Toward a Conceptualization of Good Parenting in Female Youth Sport

by

Shannon Ruth Pynn

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Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation
University of Alberta

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to produce a conceptualization of good parenting in female youth sport. A two-phase approach was used. In phase one, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight coaches (3 females, 5 males, *M* age= 40.1 years, *SD* = 15.1 years) with at least five years of experience coaching female ice hockey (*n* = 2), volleyball (*n* = 2), basketball (*n* = 1), soccer (*n* = 1), lacrosse (*n* = 1), and softball (*n* = 1). Coach interviews focused on what they perceived good parenting to be in youth sport. Coaches were then asked to nominate parents they had dealt with in the past who were exemplars of good parenting. In phase two, individual semi-structured interviews were conducted with 10 exemplary parents (7 mothers, 3 fathers, *M* age= 48.5 years, *SD*= 4.0 years). Parents were asked a range of questions about their involvement in their daughters' sport, their general parenting style, and the specific parenting practices in which they engage. Data were analysed using Thorne's (2016) interpretive description methodology. The results were organized into three categories, guided by Knight and Holt's (2014) grounded theory of optimal parental involvement in youth tennis. The three main categories were labeled shared goals, principles of an understanding emotional climate, and enhancing practices surrounding competitions. Results revealed that good sport parents are attentive to their children's emotional needs and understand their children, themselves, and the sporting context. They understand what to do, and when and how to do it, within a complex sporting milieu. Implications that arose from these findings are discussed, including suggestions for future research in autonomy supportive parenting and emotional intelligence, as well as the development of sport parent education interventions and applied initiatives aimed at improving sport parenting practices.

Preface

This thesis is an original work by Shannon R. Pynn. The research project that was completed for this thesis received research ethics approval from the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board, Aspects of Good Parenting in Youth Sport, No. Pro00060910, December 14, 2016.

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"No one who achieves success does so without acknowledging the help of others. The wise and confident acknowledge this help with gratitude."

-Alfred North Whitehead, philosopher and mathematician

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Parents are more extensively involved in youth sport than in the past (Wheeler & Green, 2014). In fact, being highly involved in children's sport is likely a feature of 'good' parenting. It is normal – and perhaps expected – that parents show a great deal of interest in their children's sport participation, be the main source of emotional and tangible support, and do volunteer work for the sport clubs if needed (Stefansen, Smette, & Strandbu, 2016; Wolfenden & Holt, 2005). Parents are supporters, administrators, and in some cases, coaches, often fulfilling several of these roles simultaneously (Knight, Dorsch, Osai, Haderlie, & Sellars, 2016).

In fulfilling these various roles, parents can influence their children's experiences in sport in both positive and negative ways. For example, specific parental practices such as providing support, communicating effectively, and keeping sport in perspective have been shown to positively influence children's development in sport (Brustad, 1996; Gould, Tuffey, Udry, & Loehr, 1996; Lauer, Gould, Roman, & Pierce, 2010). On the other hand, parents who exert excessive pressure and overemphasize winning can have a negative influence on their children's sport participation. Such parenting practices have been associated with reduced levels of children's enjoyment and self-esteem and an increase in drop out from sport (Brustad, 1996; Gould et al., 1996; Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009).

Historically, a great deal of research has focused on the negative aspects of parental involvement in youth sport (see Holt & Knight, 2014). However, observational studies show that overtly negative parental involvement at competitions is quite rare

(Bowker et al. 2009; Holt, Tamminen, Black, Sehn, & Wall, 2008). It is likely that the majority of parents engage in behaviors that have a positive influence on their children's sport development (Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes, & Pennisi, 2006). Furthermore, parents spend an extensive amount of time researching and seeking information on how to better support their children in sport (Knight & Holt, 2013). While some parental education initiatives, such as codes of conduct, have been reported as having a limited impact on parental behaviors at competitions (Elliot & Drummond, 2015), there is evidence that evidence-based parent education programs can enhance parenting practices in youth sport (Dorsch, King, Dunn, Osai, & Tulane, 2016). Hence, developing a conceptualization of good parenting could not only make an important contribution to the literature, it may also provide guidance for parents and help inform new parent education programs (cf. Holt & Knight, 2014).

There is a growing body of literature looking at positive or preferred aspects of parenting in sport, including how parents support their children before, during, and after competitions (Knight, Neely, & Holt, 2011), effective types of parenting styles (Holt, Tamminen, Black, Mandigo, & Fox, 2009; Sapieja, Dunn, & Holt, 2011), 'optimal' ways of supporting the career development of talented young athletes (Knight & Holt, 2014), and sport parenting expertise (Harwood & Knight, 2015). However, these positive or preferred aspects of sport parenting can not necessarily be prescribed as 'good' sport parenting. As Harwood and Knight explained, the knowledge derived from these types of studies may "simply reflect the desirable expectations of 'average' parenting" (p. 33). As such, studies examining the components of 'good' sport parenting are required in order to advance sport parenting research (Harwood & Knight, 2015). The current study was

designed to address this gap in the literature by seeking to develop a conceptualization of good parenting in female youth sport.

More specifically, this study focused on how exemplary[1] sport parents support their daughters in sport. That is, exemplary parents of female athletes (along with coaches of female athletes) were purposefully sampled in order to develop a conceptualization of good parenting in female youth sport. Selecting exemplary parents is a type of 'extreme' case sampling (Patton, 2015). Extreme case sampling focuses on identifying "illuminative cases" from which researchers can "learn from those who are exemplars of good practice" (Patton, 2015, p. 234). In this study, the extreme cases were exemplary sport parents who were nominated (by coaches) as exemplars of good sport parenting.

The extreme case sampling approach addressed an important limitation in the youth sport parenting literature to date, because typically researchers have not intentionally sampled exemplary parents (e.g., Knight, Dorsch, et al., 2016; Lauer et al., 2010; Wheeler & Green, 2014). For instance, in Knight and Holt's (2014) study that produced a grounded theory of optimal parental involvement in youth tennis, the researchers sampled parents of county and national level tennis players in the United Kingdom, but there is no way to know if these participants did indeed parent their children in optimal ways. Whereas it might be assumed that parents whose children reach high levels of performance are good youth sport parents, and those who volunteer to participate in studies are confident in their parenting abilities, it is likely that parents in previous studies have varying levels of 'parenting expertise' (Harwood & Knight, 2015). One useful strategy for learning more about good parenting in youth sport is to sample

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[1] To be exemplary means to serve as a desirable model (Exemplary [Def.1], n.d.).

exemplary parents. The extreme case sampling approach used in the current study is reminiscent of sampling approaches used in some coaching studies that have involved recruiting award-winning coaches as exemplars of certain coaching practices (e.g., Camiré, Trudel, & Forneris, 2014; Gould, Collins, Lauer, & Chung, 2007; Pankow, 2017).

The decision to focus on the parenting of female athletes was made because parents may support males and females differently when it comes to sport. For example, it has been reported that female athletes perceive less parental pressure than male athletes (Amado et al., 2015). Yet, a study that examined family socialization, gender, and sport involvement found that parents reported providing their sons with more opportunities and encouragement towards sport than their daughters (Fredricks & Eccles, 2005). Furthermore, girls have lower sport participation rates compared to boys (Canadian Heritage, 2013) and sport participation during adolescence tends to decline more among females than males (Canadian Fitness & Lifestyle Research Institute [CFLRI], 2016). Hence, this study focused on the parenting of female youth athletes primarily because (a) they may receive different parenting than male youth athletes and (b) they may face more barriers to engaging and continuing in youth sport than males. Finally, it should be noted that historically males have been disproportionately sampled more frequently than females in the sport psychology literature (Conroy, Kaye, & Schantz, 2008).

Purpose and Research Questions

The overall purpose of this study was to produce a conceptualization of good parenting in female youth sport. Specifically, the following research question was addressed: How do exemplary youth sport parents support their daughters in sport? To

address this purpose and research question, youth sport coaches and parents of female athletes were purposefully sampled. A qualitative approach was used, informed by Thorne's (2016) interpretive description methodology. Results were framed using Knight and Holt's (2014) grounded theory of optimal parental involvement in youth tennis.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Theories Used to Study Parenting in Sport

In order to develop the background for this study, the following sections include some influential theories that have been used to study parenting in youth sport (along with some examples of relevant research). Theory can be used in a variety of ways in qualitative research. For example, Sandelowski (1993) highlighted that theory can be used to drive the inquiry process, rationalize a methodological approach, and provide a comparative context for the interpretation and representation of data. In the current study, one theory (Knight & Holt, 2014) was primarily used to frame the latter stages of the analysis. Nonetheless, several other theories depicting the influence of parents on their children in sport have historically been used in the literature. Therefore, it is necessary to briefly review some of the prominent theories that have been used to study parenting in sport.

Competence motivation theory. Harter's (1978, 1981, 1992) competence motivation theory posits that previous experiences, perceived control over the outcome, and feedback and reinforcement from socializing agents (e.g., parents, peers, coaches) influence children's perceptions of competence. These perceptions of competence can then influence children's affective outcomes and as such, their motivation to persist at an activity (Harter, 1992). Essentially, positive feedback and reinforcement from parents following successful mastery attempts can lead to increased perceptions of competence and control, positive affect, and intrinsic motivation. Alternatively, children's perceptions of disapproval or a lack of reinforcement from parents following mastery attempts can lead to lower perceptions of competence and control, negative affect, and lower intrinsic motivation (Harter, 1981).

Babkes and Weiss (1999) conducted a study using competence motivation theory in sport, in which they examined relationships between parents' behaviors and attitudes, athletes' perceptions of their parents' behaviors and attitudes, and athletes' perceived competence, enjoyment, and intrinsic motivation. They surveyed 227 youth soccer players (114 females, 113 males) and 283 parents (160 mothers, 123 fathers) and found that children who perceived that their parents were positive role models of physical activity, had positive beliefs about their soccer competency, and provided positive feedback following succesful performances were more likely to report higher perceptions of their own competence, intrinsic motivation, and sport enjoyment. As a result, these findings supported Harter's theory that socializing agents, such as parents, can influence children's perceptions of competence and motivation in sport.

Expectancy-value theory. Expectancy-value theory (Eccles et al., 1983) has been used to examine the influence of parents on children's socialization in achievement settings. Eccles and colleagues argued that children's behaviors, and the performance, effort, and persistence of those behaviors, are based on their expectations for how well they will do on a task and the extent to which they value that task (Eccles et al., 1983; Wigfield & Eccles, 2000). Children's expectations for how well they will do are based on their beliefs about their own competence. The value children attribute to a task can be described by four components: attainment value, instrinsic value, utility value, and cost. Attainment value is the importance placed on being good at an activity. Intrinsic value is the enjoyment of an activity. Utility value refers to how the activity fits into short- or long-term goals. Finally, the cost refers to how it may limit access to other activities, how much effort is required, and the emotional cost of the activity (Eccles et al., 1983). Children's expectations and values are influenced by their perceptions of parents'

attitudes and expectations, as well as how parents have interpreted previous achievement outcomes (Wigfield & Eccles, 1992).

Brustad (1993) used the expectancy-value theory to examine the influence of parental socialization and children's psychological characteristics on children's attraction to physical activities (i.e., organized sport, school physical education, and unstructured play) by surveying 81 fourth-grade children and their parents. Children's perceived physical competence and attraction to physical activity were measured, as well as parents' level of encouragement towards their children's physical activity, their own enjoyment of physical activity, fitness, and how important physical activity was to them. Results demonstrated that parents with higher perceptions of their children's physical competence provided more opportunities for their children to engage in physical activity. Additionally, parental encouragement and enjoyment were linked to children's perceived physical competence, which was significantly related to their attraction to physical activity.

In applying the expectancy-value theory to youth sport, Fredricks and Eccles (2004) further suggested that parents fulfill three roles: provider, interpreter, and role model. That is, parents *provide* the experience by transporting their children to and from games and practices, paying for registration fees, and purchasing equipment. Parents *interpret* their children's sport involvement by communicating their beliefs and values towards sport. They also act as *role models* by influencing their children's attitudes and behaviors via their own attitudes, behaviors, and participation in sport.

Achievement motivation theory. Achievement motivation theory (Nicholls, 1984) posits that individuals' goals, whether they are mastery or performance focused, are predicted to influence behaviors. Mastery goals are those that focus on self-referenced perceptions of

competence, reflected by learning and task mastery (task-involved), while performance goals focus on other-referenced perceptions of competence, reflected by performing well in comparison to others (ego-involved; Nicholls, 1984).

Ames (1992) emphasized that perceptions of the *motivational climate* are important for predicting the development of certain goal orientations. For instance, parents who create a mastery climate provide support in relation to their children's effort and are likely to encourage their children to be task-involved. On the other hand, parents who create a performance climate provide positive feedback when their children win and negative feedback when they lose, thus promoting ego-involvement (Harwood, Spray, & Keegan, 2008). Atkins, Johnson, Force, & Petrie (2015) conducted a cross-sectional study with 405 male adolescent athletes between the ages of 12 and 15 years old. They examined children's perceptions of the motivational climate created by their parents and children's goal orientation in relation to their own competence, self-esteem, enjoyment, and intention to continue in sport. Atkins and colleagues found that children's perceptions of their parents creating a task-involving motivational climate had a significant positive relationship with the athletes having a task goal orientation themselves. These findings suggested that when parents behave in a manner that emphasizes effort and learning, athletes will hold a congruent goal orientation.

Furthermore, in a study of 238 competitive youth swimmers (141 girls, 97 boys), O'Rourke, Smith, Smoll, and Cumming (2014) compared the relationship between athletes' perceptions of coach- and parent-initiated motivational climates and their self-esteem, anxiety, and intrinsic-extrinsic motivation. Both perceptions of coach- and parent-initiated motivational climates were significantly related to athletes' self-esteem, performance anxiety, and intrinsic-extrinsic motivation, with parent-initiated climate having the strongest relationship. Together,

these studies support Nicholls's (1984) achievement goal and Ames' (1992) motivational climate theories and provide insight into the important role of parent-initiated motivational climate in youth sport.

