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# Exploring How Parents Influence Role Acceptance of Youth Athletes Through Multiple Perspectives

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EXPLORING HOW PARENTS INFLUENCE ROLE ACCEPTANCE OF YOUTH  
ATHLETES THROUGH MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

by

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THESIS

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## Abstract

Role acceptance refers to the willingness of an athlete to fulfill expected role responsibilities (Benson, Eys, Surya, Dawson, & Schneider, 2013). Researchers have proposed several potential antecedents of role acceptance, one of which emphasized the influence of parents in this process (Eys et al., in preparation). With this in mind, the general purpose of the present study was to examine how parents influence the role acceptance process through multiple perspectives (e.g., parents, athletes, and coaches). To achieve this objective, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 19 participants (7 parents, 7 athletes, and 5 coaches) from four different types of interdependent team sports (e.g., basketball). Following the interview process, each interview was transcribed verbatim and then analyzed using an inductive analysis approach (Patton, 2002). To ensure credibility and trustworthiness, several measures were taken including bracketing previous experiences, maintenance of a reflexive journal, data and investigator triangulation, and member checks. Results demonstrated that participants perceived parents to influence athlete role acceptance. Themes were organized into a framework to help explain the process by which parents influence athlete role acceptance through parent characteristics (e.g., investment, sport competence, unrealistic expectations), parent behaviours (e.g., supporting, undermining, intervening), and the resulting consequences (e.g., athlete role acceptance, team specific consequences). Discussion is focussed around several practical and theoretical implications aimed at bringing awareness to how parents influence athlete role acceptance and proposes minor adjustments with regard to the sport actors involved in role development.

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

For athletes of any age, friends, family, and loved ones seem to impact many aspects of the sport experience. This starts from a very young age as soon as a parent enrolls his or her son or daughter into organized sport. Parents have the job of getting their child to and from practices, tournaments, and games. As such, parents have a significant amount of time with their child to talk about the sport in which he or she is partaking. It goes without saying that this type of parental support is important for an athlete's development. However, there are situations where parental involvement has been extensive. For example, the parents of former NHL player Eric Lindros were known to greatly impact Lindros at every stage of his career (see Wojnarowski, 2001). Eric's parents, specifically his mother Bonnie, were extremely vocal regarding the locations where Eric would begin both his OHL and NHL careers. When Lindros was projected to be picked first overall in the 1991 NHL entry draft, Lindros' parents told the Quebec Nordiques that he would not be staying in Quebec if they drafted him. The Nordiques did not listen to the Lindros family and drafted Eric, who was subsequently traded to the Philadelphia Flyers. Even after Eric was a Philadelphia Flyer, his parents continued to monitor his career very closely, even keeping track of the role contributions of Eric's Philadelphia teammates. As Wojnarowski explained, "reportedly, the parents kept charts on who regularly passed the puck to him in Philadelphia, and who didn't" (2001, para. 5). This example gives an indication of the influence parents can have on athletes' roles and the degree to which parents are involved in athletes' sport experiences. The specific purpose of the present thesis is to understand the parental influence on athlete role acceptance. The subsequent sections of the introduction will provide information on

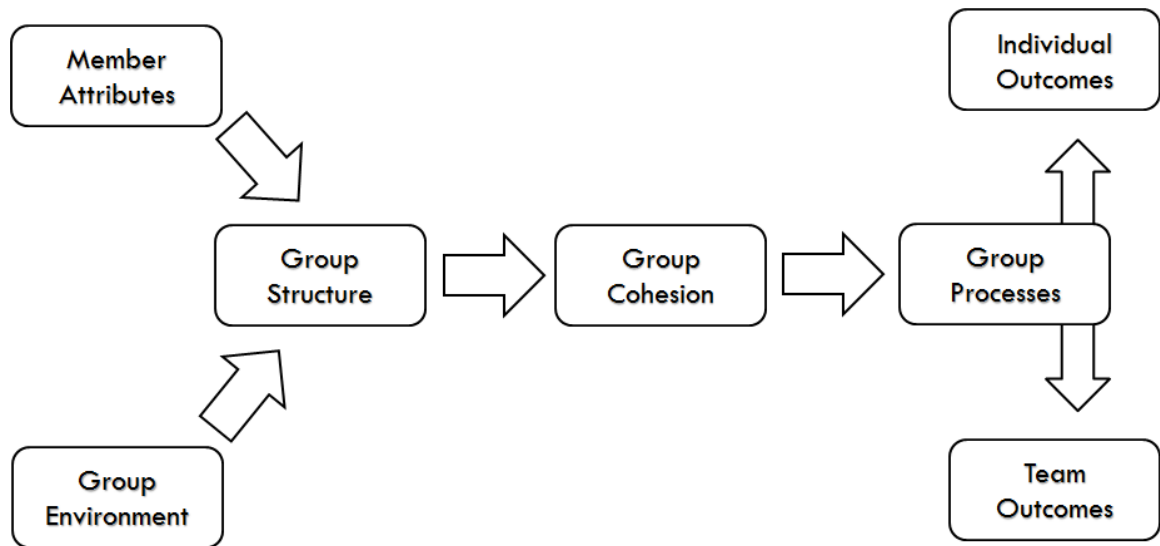
group dynamics followed by information about roles in general, important role concepts, and, finally, recent studies examining role acceptance that underpin the current project.

### **1.1 Group Dynamics**

Group dynamics, as defined by Cartwright and Zander (1968), refers to a “field of inquiry dedicated to advancing knowledge about the nature of groups, the laws of their development, and their interrelations with individuals, other groups and larger institutions” (p. 7). A conceptual framework for the study of groups created by McGrath (1984) explains generally how five factors influence group interaction processes. These factors include the type of task, group structure, required behaviours, group member properties, and the environment/context. First, the *type of task* category is straightforward and refers to the task(s) that the group must undertake. For example, this could be a basketball team working out together in the morning, which McGrath would consider a formal assigned job. The task could also involve going as a team to a house party that is not organized in a formal manner, and is more focused on recreation. Second, the *group structure* category refers to the number of members, length of tenure, compatibility of members, and the different influences the members have on one another based on their relationships within the team (i.e., informal leaders and first-year players). Third, the *required behaviours* category involves the amalgamation of the group structure and type of task categories and refers to the behaviours needed to achieve group goals. Fourth, the *group member properties* category includes individuals’ traits, beliefs, habits, and characteristics, all of which affect how the group interacts. Finally, the *group environment/context* category refers to how group interaction is affected by where the interaction takes place. Group interaction processes may be different in a quiet gym

where a varsity volleyball team is the sole team using the area as opposed to a gym where multiple teams are practicing at the same time. Although the provided examples are sport related, the McGrath (1984) framework was initially constructed for the study of groups in general.

More recently, a framework has been adapted to study the interaction of groups in a sport setting. In 2012, Carron and Eys highlighted a conceptual framework for the study of sport teams consisting of inputs, throughputs, and consequences (see Figure 1). In this framework, the group's environment and member attributes are the inputs that influence the group structure. The throughputs are the group's structure (e.g., positions), cohesiveness (i.e., group connectedness), and processes (e.g., team goals), eventually resulting in consequences. These consequences include both individual and group components. The individual outcomes include individual performance and adherence, whereas group outcomes include group stability and team outcomes (e.g., winning). These inputs, throughputs, and consequences have been researched individually with great detail; however, for this project I am particularly interested in group/team structure.



*Figure 1.* A conceptual framework for the study of sport teams (Carron & Eys, 2012).  
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Team structure consists of both physical and psychological components. From a psychological perspective, according to Carron and Eys (2012), when a group forms its members begin to communicate and interact, which results in differentiation between individual members. This differentiation causes a psychological group structure to emerge that consists of four components: group positions, status, norms, and roles (Carron & Eys, 2012). Group position describes the location of individual group members and can refer to a specific physical location, such as always sitting at the same locker, or a dynamic position that an athlete occupies during competition or practice. An example of these dynamic positions would be a setter, left side hitter, or right side hitter in volleyball. Each of these positions is associated with a relative level of importance, referred to as status. Group status is defined as the importance one possesses because of his or her position in relation to positions occupied by others (Jacob & Carron, 1994). However, status is not based on position alone as it can also be achieved through the number of years a player has been on a team or his/her amount of experience with the sport (as just a few examples). Similar to how status develops, group norms also surface slowly over a period of time and refer to the informal rules adopted by a group to regulate the behaviour of group members (Carron & Eys, 2012; Feldman, 1984). The last component that makes up the psychological structure of the group is roles. Roles are a complex aspect of the psychological team structure and are often studied in sub-categories referred to as role concepts. The following section will define roles, highlight how roles develop, and highlight six different role concepts.

## 1.2 Roles

According to Biddle and Thomas (1966) a role is “the set of prescriptions defining what the behavior of a position member should be” (p. 29). Traditionally, researchers have categorized roles in terms of the degree to which they are either task or social oriented (Bales & Slater, 1955) and/or the formality in which they develop (Mabry & Barnes, 1980). More recently, a study sought to understand the different types of roles in a sport specific setting (Benson, Surya, & Eys, 2014). It was found that the types of perceived role responsibilities could be categorized into four groups including specialized task-oriented roles, auxiliary task-oriented roles, social oriented roles, and leadership roles. The first category, specialized task-oriented roles, referred to roles that formed based on an athlete being able to perform a skill proficiently. Athletes discussed specialized task roles in terms of the functionality they had in regard to team tactics. The second category, auxiliary task-oriented roles, referred to roles that were more secondary in nature and were occupied by athletes who augmented their teammates’ role contributions. These athletes were often non-starters and described as hard workers or energy providers. These roles also did not share the same level of perceived importance as specialized task oriented roles in terms of contributions during the game; however, for the athletes who were fulfilling these auxiliary task-oriented roles, the roles were meaningful and important for team success.

The third category, social oriented roles, included roles that were social in nature and were occupied by athletes who sought to facilitate interaction between teammates, and to form or maintain relationships between members of the team. Like auxiliary task oriented roles, social oriented roles were not proposed to directly impact team

performance; although the interviewed athletes indicated that these roles were important for the formation and maintenance of relationships among team members. The last category, leadership roles, was described as roles that could be both social and task oriented in nature. Unique to leadership roles, however, was the fact that the purpose of these roles was to unify and animate team members toward team goals or objectives, either verbally or non-verbally.

A second project by Benson et al. (2014) sought to extend the previous qualitative findings and solidify the types of roles that athletes occupied within the group. The study involved Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) athletes from 15 interdependent sport teams. After reading a description of what a role involves, each athlete was asked to describe his or her role using two to five different terms. The researchers then coded these responses in order to categorize the different roles athletes fulfill. All of the roles identified fit the previously outlined categories (i.e., specialized task-oriented roles, auxiliary task-oriented roles, leadership roles, and social-oriented roles). Not surprisingly, it was found that starters were more likely to self-identify using specialized task-oriented roles compared to nonstarters and nonstarters were significantly more likely to list auxiliary task-oriented roles compared to starters. Finally, the research indicated that veterans were significantly more likely to list leadership roles than rookies. More generally, it was found that factors related to status in the group appeared to influence the occupancy of roles (Benson et al., 2014).

**Role development.** Although the above paragraphs outline examples of different types of roles, researchers have been interested in how roles develop (e.g., Bales, 1966; Mabry & Barnes, 1980). More recently Benson et al. (2014) explored the sources (i.e.,

formal vs. informal) and transmission of athletes' role expectations to further understand this development process in sport. Results of the study indicated that all athletes thought coaches were a major source of role expectations and that roles derived from coaches were more task-oriented in nature. It was also found that coaches were primarily responsible for delegating leadership roles to team members. Not only were roles delegated by a coach, but athletes indicated that a coach's expectations could change as a result of performance or the amount of time an athlete has been on a specific team.

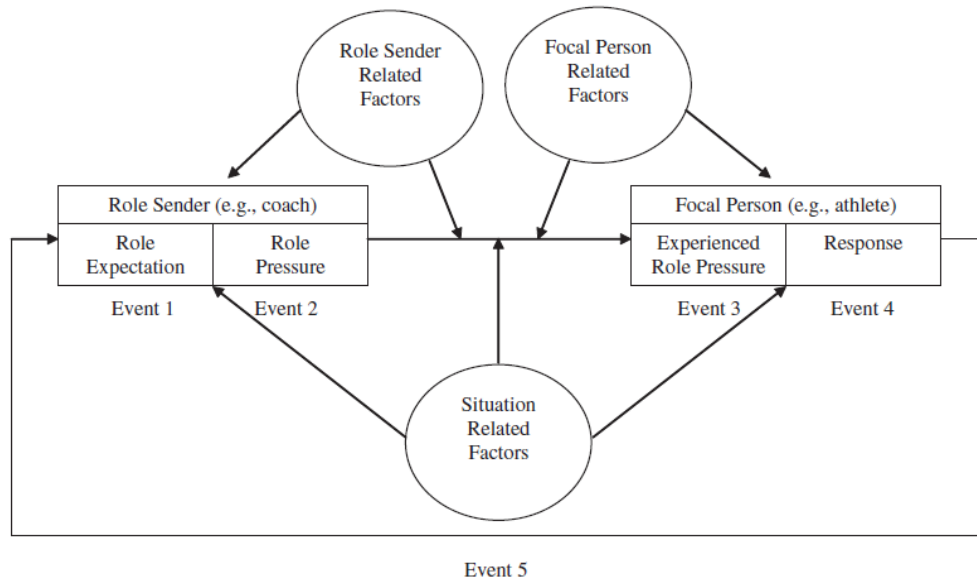
In the second theme, expectations that evolved out of group interactions, ten of the athletes interviewed indicated that role pressures, as a result of self-pressure and pressure from teammates, were also prominent in the creation of role expectations. For example, in this study one athlete talked about his social oriented leadership skills and how this caused his teammates to encourage him to take on more of a leadership role. Some participants also indicated that nonstarters were more likely to fulfill roles that were more informal (e.g., vocal player on the bench), thus evolving out of team interaction.

Overall, the findings of Benson et al. (2014) emphasized previous organizational literature regarding role development in general and the various different types of roles (Bales, 1966; Bales & Slater, 1955; Mabry & Barnes, 1980). Benson et al. (2014) discussed the development of formal roles and how task responsibilities for these roles were transmitted by coaches. This is consistent with the process by which formal roles are thought to develop through the Role Episode model (Kahn, Wolfe, Quinn, Snoek, & Rosenthal, 1964; Adapted to sport by Eys, Carron, Beauchamp, & Bray, 2005; see Figure 2). In this model there are two sport actors, the role sender and the focal person.



Consistent with the study by Benson et al. (2014), who found the coach to be the main source of role information, this model displays the coach as the typical role sender. As shown in Figure 2, there are five events proposed to take place during formal role development. During the first event, the role sender (i.e., coach) develops expectations for a player. This is followed by the coach exerting some sort of pressure on a player based on the expectations that were set for him/her. Third, the player experiences pressure from the coach to fulfill a certain role and subsequently has to respond (event four). This response often relates to various role concepts that will be discussed in the coming section (e.g., role acceptance and role performance). Lastly, event five is characterized by the response feeding back to the coach who—depending on the response—will maintain or alter the expectations he/she has for the athlete.

There are also several other factors that can influence an athlete's understanding of his/her role. First, role sender related factors refer sources of role ambiguity that are controlled by the coach (e.g., quantity and quality of communication; Eys et al., 2005). Second, focal person related factors refer to sources of role ambiguity that stem from the athlete (e.g., experience level). Finally, situation related factors are sources of role ambiguity that are not controlled by the coach or athlete but still impact an athlete's role clarity (e.g., time of season).



