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University of Alberta

Uncovering the Team Building Process in Sport

by

Rebeccah Anne Bornemann

A thesis submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Arts

Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation

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The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance, a thesis entitled Uncovering the Team Building Process in Sport submitted by Rebeccah Anne Bornemann in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master's of Arts.

Dr. Marcel Bouffard

Dr. Larry Beauchamp

Dr. John Hogg

Dr. William Strean

Feb. 24/98

Abstract

Team building is a topic about which much has been written, but a scarcity of applied information exists regarding the process of team development in sport settings. This study begins with a review of the current literature, and a resultant descriptive model which was used as a guide for the subsequent research. Members of two sport teams were interviewed about the development of their respective teams over the previous season. Despite many outward differences between the two groups, participants described remarkably similar experiences, and expressed common concerns. From these results, two models are presented: one describing various aspects involved in the team building process, and one illustrating individuals' involvement in the development of their teams. Based on these frameworks, and lessons learned from the interviews, recommendations for positive team development in sport teams (mainly from the point of view of the coach or team leader) are presented.

Preface

When I first began looking at the area of team building, my original intention was to examine team building from the perspective of the integration of athletes with disabilities onto primarily able-bodied teams. My own sport experiences as a swimmer (with a physical disability) first under disability-specific sport systems, and later in the able-bodied sport world, had convinced me that integration was not only worthwhile, but the way of the future. And while I was lucky to have some wonderful coaches, I also came to realize that some of them were wary about the prospect of how I would "fit" on the team. Sometimes I struggled, sometimes my teammates were uncomfortable. And as integration in Canada's swimming community has grown, and other sports have followed suit, more examples of "what can go wrong" have emerged, along with the success stories. All this kept bringing me back to the question of what kind of information we need to equip coaches with to make the integration process a success for everyone involved: athletes (able-bodied and disabled), coaches and administrators. Team building, I reasoned, could be a vehicle for integration. Many of the "team building" activities that immediately sprang to my mind seemed to involve physical challenges, and so would likely need multiple adaptations for athletes with different disabilities (both locomotor and sensory). But I could also think of other activities that were likely supposed to be team building (such as my college team's traditional "puzzle night"), that would be more versatile. So I thought that I would look into existing team building programs, and sorts of adaptations could be made so that they would be useful within the context of integration.

I was quickly disillusioned. I knew from previous research that very little, if anything, would exist regarding team building with or integration of athletes with disabilities. But the information about team building in sport was sparse, most of it theoretical, and not a comprehensive program in sight (the Spring 1997 edition of

the Journal of Applied Sport Psychology has proven to be the best yet in this regard). So I was back another step, to the question of what an applied team building program in sport "looked" like. There was plenty of advice to be offered; a veritable sea of information tidbits. The problem was how to fit them together. Forays into organizational development literature provided still more pointers. My first attempt at trying to construct a team building program was something of a mess, and it seemed as flimsy as a card palace. So what did actual teams do? I had some ideas from my own experience, but I felt I needed to know more. How did coaches view the process? What kind of involvement did athletes have? These are questions that I have attempted to answer, or provide information about.

In a sense, this project represents groundwork, or a beginning. The next steps would include using the information "uncovered" (not discovered, for it was always there) to develop a program that would take advantage of natural cycles within sport seasons, and to test it out. Perhaps it would be comprehensive enough, or it would still need to be adapted to help aid integration. Those questions are for another day.

* * *

Looking back at this project, it does not seem to have been as much of divergence or backtracking as it first appeared. Integration and team building appear to be closely related concepts, and I believe that we can learn much about each process from the other. The teams which were involved in the following study each experienced splits between groups (sometimes along gender lines, other times because of issues relating to skill levels or some other concern), and were challenged to reintegrate the resulting subgroups. Integration is also the process of bringing groups together. Thus the idea of integration can be considered to be as normal as team building, and can be conceptualized as a specific type of team building program. The elements of group, individual and task development (as

discussed in the following) are also common to both integration and team building. Integration is team building is integration!

May you find the following as interesting to read as I found the process of creating it.

February, 1998.

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Introduction and Overview

Team building has become a modern buzzword. Management and organizational literature often portray team building in the workplace as analogous to sports settings. Work groups are encouraged to operate like a baseball or football team. Consultants are hired to help improve group climate and productivity. What is it about the concept of the team that is so appealing? Obviously that value of "teamness" is not inherently present within a sport team setting, otherwise there would not be any strife or conflict within the sport world. Rather, when teams are held up to be ideals it is the essence of the experience that we admire and seek to emulate.

When discussing team building there are two major questions that are raised, each of which is impossible to answer precisely because of the great variation in teams. The first concerns what components constitute a team, or when a group does become a team. The second query involves how precisely we can get to that desired state of becoming or being a team. Within the current literature there are three major ways of addressing the latter question, consisting of anecdotal stories, stage theories, and consultant reports. Within each of these areas there is a struggle regarding the balance between specific and general information, and unfortunately each comes up short in terms of "how-to" direct application. Components of teams are discussed in variable depth, but the developmental process of team building is generally glossed over.

Despite these ambiguities the value of team building is evident. It is an aspect of sport culture that we take for granted, and examples are provided in popular media constantly. Championship teams often talk about the fantastic coming togetherness of the group. Participants will enthuse about the camaraderie in a team setting. A good team will generally increase the quality of people's team experience, including satisfaction and enjoyment in the process of the activity, and

the possibility of success (see, among others, Burns, 1994; Orlick, 1986; Syer, 1986). Good teams attract and retain the best people, and members are typically dedicated to excellence (Burns, 1994; Etzel & Lantz, 1992; Pearn, 1991). These are doubtless desirable outcomes, regardless of the impossibility of predicting that these outcomes will definitively result from the team process.

The crux of the problem, however, is how we can achieve this ideal state of "teamness" together with the associated outcomes. Consultants are not typically accessible to the average coach in the field, and anecdotes can depict some dangerous or inadvisable methods. Meanwhile, stage theories can be valuable for conceptualization, but tend to be limited in applied settings since they generally do not include practical ideas about how to move from one stage to the next. So what advice can be offered? One way to find out is to identify the characteristics of a functional team, discover how successful teams function, find out how successful teams define themselves, how they got that way, and try to assimilate the lessons learned. Despite a prodigious amount of writing about teams, there is a dearth of information about coordinating the process of team building, particularly within a sport setting.

Language and Constructs

One difficulty that we immediately encounter when discussing teams and team building is that of language. We use the words "team," "team building," and associated terms is such a myriad of ways that without first defining or narrowing down meanings any discussion is vague and dangerously devoid of meaning. It is my intention in presenting and using the following definitions to provide a means for this discussion, rather than to advocate a definitive use for these words. The fuzziness of the boundaries can often be a boon as they allow us to talk about broad ideas that are multifaceted and interrelated; and by using these terms consistently we can share ideas about the process of building teams in a clear and coherent manner.

The term "team", for instance, is used in a multitude of ways. A team is the basic unit referring to a group of people who play, train, and/or compete together. "Team" can also refer to a type of sport or game that requires interactive activity between participants, such as soccer, baseball, football or hockey. Or "team" may have more stringent definitions, such as the one used by Drexler, Sibbet, and Forrester (1988), where a team is a collection of individuals who work together to perform complex tasks requiring a high degree of interdependence and cooperation. Each of these descriptions of team fit in vastly different places along a continuum of meaning, from a mere collection of individuals to a highly specialized squad.

When we talk about the idealized notion of team, as in, "what we need to do here is to be more like a football team," we are embracing the notion of a unit with distinct goals, where each person has a defined task and must work with the others in a collaborative and structured manner in order to achieve the desired results. These are not characteristics that any given football team necessarily possesses, but rather are recalled by the analogy. Thus there is a need in our discussion to differentiate between the team as an unit, and the team as a functional collective.

A logical solution would be to refer to units as groups and functional collectives as teams. However, in social psychological group research, the definition of the term group is similarly ambiguous. The word "group," like team, can either refer to a unit of association, or a functional collective. For the purposes of differentiation, the term group will, in this discussion, refer to the basic unit of association, while team will be indicative of the more highly idealized functional collective or a group which approaches such a state.

Having established a distinction between groups and teams it is important to note that these are not mutually exclusive constructs, but rather represent ends of a continuum. Neither end point exists in reality; there are relationships, however nebulous, within even the most casual collection of individuals, and the ideal of

being a team in its purest sense is only approachable, not realistically achievable. Furthermore, it would be exceedingly difficult, not to mention arbitrary, to designate a point on the continuum where the group becomes a team. We can still use the terms to represent the progression of group development and team building.

Overview of Team Building

There has been much written about the importance of teams and the characteristics which successful teams possess, both in popular and academic literature. These include everything from personal integrity to communication, identification with group to clear objectives. All too often these variables are lumped together in an overwhelming rush of information. Exact configurations tend to depend upon the context in which teams are discussed. Generally speaking, team building refers to the process of coordinating a collection of variables within a particular environment to help foster desired outcomes. The existing literature tends to offer plenty of advice, but few clues as to the actual process of determining how assessments should be conducted and decisions made. It is as though each piece of a puzzle is carefully explained, but there is no sense of how the pieces fit together (see also Brawley, 1990).

There are two main branches of literature which discuss teams. One is specific to the sport domain, while the other tends to be from a more general business or organizational perspective. While there are a plethora of anecdotal accounts concerning the development of sport teams (such as Syer, 1986), there is a dearth of serious or systematic work concerning team building other than hiring a consultant to aid in the process. For instance, Etzel and Lance (1992) discussed ground rules and the importance of voluntary participation, Bettenhausen (1991) mentioned the role of humour among many others, while Palmer (1988) stressed the importance of vision.

While each of these aspects are undoubtedly valuable for the process of team building, the difficulty lies in the operationalization and coordination of these multitudinous variables. We probably all have ideas about how to set ground rules, and could likely oblige with a few jokes, but the overall structure is more ambiguous. And how do we develop other qualities, such as communication and personal integrity, which are equally valuable? There are many different aspects to consider.

Recent articles on team building in sport (Crace & Hardy, 1997; Yukelson, 1997) have offered some more applied strategies for the process of team building. These guidelines, although they offer excellent advice for the development of certain team-related dimensions, do not seem to encompass the entire process (particularly as it relates to the many factors that seem to need to be taken into account). Used in isolation, these would not likely produce the comprehensive effects desired in a team building program. They do, however, offer solid ideas for parts of a holistic plan.

This body of organizational literature has tended to focus on the structure of effective teams in very general terms, in order to increase production and efficiency. Manager-based team structure (Ford, 1964; Mahoney, 1961) has been replaced by a "Japanese" model, including the creation of multi-disciplinary "quality circles."[1] This "Japanese" management model has been adopted into both American and British mainstream business literature (Carr, 1992; Hutchins, 1990; Kayser, 1990; Kinlaw, 1991; Larson & LaFasto, 1989; Mackay, 1993; Mohr & Mohr, 1983; Wellins, Byham & Wilson, 1991), and variations of this approach have been embraced as well by other groups, most notably in the health care sector (Burns, 1994; Davidson, 1986). The focus in this body of literature has been on the

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[1] Both of these terms are used loosely, to connote a general category of literature. In a specific sense, these terms are not used uniformly.

principles of team building, and very general discussion about how to facilitate synergistic team development. Most of the suggestions in this body of work are based on an "it works, let's use it" model. Guiding principles behind the activities are seldom identified, nor do the models (when present) tend to be theoretically grounded. Also, while the need for evaluation and ongoing monitoring is acknowledged, systematic approaches to achieve this approach are seldom discussed.

Within the field of sport and exercise psychology, discussions of team building have largely centered around the construct of cohesion. However, restricting inquiries to cohesion has not always been a limiting factor. Earlier researchers tended to conceptualize cohesion specifically in terms of "sticking-togetherness" (Gross & Martin, 1950, p. 553),[2] while later researchers and writers used broader, more encompassing definitions. Discussions of cohesion could refer simply to the tendency of a group to remain together, or could incorporate other aspects of "teamness" (that which makes a team a team) than cohesion. Carron's (1982) definition, describing cohesion as a dynamic process reflected in the group's tendency to stick together while pursuing their goals and objectives sounds like a definition for a team, albeit with an emphasis on "sticking together." Yukelson, Weinberg, and Jackson (1984), with their Multidimensional Sport Cohesion Instrument (MSCI) obviously used a very broad conceptualization of cohesion for their operationalization. Because of this broad definition other unidentified cohesion-related (but not aspects of cohesion itself) variables are lumped under the heading of cohesion and tend to get lost. One example is that of cooperation, which typically exists in cohesive settings, but can also exist exclusively of cohesion.

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[2] Festinger, Schachter and Back (1950) define cohesion as being "the total field of forces which act on members to remain in group" (p. 164), mediated by personal attraction, task direction and group prestige. In a related conceptualization, Gross and Martin use cohesion as "the resistance of the group to disruptive forces" (p. 553).

The vast majority of sport and exercise psychology research regarding teams (and groups) tended to focus narrowly around the construct of cohesion, often to the exclusion of other team related variables. Additional aspects of "teamness" were treated as correlates of cohesion, as causality was difficult to establish, and these elements were considered only as they related to cohesion. While cohesion is useful and valuable as a central concept, other important aspects of team development have tended to be glossed over as a result.

Cohesion is also not an entirely positive construct. Festinger, Schachter and Back (1950) note that the greater cohesion is within a group, the greater the ability of the collective to exert pressure (not always positive) on the individual. Also, Melnick (1982) discusses "groupthink" as a pitfall with cohesive teams, characterized by defective judgment, over-optimism, lack of vigilance and sloganistic thinking. Obviously these factors would not benefit the individuals within the group, nor the desired outcomes of either the participants or the collective.

In addition, researchers in the field of social psychology have attempted to investigate teams, also with an emphasis on cohesion. However, the laboratory settings, as well as the transitory and arbitrary conceptualization of both the teams and measurement of cohesion make it difficult to transfer the findings in a meaningful way to an applied setting. Such perfunctory approaches undervalue the importance of those team factors that are so important to the workings of groups and teams (such as the development of ongoing working relationships). Furthermore, they do not give us any further ideas as to the process for building a team.

Integral Team Factors

There are a number of characteristics that are integral to all teams, although the influence of any one factor is difficult to determine at a given time, because of

the inter-relatedness and reciprocity of the variables. Some of the most significant group aspects include cohesion, collaboration, common goals or shared purpose, and size. Of these, cohesion and size have been the most explored.

As mentioned previously, cohesion has been conceptualized in many different ways. Carron's (1982) depiction is most often used; however, measuring cohesion remains problematic, particularly since various elements may or may not be included depending upon the researcher. The use of aspects such as mutual respect, pride and belongingness (Yukelson et al., 1984) is problematic as these may or may not be causally or even directly linked to cohesion. A more likely scenario is that there are reciprocal relationships between cohesion and these factors. Also, by including these aspects within a definition of cohesion the importance of the essence of cohesion--that is, basic attraction to the group and resistance to disruption--is downplayed.

Another major difficulty in investigating cohesion, particularly as an expanded concept, is that while it has been defined as a group process it has been measured on an individual basis. The major instruments used to measure cohesion use a questionnaire format and are completed by individual group members. These include the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ: Carron, Widmeyer & Brawley, 1985), the Sport Cohesiveness Questionnaire (Martens, Landers & Loy: see Carron, 1988), and the Multidimensional Sport Cohesion Instrument (MSCI: Yukelson et al., 1984).[3] Each also uses additional aspects such as goal orientation (Sport Cohesiveness Questionnaire), role clarity, and acceptance (MSCI and GEQ). And while Carron's definition of cohesion specifically refers to group goals, this dimension is not included in the GEQ.

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[3] There are also similar instruments used to measure cohesion in alternative settings (e.g., organizational) such as the Wheeless Solidarity Measure (see Summers, Coffet & Horton, 1988).

In contrast, the relationship of size to the formation of teams is an easier topic to understand. Size has been linked to productivity (mostly on "artificial" tasks), cohesion (which can be problematic because of the differing ways in which cohesion is used), or satisfaction. However, there is also a strong theoretical base on which discussions regarding size are formed. Considerations of team size generally tend to rest upon the same principle: because of the number of relationships between people, the larger the number of participants in a group, the more unwieldy the process of team development becomes. There has been much debate over the ideal working size of a group, with most "conclusions" falling in the five to eight member range (Carron, 1988, 1990; Hardy, 1990). These numbers were based on the number of dyadic relationships within a group. With two members there would be one dyadic relationship, or line of communication; with three members there would be three lines; with four members, there would be six. This proliferation, known as the Ringlemann effect (Carron, 1988), can be summed up as:

$$\frac{n(n-1)}{2}$$

The greater the number of dyadic relationships, the more opportunity there is for process losses. While potential productivity rises with the number of group members, effectiveness drops, so that the actual productivity can be expressed as the relationship of the two (Steiner, 1972: as represented in Carron, 1988, p. 294), as seen below in Figure 1:

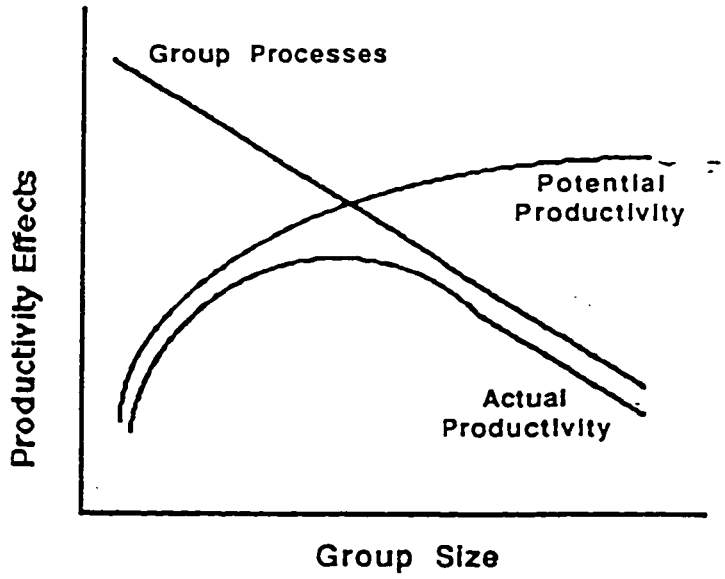

Figure 1. Steiner's relationship between group size and productivity

Therefore the obvious challenge is to optimize productivity given the size of the group, or alternatively, to find ways to maximize productivity given the number of members.

The immediately evident difficulty in the above discussion of optimal size is that sport groups usually consist of greater than 5-8 members. The danger with larger groups, especially when sub-groups are formed (Melnick, 1982), is that cliques tend to form, which become exclusive. Because of limited interaction with the others in the larger group, this scenario brings down the overall productivity of the group as well as degrading other group factors, such as cohesion and identifiability. Rather than cliques, the formation of functional sub-groups (or circles, in the language of organizational literature) which are structured toward the benefit of the larger team is the more desirable division of the larger group. In many cases these functional divisions are natural within a team: offense/defense, sprinters/middle-distance/distance.

Furthermore, the numbers for ideal group size are by no means absolute. Carron (1990) posited that group size had differing effects on social versus task cohesion (two sub-scales of the GEQ), so that depending on whether the immediate goal in any one setting was to build social or task cohesion, the size of the subgroups within the team may ideally be different. For instance, a large group may be appropriate for a team party (social cohesion), while a small group may be more appropriate for working on task cohesion between defense players in an interactive sport. In addition, Carron, Brawley, and Widmeyer (1990, as reported in Carron, 1990) found that the most important mediating factor was perceived group size. If group size was perceived to be too large, satisfaction of members decreased both in terms of their experience and what they felt they were achieving; however, if the group size was perceived to be optimal, members were satisfied, even in groups as large as twenty to forty.

