Sport Development for Athletes with Disabilities:

Collegiate Opportunities are Works in Progress

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Education and Human Development

University of Virginia

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

by

Abby Fines, PhD

August 2021

Abby Fines
Department of Kinesiology
School of Education and Human Development
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, VA

Approval of Dissertation

This Dissertation has been approved by the Graduate Faculty of the School of Education and Human Development in partial fulfillment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Title of Dissertation

Sport Development for Athletes with Disabilities:
Collegiate Opportunities are Works in Progress

Martin Block	Diane Whaley
Chair	Committee Member

Brian Pusser	Peter Youngs
Committee Member	Committee Member

Date of Defense: June 29, 2021
Date of Graduation: August 2021

This certainly is a vague dedication. You know how it is. There are too many people that matter; thus, too many people you could potentially disappoint. I dedicate this dissertation to all those who inspired me to pursue my PhD for one reason or another. This one's for you, and you probably know why.

Acknowledgements

Throughout the writing of this dissertation, I received steadfast support from several individuals that cannot go unmentioned and will never be forgotten.

I would first like to thank my supervisor, Dr. Martin Block, for always having faith in my ability to conquer every aspect of the research process. Even when I felt like I was floundering, your enthusiasm, trust, patience, and encouragement never wavered.

I would also like to acknowledge my committee members, Drs. Brian Pusser, Diane Whaley, and Peter Youngs, for their expertise and insightful feedback throughout my research process. You not only provided clarity to my current work but also opened possibilities for more to come.

In addition, I would like to thank every participant who made this research possible. Thank you for your time, honesty, and vulnerability. You have paid it forward. I truly believe your self-agency has already moved mountains for greater inclusion and equity in collegiate sport.

To my family, I simply cannot fathom this life without you. Every day I thank God for you. Thank you for always being there, through all the tears, joyful or otherwise. Mama, your faithful fortitude inspires me. Pop, your simple acts of kindness and love sustain me. And Cory, I love being your sister because you are my muffin top.

To Lydia and Anna, I cannot express how much your friendship was a staple in my sanity during these past three years. Thank you for your wise counsel and compassion, for the laughter and happy distractions, and for always reminding me of my worth.

Yes, Chad, I would also like to extend my gratitude to your company. I know you won't think you deserve this acknowledgment, but I also know I would have been completely lost without your guidance and reassurance.

And last but never least, I would like to give praise to my God and Savior. Your goodness pursued me even when I shied away. Your unconditional love helped me run this race. You were and are the pillar of cloud and fire before me. Thank you for being my glorious light.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Sport Development for Athletes with Disabilities:

Collegiate Opportunities are Works in Progress

Linking Manuscript

Linking Manuscript

International law says participation in sport, recreation, and leisure activities is a fundamental right for people with disabilities (Lord & Stein, 2009; United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). United States legislation similarly declares "equal opportunity" (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990; Rehabilitation Act, 1973). Despite these regulations, people with disabilities continue to be less physically active than their peers (Bull et al., 2020; Carty et al., 2021) and face exclusive practices in these settings. Persisting individual, cultural, and structural barriers lead to a lack of opportunity to play, practice, participate, perform, and perfect (Fay & Wolff, 2009; Legg et al., in press; Rimmer et al., 2004). As shown by such athlete development models as the American Development Model endorsed by the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee (see Appendix A), opportunities should exist from the playground to the podium. Lacking, however, is any extensive research that examines *how* to build opportunities and develop programs so people with disabilities have access to and are included in various fields of play.

In the United States, unlike many countries, schools were and are a major source of athletic opportunities for children and young adults. This includes colleges and universities. In fact, social and extracurricular activities, which include sport, are essential parts of student life (e.g., Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). Unfortunately, ableist policies and practices, as well as deeper assumptions, norms, and expectations about interest and ability, create barriers that exclude students with disabilities from participating in such activities. Although the number of students with disabilities on college campuses is increasing (National Center for Education Statistics, 2017), the lack of opportunity to participate in sport, both recreationally and competitively, continues to marginalize their collegiate experience. In turn, this prevents them from

experiencing the inherent benefits of sport and inclusion so often reported in literature (e.g., Weston, 2017).