*Figure 2.* A Theoretical Framework of Factors Influencing the Transmission and Reception of Role Responsibilities. Note: Adapted by Eys et al. (2005, p.385) from Kahn et al. (1964). Used with permission from the publisher.

### 1.3 Role Concepts

In addition to the development and transmission of roles, a number of other role concepts are currently being researched. These concepts include: role conflict, role efficacy, role overload, role satisfaction, role ambiguity/clarity, and role acceptance. Of all the role related research on sport teams, role ambiguity is the most thoroughly researched concept. Role ambiguity is defined as a lack of clear information associated with one's position (Kahn et al., 1964). In 2002, Beauchamp, Bray, Eys, and Carron proposed a conceptual model to study role ambiguity consisting of four dimensions: scope of responsibilities, behaviour to fulfill responsibilities, evaluation of role performance, and consequences of not fulfilling responsibilities. This conceptual model was based off of four manifestations identified by Eys and Carron (2001). The first manifestation, ambiguity with one's scope of responsibility, occurs when there is a lack of clear information about what duties are generally expected of a member of a group. Behavioural responsibility ambiguity occurs when an individual group member perceives unclear information about the specific behaviours that are expected of him or her in order to fulfill his or her responsibilities. The next manifestation, ambiguity with evaluation of performance, occurs when there is perceived unclear information about how an individual's performance of his or her role responsibilities should be evaluated. Lastly, ambiguity regarding consequences of not fulfilling responsibilities refers to unclear information regarding the consequences that would occur if an individual did not fulfill his or her role responsibilities.

Previous research has examined role ambiguity and the effects it can have on individual performance and how it relates to players' tenure (Beauchamp et al., 2002;

Eys, Carron, Beauchamp, & Bray, 2003). A study by Eys et al. (2003) found that in team sports, the differences in role ambiguity between veteran and first-year players on offense that were present at the beginning of the season were not present at the end of the season. In addition, throughout the season the perceived degree of role ambiguity decreased. Perhaps not surprisingly, this demonstrates that the more time that is spent with a team, the less confusion there is in terms of an individual's role.

Understanding the parameters of one's role represents an early stage of role perceptions. Once role ambiguity is diminished, other components of roles come to the forefront such as role satisfaction and role acceptance. Role satisfaction is a relatively new research area in sport that has recently received attention. According to Eys, Schinke, Surya, and Benson (2014), "role satisfaction represents the degree of fulfillment the role gives an individual" (p. 136). In 2012, Surya, Eys, and Benson attempted to conceptualize role satisfaction with a six dimensional model. The dimensions in this model included satisfaction with skill utilization, team role significance, personal role significance, feedback, autonomy, and recognition. The first dimension, skill utilization, refers to the degree to which athletes are satisfied with their roles based on how appropriate it is to their skill sets and abilities. The second dimension, team role significance, describes athletes' satisfaction with how important their roles are in regard to team success and team goals. The third dimension, personal role significance, refers to athletes' satisfaction with their roles in regard to the achievement of their personal goals and successes. The fourth dimension, feedback, is the satisfaction with the amount of communication that occurs between athletes and their coaches or teammates with respect to athletes' performance of their roles. The fifth dimension, autonomy, refers to the

satisfaction athletes perceive with respect to the level of control they have over their roles and responsibilities. Finally the last dimension, recognition, refers to athletes' satisfaction with how well their roles are recognized by teammates. A more recent study by Surya, Eys, and Benson (2014) discovered that there are also a number of different variables related to group interaction that influence individuals' perceptions of role satisfaction. For example, Surya et al. examined how team cohesion, motivational climate, and role ambiguity were related to the various dimensions of role satisfaction. It was found that team cohesion as a whole was positively correlated with all six dimensions of role satisfaction. In addition, task involving motivational climate was found to be positively correlated with the dimensions of feedback, team role significance, personal role significance, and autonomy. Finally, as a whole, role ambiguity had a negative relationship with the different dimensions of role satisfaction.

#### **1.4 Role Acceptance**

**Role acceptance from athletes' perspectives.** Benson, Eys, Surya, Dawson, and Schneider (2013) proposed that role acceptance is “a dynamic process that reflects the degree to which an athlete is willing to fulfill the role responsibilities expected of him/her” (p. 273). This study by Benson et al. (2013) sought to gain a greater understanding of role acceptance through interviews with athletes in order to explore the possible antecedents and consequences of role acceptance. Six major themes arose as potential antecedents and these included the significance of athlete roles, team cohesion, athletes' perceptions of the coach, other related role perceptions (e.g., role satisfaction), length of time playing for their team, and intrateam communication. The first theme, significance of athlete roles, contained responses indicating that athletes may be more

willing to accept responsibilities of a role if it was considered important (Benson et al., 2013). In addition, several sub-themes related to the significance of athlete roles were discussed including: importance of the role within the context of the group, status the role provides within the team, coaches acknowledging the importance of a role, and teammates acknowledging the importance of a role. These sub-themes demonstrated the ways in which athletes derived meaning from their role. The second major theme, team cohesion, was also thought to affect role acceptance from a player's perspective. Athletes spoke about both task and social aspects of cohesion as well as individual attractions to the group and group integration. These sub-themes were consistent with the Carron, Widmeyer, and Brawley (1985) conceptual model of cohesion. From a general perspective, the participants in this study by Benson et al. (2013) suggested that athletes' had enhanced perceptions of a role when their team was thought to be more cohesive.

The third major theme, athletes' perceptions of the coach, referred to the idea that how an athlete perceives his or her coach might affect the degree to which he/she accepts the role assigned. Three specific sub-themes were discussed and included: perception of the coach's competency, congruency of leadership style with personal expectations, and the nature of communication used by the coach. The fourth theme, related role perceptions, had four sub-themes: similarity of role expectations between the athlete and the coach, role clarity, role satisfaction, and degree of person-role conflict. An interesting finding in one of the sub-themes was that nine athletes described that they would be willing to accept a role despite not being satisfied by that role. This finding helps to support the notion that role satisfaction and role acceptance are separate entities. The fifth theme was related to tenure. Athletes described that they would be less likely to accept a

lower status role if they were a veteran player as opposed to a first year player. Finally, intrateam communication arose as a major theme and explained how the quality of communication with teammates affected how individual athletes accepted their roles.

In the study by Benson et al. (2013), potential consequences of role acceptance were also discussed. Two major themes arose, group environment and individual outcomes. As it pertains to the group environment, athletes noted that not fully accepting one's role represents a violation of group norms, impacts group performance, causes interpersonal conflict, and ultimately affects team climate. In other words, when athletes do not accept their roles on teams, it can result in a number of negative consequences that ultimately hurt the performance of the team as a whole. For example, within their study Benson et al. provided an example of an athlete who did not accept his role and therefore engaged in behaviours such as drinking before games, ultimately disrupting the functioning of the team. Additionally, athletes within this study also talked about how important each role is to the task performance of the team and that not accepting roles lets the team down. There were also several individual consequences related to role acceptance including effects on retention/attrition and the emotional state of the athlete. As an attrition example, participants talked about athletes quitting the team because they did not accept a lesser role on the team.

This study by Benson et al. (2013) substantially added to the current understanding of the concept of role acceptance. First, their study proposed that the similarity of expectations between the role sender (coach) and focal person (athlete) is not essential for role acceptance but serves as an antecedent that contributes to an athlete's overall willingness to accept his or her role. Second, the term 'willingness' was

considered a critical term within their definition of role acceptance because athletes indicated that acceptance alone is not always sufficient for successful role performance. For example, these athletes described scenarios whereby they were unable to fulfill a role based on their skill level, but still desired to occupy and attempt to fulfill the responsibilities of that role. Third, Benson et al. also found that role acceptance is dynamic and that over time athletes' perceptions of role acceptance could change. Fourth, a distinction between role satisfaction and role acceptance was made evident through this study. As Benson et al. (2013) suggested, athletes appeared to be able to describe experiences in which their role was not desirable; however, they were still willing to accept their role responsibilities to remain a member of their team. Finally, this study emphasized the importance of athlete role acceptance to overall team functioning through the discovery of several consequences of role acceptance. Overall, Benson et al. deepened the current understanding of role acceptance and set the groundwork for future studies.

**Role acceptance from coaches' perspectives.** Following this initial role acceptance work by Benson et al. (2013), this research group also wanted to gain insight into role acceptance through the perspective of coaches (Eys & colleagues, in preparation). In addition to findings that supported the themes emanating from athletes' perspectives of role acceptance, one major theme that arose was concerned with parents of athletes, which was a major departure from the results of the previous study. Coaches indicated that often a young athlete will accept his or her role; however, the parent or parents of that athlete will not. As the coaches described, this would often lead to conflict between the parent and the coach. Since the coach decides playing time and



contributes to the psychological structure of the team, this can make for a very complicated situation. Therefore, this intersection between parents, coaches, and players as it pertains to role acceptance constitutes some potential for conflict in youth sport. The following sections will address this issue and discuss the role of coaches and parents in the youth sport environment. As a frame of reference, similar to past research on youth sport involvement (e.g., Eys, Loughead, Bray & Carron, 2009), the current study considers youth to roughly encompass the age range of 13-17, though it is recognized that definitions of this term vary widely (e.g., Smoll, Smith, Barnett, & Everett, 1993; Wickel & Eisenmann, 2007).

### **1.5 Adults as Social Influences in Youth Sport**

In youth sport, athletes have the potential to be heavily influenced by the adults involved in their sport experience. The adults most often involved in this experience are the athletes' parents and coaches. In terms of parents, Fredricks and Eccles (2004) suggested several reasons as to why family, and parents in particular, should play such a prominent role in youth sport. For instance, they suggested parents are important to youth sport experiences because children spend a lot of time with their family, and parents have a high degree of involvement (i.e., spectator, financier, chauffeur; Fredricks & Eccles, 2004). In addition, a study suggested that parents empathize and perceive sharing the same emotions their children felt in their sport participation (Holt, Tamminen, Black, Sehn, & Wall, 2008).

Interestingly, another study by Keegan, Harwood, Spray, and Lavalley (2009) proposed that parents and coaches influence youth-athletes in a similar manner. For instance, the type of leadership, response, and motivating behaviours displayed by

coaches were congruent with those behaviours displayed by parents (Keegan et al., 2009). However, Keegan et al. also found that parents and coaches engage in behaviours that are unique to the each individual's role. For instance, the role of a coach involves tasks such as providing equal treatment, fairness, one-on-one coaching, and other task oriented behaviours (Keegan et al., 2009). Parents, however, occupy separate roles and influence their children through play-and-teach behaviours and by providing balanced instruction for practice and play. In addition, parents often influence their child's sport experience in an outwardly positive manner. For example, Keegan et al. suggested that this support and facilitation occurs through material and emotional support, supporting unconditionally, and through watching their child's sport.

In line with Keegan et al. (2009), another study found a positive association between parental support and youth tennis players' self-esteem and enjoyment of participation (Leff & Hoyle, 1995). Similarly, Wuerth, Lee, and Alfermann (2004) found parental involvement in the child sport experience to be positive. In their study, Wuerth et al. found that athletes perceived their parents to exert low amounts of pressure, and high amounts of understanding and praise. In addition, athletes who continued participating in sport, and were successful transitioning into the next career phase, received more praise and understanding than less successful athletes (Wuerth et al., 2004). Although this seems as though parental understanding and praise cause success for the athlete, Wuerth et al. cautioned that more research is needed before conclusions in this direction can be made.

However, there are situations when parental involvement is detrimental. For example, issues may arise when parents are involved in their child's sports and begin to

exert pressure upon their child that may cause conflict between parents and their youth-athlete. Although parental involvement in sport would appear to be well-intentioned, a study by Kanters, Bocarro, and Casper (2008) found that parental support was sometimes perceived as pressure by athlete participants. Essentially, Kanters et al. concluded that often parents inaccurately perceive their child's subjective experiences in sport. This is especially alarming considering high parent pressure has been found to relate to negative athlete responses (Hellstedt, 1990).

The downstream consequences of negative parental involvement can be dire. For instance, a study by Jowett and Timson-Katchis (2005) found that “coaches who perceived parents to be over-involved or over-supportive and athletes who perceived their parents to essentially interfere appear to elicit negative interpersonal feelings and a sense of distancing in the coach-athlete dyad” (p. 281). Therefore, Jowett and Timson-Katchis stressed that there needs to be a balance in regard to how much parents influence their child and the coach. Although this distancing can occur in the coach-athlete dyad, Jowett and Timson-Katchis also suggested that—at an elite level—when athletes foster a more connected relationship with their coach, a ‘dyadic withdrawal’ exists and changes the type/level of connectedness between the parent and the child. This causes the parent to experience isolation and feel distanced from his or her child's sport experience (Jowett & Timson-Katchis, 2005).

As evidenced in the literature, in youth sport there is potential for conflict between parents and the other important sport actors of the athlete and the coach. Previous research has suggested that coaches have a pre-season meeting to help with parents' understanding of youth sport and to gain their support and cooperation (Smoll,

Cumming, & Smith, 2011). Although this would be beneficial, there are certain unforeseen circumstances that alter children's roles on their sport teams. At these times youth-athletes—and perhaps their parents—may not accept a newly assigned role and this could induce conflict with the coach. Contributing to the potential for conflict to exist in these situations is the fact that parents sometimes offer their children conflicting advice to that of the coach (Keegan et al., 2009). This conflicting advice could potentially have some influence on the child's acceptance of his or her role. For example, one way parents can offer conflicting advice to athletes can be partially explained through the Role Episode model (see Figure 2; Kahn et al., 1964; Eys, et al., 2005).

Although a coach is often the role sender in sport, other individuals may provide athletes with role information. For example, Eys et al. (2005) suggested that an athlete's teammates, friends, or parents could also be role information senders. This possibility of parents being additional role senders is consistent with the previous study with coaches (Eys et al., in prep.). In addition, not only might parents offer role information, but as Keegan et al. (2009) suggested, parents might offer advice that conflicts with information given to the athlete by the coach. For instance, parents can have expectations and pressures for their child, separate from those of the coach, and give their child role information directly. Depending on the nature of the role information, the athlete may have a positive or negative experience and response. For example, from a negative perspective, parents could put a certain amount of pressure on an athlete that may cause an athlete to reject the role he/she had been given by the coach.

## 1.6 Summary and Purpose

Recent studies examined the concept of role acceptance from collegiate varsity athletes' and coaches' perspectives (Benson et al., 2013; Eys and colleagues, in preparation). Many themes arose from these studies that allowed researchers to gain preliminary insight into the concept of role acceptance. As mentioned previously, of particular interest was a theme brought to the researcher's attention through focus groups with coaches. Coaches mentioned that often parents will undermine their child's ability to accept his or her role. For example, a child would accept his/her role on the team, but the parent would approach the coach complaining about their child's situation. This creates the potential for conflict between the athlete, his/her coach, and his/her parents. Adding to this potential is that parents can offer advice to their child that conflicts with the advice given to the youth-athlete by his/her coach (Keegan et al., 2004). This could have implications for an athlete's acceptance of his or her role. For example, parents may tell their child that he or she should be occupying a greater role on their team, and therefore, the child may not accept his or her current role.

On the contrary, parental influence in youth sport can be very positive. Research has suggested that parents support their child's sport experience through emotional support, unconditional support, and through watching their child's games (Keegan et al., 2004). In addition, Wuerth et al. suggested that from the perspective of athletes, parents exert low amounts of pressure and high amounts of understanding and praise. Therefore, this structure of support provided by a youth-athlete's parents may help the youth-athlete through certain situations such as accepting a lesser role on his or her sport team. Since parents play a primary role in a youth-athlete's sport experience, it would be beneficial to

understand the role of the parent more thoroughly in terms of the type of supportive or conflicting behaviours that influence their child to accept or reject his or her role.