Unlike group size, the role of common goals or group objectives is less well studied. The importance of having direction as a collective is universally acknowledged, and is often accepted as a priori in any discussion of work groups or teams (see, for example, Carron, 1988; Etzel & Lance, 1992; Hansen & Lubin, 1988; Hardy, 1990). After all, groups are typically created for the sole purpose of achieving objectives, be they task, socially, emotionally, physically or otherwise oriented. Like the use of individual goals, the role and value of group goals tends to be under encouraged and under utilized. Widmeyer and Ducharme (1997), however, recently proposed that group goal setting could be used as a team building tool, and outlined basic steps for such an exercise.

Within any group, cooperation is necessary if all members are to contribute to the achievement of the group's goals. Cooperation entails the notion of working together. A related concept is collaboration, which suggests that members cooperate in such a way that their skills--and what each individual "brings" to the

situation--are used to the group's best advantage. And when groups work together in such a way that the sum of the whole achieves or is worth more than the parts, we call this synergy. Like the concept of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), synergy is an elusive but desired experience.

Unfortunately groups are just as prone to interactional difficulties as to other problems. In place of cooperation, collaboration or synergy, members of the group may not contribute, while others carry the bulk of the workload. This not so uncommon phenomenon is called social loafing (Hardy, 1990). An associated problem is the "sucker" effect, where, in groups with social loafers, other group members decrease their productivity so that they are not the "suckers" facilitating other members' social loafing. Both social loafing and the sucker effect undermine the group's productivity and/or performance, and in extreme cases, may lead to the disintegration of the group. There are a couple of ways in which these problems can be counteracted, namely through increased individual identification and heightened individual and group responsibility for outcomes (Everett, Smith & Williams, 1992; Hardy, 1990).

Individual Factors Contributing to Teams

On an individual level, trust, role clarity, identification and commitment are all important to the functioning of a team. In the social psychology, organizational and sport and exercise literature the development of these individualistic factors has not been well explored. There is a body of work growing around the idea of leadership, particularly as leaders relate to the building of teams and their role in fostering these individually based factors. Personal skills, awareness, mental and psychological readiness are crucial if individuals are going to be able to contribute to the group as whole. Personal development programs, including much of sport psychology's mental skills training, are geared towards helping individuals realize

their potential. However there are ways in which individuals may act towards themselves which are limiting and can ultimately hinder the workings of a group.

The individual equivalent of social loafing, where an individual decreases productivity levels in order to protect self-image and self-esteem, is called self-handicapping (Carron, Prapavessis & Grove, 1994). Self-handicapping behavior is characterized by making excuses or sabotaging chances of success, since trying for success is a risk (however low the stakes) and in the absence of effort a person cannot have "failed" even though the desired outcome is not achieved. This behavior may be purposeful, or may not be a conscious choice on the part of the individual.

In a group setting, this could lead to a subculture of failure, and again damage the group's productivity and success (Melnick, 1982). When group members are expected to take responsibility for their actions and non-actions, self-handicapping can often be offset. This empowerment could have additional positive effects as well. Examining attributions and goals is also helpful.

The challenge within any group is to optimize the role of individuals, in harmony with the larger group structure. Problems such as social loafing or self-handicapping represent process losses within the group. The role of team building is to coordinate these factors in the best way possible: a task which will vary inevitably from one situation to the next.

Task Variables

An important variable to consider when discussing sport teams is the type of activity that participants engage in (the following terms are used by Carron & Chelladurai, 1979; Carron, 1988). There are three major types of teams: individual sports, where participants compete independently with perhaps a couple of reactive-proactive events (relays); interactive, divisible conjunctive task "team" sports where each participant contributes in a variety of ways to the outcome; and coactive,

unitary conjunctive task sports where specific participants must work in concert with each other in a specific manner (such as a rowing crew). The levels of coordination necessary among group members differ in each type of situation, and each team needs to be developed with its own needs in mind. For instance, participants in an individual or even coactive sport need to realize that there will be times when they will be formally competing against their teammates, an issue that would be highly uncommon in an interactive sport setting.

An interesting assumption regarding task type and "teamness" is that team sports have more teamness than any other, de facto, because they are "team sports." However, given that some interactive sports teams can be highly divided between starters and bench warmers, this could be a dangerous and likely erroneous assumption.

It is also necessary to realize that there are two main types of environments in which a sport team may exist. Some exist over the course of a season, often with continuity from year to year. Participants in these groups typically train and compete together, and relationships can develop over long periods of time. Other sport teams are brought together for a game or tournament, such as the Canada Games, or the Olympics. Participants may have been formerly representing rival teams, the group is typically under greater pressure to perform, athletes and coaches may not be familiar with each other, and the timelines are much shorter. Available research has tended not to examine this aspect of teams. Social psychological research has conceptualized teams as being short-duration (for examples see Barnard, Baird, Greenwalt & Karl, 1994; Zaccaro & Lowe, 1988) for pragmatic reasons, but there are numerous problems with these operationalizations, particularly as they relate to cohesion and other "teamness" factors, so that these studies are of limited help in this context.

Specific task variables and their relationships to the team building process have not been widely explored in the literature. Such a comprehensive review would be practically impossible, as particulars would vary depending upon the sport (or other activity) in question. A study of the roles of task variables would be best conducted on a case by case basis.

Mediating Factors

Group, individual and task aspects of a team are mediated by a number of important factors, most significantly including trust, communication, cooperation/collaboration and leadership. Each of these factors has a task, individual and group dimension, and so does not fit into any one category (although the concept of cooperation/collaboration was previously mentioned under the heading of integral team factors). These mediating factors provide the links between group, individual and task factors, and are essential for the smooth working of a team.

Although trust has not been well investigated as a factor in team development, it is universally assumed to be integral to the team building process. Trust is the primary building block of relationships and is necessary for both interpersonal development and the achievement of goals (Bunch, Lund & Wiggins, 1983; Pearn, 1991).

Cooperation and collaboration are also essential for the effective functioning of a team. For Orlick (1978, 1986), cooperation is perhaps the most important characteristic of what he calls team harmony. Central to the ideas of cooperation and collaboration are working together, goal direction, appropriate utilization of resources, and task orientation. Individuals must be willing to contribute to the collective effort, and often to sacrifice individual recognition for the sake of the group.

Communication is another linchpin of the team process. It is the dynamic which provides links between members, and is essential for the conveyance of trust and the operation of cooperation (Donnellon, 1996). There are both individual and collective means and responsibilities for communication, either verbal or non-verbal. Communication is the mode by which goals are set, problem-solving occurs, and is essential to the idea of consensus and common direction. This aspect of group development has not been well researched either, particularly in terms of sport settings.

Leadership, by contrast, is the subject of much discussion. However, leadership is a fairly nebulous concept, and is interpreted in a plethora of ways. Styles of leadership are varied, ranging from autocratic to participatory, democratic to consensus-driven. The role of the leader is to provide direction and to set limits (Burns, 1994; Pearn, 1991). The leadership within a group setting can be essential to the creation of team norms (Bettenhausen, 1991), mediating behavior (Pearn), giving feedback (Bird, 1977; Gardner, Shields, Bredemeier & Bostrom, 1996), and providing directions (Hogg, 1995; Moosbrucker, 1988) among others. As leadership is specifically conceptualized in a variety of ways, it is generally up to the individual to find his or her own unique style which will be as effective as possible for the group (and task) in question.

The Construction of Teams

The next challenge is to create an archetype or model of a team. Without this blueprint, the lists of characteristics of teams (the high points of which were discussed briefly above) seem overwhelming and are difficult to connect. For instance, we may know that size, shared purpose and utilization of resources are all important, but how are they connected? Developing a structure helps us to make sense of how the multitudinous factors are interrelated, and will hopefully give us an idea of the process needed to attain a well-constructed team.

The bulk of models relating to team development are stage models and are generally similar in content. Perhaps the most well known is Tuckman's (1965; see Carron, 1984) conceptualization of forming, storming, norming, performing and adjourning stages. A similar model was created by Mills (1964; see Carron, 1984) as a life cycle approach including the stages of encounter, testing boundaries, creation of normative systems, production, and finally separation and dissolution. Essentially, both models encompass the same factors, although the stages have different labels. The first stage in these models is characterized by courtesy, confusion, caution and finding commonalties. Stage two involves concern, conflict, confrontation, and criticism as boundaries are explored. The norming stage, once the culture of the group has been established, is marked by cooperation, collaboration, cohesion and commitment. The performing or production stage involves creativity, challenge, consciousness, consideration and output. Finally, the adjourning or dissolution stage is characterized by closure and compromise in Tuckman's conceptualization, although it could also be marked by acrimony, depending upon the circumstances of the group's adjournment.

Obviously these stages are guidelines to describe the different periods of time that a group will progress through. Each group will develop at its own rate. However, not all groups will experience each stage, and some may actually adjourn before norming or production/performing occurs. Despite the linear nature of stage theory it is also necessary to keep in mind that groups could move backwards as well as forwards.

An intriguing question raised by these models of team development concerns the role of adjournment. Do all teams necessarily adjourn? In the case of teams that are training groups, the membership may be basically the same for years, with members coming and going at irregular intervals. A team may also develop a history which, in turn, influences the group environment. Interestingly, not all

stage models include adjournment. Moosbrucker's (1984) model included orientation, conflict, formation, solidarity, differentiation, and performing, while Etzel and Lance (1992) talked about enculturing, disseminating information, goal-setting, problem solving and supporting (although not particularly in the sense of a stage model). Burns (1994) condenses stages of team development to dysfunction, status quo and innovation. Still, these stage models are linear in nature, and only Etzel and Lance's listing refers specifically to sport.

Drexler et al. (1988) also presented a stage model of team development, however, built into his conceptualization was a sense that groups could both regress and skip stages, especially at certain identified points. Orientation, trust building, goal clarification, decision making, implementation, high performance, and renewal form the basis of the model, and potential patterns of movement are charted. This schema is trademarked under the name of the Team Performance Model.

One difficulty with stage models is that while they may chart the development of the team it is difficult to determine how any given group progresses from one stage to the next, how to move to another stage, and how the factors previously discussed relate to moving through the stages. Further confusion could be generated if some cliques or sub-groups are at different stages, or if the team does not seem to currently relate to any of the stages. Given that stage models have limitations as being highly simplified descriptions of a complicated dynamic process, it is useful to examine some of the more complex models that seek to explain teams in alternative ways.

For instance, Budge (1981: cited in Carron, 1984) examined the relationships between team members and came up with a pendular model of team development which varied between unity and competition as the dominant form of group interaction. For instance, at tryouts there would be competition between

group members, after the team is selected there would be unity. Competition would again be evident as members vied for starting positions or honours, and so on. While the universality of this model could easily be disputed, Budge's conceptualization acknowledges that the development of teams is not necessarily linear (starting at one point and progressing to the next in an orderly fashion) and that relationships within the group are constantly adjusting.

A still more comprehensive model was created by Carron (1982). Unsurprisingly (since much of Carron's work has been focused on cohesion) this model of teams uses cohesion as a reference point, with all other elements being related to the concept of cohesion. In doing so, he identified three main categories: antecedents, consequences, and correlates of cohesion. The antecedents were designated as environmental/situational factors (including geography, size of group, and team culture), personal factors (including character traits of individuals, and personal goals), leadership factors (including the interaction between group members) and team factors (which generally include shared experiences of the group). The consequences of cohesion were designated as group and individual outcomes, with a focus on perceptions and behavior. Success is a factor that was considered; however, any causal relationship between cohesion and success is tenuous at best. Collective efficacy is named as a correlate of cohesion.

Later, Carron (1984) organized team factors in a different manner, but again centered them around cohesion. This time he used two main categories, structure and correlates of cohesion; specific factors are grouped differently (for instance, team subculture is spread between the two). This method has advantages, as the groupings do not infer causal relationships between factors. Structure includes size, physical proximity, communication, subgroups, and role differentiation. Meanwhile, the correlates of cohesion are listed as performance success, satisfaction, conformity, role acceptance and clarity, and stability.

In his 1988 book on group dynamics Carron presented a linear model of team processes built once more around cohesion. In this conceptualization member attributes and group environment contribute to group structure, which in turn influences cohesion. Once cohesion is established, group processes occur which result in both group and individual products. Like the 1982 model, this model suggests that certain factors exist in time before (and others after) the creation of cohesion. One difficulty with this type of conceptualization is that it is problematic to say what precisely causes cohesion, or to identify the moment when cohesion begins.

In 1990, Carron provided yet another conceptualization of teams, this time focusing on the reciprocal relationships between group size, cohesion and consensus. In moving away from the linear models the interrelationships between the many factors are better acknowledged, although it is not always as clear as in the stage models what moving forward looks like.

Other triadic reciprocal relationship models worth noting are Palmer's (1988: p. 14) task/team/tools depiction of team development, and Schein's task/group/individual (see Clark, 1994). Adair takes Schein's model one step further, making it an actual proposal for team building, with the key characteristics of achieving task/building the team or group/developing individuals (Clark, 1994).

The group, individual and task distinctions provide a useful way to organize team factors (and is in fact the categorization used in the first sections), as they allow us to take into account not only the skills and group processes needed within the sport setting, but allow us a mechanism to account for and acknowledge the role of individual psychological, emotional and developmental factors.

However, there are certain dimensions of group development which do not fit neatly into the above categories. Notable among these are the roles played by environment and context. These factors have an influence on the growth of the

team, but rarely contribute directly as they are beyond the control of the group. The environment includes the physical characteristics surrounding a team, such as the geographic distance between group members, or the set-up of the training facility. The context of a team concerns the more intangible external aspects; the development of the sport itself, recreational versus high-performance leagues, or professional / amateur distinctions. A schematic diagram of the relationship between the integral group factors, and its context and environment might look like this (Figure 2):

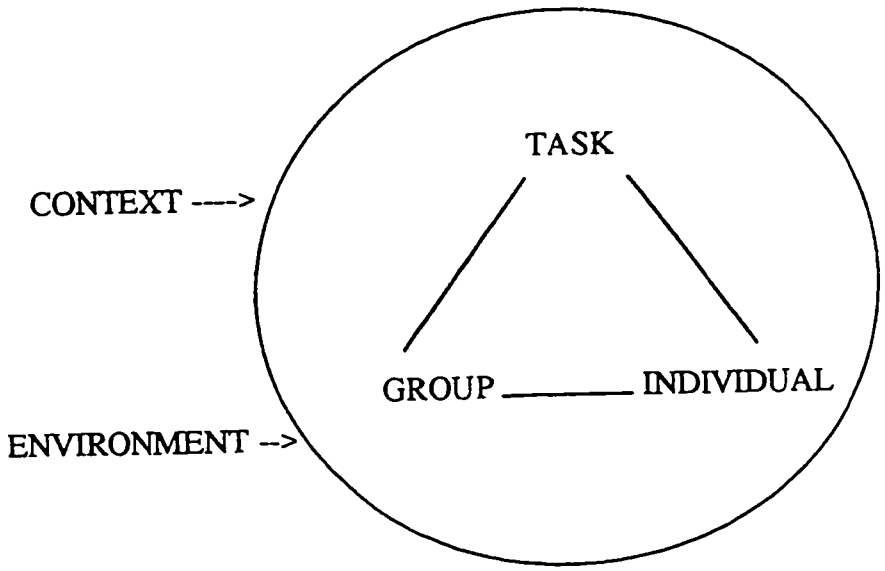

Figure 2. Team development factors

In addition, there are crucial variables that contribute directly to the team process which do not fall easily into the major task/group/individual categories. Collaboration, for instance, is characterized by a group working at a task together,

thanks to the willingness of individuals. Communication, leadership and trust are also crucial to functioning of a team and provide the links between the three major sets of factors. These relationships can be represented as (Figure 3):

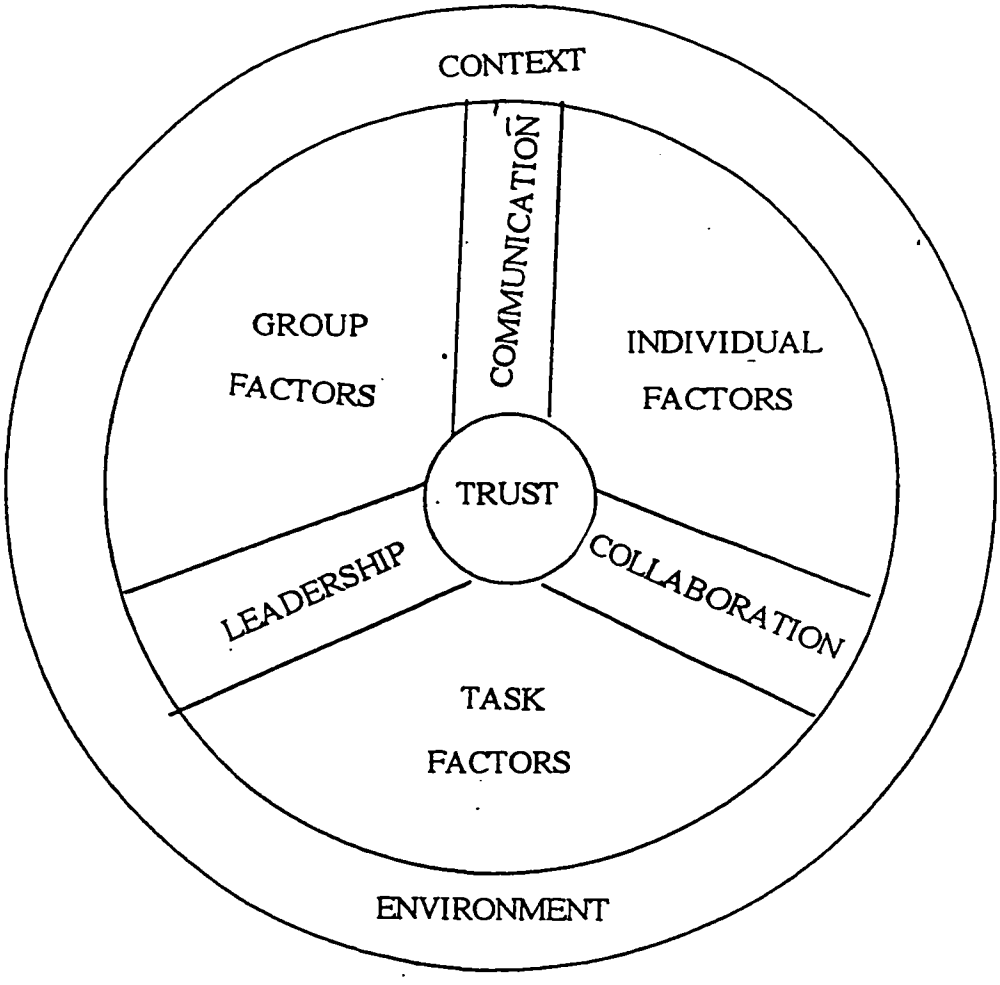

Figure 3. A model for team development

The wheel shape emphasizes that team building is a process which does not necessarily have a beginning or end point. Group outcomes, such as cohesion, do not cause individual and task development (or vice versa) although each may influence the others through the fundamental interrelatedness of the factors. Furthermore, it is crucial that the three areas of individual, group and task be developed in tandem with each other for team development.

The structure of the model also illustrates that teams must be built from the inside out. The mediating factors of leadership, communication, collaboration, and particularly trust, are the linchpins of the team building process. Without these, endeavors at increasing individual, group and task effectiveness within the context of the team can only have limited success.

Outside pressures (the context and environment in which the team exists) may have a significant impact on the team and its development. However, any team building program which relies on outside, non-controllable pressures will be reactive in nature, and thus be less likely to bring about the desired outcomes.

The above model represents one way of thinking about teams and their development. It is a way to help make sense of how the various aspects of team building (as explored in various detail in sport and physical activity, organizational, and social psychology literature) fit together and relate to each other. This model will provide a framework for the following study of the team building process in two actual sport team settings.

What is Team Building?

