The Socialization of Elite Blind Athletes into Sport

Amanda Tepfer

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THE SOCIALIZATION OF ELITE BLIND ATHLETES INTO SPORT

A Thesis
Presented to the
Faculty of the Graduate School
State University of New York, College at Brockport
Brockport, New York

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science in Education
(Physical Education)

by
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I am forever indebted to Dr. Lauren Lieberman, my academic advisor, mentor, colleague, and friend. Her expertise and enthusiasm for sensory impairments and adapted physical education was instrumental in my completion of this endeavor. I am grateful for all you have done, thank you. You are truly an inspiration!

Lastly, I would like to thank my parents, Dan and Nancy Tepfer for their never-ending encouragement and assistance along this very long journey. Your support and energy through good times and bad will never be forgotten. Thank you for everything you've done to help get me to this point.
The purpose of this study was threefold: (1) to gather information about how athletes with sensory impairments are socialized into sport, (2) to why they continue to participate and compete, (3) to what barriers, if any, they faced due to their blindness or visual impairment.

Interview data were gathered from 32 elite athletes (22 males and 10 females) who competed in the 3rd Pan Am Games for the Blind. Participants ranged in age from 17-50 (M=27.5 years). Under the classification system used by the ISBA, 12 of the participants were classified B1, 7 were classified B2, and 13 were classified B3. The interview protocol included open and closed-ended questions about personal attributes, socializing agents, socializing situations and barriers they faced and are currently confronted with.

The participants became involved in sports between the ages of 7 and 36 (M=16.6 years). Over 80% of the participants attended public schools (K-12) with inclusive physical education classes. The other 20% either attended a segregated school for the blind or both types of schools. Results indicated family as the most important socializing agent during childhood, friends during adolescence, and the athletes themselves and coaches currently. These results are consistent with other developmental research studies. During all three stages examined (childhood, adolescence, and present), mothers were more influential than any other agent regardless of the participant's gender.

The three major barriers when the participants first began playing sports were perceived perceptions of others, transportation, and lack of confidence. Currently, the barriers are cost of participation, lack of participants, and perceived perceptions of others.
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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Background of the study

An active lifestyle has been reported to benefit both physical and mental well-being such as reduction of high blood pressure, risk of heart disease, obesity, and stress related illnesses (Brownell & Stunkard, 1980; Kunesh, Hasbrook & Lewithwaite, 1992; Paffenbarger & Hyde, 1988; Powell, 1988; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 1996). Regular exercise also improves flexibility, posture, range of motion, emotional control, social awareness, and peer relations (DePauw, 1986; Poser & Ronthal; 1991). Despite this evidence researchers estimate 80% of the adults and 50% of the children in the United States do not exercise on a regular basis (Stephens, Jacobs & White, 1985).

The same is true for people with disabilities. Research indicates people with disabilities have low fitness and physical activity levels (Canada Fitness Survey, 1986; Lieberman & McHugh, 2001; Longmuir & Bar-Or, 1994, 2000; Suzuki, Saitoh, Tasaki, Shimomura, Makishima, & Hosoy, 1991; Watkinson & Bentz, 1986). Research has indicated that persons with visual impairments have even lower levels of fitness, especially children (Blessing, McCrimmon, Stoval & Williford, 1993; George, Patton & Purdy, 1975; Jankowski & Evans, 1981; Lieberman & McHugh, 2001; Schneekloth & Day, 1980; Skaggs & Hopper, 1996; Winnick & Short, 1985). Longmuir and Bar-Or (1994) and Suzuki et al. (1991) indicate that many youths with impairments live a sedentary lifestyle. Longmuir and Bar-Or (2000) reported that youths with visual impairments and/or physical disabilities have significantly lower levels of habitual physical activity, consider themselves less fit compared to their peers, and report more limitations for participation. Researchers have also reported that activity levels and mobility are limited and energy requirements for ambulation are increased for those with visual impairments (Hopkins, Gaeta, Thomas, & Hill, 1987; Longmuir, 1998; Shindo, et al., 1987, and Skaggs & Hopper, 1996).

Among able-bodied populations sports have become a basic part of children’s lives (Berlage, 1982; Dubois, 1986; Gill, Gross & Huddleston, 1983; Green & Chalip, 1997; Kuga & Douctre, 1994). Children are encouraged to participate by their families, peers, and educators. Children with disabilities should have the same opportunities given to them as able-bodied children. They should be able to go through life without others setting them apart, looking at them with pity or scorn. They should be afforded identical opportunities, privileges and demand similar responsibilities. In other words, normalization should make available to
differently abled individuals conditions as close as possible to that of the group norm (Sherrill, 1998). These rights and responsibilities should not be any different in regard to sport participation (Stein & Paciorek, 1994).

Unfortunately this is not the case. Children with physical disabilities oftentimes experience poor attitudes and interaction from their classmates and peers (Blinde & McCallister, 1998; Kerr & Helmstadter, 1990; Taub & Greer, 2000). These poor attitudes and negative interactions increase the feelings of loneliness and isolation (Taub & Greer, 2000). It has been reported that isolation limits their involvement in many childhood experiences, especially active recreation and physical activity (Longmuir & Bar-Or, 1994). Socialization experiences are necessary for people to interact positively with society. Socialization as defined by Bilton, Bonnet, Jones, Sheard, Stanworth & Webster, 1987, is:

The process by which we acquire the culture of the society into which we are born, the process by which we acquire our social characteristics and learn the ways of thought and behavior considered appropriate in our society ... When individuals, through socialization, accept the rules and expectations of their society that make up its culture and use them to determine how they should act, we say they have internalized society's cultural rules (p. 12).

The importance of social processes has been heavily researched within the past 10 years. The research has examined socialization into sport for various disability groups. These have included athletes with visual impairments (Dickinson & Perkins, 1985; Nixon, 1989; Sherrill, Pope & Arnhold, 1988; Sherrill, Rainbolt, Montelione & Pope, 1986), cerebral palsy (Sherrill & Rainbolt, 1986; Sherrill, et al., 1986; Whidden, 1986), hearing impairment (Stewart, McCarthy & Robinson, 1988, 1991), spinal cord injuries (Axe, 1992; Dickinson & Perkins, 1985; Hopper, 1986; Kennedy, 1980; Zoerink, 1992) and several others (Johannson, Thorstenson & DePauw, 1991; Wang, 1990; Williams, 1994).

Typical definitions of socialization include such elements as motivation, participation, learning and culture. Motivational research has focused on the values and/or outcomes associated from participation with sport. Examples of values, as they relate to socialization, include developing friendships, self-esteem, self-worth, coping and stress management (Schilling, 1998). Other reasons for becoming involved in sport are to have fun and enjoy oneself, to attain personal goals and objectives, to improve skills, to become fit, to challenge oneself, and to be part of a group (Dubois, 1986; Stein & Paciorek, 1994; Gill, Gross, Huddleston, 1983). The reasons are predominantly the same for people with and without

Research on able-bodied athletes indicates that they are most influenced to participate into sport by their family members (Greendorfer & Ewing, 1981). Greendorfer and Ewing (1981) demonstrated a direct relationship between sports participation and influence from parents. If parents and/or older siblings participate in sport then children are more likely to be socialized into sport. However, this is not necessarily true for persons with disabilities. Instead, research shows them to be influenced more by coaches and other athletes (Furst, Ferr & Megginson, 1993; Sherrill, Pope & Arnhold, 1986; Williams, 1994; and Zoerink, 1992). Hasbrook (1986) reported that one's social class also influences sports participation. The higher the social class the more opportunities to participate.

Research has also shown that the environment in which athletes are socialized into sport also changes depending on the disability group (Jennings, 1998). Those who have acquired disabilities have different reasons for participating than those with congenital disabilities (Zoerink, 1992). Age is another factor, which differentiates participants. Adults focus more on the health aspect of exercise and activity, while youth focus more on having fun and being with their friends (Brasile & Hedrick, 1991).

Statement of the Problem

Sport socialization is a growing area of interest; however, very few studies have been conducted on the socialization into sport of athletes with blindness or visual impairments. Most studies pertain to the socialization into sport of able-bodied athletes. Those studies relating to athletes with disabilities have singled out athletes with physical disabilities or mental retardation, not sensory impairments. Most of the information found regarding athletes with visual impairments or blindness was specific to a sport, an event, or an organization for the blind.

Previous research shows that children with visual impairments have been prepared for sport at residential facilities (Sherrill, et al., 1986). If these children are now being served through the public schools, where and how are they being introduced into sport today?

Purpose Statement

The purpose of the study was to (1) determine the social agents most involved in the socialization into sport process, for athletes with visual impairments, (2) determine why they participate in sport, and (3) what barriers, if any, they face as an athlete with a sensory impairment.
Operational Definitions

Athlete
Any person training regularly in preparation for competition in a sporting event (International Paralympic Committee Handbook, 1992)

Athlete with Visual Impairments
Any person training for competition who meets the visual acuity and field loss requirements as described by the International Blind Sports Association (IBSA, 1993).

Blind/Visually Impaired
An impairment of vision, that even when corrected, adversely affects a child’s educational performance. The term includes both partial sight and blindness (PL 105-17, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1997). According to IBSA, “the term blind refers to the full range of visual impairment from total blindness to the upper limit of visual acuity 6/60 and/or visual field of less than 20 degrees.”

The International Blind Sports Association (ISBA) uses a three-class system to classify persons who are blind or visually impaired. All classifications are in the better eye with best correction. (ISBA handbook, 1993, Ch. 4, p. 1)

Table 1:1 Classification System for Athletes who are Blind or Visually Impaired

<table>
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<th>Class</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tr>
<td>B1</td>
<td>From no light perception at all in either eye up to and including the ability to perceive light, with the inability to recognize objects or contours in any direction and at any distance.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B2</td>
<td>Ability to recognize objects or contours up to a distance of 2 meters that a person with normal vision can see at 60 meters (i.e. below 2/60 vision) and/or field of vision less than 5 degrees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B3</td>
<td>Can recognize objects or contours between 2 and 6 meters away that a person with normal vision can see at 60 meters (i.e. 2/60 to 6/60 vision) and/or field of vision between 5 and 20 degrees.</td>
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Disabled/Disability
The term “disability” refers to functional levels that describe limitations in performing skills or engaging in activities stemming from impairment (Arnheim & Sinclair, 1985).
Any physical or mental deviation that can be described clinically, whereas “handicap” refers to the barriers imposed by a disability between the person and his/her optimal functional status (Arhheim, Auxter, & Crowe, 1973).

Disability Sport

Sport conducted by disability sport organization as well as encompassing mainstream and reverse mainstream sport that includes athletes with and without disabilities (Brasile, 1990; Lindstrom, 1992).

Goalball

A game invented in Europe to help war veterans with visual impairments increase their auditory tracking ability, agility, and coordination. The court is similar to that of a volleyball court. Teams of three defend goals at opposite ends of the court. All players are blindfolded to remove any advantages those with residual vision have, and those who are completely blind. Players use their body to stop the ball before it crosses the endline (DePauw & Gavron, 1995).

Handicapped

Any term used to describe persons, “who because of impairments are limited or restricted in executing some skills, performing tasks, or participating in certain activities.” (Dunn & Fait, 1989) This term is used to indicate an impairment of functioning.

The term handicapped is descriptive of the circumstances of the person who is at a disadvantage in displaying the reactions and patterns of behavior of the normal segment of society because of physical, mental, sensory, or emotional disability, or any combination of above mentioned conditions. Because of this disadvantage, the individual is unable to display “normal” reactions and behavior patterns (Dunn & Fait, 1989).

A term used by the federal government under Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, and Public Law 101-476, the Americans with Disabilities Act. The term includes individuals who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech impaired, visually handicapped, specific learning disabled, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, other health impaired, deaf-blind, multi-handicapped, or specific learning disabled (Federal Registrar, 1997).

Inclusive School Setting

Students with and without unique needs combined in the same setting (Winnick, 2000).
International Blind Sports Association (ISBA)

The international governing body for sport for the blind and visually impaired. The general purpose of the organization is as follows:

The disabled in all nations are entitled to the same right as the non-disabled to choose sports on any level as a free time occupation. The athletes who shall be included in international sports for the disabled are those who, because of a handicap, cannot compete against non-disabled on equal terms” (ISBA handbook, Ch. 4)

Residential School Setting

School that provides living accommodations for students (Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary, 10th Ed., 1999)

Socializing agent

Any factor that influences an individual’s attitude and/or behavior into sport roles (Zoernik, 1992).

United States Association of Blind Athletes USABA

Serves as the official organization promoting athletic competition for individuals with visual impairment in the United States. (DePauw & Gavron, 1995).

Assumptions

The primary assumptions of the study are the following:

1. The participants are typical of their same-aged peers and those with similar disabilities.
2. The participants will be honest in answering the interview questions and completing the questionnaires.
3. This study elicited meaningful information, which accurately describes the population of elite athletes with visual impairments.

Delimitations

The following are the delimitation’s which helped narrow the scope of the investigation.