The purpose of the present study was to explore the role of parents, in conjunction with the other important sport actors of the athlete and the coach, in regard to role acceptance. This exploration offers the possibility of several advances to the literature. For example, to date research has only focused on perceptions of role acceptance from university level athletes and from coaches (Benson et al., 2013; Eys and colleagues, in preparation). Therefore, the current project offers an additional perspective to role acceptance (parents' perceptions) as well as uncovers information in regard to how parents influence athlete role acceptance. In addition, the current study focused on youth sport participants as opposed to interuniversity sport athletes. This provided a new lens through which to study role acceptance in sport.

Given the nature of the project, phenomenology was used as the guiding theoretical framework (Patton, 2002). As Patton (2002) suggested, phenomenology intends to find the meaning, structure, and essence of individuals' lived experiences. Therefore, interviews were conducted individually with parents, coaches, and athletes to explore parental influence and the impact that it can have on role acceptance. Naturally, exploring this parental role in combination with the other important sport actors (athlete and coach) gave a multiple perspective viewpoint of the lived experiences of individuals regarding the parental influence on role acceptance.

## Methods

### 2.1 Guiding Theoretical Orientation

The current project used phenomenology as its guiding theoretical framework. According to Patton (2002), phenomenology focuses “on exploring how human beings make sense of experience and transform experience into consciousness, both individually and as shared meaning” (p. 104). More recently, Sparkes and Smith (2014) defined phenomenology as “the study of phenomena (appearances), things as they present themselves to, and are perceived in, human consciousness” (p. 37). Patton suggested that conducting in-depth interviews with individuals who have directly experienced the phenomenon that the researcher is interested in is one way to achieve a phenomenological perspective. This approach allows researchers to understand the ways individuals perceive a specific phenomenon (Patton, 2002).

Patton (2002) suggested there are two implications of a phenomenological approach. First, knowledge of how individuals understand the world and what individuals experience is salient. Patton referred to this as the subject matter when using a phenomenological approach. The second implication is methodological in nature. In order to understand what another individual has experienced, the researcher needs to experience the same phenomenon as directly as possible. Therefore, in-depth interviewing and other participant observation practices are important to understand the phenomenon and the essence of the lived experiences of the individuals under study (Patton, 2002). The idea of this essence is another element that separates phenomenology from other theoretical orientations (Patton, 2002). Phenomenology assumes that “there is an essence or essences to shared experience” (Patton, 2002, p. 106). In other words,

phenomenology implicates that there are “core meanings” through a commonly experienced phenomenon (Patton, 2002).

## **2.2 Participants and Procedures**

After receiving ethics approval from the Research Ethics Board, participants were recruited via purposeful sampling, as this study attempted to understand the lived experiences of information rich participants (Patton, 2002). In terms of the sampling procedure, initially coaches were contacted to inquire about their own participation in the study and the potential participation of their athletes and/or parents of their athletes. A few participants were recruited this way (one parent and daughter; one coach), but ultimately most of the participants were recruited via personal connections with the researcher or snowball sampling (Patton, 2002). In other words, after participants were interviewed, they proceeded to ask their friends/families if they were interested in this study as well. This snowball sampling occurred mostly through parent participants who knew of other parent-athlete dyads who were interested in participating in the study. In the end, 19 people participated including athletes ( $n = 7$ ), parents ( $n = 7$ ), and coaches ( $n = 5$ ). Prior to participating in the interview, each participant was contacted (Appendices A, B, and C), given a letter of information (Appendices D, E, and F), and asked to sign a letter of informed consent (Appendices G, H, and I).

The sample of participants included male ( $n = 5$ ) and female ( $n = 2$ ) athletes ( $M_{\text{age}} = 14.6$  years) all of whom were starting players; male ( $n = 2$ ) and female ( $n = 5$ ) parents ( $M_{\text{age}} = 48.4$  years); and male ( $n = 4$ ) and female ( $n = 1$ ) coaches ( $M_{\text{age}} = 42$  years). Within this sample, there were six parent-athlete dyads but no athlete, coach, and parent triads. Additionally, two of the athletes had siblings who were also interviewed and this



allowed the researcher to understand the similarities or differences between athletes' experiences within families.

Participation criteria differed between athlete, coach, and parent participants. Although youth athletes were loosely defined as being 13 and 17 years of age, one athlete was 12 years old and, therefore, athlete participants were 12-17 years old and currently playing on an interdependent competitive sport team (e.g., basketball, soccer, baseball). Parent participants had to have at least one child between the ages of 13 and 17 years competing in competitive interdependent team sport. Finally, coach participants had to be currently coaching a competitive level interdependent sport team with athletes between 13 and 17 years old.

The requirements for the participants were established for a variety of reasons. First, the current project was interested in role acceptance on sport teams. Recruiting participants from sport teams characterized by a high level of task interdependence ensured there would be variability in playing time between team members. On interdependent sport teams—as compared to individual sports—there are different roles established based on differing amounts of playing time, task requirements, and status (e.g., starters and non-starters). However, that is not to say that within individual sport there are no roles established based on ability, but for the purpose of the current study interdependent sport teams were used. In addition, as Patton (2002) suggested through a specific purposeful sampling method, heterogeneous sampling, researchers are able to describe participants with great detail and important patterns that are shared among participants come to the forefront. This heterogeneity of participants occurred in a variety of ways. For instance, athletes all had unique experiences and roles (past and current) on

their respective teams (e.g. starters, bench players, captains, etc.). In addition, the parents of the athletes also had unique experiences in the ways they were involved in their children's sport experiences. Finally, the coaches also had different coaching styles and strategies that added to the heterogeneity of the sample. Therefore, because all the participants had different lived experiences in terms of the parental influence on role acceptance, the patterns that emerged gave a more holistic representation of this influence.

### **2.3 Data Collection**

In terms of data collection, participants were given a demographics questionnaire (Appendices J, K, and L) and semi-structured phenomenological interviews were utilized (Appendices M, N, and O). These semi-structured interview guides were adapted from an earlier version by Benson et al. (2013), which has its roots of Role Theory (Biddle, 1979) and an application to sport (e.g., Eys, et al., 2005).

Initially, the questionnaire aimed to gain demographic information about the participants by asking generally about their involvement in sport. Starting the semi-structured interview questionnaire with a conversational style allowed the researcher to gain rapport with the participants. In other words, the researcher wanted the participants to know that he respected them and therefore valued what they said (Patton, 2002). The interview guide then used transition questions to get the participant thinking about roles and the ways roles are communicated. The key questions then sharpened the focus of the interview to perceptions of parental involvement in sport and the resulting influence that this has on athlete role acceptance. For example, the questions asked specifically about the athlete's parent(s), and then more generally about the involvement of other parents on

the team. This way, the participants could be more willing to divulge content about other athletes' parents without the fear of the information getting back to their parents. Toward the end of the semi-structured interview, the participants were asked about their general opinion in regard to actions that parents undertake if they do not accept the role their child is occupying. Again, it was expected that ending the interview in this way would be more comfortable for the participants.

In a similar fashion to Benson et al. (2013), the current interview guide used three different types of probing questions: detail-oriented probes, elaboration probes, and clarification probes (Patton, 2002). These were used to gain a detailed portrayal of the experience, to encourage the participants to continue to explain their answers to questions, and for clarification when the researcher did not understand what the participant was trying to convey (Patton, 2002). In addition, throughout the interview prefatory statements were used. These are statements throughout the semi-structured interview guide that aimed to alert the participant, to prepare them for the questions to come, and to help transition between different parts of the interview (Patton, 2002).

The interviews were conducted by the lead researcher and the participant at a neutral location. The average interview length for the entire sample of participants was approximately 20 minutes (athletes  $M = 12$  minutes, parents  $M = 21$  minutes, and coaches  $M = 27$  minutes). This discrepancy in terms of interview length was not surprising given the relative amount of experience coaches, athletes, and parents would have with regard to how parents influence role acceptance. For example, a coach could talk about many different experiences with several different parents as opposed to athlete and parent participants who likely only spoke about their own experiences. In addition, each

interview was audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim with pseudonyms in place of the participants' names to ensure anonymity. Once transcribed, the analysis process commenced and more interviews were conducted and subsequently analyzed.

#### **2.4 Data Analysis**

In phenomenological research, analysis may begin after a single interview, with the process of data collection and data analysis often occurring simultaneously (Tesch, 1990). Tesch also described that in qualitative research, data analysis really encompasses two different steps; data organizing and data interpretation. However, there is rarely a distinction between the terms. Therefore, both steps are included in the term 'qualitative data analysis'.

That being said, in terms of data analysis, an inductive approach was employed. As Patton (2002) suggested, this involved finding patterns, categories, and themes in the data. Patton also described that analysis begins with the development of a coding scheme and "involves identifying, coding, categorizing, classifying, and labeling the primary patterns in the data" (p. 463). Prior to this, however, the researcher read, reread, and immersed himself in the data set (Tesch, 1990). Following this, the main categories of information were uncovered using open coding (Creswell, 2013). The data from the transcribed interviews were then classified and eventually segmented into individual meaning units. A meaning unit is "a segment of text that is comprehensible by itself and contains one idea, episode, or piece of information" (Tesch, 1990, p. 116). The process of developing meaning units was done carefully to ensure the essences of the individuals' experiences were being encompassed. For instance, the researcher made notes throughout this process to make sure the meaning units did not lose their context. This way, the

researcher is able to describe why each quote belongs to its respective meaning unit. The meaning units borne out of this analysis allowed for comparison between participants (athletes, parents, and coaches).

## **2.5 Credibility and Trustworthiness**

Several steps were taken to ensure the quality and credibility of the current study. First, reflexivity exercises were executed. According to Patton (2002) reflexivity exercises ensure the researcher is aware of his/her own biases and perspectives as well as perspectives of those individuals who are being researched. To achieve this, the researcher kept a reflexive journal prior to and throughout the study in order to bracket his previous experiences in sport. For example, the main researcher was a former basketball player and, therefore, had biases that needed to be set aside as to not influence the results and interpretation within the current study. In addition, the current study employed two different types of triangulation that helped to strengthen the research (Patton, 2002). These types of triangulation included data triangulation and investigator triangulation. As Patton suggested, data triangulation refers to using a number of different sources from which to gather information and investigator triangulation refers to using multiple researchers to evaluate the interviews.

Finally, member checks were utilized to ensure the interviews were an accurate portrayal of each participant's experience. For the adult participants, these member checks involved sending the participants their transcribed interviews for review via email and a physical copy was provided to the athlete participants. This ensured that no other individual would have access to the athletes' transcribed interviews. Only four participants returned member checks, where the main changes made by participants were

in regard to spelling and/or grammar. That being said, one parent participant did highlight specific sections of his transcript that he wanted removed. Those sections were then removed from the transcript and this parent was given a modified copy of his transcript in addition to a list of all the quotes that were going to be used in the data analysis process. Then, once the interviews were analyzed, if requested, the participants were sent the different themes and meaning units that were established. Participants were allowed to comment on and suggest changes as they saw fit. One participant commented on the themes, although no specific suggestions and/or changes were made from this conversation. Although only one participant commented on the different themes and sub-themes that emerged from these interviews, this process was beneficial for the participants because they could see how their responses aligned with those responses provided by other participants. Following this process, and after several meetings with a second researcher, the themes were finalized and a summarized copy was sent to the participants if requested.

## Chapter 3: Results

### 3.1 Parental Influence on Athlete Role Acceptance

Inductive analysis revealed a number of themes and sub-themes surrounding the influence parents have on youth athlete role acceptance (see Table 1). These themes were organized into three overarching categories including parent characteristics, parent behaviours, and consequences (Figure 3).

As shown in this organizational framework (Figure 3), athlete role acceptance or other related consequences could potentially be explained by parent characteristics leading to a variety of parent behaviours. In the following paragraphs, each theme within this organizational framework will be explained in further detail.

**Parent characteristics.** Athletes, coaches, and parents highlighted a number of different characteristics that parents possess that might be influential toward athlete role acceptance. Generally speaking, responses in this theme came primarily from parents and coaches, however some athlete participants highlighted the importance of different parent characteristics. That being said, five sub-themes emerged in the parent characteristics category and included: (a) investment, (b) oversight, (c) sport competence, (d) unrealistic expectations, and (e) culture.

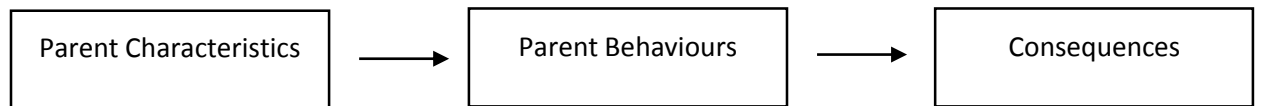
**Investment.** This sub-theme referred to the resources (e.g., time, money) parents have given to athletes' sport experiences. Interestingly, only parent and coach participants shared experiences with regard to investment. As an example, one parent talked about the amount of time spent driving athletes to sporting events and how this might cause a parent to question an athlete's role: "It's okay right, it's okay to sit on the

Table 1

*Summary of Themes and Sub-themes Related to the Process by which Parents Influence Athlete Role Acceptance.*

Themes	Sub-themes
<b>Parent characteristics</b>	Investment Oversight Sport Competence Unrealistic Expectations Culture
<b>Parent behaviour</b>	Supporting behaviours <i>Direct support of athlete</i> <i>Direct support of coaching staff</i>  Undermining behaviours <i>Negative feedback/Pressure</i> <i>Inter-sender Conflict</i> <i>Gossip</i>  Intervening behaviours
<b>Consequences</b>	Athlete specific <i>Role acceptance</i> <i>Emotions</i> <i>Attrition</i>  Team specific <i>Maintenance</i> <i>Performance</i>





*Figure 3.* Organizational framework of themes. This figure illustrates the process by which parents may influence athlete role acceptance.

bench right, but the parent has driven for two hours. They can't sit there and watch that but it's hard, it's hard for parents. They don't understand that." (P4)

Another parent mentioned the financial resources she provides in addition to the time spent driving her daughter:

Yeah so supporting her role I think you know setting her up for success, driving her to practices, driving her to training sessions, paying for additional training, additional weight lifting, so I think supportive financially has been huge. (P6)

In addition to this time and money required to get to and from practices and/or games, one coach talked about parent investment with regard to the amount of time they physically spend with their children during a typical day:

Right so then you put some rules in for the parents and the parents accept it because they have to deal with the kid every day for 22 hours. We deal with the kid for two hours a day for three hours a week or something right haha. They've got more challenges then we do right. (C1)

As previously mentioned, only parents and coaches spoke about parental investment. Athletes, therefore, may have interpreted this parent characteristic as something else such as parental support. For example, throughout the interviews, athletes often spoke quite generally about their parents supporting them and supporting their roles. For this reason, perhaps this investment sub-theme was nested within supportive behaviours from the perspectives of athletes.