My dissertation looks to address this gap in the literature on athletic and social development. The overarching purpose is to understand how to advance opportunities for students with disabilities to play and compete at the college level. This linking manuscript is meant to showcase the theoretical foundation and initial research steps taken to accomplish this goal. First, the conceptual frameworks grounding my research process will be introduced: ableism, participation barriers, organizational development, and capacity building. Each of these interrelate and are the starting blocks that hopefully lead to more effective program development. Second, the three manuscripts that make up my dissertation will be discussed in brief. One manuscript focuses on advancing opportunities at the recreation level (i.e., NIRSA) and the other two at the varsity level (i.e., NCAA). These manuscripts are the beginning of a line of research that is under-developed in the field of Adapted Physical Activity (APA). To build upon a limited body of literature, this research draws on work from other disciplines, populations, and contexts. It suggests that students with disabilities can be afforded the opportunity to participate in sport and recreation at the college level, and, with critical factors in place, program development and transformation can be successful.

Conceptual Frameworks

Ableism

Ableism is defined as a schema of perfection that produces a particular kind of self and body, one which society uses as a measurement to being "fully human" (Campbell, 2009; Wolbring, 2008). It creates a tension between what is whole, and what is not; it covets the

'essential' and rejects the deviant. It is a "network of thought that differentiates, ranks, and negates people" (Leo & Goodwin, 2016, p. 158). Thus, ableist practices scar and exclude.

Ableism is a critical norm and foundational factor that underlies all of my research. The construct also serves as a reminder of my own biases and assumptions. I do not experience disability or identify as disabled, and so my role as the researcher is to give voice to those whose stories are from this perspective, to those who face a lack of opportunity because of their disability. My intentions are never to create a hierarchy of disability or to prioritize certain opportunities over others. If anything, I want my research to challenge the status quo and help redefine athletic achievement in a way that doesn't equate difference with inferiority. But I will acknowledge that, to some degree, I am part of the status quo. I have had and still have a freedom in opportunity to play and compete in sport. I have had and still have biases that limit my ability to be fully detached in my qualitative approach. To stay true to the data, the lived experiences of my participants, I try my best to be unremittingly reflective and transparent as well as maintain a self-awareness about how my ableist assumptions, values, biases, and affective states may come into play during the research process.

Understanding the construct of ableism also helps bring to focus why exclusive practices in sport still exist. For example, DePauw (1997) provides a simple framework, comprised of three key aspects – masculinity, physicality, and sexuality – which we can begin to understand traditional claims of the 'essential' body, and, by implication, the inclusion or exclusion of those that stray from societal standards. In general, these ideals have narrowed the image of athletic achievement, causing those that fall outside of their normative boundaries to have to fight for access to different fields of play and constantly prove their value as legitimate competitors. In this regard, sport puts up barriers to participation based on ableist assumptions.

Equally significant, raising awareness about ableism can also provide hope toward systemic change. It is a lens that can appreciate the transformative power of sport – a testament not just to athletic prowess but overall human ability (Powis, 2020) – to change ableist assumptions that currently disvalue, disenfranchise, and disempower people with disabilities. It is for all these reasons why ableism is the heart of my research and the key ingredient to advancing opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in sport.

Barriers to Participation in Sport and Physical Activity

As mentioned previously, individuals with disabilities continue to face individual, cultural, and structural barriers that hinder their full and equal participation in sport and recreation. This is literally the driving force behind my research, to eradicate these long-standing barriers and build opportunities that include this population. Probably one of the most cited publications in APA, a study by Rimmer et al. (2004) was pivotal in introducing various barriers and facilitators associated with participation in sport and recreation programs unique to people with disabilities. The authors concluded that access to physical activity is a multifaceted and complex issue, one that can be viewed from the perspective of the person who experiences disability or the professional who designs or delivers the program or space. They identified 10 themes, all of which endure today, including barriers to the built and natural environment, cost and economic barriers, information-related barriers, professional knowledge and training, perceptions and attitudes, and availability of resources.

Most recently, a study by Legg and colleagues (in press) created a global model to capture barriers and determinants specific to sport participation for people with physical disabilities (see Appendix B). Their framework is intended to be used from grassroots to high performance levels across all cultural contexts. Three overarching categories of barriers –

sociocultural, physical, and sport-specific – are each operationalized into smaller subthemes.