Team building, like the term "team," is often used in a vague sense. Team building interventions may concentrate on many, or on only one or two of the aspects discussed in the following sections. As suggested by the proposed model, a holistic approach to the process of team building has been adopted for this study, and team building within this context is regarded as encompassing the various elements included in the above model. The experiences of actual sport teams, and the aspects that they see as being important to the team building process will further enable us to understand those variables which have the greatest impact on the development of teams, and how those variables fit together. Team building is, in short, that which contributes to moving a group further towards the team end of the group/team continuum.

Method: Investigating Teams

Team Building: What now?

Determining the various factors involved in team development, and their relationships to each other, represents the first step in better understanding the process of team building. However, having a sense of the components does not automatically provide useful information regarding how the process works as a whole.

In such a complex project where relationships between and among people and various factors are dynamic, and there are so many considerations, it is difficult to know where to start. Clark (1994) advocated a systematic approach, similar to standard approaches suggested for intervention programs: plan, implement, assess, and adjust (Hogg, 1995). Yukelson (1997) proposed another similar procedure, based on Steven Covey's Seven Habits of Highly Effective People (Covey, 1989). Still, it is a challenge to decide how to do an initial assessment. What does a particular team need most? What areas can be left for later?

Unfortunately, this is where the literature tends to fail us. Sweeping generalities abound, telling us to "generate trust" or "become a leader." It is less often explained how one goes about doing these things, especially in the area of team building in sports, where so many factors need to be taken into account and so much is routinely taken for granted. Obviously, the balance between generalities and specifics is crucial. On the one hand, one does not want to simply say "generate trust;" on the other hand, it would be a mistake to give the impression to say or imply that there are only one or two ways in which to create trust. Understanding the purpose of a particular team building exercise is therefore important. If there is ample trust between group members, but little cooperation, an exercise designed to generate trust will not be nearly as valuable to the team process as devoting energy to increase the collaborative power of the group members. It is

also essential for the exercises to be compatible with the abilities and interactive characteristics of the group for the activities to be appropriate and effective.

One straightforward way to help determine how to go about the process of team building is to find out what groups have done to build their teams. How have the people who are involved in sports teams contributed to the development of their groups? What did they do? What worked? What didn't? What was planned, and what came about by serendipity? By asking individuals what they believe they did, why they did these things, and what happened to contribute to the success of the team, a balance between generalities and specifics may be achieved, since we can then see how the theory relates to practice. Because of the particular information which is required to answer these questions, it is not enough to rely on anecdotes. Planning, process and products are all part of the equation.

In trying to discover what groups did to create teams, it would plainly be more advantageous to study the team development in teams that are closer to the team end of the group / team continuum than those at the group end. Once again, the question of how to make these determinations arises. Teams that describe themselves as "together" and "successful" as a team would thus be important to investigate. While studying less successful teams could also be enlightening, the information gathered would only tell us what not to do, as opposed to what ought to be done in order to achieve desired outcomes.[4]

Success is somewhat ambiguous term, and is often conceptualized in terms of outcome. However, groups that have poor win/loss records or a low record of success have also described themselves as being highly cohesive (Taylor, Doria & Tyler, 1983; Turner, Hogg, Turner & Smith, 1984), which is an important part of being a team . Likewise, productivity or output measures do not take into account

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[4] If an injunction relates to a specific incident or procedure, it is possible to benefit and learn from the mistakes of others. In some cases, however, the alternative is not obvious. Illustrating problems may be only as effective as telling someone who has never heard of the concoction not to put garlic into brownies, without offering specific information on what to include.

the group dynamics which create the team experience. Carron, Widmeyer, and Brawley (1988) found that perceptions of the group influenced measures of cohesion, which were in turn strongly related to personal satisfaction.

Furthermore, is a team only about winning? A group can win a championship, but be divisive. Or winning may not be one of the group's goals. A group may have collective goals of having a good time and improving their skills; these could be achieved, which would certainly place the group closer to the "team" end of the continuum. This sort of scenario would likely be quite prevalent in recreational league type settings. Definitions of success and the measures of "teamness" are dependent upon the perceptions and satisfaction of the people who are part of the group.

In situations where a team defines itself as successful and members describe the group as having feelings of togetherness, it would then be useful to find out what they did to get that way. Was the team development planned, and if so, how did they choose which aspects to concentrate on? Were there traditions, or did all the activities vary from year to year? Did team development appear to be spontaneous, serendipitous, or planned? What role did captains, returning team members or other leaders play? Answers to these questions would give us a sense of how successful teams--in this context, teams who achieved their goals, with members who were satisfied with their experiences--become just that.

The potential benefits of understanding this process are many. Satisfaction and enjoyment can lead to retention of team members, better performances, and ambassadors for the sport. From what we learn about the process, guidelines could be developed to help create team environments within other groups. Strategies which aid us in the planning of building a team and the decision making process (particularly in terms of how to decide which elements to focus on, and how to implement the plan) would be particularly important.

Review and Modes of Investigation

The literature, as discussed above, gives us information as to the plethora of variables involved in the group to team process, some more depth of information regarding cohesion, the effect of group size, and potential process losses via social loafing, the "sucker" effect, and self-handicapping. Also, there are a variety of models that describe possible stages of group development.

One way of making sense of the information is to use a model that effectively shows the relationship between variables, in order to give an idea of how to coordinate different factors to move forward. From the triadic reciprocal models outlined by Clark (1994), we now have a proposed philosophical model with group, individual, and task factors mediated by leadership, communication, collaboration/cooperation, and trust; the whole of which is influenced by the environment and context in which the team exists. By concentrating on these groups of factors, team building would hypothetically proceed in a balanced manner.

However, the actual process of team building is not well addressed by the literature. We are still left with questions about how groups develop, how much of that development is planned, and how decisions about that development are made, and by whom.

Since this idea of process represents a surprisingly under-investigated aspect of team building, any study undertaken concerning process will be exploratory. Not knowing what the process looks like in actuality, it would be difficult to meaningfully compare teams: the real usefulness lies in discovering what actual groups have done to build their teams. This information, since there is only limited knowledge regarding what past teams have done (usually restricted to anecdotal accounts), would likely be best achieved through an interview process.

These data need to be systematically collected, and verified to ensure that they accurately reflect the participants' experiences.

A Qualitative Approach

The approach taken in constructing this research process for this project has borrowed from various schools of thought regarding qualitative research. While the design of the study (including the topic areas used in the interviews) was heavily influenced by the review of literature presented earlier, there was no theory per se to test. Because no explicit sense of the team building process for sport teams was garnered from the existing literature about team building, a major purpose of this project was to learn more about the experiences of actual teams. As such, strategies advocated by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and Strauss and Corbin (1990) were employed in the analysis process. According to Strauss and Corbin, theory is emergent, and "is inductively derived from the study of the phenomenon it represents" (p. 23). The object is to build theory, rather than only test it. While the structure of the inquiry does not represent grounded theory, the process of analysis was based on the (coding) strategies suggested by Strauss and Corbin.

In keeping with this philosophy, efforts were made to allow the results of the interviews to drive the conclusions. The idea behind conducting the interviews was to gather information regarding the participants' experiences with team building: what they did, what worked, and how their teams developed over the course of the season. To this end, participants were encouraged to share their stories, and their views on the process of team building.

While the results of the study were viewed as emergent, the review of literature and the model discussed earlier were used to help give the interview process shape. The model of team development represents a synthesis of the various aspects of team building discussed in the literature; as such it would be inopportune to dismiss information which could help to inform the interview

process. Thus the components of the proposed model were used as the basis for the first interview guide, to help ensure that various aspects of the team building process were taken into account and discussed during data collection.

Assumptions Regarding Team Building

In the design and implementation of this study, I made certain assumptions regarding the process of team building, and about my role as a researcher. These general ideas at times led to decisions (such as the fundamental choice to use a qualitative approach) that had important ramifications for the results of the study.

One major premise was that the experience of actual sport teams, collected and analyzed in a systematic fashion, could shed light on the ways in which sport teams develop. Learning from them could enable us to create hypotheses which could later be tested, and possibly to offer advice about the team building process in sport settings. Furthermore, individuals with various roles within a team could contribute to the team building process, and could have constructive information about the ways in which teams develop.

Despite the tendency in the literature reviewed to center discussions of team building around the construct of cohesion, I adopted a broad view of team building. In part this was a pragmatic choice; one potential danger of dealing mainly with cohesion in interviews would be that participants may limit their answers to a conversation about cohesion, and further the term may not be understood consistently by all parties. Limiting the discussion would also be inappropriate to the exploratory nature of the study.

Furthermore, when team building was discussed in the existing literature, aspects additional to cohesion were included (even deemed important). These concepts may have been listed as antecedents, consequences, or correlates of cohesion, or a team building intervention may have been built around them

(communication, for instance). Thus, to incorporate various aspects, I adopted a holistic view of team building for this study.

Another assumption that I made was that no one sort of team would intrinsically have more "teamness" than another (based on task type, for instance). If anything, I hypothesized that "teamness" would be more closely related to process or effort than to any pre-existing characteristics. I did not presume any relationship between outcome success and "teamness" either; the reciprocal association suggested by the literature would indicate that there are more fruitful avenues of inquiry if one is trying to determine what to do to build a team.

Given the purpose of the proposed research was to investigate the process of team building which sport teams experienced, I regarded my role as the researcher as the compiler of information. My job was to gather information, and to make sense of the data collected. Admittedly, the final structure is ultimately a product of interpretation, but this is a reality common to any analysis or theorization, regardless of the data collection process. The job of the researcher is to try to ensure the integrity of the data, and in this context, to make explicit connections between ideas so that the process in question may be better understood.

To help ensure the integrity of the data, I took certain precautions. These included keeping the interview questions open-ended to avoid leading participants, taping and transcribing interviews to promote accuracy of accounts, and having the participant review the write-up of the study to guarantee that it corresponds to their actual experiences. Additionally, by using a data-driven analysis process, the data were allowed to 'speak' for themselves.

Selection of Teams

Teams for participation in this study were purposefully selected. As noted earlier, teams who had made an effort to team build and had had some measure of success were considered to be desirable for the purpose of this investigation. In the

interests of keeping the study a manageable size while gathering in-depth information, I decided to interview the members of two sport teams. These teams further need to be in the local area, because of the logistics of setting up face-to-face interviews (a preferable setting for creating an open discussion), over the period of several months. To lend diversity, each team was to be involved in a different type of task/sport (individual, interactive or coactive).

First I compiled a short-list of teams for potential involvement in the study. This included teams that, based on reputation seemed to meet the above conditions. Next, I contacted a 'coordinator' from each team. Briefly I outlined the purpose of the study, and my perception that the team had made efforts to build their teams and had had some measure of success. The first two contacted were happy to participate, and were able to verify that the team in question had made efforts to team build and had experienced some success. The team coordinators (the head coach in one instance, the team manager in the other) agreed in principle to having team members participate, and each was given the opportunity to suggest participants to take part in the interviews. One team participated in an interactive sport, the other in an individual sport.

From each team I interviewed three or four members, including the head coach, a team captain, and another athlete The head coach could speak from the perspective of being the formal leader of the group's activities; the team captain from a peer leader's point of view (particularly because these individuals were more likely to have organized activities for the team); and the other athletes could speak from the vantage of someone who was involved in the group, but as a participant instead of being in a formal leadership position, or a formal position of responsibility. This person could provide some perspective of how the rest of the team viewed the group's development without (perhaps) having a vested interest in having an activity 'turn out.' Additionally, the team manager of the interactive team

was interviewed, in part because of his 'coordinator'/access role, and also because he could offer a slightly removed viewpoint of the development of the team.

By interviewing a number of participants with differing roles on each team, it was my hope that both a full and representative picture of the teams' experiences would emerge. Agreement between team members would strengthen the trustworthiness of the data collected.

Data Collection

After gaining access to the teams, I contacted each participant in person or by telephone. After giving the participant a brief overview of the study and their participation (two interviews, with a possible follow-up for clarification, option to review the results), a first interview was arranged at a mutually agreeable time and place. Many of the interviews were conducted in a private office; at other times I traveled to meet the participants at a place of their choosing. Each participant read and signed an informed consent form (included in Appendix A), prior to the commencement of the interview and audio-taping.

The purpose of the first round of interviews was to initiate a conversation about the participant's experiences regarding the process of team building. An unstructured interview approach was used (Bernard, 1994). According to Bernard, an unstructured interview format involves a formal conversation clearly identified as an interview, using an interview guide, but with flexibility to allow the interviews to vary from each other. I chose to use this approach as it would allow for consistency across interviews, while providing the flexibility to pursue interesting and relevant points that may arise.

The interview guide (see Appendix B) for this first set of interviews was broadly based on the review of literature covered in the first section. The probes were generally related on the model presented previously, as it provides a sense of structure for a complex set of interrelated constructs. So that I could concentrate on

the conversation, and to reduce bias resulting from reliance on recall, each interview was audio-taped, and transcribed verbatim to help ensure accuracy.

During the first stages of analysis, I identified gaps or areas for follow-up. These formed the basis of the guide for the second round of interviews (see Appendix C). Because more specific points were identified, these sessions tended to be more structured. As previously, I audio-taped, transcribed verbatim, and subsequently analyzed the data from these interviews with the material from the first round.

During each interview session, we would spend the first few minutes chatting, to establish a level of comfort and ease. At this time I would bring the participant 'up-to-date' on how the study was progressing, to give them a sense of the sort of information I was asking them to provide. The recorder was then turned on, and the interview would commence. After the topics in the interview guide had been covered (including an opportunity to offer any additional information that might not have been previously covered), I would let the participant know what the next steps were, and answer any additional questions that he/she might ask.

In total there were fourteen interviews conducted; two interviews, several weeks apart, with each participant. The first interviews were thirty to ninety minutes each, and the second interviews lasted twenty to forty-five minutes.

Data Analysis

The process of data analysis which I used generally followed the steps laid out by Strauss and Corbin (1990). Various elements discussed in Glaser and Strauss (1967), Lofland (1971), and Miles and Huberman (1994) were also incorporated. Essentially, the strategies used were those which helped to 'make sense' of the data. These included the structure of open and axial coding suggested by Strauss and Corbin, data sorting ideas from Lofland, use of a 'logico-deductive'

framework as found in Glaser and Strauss's book, and general analysis approaches as outlined by Miles and Huberman.

More quantitative approaches to coding and data analysis (Strauss & Nelson, 1968; Wiseman & Aron, 1970: and some strategies included in Miles & Huberman, 1994) I considered, but did not use. Perhaps because of the exploratory nature of the study, events were difficult to classify as belonging to a specific category, and often events served multiple purposes. In many cases, the contribution of an episode was in its assigned meaning (by the participants), rather than in its existence. More structured interviews would possibly lend themselves more to these methods of analysis.

I kept a notebook during the interview and analysis process, to record observations and to keep track of bits of information relevant to the study and the research process. For instance, during the first round of open coding, I might note a topic to be explored in the second set of interviews. Or I would record a connection between two chunks of data. Often these notes were helpful in providing guides to the analysis process.

During the first stage of analysis I carefully read each interview transcript, and made notes about 'what was happening' in each segment of the interview in the margin. For instance, if a certain paragraph included information about ways in which team members got together outside of sport settings, a label (such as "social cohesion") was applied. This process is also called open coding by Strauss and Corbin (1990).

The next stage involved making sense of the various notes made during the open coding process. Terms may not have been used consistently during the first stage, and furthermore, merely labeling does not give a sense of how the different ideas might connect to each other and to teams. Thus I recorded all the labels from the open coding process, and made links and connections between ideas (axial

coding, according to Strauss and Corbin (1990)). This resulted in a series of groupings and their related subgroupings. Each group/subgroup was named, and a code created for consistent application. The major groupings were values, communication, cooperation, leadership, group, individual, task and process. An example of a code is VCTT, the first letter of which stands for the values grouping, and rest represents the idea of commitment to task. The new codes were then applied to all of the transcripts, including those previously examined.

The outcome of the re-coding was a plenitude of loosely structured information. The process of axial coding was, in a sense, repeated: further connections were made between the chunks of data. The elements of team development, as found in the interviews, were arranged to represent the process of team building as described by the participants (resulting eventually in the ordering of topics which appears in the results section).

Once a structure had emerged from the data, the next task was to compare this information to the existing information on team building. What were the similarities, and differences, and how do these two information sets 'fit' with each other? The results of the interviews were compared to the model created from the review of the literature (as it was a synthesis of a kind). While there were some significant variations the information gathered generally supported the elements of the model, with a few variations. The results of the interviews, and analysis process are discussed in the following sections. Generally the aim was to let the participants relate their experience; the analysis process was mainly to provide the links to make sense of the information.

Each participant was also invited to review the results of the study. Once a first draft was completed, participants who had expressed an interest at the end of the second interview (all) were contacted, and given a copy of the full report to read if they wished (six of the seven participants indicated they still wanted to read the

results). Comments from participants after reading indicate that the contents of the results accurately represent their experiences; no one voiced any objections.

The Teams

Team A was an interactive sport club team in a medium-sized city. The sport is a young one, and still developing; as such there were not many competitive opportunities for the players during their season. Members had varying skill levels, from novice players to national team members. Some had been involved in the team (and the sport) for only a couple of years, while others had been with the team since its inception. For the vast majority of the players, this team represented their introduction to the sport (although they may have played similar sports). Most team members were male, and ranged in age from their late teens to mid-forties. The senior program was split into two squads, who would form the opposing teams for scrimmages and game simulations during practices (2-3 times per week). There was a coach, an assistant coach, and a team manager, all volunteers. The team as a whole had a captain and an assistant captain. The coach, team manager, team captain and another athlete were interviewed. The team has existed for a several years, and their season runs from October to March. The team traveled to the national championships in March, and placed third overall.

Team B was an individual sport team in the same city, and was affiliated with a post-secondary institution. This team has been established for many years, competes in a well-developed sport. They had a fair number of competitions during the season (one every two to three weeks), which runs from September to February. Practices were held five to six days of the week. There are both regional and national championships in this sport, and this team sent members to each competition. The team had a men's and women's squad, a head coach, and two assistant coaches. The men's and women's squad each had a captain and two assistant captains. The coach, a male athlete and the women's captain were

interviewed. Team members were between 18 and 25 years of age, and had a range of different training and competitive backgrounds in the sport.

Results: Team Interviews

Overview

Despite the many outward differences between the two teams involved in this study, many of the ideas and themes that emerged from the interviews were strikingly similar. The concerns that each team struggled with bore resemblance to the other, and the philosophies espoused by each group were also remarkably similar despite the various contexts in which the two teams existed. In the following section, the experiences of the two teams are described, an outline of how they approached team building is provided, and there is discussion regarding some of the challenges that team members faced.[5]

Because of the common themes between the two teams that emerged from the interviews, the results are presented in terms of the issues dealt with by the teams. Thus the data are organized according to the themes identified during the analysis process. While the structure of the data has been imposed through the coding process previously described, the experiences of the participants are shared in this section, in their own words wherever possible. Occasionally, there will be a series of quotes from one person, or one team; this is not because this person was the only one to express these concerns, only that that person expressed the idea best. The experiences of each team can provide us with insight into the team building process; additionally, the experiences of one team when viewed in the light of the experiences of the other can lead to a better understanding of how the team building process would optimally proceed.

Underlying Values

Team members, and particularly the coaches and team manager, talked about the importance of values, the role that teams can play in terms of offering

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[5] Quotes in this section are from the participant interviews, unless otherwise noted. Sections are occasionally paraphrased when there was no one quote that clearly represented a theme.

members opportunities to share in these values, and the benefits of being part of a team. Part of this discussion dealt with potential values, but it was also clear that these potential values formed part of a philosophical approach to team development (similar to the values-based approaches encouraged by Covey, 1989).

The values offered by an ideal team fell into three loose categories: interpersonal aspects, personal (individual) development, and fun and enjoyment. As one coach noted, "just being part of a team just seems so much better than being on your own," and, "it enriches your life" (individual team coach). These general beliefs in the value of teams give us an indication of why people would spend the time and energy trying to make teams work.