Parenting styles typology. Baumrind (1971, 1978) developed one of the earliest and most influential typologies of parenting styles, which she referred to as authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting. *Authoritarian* parents place high demands on their children, are less responsive and highly controlling, and do not tolerate inappropriate behavior. *Authoritative* parents are also highly demanding, but more responsive and less controlling toward their children. Generally, they provide rules and boundaries and encourage their children to be self-regulating within these rules and boundaries. *Permissive* parents are warm and ready to allow children independence. They often tolerate inappropriate behavior, rarely engage in the use of punishment, and are not controlling. According to Maccoby and Martin (1983), permissive parents can either be *indulgent* or *neglecting* depending on their levels of demandingness and responsiveness. That is, indulgent parents are responsive but not demanding, while neglecting parents are neither responsive nor demanding. As such, permissive parenting was separated into indulgent and neglecting parenting styles to form a four-fold typology, as opposed to the original three-fold typology (Baumrind, 1996; Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

The authoritative parenting style has been associated with children's achievement in school settings. For example, children with authoritative parents have reported greater levels of school engagement, higher grade point averages, and higher perceptions of competence and intrinsic motivation at school (Pomerantz, Grolnick, & Price, 2005; Steinberg, Lamborn, Dornbusch, & Darling, 1992). Durkin (1995) suggested that authoritative parenting styles are associated with positive outcomes because authoritative parents engage in bidirectional

communication with their children, provide children with explanations for their actions, and provide a high level of emotional security.

The authoritative parenting style has also been associated with positive child outcomes in sport. For example, Juntumaa, Keskivaara, and Punamäki (2005) examined how parenting style influenced rule breaking behaviors, achievement strategies, and satisfaction among 1,018 adolescent ice hockey players and 979 of their parents. Findings revealed that authoritative parenting was associated with low levels of rule breaking behaviors and higher levels of task-/mastery-oriented behavior, while athletes from authoritarian families were more likely to engage in rule breaking behavior. Additionally, athletes from authoritative families reported higher satisfaction with ice hockey, which they demonstrated through their obedience towards the rules and continued participation in the sport.

Researchers have also linked parenting styles to the development of perfectionism in sport. Sapieja et al. (2011) examined the relationship between athletes' perceptions of parenting styles and their perfectionist orientations (healthy, unhealthy, and non-perfectionists) in sport among 194 male adolescent soccer players. They found that higher perceptions of parental authoritativeness were reported by healthy and non-perfectionists. Essentially, when children perceived their parents to be responsive, supportive of their needs, and not controlling, they were more likely to be healthy or non-perfectionists. The findings from these studies would suggest that authoritative parenting is a more positive parenting style than authoritarian parenting.

Autonomy supportive parenting. Grolnick's (2003) framework of parenting styles suggests that a child's well-being and intrinsic motivation to engage in various behaviors is influenced by parental involvement, autonomy support versus control, and structure. Involvement reflects how parents are dedicated and show positive attention to the child-rearing

process (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Autonomy support refers to the extent to which parents "value and use techniques which encourage independent problem solving, choice, and participation in decisions" (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989, p. 149) versus making decisions and coercing their children to act in a certain manner through disciplinary tactics and rewards. Structure is the extent to which parents set consistent guidelines, expectations, and rules for their children (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Parental involvement and structure can be viewed in different ways depending on if the parent is autonomy supportive or controlling. For example, a high level of involvement is better when parents are providing their children with resources that foster a sense of autonomy. However, high levels of involvement combined with controlling practices can undermine a child's autonomy (Grolnick, 2003). Furthermore, when it comes to providing structure, parents who set narrow boundaries may be seen as controlling, while parents who set broader boundaries and allow their children to make decisions within these boundaries are seen as autonomy supportive.

Holt and colleagues (2009) examined parenting styles and practices using Grolnick's (2003) framework of parenting styles by observing and interviewing 34 female soccer players and 56 of their parents. Participants were asked questions about how parents behaved at competitions and how they provided feedback to their children. The results were categorized into families with autonomy supportive (similar to authoritative), controlling (similar to authoritarian), and mixed (i.e., having elements of both autonomy support and controlling) parenting styles. Autonomy supportive parents tended to place little pressure on their children, provided an appropriate amount of structure, were able to read their child's mood and engaged in two-way communication. Controlling parents set strict limits and boundaries for their children and rarely engaged in two-way communication with their children. Families with mixed

parenting styles either had inconsistencies between parenting styles (i.e., in two-parent households one parent was autonomy supportive and the other was controlling) or inconsistencies in parenting practices across different contexts (i.e., a parent was autonomy supportive in one situation and controlling in another).

Integrative contextual model of parenting style. Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative contextual model of parenting style is useful for understanding how parents' goals can influence child development. Darling and Steinberg proposed that parents' goals and values for socializing their children (e.g., to acquire specific skills and behaviors such as manners and social skills, and more global qualities, such as critical thinking, and independence) influence both parenting styles and practices. Parenting style is defined as the attitudes that parents express toward their child that create the emotional climate in which their behaviors are expressed. Parenting styles are broad and pervasive across a range of situations, while parenting practices are more context-specific. Parenting practices have a direct effect on children's developmental outcomes and are the mechanisms by which parents help their children attain their socialization goals. Parenting styles change the parents' capacity to socialize their children by altering the effectiveness of parenting practices.

A grounded theory of optimal parental involvement. Knight and Holt's (2014) grounded theory of optimal parental involvement in youth tennis was used to frame the analysis in the current study. Building on Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative contextual model, the purpose of Knight and Holt's study was to develop a grounded theory of optimal parental involvement in youth tennis. Interviews and focus groups were conducted with 43 tennis players (ages 12-18), 10 former tennis players, 17 parents, and 20 coaches from the United Kingdom. Knight and Holt suggested that optimal parental involvement is achieved when parents strive to

understand and enhance their children's sport experience. The grounded theory developed suggested that parents: (1) share and communicate goals, (2) develop an understanding emotional climate, and (3) engage in enhancing parenting practices at competitions. Parents and players must generate shared goals for tennis participation, and communicate these goals with each other consistently throughout the child's tennis career. An 'understanding emotional climate' is created when parents demonstrate an understanding of tennis and the role that it plays in their child's life. The latter core category represented the specific enhancing practices that parents should display, such as attending to their child's needs at competitions, teaching their child skills to cope with competition, and managing their own emotions. That being said, optimal parental involvement is contingent on the consistency between each core category. For example, the principles of creating an understanding emotional climate must reflect the goals communicated by the child and the enhancing practices parents engage in must be consistent with the emotional climate they create.

Sport parenting expertise. Although not a theory of parenting per se, Harwood and Knight (2015) presented a position paper on sport parenting expertise based on a review of the sport parenting literature. This position paper includes six postulates that reflect competencies intended to depict sport parenting expertise. Sport parenting expertise was defined as "parental involvement that increases the chances for children to achieve their sporting potential, have a positive psychosocial experience, and develop a range of positive developmental outcomes" (p. 25). According to Harwood and Knight, parents must develop certain intrapersonal, interpersonal, and organizational competencies in order to attain sport parenting expertise. They claim that parenting expertise is demonstrated by the degree to which parents

- choose appropriate sport opportunities and provide the necessary types of social support for their children;
- foster an understanding emotional climate by applying an autonomy supportive parenting style;
- cope with the emotional demands of competition and serve as role models for their child;
- create and maintain healthy relationships with others in the youth sport environment (e.g., coaches, other parents);
- manage the various organizational and developmental stressors placed on sport parents; and
- adapt their involvement to match their child's needs based on the stage of their sporting careers.

However, Harwood and Knight highlighted that their review of the literature may reveal the desirable expectations of 'average' sport parents, rather than examples of 'expert' or, in the case of the current study, 'good' sport parenting. As such, they argued that more research is required to examine the components of sport parenting expertise, how and when expertise is developed, and the support parents require in attaining expertise.

Parenting Research in Sport

This section will review sport-specific studies of parenting, discussing expectations of parents in youth sport, roles of parents in youth sport, negative parenting practices, research examining how children want their parents to behave in sport, and initiatives for enhancing parent practices. This literature helped inform the conceptual context for the current study.

Expectations of parents in youth sport. Parental involvement in youth sport has increased across generations (Wheeler & Green, 2014). This increase may be caused in part by

changes in the ‘good parenting ideal’, which refers to parents’ perceptions of what other parents in the community and in society believe to be good parenting (Lee et al., 2015). For example, in today’s society parents perceive that allowing children to roam free outdoors is poor parenting, while monitoring their children at all times is seen as good parenting (Lee et al., 2015). The increased perceived need to monitor children may explain the enduring popularity of youth sport because it provides a supervised environment in which children can engage in physical activity (Holt et al., 2016). In fact, sport is the most popular out-of-school activity in which Canadian youth engage, with 77% of 5- to 19-year-olds in Canada participating in organized sport and physical activity (CFLRI, 2016). Coakley (2006) argued that modern parents are expected to put their children into sport in order to meet the standards for good parenting.

As noted above, expectations for sport parents have changed over time and are higher today than they were in the past (Wheeler & Green, 2014). Stefansen et al. (2016) interviewed 61 parents to discuss how parents’ involvement in organized sport has increased over time. Participants recalled that, in the past, it was normal for their own parents to be absent from their sport activities. In contrast, a ‘standard norm’ of involvement for the modern sport parent included showing an interest in their children’s activities, paying for fees and equipment, attending games, and doing volunteer work for the sports clubs. Some families, and particularly fathers, were engaged in what the authors labelled as ‘deep involvement’, referring to when parents attend every game, engage in coaching and post-game debriefing, discuss individual strategies, and use sport as the primary context for bonding with their child. Deep involvement was reported as being highly demanding in terms of time and emotional investments for parents.

Wheeler and Green (2014) interviewed 16 sport parents and children from eight different families to determine what they perceived as ‘good’ parenting practices and how parental

involvement in sport has changed since the parents were children. Parents perceived that being seen as 'good' parents in their social groups required them to support and encourage their children in sporting activities, and that expectations had increased over generations. They also perceived that it was their primary responsibility to initiate their children's sport participation and ensure regular involvement in at least two sports. Parents were willing to make large commitments in terms of finances, time, and energy in order for their children to attain the physical and psychosocial benefits associated with sport participation. In doing so, parents were meeting the perceived criteria for 'good' parenting established in their social networks.

Roles of parents in youth sport. Several studies have revealed that parents play important roles in providing various types of social support to their children in sport. For example, Wolfenden and Holt (2005) interviewed four parents, two coaches, and three athletes involved in tennis to examine their perceptions of talent development during the specializing years (ages 13-15). Results indicated that parents were the main source of emotional and tangible support for their children. They demonstrated emotional support by being there and consoling their children after a tough match, and demonstrated tangible support by providing financial support and transportation. Parents invested a lot of their own time in order to support their children in sport, but at times would become over-involved and a source of pressure for their children. Parents were negatively evaluated by children and coaches when they attempted to provide sport-specific advice. The findings of this study highlight that, depending on which roles they attempted to fulfill, parents had the ability to both help and hinder their children's development in sport.

In another tennis-specific study, Gould, Pierce, Wright, Lauer, and Nalepa (2016) interviewed 14 experienced and successful coaches to gain their views of parent roles in junior

tennis. Parents being over-involved, lacking an understanding of tennis, and having unrealistic expectations were reported by coaches as barriers to implementing their tennis program. In dealing with these parenting problems, coaches attempted to redefine the role of tennis parents by encouraging them to fulfill the roles of facilitator and supporter as opposed to leader or coach. In order to fulfill these facilitator/supporter roles, coaches suggested that parents should find the appropriate level of involvement, leave the provision of sport-specific feedback to the coach, allow their children to make their own mistakes, and limit their job to providing unconditional support. The findings from this study demonstrate the need to consider the multiple roles that parents fulfill as well as how exemplary sport parents fulfill these roles.

To provide more insight into the role of parents in youth sport, Knight, Dorsch, et al. (2016) surveyed 70 sport parents from the United States and the United Kingdom. They found that parents' involvement was influenced by a variety of factors, such as the youth sport context, other parents and coaches, knowledge of the sport, and their goals for their children's sport participation. The researchers categorized four different types of parental involvement: (1) the supporter, (2) the provider, (3) the coach, and (4) the administrator. A parent who was a supporter cheered from the sidelines and encouraged positive attitudes. Parents who assumed the role of provider facilitated their children's sport experience by, among other things, transporting them to training, providing financial support, and making sure they packed all of their equipment. Parents who took on the role of coach were those who coached their child's team or another team in the club, while administrators were parents who took care of off-court logistics such as acting as team manager, organizing fundraisers, and planning trips. The types of parental involvement outlined by Knight, Dorsch, et al. (2016) were consistent with previous work that indicate that parents fulfil the role of provider, supporter, and role model, while providing

emotional and tangible support (Fredricks & Eccles, 2004; Wolfenden & Holt, 2005). However, the presence of the coach and administrator roles suggest that parents can be even more involved in certain aspects of their children's sport and that parents may fulfill several roles simultaneously.

Negative parenting practices. Observational studies have shown that overtly negative parental involvement at competitions is quite rare. Holt and colleagues (2008) examined parental involvement in competitive youth sport by studying the verbal responses parents made to their children during youth soccer competitions. Results placed parents' comments along a continuum ranging from 'more supportive' to 'more controlling' in categories of praise and encouragement, contingent performance feedback, instruction, striking a balance between positive and negative comments, negative statements, and derogatory comments. More supportive comments of praise and encouragement (35%) and instruction (35%) were the most common, while more controlling negative comments (10%) and derogatory comments (5%) were less common.

Similarly, Bowker and colleagues (2009) examined spectator behavior in youth ice hockey. Using naturalistic observation methods, they attended 69 (50 male, 19 female) youth ice hockey games and recorded all spectator comments that were expressed in one area of the arena. Spectators were comprised of parents, grandparents, and participating players. Observers took note of who the spectator comments were directed at (e.g., a player, a referee, or another spectator) and if they were positive, corrective, negative, or neutral. The results from their observation demonstrated that the majority of the comments made were generally positive and directed towards players on the ice, with less than one percent of comments each game being categorized as negative.