***Oversight.*** Similarly, participants described the degree of oversight by parents or, in other words, parents' physical presence at practices or games. Perhaps for the same reason as described above (athletes perceiving this parent characteristic as support)

athletes were underrepresented in this sub-theme as well. Essentially, this sub-theme was related to parents being on the sideline during competition, and how parents would give instructions or feedback to athletes regarding (and during) performance. It was implied that this oversight could impact athlete role acceptance or performance. For example, when explaining how parents influence athletes' roles, one coach said the following:

You know what, I'm finding the longer I've been coaching, I find more kids look to the stands all the time....I don't know if they're looking because they think their parents know better or they look because they need validation from their parents. (C2)

Similarly, from a parent's perspective, one parent talked about how the physical presence of parents can cause issues for the team, "you get that child that is looking at their parent instead of looking at the coach". (P3)

Lastly, from an athlete's perspective, one athlete mentioned how a parent's physical presence can influence an athlete's performance, and career as a whole:

There's this one girl on my team where her dad is really, she looks at him after every shot so he's really influential on her basketball career and he wants her to score and stuff. I can see how that can be really hard for her as a teammate and a friend. (A6)

***Sport competence.*** Another underlying parent characteristic was the knowledge parents had about the sport in which their child competed. Participants explained experiences that suggest sport competence may be an underlying factor that could lead to

certain parent behaviours related to athlete role acceptance. One coach talked about two extremes in terms of parent competence:

I guess maybe the parents would influence their kid either because they're knowledgeable, or because they're not knowledgeable. So they may be not understanding the subtleties of the role. They might ask their kids to do something they're not supposed to because they're thinking 'house league' and just run and score a goal. Or, they're super knowledgeable cause they've played the sport themselves. (C4)

Additionally, parents admitted not having a high degree of competence in a sport:

I'm not knowledgeable, my son's far more knowledgeable than I'll ever be in the strategy of the game and he knows why he does things and I sometimes just miss them and he'll say did you see that or whatever and I'll say not really. (P1)

On the other hand, parents also indicated that they can use their experience from being an athlete to help their children:

I have athletic background that I've played on teams and I coach, so I think it's different as a parent who knows that because I can kind of see what offense and defense means and that sort of thing. So as he was growing up and playing, there were certain times where he would not realize things were happening. So I think because that experience, we talk about it and this is what this means, which means he can better figure out how to move into that position or play it more correctly. (P3)

In addition to the previously mentioned parent and coach perspectives on parent competence, one athlete more directly explained how his parents competence may help explain some of his parents' emotions, "I feel like they don't know exactly what's going on and so they see that I'm not playing or whatever and they get angry, but they don't know why". (A1)

*Unrealistic expectations.* The next sub-theme refers to parents having unrealistic expectations for their children. Parent and coach participants suggested that some parents inaccurately perceive where the child should fit on the team, or what their child's role should be. First, from a coach's perspective, one coach likened this phenomenon to the parent having 'blinders':

Again it all depends on parents. You know, there's some parents that look at their kid and think, okay, they're the be all and end all, they can do no wrong. So, you know, they have blinders on. They can't see the whole aspect of the team game. They just look at their kid. (C2)

Second, from a parent's perspective, one parent related this sub-theme to playing time, "I mean it revolves around playing time and it really, what it revolves around is parents' unrealistic expectations and unrealistic understandings of where their kids fit." (P5)

Lastly, no athletes shared any experiences with regard to this unrealistic expectations sub-theme. One reason for this might be that athletes have optimistic views of their capabilities and skill sets, and therefore perceive their parents' expectations to be realistic and merited.

**Culture.** The final sub-theme in the parent characteristics category is culture. In this context, culture refers to the ethnic/racial culture in which parents belong as opposed to culture within the team, or sport culture in general. Participants talked about culture and how it might have an effect on parental expectations for athletes' roles:

Yeah, there's cultural things at play here which are tremendously important on this team because of the European background for a number of the players, specifically from the [country], from [country], and [country]. There's absolutely no middle ground with a lot of the parents [for their children] not to start and not to play. That's just not acceptable. So that puts a lot of pressure on those children. They feel that they have to perform to satisfy their parents' expectations about their role on the team. (P5)

In addition, one athlete indirectly mentioned culture when she was talking about how parents influence their children in youth sport. For example she said:

One of our player's dad's, he's from [country], and he's very pushing of her to score goals all the time and her to play this and I can see him not accepting her role cause she tries to score a lot of goals and be a star player for her dad I guess so she can be like look at all these goals I'm scoring I'm the star player kind of thing. (A2)

**Parent behaviours.** Within the parent behaviours category (Figure 3), participants outlined three different types of behaviours. These behaviours included: (a) supporting behaviours, (b) undermining behaviours, and (c) intervening behaviours.

Intuitively, supporting behaviours were considered more positive in nature, undermining behaviours more detrimental, and intervening behaviours incorporated both positive and negative examples.

***Supporting behaviours.*** The first sub-theme, supporting behaviours, was broken down into two separate categories, *direct support of the athlete* and *direct support of the coaching staff*. The first category, direct support of the athlete, refers to when a parent supports the role an athlete desires, or more generally, supports the needs of an athlete. In this category, athlete, coach, and parent participants described experiences that exhibited outwardly positive support from parents. For example, from an athlete perspective, one athlete said the following:

A boy on my team left recently because he wanted to play point guard and he was currently playing power forward, so he left our team entirely to go play point guard on a different team. So his parents fully said “Hey, if that’s what you want to do, then go do that.” (A5)

Similarly, parents perceived themselves and other parents to engage in supportive behaviours:

Within your own home and support for your child you try and always be positive about their role and say they must see this in you, they must see this in you, or they expect this of you, to help them accept the role that they’ve been given. (P6)

Coaches had a similar perception and perceived parents to support athletes in a positive manner with regard to role acceptance.

Then also what they're hearing from a parent after a game parents will typically review a game with a girl. So I noticed at half time or you know before half, you did such and such and such. So if they're getting positive feedback from a parent, that's going to go into whether they accept what they did or not. (C4)

Also within this supporting behaviour sub-theme, participants described situations where parents directly supported the coaching staff. Parents who exerted this type of behaviour understood that the coach made the decisions regarding what roles athletes play. For instance, one parent said the following: "[It's] a coach's decision on where your child plays, how much they play, and what role they should be playing on the team." (P6)

In line with the previous quote, coaches also perceived to receive support from parents in some instances, "Again it depends on the parent. There's some parents that you know look at it and say ok, this is what the coach wants you to do this is what you need to do". (C2)

This feeling of parent initiated coach support was also perceived by athletes. For example, one athlete said:

I think, well something my dad and I talked about when I started kind of focussing on basketball in grade nine, was that the coach makes the decisions. So try, even though it might be hard not to listen to my parents, or look at them when they're in the stands. (A6)

***Undermining behaviours.*** Although many participants indicated how parents directly supported athletes in a positive manner, there were situations where participants



gave examples of parents engaging in undermining behaviours. Undermining behaviours were broken down into three different categories including: *negative feedback/pressure*, *inter-sender conflict*, and *gossip*. Ultimately, these behaviours were considered detrimental to the athlete, the coach, the team, or the team's performance.

Although negative feedback/pressure inducing behaviours did not seem to be as prevalent as positive support, with respect to the number of meaning units uncovered, participants nonetheless experienced and perceived these behaviours. Parent and athlete participants talked about negative feedback/pressuring inducing behaviours and how parents can be hard on their children or ask too much of them. For example, one parent participant said the following:

I see parents as either being complacent or being highly aggressive with their children. So I see them really pushing their kids to the point of it seems almost negative to me and the kids become good because of fear, maybe not necessarily love of the sport. (P6)

Like parent participants, athletes also perceived negative feedback/pressure inducing behaviours. For example, one athlete mentioned a teammate who received these types of behaviours from his parents:

Yeah well I know I had one teammate that his, it almost seemed like his parents were asking too much of him and it seemed like it was kind of bringing him down. He wasn't always like the happiest kid, you know, he didn't sometimes, didn't even seem like he wanted to be there but he was a pretty good player, but it seemed like his parent were just almost pushing him too much and expecting too much from him. (A7)

On the contrary, coaches did not describe experiences whereby parents were engaging in negative feedback/pressure inducing behaviours. One reason for this could be that these behaviours may occur outside of practice or competition, and thus coaches may be less likely to see these behaviours.

Another undermining parent behaviour was perceived to occur when parents gave athletes role information that conflicted with information given to athletes by coaches; in other words, inter-sender role conflict. Participants perceived this inter-sender conflict as being an issue for the team. For example, one coach talked about how inter-sender conflict can cause athletes to be out of position during games: “I had a girl that the dad sat her down and made her watch videos of how bigs, post players, are supposed to play so then she would come to the game and she was completely out of position”. (C2)

Interestingly, parents also described scenarios whereby other parents might engage in inter-sender conflict type of behaviours:

That talk amongst the, whether it's on the car ride home or at home, you know you should be doing this you should be doing that and therefore they might not accept the coaches decision as much cause they've got in their head what the parent is doing or they're looking constantly instead of looking at the coach during the game, they're looking at the parent. (P3)

Athletes were also able to describe experiences with teammates where they saw this behaviour:

Some teammates' parents have a specific idea of what position they want their sons to play on, or they want them to do a certain thing so during a practice they would talk to the kids when they're taking a water break telling them what they

have to do even though it's not what the coach might want you to do so it changes their role in the team. (A4)

The last category in this sub-theme involves the idea of gossip, or parents talking to their children or other parents behind the coach's back. This gossip was often about what position a child is playing, or the amount of playing time a child receives. Parent and coach participants described experiences where they either directly or indirectly heard individuals talking behind the coach's back. For example, one coach said, "I'm trying to think if I've ever had someone complain and say they wouldn't play a position. It happens behind the scenes and it's gossip and it's grumbling." (C4)

From a parent perspective, one parent referred to how this gossip can cause issues for parent to parent relationships "No cause sometimes you get people talking yeah behind other peoples back and it really splits people up" (P7)

The final category within this theme refers to behaviours in which parents directly intervene between the coach and athlete. Parent, coach, and athlete participants indicated that these intervening behaviours often happened via email or a private meeting between the coach and the parent. These behaviours occurred when parents were not satisfied with or did not support the role that the coach assigned for their child. For example, one athlete said the following:

I think a lot of them [the parents] were frustrated because we weren't getting the playing time that we deserved. I know that my peers were very good players and arguably better than some of the older girls on our team. So some of their parents talked to our coach and we talked to our coach. I

think sometimes they [the coaches] don't take us seriously because we're younger, so that's when your parents can really help you. (A6)

One parent also described a situation where she went and talk to the coach:

I saw a little bit of hey wait a minute why am I playing in the [position] I've never really done that before so they said—well that's, I actually did ask the coaches is that where he's going to be like what's happening there, I just asked, I didn't complain, what's happening there. So and it was explained to me here's the philosophy we move them around, we try to understand where they are going to be strong and whatnot. (P1)

Coaches also described situations where parents engaged in this type of behaviour:

Parents whose child may be demoted from that starting 11 and are sitting on the bench a little more or even just don't start can complain about that and I definitely had that situation it's like well why's my kid sitting on the bench? (C4)

**Consequences.** The last general category, as displayed in Figure 3, is the potential consequences of parental involvement in athletes' roles. As indicated in the framework, the other two overarching categories (parent characteristics and parent behaviours) could result in some sort of consequence for the athlete or the team. Two sub-themes emerged within this category and included *athlete specific* and *team specific* consequences.

***Athlete specific consequences.*** In terms of athlete specific consequences, athlete, coach, and parent participants indicated that how parents feel about their child's role can

impact the athlete in a positive or negative manner. Athlete specific consequences were broken down further into three different sub-categories: *role acceptance*, *emotions*, and *attrition*. For example, as described in this quote, a parent has the power to move an athlete to a different team (i.e., attrition):

Last year we had a kid and the parent thought I didn't like the kid, and you know, we kind of had it out and stuff like that, and what's happened? The parent moved to a different team. So that was the outcome from that.... This is a kid that's played the last four years, been on four different teams, four different coaches. (C2)

Parents also experienced athletes dropping out of sport as a consequence of parents not accepting their role:

Well in previous years I watched some of the players who didn't get to play very often and some of them have dropped out, they're not playing now. So I don't think they were they really accepted they didn't, you know, if they're not good enough they really didn't want to play. (P7)

Second, athletes' emotions have the potential to be negatively influenced by how their parents react to their role involvement. For example, if there is incongruence with where the athlete believes they fit on the team and where the parent believes his/her child fits, there may be a real negative impact on the emotions of the athlete:

What effect does that have on the player? The kids see that the parent's not happy and grumbling complaining that their kid is not getting enough playing time, but [the child's] happy to be on the team. They're happy to be within those confines. So I would say it's got to be hard on the player.

For instance, a kid might think the coach is going to treat them differently because the way that the parents are acting. Again I'm speculating here, but it's got to be a tough mental battle for the player. [The kid] may not generally be happy about not getting as much playing time as maybe they should, but they're happy to be on the team so there's that divide, that it could be a bit, you know, rocky that way for the kid. (C5)

Interestingly, coaches were the only participants to indicate that parents not accepting an athlete's role influences athletes' emotions. This could simply be because they may have more experience with parents and athletes where this type of consequence could take place.

As a final sub-theme in the athlete specific consequences category, participants talked about athlete role acceptance as a consequence regardless of the parents' actions or beliefs. For instance, one parent said, "The kids know where they fit, it's the parents that don't. That's in my experience. A lot of times where this has happened." (P5)

***Team specific consequences.*** Not only can parents impact their own children but, depending on whether parents accept the role their child has been given, it can have implications for the team as a whole. For example, when one parent was asked about the resulting consequences if parents do not accept a role their child is occupying, he said:

It leads to conflict, it leads to conflict with the child, it leads to conflict between spouses, and it leads to conflict on the team and it can blow teams apart. And we've been a part of that too. It's incredibly destructive. (P5)

Additionally, coaches echoed the same sentiments when talking about how the harmony of the team is disrupted when parents do not accept their children's roles "the kid kind of impacts the teammates and then the team, and then the coaches." (C1). Ultimately, this disruption to the team maintenance could have a negative impact on the performance of the team:

A child could play out of position because they're trying to please the parent and score goals. They could become a ball hog. Those are some of the ways that non role acceptance manifests itself. So rather than doing the job of the role, they're trying to get the glory for themselves and do more than they should be doing. (C4)

That being said, it should be noted that coaches were the only participants that perceived negative consequences in terms of task performance. This could be a function of a coach being more focussed on the performance of the team as a whole compared to parents and athletes who may be more focussed on individual performance at a youth level.

**Summary of themes.** Athlete, coach, and parent participants described experiences about the process of athlete role acceptance and, more specifically, how parents may influence this process. Ultimately, participants' responses were best described using the organizational framework in Figure 3, where *parent characteristics* could lead to *parent behaviours*, and this parent behaviour could result in athlete and team *consequences*.

## Chapter 4: Discussion

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of parents, in conjunction with the other important sport actors of the athlete and coach, in regard to athlete role acceptance. The results from this study suggested that parents may play a part in the role acceptance process and the degree to which athletes accept or reject their given roles. Three overarching themes emerged in the data including parent characteristics, parent behaviours, and consequences. These themes will be discussed in the following sections.

### 4.1 Parent Characteristics

As noted in the results section, there are a number of different behaviours in which parents of competitive level youth athletes engage. However, perhaps less clear are the reasons as to *why* parents engage in such behaviours. As displayed in the organizational framework in Figure 3, these behaviours may be a result of certain characteristics parents possess. The following paragraphs will highlight some of the key parent characteristics, and how they could potentially dictate parent behaviours.

One underlying characteristic that could result in varying types of parent behaviours is parents' sport competence. Although few articles have cited parents' sport competence specifically and its importance within youth sport, a recent study by Knight, Dorsch, Osai, Haderlie, and Sellars (2016) exploring sport-parent roles found that parents' knowledge and past experiences in sport appeared to shape the expectations parents had for their children. Not only can parent past sport experience potentially give parents certain expectations, but as the current research suggests, parents' sport experience and competence may also influence the behaviours in which parents engage. For instance, if parents have a high degree of knowledge about a sport they may be more



likely to offer advice to their children, a scenario consistent with the findings by Keegan et al. (2009).