1. The sample population was drawn only from those athletes who have participated in international competition.
2. There are only three sports offered at the III Pan Am Games and therefore do not encompass all sport/activity areas.
3. Demographic and biographical variables as well as race and ethnic group were not dealt with in the study.
Limitations

The following are some of the weaknesses of the study that were out of the control of the researcher:

1. One interview was started but not completed due to conflict with the tournament schedule.
2. The number of interviews conducted depended on the number of athletes present, their schedules, and the availability of the interviewer. Consequently, not all athletes eligible for the study were interviewed.
3. Due to language barriers only English speaking athletes were interviewed.
CHAPTER TWO
Literature Review

The following chapter presents a review of literature relevant to sport role socialization. Specifically, the following topics will be presented (1) benefits of sport participation; (2) stigmatization and stereotyping; (3) socialization into sport, (4) socialization into sport for athletes with physical disabilities; and (5) socialization into sport for athletes with visual impairments.

Four studies were found that pertained to the socialization of blind athletes into sport. The majority of articles reviewed related to the socialization of able-bodied athletes and athletes with physical disabilities. Most of the literature does not identify the specific agents who influence the blind and visually impaired. Textbooks about teaching methods or adapted physical education include chapters pertaining to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The chapters give precautions and adaptations to programming (Auxter & Pyfer, 1985; Sherrill, 1998; Winnick, 2000). Journal articles also cover the importance of physical education for children who are blind and visually impaired (Lieberman & Cruz, 2001; Lieberman & McHugh, 2001; and Zanandrea, 1998). Other journal articles covered sporting events for individuals with visual impairments. These articles covered events such as goalball, running, athletics, tandem cycling, and the 2000 Paralympics. (Alpert, 1999; Anonymous, 1999; Block, 1990; Chamalian, 2000; Henderson, 2000; Lieberman, Butcher & Moak, 2001; Lieberman & Tepfer, 2001; and Terwilliger, 1998).

Lastly, Mastro (1987) conducted a study on “coefficients of restitution of balls used in team sports for the visually impaired.” This study reported safety concerns about the equipment used for goalball and beep baseball. Mastro and French (1985) reported anxiety levels of elite athletes, and concluded that blind athletes exhibit anxiety levels similar to sighted athletes.

Benefits of Sport Participation

Exercise benefits everyone, both able-bodied populations and those with disabilities, regardless of disability. Researchers have described many physical benefits and psycho-social benefits (Brownell & Stunkard, 1980; Kunesh, Hasbrook & Levithwaite, 1992; Paffenbarger & Hyde, 1988 and Powell, 1988). The benefits gained by persons with disabilities are similar to those gained by able-bodied athletes (DePauw, 1986; Goldberg, 1990; Poser & Ronthal, 1991; Wells & Hooker, 1990).

Participating in physical activity improves fitness and performance levels (Blessing, McCrimmon, Stovall, & Williford, 1993; Gleser, Margulies, Nyksa, Porat & Mendelburg, 1993).
There are also psychological and social benefits associated with physical activity (Campbell & Jones, 1994; Goldberg, 1990; Martin, Mushett & Smith, 1995, and Paulsen, French & Sherrill, 1990).

**Psychosocial Benefits**

Persons with disabilities often display poor self-image, a sense of inferiority and insecurity (Goldberg, 1990). This may occur because the persistence of the disability can cause deterioration of the person's attitude towards themselves, often resulting in self-pity, lower self-esteem and social isolation (Chawla, 1994). Sport participation can help newly disabled people regain self-esteem, develop a more positive attitude, and help them come to terms with their disability (Chawla, 1994). Participating in sports can also provide them with an opportunity to gain a sense of independence and accomplishment (Goldberg, 1990).

Sherrill (1986) reported that regular physical activity is important to the development of a positive self-concept and social competency.

Hippotherapy, the use of horseback riding as a therapeutic tool, has also proved beneficial for persons with physical, mental, social and learning disabilities. Benefits included improvement in motor skills, language skills, emotional control, and social awareness. Some displayed better peer relations, increased self-concept and greater self-confidence (DePauw, 1986).

Paulsen, French & Sherrill (1990) reported that those who participate in sports or regular exercise are able to handle pressure and stressful situations better than those who do not. Athletes also have a higher level of vigor, lower levels of anxiety, and higher mastery levels (Campbell & Jones, 1994). They also have a more positive perception of their health and well-being (Campbell & Jones, 1994; Paulsen et al., 1990).

Athletic identity refers to the degree to which people identify with the athlete role (Martin, Eklund & Mushett, 1997). Swimmers with disabilities reported an average athletic identity. They also have strong competitiveness and score relatively close to their able-bodied peers. Lastly, they are highly motivated to achieve in sport and have a positive goal orientation focus (Martin, Smith, & Adams-Mushett, 1995).

**Physical Benefits**

Goldberg (1990) recorded significant improvements in children with chronic diseases because of regular physical exercise. Children with cystic fibrosis had better blood pressure readings after regular exercise while symptoms related to asthma, congenital heart disease, and rheumatoid arthritis lessened from improved physical fitness levels.
Poser and Ronthal (1991) have also reported benefits to patients with Alzheimer and Parkinson’s disease. They noted improvements in flexibility, posture, range of motion as well as a decrease in rigidity while walking and riding stationary bicycles.

Healthy physical fitness levels are also required to meet the demands of daily living skills that are more energy consuming for persons with physical disabilities (Stein, 1985). However, children with visual impairments typically demonstrate low levels of fitness (Blessing, et al., 1993; Lieberman & McHugh, 2001; Skaggs & Hopper, 1996). Similarly, other researchers have reported that activity levels and mobility are limited, despite the fact that energy requirements for ambulation increase for persons with visual impairments (Hopkins, Gaeta, Thomas & Hill, 1987; Longmuir, 1998; Shindo, Kumagai & Tanakia, 1987; Skaggs & Hopper, 1996). Buell (1982) reported that a sedentary lifestyle might be due to their need for more energy to execute activities of daily living. Children with visual impairments have demonstrated improvements in fitness levels equal to their sighted peers when included in a general physical activity program (Blessing, et al., 1993; Gleser, et al., 1992; Lieberman, et al., 2002; Ponchillia, et al., 1992). Sports and other types of physical activity also help persons with visual impairments develop a sense of spatial orientation and dynamic balance (Chawla, 1994).

It has been reported that persons with disabilities desire physical activity and view it as a valued goal (Sherrill, 1986; Winnick, 2000). Although research has established the benefits of physical activity for individuals with disabilities, the social processes that influence involvement in physical activity have not been clearly identified.

**Stigmatization/Stereotyping/Prejudice**

Sport socialization is defined as the process by which persons acquire necessary attitudes, values, skills, and knowledge to become athletes and to gain acceptance in sports groups (Sherrill, 1986). In order for this process to take place, the perceptions we have about people with disabilities must change. “The attitudes of the general population are the new frontier on which the field (of the disabled) should focus” (Bina, 1991, p.42). Our society is unaware of the successes that people with disabilities can achieve. In drama and literature, blind characters are pitied and seen as outcasts, while blindness is typically depicted as a picture of helplessness with little hope, thus leading to a depressing world of the unknown.

Most encounters between people with disabilities and those without are usually awkward and inhibited (Higgins, 1980; Kleck, Ono & Hastorf, 1966; Ladieu, Alder & Dembo, 1948; Richardson, 1969; and Wright, 1960;). Persons with disabilities are stigmatized and oftentimes denied the respect they deserve. Higgins (1980) noted that these encounters are
strained, and each one is different depending on the disability and how it is managed. Blindness may interfere with establishing identities, and also interfere with communication (Scott, 1969a, 1969b; Higgins, 1980). Persons in wheelchairs or those with heart trouble or arthritis find it difficult to keep up the pace with their able-bodied peers (Straus & Glaser, 1975; Higgins, 1980). Lack of muscle control and/or face abnormalities can interfere with face-to-face communication. This may be due to facial gestures that convey unintended information (Richardson, 1969; Higgins, 1980).

Sherrill (1986) reported that stigmatization, stereotyping, and prejudice were problems encountered by most athletes with disabilities. Others (Eisenberg, Griggins, & Duval, 1982; Gliedman & Roth, 1980; & Wright, 1983) reported similar findings. The athlete with a disability is oftentimes pitied, excluded, and denied needs, services and resources. The least stigmatized are those with sensory disabilities like deafness and blindness; physical disabilities that affect mobility and/or physical attractiveness are next; and cognitive disabilities that affect one’s rationale, self-control, and responsibility are most stigmatized (Sherrill, 1986).

Participating in sport is a way to “fight” these prejudices and gain acceptance. Sport is an avenue where individuals with disabilities can demonstrate ability over disability. Brandmeyer and McBee (1986) investigated the impact of sport participation on the social status of athletes with mobility disabilities. They theorized that able-bodied athletes gain enhanced social control, self-esteem, prestige and respect by competing. Wheelchair athletes who competed in the Boston marathon noted the social impact of wheelchair road racing included a heightened self-esteem, identification as an athlete and sub-cultural ethos. The authors reported that the inclusion of wheelchair racing into mainstream, able-bodied competitions made normalization much more possible.

Sherrill (1986) also noted that people with less stigmatizing disabilities are prejudice against people who are more stigmatized. For example, they fear being categorized with persons with mental retardation or people who compete in the Special Olympics. She also reported that athletes wished to be recognized as part of a sporting classification rather than part of a mass group of individuals with disabilities.

**Sport Socialization**

Socialization has been defined as a process by which individuals learn about their environment and/or culture, acquire the social characteristics of the culture, and interact with other members of the culture (Eitzen & Sage, 1997). Socialization and play are important to any child but even more so for children who are blind or visually impaired (Rettig, 1994;
However, children who are blind or visually impaired can't observe and imitate movements as their sighted peers (Zanandrea, 1998), and lack appropriate movement experiences (Lieberman, Butcher & Moak, 2001; Lieberman, et al., 2002; Sleeuwenshoek, Boter & Vermeer, 1995). As with the able-bodied population, sport skills are necessary to participate in sport. Without sport skills sport socialization is not likely to occur.

Sport socialization studies have traditionally used a deterministic, unidirectional perspective (Hasbrook, 1989; Kunesh, Hasbrook & Lewthwaite, 1992). That is, significant others and social situations are seen as crucial factors when becoming involved in sport. This viewpoint is also known as “socialization as internalization” (Alanen, 1990; Kunesh, et al., 1992); it assumes that sport values, beliefs, and practices are modeled and reinforced by significant others within social situations.

Sport socialization studies answer questions about who becomes involved in sport; why people get involved into sport; and how do people get involved (Eitzen & Sage, 1997). They focus on the significant others and reference groups who exert influence on individuals by teaching and modeling behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, interests, and values (Sherrill, et al., 1986).

There are three components to social learning theory (Bandura, 1969; Kenyon & McPherson, 1973). The first component is personal attributes or characteristics of the individual. Socializing agents, such as significant others and/or reference groups make up the second component. These agents are responsible for influencing the individual by teaching and modeling behaviors, beliefs, attitudes, interests and values. The third component includes socializing situations, settings, and/or opportunities. This is where sport learning occurs.

**Sport Socialization and Youth**

According to Green & Chalip (1997) the family is the first and foremost social environment in a young person's life. Family has a very significant influence in socializing both boys and girls into sport. If parents and siblings participate in sport then children and younger siblings are likely to become socialized into sport themselves (Schilling, 1998). Freysinger (1994), Holman & Epperson (1984) and Orthner & Mancini (1990) reinforced this observation. Parents are usually the ones who make the decision to enroll children into sports (Howard & Madrigal, 1990); they play a key role in the process (Green & Chalip, 1997). Greendorfer & Ewing (1981) also reported a direct relationship between sport participation and influence from parents. Greendorfer and Lewko (1978) reported that parents, mainly the father, was a significant socializing agent for both genders.
Peers have also been reported to play an important role in socialization. Kunesh, et al. (1992) reported a link between children's' perceptions of peer interaction in physical activity environments and their affective responses to physical activity. They found that children who reported more positive peer interactions and more peer acceptance had more fun. Likewise, they observed that greater anxiety was significantly increased for children who had more negative interactions with peers.

The reasons for becoming involved in sport are similar regardless of whether the individual is able-bodied or disabled. Gill, Gross and Huddleston (1980) administered 720 questionnaires to boys ranging in age from 9-18 and 418 questionnaires to girls ranging in age from 8-18. Winning, feeling important, popularity, status, to do something I’m good at and rewards were all major reasons for participation in sport. These were followed by team oriented, fitness oriented, and energy release reasons. Dubois (1986), Horn (1982), Seefeldt & Gould (1980) and Pooley (1981) all noted that most of their participants participated to have fun, to improve skills, to become fit, to challenge oneself and to be part of a group. Sapp and Haubenstricker (1978) reported that having fun was the most frequently recognized reason for participating in sport. Learning new skills, becoming physically fit, and because friends played were cited as other important reasons (Sapp & Haubenstricker, 1978).

**Athletes with Disabilities**

It is presumed that people who have disabilities experience life in different ways than those without disabilities. It is also possible that they are socialized into sport differently from their able-bodied peers. Children with disabilities also spend more time in residential settings therefore, their socializing agents are different from their able-bodied peers (Zoerink, 1992). Socializing agents may also differ for different disabilities (Schilling, 1998; Williams, 1994).