From the point of view of working with others, teams can offer a variety of benefits. Integral to this idea is that humans are social beings, and that within our society, interaction--both social and task oriented--is important and necessary. Being part of a team can help teach social skills, how to work with others, and how to get along with and interact with other people, regardless of whether there is any mutual liking. Cooperation, communication and leadership skills are encouraged, as well as a tolerance of differences. Learning to deal with

> all the different differences there are in the world. And I think you really learn to deal with that in a team. Because you don't have a choice if you want to be part of that team (individual team coach).

Additionally, it is a forum for forming quality relationships and lasting friendships.

One recurring theme throughout the interviews was that of commitment. Being part of a team can introduce or reinforce the idea that making a commitment to a group and to others has its own rewards. And from that commitment comes a sense of mutual support, that people

> can feel part of a working group, and there's not so much isolation, and, they don't have to feel the pressure of everything falling onto their shoulders because they're part of a working group (individual team coach).

This idea of commitment and the social support that goes with it was often described as a "family orientation" (interactive team captain), and resulted in the team bonding together as if it were a family. One person also noted that it "carries on in life as far as family and obviously at work" (individual team coach).

Participants also regarded teams as being important for personal growth (in addition to the development of the interpersonal and group skills mentioned above). Recurring themes included learning from others, that we "find ourselves through other people" (interactive team manager), and that teams can provide safe opportunities to learn life lessons. They also provide the opportunity to learn sport specific skills, from both peers and team staff. Taking responsibility was an important skill for both sport and life aspects of personal development, and was stressed by members of each team. One coach stressed that people need to "take responsibility for what they need to do and then in turn they can take credit for what they do achieve" (individual team coach).

The third area of benefits from being part of a team had to do with fun and enjoyment. One captain said that the team was important to many people because it gave them the opportunity to "try and have a little fun...and understand what it was about [the sport] that they liked in the first place, to try and get it back." From the other team, an athlete said that being part of the team made him "feel like a kid out there again," it was so much fun. One athlete felt that being part of his team had improved his whole university experience:

> I'm so glad I joined the team, because going to a school with thirty-five thousand people you can get lost. But being part of the [---] team, within two weeks I had forty new friends. ... It made school fun to go to. It's the first time in a long time that I've had fun going to school (individual team athlete).

All of these aspects of personal growth, interpersonal skills and enjoyment made it worthwhile for the team members to invest the time and energy into making the groups work.

Guiding Philosophies

The benefits (potentially) gained from being part of a team were not entirely serendipitous. The head coaches of each group started out the season with a set of guiding philosophies. These were much more established in the case of the individual sport team, and were part of a several year plan. As the coach explained, "the last couple of years has been an ongoing process. Where you know getting out of the age-group mentality and into the senior [program]." The challenge in this instance was to get the athletes to take control of, and responsibility for their own performances. The subculture within the team, and its tributaries, had been somewhat problematic in this vein, and it had taken a concerted effort to change the operating principles of the team. The coach felt that the 1996-97 season had been a stepping stone in that respect, and that having the guiding vision had enabled her to effect the transition. It was exciting to see that shift because, "I think a lot of the strength from that team will be carried on, and I don't think that the weakest ... will be carried on ... the young kids came up, and this all they're gonna know."

In contrast, the interactive team coach and team manager had certain ideas about how the team should act and interact ("that these guys are all adults, and they need to work through their own problems" (interactive team manager)), but these were not necessarily standardized and thus were not effectively operationalized. The result was that this group tended to be somewhat more reactive than the individual team. There were a few incidents over the course of the season which made it clear that effective lines of communication had not been established. It took longer to identify and resolve problems, but once things were smoothed over the team worked together as a stronger unit.

These guiding philosophies created by the team leaders had an impact on how the teams were structured and formed. This was evident in how team captains were named, selection of the team, and how the staff interacted with the athletes.

"Teamness" and Success

One of the most significant aspects of the team leaders' guiding philosophies had to do with how they approached winning. How they conceptualized success, and the relationship between winning and other team outcomes, informs us about some of the choices which they made, and makes it clearer as to why certain team norms existed as they did.

On neither team was winning the sole, or even most important purpose. Enjoyment, learning, and personal development were stressed as important objectives by all team members, although there was much evident respect for skill, talent and performance. Team members felt that everyone made a personal contribution to the team, and that goals or points were not necessarily the most important aspects.

The relationship of team building and winning as it emerged in the interviews mirrored the ambiguity found in the literature - does winning create teamness, does teamness create winning? Both athletes and coaches seemed to regard it as a reciprocal process, and also emphasized that picking a winning team does not always result in outcome successes. One coach summed it up by saying, "a successful team, most people think it's usually based on talent. Talent is a component of it, I don't think that it's the biggest component of it, I think chemistry is" (interactive team coach).

Skill needs to be augmented by other aspects, "not only the best skilled players, but the players who have the most dedication, and the most ability to work with each other" (interactive team manager). Diversity also was regarded as being important. The interactive team captain noted that:

> you don't need the great players. You have to have good, the fair, and the mediocre. Because it may take that group to be that family. ...It's not gonna be well I got sixteen Wayne Gretzkys on my team, they ain't gonna catch us. They will catch you because if you, if they're interfighting all the time, pass me the puck I'm the greatest, then it ain't gonna happen. You need the guys to, you need the guys that are the play-makers, but you need

> the guys with the work in the corner, and this is in hockey, this is in any sport. You need the grinders and you need the great ones.

The coach concurred, you have to "make that team work together and put the right people together."

One athlete cautioned that it was important to respect that diversity. The people who were not as skilled needed to respect the accomplishments of the ones that were highly skilled and talented, and those who did achieve the results needed to acknowledge the other kinds of contributions made by their teammates. For both teams it was important to allow the development of players. Team members did not need to be experts to be a part:

> Although your skills might not be there or it might be new to you, and you might take some time to develop, I think you have to make them feel like you want them there. And they shouldn't feel like they're intruding or holding anyone back or anything like that. I think you should just say you're new and we're gonna turn a player, turn you into a player (interactive team athlete).

An individual team athlete said that it was that very promise of a commitment by the team to him that inspired him to choose that sport over one potentially more glamourous, because "here's a varsity team offering me a chance for five years. Willing to put that investment in, so long as I work hard."

Success did not always mean winning, but rather excellence. One coach felt that the team was "really about" excellence, and that "we accomplish all these other things as a consequence" (individual team coach). The purpose of the team was clearly centered around the relevant sport, and to helping team members to better themselves in terms of the sport. The process, instead of the outcome, was the most important part of the equation:

> I think it's made us a better team, since we've ... concentrated more on, I guess building the team, not so much just on how people [perform]. I think that the speed and stuff comes later, when you have a bunch of people trying to achieve goals (individual team coach).

After all, it is the process that leads to the outcome:

> we put too much emphasis on win win win [slaps hands together]. Not enough emphasis on what sport has to offer. If we have fun, everything will come together. I mean be a family, have fun, and when it's all said and done, you'll be the ones standing on the podium because you just went out to have fun (interactive team captain).

This idea of focusing on the process, with outcome naturally following, is in concert with much of the current wisdom regarding individual goal setting (Hogg, 1995).

Part of focusing on process concerns the ability to learn from past experience. The interactive team captain recalled discussing a 'loss' with a teammate, saying, "yeah, O.K. you lost, BUT if you learned something from it, then we won. Another described his development as a player by saying, "I'm learning something new every time, every time I'm out there. A new situation will come up, and I might do it wrong, but I'll learn something from it at least" (interactive team athlete). This idea of getting something out of the experience by virtue of making an effort to learn from it was a recurring theme for both teams.

Achievements must also be viewed on their own merit. The individual team coach noted that "we haven't had mega-superstars. But we've been able to achieve, I think, pretty good things." And:

> we may not have been number one in the country, but I think there are teams that were number one in the country that aren't teams. They're a bunch of individuals [going] fast, and scoring points and the name of their team just happens to win. That's something that we, we've really gotten away from. Where people can leave at the end of the season and feel that they've committed to a team and done their best and they've succeeded, y'know, either individually, or as a team.

The success which the team had was viewed in terms of the resources which they could put towards their achievements, and all members were expected to contribute.

Past, Present and Future

As both of the teams involved in this study have been established for some time, it was difficult to determine anything so concrete as a starting point, even within the framework of the talking about the previous season. The beginning of

each season would bring some variation in terms of new members arriving, or old ones retiring, but the structure of the team would remain basically continuous, with an identity independent of specific members. Interestingly enough, the longer established individual team generally seemed to experience more variation at the start of each season, perhaps because there is a maximum number of years which a person can compete for the team.

The sense of continuity was strong with both teams. The season in question was seen in terms of the 'big picture,' regarded in light of the team's past history, or with a view to the future. While each season seemed to have its own stamp of uniqueness, the team as a whole remained constant. Team members from earlier seasons were welcomed, although with time their role would naturally shift increasingly to the periphery. At the interactive team's annual get-together "even guys who have retired ... still come ... I don't feel that I should say that they're not invited no more, because they are a part of it" and "old tales work good sometimes" (interactive team captain).

With the individual team the mentoring provided by previous team members seemed to be a little more distant, yet no less evident. The coach spoke of a competition at home where:

> different alumni [came] out, and we had them handing out medals, so to me it was kind of like the past and the present, and their names, a lot of their names are still up on the team record board, and they're giving out medals to some of our up and coming [athletes].

The links to the past seemed important because of the identity and inspiration lent by having the previous team members be a part of the current experience.

And if the past was significant to both teams, the future was even more a consideration. For the individual team, the primary focus was on the current season, however, there was a definite vision as to how the season should progress in order to ensure a good future for the team. As far as the interactive team was

concerned, getting new players out was something that the team had to focus on, in order to ensure a future.

Initiation and Acceptance

While neither team had a definitive beginning (the "season" as a length of time seemed only to denote arbitrary limits for the investigation process, although they could perhaps be named sub-beginning and sub-endings), members of each team had a personal beginning on the team. Each team had a try-out process, whereby returning team members, and would-be participants show up and "try-out" for the team. For the individual team, this was a formal process, with time-trials and cuts being made after the first week. With the interactive team, players were shifted into squads, and allowed to stay with the senior program or moved to another group.

The process of a new member becoming an integral part of the team varied between the two groups, and with the interactive team the experience further varied from person to person. Because there was no limit on the amount of time an athlete could be a member of the team, some players had been a part of the group since its inception, while others had joined more recently. There was no formal 'rookie-ing' process for this group, but the veteran members might tease new members, and would let them know their place through seating arrangements in the locker-room. At the first major competition, the new player might have his head shaved.

Some players on the interactive team had an easier time than others. One athlete, because he did "such a good job of being a rookie" (interactive team athlete), was labeled as a rookie for more than one season. Another felt that he was fully accepted in the course of only a few weeks. The difference appears to have boiled down to individual personalities. The athlete in the latter instance felt that the key to being accepted was the "willingness as a rookie to try hard ... to go that extra

mile" (interactive team athlete). However, trying did not seem to be the issue for the perpetual rookie, but rather that he was so much fun to tease.

On the individual team the process of being a rookie was more clearly defined. One athlete described the experience as "the whole year was aimed at getting the rookies on the team ... that the rookies of today are going to be the captains of the team tomorrow" (individual team athlete). There was a rookie week after tryouts when the rookies would do certain activities around campus, and be given a hard time by the veterans. The coach felt that

> it's become more of a fun thing, not so much I guess trying to embarrass them, which it used to be years ago, but more fun, and also the other teammates are there with them I find so they're not leaving the rookies out on their own, but the other people are there supporting them, and helping them through.

The athletes seemed to concur with this analysis. A recent rookie noted that it "was so much fun, like, I don't know, it was embarrassing, but you felt so close to your teammates" (individual team athlete).

For the individual team, perhaps because the rookieing experience was so standardized, there was a real awareness about the process was about. Part of it concerned gaining an identity of being part of the team, "they let some of the other university students know that they are a part of the [---] team, they are announcing it in public" (individual team coach). And another dimension is that everyone on the team, within certain parameters, all went through similar experiences. So even though not everyone was 'rookied' at the same time, there is a feeling that there is that shared experience over time.

The presence of the veteran team members during the rookie week was also significant. While they did not partake in the same activities as the newest team members, they were visibly part of the process, and so everyone on the team was identifiable as being part of that experience. One athlete described his perception of the situation as:

> I'm not sure if it's because you have to do it, or because the vets care enough to see you do it, Like they could have said welcome to the team and ignored us, but by making us do these foolish things they really make us feel a part of the team, because all the rookies know one you've done this, you're accepted as part of the team. But them laughing along and at you makes you feel a part of it and wanted (individual team athlete).

The individual team also had further rookieing traditions beyond rookie week, although they paled in comparison to that concentrated experience. There were certain small everyday tasks that rookies we expected to perform throughout the year (such as set-up, or putting away equipment), and at their first championship meet there would be more activities such as shaved heads for guys and dressing up for the girls.

These rookie experiences were the first steps for new members being accepted onto the team. However, the solidity of the relationship that a new member would create with the team would continue to be formed throughout that first season. At the beginning of the second season, they would be the vets, and the other new people would be the rookies. While this was the norm for both teams, one interactive team member noted that sometimes a player would remain "the rookie" until the next newcomer joined, which could be a period of time greater or less than one season.

Getting to Know You

After the first few weeks of the season, it becomes clear who is on the team, and who is not. Once this boundary is established, team members feel more free to devote energy to getting to know their teammates. The rookie week can be a powerful part of the process, not least because of the time which the team members spend with each other doing those activities. Over this period of time, team members would have the opportunity to get to know each other, to contribute to the team, and to support the team and its members. New athletes learn the traditions, and the norms of expected behavior.

One powerful part of team members getting to know each other was through spending time with each other. Team members felt that this was they major way in which they built their respective teams; the interactive team coach summed up the sentiment by saying, " team building consists of many things, y'know, but I think it's basically getting to know the people." An athlete noted that he thought it took "three weeks for any good team to bond" (individual team athlete) because it took that period of time to get to know the other people on the team.

During this stage of learning about teammates, the time spent away from the sport setting can be as important as that in practice. The interactive team did not have any specific activities away from their venue, but some of the most positive experiences they recall were times when they would get together after practice for a coffee and a doughnut. However, they did have trouble getting people out on a regular basis, and those who did come seemed to form a closer unit than those who did not.

For the individual team, there were a number of activities, structured or not, which took place away from practice and competition which they felt were important in their development as a team. After the first month the team had a retreat at a local camp, where they participated in a program of indoor and outdoor activities. "It was the first we'd get to stay overnight with anyone. We talked through the night, and everyone got to know each other pretty well" (individual team athlete). Through sleeping in close quarters, eating meals and doing challenging activities team members had the opportunity to learn more about their team mates. There was also the chance to form a group identity, as there was another group at the camp that was clearly cast in the role of the 'other.'

Most of the activities at the retreat were obviously planned to be team building activities, programmed by the coaching staff with the facilities available in mind. The head coach found it interesting that they would

> give them something to do and they don't really realize what they're doing. It's like little kids. We're playing this game, but you don't really realize that the whole motive behind it is for you to learn each others' names. And to get to know each other and support each other.

This was evident to the extent that when given free time, the group spontaneously proceeded to play games and icebreakers that are often used in team building programs. And a mark of the comfort that team members had developed with each other was that

> then for about three hours after [a structured activity] ... they were playing thumbs up - seven up. Which is a game from grade one or two, which was quite entertaining. And other games that they were making up as they went along. So to me, if you have a team of guys and girls that can sit there doing that and they aren't too hip or too cool to play a charade and make fools of themselves and sing a little song then that's great (individual team coach).

The value of the weekend was not only that the athletes got to know each other, but it was an opportunity for the coach to learn about the athletes:

> you can learn a lot I think about people in different settings, especially if the weather's lousy. Who's gonna complain the most, and who's gonna say oh well, too bad, that's O.K.. Yeah, and just who has the drive ... there's always gonna be people that try to take the short cuts, and it kind of reflects back and they'll try the same stuff in [practice].

And through the support of their teammates, people would try activities, such as wall climbing, or zipline, that they might not have otherwise. "You got to see a bit into people's character, who's up to the challenge, who's not up to the challenge, like who the supports are" (individual team captain), and, "if you have that kind of support, maybe with a little bit of peer pressure mixed in, you can do you know, different things that you would never do if you didn't have that" (individual team coach).

Leaders also emerged during the course of the weekend, particularly during some of the indoor group goal setting or problem solving activities, as well as during the outside challenges:

> leaders have to come out, you have to see who can follow. Because following, there's a talent to following as well. But you have to see who

> can lead and who can follow, and how you can organize a big group and come up with a plan, and if you can execute that plan as a team (individual team captain).

The retreat was a good chance to set group goals, and to set a tone for the rest of the season.

The "spending time and bonding together" (individual team athlete) outside of the sport setting continued well into the season for the individual team. There were a number of informal meeting places--certain tables in the morning for breakfast, a spot in one of the libraries in the afternoon ("yeah, you couldn't study up there, but it was lots of fun" (individual team athlete)). The importance of the shared experience seemed to be in the details, for

> as time goes by you all talk about, remember that hotel we stayed at, and remember that guy we drove by on the street and you know, simple things that you don't even realize at the time, but something that carries you through and that connects you with these people later on (individual team captain).

Through spending that time together, people got to know each other not just as athletes, and so seemed less inclined to make judgments about the person based on athletic ability. "Outside of [training], and to get to know each other as people and to try to, to respect them that way. Instead of saying you, well you're not a very good [athlete] and so I don't care what you do" (individual team captain). This type of attitude appears to have served the group well, particularly with the team existing in an educational setting (rather than in a high-performance context), where the people who join are likely to have various levels of skill and ability.

Establishing Group Processes and Social Support

After the groups had been established for some time group norms and routines began to emerge. For the individual team, these included the meeting places throughout the day. More generically, the groups developed informal codes of behavior and various rituals, both training and social. These contributed to a

sense of group identity, and participating in them added to the individuals' sense of belonging.

For the interactive team, these routines included talking about how things were going on the team in the dressing room before practice in an airing session, "messing around" during warm-ups, and scrimmaging at the end of workout. And occasionally, team members would go out together after practice. The individual team had their meeting places, stretching before practice, and get-togethers on the weekends.

Encouragement and support during practice was also important for members of both teams. This might take the form of cheering each other on, or simply working hard and setting an example for others. One athlete revealed that:

> I also know how, how much fun is lost when you're at a workout, and there's nobody to train with. So that I knew that if I showed up I'd be helping out other people and hopefully they'd be helping out me by showing up (individual team captain).

To the athletes, these behaviors were regarded as a "commitment to each other and to the team" (interactive team captain), a recurring theme.

Incentives were also in evidence, and contributed to the establishment of routines on the individual team:

> This was my first year of waking up at 4:45 AM to make it to practice. And when I got there, and there were other people there, willing to push you, and [coach] with the bagels, to inspire you to come, I mean it made you work harder, and got you close to your goals (individual team athlete).

And because of the value placed on commitment and contribution to the team, athletic ability once again was not necessarily the most important factor for a person being accepted on the teams:

> knowing that you contribute, um, you can't always contribute as far as skills go, you may not be the most skilled player on the team. But you still contribute as far as keeping everyone's attitude positive or sometimes voicing your opinion or attitude on a certain issue (interactive team athlete).

Even people who would have trouble 'fitting in' in another context were more or less accepted for what they could contribute:

> It's the closest bonding team I've ever been on, Like even, even people that are a little strange, like A.. He could fit in on an average night, with B. and everyone (individual team athlete).

And this acceptance was once again linked to effort:

> You put your time in and you're fairly committed to the team and you show up to practice, and you, when you're there you're committed to what's going on and you're not jacking around. I think if you can do those things then you're accepted pretty quickly (interactive team athlete).

For the interactive team, joking around was a favoured form of interaction. Teasing, playing practical jokes were an important part of the team "getting together," mostly in and around practice times. "You get a group of us, and there's always something in the gears" (interactive team athlete).