There are certainly several possibilities for parents who have a high degree of sport knowledge. For instance, parents may engage in undermining behaviours based on their sport competence (i.e., they think they know better than the coach and/or athlete), but parents may also exhibit supporting and/or intervening behaviours because of their sport knowledge (i.e., they have relevant experiences and knowledge that allow them to better navigate the sport context). In the present study participants talked about scenarios in which a parent would give an athlete the tools to improve his/her skills in order to fulfill a desired role. For example, a parent with a high level of sport competence could help the athlete to change his/her role effectively (i.e., through effort/skill development/sport knowledge). On the contrary, there are scenarios where parents may have very little knowledge about their children's sport. In these scenarios, perhaps the parents may be more likely to engage in intervening behaviours simply because they do not have the knowledge about the sport, or know the amount of practice it takes to gain specific skills necessary for specific roles.

Another characteristic that has the potential to dictate parent behaviour is the degree of investment parents have in their children's experience. Several researchers have cited parental investment and its importance in youth sport. This investment is often manifested through financial support (Wolfenden & Holt, 2005; Wuerth, Lee, & Alfermann, 2004), time commitment (Kirk, O'Connor, Carlson, Burke, Davis, & Glover, 1997), or both (Côté, 1999). The results of the current study suggest that not only are parents invested in their children's sport experiences in terms of both financial and time

commitments, but parents potentially have some sort of expectation for their athletes' roles based on this investment. For example, as highlighted in the results section, parents expect their children to play a certain number of minutes during a game because they feel like the coach or organization owes them for their financial and temporal sacrifice. If an athlete does not get much playing time, then perhaps a parent may engage in some sort of *intervening* or *undermining behaviour* in an attempt to promote their child.

Related to this parent characteristic of investment is the degree of oversight that parents have over their children's sport experiences. Essentially, this characteristic referred to the presence of parents at practices or games. Fredricks and Eccles (2004) suggested that parents do indeed take on a spectator and cheerleader role within youth sport. Therefore, depending on the degree of oversight parents have in terms of their children's sport experiences, parents may be more or less likely to engage in certain behaviours. First, the physical presence of parents gives opportunity for several different supportive or undermining behaviours. For instance, parents on the sideline may be yelling instructions to the athletes on the playing field and hence, be engaging in inter-sender role conflict behaviours. On the contrary, parents may be yelling information that reinforces a coaches' desired style of play or strategy. In this case, the parent could be exhibiting behaviours that directly support the coach. Second, parents may also offer negative feedback to athletes, and the impact of this feedback is increased if parents are frequently around the team during practices or games. Third, parents may feel more justified to engage in intervening behaviours because of their presence at practices or games. For example, a parent may see his/her child playing well in practice and therefore, be more likely to talk to the coach about an athlete's bench role. Finally, the physical

presence of parents can be, and was in many of the participants' experiences in this study, outwardly positive. For instance, parents often engaged in supporting behaviours such as cheering on their child, offering support, being encouraging, and building up their sons' or daughters' morale after a bad game.

The next parent characteristic that could lead to parent behaviour is *unrealistic expectations*. As the results section highlighted, this sub-theme referred to parents inaccurately perceiving their children's roles, or their children's skill level. Researchers have previously coupled unrealistic expectations with other negative parent behaviours such as over-emphasizing winning, child criticism, and pushing children to play (Gould, Lauer, Rolo, Jannes, & Pennisi, 2006). Although Gould et al. referred to unrealistic expectations as a negative parent behaviour, the current study proposes that parents having unrealistic expectations may actually be a character trait that can lead to negative behaviours (as opposed to a negative behaviour on its own). For instance, if parents have unrealistic expectations about where their child fits on a team, they may be more likely to intervene with the coach and complain about playing time when, in actuality, their child does not have the required skill to merit more playing time.

Finally the last parent characteristic that could dictate parent behaviour is culture. As highlighted in the results section, two participants mentioned culture and its importance regarding roles and role acceptance. Culture was an important theme to consider from this study for a number of reasons. For instance, both participants who mentioned culture did so without any probes or leading questions from the researcher. This indicates that for these individuals, culture clearly had an important impact on athlete roles, role acceptance, or the ways in which parents behave with regard to these

concepts. In addition, there is currently a push to explore cultural sport psychology (Schinke, Blodgett, McGannon, & Parham, 2014; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009). Given that this theme aligns with previous research in the area of cultural sport psychology, in addition to providing an additional avenue to explore how culture impacts sports (through parents), this *culture* theme seemed extremely relevant and lays the groundwork for future research in this area.

As an example, historically Black male athletes have looked at sport as a means of gaining respect from society and an effective way to establish social status (Messner, 1989; Harisson, Harrison, & Moore, 2002). In addition, these positive experiences in sport cause Black male athlete to pursue athletic goals for longer periods of time than other individuals (Messner, 1989). Sport has also been discussed as a crucial component of Black individuals' identity development, much of which happens during adolescence (Harrison et al., 2002). Therefore, if a young Black athlete identifies greatly with a certain role on a sport team (e.g., starting point guard) and is then asked to fulfill a lesser role (e.g., bench player), this athlete may be less willing to accept this role given the value it has with the individual's developing identity. Considering cultural, racial, and ethnic identities in relation to role occupancies, as well as other group dynamics concepts, represents an important and underdeveloped research area for future study.

## 4.2 Parent Behaviours

Overall, participants perceived parents to influence the role acceptance process. As the results suggested, one way in which this could occur is through parent behaviours. This is consistent with past literature where researchers have emphasized the importance of parent behaviours. For example Keegan, Harwood, Spray and Lavalley (2009) found parents to exhibit various types of leadership, response, and motivating behaviours—in line with behaviours displayed by coaches—and provide athletes with unconditional and emotional support. In addition, Wuerth, Lee, and Alfermann (2004) also found parents to behave in a supportive manner by exhibiting high amounts of understanding and praise to their athletes and exerting low amounts of pressure. These types of positive behaviours have also been shown to have a positive influence on youth athletes' enjoyment of sport and their self-esteem (Leff & Hoyle, 1995). Therefore, it is not surprising that participants perceived parents to display supportive behaviours toward athletes that were thought to somehow influence athlete role acceptance.

An important distinction to make, however, is that parent behaviours can only impact athlete role acceptance if these behaviours are observed or experienced by athletes. There are certain parent behaviours that athletes are more likely to see or have knowledge about. For instance, several participants perceived experiences where parents share information either before, during, or after games with their children that could negatively or positively influence athlete performance, and the performance of the team as a whole. When this undermining behaviour is in the form of parental pressure, this can be associated with a negative athlete response (Hellstedt, 1990). As the results of this study suggest, this pressure could be manifested through negative feedback from parents

to athletes after or during competition. Additionally, athlete participants described experiences with negative feedback/pressure inducing behaviours more frequently than other undermining behaviour themes.

There were also situations where parents did not directly influence the athlete but instead tried to influence their child's role by talking to the coach through intervening behaviours. In an article intended to give coaches strategies to work with parents, Smoll, Cumming, and Smith (2011) explained how parents have a right to ask about their children's sport experience, but that parents should understand the appropriate times to intervene with the coach outside of practice or games. Participants perceived that parents did in fact engage in various different types of intervening behaviours, some of which happened in a private meeting with the coach, via email, or directly following a practice or game. For instance, participants explained experiences where parents would either talk to the coach one on one or send an email asking for an explanation for their child's lack of playing time. Although coaches discussed the benefits of having meetings with parents, perhaps these meetings are more visible to athletes, and therefore more likely to influence athlete role acceptance than an email that is much more covert. For example, athlete participants indicated that they had seen or had first-hand experience with this type of intervening parent behaviour.

### 4.3 Consequences

As the result section summarized, there are a number of team and athlete specific consequences that can result from certain parent behaviours. Although other researchers have linked parent behaviours to athletes' emotions and attrition/dropout within youth sport (Fraser-Thomas, Côté, & Deakin, 2007, Robinson & Carron, 1982), the current study highlights how parents can make the sole decision to move their child to a different team, resulting in attrition from the current team, but not necessarily dropout of the sport completely. This attrition consequence could be a result of various parent behaviours, one of which could be unsuccessful intervening behaviours with regard to athlete playing time. In addition, parent behaviours can result in positive consequences. For example participants explained scenarios whereby parent behaviours helped athletes to accept their roles. As previous researchers have suggested, there are a various number of positive behaviours in which parents engage that are beneficial to athletes including, but not limited to, material/emotional support, spectating, and praising behaviours (Keegan et al., 2009; Wuerth, Lee, and Alfermann, 2004). These types of behaviours are likely to result in athlete role acceptance as opposed to some other consequence such as attrition or a negative impact on athletes' emotions.

There were also team specific consequences that participants experienced when parents did not accept a role their child was occupying. These team specific consequences related to either performance or the maintenance of the team. This finding was in line with the previous study by Benson et al. (2013) who suggested several group environment consequences of role rejection including decreased group performance, detriments to team climate, and an increase in interpersonal conflict. Although it is well

supported that parents influence their own children in sport (e.g., Keegan et al., 2009; Wuerth et al., 2004) this study suggests that parents can impact other athletes on the team as well. For example, if a parent does not accept a role his/her child is occupying, it could create a toxic environment, cause the athlete to become disinterested, and then influence the performance of the rest of the team. To this end, the parent has indirectly influenced both the team environment and performance of the team as a whole. To avoid these types of team consequences, parents need to be made aware of the fact that they can influence an entire team not just their son or daughter.

#### **4.4 Implications**

There are several potential practical implications of the current study. First, this study emphasized several areas for improvement within sport organizations and changes parents themselves can employ to help athletes to accept their given roles. For example, much like Smoll et al. (2011) suggested, coaches should continue to have pre-season meetings with parents to proactively discourage conflict between parents, athletes, and coaches. Not only should parents have a pre-season meeting, but coaches should emphasize that any communication regarding athlete roles should be done in a covert manner as to not impact the athletes. Although these parent meetings are important, coaches should also meet with each athlete at the beginning of the season to discuss role responsibilities and stress the importance of his/her role for team success. Additionally, coaches need to help athletes understand that parents may have experience and give them advice, but ultimately the athlete needs to fulfill the responsibilities given to him/her by the coach for the betterment of the team.



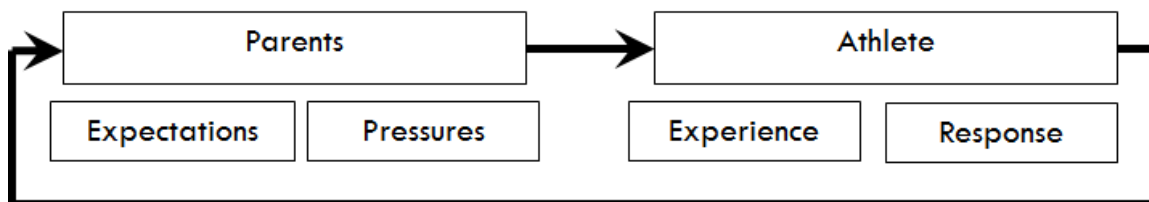
This study also stressed the importance of parent characteristics and behaviours. Therefore, organizations should look to adopt strategies such as parent education classes in order to help parents understand the impact they are having on their youth-athletes' sport experiences. This type of education may also help parents with low sport competence develop an understanding of the sport and the effort required by their son/daughter to increase playing time as well as the time and effort required by coaches to effectively lead teams. Finally, parents should also be encouraged by these education classes and coaches to ask athletes what they think of their roles before discussing issues that parents may inaccurately perceive to exist. This will prevent athletes from being caught in the middle of parents who want an athlete to have a more significant role, and a coach who thinks the athlete does not accept a role, when in actuality this is not the case.

There are also several theoretical implications of this study. For instance, this study may offer additional information with regard to the how formal roles develop and are executed in light of the Role Episode model (Kahn et al., 1964; Eys et al., 2005). As highlighted in the introduction, examples of role development that use this model typically have parents as an interchangeable actor with the coach as a role sender, or as someone who provides additional role information to athletes. However, this study suggests that perhaps the Role Episode model does not fully encapsulate the individuals involved in athlete role development, or the process by which these individuals interact. For example, although parents do have expectations and pressures of which they exert upon their youth-athletes (e.g., undermining behaviours), parents also offer supporting behaviours to athletes when a coach has assigned them roles. Participants in this study explained how parents are supportive of athletes and try to help athletes navigate through

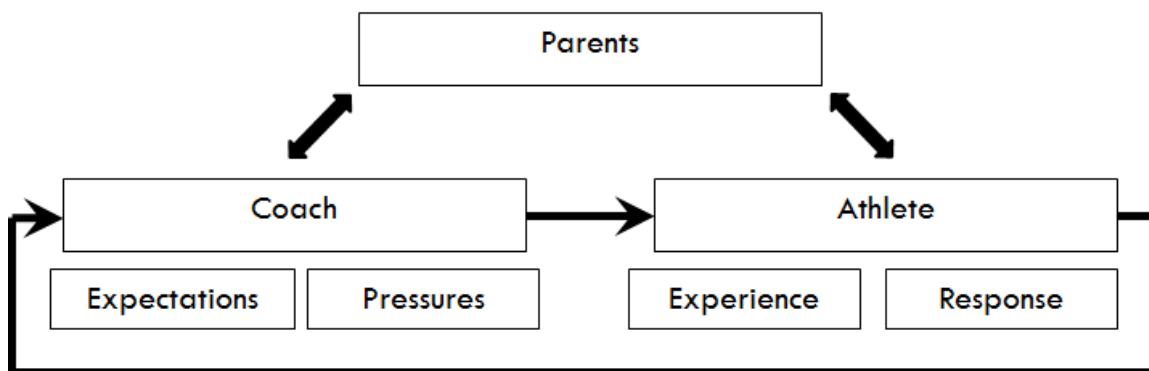
situations via support and encouragement. Parents may also have an influence on the way athletes' experience coach directed expectations and pressures, giving athletes the tools to appropriately respond to these demands. In addition, participants perceived parents to engage in intervening behaviours, such as setting up a meeting with or sending an email to the coach. Therefore, not only do parents influence athletes, but parents may actually influence the coach as well, often in an attempt to change athletes' roles. For this reason, this study suggests that perhaps sport specific additions could be made to the Role Episode model (see Figure 4) to have parents as separate, but influential actors providing direct and indirect influence on their child's sport experience (see Figure 5).

#### **4.5 Limitations**

Although this study extended previous work (Benson et al., 2013; Eys et al., in preparation) and helped to explain the characteristics and behaviours of parents that may lead to athlete role acceptance or other related consequences, there are several limitations worth acknowledging. First, and perhaps most importantly, all athlete participants identified currently as starting players for their respective teams. That being said, there was evidence through the interviews that all participants had experiences of when their playing time, position, or roles in general were different than their current reported starting position. In addition, for some of the athletes the current season was just starting, and perhaps they reported being a starting player as an optimistic estimation of future role occupancy.



*Figure 4.* Simplified Role Episode model (Kahn et al., 1964; Eys et al., 2005). This figure represents the Role Episode model with parents as an alternate role sender.



*Figure 5.* Modified Role Episode model. This figure represents the proposed changes to the Role Episode model.

Second, although recruitment was executed with the goal of attaining a heterogeneous sample (Patton, 2002) in terms of sport type, participants only played four different sports. Therefore, the results of this study could have been strengthened by having more variation in the sample. On a related note, this study lacked variation in terms of gender of the athletes (male = 5, female = 2), parents (fathers = 2, mothers = 5), and coaches (male = 4, female = 1).