Despite these studies showing that negative parental involvement at competitions is rare, there are still reports of parents having a negative impact on their children's sport experience. For example, Gould et al. (2006) conducted a national survey with 132 junior tennis coaches to identify positive and negative parenting practices. When coaches were asked what percentage of parents had a negative influence on their children's development and what percentage had a positive influence, coaches perceived that the majority of parents (59%) had a positive influence on their child's sport experience. However, coaches did report that a minority of parents (36%) had a negative influence by creating stress, uncertainty, and psychological problems for their children.

As noted earlier, parents can have a negative influence on their child's development when they exert too much pressure, have unrealistic expectations, criticize their children, and overemphasize winning (Gould et al., 2006; Lauer et al., 2010). Such practices have been shown to reduce children's enjoyment in sport, lower their self-esteem, and cause them to drop out of sport (Brustad, 1996; Gould et al., 1996; Ullrich-French & Smith, 2009). Ross, Mallett, and Parkes (2015) interviewed 12 coaches and administrators to gain their views on the influence of parents' sport behaviors on children's sport development. Coaches and administrators reported having more negative interactions with parents than positive interactions. They also reported witnessing negative parent-child communications more frequently than positive parent-child communications. Verbal abuse from the sidelines, conditional support based on performance, and parents focusing on children's weaknesses were among the negative parenting practices that were most commonly reported.

Furthermore, a recent study conducted by Bean, Jeffery-Tosoni, Baker, and Fraser-Thomas (2016) explored parenting practices in Canadian minor ice hockey, a sport that has

received attention in the media and in research for its problematic parents. Interviews were conducted with ice hockey 'insiders' consisting of coaches, players, officials, and media members from elite and professional ice hockey clubs. Participants reported negative parenting practices they had witnessed, such as parents undermining the coaches, abusing officials and other parents, and encouraging their children to be aggressive. Given these findings, Bean et al. suggested that some parents have lost sight of the fundamental goals for youth sport and that parent education programs may be helpful for preventing and managing negative parenting practices. While overtly negative parental involvement in sport is rare (Bowker et al., 2009; Holt et al., 2008), there are still some parents who engage in negative behaviors. As such, examining good sport parenting may be useful for developing sport parent education programs to address negative parental behaviors.

How athletes want parents to behave. Some research has looked at positive or preferred aspects of sport parenting from the perspectives of athletes. Knight et al. (2011) conducted interviews with adolescent female athletes competing in team sports to identify how the athletes wanted their parents to behave before, during, and after competition. Before competition, athletes wanted parents to help them prepare physically and mentally. This meant making sure they had proper equipment, were feeling well nourished, and would arrive at their competitions on time. Athletes also preferred when parents helped them to relax and did not discuss performance before a competition. During competition, athletes preferred their parents encouraged the entire team, maintained control of their emotions, focused on effort rather than outcome, and stayed positive when cheering and making comments. Athletes did not like it when parents drew attention to themselves, attempted to coach from the sidelines, and argued with the officials. After competition, athletes preferred their parents to provide positive, yet honest, feedback.

These findings are helpful for providing practical suggestions for how parents should behave, based on the preferences of athletes. However, there is still a need to understand how good sport parents actually behave. It may be worthwhile to examine whether athletes' preferences for their parents' behavior is consistent with what good sport parents actually do.

Knight, Little, et al. (2016) provided a broader contextual understanding of parenting in sport when they interviewed elite junior slalom canoeists to gain their views on parental involvement in various sport contexts. Specifically, the authors examined what type of parental involvement athletes considered positive or negative at home, in training, and during competition. In all three contexts, athletes found it positive when parents provided practical support, developed a growth mindset through a task-involving climate, were able to read and react to situations, had a willingness to adapt their involvement, and demonstrated that they valued canoeing. Additionally, athletes preferred when parents managed their emotions and held a positive perspective when at home and during competitions. These findings demonstrate that athletes' preferences for their parents' behaviors extend to contexts outside of competition.

Parent education initiatives. Several researchers have called for more research-based parent education initiatives (e.g., Bean et al., 2016; Gould et al., 2016; Knight, Berrow, & Harwood, 2017). Despite a relatively large body of research that demonstrates which parenting practices are preferred, Ross et al. (2015) argue that many parents do not know how to engage in these preferred practices, and it is not for a lack of trying. In fact, parents spend an extensive amount of time researching and seeking information on how to better support their children in sport. In a study aimed at identifying additional assistance required by parents to facilitate their children's involvement in tennis, Knight and Holt (2013) found that parents reported needing help in regards to how to behave at competitions, understanding how children progress in the

sport, accessing funding, selecting coaches, and choosing schools. Such findings suggest that parents need and want more educational resources directed towards parenting in sport.

Also interested in identifying parents' needs for support, Thrower, Harwood, and Spray (2016) produced a grounded theory of tennis parents' sport education and support needs. Through fieldwork and interviews with 13 tennis parents, 12 coaches, and four ex-youth national and international players, Thrower and colleagues developed a grounded theory that centered on the core category of parents being in a supportive learning environment. That is, parents' sport education and support needs could only be fulfilled to the extent that parents were willing to learn and enter into a supportive learning environment that delivered structured education and continued support from key stakeholders (e.g., coaches, psychologists, and mentor parents). Parents' needs were separated into introductory needs and educational sub-processes based on their children's developmental stage (i.e., childhood and early adolescence). Introductory needs referred to understanding social factors such as financial and time demands, reasons for involvement, and knowledge of tennis. Parents' needs during their children's different developmental stages (i.e., childhood and early adolescence) were categorized by organizational needs (e.g., scoring systems), development needs (e.g., talent development), and competition needs (e.g., in-match roles). Thrower and colleagues highlighted that fulfilling parents' sport education and support needs is required for enhancing parenting practices. As such, they argued, there is a need for more interventions and applied initiatives to address sport parents' support needs.

Some studies have shown that existing sport parent education initiatives have a limited impact on enhancing sport parenting practices. For instance, Elliot and Drummond (2015) examined parents', children's, and coaches' perceptions of the parent 'code of conduct' in junior

Australian football. The Australian Football League (AFL) adopted a code of conduct to address inappropriate parenting practices at youth sport competitions. The code of conduct included rules for parents, such as applauding the effort of both teams and showing respect towards referees. Through focus groups and individual interviews with 34 parents, 52 children (ages 12-13), and 16 coaches involved with junior Australian football, Elliot and Drummond found that the implementation of the code of conduct played a limited role in shaping parenting practices. Participants reported that the code of conduct was not consistently reinforced throughout the season and that it did little to influence parental practices because they believed the rules were 'common sense' and did not address all aspects related to sport parenting, such as post-game behaviors. Furthermore, participants believed that some of the negative practices parents engaged in were engrained into the culture of the sport, and therefore were difficult to address using a code of conduct.

In an attempt to create a more effective sport parent education tool, Dorsch et al. (2016) designed, implemented, and assessed an evidence-based sport parent education program for a pilot sample of 81 parents from seven U8 and U10 soccer programs. Parents were assigned to participate in the education program completely, partially, or not at all. The program consisted of a sport parent guide and seminar designed to offer strategies for parenting in youth sport. The guides and seminars involved seven sections intended to educate parents on youth sport participation, a developmental model of sport participation, participation rates, communication, working with coaches, sport parents behavior, and finally, positive sport parenting. All 81 parents and their children (41 boys and 40 girls) completed pre- and post-intervention surveys to measure parental support and pressure, child enjoyment, competence and stress, and parent-child warmth and conflict. Results revealed that parents who completely or partially took part in the

education program displayed more support and warmth and less pressure and conflict than parents who did not take part in the program. Also, children whose parents completely or partially took part in the program reported higher levels of enjoyment and competence and lower levels of stress. The results from this study suggest that evidence-based education opportunities for parents can be effective for enhancing the quality of parenting in youth sport.

Summary

In summary, there is a vast array of research pertaining to parenting in youth sport. Previous research has demonstrated that parents can have a profound influence on their children's sport experience. Parents are often highly involved in their children's sport (Stefansen et al., 2016; Wheeler & Green, 2014) and they may fulfill various roles simultaneously (Knight, Dorsch, et al., 2016). While negative parental involvement during competitions is actually quite rare (Bowker et al., 2009; Holt et al., 2008), parents are still often seen as problematic (Bean et al., 2016; Ross et al., 2015). As such, sport parent education initiatives may be useful to assist parents and enhance parenting practices (Thrower et al., 2016). Indeed, many of the studies mentioned above have provided recommendations for how parents should support their children in sport. However, researchers have highlighted that further study of the components of 'good' sport parenting is required (Harwood & Knight, 2015). Previous studies have not examined sport parenting by exclusively sampling exemplars of good practice. Therefore, the current study addresses this gap in the literature and expands our current knowledge of youth sport parenting. To reiterate, the purpose of this study was to produce a conceptualization of good parenting in female youth sport. The following research question was addressed: How do exemplary sport parents support their daughters in sport?

Chapter 3

Method

Methodology

The choice of methodology (and the associated sampling, data collection, data analysis, and reporting approaches) is driven by the purpose of the study and based on the appropriateness of the selected methodology in providing meaningful answers to the research question (Patton, 2015). Interpretive description (ID; Thorne, 2016) was used in this study as it provided an appropriate framework through which the purpose could be addressed and research question could be answered. It is a qualitative methodology that allows the researcher to interpret participants' subjective meanings associated with, and perceptions of, experiences through the identification of themes and patterns that capture the phenomenon in order to generate findings with applied implications (Thorne, Kirkham, & O'Flynn-Magee, 2004). More specifically, ID was a suitable methodological approach to fulfill the purpose of the study (i.e., to develop a conceptualization of good parenting in female youth sport) given that the typical end result in using ID is to create a "coherent conceptual description that taps thematic patterns and commonalities believed to characterize the phenomenon" (Thorne et al., 2004, p.4). The use of ID offered the potential to expand upon existing descriptive knowledge of sport parenting to produce a conceptualization of good parenting in female youth sport.

Philosophical Framework

This study was approached from an interpretivist paradigm (Sparkes, 1992). Ontologically, interpretivists assume there are multiple realities and these realities are developed through the knowledge people obtain via their social interactions (Sparkes, 1992). Epistemologically, interpretivists recognize that individuals create their own unique subjective

meanings to understand their experiences and that knowledge is co-created by the researcher and the participants. The interpretive paradigm is consistent with the use of ID because ID acknowledges that the researcher and the participant interact and influence one another and that there is a socially constructed element to the human experience (Thorne, 2016). In this research, it was assumed that coaches and parents attributed meaning to what they considered good parenting in youth sport based on their own experiences, and reported these meanings and experiences during the interviews. The interviews were conversations between the interviewer and participant, and therefore the interviewer played an active role in 'co-creating' the experiences participants reported (e.g., the questions posed by the interviewer directed the participants' attention to the experiences of interest). Then, through analysis, the researcher further interpreted these meanings and experiences to identify shared aspects (i.e., themes) intended to generate knowledge about good parenting in female youth sport. The final conceptual claim reflects another level of researcher interpretation. The conceptual claim is not intended to depict a singular reality of good parenting. Rather, it is intended to provide a conceptual overview of the shared elements of the current participants' unique perceptions and experiences.

Sampling

Participants were purposefully sampled, which involves selecting participants who can provide in-depth information about the phenomenon being studied (Patton, 2015). Coaches and parents participated in this study. Coaches were included because they would be able to provide insights into parents' behaviors and the consequences of parental involvement in sport (Gould et al., 2006; Ross et al., 2015), and presumably would have encountered a range of 'good' and 'bad' parenting in sport. The sampling criteria for coaches were that they had a minimum of five years of experience coaching a female youth sport team at the club level. This level of

experience is consistent with previous sport parenting research that sampled coaches with a minimum of five years of experience (Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes, & Pennisi, 2008).

In order to fulfill the purpose of the study, it was necessary to purposefully sample 'exemplary' sport parents. To identify potential participants, coaches were asked to nominate individuals who they believed were exemplars of good parenting in youth sport. As such, coaches served as key informants who enabled extreme case sampling (Patton, 2015). Extreme case sampling focuses on identifying "illuminative cases" from which researchers can "learn from those who are exemplars of good practice" (Patton, 2015, p. 234). In this study, the extreme cases were exemplary sport parents.

Following their interview, coaches were asked to reflect on the qualities of the exemplary sport parents they had discussed, and to nominate parents who they thought demonstrated those particular qualities. The nominated parents were also required to meet additional sampling criteria. Specifically, coaches were asked to nominate exemplary sport parents with at least one daughter currently between the ages of 16-20 years who played on an organized youth sport team. The decision to focus the sampling criterion on daughters was made because it is possible that parents support female athletes differently than male athletes. For example, it has been reported that female athletes perceive greater parental support and less parental pressure than male athletes (Amado et al., 2015). Thus, parents may provide different types of support to their daughters, and what is considered 'good' parenting to females may be different from males. The decision to sample parents with daughters in the age range of 16-20 years was made to ensure participants had extensive experience as sport parents and could speak to their involvement over an extended period of time.

Recruitment

Prior to commencing this study institutional Research Ethics Board (REB) approval was obtained. In order to recruit coaches, the coach information letter (see Appendix A) was sent via email to various youth sport club directors around Edmonton, Alberta. The directors were asked to forward the information letter to coaches within the club who fit the sampling criteria (i.e., five years of experience coaching female youth sport teams). Coaches who were interested in participating in the study were asked to contact the researcher by email. Once the researcher was contacted, further details about the study were provided, participant eligibility was established, and interviews were arranged.

In accordance with REB approval, the coach participants were asked to email the parent information letter to parents (Appendix B) and explain that they had been nominated as exemplary sport parents. Parents who were interested in participating in the study were asked to contact the researcher by email. Parents' eligibility to participate in the study was established (i.e., that they met the sampling criteria) and an interview was scheduled.