Team leadership was also important in setting norms, particularly leading by example. On the individual team, the captains told the rest of the team that they should learn what everyone's specialty was, "because you want to be there for them at their [performance]. And I think that they not only preach that, but they practice it" (individual team athlete).

Creating Group Identity

As the teams spent more time together, both in and away from practice, their sense of existing as clearly definable groups grew stronger. For the individual team, the sense of being a team started with the team cuts (knowing who was on the team), grew during rookie week, where they advertised their presence and identity to the rest of the university, and was further solidified at the retreat weekend, where they shared the facilities with another group. Although there was no competition from this other group, they provided a sense of otherness ("Making fun of the Bible kids, that was fun too" (individual team athlete)).

Competitions were also important in creating a sense of group identity. These provided the opportunity to be seen as a team, and to share in the accomplishments of their teammates:

> people that were there really got excited for the team and came together for the team and came together and felt good being part of the team. Well I guess that just comes out of somebody's success, or being part of a team where somebody on that team is having success. Sort of carries you along, makes you feel, well I can have some too (individual team captain).

The coach felt that the team's image and identity was reflected in comments received from outsiders; a rare thank-you note for attending a competition, and at the regional championships:

> we got a lot of comments from the, the senior officials that were working at the meet, saying how great it was to work at a university meet, 'cause there's so much noise and there's so much spirit and there's so much respect for the officials.

Occasionally at a competition team members would inspire each other to greater heights, "like a rookie who barely qualifies [who has a great performance]... that was amazing, she really inspired a lot of people, I know it really inspired me to see that she could accomplish something like that, whereas some of the people are ... like so what, they're ten seconds off their best time, they don't even try" (individual team captain). It was rewarding for the coach to see the athletes succeed and to help each other along:

> kids that I coached when they were ten, just to seem them there was like they, made it kind of thing. I think there were a lot of people who performed, they were [getting] lifetime best times, when they're eighteen, nineteen, twenty. And that to me was great.

Competitions also gave team members the chance to "go to the bat for each other," and "to do what's best for the team" (individual team athlete).

The closeness and identifiability of the team were evident at other times as well. For instance, at an end of the season awards banquet for university teams, the coach observed that

> they were really a team there. I mean they really, when their teammates were nominated, you knew that they were [our] team. Oh very loud. And they all sat together, they stayed together and I thought that was a good end to the season.

In fact, some team members seemed to enjoy the experience as part of the team so much that they seemed loathe to leave when their time came to an end, "like C. showing up ... after five years, can't get rid of the guy! And guys coming back like D., who is doing his med degree and that type of thing" (individual team coach).

In contrast, it took the interactive team nearly the entire season to identify themselves as a real solid group. At the beginning of the season they seemed to start off strong, but got bogged down with problems and difficulties in the middle. However, towards the end of the season the team pulled together more. The team manager explained:

> I think the reason why there's a slide, from the beginning of the season, to the trip in Toronto was because of the fact that they're always pitted against each other in practice and in scrimmages, because they do not have an opportunity to play as a team against another team.

When they did finally begin to act as a team, the difference was striking:

> Like they were all wearing the team uniforms suddenly, instead of different practice jerseys. A chant, we had y'know the group chant before the periods, before the games, that was another thing. The coach addressing everyone as a unit, instead of this team is going to be against this team and you guys are going to do this, and you guys have to do that, he was addressing everyone as a whole unit (interactive team manager).

Once the group could see themselves as a whole team, they behaved like one.

There were two major incidents which seemed to enable the group to move away from the problems which they were having, and to identify themselves as a solid team. Once was having a clear goal of working towards a tournament, and the other was improving their communication. But the moment of realization came "when they were at the airport, they looked around and saw who their teammates were," and "they were all of a sudden part of a team, just the concept and the principle of it drew them together" (interactive team manager).

Once they had arrived at the tournament the team developed a pre-game warm-up that asserted their presence:

> Sometimes that can make the game, if you get against a team that's more casual, and they look over and see all the fancy drills, they think, whoa y'know, look at them. So that was one of things we talked about when we put that routine at the beginning, we thought sometimes there is that intimidation factor (interactive team captain).

And with every game the team just seemed to become stronger.

Team members noted that they should make a greater effort on a regular basis to participate in events that allowed them to operate as a team:

> We have to get out there and do it more. Like every couple of weeks, get out and visible, [at a] game. We have to get out there and let everyone know that we're here (interactive team athlete).

Gaining that identity as a group was a strong contributor to the positive experience of being on the team, as well as the sense of individuals being a part of the whole.

Leadership Roles

The ways in which the teams grew and operated were influenced by the available leadership, formal and informal. These leaders had a variety of roles within the team, not the least of which was to act as the glue that held the group together; to provide direction, motivation and feedback. There were three kinds of leaders, these being the coaches, the team captains, and the veteran team members.

Certain skills were seen as being important for team leaders to possess. Humour, the ability to motivate others as a group, social interaction skills, and self-confidence were some of the desired qualities, and athletes felt that a leader needed to be :

> Someone who wants to lead. Not gonna follow. Someone who's original. Someone who won't dislike someone, just because the top guys dislike them. Someone who's not gonna badmouth anyone else. ... Someone who's always gonna be there for encouragement (individual team athlete).

The interactive team coach commented that the key to being an effective leader was "to get to know your individuals. And then you mix your group." A leader also needed to be able to be receptive to the needs of others, not be too egocentric, "able

to give to others, and to train others, and not to worry about himself or herself a lot. Putting more emphasis on the unity of the team and on the team dynamic" (interactive team manager).

The coach was, for both teams, a linchpin. This was the person who provided structure to the activity, clear lines of authority, and the specific expertise necessary for effective training. Undoubtedly there are different coaching styles, but the coaches of both teams had similar approaches to leadership, shaped to a large degree by the age and expected maturity level of the athletes on their teams:

> the task of the, of the coach is to, is to be there not only as a technical person ... to teach the team skills, but also to foster unity. And our coach ... has tried to do that as much as he can, but he's also the type of person who realizes that these guys are all adults, and they need to work through their own problems (interactive team manager).

And on the other team it was also important:

> to get away from the age-group mentality. There's a lot of people that y'know, they want the coach to tell them what events to [compete in], tell them to make sure you're here at workout and I've really gone more towards an ownership model .... I think it's been better for us, and I think just people have had a better feeling for the team, and a better feeling for what they've done. It's not oh my coach got me to [go] fast, it's I got me to [go] fast. I mean the coaching staff is here to help them. To help provide support, and obviously workouts. And corrections ... (individual team coach).

Personal responsibility was an important theme for both groups, and there was a tacit agreement amongst the team leaders to empower athletes to take that responsibility for themselves and for their actions. The individual team coach, reflecting on her own experiences as an athlete, attributed her present philosophy to past experiences:

> a bad meet ... for the most part as a team ... and you just get lectured and lectured by the coach. And you think why am I even here? So my tendency on that is to say, look, this is what happened, this is what went on, go home, go to sleep, put it behind you and tomorrow is a new day.

The athletes seemed to recognize this approach, and on the whole appreciate it. One athlete summed up the situation by saying:

> the coaching staff treated us like adults. There was no, like if one guy was slacking, they wouldn't make the whole team suffer for it, if they chose to slack, that was their choice I guess (individual team athlete).

Not all athletes necessarily liked the individual team coach's "ownership model" approach, but didn't particularly want the alternative either. One athlete noted that:

> we've told [the coach] to be a little bit meaner, a little more strict. To say like stop being lazy, get off your ass and just do it because people just need to hear that. But I'm not ready, and I don't think I ever want to be again in a pressure situation where the coach is overbearing. ... I came here because I wanted ... an environment that let me drive myself as much as I want to be driven, but, or not be driven. I think it helped me figure out what it was I wanted to do (individual team captain).

On the whole, sticking to that philosophy was successful for many "who went through the program for five years, I think that they did, I think that those are the people that showed that they started to take more responsibility for themselves" (individual team coach).

Expecting team members to be accountable for their actions did not, however, mean that there was no structure to practices. And athletes clearly felt that it was one of the coach's most important roles to be providing that structure:

> we're very much coach-oriented ... it's important for us to have him there to, y'know, send us in the right direction, and to make sure we're working on the right things (interactive team athlete).

Not only does the coach possess the necessary expertise, but he or she has that crucial slight remove from the activity:

> As a player, I think it's tough to see those things that we need to work on. It's nice to have someone there who's not involved ... watching everything happen. And it's important to have that because he'll see something developing and he'll come in and stop it or help us to use that in a positive way (interactive team athlete).

In this sense the coach is the mediator and facilitator. Not only for sport related skills, but also to help team members solve communication or interpersonal difficulties, "to help them to work through, y'know, those problems and unite" (interactive team manager).

The role of the coach is additionally to be an authority figure, and to provide a sense of equality amongst them team members. It was important for coaches to "treat everyone equal too, and show interest so it's not the good ol' gang" (individual team coach). Having the coach there puts all the players in the same boat, none better than the others (barring preferential treatment, which does not seem to have been an issue for these teams):

> Y'know having the coach yell and scream at all of us, not just one of us, and that might have had something to do with [feelings of togetherness] too. He doesn't really single too many people out (interactive team athlete).

The coach is "your chain of command" (interactive team coach), who sets the limits for acceptability as well.

Despite that separateness which the coach has by virtue of the role, team members felt that it was critical for the coach to maintain close connections with the team. In this regard their responsibilities range from the everyday activities to special events:

> Coaches have to be there every practice, they have to. Even if they're only there for twenty minutes. They have to make that appearance, because they are, they are the thread that holds everything together (interactive team captain).

When conflicts arise between athletes and coaches it is extra important for them to be resolved quickly, since the coach "can't be [the outcast], he's gotta be a part of that team again" (interactive team captain).

The role of the team captain is somewhat different than that of the coach. Team captains have additional responsibilities, but because they are also athletes, it is vital that their roles are clear and not overburdening. They are not coaches, nor is it appropriate that they step into those shoes:

> I mean the captain can try and run it, but he's part of the team too, and he wants to ... [say] "Let's scrimmage" instead of running drills. And why I want to scrimmage just as much as the next guy, it's much more fun than running drills. ... if the captain starts doing that, that's taking, he's kinda separating himself from the being the captain again, being the person that anybody can come to (interactive team captain).

Team captains can also be as visible--or invisible--as they choose. The "leader on paper" (interactive team manager) may not in fact be the most influential on the team. The individual team had a situation where "the majority of the team didn't know that E. was a captain. The majority of the team didn't know F. was a captain. And that was unfortunate" (individual team captain). In this case, others stepped forward, and filled the void.

Veterans, or returning team members played a potentially strong role in initiating and mentoring new athletes. Their influence was evident on both teams, but particularly on the individual team. The interactive team had a number of "quiet leaders" though:

> not the sort to pipe up and say we should do this and this and this, he does things very quietly, and gives suggestions along the way, and gives people a lot of, empowers them I guess. Giving, giving tips and complements and whatnot. ... He found that a lot of people looked up to him as a leader on the team (interactive team manager).

The coach tried to foster this kind of interaction:

> I take one of the players, one of the elite players, and I let them, almost become an assistant coach with me. Where they can show their skills, and they can, teach the younger kids what it takes. And y'know, it's a thing where, if you don't teach the young kids, then there's nothing to follow up.

A similar dynamic was evident on the individual team, where "just leading by example" the veterans helped guide new members through the season. They might lend their experience about the flow of the season, or offer technical advice. Sometimes they offered academic assistance too: they "made sure like all aspects, social, educational and athletic were all included." What was important to the newcomers is that "they seemed to care" (individual team athlete).

The leadership on the men's side of the team was much more "stand out in front and lead from the top of the hill," whereas on the women's side it was "sit back and from behind, y'know, and try to push them along" (individual team captain). A result was that the women sometimes felt overwhelmed by the men.

However, on the whole, the athletes took charge admirably, and were "more in charge of [their] destiny, rather than asking for the answers they're more searching for the answers" (individual team coach).

Furthermore, the current leaders fostered the development of the newer team members, "training [them] to be the leaders of tomorrow" (individual team athlete). The coach relished one competition where these leaders-in-training could shine:

> They were the big wheels of the meet ... they got up to [compete], I mean, not once did they say let's scratch this relay or anything like that .

They accepted the challenge and rose to the occasion, showing that they too could take on those leadership roles.

The team leaders, both formal and informal tended to take their role quite seriously. Realizing that they are the role models, being looked up to, made them more aware of their actions:

> I feel like I have to set some sort of example, I want to set some kind of a standard, for some of the people to try and work for (individual team captain).

And because the standard that they strove for was a high one, the caliber of effort and performance tended to go up, because others felt similarly; "it makes me work harder to think that I might be an impact on somebody else, rather than just for the sake of me" (individual team captain). The coach felt that "that will make this year more successful. Cause we have these guys that are pumped up because they say G. [perform] out of his mind" during the season.

Communicating and Cheering

Verbal interaction was the most common way in which team members formed task and social connections, and was thus an integral part of the team's development. Honest and open communication was also crucial for resolving, or at least diffusing problems that arose during the course of the season.

In practice and competition team members would consistently make an effort to cheer on or encourage their teammates. It would contribute to a sense of

belonging; one athlete said that "cheering makes me feel part of the team, when people cheer for me, or when I help the group cheer for others" (individual team captain). It was also a way for people to contribute to the group effort:

> I like to do as much as I can, I don't like just sitting there and being quiet, I like to get support from people. I know when I'm out there I like to hear people screamin at me, so I try to do the same thing (interactive team athlete).

It was however, also important that team members know each other and the preferences of their teammates:

> I know that some people are just quiet and they don't cheer. Some people are great cheerers, like H. is a great cheerer. J. isn't. J. doesn't and he'd just as soon people didn't cheer for him either. ... There's a time when a team needs to get together and do things for each other, and there's also a time when you need to respect other people's differences (individual team captain).

The type and style of interaction had to be suited to the individual; there was no sure fire method for reaching each person.

Ongoing communication was essential to the smooth running of the team. Team members needed to feel consulted:

> so people feel they have a say. And that's where commitment comes in, when people feel that they're a valid part of something, and they feel that they have a say, and that they're going to be heard is another one. So you really need to be open to feedback and suggestions from their teammates. Or [athletes] (individual team coach).

Trust and reliability were also a vital part of the equation. Even though maintaining that reality can be time consuming, "don't tell somebody 'yeah, I'll take of it, I'll deal with it,' and never do it. Because if you never do it, then they don't trust you" (interactive team captain).

The exchange of information sets an important groundwork to build upon later in the season. If team members felt as though they were part of the decision making process, then they were more likely to devote energy to subsequent endeavors:

> It's not six people deciding what forty-five people are going to do, but it's forty-five people. Forty-five voices. And obviously not everyone's going

> to get their way, and that's where the give and take is going to come in. Everyone want to feel a part of it, and you know, a part of the fundraising we're gonna do, and the activities that are going to happen (individual team coach).

For the leaders the consequences of insufficient communication were potentially harsh, summed up in a warning from the interactive team captain; "Don't segregate 'em. Because if you segregate the players, they're gonna segregate you." As with any interaction, communication is clearly a two-way street.

The lines of communication needed to be kept open on a regular basis. The individual team had sporadic team meetings, but everyone agreed there probably weren't enough (usually with the primary purpose of updating, rather than providing a forum for discussion). The interactive team, in contrast, had a time when they would:

> sit in the dressing room and throw around messages and ideas and problems, y'know if there's any kind of problems, shoot em out now. Well that worked a few times, actually a lot of the guys were showing up through the whole year except for the ones that were having the troubles (interactive team captain).

Both teams agreed that when a problem arose they needed to have the ability to deal with it immediately, so that it didn't end up boiling under the surface. There had been instances in the not so distant past when the group had experienced significant rifts, primarily because of a lack of communication. So it was a relief when things could be settled or patched up relatively quickly:

> we had some differences of opinion as far as where the team was going at one point, but we sat down as a team, and we addressed it right away, which was good. We didn't leave practice and think about it for a week, we addressed it right there and then, and we settled the problem, and it wasn't a problem after that again, and I think that was good. Because deep down, we were, I was thinkin, something's gonna come loose at one point (interactive team athlete).

For the interactive team, effective communication was crucial for their sport performance. When team members were familiar enough with each other, their communication didn't always need to be verbal:

> I don't even have to look for him ... I know where he's gonna be. And he says the same thing about me. ... And that's the becoming kind of one. And knowing that person is there (interactive team captain).

So with communication, like with other aspects, "Everything you can do as a team just builds up" (individual team athlete).

Fielding Feedback

One of the most important aspects of communication, particularly as it relates to the sport setting, is giving and receiving feedback (Christina & Corcos, 1988; Hogg, 1995). It is crucial in terms of learning skills, and can also foster the development of relationships (Orlick, 1986). Feedback between team members could help others feel

> included. Being complimented, or being constructively criticized. Showing, teammates showing interest in your [performance], and you reciprocating that. I guess that's what made me feel a part of the team, that people wanted to help me get better (individual team athlete).

And it was important that the feedback was respectful:

> I think you should stay positive with them with them, you have to, I think you should be honest with them, you shouldn't lie and say oh you're going to do fine when really they're not. I think you should be honest and say listen I think you need to work on this aspect of your [performance] or whatever. I think there has to be some respect. The respect has to go both ways, to the new person and from the new person as well. You have to respect that it's sometimes tough to start (interactive team captain).

For sport development, the coaches' feedback was clearly the most important, not only because of their advanced level of expertise, but also because it made it clear that the coach too cared about all the athletes on the team.

Feedback could also be an exercise in reflection. One individual team athlete remembered fondly receiving feedback about the group's activities during the team retreat:

> And then at the end of it all, we all got together and they said what things did you like about today, what successes do we think came out about today, what things didn't you like, or that kind of thing. And I think that really helped set people off on a good foot. Because even though it [the activities] had nothing to do with [sport], it was all things you could relate to [sport] (individual team captain).

Team meetings also provided an opportunity to assess and reflect, in a group setting. To "congratulate ourselves" (individual team coach) or to see what lessons could be learned from the experience. The individual team acknowledged that team meetings were not used as effectively as they might have been during the season.

Meeting Challenges Together

The challenges that the teams faced as a whole tended to pull them together. Issues between team members had the potential to tear the team apart, but when there was an obstacle confronting them as a group they were able to rise to the occasion. Invariably, these challenge situations resulted in the groups emerging from the experiences as stronger teams. These challenges ranged from those presented through training or competition, to difficulties with group dynamics.

At the individual team's retreat (away from the sport setting) many of the team building activities presented challenges. "[Scary] things, challenging things where you could get together as a group, and support each other and convince each other and help each other to do rock climbing, wall climbing, zipline, things like that." These types of situations seem to work because teammates "have a chance to know what it's like to rely on their team members" (individual team captain).

For both teams practices could provide the challenges on a day to day basis. One athlete spoke of "the hard work of staying in shape" (individual team athlete), and the interactive team coach observed:

> I think that when the team bonds together is when we've had a really good practice, and everybody is really tired, beat up. And we go out and have a, be it a beer or a pop, or whatever afterwards, just to talk. And that's usually the time it happens.

The individual team also had a training camp, which gave them that much more of a challenge in terms of practice, as well as the added team building bonus of doing everything together over that week.

Competition also supplied challenges for the teams. For the individual team they were a chance to show their stuff, and to support each other and prove their

collective mettle. For the interactive team competition was the only time that they really had the opportunity to see themselves as a clear and distinct entity, and with each game they played, they "seemed to build from it, and we just seemed to get a little stronger, and little stronger, and a little stronger" (interactive team captain).

Cliques and Conflict

Despite the obvious efforts that team members made to get along, team build and resolve differences, both teams experienced decided conflict during the course of the season. These conflicts highlighted divisions within each group, and were in essence infractions of the values codes discussed earlier. For both teams there were concerns about certain factions, and questions about other team members' commitments to the team. Additionally, the interactive team had evident problems regarding new members and long-term continuity, leadership, and the lack of clear directions or goals for the group.