Lastly, although variation within samples can be beneficial to allow important themes to come to the forefront (Patton, 2002), the variation in age may have caused some data interpretation issues in this study. For example, given that the age ranged from 12 to 17 years old for the athletes, these individuals would likely have very different experiences in terms of how their parents influence them and their role acceptance processes. For instance, an individual who is 17 may not experience much parental involvement currently, but may be able to talk to past experiences. A 12 year old athlete on the other hand may have a lot more parent involvement and be a lot more dependent on their parents for many aspects of their sport participation. Given that this study looked at youth sport in general, these differences highlight the broad spectrum that is encompassed by the term 'youth sport'.

#### **4.6 Future Research Directions**

Given the limitations of the current study, there are several future research directions relating to gender, culture, and starting status. In terms of gender, there are a number of future research directions to explore. First, previous studies have shown some gender differences in terms of perceived support and pressure from parents (Leff & Hoyle, 1995). In their study, Leff and Hoyle found female tennis athletes perceived similar amounts of pressure from both parents, whereas males perceived higher amounts

of pressure coming from their fathers. Therefore, future studies should look into what effect parent gender has on parental behaviours, and ultimately, athlete role acceptance. Second, given that previous researchers have found coach gender to be an important variable with regard to behaviours such as social support (e.g., Riemer & Toon, 2001), future studies should explore gender differences in coaches and how this may affect athlete role acceptance and the types of behaviours in which parents engage (e.g., *intervening behaviours*).

An additional future research direction has to do with the culture of athletes, parents, and coaches, and how culture may impact athlete role acceptance. As previously mentioned, *culture* as a theme was rather surprising given the lack of probes regarding this topic. However, a study by Eys et al., (in preparation) hinted at how athletes coming from different backgrounds (i.e., culture, socio-economic status) may be less likely to accept lesser roles on sport teams. In line with this finding, researchers have recently expressed the importance of cultural sport psychology and its importance given the diversity of modern day sport teams (Schinke, et al., 2014; Schinke & Hanrahan, 2009). In addition, previous research has suggested that variability in race/ethnicity can impact team success within interdependent sport (Timmerman, 2001). Therefore, future research should seek to extend these studies and examine the impact culture can have not only on how parents influence athletes' roles, but also how culture influences team cohesion, group processes, and roles in general. Future research should look for differences across cultural confines such as Eastern vs. Western societies. Recently, researchers have begun to explore these cultural differences within sport (Geisler, 2016) and parenting (Dwairy

& Achoui, 2010). Therefore, examining role acceptance in non-westernized societies would be beneficial to compare role acceptance across cultures.

Lastly, as mentioned previously, future research should look to examine the Role Episode model (Kahn et al., 1964; Eys et al., 2005) and the possibility of adding a new actor, in addition to the role sender and focal person, within this model. Although Eys et al. (2005) suggested that other individuals could be role senders (e.g., parents and teammates), this study is the first to propose that these other sport actors may impact the coach as well as the athletes. Although it is not a novel concept that youth athletes are influenced by a number of different individuals such as coaches, parents, and peers (Keegan et al., 2009), formal role development previously has not considered these other sport actors as anything other than alternative role senders. Therefore, future research should aim to understand the process by which other individuals influence youth athletes' roles (e.g., peers, friends) and how they may influence the coach through indirect means such as key intervening behaviours. Although currently researchers have not yet examined how these other actors may influence the role development process, Keegan et al. found through their study that peers have the ability to influence other youth athletes' motivation by way of collaborative and competitive behaviours, social relationships, and evaluative communications. Therefore, future studies could seek to examine how these different peer behaviours and concepts influence youth athlete role acceptance.

## Chapter 5: Conclusion

Overall, the current study was intended to explore the influence parents can have on the process of athlete role acceptance. To achieve this objective, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore the experiences of athletes, coaches, and parents with regard to athlete role acceptance. Participants perceived that parents do in fact influence athlete role acceptance in a variety of ways through *parent characteristics* and *parent behaviours*. In addition, participants described several *consequences* that resulted in situations where parents did not accept their children's roles.

Although this project was a natural extension of previous literature (Benson et al., 2013, Eys et al., in preparation), several new concepts and future research directions were discussed. This included potential practical and theoretical implications. From a theoretical perspective, the results provide the ground work for future studies to examine previously existing theories and models (e.g., Role Episode model; Kahn et al, 1964; Eys et al., 2005). In addition, and perhaps more importantly, this study provided crucial evidence of the impact parents can have on athlete role acceptance that can help coaches, parents, and athletes alike reduce conflict and tense youth sport team environments.



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## Appendix A: Oral Contact Script for Participants- Athlete

Hello, my name is Michael Godfrey. I am a Master's student in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at Wilfrid Laurier University. I am conducting a research project investigating the concept of role acceptance in sport teams. Recent investigations regarding the topic of roles in sport have demonstrated that athletes' perceptions of roles within a group can influence a team's success. However, currently there is minimal to no understanding about the ways that parents influence this role acceptance process. For the purpose of the current study, I am interested in personal experiences and insights of athletes, parents, and coaches related to the parental influence on athletes accepting or rejecting their prescribed role to better understand this concept of role acceptance.

I am contacting you to inquire if you are interested in participating in this project. The study will involve a single interview that will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. This interview will be performed in person and will be audio-recorded so it can be later transcribed verbatim. In addition, you will receive a copy of the transcribed interview content to review in full. In the event that you feel any of the information within the interview does not accurately depict your thoughts and insights, then you have the opportunity to clarify or retract any statements made.

The present study is intended to further the current understanding of the processes related to role acceptance in the context of the sport environment. The benefits of this study are largely theoretical, but the findings will also provide a foundation for future research investigations concerning practical interventions related to optimizing role perceptions. There are potential psychological or emotional risks associated with this study including boredom, regret over the revelation of personal information to the interviewer, and disruption of work/family time. It is also possible that parents or coaches will not respond favourably to comments made by the youth-athlete participants. However, best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. All quotations will be de-identified by using pseudonyms in the place of participants' names and any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team affiliation, type of sport, etc. will be removed. In addition, there are no anticipated physiological risks.

The present study relates to the experiences you have had playing your sport. Thus, confidentiality will be maintained to protect your responses from public disclosure. This will be facilitated in two ways. First, only the researchers listed will have access to the transcribed data. Second, all transcripts, tapes, and notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet within a locked office and will be shredded and disposed of at the appropriate time (i.e., 5 years) after publication of the results. Quotations from interviews may be used in publications or presentations. However, all quotations will be de-identified and best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. At any time, you may deny or retract permission for use of your quotes.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have them destroyed. You have the right to omit any questions or procedures you choose.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board (REB# 4566). If you feel you have not been treated appropriately, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of the project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair of the University Research Ethics Board at (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or via email at [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca). Finally, it is anticipated that the results of this study will be communicated at academic conferences and within written publications. If you would like a summary of the results or publications, please feel free to contact the lead researcher.

Would you be interested in participating in this project?

(If answer yes): Thank you. Your participation is greatly appreciated. I will be in contact with potential interview times?

(If answer no): Thank you for your time. Take care.



## Appendix B: Oral Contact Script for Participants- Parent

Hello, my name is Michael Godfrey. I am a Master's student in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at Wilfrid Laurier University. I am conducting a research project investigating the concept of role acceptance in sport teams. Recent investigations regarding the topic of roles in sport have demonstrated that athletes' perceptions of roles within a group can influence a team's success. However, currently there is minimal to no understanding about the ways that parents influence this role acceptance process. For the purpose of the current study, I am interested in personal experiences and insights of athletes, parents, and coaches related to the parental influence on athletes accepting or rejecting their prescribed role to better understand this concept of role acceptance.

I am contacting you to inquire if you are interested in participating in this project. The study will involve a single interview that will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. This interview will be performed in person and will be audio-recorded so it can be later transcribed verbatim. In addition, you will receive a copy of the transcribed interview content to review in full. In the event that you feel any of the information within the interview does not accurately depict your thoughts and insights, then you have the opportunity to clarify or retract any statements made.

The present study is intended to further the current understanding of the processes related to role acceptance in the context of the sport environment. The benefits of this study are largely theoretical, but the findings will also provide a foundation for future research investigations concerning practical interventions related to optimizing role perceptions. There are potential psychological or emotional risks associated with this study including boredom, regret over the revelation of personal information to the interviewer, and disruption of work/family time. It is also possible that parents or coaches will not respond favourably to comments made by the youth-athlete participants. However, best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. All quotations will be de-identified by using pseudonyms in the place of participants' names and any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team, affiliation, type of sport, etc. will be removed. In addition, there are no anticipated physiological risks.

The present study relates to the experiences you have had as a parent to a child on an interdependent sport team. Thus, confidentiality will be maintained to protect your responses from public disclosure. This will be facilitated in two ways. First, only the researchers listed will have access to the transcribed data. Second, all transcripts, tapes, and notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet within a locked office and will be shredded and disposed of at the appropriate time (i.e., 5 years) after publication of the results. Quotations from interviews may be used in publications or presentations. However, all quotations will be de-identified and best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. At any time, you may deny or retract permission for use of your quotes.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have them destroyed. You have the right to omit any questions or procedures you choose.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board (REB# 4566). If you feel you have not been treated appropriately, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of the project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair of the University Research Ethics Board at (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or via email at [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca). Finally, it is anticipated that the results of this study will be communicated at academic conferences and within written publications. If you would like a summary of the results or publications, please feel free to contact the lead researcher.

Would you be interested in participating in this project?

(If answer yes): Thank you. Your participation is greatly appreciated. I will be in contact with potential interview times?

(If answer no): Thank you for your time. Take care.

### Appendix C: Oral Contact Script for Participants- Coach

Hello, my name is Michael Godfrey. I am a Master's student in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at Wilfrid Laurier University. I am conducting a research project investigating the concept of role acceptance in sport teams. Recent investigations regarding the topic of roles in sport have demonstrated that athletes' perceptions of roles within a group can influence a team's success. However, currently there is minimal to no understanding about the ways that parents influence this role acceptance process. For the purpose of the current study, I am interested in personal experiences and insights of athletes, parents, and coaches related to the parental influence on athletes accepting or rejecting their prescribed role to better understand this concept of role acceptance.

I am contacting you to inquire if you are interested in participating in this project. The study will involve a single interview that will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. This interview will be performed in person and will be audio-recorded so it can be later transcribed verbatim. In addition, you will receive a copy of the transcribed interview content to review in full. In the event that you feel any of the information within the interview does not accurately depict your thoughts and insights, then you have the opportunity to clarify or retract any statements made.

The present study is intended to further the current understanding of the processes related to role acceptance in the context of the sport environment. The benefits of this study are largely theoretical, but the findings will also provide a foundation for future research investigations concerning practical interventions related to optimizing role perceptions. There are potential psychological or emotional risks associated with this study including boredom, regret over the revelation of personal information to the interviewer, and disruption of work/family time. It is also possible that parents or coaches will not respond favourably to comments made by the youth-athlete participants. However, best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. All quotations will be de-identified by using pseudonyms in the place of participants' names and any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team, affiliation, type of sport, etc. will be removed. In addition, there are no anticipated physiological risks.

The present study relates to the experiences you have had as a coach of team sports. Thus, confidentiality will be maintained to protect your responses from public disclosure. This will be facilitated in two ways. First, only the researchers listed will have access to the transcribed data. Second, all transcripts, tapes, and notes will be kept in a locked filing cabinet within a locked office and will be shredded and disposed of at the appropriate time (i.e., 5 years) after publication of the results. Quotations from interviews may be used in publications or presentations. However, all quotations will be de-identified and best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. At any time, you may deny or retract permission for use of your quotes.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without consequence. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have them destroyed. You have the right to omit any questions or procedures you choose.

This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board (REB# 4566). If you feel you have not been treated appropriately, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of the project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair of the University Research Ethics Board at (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or via email at [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca). Finally, it is anticipated that the results of this study will be communicated at academic conferences and within written publications. If you would like a summary of the results or publications, please feel free to contact the lead researcher.

Would you be interested in participating in this project?

(If answer yes): Thank you. Your participation is greatly appreciated. I will be in contact with potential interview times?

(If answer no): Thank you for your time. Take care.

## Appendix D: Letter of Information-Athlete

# Wilfrid Laurier University



*Founded 1911*

## Letter of Information

Exploring how parents influence role acceptance of youth athletes through multiple perspectives

Lead researcher: Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. Student

Supervisor: Mark Eys, Ph.D

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the present study is to explore the role of parents in conjunction with the primary actors (coach and athlete) with respect to athlete role acceptance. Recent investigations regarding the topic of roles in sport have demonstrated that athletes' perceptions of roles within a group can influence a team's success. However, currently there is minimal to no understanding about the ways that parents influence this role acceptance process. This research study is being conducted by Michael Godfrey (M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education) and Mark Eys (Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology).

### **INFORMATION**

The full extent of your participation involves reading the letter of information, signing the informed consent form, filling out a brief demographic questionnaire, and participating in a single interview that is designed to (a) explore the involvement of parents in their child's sport experiences (b) explore your general thoughts on accepting your role (c) examine the impact of parents on athletes' willingness to fulfill their role. The demographic questionnaire and interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. Approximately 30 competitive sport athletes, parents, and coaches will be interviewed in total (approximately 10 participants for each group). For the purposes of accuracy, we would like to digitally audio-record the interview. The audio-recording will be transcribed in full at a later date. Following the transcription of the interview, we will set up a time to meet with you and go over your interview to ensure its accuracy and to allow you to clarify or retract any information you provided.

### **RISKS**

There are potential psychological or emotional risks associated with this study including boredom, regret over the revelation of personal information to the interviewer, and disruption of work/family time. . It is also possible that parents or coaches will not respond favourably to comments made by the youth-athlete participants. However, best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. All quotations will be de-identified by using pseudonyms in the place of participants' names and any potentially identifying information in

reference to timelines, team, affiliation, type of sport, etc. will be removed. You will be offering responses related to your personal experiences and insights related to the parental influence on athlete role acceptance. It is important to note that your real name will not be used at any time during the communication of results. Furthermore, any identifying statements made will be omitted from the final analysis to ensure anonymity. In addition, there are no anticipated physiological risks. Please feel free to contact Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Mark Eys, or the WLU research office (see contact information below) in the event that you have concerns/questions.

### **BENEFITS**

The present study is intended to further the current understanding of the processes related to role acceptance in the context of the sport environment. The benefits of this study are largely theoretical, but the findings will also provide a foundation for future research investigations concerning practical interventions related to optimizing role perceptions. Lastly, if you wish to obtain a summary of the final results, you may contact the researcher (please see contact information listed below).

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Several measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all your responses pertaining to the interview. Only the researchers listed will have access to the transcribed data, and the participant responses will be locked in a filing cabinet in a secure card access only office, and will be shredded and disposed of at the appropriate time (i.e., 5 years) after publication of the results. Quotations from the interviews may be utilized in future publications, as well as presentations. However, all quotations will be de-identified and best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The lead researcher will replace the real name of each participant with a pseudonym within each transcribed interview to ensure anonymity. Also, any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team affiliation, type of sport etc. will be removed.

### **CONTACT**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the researcher, Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology/Physical Education, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, [godf3150@mylaurier.ca](mailto:godf3150@mylaurier.ca). Alternatively, you may contact Mark Eys, Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, Tel: 519-884-0710 x4157, [meys@wlu.ca](mailto:meys@wlu.ca). This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board (REB# 4566). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca)

### **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have them destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

**FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION**

The results of this study will be used within the lead researcher's written Master's thesis document. In addition the results are also anticipated to be communicated at academic conferences and within written publications. If you would like a summary of the results or publications, please feel free to contact the lead researcher (Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, godf3150@mylaurier.ca).