Participants

Eight coaches (3 females and 5 males) participated in this study. They coached the sports of basketball (n = 1), ice hockey (n = 2), lacrosse (n = 1), softball (n = 1), soccer (n = 1), and volleyball (n = 2). The average age of the coaches was 40.1 years (SD = 15.1), and they had an average of 17 years (SD = 11.3) of coaching experience. When asked if they coached in a system that was considered 'competitive' or 'recreational', all coaches reported coaching in a 'competitive' system. In terms of coaching education, three participants held National Coaching Certification Program (NCCP) Level 1, two participants held NCCP Level 2, one had NCCP Level 3, one had a National B License in soccer, and one held both NCCP Level 3 and a Masters

of Coaching graduate degree. Four of the coaches were (or had been) youth sport parents themselves.

In addition, 10 parents (7 mothers, 3 fathers, *M* age = 48.5 years, *SD*= 4.0) participated in the study. All parents were Caucasian. In terms of education, one parent had a high school diploma, five parents had completed a college diploma, and four parents had completed a Bachelor's degree. In total, the parents had 18 daughters (*M* age = 17.1 years, *SD* = 2.0) and five sons (*M* age = 20.2 years, *SD* = 6.1). Their daughters participated in volleyball (*n* = 6), soccer (*n* = 6), basketball (*n* = 3), ice hockey (*n* = 2), or lacrosse (*n* = 1) as their main sport. Participants' daughters were all still involved in their sport and had reached varying levels of competition, with 12 daughters playing for a local club team, five daughters playing college/university sport, and one daughter playing on a Junior National Team.

Data Collection

Data were collected using in-depth individual semi-structured interviews. Prior to conducting the interviews the researcher had received extensive interview training, which included undergraduate and graduate courses in counselling and qualitative research methods, practice interviews with experienced graduate students, and readings on how to conduct effective qualitative interviews (e.g., Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The researcher had also completed several qualitative interviews for unrelated studies in the past. Such interviewer training is important because the interviewer is the main 'instrument' of research in a qualitative study, and interviewer training can add to the quality of the data obtained during the interviews (Smith, 2011).

The use of individual semi-structured interviews allows the researcher to learn about the experiences and opinions of others and view the world from perspectives other than their own

(Rubin & Rubin, 2012). Interviews were scheduled at the participants' convenience. Seven parent interviews took place in a quiet meeting room at the Saville Community Sports Centre while the participants' daughters were in practice. Three parent interviews were conducted in a quiet area of the family home free from distractions. One coach was also interviewed in a quiet meeting room at the Saville Community Sports Centre. Four coach interviews were conducted in the Child and Adolescent Sport and Activity Lab at the University of Alberta. Three coach interviews were conducted at a local coffee shop.

Before proceeding with the interview, participants were given the study information letter, a verbal explanation of the study, and an opportunity to ask questions. All participants agreed to participate in the study and provided written informed consent (see Appendix C). Coach interviews lasted an average of 41.4 minutes (SD = 8.9), while parent interviews lasted an average of 43.0 minutes (SD = 9.8).

Interview guides. Separate interview guides were created for the coach and parent interview. Each interview guide was designed with main questions that ensured the research questions would be answered, as well as follow-up questions and probes to seek more detailed information (Rubin & Rubin, 2012). The initial versions of the interview guides were developed based on findings of previous sport parenting research (e.g., Holt et al., 2009) and discussions with the researcher's supervisory committee. Two separate pilot interviews were conducted with one father and one female coach in the Child and Adolescent Sport Activity Lab to ensure the interview guides effectively addressed the research purpose. The pilot interviews also provided an opportunity for further researcher training, as the researcher reflected on her own performance and areas for improvement.

Following the pilot interviews the interviewees were asked to provide feedback on the flow of the interview, clarity of the questions, and made suggestions for questions they would add or remove. The coach interview guide (Appendix D) began with what coaches expected from parents on their team in terms of responsibilities and involvement. The interview guide then progressed to more specific questions pertaining to experiences and encounters they have had with parents. For example, coaches were asked to think of a parent they encountered who they believed demonstrated exemplary sport parenting, and were asked to describe what specific behaviors characterized that parent as an exemplary sport parent.

The parent interview guide (Appendix E) began with questions about what good sport parenting means to them and the roles and expectations they face as sport parent. The questions then progressed to how they supported their child in sport, their general parenting style, how they behave at competitions, and challenges they have faced as sport parents. Finally, parents were asked to reflect on a time when they felt they handled a situation correctly or made a decision that made them feel successful as a sport parent, as well as a time when they felt they behaved poorly and regretted their actions.

Data Analysis

Interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by a professional transcribing company, producing 270 pages of single spaced data. To ensure appropriate security and confidentiality, all data that identified the participants was removed and all parents and coaches were assigned a number (P1, P2, C1, C2, etc.). Pseudonyms were also given to any participants' children that were mentioned in the interviews. Analysis began as soon as the first data were collected and continued in an iterative process throughout the study. The use of ID does not prescribe a single linear technique for data analysis (Thorne, 2016). Rather, when using ID, the

researcher is encouraged to use whichever data collection and analysis techniques are logical and consistent given the purpose of the study (Thorne, 2016). In line with ID, the aim of the analytic process for this study was to comprehend the data, synthesize meanings, theorize relationships, and recontextualize data into meaningful findings (Morse, 1994a; Thorne et al., 2004).

In order to *comprehend the data*, analysis first began using an inductive descriptive content analysis as described by Maykut and Morehouse (1994). Coaches' data were analyzed first. The transcripts were read multiple times to gain familiarity with the content and ensure full immersion in the data. The transcripts were coded into raw data themes and assigned meaning units that were grouped by content into higher-order themes. Following initial coding, rules of inclusion were assigned in order to ensure distinction between each theme. After coding the coach transcripts, emerging themes were discussed with the researcher's supervisor and the process was repeated with the parents' transcripts.

In order to *synthesize meanings*, the next step in analysis involved identifying patterns and relationships within the data, organizing the essential elements into groupings, and synthesizing the coach and parent findings (Thorne, 2016). When using an ID approach, it is common practice to borrow certain data analysis techniques from other methodologies during the analytic process (Thorne, 2016). The constant comparison technique (Corbin & Strauss, 2008) was used to examine similarities, differences, and possible relationships that existed among the data. This was an appropriate analytic technique because constant comparison is useful for studies where the purpose is to discover patterns and similarities within a phenomenon (Thorne, 2000). Additionally, the researcher met with her supervisor and other graduate students to discuss emerging themes and interpretations. These discussions allowed the researcher to explore different perspectives and consider the different ways that the data could be grouped together.

Themes were initially coded into three main categories; creating a positive atmosphere (represented by the themes of staying positive, having fun, and emphasizing effort), autonomy supportive parenting (represented by the themes of fostering independence and minimal pressure), and relationships with the coach, team, and club (represented by the themes of the coach-parent relationship and supporting the team and club). A data matrix was created to demonstrate which themes were represented by coaches and parents (see Table 1). According to Miles and Huberman (1994), data matrices are useful for displaying descriptive results of data.

According to Thorne, Kirkham and MacDonald-Emes (1997), themes must be placed into a logical framework in order to make sense of the findings. In fact, it is necessary for an interpretive description to be located within the existing knowledge base so that findings build on and link to the work of others in the discipline (Thorne et al., 1997). Therefore, in order to *theorize relationships*, the next part of the analysis was more deductive and involved using Knight and Holt's (2014) grounded theory of optimal parental involvement in youth tennis to organize and represent the results. The use of this grounded theory helped make sense of the findings and locate them within the existing body of relevant knowledge (Thorne et al., 2004). The application of the theory also provided an interpretive layer that moved the findings beyond description.

After exploring other options (e.g., Darling & Steinberg's [1993] integrative contextual model of parenting style), Knight and Holt's (2014) grounded theory was used to frame the analysis because it is specific to parenting in sport (tennis) and offered a good 'fit' for the data derived from the inductive analysis. During the more deductive process of using the Knight and Holt grounded theory to frame the analysis, the three main components of their grounded theory (i.e., share and communicate goals, develop an understanding emotional climate, and engage in

enhancing parenting practices at competitions) were used to re-organise the themes into categories. This analytic step meant that the existing categories were renamed to coincide with those in the grounded theory and themes were reorganised to fit within the categories in the grounded theory (e.g., fostering independence moved from the category of "autonomy supportive parenting" to "principles of an understanding emotional climate").

It is important to note that the grounded theory was used 'sensitively' (Glaser & Holton, 2004) to ensure that pre-existing categories were not 'forced' onto the current data. For example, some of Knight and Holt's themes in the category of 'developing an understanding emotional climate' did not exactly fit with the specific themes identified in the current study. Therefore, while using Knight and Holt (2014) categories to organize the data, specific themes arising from the current analysis were retained in order to reflect the unique findings of this study. Such sensitive use of theory reflects the ability to have "theoretical insight into one's area of research, combined with an ability to make something of one's insights" (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, p. 46).

The next step of analysis was to *recontextualize data into meaningful findings*, which was addressed in the writing and presentation of the results. This was an important final phase of interpretation as writing the results involves drafting, editing, and redrafting to ensure that the most important findings are conveyed (Thorne et al., 2004). The final step of analysis was to produce a conceptual description or 'claim'. According to Thorne (2016), a conceptual claim should "capture the important elements within the phenomenon in a manner that can be readily grasped, appreciated, and remembered in the applied practice context" (p. 188). Thorne describes the conceptual process during analysis as moving from basic groupings of data to conceptual labels, which reflect the patterns and relationships within the data. Conceptualizations are produced through "iterative listening, observing, writing, thinking, listening, writing, thinking,

and writing again" (p. 197). This process continues until patterns and relationships begin to form and the researcher is able to determine which play a fundamental role in understanding the phenomenon. The conceptual claim for this study is presented in the discussion.

Methodological Rigor

According to Thorne et al. (2004), in order to make the interpretive description of the phenomenon convincing, the research report must include such detailed information about the research process that a reader would be able to follow the analytic reasoning process and to judge the degree to which the analysis is grounded within the data. In particular, it is important to pay attention to methodological rigor throughout the research *process* when using ID, rather than relying entirely on post-hoc techniques (Thorne et al., 1997). Furthermore, the principle of methodological coherence was used to ensure consistency between the philosophical viewpoint, methodology, research question, and data collection and analytic procedures, therefore enhancing the rigor of the study (Mayan, 2009; Morse, Barrett, Mayan, Olson, & Spiers, 2002).

Other key features of methodological rigor in the research process included the interviewer training, piloting of the interview guide, concurrent data collection and analysis, and critical reflection on emerging results via regular discussions with the researcher's supervisor and other graduate students. Additionally, a reflective journal was kept to record thoughts and insights following interviews and during the analysis. Keeping a journal is helpful because it is a record of the researcher's feelings, assumptions, and perspectives that the researcher can refer to later on (Mayan, 2009; Thorne et al., 1997). For example, after each interview, reflections (e.g. the quality of the interview, if the participant had difficulty answering a question, additional probes thought of during the interview) were recorded. Thus, journaling was helpful in strengthening and improving the interviews. Combined, incorporating these strategies into the

design of the study enable the researcher to determine if and when to continue, stop, or modify the research (Mayan, 2009). Such tactics have the potential to challenge the direction of the analysis before it has "reached the point of no return" (Thorne, 2016, p.177).

Following analysis, an e-mail member-checking protocol was used (following Neely, Dunn, McHugh, & Holt, 2016) whereby participants were emailed a written summary of the results prior to forming a conceptual claim. Although the merits of member-checking have been challenged in the sport psychology literature recently (Smith & McGannon, 2017), Thorne (2016) argues that it is useful to present a synthesis of the findings to the study participants, as it offers them the opportunity to reflect on the degree to which it reflects their experience. Participants received a summary of the results via email and were asked to provide feedback by answering the following questions: (1) Do you think this conceptualization of good parenting in sport is similar to/fairly representative of what you consider to be good parenting in sport? (2) Do you have any other comments or feedback based on the summary provided? Only five parents and three coaches responded to the member-checking e-mail. All agreed that the analysis was a fair representation of what they considered to be good parenting in youth sport. While member-checking did not make a major contribution to the results of this study, it should be noted that (a) it is recommended by Thorne (2016), and (b) it was merely one technique used in a range of strategies designed to incrementally add to the methodological rigor of this study (Mayan, 2009).

Chapter 4

Results

The results are broadly organized around the three categories depicted in Knight and Holt's (2014) grounded theory. However, as noted in the method, this theory was not 'forced' upon the data. As such, some of the themes differ slightly from those reported by Knight and Holt. The three main categories reported herein are shared goals, principles of an understanding emotional climate, and enhancing practices surrounding competitions. The data matrix (Miles & Huberman, 1994) of participants' responses in each category and their corresponding themes is provided in Table 1. In the following sections these categories and themes are presented.

Table 1

Data Matrix Summary of Participants' Responses

	Shared Goals		**Principles of an Understanding Emotional Climate**					**Enhancing Practices Surrounding Competitions**		
Participants	Understanding and sharing goals	Not forcing the journey	Emphasizing effort	Having Fun	Fostering independence	Trusting & supporting coaches	Supporting the team and club	Taking care of basics	Staying positive (during)	Staying positive (after)
C1	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	
C2	x	x		x	x	x	x		x	x
C3			x	x	x	x		x	x	x
C4	x			x	x	x	x	x		x
C5	x					x	x	x		
C6	x	x		x	x	x		x		x
C7	x			x		x	x	x	x	x
C8	x	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x
Coach Totals	**7**	**3**	**2**	**7**	**6**	**8**	**6**	**6**	**5**	**6**
P1	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
P2			x		x	x	x	x	x	
P3	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x
P4		x			x	x	x	x		x
P5	x		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
P6		x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x
P7	x			x	x	x	x	x	x	
P8	x	x			x	x	x		x	x
P9	x	x			x	x	x	x	x	
P10	x				x	x		x		
Parent Totals	**7**	**6**	**5**	**5**	**9**	**10**	**9**	**8**	**7**	**6**

Notes. X = theme reported by participant. C = Coach. P = Parent.