On the individual team a real rift was clear between the men's and women's squads. Part of the difficulty, as mentioned earlier, may have been due to the different leadership styles of the female and male captains. The coach hypothesized:

> Maybe if they got together and had more of a team, just a women's team identity I guess, for lack of a better word, then maybe there wouldn't be the problems with the guy's team, thinkin' that they're being overrun.

The men's side also happened to have more depth and success in terms of outcome placings, and there were already tensions between people who were able to achieve better outcomes, and those who weren't: there was a perceived lack of respect, on both the men's and women's parts of the team.

As the season progressed, the divisions seemed to deepen. Some people seemed to feel them more acutely, while others did not seem to recognize the situation as a problem. When the women placed higher than the men at the

conference championship, with a less competitive field, the tensions became all too apparent:

> it really disappoints me when I hear people say, as I did, the girls toasting their drinks, and cheering that we beat the guys. Which first of all shouldn't be an issue for us to beat them, or them to beat us (individual team captain).

Throughout the season there was not a willingness to work out the differences; when the women had a meeting about the difficulties with the men, "comments were coming up like, how are we going to change them? We're gonna tell them that they just have to change. And that's not the way things work" (individual team captain).

Fortunately, not everyone was mired in the divisions within the team. One (male) athlete recognized that:

> there was a select group of guys, and there was a select group of girls who didn't like each other. And that, heads would clash, and that's been going on for five years I think. ...But it wasn't even a big hurdle, because all you had to do was put them in their place. Worry about the other fifteen girls that were pulling for you (individual team athlete).

Part of the difficulty between these two segments of the team was that the behavior of a few tended to bring the whole group down. And for whatever reasons, these "troublemakers" (individual team captain) were not directly confronted. A dimension of the issue was that two or three of these key individuals did not make the commitment to the team that others did, and one in particular was able to rely on past accomplishments to have continued success that, at least, translated into 'better' outcomes than some of the newer team members' performances. Because these people were not consistently participating in team activities they were perhaps not aware of the norms of established behavior within the group as a whole, nor would the resulting (informal) sanctions have as much effect.

Commitment, or perceived lack of commitment, to the group and its activities also created tensions. The troublemakers often were the ones who were seemed to not be contributing to the team, and so their agitating was even more resented. The negative feelings were only heightened by the fact that it was sometimes hard to resist the temptation to 'goof-off':

> a lot of people were really annoyed with K. this year because she had this knack for stopping in the middle of sets and saying [coach] can you help me ... and just going to the bathroom or something. And that was really annoying because part of the support that you get training with other people is that, if they're doing what you're doing, it doesn't matter how much you're hurting, you know the person beside you is hurting too. But if you're hurting and someone is sitting [out], well that's real hard, because you want to sit [out] (individual team captain).

This "slacking" was all the more difficult to take because the team members did not see the behavior as having any real meaningful consequences:

> [they say] this is the attendance that you have to make, or you don't get [the scholarship], or things are going to happen. Things never happen, they don't care, they'll come when they feel like coming, and that really takes away from the team, it makes other people upset, whether it's because they wish they didn't feel like they had to come, but they feel like they do, or because they feel that these people are getting benefits they don't deserve, or just that they're never around, and you can't get to know them and feel that they're on the team (individual team captain).

The coach felt torn at times between laying down the law and smoothing things over, or sticking to her policy of getting people to take responsibility for themselves. Ultimately she felt that it was the individual that bore the consequences in the end; "there's some people who never really got on-line with it. And that's too bad, because I really think that they could have got more out of their [athletic] career."

Despite the philosophical approaches taken by various team members towards the conflict experienced by the individual team, it was clear that these problems took away to a degree from the overall experience of being on the team. Partly this was because the difficulties were never entirely resolved; however no

one seemed to have any clear idea of how the problems should be solved, except perhaps through improved communication.

The interactive team, on the other hand, found conflict to be both problematic and cathartic. As with the individual team, many of the underlying difficulties dated back several years, with the same people continually picking on each other:

> Y'know, they're rehashing the same problems -- that guy's always whining, this guy's always complaining, this one never tries hard enough. Or this one's overweight, or this one's -- . And it just kind of propagates, and sometimes it's like, sometimes it's just like a, an old married couple (interactive team manager).

The trouble started between a select few, but the others in the group had become involved:

> where most of these problems occur, is with those one, two, three, four people. Y'know a couple sort of side with each other, and they're talking behind everyone else's back about the other two people. And then it just sort of goes back and forth that way. The way it manifests itself on the team is that people are struggling for, to have the other team members take their side (interactive team manager).

At the center of the problem seem to have been a lack of respect and honest communication; because these difficulties have been ongoing for so long, this kind of behavior appears to have become part of the status quo.

As with the individual team, much of the tension was oriented around questions of commitment, for both players and staff. One person described it as:

> There's a bit of infighting that goes on, a lot of teasing and razing. Um, because some players feel that others aren't pulling their weight in terms of coming out to practices and showing up for team events. There's some resentment there, and it manifests itself in different ways (interactive team manager).

A few individuals tended to bear the brunt of this bad feeling, and one team member regretted that there was some talking behind others' backs, and difficulty understanding and accepting constraints that others might experience in their lives. (The individual team also struggled with this issue, although compassion was evident for those who could not make all the practices, but who "contributed to the

team" when present, always showing a "positive attitude" (individual team captain)).

Obviously, while team members theoretically acknowledged the importance of communication, they had a lot of trouble actually talking out issues:

> nobody seemed to want to talk. About what was bugging them, no one wanted to express their feelings, it always had to come from the captain. He had to express it, even though I could get the vibes from what was buggin them, they would never come out and say it. You would have to bring it out to the forefront. People have to speak up, and that was part of the problem with that team (interactive team captain).

And so difficulties were allowed to fester.

The interactive team members universally acknowledged that the team as a whole struggled between the "beginning of the season, everyone's in a good mood, nothing's occurred yet, everyone's on an even keel" (interactive team coach), and about a month before the national championships. And while much of this was likely directly attributable to the ongoing tensions, it was, interestingly enough, a conflict in concert with the new direction of the tournament that helped to turn the team around.

One night, at a practice, the coach and the team captain had a dispute which escalated. There was yelling. The captain stormed off, or was kicked out of practice. And then cooler heads prevailed, and the team discussed what had happened as a group. "It blew apart, there was turmoil, and boom, everyone was in one situation" (interactive team captain), and the atmosphere noticeably improved. The captain related:

> I could not walk away from it, I had to resolve it right now, let's get it over with, so we can, so everybody knows what happened, and we all straighten it out together. We straighten it out as a team. Not as an individual. And that's important.

The experience was clearly beneficial, despite the negative potential of the situation:

> it may sound strange, but a good falling out among the players can be good for everybody. Because it shows who stands where (interactive team captain).

The gusto with which members of the interactive team would sometimes talk about the importance of conflict was notable, and team members appeared to attribute much to the role that conflict played in pulling the team together. The coach affirmed, "without conflict I believe that you don't know where you are, where you stand. If everything is going smoothly, you think well, is this all there is to it?" But perhaps the more constructive question concerns the respective roles of challenges and conflicts. The individual team, in contrast, found that challenge, and the occasional airing of bad feelings in a useful manner was helpful, whereas conflict itself tended to be destructive to the team as a whole.

Creating Continuity

Despite the problems that the teams endured, team members felt rewarded by their experiences as part of their respective teams. One athlete summed up his feelings by saying that being part of his team "was a choice, and I've never looked back since" (individual team athlete). Team members' satisfaction with their experiences was a great attraction for others, and thus helped to create continuity to ensure a future for the teams.

Retaining new team members was one of the greater challenges for the interactive team, however. Because of their ongoing problems they would have trouble and keeping new players, which they badly needed to keep their team viable in the long-term. The difficulty becomes a vicious circle, for without the numbers they can't set up a competitive schedule that would help the squads see themselves as a team, and without that identity and the direction it is hard to pull together as a group and resolve those differences, while in the meantime they may be scaring others off. The times when the team members are participating in demos are some of the most fondly remembered parts of the season, and it was likely because of this enthusiasm that they were able to attract players in the first place.

In contrast, the individual team had arrived at a point when they had been able to sort out many of their ongoing difficulties, and so effectively attract and retain new recruits. Clearly team members had a pronounced sense of accomplishment in regard to their team experiences, both collective and individual. The pride with which people talked of the team and what it had become (particularly in reference to that particular season) was unmistakable:

> we've made different changes with the team but we've got a lot of support now from all the different teams in the city and area, and I think that that probably reflects on what the team has become. Like we have people coming ... here from four or five teams and we also have athletes coming from Calgary this year which is something that has never happened, because the have very strong ... teams there (individual team coach).

The reputation of the team is what appears to be attracting people, because "they can come here and know they're going to get a good education and have fun [in sport] and they can perform well and know that their team is going to do well, that's an incentive to them" (individual team coach).

Team members, past and current become ambassadors for the team. "They can reflect back when they've been out of school for ten or fifteen years and go, yeah I [trained] with this team and it was awesome, fun, we did all this stuff together, had good friends" (individual team coach), and they end up spreading the word. The satisfaction of the participants becomes one of the most remarkable benefits of the hard work of building the team. And the satisfaction is not limited to having a good time:

> that is what recruits people to this team. They see how well that, these guys do in school with fourteen academic all-Canadians, it's absolutely amazing when you think about the courses that they all take and the time they put in [training], y'know (individual team coach).

The program ends up recruiting it's own athletes, and more time and energy can then be devoted to the current incarnation of the team. The coach summed up her philosophy by saying, "if you build it, they will come."

Last Words

Both teams started out their seasons with a variety of goals, some sport oriented, some geared towards personal development of team members. Guiding philosophies were utilized by coaches and team leaders, based on values of how they felt adults should be treated and should behave. Commitment, responsibility and communication were all important themes for the groups. Each team struggled with internal divisions, although the individual team appeared to reach more resolution than the interactive team was able to achieve.

Being part of a team was potentially beneficial to team members, in a generic sense:

> when you are part of a team you can identify with a lot more experiences that other people are going through, so you feel more normal, at least. It gives you confidence that way, as well you can learn from other people's mistakes. You can feel important about yourself helping other people through their things. I think you feel a much greater sense of accomplishment when you can achieve things as a team, rather than just an individual. It's more fun interacting with other people (individual team coach).

And individually:

> this is a kid that I've known since he was six or seven years old and it was kind of a long time coming for him too to stand up and take ownership. And he's one that really came through and I guess he's an example of the old turning into the new. Two years ago he would have been happy to just sit on his butt, and oh coach told me to do it, I guess I'll go do it. This year he told me what he was gonna do and I just nodded my head and said good, I'll be there to watch it (individual team coach).

Many of the benefits that team members accrued from being part of their teams were attributable to the atmosphere and operation of the teams. Both teams worked at team building, or improving the ways in which the teams functioned. The individual team seemed to have a more systematic program in place, and this was perhaps why they seemed to have more success both in terms of solving problems and being proactive. Activities both in and away from the sport venue were valuable, and the diversity that team members brought to the teams was

important. For the teams to work there was no sure-fire recipe, either in terms of choosing members (it takes all kinds would be the best motto), or running activities:

> Team, team bonding is a funny thing. Sometimes it happens instantly, sometimes it takes, even an incident like I had with my captain to get the team together. And sometimes it takes a lot of work. The strangest things sometimes brings the team together (interactive team coach).

It was more important to focus on the process than the outcome, because the outcomes were more uncertain and less controllable. Putting in the effort to try to make things as good as they could be seemed to the most consistent key to success.

Discussion

From the data collected through the interviews, and the insights provided by the review of literature there is a substantial amount of information regarding the process of team building. The challenge is to examine the knowledge gained through these sources to determine what can be done to build better sport teams. In particular, it will be important to see what lessons can be learned from the experiences of the actual teams, and how these relate to the information found in the literature.

The common experiences of the two teams are particularly telling, because of the very differences between the two. Despite outward variations in sport development, participation levels, gender, ranges of skill levels, task type, and competitive opportunities, the similarities are striking. If we can learn something from these teams (especially within the context of some of the more theoretical knowledge regarding team building), the likelihood that these lessons will be transferable to other teams is that much greater.

The Shape of the Season

One striking similarity between the two teams was the way in which team members described the evolution of their teams from being a collection of individuals at the beginning of the season to becoming more of a team. This evolution is not quite so simple, since both teams had returning members and new members, each of whom would have different histories of relationships with the others. Because not everyone was in "the same boat" at the beginning of the season, team members tended to talk about their experiences with the team beginning with their first season, and would then proceed to talk about the evolution of the team during that particular season specifically. For instance, the individual team captain talked about her own first year on the team to explain how the rookieing process worked during the previous season. She did not have

experience of those team members who were rookies during this particular season, but was able to guess at their experiences because of the similarities between their initiation and her own.

The progression of the teams' development, as described by their members, included elements found in the stage models discussed previously, but none matched up well. The process that team members related was cyclical, repeating each season, from the time an athlete joined the team until the time that he/she disengaged. These experiences encompassed the various parts of the season--tryouts, team selection, hard training and competitions. The season in question was seen as being unlike any other, and was viewed within the context of past collective accomplishments and achievements, and in terms of the plans for the future. The teams seemed to develop a subculture which was more enduring than any member or group of members, and would persist over several seasons.

While each team did not experience the stages of a group as a whole group (i.e. not all members began and finished with the team at the same time), the groups did move through certain stages during the course of a season, and over the years. With both the interactive and individual teams, there was an evident pattern of engagement, rookieing, acceptance, bonding, adaptation, season break, rookieing, acceptance, bonding, adaptation and so on. Disengagement would occur after some time, usually at the season break. Individuals would cycle through the process at different times (some may stay for only one season, while others may participate for several), although certain points in the season were identifiable as generally being the time when certain aspects of the process would occur. This process could be represented as in Figure 4:

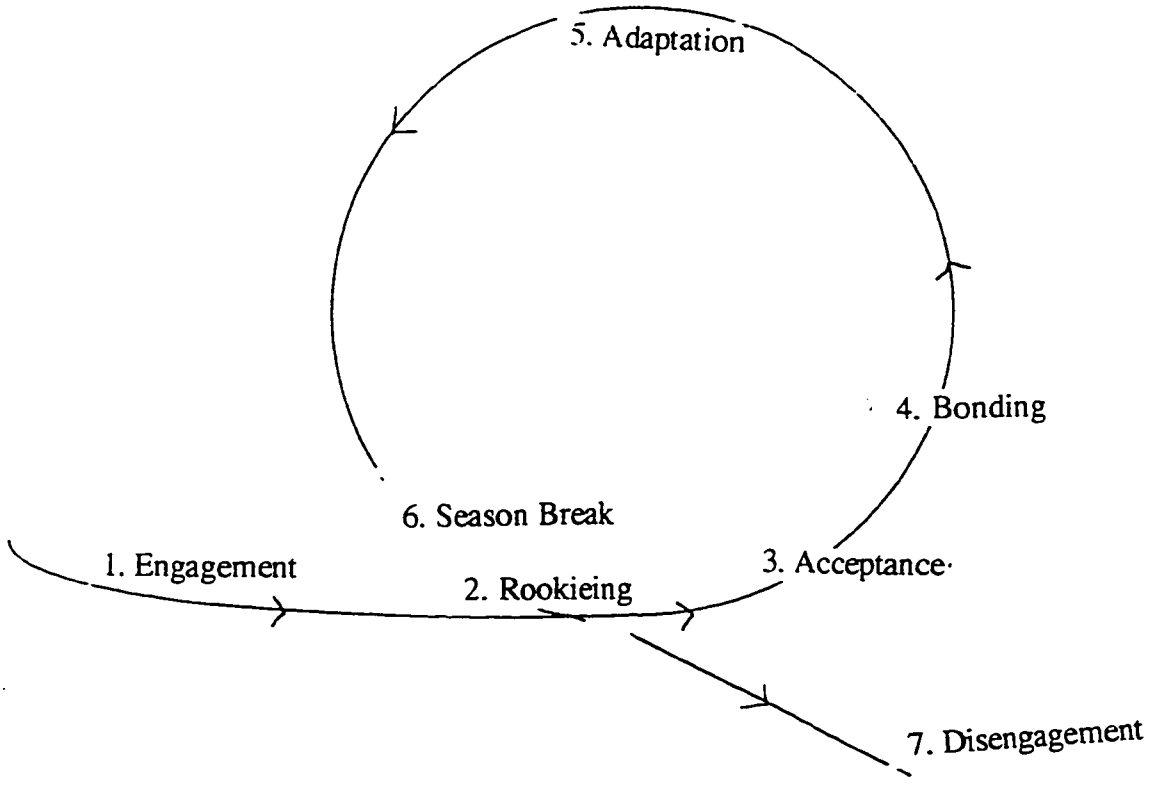

Figure 4. A participant involvement model for team stages

This participant involvement model reflects the stages that each team members experienced as part of their team. At the first stage, engagement, the team member makes the decision to join the team, and 'tries out' (1). For each of the two teams, this period generally comprised the first week or so of the season, formally in the case of the individual team. Cuts were then made by the coach; the individual team tended to accept most of those who were fairly competent in the sport, while the interactive team would refer anyone who needed more skill work to an associated developmental program.

If the individual is named to the team, there is then some rookieing process, either formal or informal (2). While rookieing may occur to some degree throughout the entire season, there is generally a concentrated period of activity,

followed by acceptance (3) as a full-fledged team member. At this stage, group norms are established and/or reinforced. While both teams described this process, the timelines were clearer for the individual team. As shown previously, the individual team had a "rookie week" when new team members were essentially initiated by returning team members. One individual team athlete thought the experience was "really important, it gets you involved and included." Even the "humiliation" involved "makes you feel included, or wanted, loved by the team" (individual team athlete). By contrast, the interactive team had a loose rookieing process, which might last a few days, or several months. On both teams there were implications to being a rookie that lasted the whole season, such as having to put away equipment (individual team), or occupying the least favored spots in the locker room (interactive team), but general acceptance of the new team members would typically have occurred on both teams after the first few weeks.

The following stage is marked by bonding experiences (4), when team members are getting to know each other and feel closer bonds to each other. This was a part of the season which team members on both teams talked about a lot, and seemed to hold some of the best memories. Team members frequently mentioned the important times when team members would get together after practice for something to eat, or a drink (both teams), or special get-togethers away from training and competition (retreat, pot-luck for the individual team; barbecue for the interactive team). The common experience was important, as well as getting to know the other people on the team and "where they're coming from" (individual team captain).

The remainder of the season is characterized by adaptation (5); the team may experience conflict, the group may face obstacles, and the challenge is to keep the team together and to reinforce the interrelationships among team members. It was after the initial stages that tension emerged on the teams studied; the challenge for

both was to keep the lines of communication open, and to strengthen the bonds between team members (rather than let them deteriorate). Each team had to deal with a rift (between a couple of key individuals on the interactive team, between some members of the men's and women's squads on the individual team) that other team members tended to get "sucked into one side or the other" (interactive team manager). For both teams the conflict had a history predating the start of the season, and so the challenge was to change--or start to change--those accepted ways of doing things that made those problematic behaviors possible.

At the end of the season, the team members experience a break from the team (6), as team members do not typically have as much contact with each other over the off-season. The team member may return for successive seasons, cycling through the process again, except for beginning anew at the stage of rookieing the new members. This was a period of lower activity for the team members, although they did get together somewhat during the breaks both preceding and following the season in question. The interactive team would meet for an informal game of ball at a park, and the individual team organized a small fund-raiser and trips out of town for team members.

The team member will eventually disengage (7) from the team, often at the end of the season, although other circumstances (such as injury) may dictate disengagement at other points in the cycle. At this point the team members are not really part of the team building process, but may contribute in small ways. For instance, the interactive team captain talked about the value of inviting old team members to the team's annual barbecue ("Old tales work good sometimes"), and the individual team coach thought that it was nice that alumni came back to give out awards at a regional competition, because of the sense of continuity and community that it provided.