Notably, the adapted circular model is able to demonstrate the complicated interplay among

various factors as opposed to the linear and causal impact suggested by the study's earlier

triangular version. Another benefit of the circular shape is the ability to adjust each "piece of the

pie" to demonstrate the relative importance of each barrier, and the surrounding interconnections,

according to different global contexts. Ultimately, the authors hope that this new "framework can

shine light on the challenges being faced globally by persons with disability and result in

solutions that ensure greater participation across the sport, recreation and leisure continuum"

(Legg et al., in press, p. 21). Motivated by similar intentions, my research benefits from the work

done by these authors in identifying the "what" (barriers) so I can continue to address the "how"

(program development).

Organizational Development

In order for sport to be a site of transformation, free of barriers and geared towards

change, it is important to understand what it means for an organization to value diversity and

facilitate inclusion. Fay's (1999) conceptual framework, the *Organizational Continuum in Sport*

Governance, "is an "access" paradigm that shows where a person or group resides within a

dynamic organizational environment based on a self or culturally imposed identity group label"

(Fay & Wolff, 2009, p. 241), such as disability. Modified from a model by Etsy, Griffen, and

Hirsch (1995) on workplace diversity, the resultant multistage continuum is reflective of a sport

organization's progress, or lack thereof, toward inclusivity of any given identity group (Fay,

2011, 1999; Fay & Wolff, 2009). There are similar frameworks found within the broader

organizational development literature (e.g., Jackson, 2006), all of which express the idea that

working towards being a multicultural or inclusive organization, one that values and embraces

diversity, is a dynamic process, of which individual units may be progressive, regressive, or stagnant (Fay, 2011; Fay & Wolff, 2009; Jackson, 2006). The stages of Fay's model (see Appendix C) will be used in my dissertation because they have been directly derived from and applied to the sport domain (Legg et al., 2009; Legg et al., 2015). Here they will be augmented by the Multicultural Organization Development (MCOD) framework of Jackson (2006; see Appendix D) to capitalize on the practical applications the author provides in regard to initiating organizational change (e.g., identification of change agents; benchmarking and assessment).

Capacity Building

The frameworks provided by Fay (1999) and Jackson (2006) are limited in their application because they do not provide a great sense of *what* and *how* an organization can change for progressive movement along the continuum. In order for sport institutions (i.e., NIRSA and the NCAA) to effectively institute their mission statements and core values of equity, diversity, and inclusion, they need to have the capacity to implement the policies and practices that help transform the status quo, or at least build the capacity to do so. Therefore, the process model of capacity building is also employed throughout my dissertation.

Organizational capacity refers to an organization's ability to draw on various resources and assets in order to perform and achieve its goals and satisfy the needs of its stakeholders (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003; Millar & Doherty, 2016). Over the last several years, it has been an increasing focus within the nonprofit and community sport sectors. Research has sought to understand the critical dimensions of capacity (e.g., human resources, financial, planning, infrastructure, and external network; Hall et al., 2003; Doherty et al., 2014) to determine the strengths and challenges faced by community sport clubs in regard to achieving their missions of providing recreation and sport as well as associated social policy objectives

(e.g., health, equity) to the individuals and communities they serve (Millar & Doherty, 2020).

Though collegiate sport and recreation have their own unique management cultures, Andrassy et

al. (2014) examined organizational capacity in the context of student-athlete development and

showed that the critical dimensions significant to community sport (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et

al., 2003) are also meaningful to intercollegiate sport.

As a logical next step, research has recently undergone a shift in focus, turning from the

what to the *how*. Scholars are currently vested in understanding the conditions and mechanisms

through which organizations can alleviate challenges, build upon their assets, and ultimately

strengthen their capacity to fulfill their missions (e.g., Millar & Doherty, 2016, 2018).

Developing from the work of organizational capacity, capacity building can be understood as a

strategic approach for introducing planned change within an organization to address a gap in

organizational effectiveness (Millar & Doherty, 2016, 2018). For the purposes of my

dissertation, organizational effectiveness will be used to analyze the potential for NIRSA and the

NCAA to include students with disabilities within their existing infrastructures. Millar and

Doherty (2016) developed a process model of capacity building framed by their work with

community sport organizations but intended for broad application. Thus, this dissertational work

will extend its use within the context of collegiate sport and recreation (see Appendix E).

3 Manuscripts

In working to launch more opportunities for athletes with disabilities in the Eastern Coastal

Athletic Conference (ECAC), Ackerman and Fay (2016) presented four principles of inclusion

that have become another guiding framework for developing my line of research. These

principles reflect ideologies presented in the Department of Education's 2013 Dear Colleague

Letter, which clarifies the obligations of schools to provide extracurricular athletics under

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. They demonstrate the continuum of opportunity

that is needed to ensure students with disabilities have access to sport and recreation at the

collegiate level.