Shared Goals

Understanding and sharing goals. A fundamental feature of being an exemplary sport parent involved parents understanding their daughter's goals for sport and then sharing these goals. Importantly, parents followed their daughter's goals for sport rather than imposing their own goals. Parent #3 (P3) said, "We listen to our kids and try to recognize their needs or their wants or desires and we try to put that before our own." P5 said her daughters have, "always had goals for themselves. So my goal for them is 'you need to establish goals for yourself and what you want to work towards.'" Here, P5 was explaining that her goal for her daughters was, in fact, for them to set *their own goals.* It was then a case of understanding and sharing the daughters' goals. According to P10, it was necessary to "understand what your kids, what they wanna get out of it. [It] is important, because that's the level of support that they're gonna want or need to succeed."

For some parents, developing an understanding for their daughter's goals could mean changing their own expectations. As P7 explained, "We all have expectations as sport parents. They could be completely different than what our daughter's expectations are. So I think trying to align those expectations of what you want out of this sport [is good sport parenting]." Here, this point emphasizes the importance of understanding their daughter's goals for sport and then, accordingly, striving to support these goals.

Coaches said they often saw parents trying to impose their own goals on their children, which they considered "bad" sport parenting. Coach #6 (C6) said:

> I think the parents nowadays, they [parents] are almost over invested. They of course see the big paychecks or they see you know [my kid] they're gonna get an NCAA scholarship, whether it's swimming or basketball or whatever the sport

> may be. All they see is a payday at the end of it. Let the kids make the decision. I've coached players in the past at all the sports that I've coached, that I'm sure they're not there on their own free will.

When P1's daughter played ice hockey, she encountered parents who forced their own personal goals on their children. She said that these parents should remember:

> You had your childhood and it's your kid's turn and you can't relive your childhood so let your child have theirs. Let them do what they want to do. I think there's a lot of kids playing [ice] hockey that don't even want to play [ice] hockey. Just let them decide what they want do and how much they want to do it.

A good example of understanding and sharing their daughters' goals was provided by P8. She was the mother of three daughters, and had played at an elite level of sport herself. But she realized that her own prowess as an athlete did not necessarily extend to her children. She explained:

> I never really pushed my kids to get involved in ringette at all because I didn't want to be one of those parents who made their kids play the game because they loved it. Just 'cause you loved it doesn't mean they will. So I think that's it. Let it be their dream, not your dream and let them find their way but help them.

Not forcing the journey. Consistent with the notion of understanding and sharing goals for sport, parents made a conscious effort not to force or push their daughters in a particular direction on their sporting journey. As C6 said, "If a child excels at something a parent's job is to try and foster that, but it's not for them to try and force that." P1 felt it was important to "not push [our daughters] to do something that they don't want to do and encourage them to do what they do want to do." Essentially, exemplary sport parents let their daughters "take the lead" (P8)

on their journey in sport and are there to provide support along the way. Parents emphasized that a child's sport experience is about the child first, and not the parent. As one father (P6) explained:

> I never wanted her to feel that she had to keep playing this for me. It wasn't about me. I was happy to support her as long as it was working for her, but if it wasn't working for her, then that's fine.

Similarly, another father (P3) said:

> We've allowed our kids to try any sports that they were interested in, to find what's best for them, so we've supported them all the way, and didn't try to fit them into a sport that we thought they would like, or we thought they were a good fit for.

P9 emphasized this point when she said her "pet peeve" was seeing other parents "pushing a kid when they are not passionate and it's not their own goal" and "parents who want something so badly for their child and they want it far worse than the child wants it."

Unfortunately, C8, an ice hockey coach, often encountered parents that put too much pressure on their children to succeed, leading those children to quit their sport. He explained:

> When a parent is super critical, and overbearing, and pressuring their kids too much, that's the last thing you want to see is that the kid stops playing because they don't enjoy the game anymore. And it happens lots.

When describing the "best sport parents" she ever worked with, C2 described a situation when one of her players wanted to take a break from ice hockey to focus on other activities and her parents were supportive of that decision. C2 said:

> They had a daughter that one year was like, 'I don't think I want to play [ice] hockey, I want to take a break and focus on something else' and I was like, 'Oh like, what do your parents say?' and she said, 'Oh it's up to me.' Like cool, because she wanted to focus on singing and theatre arts for a year and then she went back to AAA [a highly competitive level of ice hockey] the year after and I was like, 'that's incredible.' Like they just want her to be happy. That was it.

In this instance, the parents allowed their daughter to make her own decisions and did not pressure her to stay in ice hockey. Ultimately, she returned to ice hockey on her own accord because she enjoyed it. She was not forced back into her sporting journey.

Principles of an Understanding Emotional Climate

Exemplary sport parents adopted principles that enabled them to create a 'climate' in relation to sport that showed that they understood their daughter and focused on her emotional experiences. The themes in this category were emphasizing effort, having fun, fostering independence, trusting and supporting coaches, and supporting the team and the club.

Emphasizing effort. Parents placed an emphasis on effort rather than outcomes. P6 explained that:

> … I didn't care whether you score a goal, I didn't care whether you made a mistake, all I cared about was that you tried your hardest... So just give it your best effort and some days that will have good results and some days it might not but as long as you gave your best effort. The only time I was ever really critical was if I didn't feel the best effort was being given.

Similarly, P5 said that the only expectations she had for her daughters in sport was "to have fun and do their best." This mother did not care if her child was winning or at the top of her sport, only that she was trying her hardest. P5 further explained:

> If they're working hard, then that's the best they can do. My oldest daughter, she was the lowest in her gymnastics class for the first three years. She always finished last in the competitions but it was like, you know what, 'Are you trying your hardest? Yeah. OK then do you love it? Yeah, I love it. Do you want to keep going to practices? Yeah.'

P3 explained that he and his wife were willing to support their children as long as they knew they were doing their best. They were consistent in applying this principle across school and sport. He said:

> Our expectations in school are to try to have our kids, or try to help our kids, do the best they can and not necessarily the best overall or as good as someone else, but the best they can do. I think that applies to sports as well. You don't have to be number one. We don't have expectations of them being number one in school or in sports and we don't push that. Everyone has limitations. So as long as we know that they're trying hard and they're doing the best they can do, we support that and if there's anything we can do to make it better, then we're here.

C3 felt that sport parents should have conversations with their children about the importance of effort versus winning. She said, "the atmosphere around [sport] needs to be about doing your best versus winning, that's a hard conversation to have, but it's an ongoing conversation you're having with your child…"

Having fun. Exemplary sport parents would 'check in' with their daughters and ask, "are you still having fun?" (P1). For example, C7 said the first question a parent should ask after a competition is, "Did you enjoy yourself today?" For P6, as his daughter progressed in her sport journey it was important to make sure she was still enjoying it. P6 explained that:

> As she got older it was, you know, 'Are you still having fun? 'Cause you gotta be having fun. So if you're not having fun and not enjoying it, if you don't feel like this is something that's making you feel good about yourself, then why are we doing this?'

C8 believed that parents' "priority number one" should be that their children "still enjoy the game." Further, C6 felt that a sport parent should measure their children's success in sport by the amount of fun they are having, as opposed to wins and losses. He explained:

> … all parents want to see their kid succeed. Now do you measure success in wins and losses or do you measure success in the amount of friends they have? Do you measure success in them wanting to continue on with that sport year after year after year? That's success… As a parent if you take that step back and say 'is my son or daughter enjoying their time at the sporting activity that they chose?' And if they are, that's success.

It was also important that the *parents themselves* were having fun with regard to their daughters' involvement in sport. C4 said that parents should "have fun. Like, it shouldn't be stressful or hard on them to be a sport parent, like, they should enjoy it and enjoy it because their daughter or their son enjoys it..." C2 recalled fond memories of parents who saw sport as a fun, social gathering. She said:

> You spend time and become friends with other parents on the [ice] hockey team because you see them three or four times a week, which is more than you see any other adult when you're a parent. Like I love parents that did that. They had their own fun groups. They would go on Tim Hortons runs, get us our coffees, they trusted us with the kids and that was like the best kind of parents.

Parents perceived that having fun and telling their children that they enjoyed watching them play their sport was a way to show love, support, and encouragement. P5 enjoyed watching her daughters play so much, that when they graduated from high school, she missed watching them play sport. She said, "Well, I enjoy it so much that I miss it now. They're all graduated. I would be involved as much as I could because I enjoyed it. I enjoyed being there and I enjoyed watching it."

Fostering independence. Whereas exemplary sport parents were clearly highly involved in their daughters' sport, they tried to foster a sense of independence. The coaches recognized the importance of trying to strike a balance between being highly involved while fostering children's independence. C4 explained:

> I think it's kind of finding the balance of giving them the freedom to sort of explore and be challenged and knowing when they need to be more of that caring parent and when they need to be pushed a little bit.

In the following quote, P3 discussed this notion of fostering independence while still providing guidance using the concept of giving his children 'freedom.' He said:

> We [husband and wife] have the same philosophy when it comes to allowing our kids the freedom to do what they enjoy. So maybe we'll voice our opinion about

> certain things but we're maybe providing alternatives or choices that they might not be aware of.

Here, P3 highlighted how he provided guidance but gave his children options to make decisions. P10 described this idea as "giving them enough rope so they can trip but not hang themselves." At times, allowing their children to make their own decisions resulted in them making mistakes or experiencing failure. For example, P5 said:

> I let them make mistakes. I didn't always rescue them. So let's say somebody made a mistake and forgot their cleats or shoes or whatever, it was like learn by mistake. I wasn't ever [an] angry parent or would get mad at them. I would just say, 'OK what do we have to do next time to make sure that that's there.'

P4 explained *why* she thought it was important to foster independence. She said:

> I think we are encouraging independence in our kids. I guess that's our goal, right, is for them to become you know, contributing citizens to society. That might be our contribution, developing those qualities within them.

Trusting and supporting coaches. Exemplary sport parents trusted their daughters' coaches. C3 said that it "was really important that [parents] are trusting the coach's decisions" and C4 said:

> I think if the parents trust you and feel like they can talk to you if they need to, and they know you're doing the best for their child, then most of the time even if they might not agree with how you made a decision, they're not gonna challenge you on it.

P10 had a similar perspective, and explained that:

> If you have a good coach, and you place your kids in their trust, and you put them on their team then I think you should let the coach coach. And the parent should support the kid the best they can and encourage them to have conversations with their coach and work through that stuff.

Parents expressed that they often trusted their daughter's coaches and would not challenge their decisions, even if they or their child, might disagree. For example, P6 said:

> I always wanted them [coaches] to know that I was there to support them and I needed them to know that I trusted them and would defer to them and if my daughter wasn't getting as much playing time as she wanted, I never ever called a coach out and said my kid deserves to be either on this line, more playing time, you know, whatever it was.

But while not questioning a coach was a feature of the parents' activities, they did strive to engage in open and honest communication with the coach, at an appropriate time and place. When discussing how often a parent should interact with their daughter's coach, P3 said:

> … there's a lot of sport parents that maybe go overboard and think they have to actually control the coach and say, 'you're doing this wrong' or whatever the case… Then there's a good middle ground where you can develop a good relationship and you can have a conversation. I think that's probably the most proactive approach to it…

Supporting the team and club. Exemplary sport parents did not only support the coach, but their support extended to the team and club more broadly. There were some specific roles parents could fulfill and, crucially, none of these involved actually coaching the children. For example, C1 said that exemplary sport parenting, in his experience, involved:

> Volunteering at registration, washing the jerseys at the end of the season, helping to score keep games, helping to manage, [helping] if we're gonna do some type of a fun day activity day, someone has to be treasurer, or to do the money. There are a host of things and duties to organize…

Similarly, C4 explained that it was important to provide clearly defined roles in which parents could help the team and the club. She said:

> ...we have parents that are really keen. They wanna help. So we try to give them a role that's really specific… So on my current team I have a mom that is, she's always really keen to do team suppers and stuff like that and so that's a good role for a parent. So I think just establishing those things are important.

The parents in this study were often highly involved with their daughters' teams, either through fundraising, volunteering at tournaments, or having an official position with the team, such as team treasurer or team manager. Parents recognized they could help in these 'ancillary' roles without interfering with the coaching. For instance, one mother said, "when the team needs something, stepping up and saying, yeah, absolutely I'll help out. Even if it's just a tiny little thing. Help out when you can and just help them focus on what they need to focus on" (P8).

In fact, for some parents, *not* being involved with the team or club in some capacity was actually considered to be bad sport parenting. P3 suggested that:

> It's one thing to not be involved on your kid's behalf but you're also not supporting the team, you're not supporting the league, or sports in general by just ignoring it and thinking, 'There's my kid, let them do their thing and it's got nothing to do with me.' So not supporting them on a bigger level than just your own kid is… [that's] definitely a behavior that a bad sport parent would have.

Enhancing Practices Surrounding Competitions

This category depicts some of the specific practices in which exemplary sport parents engaged to support their children in relation to competitions (e.g., games). These practices were captured by the themes of taking care of the basics before competitions, staying positive during competitions, and staying positive after competitions. Critically, these competition-related practices were extremely *consistent* with the principles the parents adopted in terms of creating an understanding emotional climate.

Taking care of the basics before competitions. Parents and coaches felt that it was parents' responsibility to ensure their daughters were prepared to participate in their sport. For example, coaches said exemplary sport parents ensured their children arrived at games and practices on time. C1 said, "Great parents understand that if the game starts at 6 p.m., the kid is there, shoes on, water bottle filled at 5:40 p.m., not running in the door at 6 o'clock." P5 shared a similar view, and said a key element of the sport parent role was simply, "To get them to practice and to places on time. [That] was the big one that I found was my biggest role."

Parents also made sure their daughters were getting the proper nutrition and adequate amount of sleep to perform well in their sport. For example, P9 felt her responsibility was "making sure that she's getting enough sleep. Reminding her 'OK you need to make sure that you're eating well', just kind of being the practical support maybe, if you want to call it that." Further, P10 saw himself as his daughter's "support network" that supplied anything his daughter needed to perform in her sport. This support included helping with "nutrition, medical resources, any questions she'd need answered, feedback when it was solicited, and then travelling and making sure she had the best travel times and was able to rest and take care of her body and all that stuff."