As illustrated above, and in the previous section through interview excerpts, the above model shows the general experiences of athletes on the two teams. Each of them joined his or her respective team after the team was established, and each described the progression of the season in a similar manner. Team members talked about tryouts, their initiation and/or initiating others (commonly referred to as rookieing), the process of accepting new members as part of the team (a more variable process for the interactive team, as outlined earlier), getting to know each other, the process of supporting each other throughout the season (through training, competition, or other challenges), and adapting the ways that the group operated. The departure of the interactive team for nationals, for instance, marked a positive change in how the group operated. In contrast, the tensions on the individual team between the men's and women's squads showed a clear lack of adaptation, particularly as there were some efforts to attempt to resolve the problem. Team members also talked about the break between seasons, and a little about disengagement.

The ways in which the team members described their experiences are not immediately reconcilable with the stage models in the literature, although some commonalties do exist. For instance, Tuckman's stages (cited in Carron, 1984) describes a group's progress as forming, storming, norming, performing, and adjourning. Even setting aside the issue of adjournment (these teams seemed to take a break, or have periods of less intense activity, but never end), the order of stages does not fit the experience of the teams interviewed. These groups had pre-existing subcultures and already established norms, so that new members were introduced to the team rather than going through the process from scratch. Forming seemed to be a short phase (the week of tryouts, at most, for both teams), and then teams would progress straight to the norming process, but only new members would be learning the new rules. The conflict regarding direction and norms which

represents the storming stage does not seem to have been evident for either team. Any conflict which arose during the course of the season emerged later in the season, after the excitement of getting back to the team wore off. And during the performing stage there were constant adjustments, as the team created new routines, faced challenges, or experienced strife.[6]

Elements of the Team Building Process

During the course of the interviews, it became evident that there were certain dimensions of the team building process which were not well represented in the literature reviewed. There were many areas of overlap, but the ideas of commitment, pride and respect (in addition to trust) frequently came up, as did the idea of mutual support (including cheering for each other, knowing about other people and their goals, teaching each other skills, and working together). As such, it may be useful to compare to the experiences of the teams to the structure of team building aspects developed in the first section. The purpose of the original model was to provide a framework for showing the relationship of variables involved in the team building process, as explored in the literature. This model showed that team building consists of group, individual and task development, centered around trust, mediated by leadership, communication, and collaboration within the context and environment in which the team exists.

In terms of the group/individual/task development, the interviews revealed similar information to that presented in the literature. When team members talked about growth as a group, the ideas of identifiability and profile as a group, a sense of belonging, physical proximity to others, developing relationships with others, and group norms were all recurring themes. These were all particularly important during competition and training, but both teams augmented this aspect by structured

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[6] While the stage models discussed here do not seem to be applicable to these sport teams, their value is by no means refuted. It is easy to see how these structures would easily relate to a group in an organizational setting, developed for the purpose of achieving a specific task, where most group members begin and end their experience together.

and unstructured activities away from the sport setting. In terms of individual development, team members talked extensively about learning both sport and social skills, self-reliance, personal responsibility, and sheer enjoyment of participation and/or life. Generically, participants discussed task development in terms of learning sport-specific skills and helping others learn sport-specific skills, and the challenges provided by training and competition.

The mediating factors of leadership, and communication, as described by the participants, were also similar to the depiction in the literature. Leadership was important to hold the teams together and keep them moving in the right direction; team members talked about leadership roles (particularly in terms of the coach's and captain's roles, but also mentioned the role of veteran team members), leadership skills, and the importance of modeling. Safe, open communication was important to the team members, although there was an acknowledgment in both cases that there was at least one major breakdown of communication during the course of the respective seasons. The value of getting feedback about skills and performance was stressed by the athletes in particular.

The aspect of cooperation was not discussed much in the interviews. There was an evident sense of working together, but this idea was more often couched in the idea of support each other on the field of play. Athletes often talked about 'being there' for each other, not only in terms of actual performance, but before and after, as well away from the sport setting (or regarding issues not directly pertaining to the sport setting). This mutual support, would help teammates to try harder, and generally made people's experiences with their teams more enjoyable. This concept of support incorporated cooperation / collaboration, but was not limited to it. As such, it would be more accurate to conceptualize this dimension as support, as a broader term.

Additionally, the individual team did not usually employ cooperation in a task context. These terms suggest that team members need to cooperate or collaborate in order to perform their task requirements. For the individual team, such task interdependence was clearly limited.[7] It was important for the individual team members, however, that there was a "whole team aspect" (individual team captain). There were ways, other than task cooperation, to contribute to the team, such as competing in a particularly grueling event; "if the coaches needed you to [do it] you would do it to help your team out" (individual team athlete). That ability to "sacrifice yourself for your team" (individual team athlete) was significant to the team members. Task support, for the individual team, could take the shape of cheering, encouragement, participating in a different event to gain points, as well as giving one's own best performance. Thus task support was a more appropriate label than cooperation from the perspective of the individual team. The broader term of support further incorporates those other forms of support which were significant to members of both the individual and interactive teams.

The idea of trust, which represented the center of the original model, was also evident in the interviews. However, there were other dimensions, distinct yet somehow related, which emerged from the study. Most notably these included the idea of commitment (to the task, and to the others on the team), and respect for others and the team as a whole. These were recurring issues for team members, and indeed the conflicts which both teams experienced were centered around commitment and respect (or lack thereof). As discussed previously, team members were often concerned that others were not contributing adequately, and/or that they were not respecting or valuing the achievements of others.

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[7] Interestingly, the idea of support was particularly important for members of the individual team, and perceived lack of support (often related to lack of commitment) from other teammates appears to have been at the root of conflicts experienced by the team. It may be that shows of support were more important to individual team members because they did not have the opportunity to directly support their teammates in a task context.

The aspects of commitment and responsibility represent values similar to trust. While trust is of great importance to any team building program, it was not the only value around which the teams were centered. Therefore it would be useful to replace the label of 'trust' with that of 'values,' to acknowledge the broader perspective used by the teams.

Context and environmental considerations were not greatly discussed by team members, but were more taken for granted as conditions of involvement. For the interactive team, the lack of competition did have a significant impact on the development of the team as a whole, but it was not something that the team had any control over. Context and environment will be further discussed later.

Therefore the model remains generally intact, with a few adaptations to account for dimensions that were made clear by the interview process. The revised model is shown below (Figure 5):

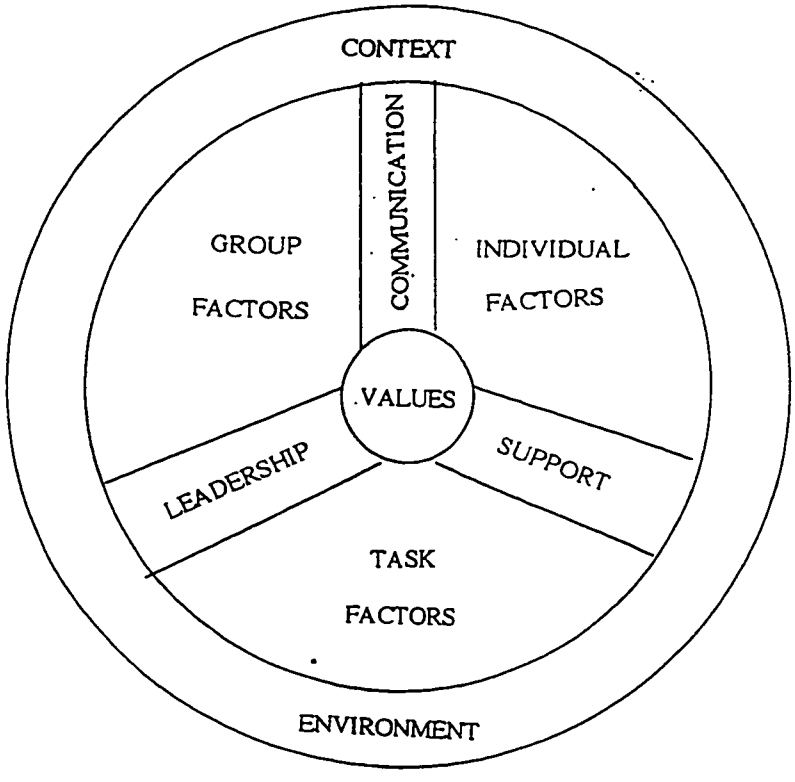

Figure 5. A revised model for team development

The relationship of the factors involved in the development of the team was reinforced by the data in the interviews, including the importance of developing each of these aspects in balance with the others. When participants talked about the value of being part of a team, common points included personal growth, and learning to deal with other people. Mastery and success in the sport (task) was important, but was also regarded as the vehicle for team members to learned a wide array of skills. These included sport specific/technical skills, mental skills for individual development (the individual team included specific activities to foster this aspect), and communication, leadership and other interpersonal skills.

Role of Coach and Team Leaders

From both the teams interviewed and the review of literature, it is evident that the coach and/or other team leaders play a critical role in the development of sport teams. It is important to have someone who can develop and maintain a vision of where the team is going, and who is able to as a whole, and within its general context and environment. Hansen and Lubin (1988) stressed the necessity of having an involved leader, committed to the process of team building. An "indifferent or critical attitude toward the effort" (p. 78) will inevitably undermine the process.

The role of the leader is to provide structure for the process, to plan and lead the implementation (Carr, 1992; Hansen & Lubin, 1988; Hutchins, 1990; Moosbruker, 1988). In a sense, this is the person who keeps the group together and moving on the right track (and this is what team members wanted from their coaches). Generally this person would have the authority to provide an extra 'shove' to hesitant participants, or to provide sanctions if necessary.

Leadership styles are also important to consider in this context. According to Gardner et al. (1996), certain behaviors appear to be more compatible with higher levels with cohesion. Democratic decision making styles, providing

instruction, giving positive feedback, and fostering social support were all highly correlated with cohesion, while autocratic behavior was negatively related. As the interactive team demonstrated, it is possible for a team to unite against a leader, but then the leader is less able to provide constructive guidance, and modeling as a tool becomes practically impossible.

Additionally, Adams (1988) discussed the significance of outlooks in the team building process, and advocated for a Strategic-Creative Mindset, as opposed to a Operational-Reactive Mindset. Strategic-creative outlooks allow for more proactive action; the characteristics of these leaders is that change is acceptable, there are clear goals, they strive for empowerment and alignment of team members, they are patient, and they have a long-term view of where the team is going. Certainly if we compare the strategies employed by the two teams interviewed, the individual team (whose leader had embraced elements of a strategic-creative outlook) seemed to experience much more team building success than the interactive team, which seemed to operate on more operational-reactive lines.

Various leadership roles as discussed in the literature were underscored by the experiences of the teams (as outlined previously), particularly concerning the role of the coaches. For instance, individual team athletes noted that it was important to them for the coach to set limits for behavior, and interactive team athletes stressed how crucial it was for the coach to direct practices. They expected that the coaches would provide structure for the teams, for, as one athlete put it, "they are the thread that holds everything together" (interactive team captain). The interactive team had difficulties with the coach showing up to practices, and at times felt lost as a result.

In contrast, the role of the team captain (a formal peer leadership position) is less discussed in the literature. Participants, however, had strong views about the role of the team captain, including his or her part as a role model, and as a

spokesperson for the athletes. The interactive team captain noted that it was important to have a clear role, for in the final analysis the team captain is an athlete, and should not be expected to take on extra coaching or administrative duties.

The role of the coach puts him or her in a unique position on the team. The coach is an integral and important part of the team, yet the position of authority which the coach holds creates a distance between the coach and the athletes. There were clear expectations for the coaches by team members; athletes on both teams wanted their coaches to provide structure and direction. The interactive team captain, in particular stressed that the leadership role of the coach should not be expected of any athlete, because it would separate that person from his/her peer group. As such, the coach has a different relationship to the rest of the team than any other team member.

In terms of the participant involvement model presented earlier, the coach is simultaneously the facilitator and on the periphery of the process. The stages of engagement, rookieing, acceptance, bonding and adaptation are not experienced by the coach as they are by the athletes. The coach's presence and role is more taken for granted by virtue of his/her authority. At the same time, it falls to the coach to orchestrate the team development process, keep the group together, and facilitate the movement of the team through the various stages. The role of the coach in the above model could be depicted as below (Figure 6):

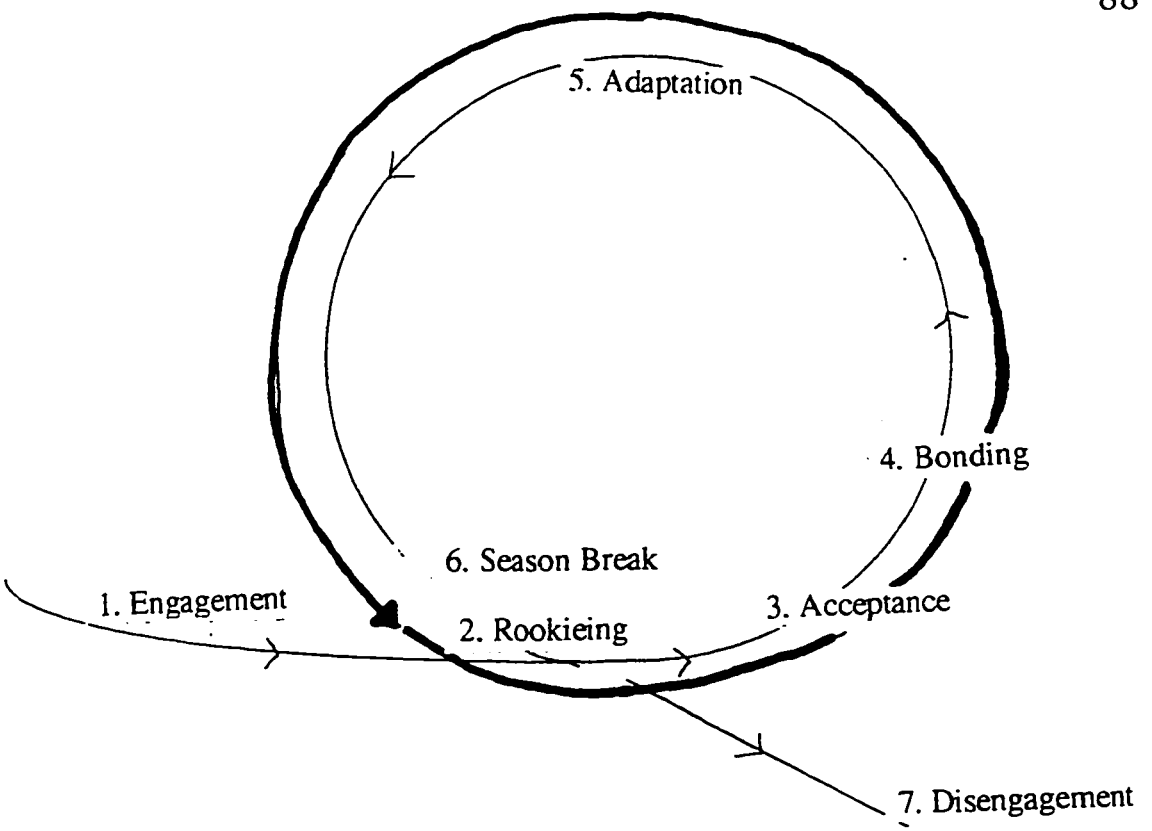

Figure 6. Coach's relationship to the participant involvement model

The coaches involved in the study did not see themselves as being directly involved in the process of team development as described above. The coaches tended to talk about what the athletes did, although there were hints that they did experience aspects of the various stages (albeit less intensely). They did, however, recognize the development of the teams, and described it in terms similar to those the athletes used. The above depiction illustrates the particular relationship which the coaches had to team development, in contrast to the athletes on the team.

Planning for the Season: Values

One significant role of the team leader is to provide basic direction in terms of the team's value orientation. While it can be important and worthwhile for the team members to collectively develop principles and guidelines (as the individual

team did), the leader can set the groundwork, and the initial expectations for behaviors and attitudes.

Both teams, as discussed previously (in both this and the preceding section) experienced some problems around varying expectations regarding certain values, including commitment and respect. That these issues were of such importance to team members illustrates the significance of a values structure for a team.

Recent articles have stressed values approaches to team building (Crace & Hardy, 1997; Yukelson, 1997). This tack is consistent with some of the popular personal productivity literature (Covey, 1989), coaching philosophy (Hogg, 1995; Smith & Smoll, 1997) and other aspects of group development work (Burns, 1994).

Values have two general types of roles to play in building teams. The first is to provide a philosophical background, on which the team building process is based. The second is to create a blueprint for behavior, and standards for sanctions (Melnick, 1982), which, as the individual team captain pointed out, are important for reinforcing expected behavior for team members. The creation of a values structure is the role of the coach and other team leaders in the first place, but once the season starts it is important to get the rest of the team to 'buy-in' to the philosophy, and so it may be useful to collectively create a set of "team philosophy and guidelines" as the individual team did. In this way all team members can have a say in the values structure which can form the basis of the norms for team behavior, as well as having a role in the enforcement of behaviors. The individual team found that this approach worked well, and encouraged team members to take responsibility for their actions.

Admittedly, the presence of a values structure does not provide guarantees. The individual team experienced conflict around the issue of commitment, one of the major groupings in their written and posted philosophy and guidelines. They

did, however, have an easier time than the interactive team around this problem. The interactive team also had expectations regarding commitment, but no comparable code to refer to.

Value structures can be developed in different ways. It is helpful if the coach has a personal framework to guide his or her leadership style (as the individual team coach did), perhaps developed according to the strategies suggested by Covey (1989), Hogg (1995) or Yukelson (1997). When the rest of the team becomes involved, strategic planning exercises could be used, group goal setting exercises (Widmeyer, 1997), or a combination of the two.

Context and Structure Considerations

In developing a guiding philosophy (and from it a vision) for teams, it is important to consider the external factors which have an influence on the structure of the group. The outer rim of the team development model, these factors cannot usually be manipulated, but need to be taken into account. For the teams interviewed, some of these context considerations included the level of development of the sport, location, past history of the team, and task type. Additional variables, such as the philosophies of the larger organizations to which the teams belonged, and team composition, were somewhat more controllable, but there was only so much latitude that could be gained.

Some of these considerations concerned resources and environment. Where the teams trained and competed, rural or urban settings and the sport itself had to be accepted as the parameters within which the groups operated. The interactive sport team's lack of competition was not a factor which the team could change, but it was a variable that they needed to take into account The type of task which the team members were engaged in was also enduring; the individual sport could not be made interactive to suit the wants or needs of the group, or vice versa.

Interestingly, there has been some discussion regarding the suitability of task type for team development. While some authors and researchers have viewed task type as more of a consideration to be taken into account, others, such as Drexler et al. (1988), have suggested that certain task types are superior. According to this viewpoint, teams with tasks which do not require a high degree of interdependence should not create such a sense of interdependence among team members, as it has no inherent value. While it would likely be a mistake to try to change the team members' approaches to their task, the individual team members (involved in a clearly un-interdependent task) valued the social support provided by their team members, which ultimately created a sense of interdependence between team members. This support, encouragement and inspiration provided by other team members constituted some of the most important benefits which participants gained from being part of their team. It may be that the observations made by Drexler et al. would be more suited to organizational, rather than sport settings.

In addition, some interactive team members made some assumptions about the nature of individual sport, that do not seem to have been borne out in the experience of the individual team. While most interactive team members seemed to think that the structure and camaraderie provided by the team were most beneficial for them and their sport development, the interactive team members seemed to believe that the individual team members may as well be training by themselves. This seemingly erroneous assumption (according to the experience of the individual team members) is worth noting, as it may indeed represent a more common attitude.

Age is another factor that needs to be taken in account when considering the structure of the teams. Both of the teams in question were made up of adults (or young adults). As such, the democratic and participative leadership styles which seemed to work so well (and are reported as being more effective in the literature, which has been mainly if not exclusively concerned with adult populations) may be

particularly suited to the maturity levels of the participants. Team building with a team made up of children or younger team members may well require more structure, although Smith and Smoll (1997) still advocated a values based approach.