1. Inclusion of athletes with a Paralympic-eligible disability onto existing teams,

    competitions and Championships without any sport-specific accommodations required.

2. Inclusion of athletes with a Paralympic-eligible disability onto existing teams,

    competitions and Championships with reasonable sport-specific accommodations

    provided.

3. Inclusion of athletes with a Paralympic-eligible disability through the addition of specific

    adaptive (Para) events into existing competitions and Championships in an **array [of]**

    individual Olympic/Paralympic sports (e.g., track & field, swimming, tennis, rowing,

    alpine & cross-country skiing, golf and fencing).

4. Inclusion of athletes *with and without disabilities* through the creation of specific

    adaptive (Paralympic) team sport in new leagues, competitions, and Championships (e.g.,

    wheelchair basketball, sled hockey, goalball, sitting volleyball and wheelchair rugby)

Additionally, although these principles use language relevant to varsity sport (i.e., NCAA), they

can be applied to recreation and leisure programs as well (i.e., NIRSA). The three manuscripts I

outline next each fall within one of these 'types' of inclusion. The first and second are situated in

principle four, one focusing on campus recreation and the other on varsity sports. The third is

situated in principle two and gives attention to intercollegiate varsity competition. This research

is just the beginning. To advance opportunities for student with disabilities at the collegiate level,

all four principles will need further exploration.

Capacity Building in Campus Recreation: Collegiate Goalball

Although colleges and universities seek to promote diversity, educational inequities and opportunity gaps remain that keep underrepresented student groups from full participation in campus life (Pope et al., 2014). This includes access to campus recreation by students with disabilities (e.g., Devine, 2016). This study aimed to examine the organizational capacity (Doherty et al., 2014) of campus recreation to achieve their missions of equity, diversity, and inclusion (Motch-Ellis, 2019) and satisfy the needs of students with disabilities. A multiple case study approach afforded analysis of the organizational attributes critical for the development of goalball programs. With only a handful of long-standing collegiate programs, all of which were represented in this study, goalball was chosen specifically because it is a nontraditional sport and allows for participation among students with and without disabilities. The thirteen participants recruited for this study all played a significant role in developing and sustaining their respective goalball programs, which are the six 'cases' comprising this study. Semi-structured interviews were the main source of data drawn upon to understand how each goalball program was started, the current nature or status of the program, and the leader's vision for the program as well as collegiate goalball as a whole. Findings suggest that capacity building initiatives are both context dependent and resource intensive, and that campus recreation programs continue to struggle to reach beyond compliance and find the right mix of critical factors (i.e., human resources, partnerships networks, sport infrastructure, and strategies for effective planning and implementation) to develop (goalball) programs for students with disabilities.

Intercollegiate Adapted Athletics: Learning from NCAA Women's Sports

There are many athletes with disabilities who have been "able" enough to successfully compete against their able-bodied peers in the NCAA (Fay, 2011). However, these athletes are outliers. Athletes who require accommodation(s) because their "disability is more significant or does not easily allow them to fit within the common rules of the able-bodied version of their sport" are absent from the rosters (Fay, 2011, p. 78). Therefore, this is a conceptual manuscript that directs attention toward these "outsider" athletes and, correspondingly, the provision of separate parasport (i.e., disability, adapted, or adaptive sport) opportunities at the intercollegiate level. Specifically, it aims to contextualize the nature of intercollegiate adapted athletics and take strides in addressing its relative absence in contemporary intercollegiate athletics by learning from the history of women's intercollegiate sport. To do so, the norm of ableism is first introduced as a lens for understanding the invisibility of disability in collegiate sport. The current status of disability in the NCAA is outlined next, including an overview of promising inclusion initiatives that have not been widely implemented. The discussion then turns to contextualizing the legal landscape surrounding disability and sport. This is juxtaposed with the history of women's intercollegiate sport, before finally presenting commonalities (and differences) in the experiences of women which may be applied to understanding the parasport context. The comparable topics presented are: compliance of interests and abilities (in selection of sport and levels of competition), a Designation for Inclusion, the Emerging Sports for Women program, and the alternate governance structure of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW). The presentation of these alternatives does not conclude with 'an answer.' Rather it points to the need for future research across institutional levels and stakeholder groups to find a strategic direction that will create greater inclusion for students with disabilities.