Zoerink (1992) reported that those with acquired disabilities had different socializing agents compared to those who had congenital disabilities. Participants with congenital disabilities reported physical therapists, family and athletes with disabilities as the people who most influenced their sport participation. Participants with acquired disabilities reported themselves, other athletes with disabilities, and therapeutic recreation specialists as their most influential agent. Those with acquired disabilities reported having an interest in sport prior to their injury and wanted to continue that lifestyle. Those with congenital disabilities said that their reasons were related to relationships with family members.

Williams and Taylor (1994) investigated the influence of peers as socialization agents in wheelchair racing. They reported that peers were the primary source of wheelchair racing information, regardless of skill level. Knowledge of training techniques was passed on from
elite athletes to non-elite athletes through socialization. It was noted that the socialization process began when the athlete purchased a racing wheelchair. The store served as a hub for communication, it was here that racers exchanged information and extended opportunities to train and attend racing events.

Sherrill and Rainbolt (1988) compared male, able-bodied and elite cerebral palsied athletes. They found that both populations had similar self-actualization profiles. Elite athletes, regardless of their disability type, reported intrinsic and self-motivated reasons for participating (Furst, Ferr & Megginson, 1993; Schilling, 1998).

Wheelchair athletes reported reasons for participating in sport differed by age group, but for the most part were similarly motivated. Both groups rated task-oriented incentives as the main reason for their participation. Adults focused more on the health aspect of exercise and activity while youth focused their reasons around having fun, being with friends, improving skill and being competitive (Brasile & Hedrick, 1991).

Fung (1992) interviewed athletes who competed in the Seoul Paralympics. Male and female athletes from Britain and the United States stated that the most important motive for their competing was fitness. However, Japanese athletes listed skill development as their main reason. Female Japanese athletes listed skill development and friendship equally. Males competed for achievement and to gain status while female athletes rated friendship as more important. Ahlgren & Johnson (1979) similarly reported that males are more motivated than females towards achievement in competition.

Hearing coaches are the primary socializing agents for introducing individuals to opportunities in deaf sports (Stewart, Robinson, & McCarthy, 1991). Many deaf athletes are introduced to sport through deaf clubs and residential schools for the deaf. As more students become mainstreamed into public schools, socializing agents begin to change. In the public schools, deaf students are introduced to sport by their physical education teachers and coaches (Stewart, et al., 1991).

Socializing Factors

Williams (1994) reviewed relevant sociological literature on the subject of disability sport socialization and identity construction. Brasile (1990) and Thiboutot, Smith, & Labanowich (1992) debate over the inclusion of non-disabled athletes and athletes with minimal disabilities in disability sport. Lindstrom (1992) argues against including those with different disabilities in the same competition because the competition would not preserve the identities of the athletes with disabilities. Identities are sufficiently different from each other to warrant separate competitions. However, other research on the sport socialization of
athletes with disabilities opposes his position and must be considered. This study is important because it deals with the sociological issues of labeling and differentiation necessary for classification systems in competitions.

Newman (1990) identified the choices available to individuals with disabilities throughout their lives. He plotted the life events and activity careers of 100 subjects and found that the individual is an active participant in the socialization process.

Attributes related to the disability, which influences the socialization process, include the onset of the disability, the severity of the disability, and the gender of the participant. The more severe the disability the more likely the individual will be placed in a residential institution or other segregated environment. Sherrill, et al. (1986) supported this observation in her study of athletes with visual impairments and cerebral palsy.

Nixon (1988) examined the role of parents in the initial sport participation of children who are visually impaired. Previous studies have found parents to be positive socialization agents. However, Nixon found that parental influence could be negative. His typology of encouragement identified strong encouragers, weak encouragers, tolerators, and discouragers. The majority of parents fell into the last three categories. Thus, parents may or may not contribute to the sport socialization process of the disabled individual.

The studies described above focused on athletes with disabilities and their sport participation. However, it should be noted that none specifically addressed the sport role socialization of athletes with visual impairments and blindness.

**Athletes with Visual Impairments**

Four articles related to visual impairments and sport role socialization were identified. According to Sherrill, Rainbolt, Montelione & Pope (1986) there are no significant differences in socializing agents with regard to age, gender and/or onset of visual impairment. Contrary to other findings, Sherrill, et al. (1986) found that parents do not play a significant role in the sport socialization process.

According to motor development experts, sighted children who excel in sport typically come from homes in which parents have been highly active in sport (Sherrill, et al., 1986). Parents' past athletic experiences also positively influence the sport socialization of children (Sherrill, et al., 1986). Sherrill et al. (1986) reported that blind athletes were more athletic than most of their brothers and sisters even though their parents weren't athletic.

A blind athletes' interest in sport instruction is typically initiated by physical educators working in both residential and mainstreamed school settings (Sherrill, et al., 1985). The residential school is the first setting in which sport instruction occurred, followed by
home/neighborhood, mainstream public physical education in public schools, separate/adapted
public school physical education classes, parks/recreation, and lastly sport clubs for disabled
or mainstreamed youth (Sherrill, et al., 1986).

In regard to visual classification, it was reported that classification affected school
physical education for blind athletes, especially at the elementary level (Sherrill, et al., 1985).
Most B-1 athletes received elementary physical education in a residential school setting, B-2
and B-3 athletes received physical education in the public school (Sherrill, et al., 1985).

Sherrill, Pope & Arnhold (1986) reported similar findings for 133 athletes who
competed in the sixth national USABA games. They reported that many athletes successfully
competed against sighted athletes in swimming, wrestling, and long distance running. In
general, blind athletes are introduced to their favorite sport at a later age than sighted athletes.
Most experts report that competition for sighted children begins between the ages of 6 and 10,
depending on the sport. Sherrill, Pope and Arnhold (1986) reported the age of exposure to a
favorite sport ranged from 9 to 27 years of age.

They also reported the physical educator as the first person who generally introduces
them to sport. Only 10% of the subjects reported family as the one who introduces them to
sport. The physical education teacher/coach ranked the highest as the most influential person
in their learning and enjoying sports, while the family accounted for only 15 percent (Sherrill,
et al., 1986). Unlike sighted athletes, athletes with visual impairments report themselves as
being very influential (Sherrill, et al., 1986).

Sherrill, et al., (1986) also reported that the residential school is the main socializing
agent, followed by home, neighborhood, and the mainstreamed physical education class.
Competitive events organized by the USABA were also identified as important socializing
agents (Sherrill, et al., 1986).

national competitions. The data indicated the influential factors associated with becoming
involved and remaining in sport for athletes with visual impairments. Regardless of gender,
athletes initially began competing in their 20’s and 30’s. Meeting the challenge of
competition and reaching personal goals were two popular reasons for competing. Having
fun, socialization issues, winning, being accepted, being with others with similar disabilities,
and travel were other reasons listed.

All of the participants reported family as supportive in their endeavors, both in
life and in sport. The majority of participants also reported that family did not hinder
their progress, however some mentioned that they felt overprotected by family
members (Scott, 1995). Many athletes have reported no barriers to their participation. For those who have encountered obstacles, the largest barrier was the attitudes of sighted people (Scott, 1995).

Mastro (1990) proposed a theoretical framework for the development of an elite athlete, he called it the "Diamond of the Visually Impaired Athlete". If at any time a barrier is encountered, becoming an elite athlete, will not occur.

The seven surfaces of the diamond include (1) permission, (2) inclination, (3) information, (4) opportunity to participate, (5) inspiration, (6) dedication, and (7) frustration. Any person attempting to become an elite athlete passes through each stage, but for the visually impaired, each stage is reached somewhat differently.

Many able-bodied athletes take the first facet, permission, for granted, however, for the visually impaired it is the most difficult to attain. Permission is oftentimes not given to those who are partially sighted and totally blind. The American Medical Association recommends that partially sighted individuals not be allowed to participate in interscholastic or intercollegiate athletics (Appenseller & Appenseller, 1983). The second facet, inclination, refers to the idea that individuals enjoy involvement and are inclined to continue that involvement. Information concerns the type of opportunity for involvement available and the support provided. The fourth facet, opportunity to participate, is most important after granting permission. Opportunities may be limited for individuals with visual impairments due to such factors as lack of skill, lack of adequate coaching, and lack of guide runners. Coaches must overlook the disability and treat the athlete as any other. The coach must also be knowledgeable about mechanical devices and adaptations necessary to maximize opportunity. Inspiration is where the individual realizes that sport and athletics can be fun and beneficial. The athlete is inspired to continue, regardless of the reason. The last facet, dedication, brings the individual to the completion of the goal. The athlete must be willing to devote time, effort, and energy to fulfill his/her purpose. Included in all of the facets is frustration. It may be in the form of barriers or not being able to complete one of the facets.

**Summary**

The implementation of federal legislation (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1992 and Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 1997) promises individuals with disabilities opportunities for successful living. However, before the socialization process can occur society's attitude towards people with disabilities must change. They must be fully accepted as equals before they can be involved in our activities.
Athletes with disabilities are more likely to be influenced by their coaches, other athletes, and sport scientists; family is a secondary social agent. Athletes with acquired disabilities are more influenced by other people with disabilities, themselves, therapeutic recreation specialists and physical therapists (Zoerink, 1992). Physical therapists, family and other athletes strongly influence athletes with congenital disabilities. Physical education teachers and friends are the main socializing agents for athletes with sensory impairments and cerebral palsy. Unlike athletes without disabilities, family is not a significant factor in the sport participation of athletes with disabilities (Sherrill, 1985).

Several reasons were identified in the literature for participating in sport for athletes with visual impairments. They include fitness, camaraderie, skill development, physical activity/exercise, challenge, friendship, achievement and status, energy release, fun, fitness, societal approval, improvement of physical fitness, travel and enjoyment.

The following statements can be drawn from the literature review:

- Sport participation may be a way to weaken stereotypes and improve attitudes concerning people with disabilities.
- Identities are socially constructed, and both society and the individual play a role.
- Participation in activities that are valued by the individual are likely to enhance affective development.
- Individuals with disabilities are classified differently within their sport.
- Individuals with disabilities are reduced to second-class citizen status versus their able-bodied peers.
- Sport participation improves self-esteem, gives a sense of independence and accomplishment, develops a positive self-concept and enhances social competency.
- Family and peers are reported by both able bodied and athletes with disabilities as important agents in their socialization into sport.
- Athletes with disabilities report their coaches and teachers as the most influential people in their sport career.
- The reasons for participating in sport included health benefits, fun, being with friends, and being competitive. These reasons were similar to those stated by athletes with disabilities.
CHAPTER THREE
Methods and Procedures

The purpose of the chapter is to present the methods and procedures that were used to determine how athletes with sensory impairments are socialized into sport. The methods and procedures that were used in the study are presented in the following sections: (a) selection of subjects; (b) methodology; (c) instrumentation; (d) data analysis.

Selection of Subjects

The participants who were interviewed for the study included athletes who competed at the 2001 Ill Pan Am Games for the blind. The Games were held at the South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind (Spartanburg, South Carolina). Thirty-two participants (22 male and 10 female) were interviewed; they ranged in age from 17 to 50. Twelve of the athletes were classified B1, seven B2, and 13 B3. Two researchers interviewed all athletes from the United States and Canada who spoke English and were willing to participate in the study. Permission to conduct the interviews was granted by the State University of New York Human Subjects Committee (Appendix A) and the coordinator of the games.

The Games ran from May 29, 2001 through June 2, 2001. Goal ball and track and field were held on the school campus while swimming took place at a local YMCA.

Instrumentation

Greendorfer (1993) developed a socialization agent's inventory to qualitatively measure the socializing agents of female athletes. The instrument was adapted and combined with Scott's (1995) instrument to accommodate the current study. Demographic and biographical information were gathered prior to the socializing agents inventory (SAI). The SAI includes five sub-scales: (1) sport experiences and interests, (2) a comparison of the athlete's participation and ability across three time periods, (3) present opportunities to participate in sport, (4) barrier ranking, and (5) people as influences. See Appendix D for the interview instrument.

Methodology

Personal interviews rather than mailed questionnaires were used. This was done for three reasons, namely: (1) transcribing questionnaires into braille is very costly, (2) the interviewer obtained more accurate answers to the questions, and (3) the data could be collected in a more timely fashion.
Long-qualitative Interview

The long interview asks many questions, but the answers are relatively short. Several participants are interviewed, but only once. The participant is not re-interviewed unless for further clarification. McCracken (1988) describes the long qualitative interview as the most powerful method of data-gathering in qualitative research. Answers to the long interview are more revealing than numbers alone and make them less abstract. The major concerns with the long qualitative interview are time and privacy issues (Scott, 1992). Long interviews can last anywhere from one to eight hours. These qualitative interviews ranged from 30 minutes to one hour. Interviews were conducted on-site whenever athletes were available.

The first section of questions focused on the participant's background and personal attributes. For example, questions were asked regarding when they began participating in blind sport; why they continue to participate; and how they first became involved in blind sport. The second section gathered information about their current sport involvement. These questions referred to their active participation within the past five years. Included in the second section were (1) questions about barriers; (2) when participants first began sports; and (3) their elite athlete status. The third section included a Likert scale to measure the people who influenced their sport interest. The last question asked who they received the most encouragement from to become an athlete.