Appendix E: Letter of Information-Parent  
 Wilfrid Laurier  
 University



*Founded 1911*

Letter of Information

Exploring how parents influence role acceptance of youth athletes through multiple perspectives

Lead researcher: Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. Student

Supervisor: Mark Eys, Ph.D

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the present study is to explore the role of parents in conjunction with the primary actors (coach and athlete) with respect to athlete role acceptance. Recent investigations regarding the topic of roles in sport have demonstrated that athletes' perceptions of roles within a group can influence a team's success. However, currently there is minimal to no understanding about the ways that parents influence this role acceptance process. This research study is being conducted by Michael Godfrey (M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology/Physical Education) and Mark Eys (Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology).

**INFORMATION**

The full extent of your participation involves reading the letter of information, signing the informed consent form, filling out a brief demographic questionnaire, and participating in a single interview that is designed to (a) explore involvement of parents in their child's sport experiences (b) explore your general thoughts on what it means for an athlete to accept his/her role (c) examine the impact of parents on athletes' willingness to fulfill their role. The demographic questionnaire and interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. Approximately 30 youth competitive sport athletes, parents, and coaches will be interviewed in total (approximately 10 participants for each group). For the purposes of accuracy, we would like to digitally audio-record the interview. The audio-recording will be transcribed in full at a later date. We will send a copy of the transcription of your interview to you to ensure its accuracy and to allow you to clarify or retract any information you provided.

**RISKS**

There are potential psychological or emotional risks associated with this study including boredom, regret over the revelation of personal information to the interviewer, and disruption of work/family time. It is also possible that parents or coaches will not respond favourably to comments made by the youth-athlete participants. However, best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. All quotations will be de-identified by using pseudonyms in the place of participants' names and any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team, affiliation, type of sport, etc. will be removed. You will be offering



responses related to your personal experiences and insights related to the parental influence on athlete role acceptance. It is important to note that your real name will not be used at any time during the communication of results. Furthermore, any identifying statements made will be omitted from the final analysis to ensure anonymity. In addition, there are no anticipated physiological risks. Please feel free to contact Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Mark Eys, or the WLU research office (see contact information below) in the event that you have concerns/questions.

### **BENEFITS**

The present study is intended to further the current understanding of the processes related to role acceptance in the context of the sport environment. The benefits of this study are largely theoretical, but the findings will also provide a foundation for future research investigations concerning practical interventions related to optimizing role perceptions. Lastly, if you wish to obtain a summary of the final results, you may contact the researcher (please see contact information listed below).

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Several measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all your responses pertaining to the interview. Only the researchers listed will have access to the transcribed data, and the participant responses will be locked in a filing cabinet in a secure card access only office, and will be shredded and disposed of at the appropriate time (i.e., 5 years) after publication of the results. Quotations from the interviews may be utilized in future publications, as well as presentations. However, all quotations will be de-identified and best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The lead researcher will replace the real name of each participant with a pseudonym within each transcribed interview to ensure anonymity. Also, any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team affiliation, type of sport etc. will be removed (5).

### **CONTACT**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the researcher, Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology/Physical Education, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, [godf3150@mylaurier.ca](mailto:godf3150@mylaurier.ca). Alternatively, you may contact Mark Eys, Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, Tel: 519-884-0710 x4157, [meys@wlu.ca](mailto:meys@wlu.ca). This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board (REB# 4566). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca).

### **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have them destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

**FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION**

The results of this study will be used within the lead researcher's written Master's Thesis document. In addition the results are also anticipated to be communicated at academic conferences and within written publications. If you would like a summary of the results or publications, please feel free to contact the lead researcher (Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, godf3150@mylaurier.ca).

## Appendix F: Letter of Information-Coach

# Wilfrid Laurier University



*Founded 1911*

## Letter of Information

Exploring how parents influence role acceptance of youth athletes through multiple perspectives

Lead researcher: Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. Student

Supervisor: Mark Eys, Ph.D

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the present study is to explore the role of parents in conjunction with the primary actors (coach and athlete) with respect to athlete role acceptance. Recent investigations regarding the topic of roles in sport have demonstrated that athletes' perceptions of roles within a group can influence a team's success. However, currently there is minimal to no understanding about the ways that parents influence this role acceptance process. This research study is being conducted by Michael Godfrey (M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology/Physical Education) and Mark Eys (Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology).

### **INFORMATION**

The full extent of your participation involves reading the letter of information, signing the informed consent form, filling out a brief demographic questionnaire, and participating in a single interview that is designed to (a) explore the involvement parents in athletes' sport experiences (b) explore your general thoughts on what it means for an athlete to accept his or her role (c) examine the impact parents have on athletes' willingness to fulfill their role. The demographic questionnaire and interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. Approximately 30 competitive sport athletes, parents, and coaches will be interviewed in total (approximately 10 participants for each group). For the purposes of accuracy, we would like to digitally audio-record the interview. The audio-recording will be transcribed in full at a later date. We will send a copy of the transcription of your interview to you to ensure its accuracy and to allow you to clarify or retract any information you provided.

### **RISKS**

There are potential psychological or emotional risks associated with this study including boredom, regret over the revelation of personal information to the interviewer, and disruption of work/family time. It is also possible that parents or coaches will not respond favourably to comments made by the youth-athlete participants. However, best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. All quotations will be de-identified by using pseudonyms in the place of participants' names and any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team, affiliation, type of sport, etc. will be removed. You will be offering responses related to your personal experiences and insights related to the parental influence on

athlete role acceptance. It is important to note that your real name will not be used at any time during the communication of results. Furthermore, any identifying statements made will be omitted from the final analysis to ensure anonymity. In addition, there are no anticipated physiological risks. Please feel free to contact Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Mark Eys, or the WLU research office (see contact information below) in the event that you have concerns/questions.

### **BENEFITS**

The present study is intended to further the current understanding of the processes related to role acceptance in the context of the sport environment. The benefits of this study are largely theoretical, but the findings will also provide a foundation for future research investigations concerning practical interventions related to optimizing role perceptions. Lastly, if you wish to obtain a summary of the final results, you may contact the researcher (please see contact information listed below).

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Several measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all your responses pertaining to the interview. Only the researchers listed will have access to the transcribed data, and the participant responses will be locked in a filing cabinet in a secure card access only office, and will be shredded and disposed of at the appropriate time (i.e., 5 years) after publication of the results. Quotations from the interviews may be utilized in future publications, as well as presentations. However, all quotations will be de-identified and best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The lead researcher will replace the real name of each participant with a pseudonym within each transcribed interview to ensure anonymity. Also, any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team affiliation, type of sport etc. will be removed.

### **CONTACT**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the researcher, Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology/Physical Education, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, [godf3150@mylaurier.ca](mailto:godf3150@mylaurier.ca). Alternatively, you may contact Mark Eys, Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, Tel: 519-884-0710 x4157, [meys@wlu.ca](mailto:meys@wlu.ca). This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board (REB# 4566). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca).

### **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have them destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

**FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION**

The results of this study will be used within the lead researcher's written Master's Thesis document. In addition the results are also anticipated to be communicated at academic conferences and within written publications. If you would like a summary of the results or publications, please feel free to contact the lead researcher (Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, godf3150@mylaurier.ca).

## Appendix G: Informed Consent-Athlete

# Wilfrid Laurier University



*Founded 1911*

## Informed Consent

Exploring how parents influence role acceptance of youth athletes through multiple perspectives

Lead researcher: Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. Student

Supervisor: Mark Eys, Ph.D

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the present study is to explore the role of parents in conjunction with the primary actors (coach and athlete) with respect to athlete role acceptance. Recent investigations regarding the topic of roles in sport have demonstrated that athletes' perceptions of roles within a group can influence a team's success. However, currently there is minimal to no understanding about the ways that parents influence this role acceptance process. This research study is being conducted by Michael Godfrey (M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education) and Mark Eys (Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology).

### **INFORMATION**

The full extent of your participation involves reading the letter of information, signing the informed consent form, filling out a brief demographic questionnaire, and participating in a single interview that is designed to (a) explore the involvement of parents in their child's sport experiences (b) explore your general thoughts on accepting your role (c) examine the impact of parents on athletes' willingness to fulfill their role. The demographic questionnaire and interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. Approximately 30 competitive sport athletes, parents, and coaches will be interviewed in total (approximately 10 participants for each group). For the purposes of accuracy, we would like to digitally audio-record the interview. The audio-recording will be transcribed in full at a later date. Following the transcription of the interview, we will set up a time to meet with you and go over your interview to ensure its accuracy and to allow you to clarify or retract any information you provided.

### **RISKS**

There are potential psychological or emotional risks associated with this study including boredom, regret over the revelation of personal information to the interviewer, and disruption of work/family time. It is also possible that parents or coaches will not respond favourably to comments made by the youth-athlete participants. However, best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. All quotations will be de-identified by using pseudonyms in the place of participants' names and any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team, affiliation, type of sport, etc. will be removed. You will be offering

responses related to your personal experiences and insights related to the parental influence on athlete role acceptance. It is important to note that your real name will not be used at any time during the communication of results. Furthermore, any identifying statements made will be omitted from the final analysis to ensure anonymity. In addition, there are no anticipated physiological risks. Please feel free to contact Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Mark Eys, or the WLU research office (see contact information below) in the event that you have concerns/questions.

### **BENEFITS**

The present study is intended to further the current understanding of the processes related to role acceptance in the context of the sport environment. The benefits of this study are largely theoretical, but the findings will also provide a foundation for future research investigations concerning practical interventions related to optimizing role perceptions. Lastly, if you wish to obtain a summary of the final results, you may contact the researcher (please see contact information listed below).

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Several measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all your responses pertaining to the interview. Only the researchers listed will have access to the transcribed data, and the participant responses will be locked in a filing cabinet in a secure card access only office, and will be shredded and disposed of at the appropriate time (i.e., 5 years) after publication of the results. Quotations from the interviews may be utilized in future publications, as well as presentations. However, all quotations will be de-identified and best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The lead researcher will replace the real name of each participant with a pseudonym within each transcribed interview to ensure anonymity. Also, any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team affiliation, type of sport etc. will be removed.

### **CONTACT**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the researcher, Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology/Physical Education, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, [godf3150@mylaurier.ca](mailto:godf3150@mylaurier.ca). Alternatively, you may contact Mark Eys, Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, Tel: 519-884-0710 x4157, [meys@wlu.ca](mailto:meys@wlu.ca). This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board (REB# 4566). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca).

### **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have them destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

### **FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION**

The results of this study will be used within the lead researcher's written Master's thesis document. In addition the results are also anticipated to be communicated at academic conferences and within written publications. If you would like a summary of the results or publications, please feel free to contact the lead researcher (Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, godf3150@mylaurier.ca).

### **CONSENT**

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study."

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

"I agree to allow the researchers to use quotes from my interview in academic publications/presentations with the explicit understanding that I will not be identified through these quotes"

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix H: Informed Consent-Parent

# Wilfrid Laurier University



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## Informed Consent

Exploring how parents influence role acceptance of youth athletes through multiple perspectives

Lead researcher: Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. Student

Supervisor: Mark Eys, Ph.D

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the present study is to explore the role of parents in conjunction with the primary actors (coach and athlete) with respect to athlete role acceptance. Recent investigations regarding the topic of roles in sport have demonstrated that athletes' perceptions of roles within a group can influence a team's success. However, currently there is minimal to no understanding about the ways that parents influence this role acceptance process. This research study is being conducted by Michael Godfrey (M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology/Physical Education) and Mark Eys (Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology).

### **INFORMATION**

The full extent of your participation involves reading the letter of information, signing the informed consent form, filling out a brief demographic questionnaire, and participating in a single interview that is designed to (a) explore involvement of parents in their child's sport experiences (b) explore your general thoughts on what it means for an athlete to accept his/her role (c) examine the impact of parents on athletes' willingness to fulfill their role. The demographic questionnaire and interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. Approximately 30 youth competitive sport athletes, parents, and coaches will be interviewed in total (approximately 10 participants for each group). For the purposes of accuracy, we would like to digitally audio-record the interview. The audio-recording will be transcribed in full at a later date. We will send a copy of the transcription of your interview to you to ensure its accuracy and to allow you to clarify or retract any information you provided.

### **RISKS**

There are potential psychological or emotional risks associated with this study including boredom, regret over the revelation of personal information to the interviewer, and disruption of work/family time. It is also possible that parents or coaches will not respond favourably to comments made by the youth-athlete participants. However, best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. All quotations will be de-identified by using pseudonyms in the place of participants' names and any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team, affiliation, type of sport, etc. will be removed. You will be offering responses related to your personal experiences and insights related to the parental influence on

athlete role acceptance. It is important to note that your real name will not be used at any time during the communication of results. Furthermore, any identifying statements made will be omitted from the final analysis to ensure anonymity. In addition, there are no anticipated physiological risks. Please feel free to contact Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Mark Eys, or the WLU research office (see contact information below) in the event that you have concerns/questions.

### **BENEFITS**

The present study is intended to further the current understanding of the processes related to role acceptance in the context of the sport environment. The benefits of this study are largely theoretical, but the findings will also provide a foundation for future research investigations concerning practical interventions related to optimizing role perceptions. Lastly, if you wish to obtain a summary of the final results, you may contact the researcher (please see contact information listed below).

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Several measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all your responses pertaining to the interview. Only the researchers listed will have access to the transcribed data, and the participant responses will be locked in a filing cabinet in a secure card access only office, and will be shredded and disposed of at the appropriate time (i.e., 5 years) after publication of the results. Quotations from the interviews may be utilized in future publications, as well as presentations. However, all quotations will be de-identified and best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The lead researcher will replace the real name of each participant with a pseudonym within each transcribed interview to ensure anonymity. Also, any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team affiliation, type of sport etc. will be removed.

### **CONTACT**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the researcher, Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology/Physical Education, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, [godf3150@mylaurier.ca](mailto:godf3150@mylaurier.ca). Alternatively, you may contact Mark Eys, Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, Tel: 519-884-0710 x4157, [meys@wlu.ca](mailto:meys@wlu.ca). This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board (REB# 4566). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca).

### **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have them destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

**FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION**

The results of this study will be used within the lead researcher's written Master's Thesis document. In addition the results are also anticipated to be communicated at academic conferences and within written publications. If you would like a summary of the results or publications, please feel free to contact the lead researcher (Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, godf3150@mylaurier.ca).

**CONSENT**

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study."

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

"I agree to allow the researchers to use quotes from my interview in academic publications/presentations with the explicit understanding that I will not be identified through these quotes"

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix I: Informed Consent-Coach

# Wilfrid Laurier University



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## Informed Consent

Exploring how parents influence role acceptance of youth athletes through multiple perspectives

Lead researcher: Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. Student

Supervisor: Mark Eys, Ph.D

You are invited to participate in a research study. The purpose of the present study is to explore the role of parents in conjunction with the primary actors (coach and athlete) with respect to athlete role acceptance. Recent investigations regarding the topic of roles in sport have demonstrated that athletes' perceptions of roles within a group can influence a team's success. However, currently there is minimal to no understanding about the ways that parents influence this role acceptance process. This research study is being conducted by Michael Godfrey (M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology/Physical Education) and Mark Eys (Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology).

### **INFORMATION**

The full extent of your participation involves reading the letter of information, signing the informed consent form, filling out a brief demographic questionnaire, and participating in a single interview that is designed to (a) explore the involvement parents in athletes' sport experiences (b) explore your general thoughts on what it means for an athlete to accept his or her role (c) examine the impact parents have on athletes' willingness to fulfill their role. The demographic questionnaire and interview will take approximately 45-60 minutes of your time. Approximately 30 competitive sport athletes, parents, and coaches will be interviewed in total (approximately 10 participants for each group). For the purposes of accuracy, we would like to digitally audio-record the interview. The audio-recording will be transcribed in full at a later date. We will send a copy of the transcription of your interview to you to ensure its accuracy and to allow you to clarify or retract any information you provided.