The Inclusion of Student-Athletes with Disabilities in the NCAA: A Case Study of Notre Dame Track & Field

While the first two manuscripts, focus on "the provision of separate or different athletic opportunities" (Office of Civil Rights, 2013, p. 2), the purpose of this paper was to examine the inclusion of athletes with physical disabilities who require "sport-specific accommodation" in NCAA competition (Principle 2; Ackerman & Fay, 2016). This focus is important because athletics are an integral part of the collegiate experience as well as a building block within the development pipeline of athletes (Ackerman & Fay, 2016). Despite a general assumption that participation in intercollegiate athletics is a privilege, not a right, it can be argued that students with disabilities have legal protections against discrimination that should give them the same opportunity of earning a spot on a team roster as any NCAA student-athlete. Such an opportunity affords personal and professional benefits on the playing field, in the classroom, and "after the game" (NCAA, n.d.). Intercollegiate sport is seen as a "gateway" to high level achievement and an opportunity that shouldn't be denied to students with disabilities. Thus, to bring greater inclusion to NCAA sports, and to address the needs of 'non-traditional' athletes, it is necessary to challenge, assess, and publicly expose the prevailing traditions of sport governance, norms, and public opinions that serve to limit opportunities in sport for this population.

As discussed by the second manuscript, there have been many athletes with disabilities "able" enough to compete within the NCAA (Fay, 2011). Without a critical mass, however, these athletes have been isolated as anomalies with their impact on inclusion limited, and short-lived (Fay, 1999). A more strategic analysis is necessary to understand cases where these athletes with disabilities have been included, in order to increase the likelihood that they will be included in

the future. The purpose of this paper was to build on existing research by examining how Notre

Dame Track & Field included Sam Grewe, a single-leg amputee high jumper who uses a

prosthetic to compete. As this was an atypical case, an intrinsic single-case study approach,

framed by the process model of capacity building (Millar & Doherty, 2016), was adopted to

probe unique aspects of the case. This was done with the expectation that findings may reveal

insights about normal processes and practices as well (Stake 2005; Yin, 2018). To do so, an

embedded design was employed to allow for "integrated" analysis from three stratification levels

of stakeholder engagement – athletes, management (coaches and training staff), and

administration (Balish & Côté, 2014; Fay, 1999; Yin, 2018). Though multiple data sources (i.e.,

documentation, observation) were collected, interviews with participants representing these

various levels served as the primary form of data collection. Findings illuminated a set of actions

that were taken by Notre Dame to include Sam Grewe, why and how these were implemented

and sustained, and with what result. While careful not to over-generalize and suggest that

implications of this case apply to all contexts, I believe in their value to inform strategy and

practice that can ultimately expand the spectrum of opportunities for student-athletes with

disabilities to participate in varsity sports at the college level.

Concluding Remarks and Researcher Standpoint

The work has just begun. There are a few influential scholars and practitioners in the field

who are working for equal opportunity of students with disabilities in collegiate sport and

recreation. But as is the case for student athletes with disabilities, there is not a critical mass of

scholarship, activism or practice challenging the legitimacy of the dominant intercollegiate sports

organizations (i.e., NIRSA and the NCAA) in a way that moves the status quo. There needs to be

more extensive research to continue widely advancing equal opportunity recreationally and

competitively, for each sport, and for all types of disabilities. As noted above, I do not

experience disability or identify as disabled. At the same time, while I try to stay objective in the

pursuit of equal opportunity for student athletes with disabilities through my research, my

passion is brimming. What I believe is this – we have to begin somewhere, somehow – so why

not now? And why not with me?

References

Ackerman, P., & Fay, T. (2016). *Creating new high performance opportunities for inclusive sport for athletes with Paralympic-eligible disabilities*. NCAA Inclusion Forum. https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2016_Inclusion_Forum_Creating_New_Inclusive _20160426.pdf

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq. (1990). https://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm

Andrassy, E. J., Svensson, P., Bruening, J., Huml, M. R., & Chung, M. (2014). The role of organizational capacity in student-athlete development. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, *7*(2), 218–244. https://doi.org/10.1123/jis.2014-0103

Balish, S., & Côté, J. (2014). The influence of community on athletic development: An integrated case study. *Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health*, *6*(1), 98–120. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2013.766815

Bull, F. C., Al-Ansari, S. S., Biddle, S., Borodulin, K., Buman, M.P., Cardon, G., Carty, C., Chaput, J., Chastin, S., Chou, R., Dempsey, P. C., DiPietro, L., Ekelund, U., Firth, J., Friedenreich, C. M., Garcia, L., Gichu, M., Jago, R., Katzmarzyk, P. T.,…Willumsen, J. F. (2020). World Health Organization 2020 guidelines on physical activity and sedentary behavior. *British Journal of Sports Medicine, 54*(24), 1451-1462.