Focus Group Interview

Another type of interview is known as the focus group interview. These interviews obtain information about norms, behaviors, attitudes, cultural domains, and innovations (LeCompte & Schensul, 1999). Due to time constraints, only one focus group interview was conducted. Three males ranging in age from 17 to 36 participated. Two of the participants were classified as B-3 and the third B-1. All three attended public schools and were integrated into physical education classes. The main purpose of the focus group was to confirm the previously gathered data.

Equipment

Each of the long-qualitative interviews was audio-taped. Notes were also taken during the interviews. Audio/videotaping does not replace notes, therefore the two types of data gathering were used simultaneously. A Sony video recorder was used to record the focus group interview. This was done because videotapes are excellent for capturing nonverbal behaviors (Schensul, Schensul, & LeCompte, 1999).
Data Collection

All clearances were obtained from the meet director prior to the competition. See Appendix B for the request form. All of the interviews were conducted on site between May 29, 2001 and June 2, 2001.

A total of 21 male and 10 female athletes were interviewed. Fourteen male and four female athletes participated in track and field. Five male and five female athletes participated in goalball. One male and one female were dual sport athletes. They participated in track and field and goalball. One male swimmer and one male weight lifter also participated in the interviews.

Track and field athletes were more readily available than other athletes because of large blocks of waiting time between events. The goal ball athletes were harder to interview because of their match and practice schedules. Swimming events were held off campus, which made it difficult to access them. Only one athlete from the U.S. and Canada competed in swimming.

Athletes were told the purpose of the study and that it would take approximately one hour to complete the interview. Informed consent forms (see Appendix C) were signed after the athlete was introduced to the study. All athletes were assured anonymity.

Answers to the interview questions were written directly on the interview form. These written answers were the primary source of information while the tape recordings were used to verify responses. The written replies and audiotapes were studied to identify patterns. The videotape of the focus group interview was also saved and transcribed. Demographic information can be found in Appendix E and individual answers in Appendix F.

Data Analysis

Interview Analysis

Inductive content analysis served as the primary methodology for analyzing the interview data. Content analysis is helpful for identifying lower and higher order themes. Several other qualitative studies have used this type of data analysis (Ecklund, 1993; Hayashi, 1996; Scanlan & Simons, 1992; Weiss, Barber, Sisley & Ebbeck, 1991). Lincoln & Guba (1985) and Patton (1990) have also used this type of data analysis in qualitative methodology studies.

Verbatim interview transcription is the first step in the content analysis of qualitative data. Each tape was transcribed onto a computer and printed out as a separate document. Each was labeled with an interviewee code number, tape number, and date of interview.
The researcher and committee chairperson analyzed the socializing agent interview data. Quotes that referred to specific socializing agents proved especially insightful. Both researchers combined their findings and compiled them into a final list.
CHAPTER FOUR

Results

The purpose of this study was to: (1) determine socializing agents of elite blind athletes into sport, (2) assess why blind athletes compete, and (3) identify what barriers, if any, blind athletes face. The following sections will summarize the results of the three main questions asked. See Appendix G for results to the individual survey questions.

**Personal Attributes/Biographical Information**

See Appendix E for the biographical information.

**Age/Gender**

The average age of all athletes interviewed was 27 years, with a range of 17-50 years. There were 22 male athletes interviewed and 10 female athletes.

**Visual Classification**

Twelve of the athletes were classified B1 (eight males and four females). Seven of the athletes were classified B2 (three males and four females). Thirteen of the athletes were classified B3 (eleven males and two females). Table 4.1 presents visual classification by gender and sport.

**Table 4.1 Sport, Gender and Visual Classification (N=32)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Visual Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track and Field</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goal Ball</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swimming</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight Lifting</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dual Sport</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Type of physical education program

Twenty-five of the athletes interviewed took part in an inclusive physical education program. Of these, eight were B1, seven B2, and 10 B3. One B1 athlete attended a public school, but did not take physical education. Five of the athletes attended a segregated school for the blind and a public school with inclusive physical education for grades K-12. The majority of the participants attended public schools and received physical education with their sighted peers. See Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Visual Classification by Type of Physical Education (N=32)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Type</th>
<th>Visual Classification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>B1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusive</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segregated</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mixed</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No PE</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Socializing Agents

When did you begin participating in blind sport?

Age of exposure to a favorite sport was nine or under for 13 percent of the athletes; 10-16 for 50 percent; 17-26 for 30 percent; and 27 or over for 6 percent. Response ranged from 7-36 years with a mean of 16.6 years. It has been previously reported that sighted athletes begin participating in sports between the ages of 6-10 years, depending on the nature of the sport (Martens, 1982).

How did you find out about blind sport? Who was the most influential during your sports career?

Two different socializing agents were examined. The first was who first introduced them to sport. The second asked what persons were most influential in the athlete’s learning and continued participation in sports.

A coach initially introduced 10 (33%) of blind athletes to sport. Friends and/or other blind athletes introduced 7 (23%), while family did so for only 3 (10%) of athletes. Interestingly for 10 (33%) of the athletes, family was the most influential in learning and
continued participation. It is important to take note that a small percentage of athletes reported that no one introduced them and that no one was influential in their desire to learn or continue to participate. These athletes indicated themselves rather than anyone else. They believed that it was their responsibility and their self-motivation that started their sports involvement. Research on sighted athletes does not report self as a socializing agent (Sherrill, Pope, Arnold, 1986)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Socializing Agent</th>
<th>First Introduction to Sport</th>
<th>Most Influential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friends/Other Blind Athletes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Socializing Situations**

*What socializing agent/situation provided you with opportunities to learn new skills?*

Coaches and/or teachers were reported by 43 percent of athletes to be the most frequent agents for learning new skill. Blind sport organizations closely followed with 40 percent of the athletes. These organizations included the USABA, Commission for the Blind and the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Twenty-seven percent felt that other blind athletes and 17 percent found themselves to be responsible for providing opportunity to learn new skills. Public and segregated schools were also reported, each by 6 percent. One athlete specifically stated, “with more integration they (public schools) are the ones who see the kids.” Only one athlete reported family as being important in learning new skills.

**Why do you compete in sports?**

Eighty-six percent of athletes reported their love for the game and/or they loved to compete. Fifty percent reported friends, for fun, travel and meeting new people. Health benefits, such as staying in shape, keeping fit, and stress relief was reported by 36 percent. Thirty percent said sports always gave them something to improve upon, while 17 percent reported team camaraderie and being part of a “family. Thirteen percent competed because
they like to win and 6 percent competed to earn respect from the sighted population and prove
they can do it. Interestingly, all of the participants who reported winning (13 percent) as a
reason for participating were male. See Figure 4.1.

Figure 4a Reasons for Participation by Class

Do you participate on any sighted sport teams?

Sixty-three percent of the athletes did not participate on sighted sport teams. Reasons
for not participating on sighted teams varied, however 52 percent reported not having enough
visions as the primary reason. One B1 athlete reported that he was not on a specific sighted
team, but that he competed in sighted road races. Two participants said they didn’t have
enough time. One participant answered there weren’t any sighted team he wanted to be on.
Two said they preferred blind sport teams and two answered it was “easier” to be on blind
teams. One athlete didn’t think she could so she didn’t press the issue but wished she had.

How do blind sport teams differ from sighted sport teams?

Eleven of the athletes felt there wasn’t any difference between the two types of teams.
They emphasized that both involved working hard to achieve goals. The most often reported
answer was that blind athletes needed modifications, e.g. sighted guides and how skills are
taught. Other differences included funding, publicity, number of participants, and opportunity
to participate.

Some differences were sport-specific. For goal ball, the major differences were in
number of participants and public knowledge of the sport. Many said there weren’t enough
teams and therefore they had to travel just to compete and/or practice against others.
Participants also stated that people don’t know what goal ball is or about. They think it’s non-competitive and easy to play. One athlete said, “blind teams can’t be as picky with try-outs and cuts, you have to take whoever shows up, regardless of their desire to train.”

Track and field differences were more oriented to adaptations. One athlete replied people on sighted teams were unsure of how to guide runners with visual impairments. Another felt sighted teams had advantages over blind sport teams or teams with limited vision.

**Barriers**

Figure 4.2 presents the barriers by classification at the beginning of the athlete’s sport experience. Figure 4.3 presents the barriers for elite athletes.

**B1 Classification**

As an amateur athlete 67 percent said lack of others to participate with as the greatest barrier. Lack of a sighted guide was reported by 58 percent. Perceived perceptions of others were reported by 42 percent. Fifty percent of athletes (at the elite level) listed lack of others to participate with, lack of time, and lack of a sighted guide as their greatest barriers. Lack of adequate programs was reported by 42 percent of athletes. Perceived perceptions and lack of quality coaching was named by 33 percent of athletes.

**B2 Classification**

Eighty-six percent of B2 athletes reported perceived perceptions as their greatest barrier as an amateur athlete. Transportation was reported by 71 percent of athletes. Fifty-seven percent listed lack of opportunity as their third greatest barrier. As an elite athlete perceived perception was still the largest barrier, reported by 71 percent. Lack of other to participate with, availability, lack of time, and cost were reported by 57 percent. Forty-three percent also reported transportation and lack of adequate coaching.

**B3 Classification**

As an amateur athlete 62 percent listed transportation as their greatest barrier. Perceived perceptions, lack of participants, and lack of quality equipment were reported by 38 percent. Thirty-one percent reported attitudes of others, coaching, and lack of adequate programs the third greatest barrier. Thirty-two percent of the athletes rated transportation, lack of others to participate with, access to equipment and cost as the greatest barrier as an elite athlete. Thirty-one percent rated perceived perceptions, and lack of time as the second greatest barrier. Lack of self-confidence, access to coaches, and lack of adequate programs was reported by 23 percent.
Results to the Research Questions

The following statements summarize the information collected from the interviews.

*Question 1: How are athletes with visual impairments socialized into sport?*

- Athletes began their blind sport participation at the average age of 16.6 years.
- Seventy-seven percent of athletes participated in an inclusive physical education program.
- Coaches were reported as the most important agent for introducing athletes into blind sport.
- Family was reported as the most influential in continuing to participate.
- Coaches/teachers and blind sport organizations were reported as the “best” resources in learning new skills. It should be noted that regardless of how athletes learn sport the services are futile if they aren’t publicized.
Question 2: Why do athletes continue to participate?

- Ninety-four percent of athletes considered themselves to be at the elite level.
- Love for the game and/or competition was reported most as reasons to participate.
- Health benefits, fun, team camaraderie, and self-improvement were also mentioned.

Question 3: What barriers, if any, did the athletes encounter?

- Lack of participants was reported as the greatest barrier for these athletes.
- Perceived perceptions, of blind persons ability to participate in sports were reported as the second greatest barrier for these athletes.
- Transportation and lack of time were also reported.
- Lack of sighted guides was a barrier for B1 athletes as amateurs as well as at the elite level.
CHAPTER FIVE
Discussion and Recommendations

This chapter contains the following sections: Introduction, findings compared to the literature review, and recommendations for further study. The purpose of this study was to determine (1) how athletes with sensory impairments are socialized into sport, (2) why they compete/participate in sport, and (3) what barriers they face due to their visual impairment. Interviewees were asked a variety of questions in regard to how they were introduced to sport, who introduced them into sport, and why they participate in sport.

Findings Compared to the Literature Review

This study investigated who or what first introduced blind athletes into sport. Other blind athletes, organizations for the blind, and teachers were reported the most. Teachers included physical educators, vision teachers, and classroom teachers. Family members and schools for the blind closely followed in frequency. A few of the athletes mentioned coaches, colleagues, rehabilitative services, and self. These results are similar to those found by Sherrill, et al. (1986). She reported that physical education teachers in residential or mainstreamed settings motivated blind athletes the most to become involved in sport. Sherrill also reported that only 15% of the athletes listed family as a socializing agent. The current study reported coaches as the greatest socializing agent. Family was only reported by 10 percent; however, it was reported by 33 percent as most influential. This differs from Sherrill et.al. who reported that parents do not play an important role in sport socialization. At the times of Sherrill's study, students with visual impairments were more likely to attend segregated schools for the blind. Today, more students are attending inclusive settings and therefore there is more family interaction.

According to Green and Chalip (1997) family is the most important socializing agent in a person's life. For example, family has a significant influence in socializing both boys and girls into sport. Schilling (1998) offered that if parents and siblings participated in sport, then children or younger siblings were more likely to become socialized into sport. Freysinger (1994), Holman & Epperson (1984), and Orhtner & Mancini (1990) reported parents are usually the ones who enroll their child/ren into sports and are a key role in the process of initiating them into sport.

Family appears to be a powerful agent because fewer children attend residential schools away from home. They have more interactions with family members as a result. Friends and/or other blind athletes were ranked third as socializing agent who introduced the athlete into sport. They were also the most influential. This is similar to findings reported by
Furst, Ferr, and Megginson (1993). They reported that disabled friends were the primary motivators and that able-bodied friends were most instrumental in encouraging participation.

Athletes in the study were introduced to sport at a much later age than that of sighted athletes. The average age for participating in organized sports for males was 17, females 14. The ages ranged from 7-36 years with a mean of 16.6 years. These results are similar to those of Scott (1995) and Sherrill, et al. (1986). Scott reported an average age of 12 years. Sherrill et al (1986) reported a range from 4-48 years with a mean of 13.49 years. Although these athletes became involved at approximately the same time public school athletic programs begin; it was still later than their sighted peers. Sports for sighted children begin between 6 and 10 years, depending on type of sport. Non-contact sports begin around age six, while contact sports start around the age of eight (Mattens, 1982).