While parents were eager to provide this type of support to their daughters, they recognized the need to balance their support with also teaching their daughter to do things for herself (consistent with the principle of fostering independence). Reflecting on good sport parents he had encountered, C6 recalled "they made sure she had proper nutrition, proper rest, she was always prepared, yet when it came to the competitions they would just take their step back." Similarly, P5 would prompt her daughters the night before a competition, so they could prepare everything they needed for the next day on their own:

> I'm going to get them there at this time and be the taxi driver to make sure they are all in the right places and they had enough to eat and had all their stuff together. So the night before, I'd say, 'OK what do you need for tomorrow? You get it all ready.'

Parents and coaches also recognized that the practical support that parents provided changed over time. Specifically, as their daughters got older, parents provided less support in terms of driving them to and from practices or games, preparing their equipment, and making meals. As C5 explained:

> When they're little, when they're small you have probably more hands on. They're making sure they're dressed properly, get skates on, make sure the ball glove is on. So more hands on physically as a parent, where you're getting your kid prepared and then turning them loose. As they're older, you're less hands on, more support as far as the running of the club, all that management behind the team, you need more management less hands on. If that makes sense.

Staying positive during competitions. Coaches and parents discussed ways in which exemplary sport parents would specifically behave during competitions. In terms of staying positive during a competition, C1 said good sport parents:

> [Are] celebrating the positive things your daughter does, and not complaining about the negative things others do… They are saying things like 'Hey, good job!' 'Good catch!' 'Hey, nice pass!'And 'Way to be tough on the rebound!' That's wonderful, you're there to support your daughter… You're not gonna embarrass anybody.

Staying positive extended to providing encouragement for other players on the team. P6 said that he provides "positive commentary on our own team's play and I'm always very mindful of not just singling out my own child but singling out all the players and providing positive encouragement to all of them."

A corollary to staying positive was not being negative. For example, P7 said:

> I guess the biggest thing that always comes to mind is to be supportive and should that be the main priority? Probably, yes. But I would say the biggest priority is don't be negative. Like it should yes be supportive of your kid but I think the biggest thing that has to happen is don't ever be negative.

Participants highlighted that, at times, they could become frustrated (e.g., following a bad call by an official) and that it was important to be aware of their own emotions. P1 said, "trying to help your child manage their emotions is challenging. And managing your own too at times." During these times they were extremely mindful of remaining positive. P7 described this as making a "concerted effort" (P7) to remain positive and went on to explain that after a bad call, "I keep my mouth shut and bite my tongue and just say like, 'Yay! Go girls! Good job! Keep

going!" Similarly, P2 described how she made a conscious effort to "never rant on the negative, just the positive."

Further, parents made a point of trying not to create a negative atmosphere for opponents. P6 said, "I never am critical of play. I never cheer another team's bad play like if they make a mistake, I don't cheer for that…" Similarly, P2 made a point to never discourage the opposing team. She said:

> So as a fan, it's like you clap when you make a point, but you don't necessarily clap when the other team makes an error. It's kind of like OK you were just given that point because they served in the net, I don't need to clap for that.

Staying positive after competitions. For exemplary sport parents, staying positive extended to the period following competition. C2 explained:

> It's talking about the game after the game with the child, but it's not criticizing everything they do. It's giving constructive feedback. It's like, looking at the positive strengths instead of focusing on the weaknesses.

Participants (e.g., C3, P8) described exemplary sport parents as being "sounding boards" during the car ride home. C7 discussed the importance of staying positive during the car ride home. He said:

> Once the child leaves the field or the player leaves the field, then of course conversations are gonna go ahead in the car, but again, all it should be, in my opinion, is that you carry on the encouragement and just say 'Did you enjoy today? Did you enjoy your practice? Did you think you played well? Because I thought you played really well. I thought you trained very hard.' And that's all it should really be.

The car ride was a time for parents to "just let her [daughter] vent when she needs to vent and just support her" (C6). P8, in particular, found that it was part of her role as a parent to listen and help her daughters deal with their emotions after a game. She explained:

> You know, they might come to me and go, 'oh, that sucked' but it doesn't matter whether they're complaining about something or they're excited about something. I think that being there emotionally for them is really important and knowing when just to listen and not to talk.

Interestingly, knowing what to say to their daughters post-game came appeared to be learned via trial and error for parents, which suggested they were reflective. For instance, P3 said that, over time, he learned that some questions were better left unasked:

> It's taken me a long time to understand that sometimes things are best left unsaid... I do say 'Man that was a good game!' I try not to say, 'What happened on those three pointers you missed?' I mean I still find myself asking that, which, thinking about it afterwards, it's kind of a stupid question because there's no answer, other than 'Yeah I failed to make the shots.' It's taken me a long time to figure out there are some questions that you may want to ask, but there isn't a really good answer for it, so it's better off not asking. Period.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to produce a conceptualization of good parenting in female youth sport. Youth sport coaches were asked about what they perceive to be good parenting in youth sport and nominated exemplary sport parents were asked about what they do to support their daughters in sport. The results were organized by the categories of shared goals (captured by the themes of understanding and sharing goals and not forcing the journey), principles of an understanding emotional climate (captured by the themes of emphasizing effort, having fun, fostering independence, trusting and supporting coaches and supporting the team and club), and enhancing practices surrounding competitions (captured by the themes of taking care of the basics before competition, staying positive during competitions, and staying positive after competitions).

When using ID methodology, Thorne (2016) recommended developing an overarching conceptual claim to express the key findings. The overarching conceptual claim for this study is that: *Good sport parents are attentive to their children's emotional needs and understand their children, themselves, and the sporting context. They understand what to do, and when and how to do it, within a complex sporting milieu.* In the following sections each of the main findings are discussed before returning to the conceptual claim and considering it more generally in light of other recent work on youth sport parenting.

The category of shared goals was related to how parents shared and sought to understand their daughters' goals for sport. The concept of shared goals is well-established in the literature. Darling and Steinberg's (1993) integrative contextual model of parenting style begins with parents having goals for their children's socialization (i.e., the acquisition of specific skills and

the development of more global qualities). These goals then shape the specific parenting styles and practices in which parents engage. Shared goals are also featured in Knight and Holt's (2014) grounded theory (that was used to guide the analysis). In this grounded theory parents and children sharing and communicating goals (e.g., reasons for involvement) enables parents to understand and enhance their child's sport journey. By understanding their children's goals, parents are able to engage in the specific types of involvement that are preferred or needed, as different parenting practices could be required to attain different goals (Knight & Holt, 2014). Parents in the current study made an effort to understand what their daughters wanted to get out of sport, which provided parents with important information on what to do and how to be involved. As a result, parents adapted their own behaviors and expectations in order to meet their children's goals. Therefore, the concept of shared goals is consistent with previous research in developmental and sport psychology.

In the second major category, exemplary sport parents adopted principles that enabled them to create a 'climate' in relation to sport that showed they understood their daughters and focused on their emotional experiences in sport. That is, the parents appeared to be in tune with their children's emotional needs *and* appeared to know how to create an appropriate climate. Ways that parents created an understanding emotional climate were emphasizing effort over outcome, and ensuring everyone - parents and children - were having fun. Previous studies have shown that the emphasis on effort and fun result in a more enjoyable sport experience for young athletes (Knight & Holt, 2014; Knight, Neely, & Holt, 2011). Athletes prefer when parents focus on effort over outcome as it makes them feel like there is less pressure placed on them to perform well (Knight et al., 2011). According to Knight and Holt (2014), children reported experiencing less pressure when their parents enjoyed themselves at competitions because it made their

parents appear more relaxed. Furthermore, the focus on effort and fun reflects a mastery motivational climate, thus encouraging children to be task-involved (i.e. seeking to demonstrate competence in relation to their own task mastery; Atkins et al., 2015; Harwood et al., 2008). Those who perceive a mastery motivational climate tend to have a more favourable sport experience, as those perceptions of a mastery climate are associated with positive motivational outcomes, such as heightened perceived competence, heightened self-esteem, and heightened positive affect (e.g., enjoyment, satisfaction, interest; Harwood, Keegan, Smith, & Raine, 2015; O'Rourke et al., 2014).

Although parents in this study were highly involved in their children's sport, it was important for them to strike a balance between being highly involved and fostering independence. Again this reflects the claim that parents were attentive to their children's emotional needs and know what, how, and when to be involved while fostering independence. For instance, parents wanted to be supportive of their children, but also wanted them to learn to make decisions for themselves. Thus, parents often voiced their opinions and provided alternative choices, but ultimately the children made the decisions. Parents found that allowing their children to make their own decisions opened them up to the possibility of making mistakes, but these mistakes resulted in a learning experience that would help them make better decisions in the future. In a grounded theory of adolescent athletes' learning about coping and the role of parents and coaches, Tamminen and Holt (2012) found that parents fostering independence was a way to provide a supportive context for learning coping skills. Parents knew that they needed to strike a balance by supporting and protecting their daughters but also providing freedom, as they did not want to fix everything for them and end up with children who have no ability to deal with adversity.

Another way parents created an understanding emotional climate was through having a trusting and supportive relationship with their daughters' coaches. Several studies examining relationships between parents and coaches have tended to focus on the negative aspects of the parent-coach relationship. For instance, Knight and Harwood (2009a) found parents' behaviors, perceptions of the coach, understanding of the sport, and demands on the coach to be stressors that coaches encountered in youth sport. Further, Ross et al. (2015) found that coaches and administrators experienced more negative interactions with parents (such as, anger/complaints over coaching issues, playing opportunities, and refereeing decisions) than positive interactions. As such, the coach-parent relationship is often seen as problematic (Holt & Knight, 2014).

On the other hand, previous research has also identified positive aspects of the parent-coach relationship (Jowett & Timson Katchis, 2005; Wolfenden & Holt, 2005). For instance, parents can positively influence the quality of the dyadic coach-athlete relationship by providing information to their children on how to resolve conflicts with their coach, and also provide valuable information to coaches about their children (Jowett & Timson Katchis, 2005). Furthermore, Harwood and Knight (2015) posited that in order to demonstrate sport parenting expertise, parents must support the coach, respect their authority, and avoid undermining their leadership. The current study sheds more light on the positive aspects of the coach-parent relationship, given that all of the parents reported having positive relationships with coaches, and coaches described the positive ways in which they interacted with parents. The parent-coach relationship appears to reflect the concept that parents understood the complex sporting milieu. They were attentive to their children's needs (i.e., that children needed their parents to support their coach) and to the needs of the coach (i.e., offering the coach support and trusting them to make decisions).

In the current study nearly all of the parents and coaches felt that it was a feature of good sport parenting to be involved with the team and/or club through volunteering, fundraising, or having an official role such as manager or treasurer. Parents volunteered at tournaments, held fundraisers, served as team managers, treasurers, and organized team bonding activities, such as team dinners. This finding supports the work of Knight, Dorsch, et al. (2016) who found that parents could fulfill various roles simultaneously when it comes to their child's sport participation. One role outlined by Knight, Dorsch, and colleagues was the 'administrator' role, in which parents may fulfill duties such as team manager or fundraiser. In this respect, the current findings contribute to the literature by detailing specific ways in which exemplary sport parents are able to take on multiple roles and extend their support beyond the child to the coach, team and club. Parents in this study were highly-involved in their child's sport without being seen as over-involved by their daughter's coach because they knew *how* they should be involved and as such, tailored their involvement to match the needs of the team and the club.

It is through these principles that parents were able to understand their daughters' emotional needs and create an understanding emotional climate. These principles are different than those outlined in Knight and Holt's (2014) category of creating an understanding emotional climate. In the grounded theory, parents needed to demonstrate that they understood the intricacies and challenges associated with competitive tennis, the influence of external factors on children's tennis experiences, and how tennis fit within their children's lives. Creating an understanding emotional climate meant having knowledge about their children's sport (tennis), which would help them understand their children's sport experience. In the current study, parents did not necessarily demonstrate specific knowledge of their daughter's sport. Rather, they demonstrated an understanding of the individual needs of their child, the coach, the team, and the

club. There are several reasons why the principles are different. For example, Knight and Holt's grounded theory focused on parenting of county and national tennis players. The focus on parenting at the club level in the current study may explain some of the differences, considering that athletes playing at a national level may have different goals than those at the club level, and therefore there may be different responsibilities and expectations placed upon parents. Furthermore, the amount of sport-specific knowledge that the exemplary parents had about their daughters' sport was not addressed in the current study. In Knight and Holt's grounded theory, having knowledge about tennis and what it takes to succeed in tennis helped parents create an understanding emotional climate. Nonetheless, there are similarities between Knight and Holt's grounded theory and the current study as parents in both studies understood the importance of understanding their children's emotional needs and adapting their support to meet those needs.

In the final category, parents engaged in practices before, during, and after competition that were consistent with the principles of creating an understanding emotional climate. Parents and coaches reported that it was parents' responsibility to help their daughters prepare for upcoming competitions. These finding are entirely consistent with previous studies (Knight et al., 2011; Wolfenden & Holt, 2005) that suggest that parents should provide physical or 'tangible' (e.g., transportation, financial support, nutrition) support to help their children prepare for competition. Knight et al. (2011) found that female athletes preferred when parents helped them physically prepare for competition by getting them to competition venues on time, preparing their equipment, and making sure they were eating well, and these things would help them perform better in their competition. While parents in the current study engaged in similar practices, it was also important for parents to teach their children to prepare for competitions themselves, rather than doing everything for them. Similarly, Knight, Little et al. (2016) found

that elite female and male youth athletes wanted parents to trust them to be prepared for both training and competition and this allowed athletes to focus more successfully on their performances. Hence, there was a great deal of similarity between the behaviors athletes prefer from their parents surrounding competitions and the findings of the current study.