The interactive team captain also observed that marital status appeared to also have an impact on the ways in which players interacted, and perhaps (similar to taking into account age and maturity) should be considered in the team development process. Players who had families, "you can notice that difference in the dressing room." They had to deal with other people, and potential interpersonal challenges on a daily basis, whereas "people who are single they don't have to deal with that, other than in themselves" (interactive team captain).

The competition schedule can also have an impact on team development, as illustrated by the experiences of the interactive team. The difficulties that they seemed to have because of not having those opportunities to compete included a lack of clear direction, lack of uniting challenge, and trouble forming group identity, as well as the accompanying difficulties in using and practicing sport skills in a competitive setting. These considerations could also include the level of play (recreational, house leagues, competitive, elite), as well as the values of the organizations which with the teams are affiliated. For instance, the individual team was attached to an educational institution, and thus the coach felt that the training and competition schedule had to allow for academic pursuits. It was a further point of pride that the team boasted fourteen academic All-Canadians.

It is also important to consider the length of time for which the teams are together. Both teams investigated in this study were long-duration, but teams may come together for shorter periods of time, sometimes as little as a few days. It is difficult to guess whether these teams would generally have a harder time bonding (lacking the sheer time to get to know each other, which was so important to the

teams interviewed), or if it would be easier because the tensions would not have a chance to surface (which both teams experienced after the first several weeks). Also, it would be interesting to see whether team building programs used by short duration teams differed significantly in structure.

Being Proactive and Preparing for Conflict

Both teams found dealing with conflict to be difficult, and avoiding problems only tended to make them worse. The two teams had various troubles with issues simmering under the surface during the middle and later parts of the season, erupting at times. For the individual team, the evident resentment between the men's and women's teams was an ongoing challenge. Fundamental to the conflict were issues of commitment and support, and similar concerns were faced throughout the season by the interactive team.

When the problems "blew-up" the teams were forced to deal with them. Sometimes this would help to resolve the situation, as in the case of the interactive team captain's celebrated "stint" when he "blew a gasket on the ice" (interactive team captain). For the individual team some of the ways in which team members dealt with the problem only made the tensions worse.

The key in both these situations appears to have been effective communication. The interactive team was able to capitalize on the situation, and were finally able to talk about some of the issues that were bothering team members. The individual team, in contrast, was not able to communicate in such a way that the difficulty could be resolved.

For both teams some of this resentment was fueled by the fact that there seemed to be no official sanctions, or deterrents, for errant behavior. Team members who did not fulfill their commitment continued to receive the same benefits, and this rankled, particularly for the individual team members.

Obviously, being proactive and dealing with potential conflicts before they become problems would be preferable to dealing with them afterwards. The experience of the two teams would suggest that regular communication, safe and constructive opportunities to express dissatisfaction, and team members getting to know each other and respect each other would help to avoid conflict in general.

When asked what might have been done to make the season a better experience, interactive team members talked about having more opportunities to both get to know each other, and to spend more time working with each other, in addition to strengthening their profile in the community (likely linked with pride and identifiability). Individual team members mentioned team meetings, improved communication, and clear sanctions. The experiences of these teams would suggest that these factors may help to avoid or lessen strife.

Team Development and the Seasonal Plan

If the lessons learned from talking to teams had to be boiled down to a single element, it would be for the planning of a team building program. One of the greater challenges facing the teams was that there was a tendency for formal team building activities to get lost in the shuffle; the season would start off strong (such as the individual team's retreat), but because activities during the season were not planned out in advance, they did not occur (an observation made by both the individual team coach and team captain). Informal activities, like the interactive team's meetings over coffee, tended to peter out. Therefore, the success of team building in an overall sense depends upon how well team building is integrated into the activities of the team. Making team building activities a normal part of the routine also avoids the potential pitfall of making it a chore by having the activities be overly identifiable ("we're all going to go out for a coffee after practice" would likely be much more effective than "we're going to team build after practice").

Carron, Spink and Prapavessis's (1997) observation that all team building activities are basically indirect interventions tends to support this approach.

As mentioned previously, certain stages in team development would appear to occur at certain points in the season. To ensure consistency in discussing parts of the season I will use the terminology suggested by Hogg (1995), among others: pre-season, preparatory or build-up phase, accumulative or hard training phase, pre-competitive and competitive phase, and recovery phase. The emphasis in the following outline is on the role of the coach in developing and implementing a team building program. The below points are, in fact, a summation of the 'lessons learned' from the interviews, various aspects of which were discussed in the preceding sections.

During the pre-season it is first of all beneficial to create a plan for the shape of the season, including team building aspects. As discussed previously, it is also an appropriate time for the coach to sit down and develop guiding principles for the process. Decisions such as how the team will be selected, and what sanctions are available and appropriate are indicative of the types of issues to be addressed.

Practically, team building activities need to be written into the seasonal plan. While considering the training and practice schedule, events should be strategically placed. These could include a retreat (one such the individual team has found quite helpful), team dinners, or other structured or semi-structured activities. Having that time together away from the training venues was important for both teams.

Making an assessment of 'where the team is at' is problematic. As examined in the first section, there are limitations with many of the currently available instruments designed to assess team cohesion. It is also difficult to determine the optimal level of cohesion necessary for a good team; to a certain degree, it may be counterproductive to worry about the amount of cohesion present. The crucial aspect is that there is a functional amount of cohesiveness among team

members, and as such there is a real need to investigate what these functional levels 'look like' (Brawley, 1990). Neither team made an assessment as such, but rather dealt with issues as they arose, and/or watched for traditional problems in hopes of diffusing them before they became serious.

Since most of the constructs involved in team building are at least as difficult to measure as cohesion, it would be a formidable task to determine what exact dimensions need to be developed to what degree. It may become obvious that there are areas that are lagging behind (the individual coach found those discoveries to be "painful"), however at the beginning it is more prudent to plan for a variety of activity, geared towards different aspects of team development. In this way, one can ensure that each area is covered. It may also be useful to involve other team leaders (such as team captains) in this part of the process, so that they have some idea of what the process looks like, and can help promote it. This approach would be particularly appropriate for teams with more mature participants. The coach of the individual team encouraged team captains to organize activities, and the interactive team captain took the initiative himself to organize locker room chats and an annual barbecue.

In the preparation or build-up phase the groundwork for the rest of the season is laid. Ground rules are established, and the team members get to know each other. This is the stage at which basic skills are developed, and patterns are established. Activities that require the team members to get to know each other, interact, and develop effective communication skills are particularly useful here. This is also the time to establish expectations for behavior, and to encourage personal as well as group and task development (such as through a mental skills program). It is useful to create chances for the group to be seen as a team during this time, since this is the period of time when the teams develop a sense of group identity. Sources for various activities can be found in Appendix D; a variety of

exercises, both in terms of purpose and nature (some verbal, some physical, some written) would help ensure that different aspects of the team development process are covered, and that there will be some activity that will be especially meaningful for each participant.

The accumulative or hard training phase is the time to emphasize working through challenges, as the task will provide them. The "hard work of staying in shape," as an individual team athlete put it, provides challenges and a common experience for the team members to bond over. This should be the glue that holds people together. Team get-togethers away from training can help to solidify feelings of togetherness (as the individual team in particular found), and physically removes participants from the training venue, and some negative associations (especially fatigue) with the place during this part of the season. In the experience of both the teams, this was the time when things would tend to fall apart, and so it is important to be proactive in terms of keeping lines of communication open, and providing ongoing opportunities for positive group interaction. The assistance of team captains in organizing and promoting activities can be crucial, particularly when considering less structured outings. Original values need to be reinforced and maintained, and group/individual/task development should all be furthered. Mutual support is crucial, and should be positively reinforced.

The pre-competitive/competitive portion of the season is the refining stage, for all team activities (team building as well as training). Except in the case of extreme circumstances, new major undertakings should not be started. Again, it is important to be proactive, providing opportunities as above. This is typically a high-stress portion of the season, so chances to blow off steam may be particularly helpful (and may help head off incidents such as the interactive team experienced, despite its cathartic side-effects). These could be special activities outside of the normal routine, a group outing, or a celebration of achievements to date. Both

interactive and individual team members seemed to want more feedback about accomplishments throughout the season.

The end of the competitive phase marks the end of the season, and disengagement for some team members. As such it is helpful for all team members to have some kind of wrap-up session to allow for debriefing, a recap and evaluation of the collective experience, and to provide closure to departing team members (Bettenhausen, 1991). This is also a good time to recognize achievement and provide directions to help carry team members into the future. An appropriate activity may be a team dinner or get-together after the end of the season (a tradition for both teams interviewed), especially for these functions.

The recovery phase is the time to reflect on the previous season. What worked well? What didn't work well? Why? By examining these questions the coach, perhaps with the help of the team captains (or other leaders) can make adaptations for the following season. It may also be valuable to organize some low-key activities during the off-season. The interactive team members talked about an afternoon of ball playing at the part, or group dinners, and the individual team members had participated in some fundraising activities, and the coach had sent out a newsletter. All these activities served to keep the connections between team members intact during the off-season.

Lessons Learned: Fostering Team Building

The process of team building is complex and ongoing. From the combined wisdom of the existing literature on team building, and the present study regarding team building in sport, a number of points deserve highlighting. These recommendations or guides, together with some of the conceptual frameworks previously presented can provide a strong base for a team building program.

First, be proactive. Plan activities throughout the year, and have ideas for contingency plans. Both teams found that the points at which they ran into trouble

were when there were gaps in the team building activities. It may help to map out the potential fault lines, along natural delineations in the group. Structural distinctions may also form breaks within a group. Some examples include male-female splits, age issues, high-performance versus developmental groups, or skill or talent levels (the interactive team particular struggled with age issues and skill levels, while the individual team mostly experienced splits based on gender and talent or outcome).

Second, ensure that various aspects of a team building program are embraced. Set smaller goals for each week or fortnight, based on categories of task factors (technical, physical, tactical), individual (mental rehearsal, personal achievement), group (activity, social, partner work), communication, support, and opportunities for leadership. With some creativity, one activity can fulfill several objectives. For instance, peer coaching on a particular skill could fulfill technical (and possibly tactical) ends, as well as providing an opportunity for leadership, positive support, and enhancing communication between team members. Team development has components of individual, group and task development. The interactive team, for instance, found that so long as individuals harbored personal animosity, it was difficult to promote group cohesiveness.

Third, set expectations for behavior, and stick to them. There should be appropriate consequences. Reward good behavior, and sanction negative behavior. One source of tension for both teams was the perception of people getting away with things; don't let the norms of behavior deteriorate. Be true to agreed upon guiding principles. The individual team found this to be particularly important, and Melnick (1982) also stressed this point.

Fourth, establish clear roles and responsibilities. Everyone should know what his or her job is on the team, and what they can do to contribute (the individual team found this to be particularly important, in lieu of having

opportunities for direct task support). Set boundaries, and adhere to them. The athletes are not trained coaches, nor should they be expected to fulfill that role (or vice versa), as the interactive team captain pointed out. Some people will need more direct encouragement than others; it is important to get to know the individuals as well as the group. Members of both teams struggled with respecting others' personal differences, and getting to know each other's preferences, although individual team members were blunter in talking about these problems.

Fifth, teams need a clear direction and purpose. Group goal setting can help get everyone moving in a similar direction. Small weekly goals can help keep everyone focused on the process. The individual team found that the group goal setting, and sharing of individual goals at the beginning of the season (at the retreat), helped to pull the team together, while the interactive team found the lack of clear direction (including not knowing their competition schedule, if any) to be detrimental. Widmeyer and Ducharme (1997) further discussed aspects of group goal setting for team building purposes.

Sixth, the coach is the facilitator. The challenge is to get the team members involved, and give them a sense of ownership in the process. Keep the lines of communication open. Create routines or traditions to help make various aspects self-perpetuating. Team meetings, as noted by both teams, are important in keeping ideas flowing, and giving members feelings of involvement in the process. This view of the coach's role appears to be particularly appropriate to the composition of the teams studied; teams with younger athletes may need to treated somewhat differently.

Future Directions

These "lessons learned" from the teams interviewed give us some insight as to how the teams developed, and how the problems the teams encountered might be avoided or solved. These potentially form the basis of a solid team building

program to be used with sport teams. And the sense that they provide regarding development of sport teams lends ideas for further investigation which could provide even better ideas of how to build teams in the future.

This particular study looked at the process of team building for two long-duration sport teams over the course of a single season. Both teams comprised young adults or adults, but each existed in a different sport context. While valuable information was gained about the way in which team building proceeded, questions still remain. For instance, is the process for short-duration teams a 'speeded-up' version of the process for long duration teams? And do all teams seem to follow this rough pattern of development?

Another set of questions involves the role of the coach in the team building process. Which strategies seems to work best, and what are the various requirements needed for various contexts? High performance teams have different requirements than recreational ones, and adults need responsibility and direction in a different way than children.

Some of the findings of this study were not entirely compatible with the common wisdom found in the literature. This incongruity is perhaps indicative of the struggle to form links between theoretical constructs, operationalizations and measurements, as suggested by Brawley (1990). There is a real need for applied findings that will benefit actual coaches and teams. Furthermore, these interventions or strategies (depending on the particular conceptualization) need to be based on both practice and theory, not just one or the other.

From this point of view there are a number of immediately evident issues. The first concerns assessment tools. How can tools be developed which will accurately reflect the different variables associated with team building, while ensuring the individual/group/task balance? Ironically enough, it would appear that

task aspects of team building have been the least examined, perhaps because of the great diversity of sports and the unique demands of each.

Closely associated with the issue of assessment is that of measurement. To what degree is measurement truly necessary? Theoretical conceptualizations need to be replaced by functional operationalizations for constructs such as optimal size, cohesion, process loss, and synergy. Is it reasonable to attach numbers to these concepts, particularly when the perception of group members can affect the outcome, or should we stick with functional versus non-functional descriptions?

Perhaps most importantly there is a need to test systematic team building interventions, possibly constructed similarly to mental skills training programs. Many of the programs alluded to in the literature are not well described, based on anecdotes, or are otherwise made difficult to replicate. The models and schemas discussed previously could provide the basis for such a program in the future.

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Appendix A. Informed Consent

Dear Participant:

The study in which you have been asked to participate regards the ways in which sport teams "team build." Your involvement would consist of two interviews, approximately one hour in length each, in which discussion will touch upon aspects of your experience within sport team settings.

It is my hope that the information provided by these interviews will lend insight into the ways in which sport teams develop. From this, recommendations would be made to coaches, team leaders and other interested parties about the process of team building.

If you are agreeable to participating in this study, please read and sign the following to indicate your willingness. Thank you for your assistance.

* * *

I, the undersigned, agree to participate in the research study conducted by Rebeccah Bornemann, under the supervision of Dr. Marcel Bouffard. In doing so, I understand that,

1. I will be asked to discuss various aspects of my experience as a member of a sport team.
2. Each interview shall be audiotaped and transcribed. These materials will be kept private, and the tapes will be destroyed at the end of the study. If I wish, I may request a copy of the transcript for my interview.
3. Each of the two interviews will take approximately one hour to complete, and will occur at a mutually agreeable time. I may be contacted at a later date for

clarification or verification of information which arises from my participation in this study, which would likely not exceed twenty minutes.

4. If, at any time, I do not wish to discuss a certain topic, or would like to end my participation in the study, I may do so without recourse. In such a case, I will advise the investigator.

5. I am a volunteer in this study and am not entitled to any pay remuneration.

6. At all times my confidentiality and anonymity will be respected. No identifying information will appear in the final paper.

7. I may ask questions regarding the study and my participation at any time.

I agree to participate in the above described study, and acknowledge that I have received a copy of this form for my reference.

Appendix B: Interview guide for the first set of interviews

A. (briefly) How did you become involved in your sport?

B. Generally speaking, do you enjoy being part of a team? Why or why not?

C. What factors do you think are characteristics of a successful team?

I. Please describe the team of which you were a part of over the previous season.

1. How did you become part of the team? Do you think your experience was typical?

2. Would you define your team as being successful? Why? What factors would you take into account in calling your team successful? What makes your team successful? What makes it work together well?

3. Did your team have goals for performance outcomes? (Please describe). Do you think that team members were able to work together well to achieve these?

4. Did your team have goals or expectations about the ways in which group members interacted? (Please describe)

5. Do you think team members worked well with each other? Did you feel a part of the group?

6. On the whole, do you think team members enjoyed and/or valued being part of the team? What do you think made it enjoyable?

7. Did you have individual goals? If so, did being part of the team help you to achieve them? (Please explain)

8. Was this team special or different compared to other teams that you have been a part of? If so, how?

II. Tell me about the development of your team over the course of the last season. How did this group evolve from being a collection of individuals into being a team?

1. Does your team have any particular traditions? Can you describe some of them? Do you know how or why these came about?

2. Were there times when the team really pulled together or seemed to "click"? (Please describe when and how)

3. Are there any specific times or events when you were a part of the team that seem particularly memorable to you?

4. Do you think that there were any team activities that were specifically supposed to "team build"? Do you think they worked? (Were you involved in the planning? If so, why did you pick that particular activity? What specifically did you hope it would achieve? Did it work? Were there any other outcomes?)

5. How do you feel about the leadership, formal and informal, provided on the team? What do you feel your role was on the team?

6. What did you enjoy most about being part of the team? What did you enjoy least?

7. If you could, what would you have done to make being part of the team a better experience? What would you have done to make the team stronger?

III. Anything else you think I should know?

Appendix C: Interview guide for the second set of interviews

1. What is the value of being part of a team? Did being part of your team include these positive aspects?
2. What makes you feel a part of a team? What does it mean to you to be part of the team?
3. Is there anything that bothers you about the team?
4. Describe the closeness of the team over the course of the season (peaks/valleys, graph).
5. What expectations did you have for or regarding the team?
6. Describe how the members of the team interacted in general (paint me a picture).
7. Did the team have any routines?
8. Describe how rookies become vets.
9. Anything else?

Appendix D. Sources for team building activities

Team Building: A practical guide for trainers. By N. Clark. Provides examples of various exercises, including problem-solving, sharing and individual development activities. This book mainly discusses workgroup settings.

Team Building Through Physical Challenges. By D.R. Glover and D.W. Midura. Includes cooperative gymnasium games geared towards elementary-school children. Some activities could be adaptable for other age groups.

More Team Building Challenges. By D.W. Midura and D.R. Glover. More cooperative gymnasium games, focusing on elementary students and young adolescents. Some paper and pencil communication exercises are included. Many activities are suitable or adaptable for other age groups.

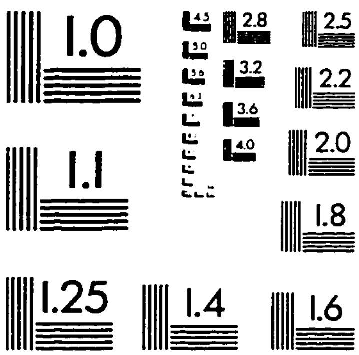
The Lifeline: A qualitative method to promote group dynamics (article). By M.J. Miller. A description of an intense group sharing exercise for adults.

The Cooperate Sports and Games Book. By T. Orlick. Cooperative indoor and outdoor games, mostly for pre-schoolers and elementary students. Some ideas are included for teen-agers and adults, and many activities could be adapted.

A Handbook of Structured Experiences for Human Relations Training (volumes I and II). By J.W. Pfeiffer and J.E. Jones. An collection of group exercises, mainly oriented towards organizational settings. Problem solving and communication exercises predominate, with some getting to know you and cooperative activities included.

TeamWorks! Building support groups that guarantee success. By B. Sher and A. Gottlieb. Activities presented include ice-breakers / getting to know you exercises, and group sharing exercises.

IMAGE EVALUATION TEST TARGET (QA-3)



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APPLIED IMAGE, Inc
1653 East Main Street
Rochester, NY 14609 USA
Phone: 716/482-0300
Fax: 716/288-5989