Fung (1992) reported the most important motive for competing for British and American athletes was fitness-related. Male Japanese athletes reported skill development and female Japanese athletes reported skill development and friendship. Males were also more driven to compete for achievement and gain in status while females rated friendship as more important. In the current study love for the game was the most important reason for participating. Friendships, traveling, and meeting new people were also reported. Health benefits were reported as the third most reason for participating. Furst, Ferr & Megginson (1993) and Schilling (1998) reported similar findings. Elite athletes, regardless of their disability identified intrinsic reasons such as skill development, and improve health. Although the ages of the participants in Gill, Gross and Huddleston’s study (1980) were younger, they reported similar reasons for participating. Winning, feeling important and gaining status was reported as major reasons for participation in sport. These were followed by team-oriented, fitness-oriented and energy-release reasons. Dubois (1986), Horn (1982), Seefeldt & Gould (1980) and Pooley (1981) also reported similar findings, noting that participants participate to have fun, to improve skills, to become fit, to challenge themselves and to be part of a group. Learning new skills, becoming physically fit, and friendships were cited as important reasons by Sapp & Haubenstricker (1978).

The athletes in the current study agreed that physical activity is a valued activity for persons with disabilities (Sherrill, 1986; Winnick, 1990). Physical health (Winnick & Short, 1985) and positive psychological well being (Craft & Hogan, 1985; Sherrill, 1986) are benefits gained from physical fitness and activity. If we increase the numbers of athletes with visual impairments we will in turn increase the number of participants who benefit from the experience.
Although there are more opportunities for inclusion and mainstreaming in schools today, there is still a reluctance to allow people with disabilities to participate in sport. This may be due to safety reasons and/or lack of knowledge about how to include them (Lieberman, Houston-Wilson & Kozub, 2002). It is also important to note that many participants stated it wasn't easy to find out about blind sport. They also feel that information needs to get out to everyone that sports for the blind are available.

Sherrill, et al. (1986) reported that stigmatization, stereotyping, and prejudice were problems encountered by most athletes with disabilities. Others reported similar findings (Eisenberg, Griggins & Duval, 1982; Gliedman & Roth, 1980; and Wright, 1983). Athletes with disabilities are sometimes pitied, excluded, and denied needs, services and resources. These reporting were all conclusive to the current study. Two of the athletes in the current study stated that participating in sport is a way to earn respect from the sighted population. Several athletes said that the perceptions and/or attitudes of others were barriers to starting sport and as an elite. Access to equipment and/or facilities were reported as a barrier by eleven athletes at the beginning of their sport careers. Eleven athletes also reported access to qualified coaches as a barrier. It is no surprise that lack of coaches was reported as a barrier. The number of coaches who know about visual impairments and how to coach athletes with visual impairments is relatively small.

**Conclusion**

These results clearly answered the three major research questions, namely (1) how are athletes with sensory impairments socialized into sport? (2) Why do they continue to participate? (3) What barriers, if any, do they face?

Organizations for the blind and coaches were reported as the strongest socializing agents. These organizations for the blind weren’t necessarily sport-related. Programs for the visually impaired, such as the Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (ABVI) and local commissions for the blind were also identified as socializing agents.

Family members were reported as the greatest supporter of these athletes. Mothers were singled out as an especially powerful motivator. Coaches and self were also listed as sources of support. These “others” encouraged them, cheered them on, and made sure they arrived at their practices and competitions on time.

Athletes with visual impairments participate in sport mainly out of love for the sport and/or to compete. Maintaining a healthy lifestyle and challenging oneself were also highly rated as reasons for participating.
Barriers were consistent across all three visual classifications. Whether the athlete was just starting out or had achieved elite status, the barriers were the same, namely, lack of participants, perceived negative perceptions of others, and lack of adequate programs. Specific to B1 athletes, lack of a guide was reported as a significant barrier.

Individuals with visual impairments are capable of participating in sports at the recreational and competitive level. However, in order for this to occur they must first be exposed to sports as well as welcomed to participate. Educators need to be accepting of students with visual impairments and not exclude them from activities. They also need the education and knowledge of adapting activities successfully. We, as a society, need to lose our perceived perceptions that they cannot participate solely because they are blind.

Recommendations for Future Study

More research is needed about the sport role socialization process of blind youth and adults. For example, how many blind students attend public schools compared to residential schools? How is the sport role socialization process different for the blind?

This author agrees with others who support cross-cultural analyses (Duda & Allison, 1990) and cross disability studies (DePauw, 1986). Both topics are important because every person is socialized differently. Specific recommendations for future studies include:

- Conduct similar studies of other disability groups (e.g. physical disabilities, deaf/hard of hearing)
- The socializing contributions of schools, churches, communities, and neighborhoods should be studied to determine their degree of influence.
- Identify what organizations and/or groups are responsible for integrating athletes with disabilities into sport. (Are they open to the concept, are they prepared, are they knowledgeable in the content area?)
- Identify what information organizations, facilities, and directors need to integrate athletes with disabilities.
APPENDIX A

Human Subject Committee Approval
Date: May 9, 2001

To: Amanda Tepfer
    Lauren Lieberman

From: Colleen Donaldson for
      Institutional Review Board

Re: Project IRB #2001-87

Your proposal "A Descriptive Study on Socialization into Sport of Elite Blind Athletes" has been approved. If you wish to continue this project beyond one year, federal guidelines require that the information below (items 1-6) will need to be provided to the IRB before the project can be approved for a second year. Please note also that if the project initially required a full meeting of the IRB (Category III proposal) for the first review, then continuation of the project after one year will again require full IRB review.

Information required by the IRB for continuation of the project past the first year includes the following:

1. number of subjects involved in year one; a description of any adverse events or unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or other, withdrawal of subjects from the research or complaints about the research during the previous year
2. a summary of any recent literature, findings, or new information about any risks associated with the research
3. a copy of the current informed consent document
4. a general summary of research findings from year one
5. reason why project needs to be continued into a second year or more.

Please contact Colleen Donaldson, Office of Academic Affairs, immediately if:
   - the project changes substantially,
   - a subject is injured,
   - the level of risk increases.

A final report of less than one page that focuses on human subjects participation in the process is due on or before May 9, 2002.

CD:dhl
APPENDIX B
Participant Informed Consent Form
An Examination of Elite Blind Athletes
Subjective Task Value in the Physical Domain

1. Thank you very much for your participation in this interview.

2. This interview will be used as part of our research at SUNY Brockport. The results will assist parents, professionals, and youth in the field of blindness in increasing the knowledge of sport participation. It will also give information on how to decrease barriers to sport participation and thus improve the quality of life for individuals who are blind.

3. I am defining value by how dis/interesting, not/important, and/or not/useful sport is to a person. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to understand the factors, which have influenced the value you hold for sport.

4. I am going to ask you questions pertaining to the reason why you find sport interesting, important, and/or useful. Participating in this interview is completely voluntary and should take less than 1 hour.

5. Please answer the questions as honestly as possible, as there are no right or wrong answers. For each of the questions I will be asking you to give as many examples as possible.

6. Your name will not be associated with your answers; instead I will identify this interview by using a code number system.

7. You may withdraw from the completion of the interview at any time without any penalty or loss of benefits.

8. To assist me in not having to write while you speak I would like to tape this interview. Is this okay with you? ______

9. Only those involved with this study will hear this interview, however they will not know your real name.

Thank you for your time and we appreciate your efforts. Please sign the bottom of this form to show your permission to begin the interview process. If you have any questions please feel free to contact Amanda Tepfer at SUNY Brockport (716) 395-2629 or email at: tepfer_10@yahoo.com

__________________________________________    _______________________
Participant                          Date
APPENDIX C

Interview Instrument
Qualitative Long Interview

1. Background Information

1. Age

2. Gender

3. How many brothers do you have? ________________________________
   What are their ages? ________________________________

4. How many sisters do you have? ________________________________
   What are their ages? ________________________________

5. Did you participate in:
   a. an inclusive physical education program (mainstreamed with sighted peers)?
   b. public school with adapted physical education program?
   c. segregated school (School for the Blind)
   d. other? ________________________________

6. How do you define sport?

7. How do you define athlete?

8. Do you consider yourself to be an elite athlete? Why or why not?

9. Why do you participate in sport?

10. How did you find out about blind sport?

11. When did you begin participating in blind sport?
II. Current Sport Involvement

A. I would like to ask you some questions about your present sport interests and participation. These questions refer to active participation within the last 5 years.

1. On how many competitive blind sport teams are you currently playing on/have played on?

1 __________ 2-3 __________ 4-5 __________ 6+ __________

2. Name these sports in order of importance to you and the amount of time spent on each sport per week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Time (hrs per week)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. On how many competitive sighted sport teams are you currently on/have been on?

0 __________ 1 __________ 2-3 __________ 4-5 __________

4. Name these sports in order of importance to you and the amount of time spent on each sport per week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Time (hrs per week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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</tbody>
</table>

5. If you do NOT participate in sighted sport what is the biggest reason why?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

6. In your opinion how do blind sport teams differ from sighted sport teams?

____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________

7. Do you participate in any non-competitive sport activities? (in addition to those in A1)

0 __________ 1-3 __________ 4-6 __________ 7+ __________

8. Name these activities in order of importance and the amount of time spent on each activity per week.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Time (hrs per week)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
9. Of your total sport participation time how much time would you estimate you participate in each of the following: (An example of a team sport is goalball; examples of individual sports are swimming, judo, wrestling, track & field).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team Sports</th>
<th>about 25% of the time</th>
<th>about 50% of the time</th>
<th>about 75% of the time</th>
<th>all of my participation time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individual Sports</th>
<th>about 25% of the time</th>
<th>about 50% of the time</th>
<th>about 75% of the time</th>
<th>all of my participation time</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. On the average how many total hours a day do you spend playing or practicing in all sports?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Monday-Friday</th>
<th>1 hour or less</th>
<th>2 hours</th>
<th>3 or more hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturday-Sunday</th>
<th>1 hour or less</th>
<th>2 hours</th>
<th>3 or more hours</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Given the opportunity how often would you like to participate in sports?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>more than now</th>
<th>about the same</th>
<th>less than now</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Compared to your high school interest and participation in sports would you say that your present participation has:

- increased significantly
- decreased slightly
- increased slightly
- decreased significantly
- not changed

13. Have you learned or participated in any new sports since high school? If so, how many and what?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>none</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>7+</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B. The next three questions refer to three different stages of your life. Please check the appropriate rating for each stage.

1. Compared to athletes in general would you say your active participation was:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Presently</th>
<th>In college</th>
<th>In high school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>well above average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well below average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Compared to athletes in general how would you rate your ability in sports?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Presently</th>
<th>In college</th>
<th>In high school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>well above average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>above average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>average</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>below average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>well below average</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. In general how would you rate your depth of involvement in sports at each stage?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Presently</th>
<th>In college</th>
<th>In high school</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>well above average</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>above average</td>
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<td>average</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>below average</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>well below average</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

C. Now I would like to ask you about your present opportunities to participate in sport. Again, these questions refer to active participation.

1. Where do you participate in sports and how much of your participation time is spent at each facility? (rate each facility)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Facility</th>
<th>all of the time</th>
<th>most of the time</th>
<th>some of the time</th>
<th>never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>public facility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>private facility</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>open field/lot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other, please specify</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Select the facility from C1 where most of your participation time is spent. How far do you usually travel to this facility? (mark the best answer)

   less than ½ mile  ½ to 1 mile  1-2 miles  more than 2 miles

3. To what extent do you think the following provide opportunities for athletes with visual impairments to learn new skills?

   [Blank]

49
public facility  to great extent  somewhat  very little  none
private facility  ________  ________  ________  ________
open field/lot  ________  ________  ________  ________
other, please  specify  ________  ________  ________  ________

4. To what extent do you think sports programs for visually impaired are existent? (rate each)

through public agencies  ________  ________  ________  ________
through private agencies  ________  ________  ________  ________
other, please specify  ________  ________  ________  ________

D. Below is a list of items that may be considered as barriers to participation. Please check all that apply when you began participating in sport(s).

______ transportation availability cost
______ perceived perceptions lack of opportunity access to coaching
______ attitudes of those offering activity access to equipment or facilities lack of others to participate (guide)
______ lack of others to participate with lack of time lack of adequate programs
______ lack of confidence in self other

Presently, as an elite athlete, what barriers do you face? Please check all that apply.