Parents and coaches stressed the importance of remaining positive during and after competition, regardless of the outcome and specifically during the car ride home. Elliot and Drummond (2017) found that parents typically 'debrief' their children in the car ride home after a competition and it is at this time that parents provide an assessment and opinion of their child's performance. In Elliot and Drummond's study, they found that parents generally used a 'sandwich' approach when providing feedback, meaning they gave positive comments, followed by one or two critical comments, and concluded with another positive comment. They found that the sandwich style of feedback could be challenging given that children do not necessarily respond well to criticism. Tamminen, Poucher, and Povilaitis (2017) found that not all athletes perceive the car ride home the same way. For some athletes, the car ride home is "something to endure" (p. 6) while other athletes find the car ride home enjoyable. Those athletes who found the car ride home enjoyable felt that it was a time that their parents provided support after a poor performance. This notion is consistent with the current study in which exemplary parents emphasized that post-competition was a time to provide emotional support and act as a sounding board for their daughters to vent their frustrations, rather than a time for parents to inject their opinions on their performance or how the game went. Some athletes in Tamminen et al.'s (2017) study appreciated when their parents provided post-game feedback on their performance because it helped them improve. However, the parents in the current study avoided providing negative feedback and made an effort to remain positive after competition. Consistent with principles of

creating an understanding emotional climate, parents would comment on their children's effort during the game rather than their performance, and would ask them if they enjoyed themselves. In this sense, parents knew what kind of feedback their daughters needed to hear after a game, and how to deliver it.

Further Considerations with Regard to Conceptual Claim

The overarching conceptual claim for this study is that exemplary sport parents are attentive to their children's emotional needs and understand their children, themselves, and the sporting context. They understand what to do, and when and how to do it, within a complex sporting milieu. The following sections will link this claim to concepts such as autonomy supportive parenting and emotional intelligence, and how these findings may contribute to future research in sport parenting.

Links to autonomy supportive parenting. One way to understand the 'climate' that parents create is through their parenting style. Darling and Steinberg (1993) described parenting style as "a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parent's behaviors are expressed" (p. 488). Baumrind (1971, 1978) created a classification of parenting styles, which are authoritative, authoritarian, permissive, and rejecting-neglecting. The parents in the current study generally appeared to adopt a parenting style consistent with authoritative parenting. Authoritative parents place high maturity demands on their children, are less controlling, and demonstrate responsiveness through love and support. Generally, authoritative parents provide rules and boundaries and encourage their children to be self-regulating within these rules and boundaries. Authoritative parenting has been associated with positive child outcomes in school and sport (e.g., Juntumaa et al., 2005; Sapieja et al., 2011; Steinberg et al., 1992). The findings from these

studies would suggest that authoritative parenting is associated with more positive outcomes for children than authoritarian parenting.

Similar to authoritative parenting is the notion of autonomy supportive parenting. According to Grolnick (2003), autonomy support reflects the extent to which the environment allows children to feel in control of their actions, as opposed to feeling coerced to act a certain way. Essentially, autonomy supportive parents provide children with options to choose and to solve problems on their own, allow children to make their own decisions, and exert minimal pressure on their children (Grolnick & Ryan, 1989). Previous research examining autonomy supportive parenting in sport conducted by Holt and colleagues (2009) found that autonomy supportive parents tended to place little pressure on their children, provided an appropriate amount of structure, were able to read their child's mood and engaged in two-way communication. Certain themes depicted in the current study (e.g., shared goals, not forcing the journey, fostering independence) are characteristics of autonomy supportive parenting. Furthermore, parents in the current study demonstrated consistency across different contexts (i.e., having similar expectations for school and sport) and consistency between their parenting style and parenting practices. Although the current study did not specifically assess parenting styles, the findings likely support the concept that authoritative/autonomy supporting parenting styles reflect the emotional climate created by exemplary sport parents.

Links to emotional intelligence. Harwood and Knight's (2015) position paper on sport parenting expertise postulated that parents who demonstrate expertise are emotionally intelligent individuals who "manage the emotional demands of competition" (p. 27), "understand their child's emotional needs" (p. 29) and are role models of values, such as effort, sportpersonship, and honesty. The sport parents in the current study supported this notion by demonstrating their

ability to manage their emotions during competition, specifically by remaining positive when they or their daughters were faced with adverse situations (e.g., poor officiating). They also demonstrated an understanding of their daughters' emotional needs by adapting their support to coincide with what worked for them and their daughters.

Through understanding the emotional needs of their daughters, themselves, and others in the sporting context (e.g., coaches, teammates, and opponents), the parents in this study reflected qualities of emotional intelligence (EI), as outlined by Salovey and Mayer (1990). EI is the "ability to monitor one's own and others' feelings and emotions, to discriminate among them and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey & Mayer, 1990, p. 189). Parents in this study demonstrated characteristics of Salovey and Mayer's ability model, in which EI is seen as a mental skill or ability (as opposed to a personality trait) that can be developed over time (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Parents reported that over time they *learned* what to say and how to behave in certain situations. Mayer and Salovey (1997) divided their ability model of EI into four branches: (1) The ability to perceive and recognize emotion accurately and adaptively, (2) the ability to use emotions to generate cognitive activities, (3) the ability to understand and analyze emotions, how they develop, and the relationships that exist among them, and (4) the ability to manage emotion in oneself and others in the context of the individual's goal, self-knowledge, and social awareness.

Parents in the current study reflected qualities consistent with each of the four branches of EI. They were able to read and recognize their own emotions, as well as their child's emotions, those of the coach, the rest of the team, and even the opponents (first branch). The emotions they recognized guided their thinking and therefore their actions (e.g., cheering for the whole team, not cheering if their child's opponent made a mistake; second branch). They

demonstrated an understanding of their child's emotions, were able to anticipate what emotions their child would feel after a win or a loss, and delivered emotional support that they knew their child would be receptive to (third branch). And finally, consistent with the fourth branch, parents demonstrated that they were able to harness and regulate their emotions based on the knowledge they had of their child's goals and what was appropriate in the given sporting context (e.g., emphasizing effort and fun after a loss, making a concerted effort to always remain positive). Meyer and Fletcher (2007) suggested that EI could be a unique and important construct in the domain of sport performance and athlete, team, and coach satisfaction, and that "knowledge of an individual's EI profile can be used to inform the design and delivery of educational and clinical programs" (p.11). Thus, further research in the area of sport parenting and EI may be helpful for informing future sport parent education initiatives, as it may be that exemplary sport parents have high levels of EI.

Limitations and Strengths

The current study is not without limitations. First, coaches in this study could only provide information about how the exemplary sport parents supported their children in sport based on parental behaviors that they witnessed firsthand at practices, competitions, and via parent-coach interactions. They could not speculate on how these parents behaved in other contexts, such as in the family home or in the car ride after a competition. Furthermore, this study relied on parents reporting aspects of their parenting, without any behavioral observations or data from their daughters to triangulate the findings and provide consistency between their reported parenting behaviors and those that they actually demonstrated. It may be that parents presented themselves in the most favorable ways. In the future, studies on exemplary sport

parenting with data from coach-athlete-parent triads would make a valuable contribution to the literature.

Qualitative studies are not typically suited to producing empirically generalizable results. Rather, they have naturalistic generalizability (Shadish, 1995), meaning that the findings can typically apply to a similar population and context to that studied (i.e., parents of female youth athletes participating in team sports). According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), naturalistic generalizations rely on researchers to provide readers with detailed descriptions of experiential accounts in order to determine if and how they can use the information in their own lives. Hence, the results and conceptual claim should contain sufficient information to enable a certain degree of naturalistic generalizability in this manner.

In terms of naturalistic generalizability, it is worth considering the extent to which the findings would only apply to female athletes. The sampling criteria stipulated the inclusion of coaches with experience of coaching female athletes and parents with at least one daughter aged 16-20 years. Whereas the majority of the results do specifically relate to participants' experiences with females (and the parents had, in total, 18 daughters and only five sons), there were some occasions when participants (both coaches and parents) appeared to be referring to children in more general terms (i.e., both males/females or sons/daughters). As such, it is unknown whether the current results would *only* apply to female youth sport or whether some of the findings would also be applicable to males. Future research examining gender differences in relation to exemplary sport parenting would make useful contributions to the literature because there may be differences related to parenting girls and boys in sport (Amado et al., 2015).

The member-checking protocol was incomplete and added little to the study. Indeed, only eight of the 18 participants responded to the member-checking e-mail and their feedback did not

add to or improve the analysis in any demonstrable way. Although Thorne (2016) recommended using member-checking when using ID, the merits of member-checking have been disputed in the sport psychology literature. In fact, Smith and McGannon (2017) recently called into question the effectiveness of member-checking as a verification method altogether. They claimed that there are an insurmountable number of practical problems associated with the strategy, such as the way that an individual's personal interests may influence their response to the member-check, the uncertainty of knowing whether or not the participant has fully engaged in the member-checking process, and issues of power relations in research. Some of these problems may account for the incompleteness of the member-checking protocol used in the current study. Regardless, other verification strategies were used throughout the research process to strengthen the rigor of this study.

A notable strength of this study was the purposeful sampling approach used to recruit exemplary sport parents. Coaches nominated parents who were exemplars of good sport parenting and these parents were exclusively sampled to serve as role models for what parents should do, making a unique contribution to literature in terms of providing practical implications for parents. Previous sport parenting studies (Knight, Dorsch, et al., 2016; Lauer et al., 2010; Wheeler & Green, 2014) have recruited parents without paying specific attention to identifying parents who demonstrate 'good' behavior. While it might be assumed that parents who are confident in their parenting abilities volunteer to participate in studies of parenting, strategies to recruit individuals who serve as models of good parenting have rarely been used in the youth sport parenting literature.

Furthermore, there were constructive procedures (Morse et al., 2002) embedded throughout the research process that contributed to the strength of the study. For example,

methodological coherence was ensured throughout the study. That is, the research question, the method of data collection, the data itself, and the analytic procedures were all coherent and consistent with each other and with ID methodology. Another strength of this study was the sensitive use of theory. Theoretical sensitivity (Glaser & Holton, 2004) is the ability to generate concepts from data and relate them to existing theory (in this case, Knight & Holt's 2014 grounded theory of optimal parental involvement). Knight and Holt's (2014) grounded theory was not used to inform data collection, rather it was used during analysis to make sense of the data. As such, the researcher was required to conceptualize, organize, and make abstract connections between the data and the theory (Glaser & Holton, 2004). Other methodological strengths of the study included a rigorous approach to the development of the interview guide through pilot interviews, concurrent data collection and analysis, and the use of a reflective journal during the research process.

Implications

Based on parents' and coaches' views on exemplary sport parenting, this study was positioned to provide applied implications for how parents should support their children in sport. In addition to providing examples of how nominated exemplary sport parents actually supported their children in sport, the findings from this study highlighted the importance of communication between the parent, child, coach, and sport club. That is, exemplary sport parents were characterized by their ability to understand the individual needs of their children, the coach, and the sport environment, and to adjust their involvement to meet those needs. Strategies for enhancing sport parenting practices may be as simple as encouraging parents to ask questions, and encouraging athletes, coaches, and sport club directors to express to parents how they want them to behave. For example, parents may ask their children: What are your goals for sport?

How can I help you reach your goals? What types of feedback do you prefer to hear after a game?

This study also has applied implications for youth sport organizations when it comes to how they approach parent education initiatives to improve parenting practices on their teams. The findings from this study highlight that exemplary sport parenting is not limited to a list of 'good' and 'bad' behaviors. Rather than just providing a list of rules for parents to adhere to, sport organizations should focus their parent education tools on helping parents understand their children's emotional needs and the specific needs of the sport environment. One way to address this may be in the pre-season parent meeting. Rather than going over a 'code of conduct' and having parents sign off on it, it could be more worthwhile to explain the club's and team's goals for sport and providing parents information on what roles they can fulfill and how they can help the team achieve those goals.

Given that the current findings suggest that elements of autonomy supportive parenting and EI may be important features of exemplary parenting in sport, a logical next step for research in this area would be to examine relations between autonomy support, EI, and child outcomes in sport. One way to do this would be to examine relations between autonomy supportive parenting and parental EI, and how they influence child outcomes in sport among parent-child dyads. Parents could be assessed using the Perceived Parental Autonomy Support Scale (Mageau et al., 2015) which measures autonomy supportive and controlling parenting, and the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Intelligence Test (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2003), a scale designed to measure the four branches of the EI ability model. Children could complete, for example, a measure of enjoyment in (e.g., Sources of Enjoyment in Youth Sport Questionnaire; Wiersma, 2001). In addition, qualitative case studies using behavioral observation and semi-structured

interviews with nominated sport parents and their children may provide opportunities to further examine autonomy supportive parenting and EI.

The results of the current study may also help inform programs aimed at educating parents on how to better support their children in sport. There is little existing research examining the effects of evidence-based sport parent education programs (Knight et al., 2017). An exception was provided by Dorsch et al. (2017), who evaluated a parenting intervention that involved providing U8 and U10 soccer parents. The results from the evaluation indicated that the evidence-based parent education intervention had a positive impact on parental involvement, the parent-child relationship, and child enjoyment and competence.

Knight et al. (2017) suggested that parent education programs may be enhanced by developing and evaluating broader strategies (rather than a list of specific parenting practices) to help parents. One way to address this may be to design an intervention that targets parents' EI more broadly. Perhaps rather than focusing on specific parenting practices in sport, parent education programs could be designed to teach parents skills to understand and adapt to their children's emotional needs. The intervention could be delivered by a qualified sport psychologist to sport parents as an interactive workshop designed to teach general parenting skills (e.g., self-awareness, emotional understanding, emotion regulation) and how to apply these skills to various domains of their children's lives (e.g., school, sport). Mixed-methods, such as pre- and post-intervention surveys and semi-structured interviews with parents and athletes, could be used to evaluate the effect of the intervention on parents' EI and the transferability of the skills to the sport context.

Conclusion

Several of the themes reported herein have previously been reported in other studies (Gould et al., 2016; Knight, Dorsch, et al., 2016; Knight & Holt, 2014; Knight, Little, et al., 2016; Knight et al., 2011; Ross et al., 2015). However, the current study adds to the literature because previous research in sport parenting may "simply reflect the desirable expectations of 'average' parenting" (Harwood & Knight, 2015 p. 33). By sampling exemplary sport parents (and asking coaches to focus on the qualities of good parenting in sport), the current study sheds light on what parents with likely high levels of parenting expertise do to support their children in sport. Another contribution of the current study was that it showed how exemplary parents deployed various principles and practices in ways that focused on understanding their children's emotional experiences, while maintaining an awareness of what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. Knight et al. (2017) suggested that researchers should seek to understand youth sport parenting as an intricate social experience. The results of the current study captured some of the intricacies of this social experience.