### **RISKS**

There are potential psychological or emotional risks associated with this study including boredom, regret over the revelation of personal information to the interviewer, and disruption of work/family time. It is also possible that parents or coaches will not respond favourably to comments made by the youth-athlete participants. However, best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality of participants. All quotations will be de-identified by using pseudonyms in the place of participants' names and any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team, affiliation, type of sport, etc. will be removed. You will be offering responses related to your personal experiences and insights related to the parental influence on

athlete role acceptance. It is important to note that your real name will not be used at any time during the communication of results. Furthermore, any identifying statements made will be omitted from the final analysis to ensure anonymity. In addition, there are no anticipated physiological risks. Please feel free to contact Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Mark Eys, or the WLU research office (see contact information below) in the event that you have concerns/questions.

### **BENEFITS**

The present study is intended to further the current understanding of the processes related to role acceptance in the context of the sport environment. The benefits of this study are largely theoretical, but the findings will also provide a foundation for future research investigations concerning practical interventions related to optimizing role perceptions. Lastly, if you wish to obtain a summary of the final results, you may contact the researcher (please see contact information listed below).

### **CONFIDENTIALITY**

Several measures will be taken to ensure confidentiality of all your responses pertaining to the interview. Only the researchers listed will have access to the transcribed data, and the participant responses will be locked in a filing cabinet in a secure card access only office, and will be shredded and disposed of at the appropriate time (i.e., 5 years) after publication of the results. Quotations from the interviews may be utilized in future publications, as well as presentations. However, all quotations will be de-identified and best practices will be taken to ensure anonymity and confidentiality. The lead researcher will replace the real name of each participant with a pseudonym within each transcribed interview to ensure anonymity. Also, any potentially identifying information in reference to timelines, team affiliation, type of sport etc. will be removed (5).

### **CONTACT**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, (or you experience adverse effects as a result of participating in this study) you may contact the researcher, Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, Department of Kinesiology/Physical Education, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, [godf3150@mylaurier.ca](mailto:godf3150@mylaurier.ca). Alternatively, you may contact Mark Eys, Ph.D., Departments of Kinesiology/Physical Education and Psychology, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, ON, N2L 3C5, Tel: 519-884-0710 x4157, [meys@wlu.ca](mailto:meys@wlu.ca). This project has been reviewed and approved by the University Research Ethics Board (REB# 4566). If you feel you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form, or your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact Dr. Robert Basso, Chair, University Research Ethics Board, Wilfrid Laurier University, (519) 884-1970, extension 4994 or [rbasso@wlu.ca](mailto:rbasso@wlu.ca).

### **PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary; you may decline to participate without penalty. If you decide to participate, you may withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and without loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. If you withdraw from the study, every attempt will be made to remove your data from the study, and have them destroyed. You have the right to omit any question(s)/procedure(s) you choose.

**FEEDBACK AND PUBLICATION**

The results of this study will be used within the lead researcher's written Master's Thesis document. In addition the results are also anticipated to be communicated at academic conferences and within written publications. If you would like a summary of the results or publications, please feel free to contact the lead researcher (Michael Godfrey, M.Sc. student, godf3150@mylaurier.ca).

**CONSENT**

"I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study."

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

"I agree to allow the researchers to use quotes from my interview in academic publications/presentations with the explicit understanding that I will not be identified through these quotes"

Participant's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Investigator's signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix J: Demographic Questionnaire-Athlete

# Wilfrid Laurier University



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Exploring how parents influence role acceptance of youth athletes through multiple perspectives  
*Lead Researcher: Michael Godfrey (M.Sc. Student)*

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age (in years): \_\_\_\_\_

Current sport team: \_\_\_\_\_

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years having competed in this sport:

\_\_\_\_\_

Year on this team: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years you have played for this organization:

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of organizations you have played for:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate which of the following best describes your current playing status:

Starting Player

Do not typically start but consistently substituted in to play

Do not typically compete in matches but dressed to play

Practice player

(Only answer the following question if you have played multiple years at a competitive level)

Was your status different from previous season(s):  Yes  No

If yes, can you please indicated if playing time increased or decreased from prior competitive seasons?

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Have you ever played at a higher level than the one you are competing at right now?

Yes  No

If yes, how many years? \_\_\_\_\_



## Appendix K: Demographic Questionnaire-Parent

# Wilfrid Laurier University



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Exploring how parents influence role acceptance of youth athletes through multiple perspectives  
*Lead Researcher: Michael Godfrey (M.Sc. Student)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age (in years): \_\_\_\_\_

Child's current sport team: \_\_\_\_\_

Child's position: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years your child has competed in this sport:

\_\_\_\_\_

Year on this team: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years your child has played for this organization:

\_\_\_\_\_

Number of organizations your child has played for:

\_\_\_\_\_

Please indicate which of the following best describes your child's current playing status:

Starting Player

Do not typically start but consistently substituted in to play

Do not typically compete in matches but dressed to play

Practice player

(Only answer the following question if your child has played multiple years at a competitive level)

Was your child's status different from previous season(s):  Yes  No

If yes, can you please indicated if playing time increased or decreased from prior competitive seasons?

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---

Has your child ever played at a higher level than the one he/she is competing at right now?

Yes  No

If yes, how many years? \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix L: Demographic Questionnaire-Coach

Wilfrid Laurier  
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Exploring how parents influence role acceptance of youth athletes through multiple perspectives

*Lead Researcher: Michael Godfrey (M.Sc. Student)*

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Sex: \_\_\_\_\_

Age (in years): \_\_\_\_\_

Sport(s) that you have coached: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Number of years having coached in this/these sport(s):  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Current team that you coach: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of years coaching your current team: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix M: Semi-structured Interview Guide-Athlete

# Wilfrid Laurier University



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## EXPLORING HOW PARENTS INFLUENCE ROLE ACCEPTANCE OF YOUTH ATHLETES THROUGH MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Note: The interviews are semi-structured in nature. With this consideration in mind, the following script does not represent a verbatim portrayal of what the researcher will be asking the participants. The purpose of the guide is to provide the researcher with key questions to ask each participant. In addition, the sequence of questions are subject to change dependent on the responses provided by the participant, and what is deemed as the most appropriate direction for the interview to follow. When appropriate, the use of probing questions may be utilized in order to maximize the richness of the data within the interviews. These consist of elaborative, clarification, and descriptive type probes.

### Introductory Oral script:

I am a Master's student in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at Wilfrid Laurier University who is interested in understanding the processes related to how parents influence the role acceptance process of youth athletes. This interest stems not only from my academic research, but I am also a former intercollegiate athlete and have coached at the high school level. I appreciate you volunteering your time to provide and share your insights as an athlete. I will be asking you questions regarding the role you occupy on your sport team to gain a better understanding of how parents influence this process. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, and if at any time you do not wish to continue, you may stop the interview. In addition, all the information you provide during this interview will be strictly confidential. The following interview will be recorded and then transcribed verbatim. However, your name will be replaced with a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes in length. Please feel free to take your time to gather your thoughts if needed for any of the questions. Lastly, there are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions as I am interested in your own personal experiences. Do you have any questions before we start the interview?

**Opening Question:** Can you please describe what your experience has been like as an athlete?

\* Will use information from background demographic information to further expand on the opening question to gain a general perspective of athletes' experiences on their sport teams to promote a conversational style flow within the interview.

### **General Orientation of Role Concepts**

1. To begin, I am interested in your general thoughts on what a role is. Can you please describe what a role on a sport team involves?
2. Task roles are roles that you occupy that help the performance of your team during practices or games. Can you please outline what you consider to be your task role on the team?
3. Who explains your roles to you?
  - \*Prompts if required
  - Coach
  - Teammates
  - Parents, others etc.
4. Commonly, when are these roles given to you?
5. Please describe how, if at all, these roles have changed since you joined the team?

### **Key Questions: Parental Influence on Athlete Role Acceptance**

#### **Transition:**

As I mentioned earlier, I am examining the ways parents influence athlete role acceptance within sports teams. I am interested in your thoughts on the ways your parents influence your willingness to fulfill your role during the prior/current competitive season.

#### **Key Questions:**

6. What comes to mind when you think of accepting your role on a team?

7. From your own personal perspective, can you please describe any situations where your parents have influenced your role or whether you accept your role or not?
8. From a more general perspective, can you describe any situations where your teammates' parents have influenced their roles?
9. From your own personal perspective, can you please describe any situations where your parents have supported part of your role, but not another element of your role?
10. What do you think are some of the factors that lead you to accept your role? How, if at all, do your parents influence these factors?
11. Can you please describe how, if at all, your role changes throughout the course of the competitive season? If so, how if at all, do your parents influence how your role changes?
12. From a more general perspective, can you please describe any situations you have experienced where a parent does not accept the role that his/her child is occupying?

## Appendix N: Semi-structured Interview Guide-Parent

# Wilfrid Laurier University



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## EXPLORING HOW PARENTS INFLUENCE ROLE ACCEPTANCE OF YOUTH ATHLETES THROUGH MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Note: The interviews are semi-structured in nature. With this consideration in mind, the following script does not represent a verbatim portrayal of what the researcher will be asking the participants. The purpose of the guide is to provide the researcher with key questions to ask each participant. In addition, the sequence of questions are subject to change dependent on the responses provided by the participant, and what is deemed as the most appropriate direction for the interview to follow. When appropriate, the use of probing questions may be utilized in order to maximize the richness of the data within the interviews. These consist of elaborative, clarification, and descriptive type probes.

### Introductory Oral script:

I am a Master's student in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at Wilfrid Laurier University who is interested in understanding the processes related to how parents influence the role acceptance process of youth athletes. This interest stems not only from my academic research, but I am also a former intercollegiate athlete and have coached at the high school level. I appreciate you volunteering your time to provide and share your insights as a parent of a competitive interdependent sport team athlete. I will be asking you questions regarding the role your child occupies on his/her sport team to gain a better understanding of how you as a parent influence this process. Your participation in this interview is completely voluntary, and if at any time you do not wish to continue, you may stop the interview. In addition, all the information you provide during this interview will be strictly confidential. The following interview will be recorded and then transcribed verbatim. However, your name will be replaced with a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes in length. Please feel free to take your time to gather your thoughts if needed for any of the questions. Lastly, there are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions as I am interested in your own personal experiences. Do you have any questions before we start the interview?

**Opening Question:** Can you please describe what your experience has been like as a parent of an athlete?

\* Will use information from background demographic information to further expand on the opening question to gain a general perspective of parents' experiences in their child's sport experience to promote a conversational style flow within the interview.

### **General Orientation of Role Concepts**

1. To begin, I am interested in your general thoughts on what a role is. Can you please describe what a role on a sport team involves?
2. Task roles are roles that help the performance of the team during practices or games. Can you please outline what you consider to be your child's task role on his/her team?
3. Please explain to me how role responsibilities are communicated within your child's team?
  - \*Prompts if required
  - Coach
  - Teammates
  - Parents, others etc.
4. Commonly, when are these role responsibilities communicated to your child?
5. Please describe how, if at all, these responsibilities have changed since your child joined the team?

### **Key Questions: Parental Influence on Athlete Role Acceptance**

#### **Transition:**

As I mentioned earlier, I am examining the ways parents influence athlete role acceptance within sports teams. I am interested in your thoughts on the ways you influence your child's willingness to fulfill his/her role during the prior/current competitive season.

#### **Key Questions:**

6. What comes to mind when you think of an athlete accepting his/her role on a team?



7. From your own personal perspective, can you please describe any situations where you have influenced your child's role or the process of your child accepting his/her role?
8. From a more general perspective, can you describe any situations where parents of your child's teammates' parents have influenced their children's roles?
9. From your own personal perspective, can you please describe any situations where you have supported part of your child's role, but not another element his/her role?
10. What do you think are some of the factors that lead your child to accept his/her role? How, if at all, do you influence these factors?
11. Can you please describe how, if at all, your child's perceptions of his/her role change throughout the course of the competitive season? If so, how if at all, do you influence how your child's role changes?
12. From a more general perspective, can you please describe some outcomes that have resulted when a parent does not accept the role that his/her child is occupying?

## Appendix O: Semi-structured Interview Guide-Coach

# Wilfrid Laurier University



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## EXPLORING HOW PARENTS INFLUENCE ROLE ACCEPTANCE OF YOUTH ATHLETES THROUGH MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Note: The interviews are semi-structured in nature. With this consideration in mind, the following script does not represent a verbatim portrayal of what the researcher will be asking the participants. The purpose of the guide is to provide the researcher with key questions to ask each participant. In addition, the sequence of questions are subject to change dependent on the responses provided by the participant, and what is deemed as the most appropriate direction for the interview to follow. When appropriate, the use of probing questions may be utilized in order to maximize the richness of the data within the interviews. These consist of elaborative, clarification, and descriptive type probes.

### Introductory Oral script:

I am a Master's student in the Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education at Wilfrid Laurier University who is interested in understanding the processes related to how parents influence the role acceptance process of youth athletes. This interest stems not only from my academic research, but I am also a former intercollegiate athlete and have coached at the high school level. I appreciate you volunteering your time to provide and share your insights as a coach. I will be asking you questions regarding athletes' roles on the team to gain a better understanding of how their parents influence this process. Your participation in interview is completely voluntary, and if at any time you do not wish to continue, you may stop the interview. In addition, all the information you provide during this interview will be strictly confidential and I ask you to please respect the other participants by not divulging the content of this interview. The following interview will be recorded and then transcribed verbatim. However, your name will be replaced with a pseudonym to ensure anonymity. The interview will last approximately 45-60 minutes in length. Please feel free to take your time to gather your thoughts if needed for any of the questions. Lastly, there are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions as I am interested in your own personal experiences. Do you have any questions before we start the interview?

**Opening Question:** Can you please describe what your experience has been like as a coach?

\* Will use information from background demographic information to further expand on the opening question to gain a general perspective of coaches' experiences on their sport teams to promote a conversational style flow within the interview.

### **General Orientation of Role Concepts**

1. To begin, I am interested in your general thoughts on what a role is. Can you please describe what a role on a sport team involves?
2. Task roles are roles that help the performance of the team during practices or games. Can you please outline what task roles athletes on your team occupy?
3. Please explain to me how role responsibilities are communicated within your team?
  - \*Prompts if required
    - Coach
    - Teammates
    - Parents, others etc.
4. Commonly, when are these role responsibilities communicated?
5. Please describe how, if at all, these responsibilities change over the course of the season?

### **Key Questions: Parental Influence on Athlete Role Acceptance**

**Transition:**

As I mentioned earlier, I am examining the ways parents influence athlete role acceptance within sports teams. I am interested in your thoughts on the ways parents have influenced athletes' willingness to fulfill their roles during the prior/current competitive season.

**Key Questions:**

6. What comes to mind when you think of an athlete accepting his/her role on a team?
7. Can you please describe any situations where parents have influenced an athlete's willingness to fulfill his/her role?

8. From a more general perspective, can you describe any situations where parents have influenced any aspect of athletes' roles?
9. Can you please describe any situations where parents have supported part of an athlete's role, but not another element his/her role?
10. What do you think are some of the factors that lead athletes to accept their roles? How, if at all, do athletes' parents influence these factors?
11. Can you please describe how, if at all, athletes' perceptions of their roles change throughout the course of the competitive season? If so, how if at all, do athletes' parents influence how their roles change?
12. From a more general perspective, can you please describe some outcomes that have resulted when a parent does not accept the role that his/her child is occupying?