______ transportation availability cost
______ perceived perceptions lack of opportunity access to coaching
______ attitudes of those offering activity access to equipment or facilities lack of others to participate (guide)
______ lack of others to participate with lack of time lack of adequate programs
______ lack of confidence in self other

III. People who influenced your sport interests.
The following questions relate to other people who may have had some influence on your involvement in sports. Please answer each question for every person at each of the three points in time.
1. How involved are (were) the following as active participants in sports? (Use the appropriate number for each person at each point in your life—presently or college years, adolescence or high school years, childhood or elementary school years).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Older Brothers</th>
<th>Older Sisters</th>
<th>Younger Brothers</th>
<th>Younger Sisters</th>
<th>Male Friends</th>
<th>Female Friends</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presently</td>
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<td>Adolescence</td>
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<td>Childhood</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 = not available</td>
<td>1 = never</td>
<td>2 = once or twice per year</td>
<td>3 = once or twice per month</td>
<td>4 = once or twice per week</td>
<td>5 = daily</td>
<td>3 = once or twice per month</td>
<td>4 = once or twice per week</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. To what degree do (did) the following encourage you to participate in sports? (use the appropriate number for each person at each stage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Older Brothers</th>
<th>Older Sisters</th>
<th>Younger Brothers</th>
<th>Younger Sisters</th>
<th>Male Friends</th>
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<td>Presently</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0 = doesn't apply</td>
<td>1 = never</td>
<td>2 = not much</td>
<td>3 = occasionally</td>
<td>4 = frequently</td>
<td>5 = at every opportunity</td>
<td>3 = occasionally</td>
<td>4 = frequently</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. To what extent do (did) any of the following discourage you from participating in sports? (use the appropriate number for each person at each point in time)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Father</th>
<th>Mother</th>
<th>Older Brothers</th>
<th>Older Sisters</th>
<th>Younger Brothers</th>
<th>Younger Sisters</th>
<th>Male Friends</th>
<th>Female Friends</th>
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<td></td>
<td>0 = doesn't apply</td>
<td>1 = never</td>
<td>2 = not much</td>
<td>3 = occasionally</td>
<td>4 = frequently</td>
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4. How important is it to the following people that you be good in sports?

   0 = doesn’t apply       3 = somewhat
   1 = not at all          4 = a lot
   2 = not much           5 = very much

Father    Mother    Older Brothers    Older Sisters    Younger Brothers    Younger Sisters
Presently Adolescence
Childhood

male friends    female friends    PE teachers    Other teachers    Coaches    Yourself

Presently Adolescence
Childhood

5. Overall, who was/is your biggest supporter of your goal to participate in sports, and how?


IV. Conclusion

Please add any comments, suggestions or further responses. Before we finish, do you have any questions for me?

I appreciate your help in my project and would like to ask that you not discuss the questions with anyone else you know who may be participating in this interview.
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APPENDIX E

Individual Athlete Responses
1. What type of physical education program did you participate in during school?

**Goalball – male – 5**
1. (#4) inclusive physical education program
2. (#7) inclusive physical education program
3. (#8) went to inclusive school, but didn’t have any physical education
4. (#12) inclusive physical education program
5. (#13) inclusive physical education program

**Goalball – female – 6**
1. (#10) inclusive physical education program
2. (#11) inclusive physical education program
3. (#16) inclusive physical education program up to 10th grade; 11-12th grade segregated school f/t blind
4. (#19) inclusive physical education program
5. (#20) inclusive physical education program
6. (#22) inclusive physical education program
7. (#31) inclusive physical education program

**Track and Field – male – 14**
1. (#1) 4th grade inclusive physical education program; 5-12th grade school f/t blind
1. (#2) inclusive physical education program
2. (#3) inclusive physical education program
3. (#6) inclusive physical education program
4. (#9) inclusive physical education program
5. (#14) inclusive physical education program
6. (#15) inclusive physical education program
7. (#17) inclusive physical education program
9. (#18) inclusive physical education program
10. (#24) inclusive physical education program
11. (#26) segregated school for the blind
12. (#27) inclusive physical education program
13. (#29) inclusive physical education program to 8\textsuperscript{th} grade; 9-12\textsuperscript{th} grade segregated school f/t blind

14. (#30) inclusive physical education program

\textit{Track and Field – female – 4}

1. (#5) inclusive physical education

2. (#21) inclusive physical education

3. (#23) K-3 inclusive physical education; 3-8\textsuperscript{th} grade segregated school f/t blind; 9-12\textsuperscript{th} grade mainstreamed

4. (#25) segregated school f/t blind until 9\textsuperscript{th} grade; 10-12\textsuperscript{th} grade public school with adapted physical education

\textit{Weight Lifting – male – 1}

1. (#28) inclusive physical education

\section*{2. How do you define sport?}

\textit{Goalball – male – 5}

1. (#4) competition, to be active

2. (#7) any competitive event

3. (#8) activity to give self awareness of surroundings, team awareness and self-confidence

4. (#12) competition between 2 or more people testing physical abilities and skills

5. (#13) something one must train for and be able to compete against others

\textit{Goalball – female – 7}

1. (#10) somewhere you can compete against yourself and try to do your best and get better and better; must have discipline and determination; sport is challenging

2. (#11) participation in physical activity; can be team or individual

3. (#16) physical activity and ability

4. (#19) something that takes extensive physical activity and mental focus

5. (#20) opportunity to release competitive spirit; opportunity to interact and work together towards measurable goal
6. (#22) physical activity one participates in
7. (#31) an outlet; career at the elite level

Track and Field – male – 14
1. (#1) achieving something; physically competing against someone else
2. (#2) way of life; teaches you everything: cooperation, dedication, discipline
3. (#3) physical activity for recreation and/or competition
4. (#6) any type of physical activity
5. (#9) competition
6. (#14) competition between individuals; ability is measured by effort; physically grueling; must work hard to be at the top level
7. (#15) sport is very important for everyone to stay healthy; socialize with others
8. (#17) activity to test one’s physical prowess, coordination, flexibility, explosiveness, intensity and ability to withstand stress under competitive conditions and chemistry
9. (#18) competitiveness, extracurricular activity that is fun
10. (#24) recreational sports are for fun; professional, work towards goal
11. (#26) individual for everybody; from recreation to active and involved and participating individual or team helps sense of well being
12. (#27) leadership, competition, something that challenges you at higher levels
13. (#29) competitive activity good for the mind, body and soul
14. (#30) some form of game that has rules

Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) any physical activity where you keep score
2. (#21) any physical activity
3. (#23) event for athletes; put in time, participate in event, have fun; do your best
4. (#25) outlet for competition; social activity with an emphasis on competition

Weight Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) good, fun competition
3. How do you define athlete?

**Goalball – male – 5**

1. (#4) someone who competes and tries their best
2. (#7) a competitive person
3. (#8) one who wants to strives to be best, trains, and is dedicated to the end
4. (#12) someone skilled in a sport or many sports
5. (#13) someone who loves to compete and work hard; loves his/her sport or game

**Goalball – female – 7**

1. (#10) someone who is engaged and determined; must make choices, I train very hard and give up my weekends to do so; must sacrifice time to sport
2. (#11) someone who competes in sport other than recreation
3. (#16) someone who is good at a sport
4. (#19) someone who would participate on a regular basis and do the necessary training for the sport
5. (#20) someone who enjoys sport and competing; enjoys thrill of competition
6. (#22) someone who participates in a physical activity
7. (#31) someone who goes out and puts forth an effort

**Track and Field – male – 14**

1. (#1) someone who competes in sport; don’t have to be elite
2. (#2) someone that gives the best of their ability; gives their all
3. (#3) someone who tries their best; pushes themselves
4. (#6) person who participates regularly in sport
5. (#9) better than everyone else
6. (#14) someone who is serious about sport; compete, train, workout, racing important, wants to be the best; not just social; find your limits and push past them
7. (#15) people who are into sport and good at it; person who others up to
8. (#17) person who participates in sports but is a student of and trains with total commitment to self improvement and goals to greater
9. (#18) anybody that is active and competes
10. (#24) anyone that would go through mental and physical training to achieve a goal
11. (#26) person who competes in the sport
12. (#27) someone who displays leadership, dedication, “the sky is the limit”
13. (#29) dedicated, hard working, intense with everything they do
14. (#30) someone who is trying to achieve a lot of their sport

Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) individual who is working to improve self for sport
2. (#21) someone who participates in sport
3. (#23) hard working person, strive for goal; ability to do well; improve times and form
4. (#25) not answered

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) someone who doesn’t worry about winning or losing but always tries their best

4. Do you consider yourself to be an elite athlete? Why or why not?

Goatball – male – 5
1. (#4) yes, because of my hard work and training I put in
2. (#7) yes, training I do; what I can bring to the game
3. (#8) “I have to made US team here”; train very hard
4. (#12) yes, (honor to be on US team) and no because I see athletes sighted athletes who train everyday and work their whole lives to be on Olympic team and barely make the cut; I’ve only played for 2 years and haven’t trained as much and am on team
5. (#13) no, because I’m only good at one thing, if you are elite you should be able to compete in anything

Goatball – female – 7
1. (#10) yes, I sacrifice and do what it takes to be best
2. (11) yes, because I train my butt off, must have high work ethic, especially to be on the national team
3. (16) I suppose so; I have been classified as an elite athlete and have been to many international competitions and world games
4. (19) yes, because I have competed at Paralympic level; training is physical and mental they work together; all the experience I’ve gained in international tournaments and other competitions
5. (20) yes, because I’m very goal-oriented and driven
6. (22) yes, because I’ve advanced in the ranks; have risen to the Paralympic level
7. (31) yes, always been competitive and challenge myself to improve

Track and Field – male – 14

1. (1) yes, because I compete against other elite athletes in the world
2. (2) yes, because I know how hard I work, can’t take off time, can’t relax, must keep at it, proved it in world championships
3. (3) yes, because of the work I put into training; have been to many international competitions and have many records; all of my accomplishments
4. (6) yes, training 4x/wk, have set national junior records and competed in international competitions
5. (9) no, not in the Olympics
6. (14) yes, because when I’m healthy not many people as fast as me; I take racing seriously; I’m obsessed with the sport and care about it as much as any other elite athlete (able-bodied Olympians); don’t see myself as one now because I’m not healthy and in the best shape
7. (15) yes, because I have good skills and train for many competitions
8. (17) currently no, but was in the past and have competed in 26 international competitions; I believe in sport and want to pass on what I have learned and gained
9. (18) yes, have been in many international competitions
10. (24) yes, because of all the time and energy I’ve put in to reach my goals
11. (#26) for my sport I would be considered an elite athlete; compared to sighted
I’m an aspiring athlete
12. (#27) yes, because I’、“m a leader, love to take things to a higher level; love the
competitive aspect of sports, always challenging myself to do better
13. (#29) yes, in the past by my hard work, winning medals, achieving goals
14. (#30) yes, because I can hit elite standards; my attitude towards what I am
doing

Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) yes, because I've been called it; I’m extremely dedicated and takes it to
the next level; this is my career
2. (#21) no, I just started competing at the international level
3. (#23) yes, takes a lot of hard work; I like to improve my times and meet
standards; I work very hard
4. (#25) not yet, this is my first international competition; with the right training
I could be

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) yes, because I work hard at what I do and I have been to many world
championships and many other events; power lifting is not yet a
Paralympic event, but we are trying to make it one

5. When did you begin participating in blind sport?

Goalball – male – 5
1. (#4) 10 years old, 1989
2. (#7) 25 years old, 1996
3. (#8) 36 years old, 1988
4. (#12) 14 years old, 1998
5. (#13) 12 years old, 1991

Goalball – female – 7
1. (#10) not answered
2. (#11) 19 years old, 1989
3. (#16) 16 years old, 1997
4. (#19) 9 years old, 1983
5. (#20) 8 years old, 1987
6. (#22) 7 years old, 1986
7. (#31) 14 years old; 1989

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<td>2. (#21) 34 years old, 1999</td>
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<td>3. (#23) 11 years old, 1992</td>
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<td>4. (#25) 12 years old, 1986; 21 years old, 1995 join USABA team</td>
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6. How did you find out about blind sport?