Results revealed how exemplary sport parents share and communicate goals with their daughters, strive to create an understanding emotional climate, and engage in enhancing practices surrounding competition. Taken altogether, these findings produced a conceptualization of good parenting in female youth sport. Given the exclusive sampling of exemplary sport parents, the results from this study may serve as recommendations for how parents should support their daughters in sport. The findings from the current study may also provide directions for future research, such as examining how EI and authoritative/autonomy supportive parenting styles contribute to the children's experiences in sport.

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Appendices

Appendix A

Principal Investigator:	Supervisor:
Shannon R. Pynn, MA Student Child and Adolescent Sport and Activity Lab Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation University of Alberta Tel: (780) 803-8461	Dr. Nicholas L. Holt Professor and Associate Dean – Research Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation University of Alberta Tel: (780) 492-7386

Toward a Conceptualization of Good Parenting in Youth Sport

Dear Technical Director/Coach,

My name is Shannon and I am a Master's student (under the supervision of Dr. Nicholas Holt) in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta. This study is a part of my Master's thesis examining good parenting in youth sport.

I would like to invite you to take part in a research study. **The purpose of the study is to produce a conceptualization of good parenting in youth sport.** Specifically, I am looking to recruit youth sport coaches, technical directors (TDs), and parents to discuss what coaches, TDs, and parents perceive as good parenting in sport. I hope to be able to identify how 'exemplary' youth sport parents support their children in sport.

Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in this study you must have at least **5 years of experience** as:

- a TD of a youth sport club or organization
  or
- a coach of a female team in a youth sport club or organization

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be invited to complete an individual interview lasting approximately 30 minutes. You will be asked about your perceptions of what good parenting is in youth sport. You will also be asked to nominate sport parents who you believe exemplify your perceptions of good parenting in sport. However, nominating sport parents is not a requirement for your participation in the study.
The interview will be audio recorded and the recording will be transcribed verbatim. Following data analysis, you will be emailed a written summary of the results and will be asked to answer questions about the accuracy of the results. At this point you will also be able to provide additional comments and feedback (this will take approximately 15 minutes).

Therefore, the total time commitment for this study is approximately **45 minutes**.

Benefits
There are no direct benefits to you as individuals. However, the information you provide may help to identify and improve current practices associated with parenting in youth sport.

Risks
It is highly unlikely there are any risks associated with this study. If any question makes you uncomfortable in any way, you do not have to answer it. If at any time during the interview you want to stop, you can let me know and we will stop.

Freedom to Withdraw
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no negative consequences if you choose not to participate. All of your data, including personal contact information, will be deleted upon request. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me within four weeks after your initial interview.

Anonymity and Confidentiality
Once the interviews are typed up, I will remove all personal information, and all names will be replaced with pseudonyms. Any information that you provide will remain confidential. All data will be secured in a locked office. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the data. I am required to keep the data for five years after the study. After five years the data will be destroyed. Once I have finished the study I will present the results at conferences and in an academic journal. No identifying information (e.g., names, locations) will be included in any results presented in academic settings.

This study has been approved by the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board. Any questions you may have about this study may be directed to Shannon Pynn by email (spynn@ualberta.ca). Questions about your rights as a research participant may be directed to the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615. This office has no direct involvement with this project.

If you would like to participate in this study,
please contact Shannon at spynn@ualberta.ca or 780-803-8461.

Many thanks,

Shannon R. Pynn
MA Student

Appendix B

Principal Investigator:	Supervisor:
Shannon R. Pynn, MA Student Child and Adolescent Sport and Activity Lab Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation University of Alberta Tel: (780) 803-8461	Dr. Nicholas L. Holt Professor and Associate Dean – Research Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation University of Alberta Tel: (780) 492-7386

Toward a Conceptualization of Good Parenting in Youth Sport

Dear Parent,

My name is Shannon and I am a Master's student (under the supervision of Dr. Nicholas Holt) in the Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation at the University of Alberta. This study is a part of my Master's thesis examining good parenting in youth sport.

I am inviting you to take part in a research study because you have been nominated by a coach or technical director from a sports club as someone who exemplifies the qualities of a good sport parent. **The purpose of the study is to produce a conceptualization of good parenting in youth sport.** Specifically, I am looking to recruit exemplary youth sport parents to discuss how they support their children in sport.

Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in this study you must:

- Have a daughter between the ages of 16-20 who participates (or has participated) in organized youth sport

If you choose to participate in this study, you will be invited to complete an individual interview lasting approximately 45 minutes. You will be asked questions about your thoughts, behaviors, and experiences as a youth sport parent.

The interview will be audio recorded and the recording will be transcribed verbatim. Following data analysis, you will be emailed a written summary of the results and will be asked to answer questions about the accuracy of the results. At this point you will also be able to provide additional comments and feedback (this will take approximately 15 minutes).
Therefore, the total time commitment for this study is approximately **60 minutes.**

Benefits

There are no direct benefits to you as individuals. However, the information you provide may help to identify and improve current practices associated with parenting in youth sport.

Risks

It is highly unlikely there are any risks associated with this study. If any question makes you uncomfortable in any way, you do not have to answer it. If at any time during the interview you want to stop, you can let me know and we will stop.

Freedom to Withdraw
Participation in this study is completely voluntary. There are no negative consequences if you choose not to participate. All of your data, including personal contact information, will be deleted upon request. If you wish to withdraw from the study, please contact me within four weeks after your initial interview.

Anonymity and Confidentiality
Once the interviews are typed up, I will remove all personal information, and all names will be replaced with pseudonyms. Any information that you provide will remain confidential. All data will be secured in a locked office. Only my supervisor and I will have access to the data. I am required to keep the data for five years after the study. After five years the data will be destroyed. Once I have finished the study I will present the results at conferences and in an academic journal. No identifying information (e.g., names, locations) will be included in any results presented in academic settings.

This study has been approved by the University of Alberta Research Ethics Board. Any questions you may have about this study may be directed to Shannon Pynn by email (spynn@ualberta.ca). Questions about your rights as a research participant may be directed to the University of Alberta Research Ethics Office at (780) 492-2615. This office has no direct involvement with this project.

If you would like to participate in this study,
please contact Shannon at spynn@ualberta.ca or 780-803-8461.

Many thanks,

Shannon R. Pynn
MA Student

Appendix C

Informed Consent Form

Title of Project: Toward a Conceptualization of Good Parenting in Youth Sport	
Principle Investigator:	**Supervisor:**
Shannon R. Pynn, MA Student Child and Adolescent Sport and Activity Lab Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation University of Alberta Tel: (780) 803-8461	Dr. Nicholas L. Holt Professor and Associate Dean – Research Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation University of Alberta Tel: (780) 492-7386

Do you understand that you have been asked to take part in a research study?	Yes	No
Have you read and received a copy of the attached information letter?	Yes	No
Do you understand the benefits and risks involved in taking part in this research study?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you are free to contact the researcher to ask questions and discuss this study?	Yes	No
Do you understand that you are free to refuse participation, or to withdraw from the study up to four weeks after your interview, without consequence?	Yes	No
Do you understand the issues of confidentiality and do you understand who will have access to your information?	Yes	No
I agree to take part in this study:	**Yes**	**No**

Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix D

Coach Interview Guide

Preamble
Thank you for agreeing to participate in this interview. You have been asked to participate in this study because you may be able to provide insight into what is good parenting in sport.
There are no right or wrong answers here. I am interested in your opinions and experiences.

This interview is meant to be a conversation rather than a strict 'question and answer' format. So don't worry about going 'off topic' or talking about things I did not specifically ask about. I want to know everything you know or have witnessed when it comes to sport parents.

[SWITCH RECORDER ON]

Demographics
Before we start I just have to ask a few brief demographic questions. I need this information for when I go to publish this study so I can describe the sample (e.g., mean age).

- How old are you?
- How much education have you completed (e.g., high school, diploma/degree, post-graduate degree)?
- What sport(s) do you coach?
- How many years have you been a coach/TD in youth sport?
- What coaching qualifications do you have?
- Do you coach in a system that is "competitive" or "recreational"?

Introductory Questions ('Ice breakers')
I'm going to start with some general background questions just to get things going.

- Were you involved in organized sport as a youth?
- Do you remember things your parents did as sport parents?
- How do you think parenting in sport has changed since then?
- Are you a parent? If so, have you ever coached your child?

Main Questions

<u>Parent Roles & Expectations</u>

The first set of questions is about the expectations you may have for the parents on your team.

- How involved do you expect parents to be in their child's sport?
    - How involved should they be with the sports club?
    - How often do you like to communicate with parents?
    - How do you think parents' involvement changes over time?
    - Probe for details [how often they should attend games, practices, etc.]

- What do you think is a parents' main responsibility when it comes to their child's sport?
    - What other responsibilities do you think they have?
    - How do good parents manage these responsibilities?
    - How do you think parents' responsibilities change as their child progresses in sport?
    - Probe for details [focus on parent roles at home, in training, in competition]

Parenting Styles

Parenting style is a parent's general approach to parenting.

- What kind of atmosphere should parents try to create within their families, in regards to sport?
    - Should they parent differently in different situations? (i.e., have different expectations for their child in school or at home versus in sport?)
    - What should parents' goals and aspirations be for their children in sport?

Parenting Practices

- How should sport parents behave at their child's sport competitions?
    - Probe for details [focus on specific behaviors, ask for specific examples]

- I would like you to think about a specific parent that you've encountered that you thought was a really good sport parent. What made that parent a good sport parent in your eyes?
    - How did that parent support their child in sport? Be as specific as possible.
    - Probe for details [focus on specific behaviors and examples]

- In order to help us understand what makes a good parent, we need to understand what 'bad' parenting means. So what do you think is bad parenting in youth sport?
    - Probe for details [ask for specific examples]

- In your opinion, does 'good parenting' change as the child gets older or plays at a higher level of competition?

Summary Questions

- If you had the chance to speak to parents who are thinking about putting their children into competitive sport, what advice would you have for them?

- Finally, are there any other features of good parenting that you can think of that we maybe haven't discussed yet?

Appendix E

Parent Interview Guide

Preamble
You were nominated to participate in this study because someone from your child's sport club thought you would be a good person to speak to about what it means to be a good sport parent.

There are no right or wrong answers here. I am interested in your opinions and experiences.

This interview is meant to be a conversation rather than a strict 'question and answer' format. So don't worry about going 'off topic' or talking about things I did not specifically ask about. I want to know everything you know about being a good sport parent.

Demographics
Before we start I just have to ask a few brief demographic questions. I need this information for when I go to publish this study so I can describe the sample (e.g., mean age).

- How old are you?
- How many children do you have?
- What ages are they?
- What are/were their main sports?
- How much education have you completed (e.g., high school, diploma/degree, post-graduate degree)?
- What is your ethnic or cultural background?

[SWITCH RECORDER ON]

Introductory Questions ('Icebreakers')
I'm going to start with some general background questions just to get things going.

- Were you involved in organized sport as a youth?
- Do you remember things your parents did as sport parents?
- How do you think parenting in sport has changed since then?

Main Questions

<u>Parent Roles & Expectations</u>

- What does good parenting in sport mean to you?
    - What do you think society (e.g. other parents, coaches) thinks is good sport parenting?
    - Probe for details [focus on expectations and ideals vs. their reality]

  Now I'd like to focus on the types of things you do or did for your daughter in sport.
- How involved are you in your child's sport?
    - How involved are you with the sports club?
    - How often do you communicate with your child' coach?
    - How involved is your spouse in your child's sport?
    - How has your involvement in your child's sport changed over time?
    - Probe for details [how often they attend games, practices, etc.]

- What do you think is your main responsibility when it comes to your child's sport?

  - What other responsibilities do you have?
  - How do you manage all of your responsibilities when it comes to your child's sport?
  - Have your responsibilities changed as your child progresses in sport?
  - Probe for details [focus on parent roles at home, in training, in competition]

- What are some of the challenges parents face in youth sport?
  - How do you manage these challenges?
  - How have you witnessed other good parents manage these challenges?
  - Probe for details

Parenting Styles

- One way to think of parenting is in terms of 'parenting style' – which is your general approach to parenting. Can you tell me about your parenting style?
  - What are your goals and expectations for your child in sport? Have these goals changed over time?
  - What kind of atmosphere do you try to create within your family (in general and specific to sport)?
  - Do you parent differently in different situations? (i.e., do you have different expectations for your child in school or at home versus in sport?)
  - Does your spouse (if applicable) have a similar or different parenting style to you? If different, how do you make it work?
  - Have there ever been any times when your general parenting style does not 'work' in sport? If so, can you explain?
  - How has your approach to parenting changed as your child progresses in sport?

Parenting Practices

- How would you describe your behavior at your child's sport competitions?
  - How should parents behave at their children's sport competition?
  - Probe for details [focus on specific behaviors, ask for specific examples]

- When you're at home, how often do you discuss your child's sport?
  - What types of discussions do you have surrounding sport with your child?
  - Probe for details [ask for specific examples]

- What was your 'best moment' as a youth sport parent? By that, I don't mean what was the best thing your child did, but rather I would like you to think of a time when you, as a parent, did something and thought "yes, I got that right" or "I handled that well". Please tell me what you remember about that moment.
  - Probe for details [focus on behaviors, ask for specific examples]

- On the other hand, what was your 'worst moment' as a youth sport parent? By that, I mean what is something you did as a sport parent where, looking back, you think "maybe I shouldn't have done that."
  - Probe for details [focus on behaviors, ask for specific examples]

- In order to help us understand what makes a good parent, we need to understand what 'bad' parenting means. So what do you think is bad parenting in youth sport?
  - Probe for details [ask for specific examples]

Summary Questions

- If you woke up tomorrow and suddenly had the power to change youth sport, what would you do?

- If you had the chance to speak to parents who are thinking about putting their children into competitive sport, what advice would you have for them?

- Finally, do you have anything else to add or other types of things we should be asking about?