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2. (#7) moved from small town to city and enrolled in a blind academic program where I met 2 other blind people who told me about goalball
3. (#8) PABA
4. (#12) discovered my vision problem when I was 13; my step mom did some research and found out about this sports camp for the visually impaired in Michigan; made the Jr. National team and have been competing ever since
5. (#13) VI teacher, O&M teacher told me about Michigan youth camp for VI

**Goalball - female - 7**

1. (#10) rehabilitation program
2. (#11) met a blind man who suggested goalball
3. (#16) summer before Junior year at a camp via goalball coach
4. (#19) have always been athletic; vision teacher who came to school taught goalball
5. (#20) referred by Canadian Institute for the Blind to organization for able-bodied athletes who were having an integrated demonstration. I went and a woman there introduced me to goalball and I fell in love with it
6. (#22) blind friend
7. (#31) coach called me and asked me to try goalball

**Track and Field - male - 14**

1. (#1) went to FSDB, head goalball coach got students involved in physical education
2. (#2) always competed in able bodied sport; was 16 when mom saw pamphlet; CBSA coaches recruited me
3. (#3) rehabilitation
4. (#6) resource teacher
5. (#9) coach, teacher of SCSB
6. (#14) ran in high school w/ coach and met Mark Lucas who introduced him to USABA
7. (#15) parents always encouraged me to play sports, coach told me about blind sports
8. (#17) someone I worked with told me about USABA
9. (#18) graduated high school and found out from friend, web site
10. (#24) special needs teacher in my town had a friend in the provincial sports organization, she contacted them and told them about me
11. (#26) started running with friend and ran cross country races; high school programs after school; I staff person, ran with club in high school with sighted
12. (#27) woman that worked for the Guild for the Blind recognized my talents and the guild flew me to Colorado Springs where I tried out for USABA track team
13. (#29) school for the blind
14. (#30) people from support meetings

Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) summer sports festival for the visually impaired; qualified for nationals where I met my current coach
2. (#21) gave a speech and used USABA as a reference
3. (#23) school for the deaf blind
4. (#25) people at college played goal ball; only girl that wanted to play competitively, played with the men

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) teacher told me about blind sports club in town I live

7. Why do you compete in sport?

Goalball – male – 5
1. (#4) I like the rush of competition and winning
2. (#7) love for the game and competing
3. (#8) exercise, activity, love of game
4. (#12) like staying healthy and fit, competition, and camaraderie
5. (#13) because I love goal ball, it’s not a human interest it’s a sport; never close to brothers and my team are my brothers, we understand each other and they are supportive; camaraderie; great socialization
Goalball – female – 7

1. (#10) helps me have a normal life; before I lost my sight I never knew any blind people or anything like that; give self-esteem and meet people that help me; also helped teach English; allows me to travel; “sport brought me everything”, especially when I became blind

2. (#11) I'm a goal oriented person and need something to strive for; I like to push myself

3. (#16) fun

4. (#19) I like the competition part, being competitive. I like to be in shape; always improving in my sport. I like to see my results, in sports you see your improvements and accomplishments

5. (#20) competition, physical fitness, rewarding

6. (#22) fun; meet new people; role model to others; socialization

7. (#31) love sports, it’s a part of my life and is a release

Track and Field – male – 14

1. (#1) competition; training and challenging my body; travel to meet new people; fun

2. (#2) always been a way of life in my family; saw my brother win in track and I wanted to show that I could do that too; want to be active and not sedentary; track & field keeps me strong and fit; love competition; prove to everyone I can do it

3. (#3) started out as rehab; now it’s a way back to normalcy for my life; helped me accept visual impairment; stay in shape; fun

4. (#6) always into sports, always been competitive

5. (#9) to compete and win

6. (#14) saw sports on TV as a child and fell in love with baseball; love the emotions of sports; wanted to play baseball; wanted to win and be popular; wanted to be picked first on the team; want to test my limits and find out how good I can be; very competitive

7. (#15) I really love it, running and being competitive
8. (#17) test limits; love the sport
9. (#18) it’s fun, enjoy the competition
10. (#24) I’m goal oriented, always trying to improve, trying to achieve excellence; it’s fun; get to travel enjoy travelling and friends
11. (#26) sense of well-being, felling fit; being involved; competitions provide outlet for competitive side
12. (#27) love sports; it’s my life; I’m a competitor
13. (#29) I love it; running has always been in my family; enjoy the sports
14. (#30) enjoyment; love to win; attitude, competition breeds excellence

Track and Field - female - 4
1. (#5) I like to test myself and see how far I can get; good at track and field; helps me earn respect from sighted peers; I’m very competitive
2. (#21) keeps me young; gives me more energy
3. (#23) I love sports, it’s fun, I get to go places and travel, meet different people; love getting involved
4. (#25) love competition; good social opportunity to meet new people; be with friends; stay in shape

Power Lifting - male - 1
1. (#28) fun; travel; to meet new people; stay healthy and fit

8. On how many competitive blind sport teams are you currently playing on/have played on? What are/were they?

Goalball - male - 5
1. (#4) 2; USABA goalball team, Penn Tornado Goalball team
2. (#7) 2; Provincial Nova Scotia Goalball team, Canadian National Goalball team
3. (#8) 1; USABA goalball team
4. (#12) 2; local and USABA goalball teams
5. (#13) 1; goalball team

Goalball - female - 7
1. (#10) 2; provincial goalball team and Canadian Goalball teams
2. (#11) 3; provincial and National Goalball teams and visually impaired hockey team
3. (#16) 2; swimming and goalball
4. (#19) 2; provincial and National team
5. (#20) 2; goalball and track
6. (#22) 2; USABA goalball team, USABA track team
7. (#31) 1; goalball

**Track and Field – male – 14**

1. (#1) 2; goalball and track and field
2. (#2) 1; track & field
3. (#3) 1; track & field
4. (#6) 2; track & field and tandem cycling
5. (#9) 3; USABA track team; high school track team; SCSDB track team
6. (#14) 1; track
7. (#15) 1; track
8. (#17) 2; track, goalball (wanted to put all time towards track)
9. (#18) 1; track
10. (#24) 2; Canadian National team; provincial team
11. (#26) 1; CBSA track and field
12. (#27) 1; USABA track team
13. (#29) 2; USABA track team, USABA goalball team
14. (#30) 1; track team

**Track and Field – female – 4**

1. (#5) 2; Canadian Paralympic Team, Canadian Blind Team
2. (#21) 1; USABA
3. (#23) 2; USABA track team, goalball
4. (#25) 2; USABA track team, local goalball team

**Power Lifting – male – 1**

1. (#28) 1; provincial team
9. How much time is spent on the sport you currently compete in?

**Goalball – male – 5**

1. (#4) 21 hrs/week
2. (#7) 12-15 hrs/week
3. (#8) 18-21 hrs/week
4. (#12) 8-10 hrs/week
5. (#13) 8-12 hrs/week

**Goalball – female – 7**

1. (#10) 10 hrs/week
2. (#11) 10-14 hrs/week
3. (#16) 18-21 hrs/week
4. (#19) 20 hrs/week
5. (#20) 17-20 hrs/week
6. (#22) 10-12 hrs/week
7. (#31) 10-12 hrs/week

**Track and Field – male – 14**

1. (#1) track: 15-18 hrs/week goalball: 4-6 hrs/week
2. (#2) 13-17 hrs/week
3. (#3) incomplete interview
4. (#6) 12-14 hrs/week
5. (#9) 25-30 hrs/week
6. (#14) 12-13 hrs/week
7. (#15) 20 hrs/week
8. (#17) 7 hrs/week
9. (#18) 10-12 hrs/week
10. (#24) 20-24 hrs/week
11. (#26) 10-12 hrs/week
12. (#27) 9 hrs/week
13. (#29) goalball: 15 hrs/week track & field: 11 hrs/week
14. (#30) 20-30 hrs/week
Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) 24-30 hrs/week
2. (#21) 15-19 hrs/week
3. (#23) 4 hrs/week
4. (#25) track: 5-7 hrs/week goalball: 7 hrs/week

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) 10-12 hrs/week

10. On how many competitive sighted sport teams are you currently on/have played on? What are/were they?

Goalball – male – 5
1. (#4) 3; soccer, football (not accepted), basketball (high school)
2. (#7) 2; basketball, soccer (in high school)
3. (#8) 1; crew (in college)
4. (#12) 1; track and field
5. (#13) 1; wrestling in high school

Goalball – female – 7
1. (#10) 0
2. (#11) 0
3. (#16) 0
4. (#19) 0, used to, but not enough time anymore
5. (#20) basketball (in 6th grade)
6. (#22) 1; track and field (in high school)
7. (#31) 2; judo and basketball (in high school)

Track and Field – male – 14
1. (#1) 0
2. (#2) 6 different track and field teams; running clubs
3. (#3) 0
4. (#6) 1; wrestling
5. (#9) 3; football, track, cross country
6. (#14) 1; track
7. (#15) 2; track and swimming
8. (#17) 1; track "US Striders"
9. (#18) 2; high school and college track teams
10. (#24) 0, but compete in sighted competitions
11. (#26) 2; college and home club
12. (#27) 0
13. (#29) 0
14. (#30) 0

Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) 3; provincial team, Canadian Juniors Team, Canadian Team
2. (#21) 3; local team, Masters Team, state team
3. (#23) 1; high school track team
4. (#25) 0

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) wrestling, in high school

11. If you don’t participate on sighted sport teams what is the biggest reason why?

Goalball – male – 5
1. (#4) N/A
2. (#7) can’t see well enough anymore
3. (#8) there are no sighted sports I can play on
4. (#12) N/A
5. (#13) sighted people aren’t allowed to compete in my sport

Goalball – female – 7
1. (#10) no team sports available for people with visual impairments
2. (#11) can’t see well enough
3. (#16) more competition in sighted sports; some sports not adaptable to visually impaired
4. (#19) not enough time
5. (#20) no other team sports adapted to visually impaired, except hockey
6. (#22) currently no b/c no time to find organizations or clubs
7. (#31) can’t see well enough to be on sighted teams

Track and Field – male – 14
1. (#1) opportunity not there; no teams I want
2. (#2) N/A
3. (#3) prefer blind teams
4. (#6) N/A
5. (#9) N/A
6. (#14) N/A
7. (#15) N/A
8. (#17) N/A
9. (#18) N/A
10. (#24) blind sport is more in my grasp; #1 position more attainable
11. (#26) N/A
12. (#27) 0; I’m totally blind
13. (#29) choose not to be
14. (#30) don’t compete on teams, but compete against them

Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) N/A
2. (#21) N/A
3. (#23) N/A
4. (#25) never thought about competing with high school team since I was blind, now I know I can and I do, but at the time never pressed the issue; wish I had

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) not many sighted sport to do; tried some but they prefer sighted athletes; easier to compete with blind

12. In your opinion how do blind sport teams differ from sighted sport teams?

Goalball – male – 5
1. (#4) no differences
2. (#7) they aren’t, all play as a team and everyone has a part
3. (#8) do not differ – each team has similar goals; all there for the same reason
4. (#12) don’t differ – blind teams have adaptations
5. (#13) not answered

**Goalball – female – 6**

1. (#10) numbers; blind sport coaches take all and try to make them good; more opportunity in blind sport; even if player doesn’t practice as much as they should or isn’t good still take because team needs numbers; not as much opportunity to compete; must travel more with blind sport
2. (#11) not many blind sport teams; standards are different with different perspectives, still have poor blind people attitude or how nice blind people can do something; doesn’t get the attention deserved
3. (#16) more adapted to disability
4. (#19) don’t see a big difference; must adapt for B1 athletes, can’t forget them
5. (#20) not as much drive to train for goalball (but that’s beginning to change), nobody knows what it is; don’t get as much politics, probably due to small numbers
6. (#22) blind athletes don’t take things for granted; always trying to prove self to others
7. (#31) how athletes are taught and trained; expectations – blind sports aren’t seen as equal to sighted sports and they should be

**Track and Field – male – 14**

1. (#1) not answered
2. (#2) sighted teams always different people on team, depends on who makes the cut, often times not the same group; blind sport you know all members and are a lot closer, have in common; more of a bond in blind sports
3. (#3) blind teams more cohesive and close as team members
4. (#6) they don’t much; smaller numbers in blind sports; both are competitive and serious; blind aren’t disadvantaged in any way

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5. (#9) how athletes handle the situation
6. (#14) in high school I was really a part of the team; in college it was a chore
to run with job; in the USABA everyone helps each other; everyone
deals with same things, we all relate well to one another; “relationships
transcend sport”
7. (#15) sighted teams have advantages over blind sport teams or teams with
limited vision (in track meets)
8. (#17) at the elite level sighted athletes are sponsored more easily
9. (#18) how people act; some people don’t need help getting around; blind
people need more help and/or verbal command
10. (#24) attitude in blind sports better; more geared to fair play; ability of
athletes differs; sighted sport has more depth in history; blind
sport/disability not been around as long as athletes with disabilities
11. (#26) easier to find guides in blind team; easier to get going; people unsure
how to guide on sighted teams; sighted more competitive and easier to
be competitive
12. (#27) sighted sport teams have organization and structure; blind headed in the
right direction but not up to par with sighted sports
13. (#29) funding; at the elite there is a big difference, USOC funds and sponsors
their athletes
14. (#30) there is no difference

Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) blind teams don’t get as much support; events not as organized; respect
towards blind sport not equal
2. (#21) blind teams are more conducive to blind athletes; more fair playing
field; everyone seen as equal; no one proving self or for pity
3. (#23) blind must use tethers, callers, guides; sighted do not
4. (#25) don’t know, don’t think they do

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) not a lot; both work very hard to achieve their goals; difference is
vision
13. How many non-competitive sport activities do you participate in?
What are they?

**Goalball - male - 5**
1. (#4) 0
2. (#7) 4; bowling, biking, weight lifting, swimming
3. (#8) 2; karate and cycling
4. (#12) 5; swimming, rollerblade, cycling, trampoline, weight lifting
5. (#13) 1; bowling

**Goalball - female - 7**
1. (#10) 0
2. (#11) 1; swimming
3. (#16) 1; swimming
4. (#19) 0
5. (#20) 4; mountain biking, hiking, canoeing, rock climbing
6. (#22) 1; basketball
7. (#31) 3; rock climbing, sky diving, skiing

**Track and Field - male - 14**
1. (#1) 2; basketball, football
2. (#2) 1; basketball
3. (#3) 1; weight lifting
4. (#6) 3; skiing, swimming, tandem cycling
5. (#9) not answered
6. (#14) beep baseball
7. (#15) 0
8. (#17) 0, but train by doing calisthenics
9. (#18) 0
10. (#24) 2; cycling, volleyball
11. (#26) 0
12. (#27) 2; bowling, golf
13. (#29) 3; basketball, rollerblading, hockey
14. (#30) 0
Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5)  4; cycling, fishing, hiking, running
2. (#21) 3; cycle, rollerblade, scooter
3. (#23)  0
4. (#25)  none; spend most of my time training

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28)  1; bowling

14. Of your total sport participation how time would you estimate you participate in each of the following: team sports and individual sports?

Goalball – male – 5
1. (#4)  team sports – all of my participation
2. (#7)  team sports – 50%  individual sports – 50%
3. (#8)  team sports – 75%  individual sports – 25%
4. (#12)  team sports – 50%  individual sports – 50%
5. (#13)  team sports – all of my participation

Goalball – female – 7
1. (#10)  team sports – all of my participation
2. (#11)  team sports – all of my participation
3. (#16)  team sports – 75%  individual sports – 25%
4. (#19)  team sports – all of my participation
5. (#20)  team sports – 75%  individual sports – 25%
6. (#22)  team sports – 30%  individual sports – 70%
7. (#31)  team sports – 90%  individual sports – 10%

Track and Field – male – 14
1. (#1)  team sports – 25%  individual sports – 75%
2. (#2)  individual sports – all of my participation
3. (#3)  individual sports – all of my participation
4. (#6)  team sports – 5%  individual sports – 95%
5. (#9)  team sports – 50%  individual sports – 50%
6. (#14) individual sports – all of my participation
7. (#15) individual sports – all of my participation
8. (#17) prior to losing sight did all team sports now all my participation is towards individual sports
9. (#18) individual sports – all of my participation
10. (#24) individual sports – all of my participation
11. (#26) individual sports – all of my participation
12. (#27) individual sports – all of my participation
13. (#29) team sports – 25% individual sports – 75%
14. (#30) individual sports – all of my participation

Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) individual sports – all of my participation
2. (#21) individual sports – all of my participation
3. (#23) individual sports – 75% team sports – 25%
4. (#25) individual sports – all of my participation; currently don’t have a goalball team so my training for that is on my own

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) individual sports – all of my participation

15. On the average, how many total hours a day do you spend playing or practicing in all sports?

Goalball – male – 5
1. (#4) Mon-Fri: 12 hours total; Sat-Sun: 9 hours total
2. (#7) Mon-Fri: 2-3 hours/day; Sat-Sun: 1 hour or less/day
3. (#8) Mon-Fri: 3 or more hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 3 or more hrs/day
4. (#12) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
5. (#13) Mon-Fri: 2 hours/day; Sat: 2 hrs/day

Goalball – female – 7
1. (#10) Mon-Fri: 1.5 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
2. (#11) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 3 or more hrs/day
3. (#16) Mon-Fri: 3 or more hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 3 or more hrs/day
4. (#19) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
5. (#20) Mon-Fri: 3 or more hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 3 or more hrs/day
6. (#22) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 1 hr/day
7. (#31) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day

Track and Field – male – 14

1. (#1) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
2. (#2) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
3. (#3) Mon-Fri: 3 or more hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
4. (#6) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
5. (#9) Mon-Fri: 3 or more hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 3 or more hrs/day
6. (#14) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
7. (#15) Mon-Fri: 3 or more hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
8. (#17) Mon-Fri: 1 hr/day; Sat-Sun: 1 hr/day (retiring from competing)
9. (#18) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 1 hr/day
10. (#24) Mon-Fri: 2-3 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 3 hrs/day
11. (#26) Mon-Fri: 1 hr/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hr/day
12. (#27) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: don’t train
13. (#29) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
14. (#30) Mon-Fri: 3 or more hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 3 or more hrs/day

Track and Field – female – 4

1. (#5) Mon-Fri: 3 or more hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 3 or more hrs/day
2. (#21) Mon-Fri: 3 or more hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day (M, W running; T, TH weights)
3. (#23) Mon-Fri: 1 hr/day; Sat-Sun: 1 hr/day
4. (#25) Mon-Fri: 1 hr/day; Sat-Sun: 1 hr/day

Power Lifting – male – 1

1. (#28) Mon-Fri: 2 hrs/day; Sat-Sun: 2 hrs/day
16. Given the opportunity how often would you like to participate in sports?

**Goalball – male – 5**
1. (#4) about the same
2. (#7) more than now
3. (#8) more than now
4. (#12) more than now
5. (#13) more than now

**Goalball – female – 7**
1. (#10) about the same
2. (#11) more than now
3. (#16) about the same
4. (#19) about the same
5. (#20) about the same
6. (#22) more than now
7. (#31) more than now

**Track and Field – male – 14**
1. (#1) about the same
2. (#2) more than now
3. (#3) about the same
4. (#6) more than now
5. (#9) about the same
6. (#14) more than now
7. (#15) about the same
8. (#17) more than now
9. (#18) about the same
10. (#24) less than now
11. (#26) about the same
12. (#27) less than now
13. (#29) more than now
14. (#30) more than now
17. Compared to your high school interest and participation in sports would you say that your present participation level has:

**Goalball – male – 5**
1. (#4) increased significantly
2. (#7) increased significantly
3. (#8) increased significantly; no sports in high school
4. (#12) not changed (still in high school)
5. (#13) decreased slightly (wrestled in high school)

**Goalball – female – 7**
1. (#10) increased significantly
2. (#11) increased significantly
3. (#16) decreased slightly
4. (#19) increased significantly
5. (#20) increased significantly
6. (#22) increased slightly
7. (#31) increased slightly

**Track and Field – female – 4**
1. (#5) about the same
2. (#21) more than now
3. (#23) more than now
4. (#25) more than now

**Power Lifting – male – 1**
1. (#28) more than now

**Track and Field – male – 14**
1. (#1) decreased slightly (played 5 sports in high school)
2. (#2) increased slightly
3. (#3) decreased slightly
4. (#6) still in high school; increased since childhood
5. (#9) still in high school
6. (#14) increased slightly
7. (#15) increased significantly
8. (#17) decreased significantly
9. (#18) not changed
10. (#24) increased slightly
11. (#26) increased significantly
12. (#27) decreased slightly
13. (#29) increased slightly
14. (#30) increased significantly; especially amount of training

Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) increased significantly; especially intensity
2. (#21) decreased slightly
3. (#23) not changed – still in high school
4. (#25) increased slightly

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) not changed

18. Have you learned or participated in any new sports since high school? If yes, how many and what were they?

Goalball – male – 5
1. (#4) 2: beep baseball and blind soccer
2. (#7) 2: goalball and bowling
3. (#8) 7; crew (college), bowling, beep baseball, goalball, karate, darts, weight training, cycling
4. (#12) N/A
5. (#13) no

Goalball – female – 7
1. (#10) 5; cross country ski, rock climbing, goalball, tandem biking, kayaking
2. (#11) 1; goalball
3. (#16) no
4. (#19) 0
5. (#20) 0
6. (#22) 0
7. (#31) 1; judo

**Track and Field – male – 14**

1. (#1) 0
2. (#2) 1; goalball
3. (#3) interview not finished
4. (#6) n/a still in high school
5. (#9) still in high school; learned goalball at SCSDB
6. (#14) 1; beep baseball
7. (#15) 1; curling
8. (#17) 4; shot put, discus, goalball, powerlifting
9. (#18) 0
10. (#24) 1; goalball
11. (#26) 0
12. (#27) 1; football
13. (#29) 2; goalball, hockey
14. (#30) 1; power lifting

**Track and Field – female – 4**

1. (#5) 2; fishing, cycling
2. (#21) 1; high jump
3. (#23) still in high school
4. (#25) 1; goalball

**Power Lifting – male – 1**

1. (#28) 0

19. *What organizations/agents provide opportunities for athletes with visual impairments to learn new skills?*

**Goalball – male – 5**

1. (#4) blind athletes; coaches
2. (#7) public schools
3. (#8) coaches
4. (#12) blind sport organizations
5. (#13) teachers; parents; self; USABA

**Goalball – female – 7**
1. (#10) other blind athletes
2. (#11) blind sport organizations
3. (#16) coaches
4. (#19) public schools, with more integration they are the ones who see the kids
5. (#20) blind sport organizations
6. (#22) coaches
7. (#31) coaches; other athletes

**Track & Field – male – 14**
1. (#1) self
2. (#2) teammates
3. (#3) interview not finished
4. (#6) coaches; teachers
5. (#9) coaches; self
6. (#14) residential schools; USABA
7. (#15) other athletes
8. (#17) coaches
9. (#18) coaches; other athletes
10. (#24) coaches; blind sport organizations
11. (#26) residential school
12. (#27) athletes themselves; meet people with skills to learn from
13. (#29) USABA
14. (#30) USABA; self

**Track & Field – female – 4**
1. (#5) blind sport organization; other athletes; coaches
2. (#21) blind sport organization
3. (#23) organizations for the blind
4. (#25) USABA

**Power Lifting – male – 1**
1. (#28) other blind athletes and coaches
20. Overall, who was/is your biggest supporter of your goal to participate in sports and how?

**Goalball – male – 5**
1. (#4) my wife and goalball coach in Pennsylvania
2. (#7) younger children are inspirational to me; encourage me to be a good role model
3. (#8) my wife, lets me do everything I want
4. (#12) step mom, really did a lot of work to find information on blind sport
5. (#13) as a kid my VI and O&M teachers, in Jr. High my dad, currently my mom

**Goalball – female – 7**
1. (#10) me, always push myself to do better; family, friends and coaches all have been supportive and encouraging
2. (#11) coaches, because all very supportive, they see the potential and want to help you reach your goals
3. (#16) mom and older sister, helped with transportation and all kinds of support
4. (#19) myself, as I see myself improve I want to do even better and keep pushing myself; all of my family members, all encourage me and want me to do my best, parents support financially
5. (#20) coach – very dedicated to improving me and the sport
6. (#22) mom was my support system: counselor, friend, coach
7. (#31) entire family – dad is coach of USABA team, mom always comes to events and sisters come when they can but always inquire about how things are going

**Track and Field – male – 14**
1. (#1) career/industrial arts teacher: been there since I got involved; surrogate father
2. (#2) oldest brother; mentor; watched him and that’s how I knew I could do it
3. (#3) interview not finished
4. (#6) parents; always helping and encouraging me to do the best
5. (#9) coaches; always there
6. (#14) parents: helped with transportation and very supportive; friend: helped train with me and always cared
7. (#15) family; really support me because they want to see me be successful and they know I have good skill in sports
8. (#17) wife and family; always supporting my goals, wife comes to many events and supports that way too
9. (#18) mom, she helps me with everything I need, money to travel, she comes to events
10. (#24) mom; always encouraged me to try and pushed me to do my best
11. (#26) coaches: committed to helping me improve, always been there for me; guide runners
12. (#27) father & grandmother; they are my role models
13. (#29) mom & sister: both visually impaired and mom had to deal with a lot back in the 50's being black an issue; both encouraged me to train hard and always encouraged me; both pushed me to do my best in high school and at the residential school
14. (#30) mother: saw what happened when I lost my vision, knew my potential, always supportive

Track and Field – female – 4
1. (#5) coach: always there, problem solver, adapts things when needed, supportive, helps find sponsors
2. (#21) me; always push myself, don’t want to be “normal” in general
3. (#23) parents; always there for me since day one, always supportive
4. (#25) friends; very motivating

Power Lifting – male – 1
1. (#28) coaches; most supportive, positive and encouraging
21. Other comments

**Goalball – male – 5**

1. (#4) n/a
2. (#7) n/a
3. (#8) n/a
4. (#12) can be frustrating because funding hard to find, shouldn’t be that way
5. (#13) important we pay attention to perceptions of the game, more definition; more public service the better

**Goalball – female – 7**

1. (#10) sighted people thing goalball is easy and just a game; we need to change perceptions; it is a competitive sport; sport always comes 1st
2. (#11) no
3. (#16) none
4. (#19) increase confidence; when something is done well or an effort is make it needs to be recognized, especially for women
5. (#20) no
6. (#22) include more blind in able-bodied sports; increase awareness
7. (#31) no

**Track and Field – male – 14**

1. (#1) tough time in the US to compete; not enough numbers or publicity; no one knows who we are or what we are doing
2. (#2) negative comments about blind sport, “must not be hard”; in Canada poor support and effort to get blind sport recognized; no information in schools; needs to be more information
3. (#3) interview not finished
4. (#6) none
5. (#9) none
6. (#14) money not a barrier, don’t need equipment to run; other sports finances more of an issue for other sports
7. (#17) none
9. (#18) needs to be more media involved; too many people don’t know about disability sport – blind sport

10. (#24) need to increase public awareness/knowledge; lack of public programs for the blind; not enough competitors; need more financial assistance; not enough coaches or competitors

11. (#26) there is a place for segregation and integration

12. (#27) never say, “I can’t”; never say, “never”; your visual impairment isn’t a handicap or disability

13. (#29) needs to be a push for youth, coaches need to get the information out

14. (#30) blindness just means doing some things differently, but you can still do them

*Track and Field – female – 4*

1. (#5) blind athletes need more physical, hands on adaptations, teaching needs more time, blind get lost in the shuffle and sidelined; need more information out there; seems like information is sent to schools, but schools emphasize academics more and students never get it

2. (#21) don’t put blind people in a box; no 2 blind people are alike; don’t tell students they have limits, they’ll find them on their own like everyone else

3. (#23) none

4. (#25) not answered

*Power Lifting – male – 1*

1. (#28) biggest barrier is finding out about sports, people can’t do sports if they don’t know about them; major support comes from family members and coaches.
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