Campbell, F.K. (2009). *Contours of ableism: The production of disability and abledness*. Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1057/9780230245181

Carty, C., van der Ploeg, H. P., Biddle, S. J. H., Bull, F., Willumsen, J., Lee, L., Kamenov, K., & Milton, K. (2021). The first global physical activity and sedentary behavior guidelines for people living with a disability. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health, 18*, 86-93.

DePauw, K. P. (1997). The (In)visibility of DisAbility: Cultural contexts and `sporting bodies.'.

   Quest (00336297), *49*(4), 416-430.

Devine, M. A. (2016). Leisure-time physical activity: Experiences of college students with

   disabilities. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, *33*(2), 176–194.

   https://doi.org/10.1123/APAQ.2014-0241

Doherty, A., Misener, K., & Cuskelly, G. (2014). Toward a multidimensional framework of

   capacity in community sport clubs. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*,

   43(2_suppl), 124S-142S. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764013509892

Fay, T. (2011). Disability in sport it's our time: From the sidelines to the frontlines (Title IX--B).

   Journal of Intercollegiate Sport, *4*(1), 63–94.

Fay, T. G. (1999). *Race, gender, and disability: A new paradigm towards full participation and

   equal opportunity in sport* [Ph.D., University of Massachusetts Amherst].

   http://search.proquest.com/pqdtglobal/docview/304515532/abstract/7A00A945639F4AA

   FPQ/1

Fay, T., & Wolff, E. (2009). Disability in sport in the twenty-first century: Creating a new sport

   opportunity spectrum. *Boston University International Law Journal, 27*(2), 231-248.

Gillies, J., & Dupuis, S. L. (2013). A framework for creating a campus culture of inclusion: A

   participatory action research approach. *Annals of Leisure Research*, *16*(3), 193–211.

   https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2013.832646

Hall, M., Andrukow, A., Barr, C., Brock, K., de Wit, M., Embuldeniya, D., Jolin, L., Lasby, D.,

   Levesque, B., Malinsky, E., Stowe, S., & Vaillancourt, Y. (2003). The capacity to serve:

A qualitative study of the challenges facing Canada's nonprofit and voluntary

organizations. *Canadian Centre for Philanthropy*.

http://sectorsource.ca/sites/default/files/resources/files/capacity_to_serve_english.pdf

Jackson, B. W. (2006). Theory and practice of multicultural organization development. In B. B.

Jones & M. Brazzel (Eds.), *TheNTL handbook of organization development and change:*

Principles, practices, and perspectives (pp. 139–154). Pfeiffer.

Legg, D., Higgs, C., Douer, O. F., Bukhala, P., & Pankowiak, A. (in press). A framework for

understanding barriers to participation in sport for persons with disability. *Palaestra*.

Leo, J., & Goodwin, D. (2016). Simulating others' realities: Insiders reflect on disability

simulations. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 33*, 156-175.

http://dx.doi.org/10.1123/APAQ.2015-0031

Lord, J. E., & Stein, M. A. (2009). Social rights and the relational value of the rights to

participate in sport, recreation, and play. *Boston University International Law Journal,*

27(2), 249-282.

Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2016). Capacity building in nonprofit sport organizations:

Development of a process model. *Sport Management Review*, *19*(4), 365–377.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2016.01.002

Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2018). "You can't just start and expect it to work": An investigation of

strategic capacity building in community sport organizations. *Journal of Sport*

Management, *32*(4), 348–361.

Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2020). Readiness to build capacity in community sport organizations.

Managing Sport and Leisure, *0*(0), 1–19.

https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2020.1763830

Motch-Ellis, W. B. (2019). Equity, diversity, & inclusion: A resource guide for leaders in

      collegiate recreation. *NIRSA*. Retrieved from:

      https://nirsa.net/nirsa/wp-content/uploads/nirsa-equity-diversity-inclusion-resource-

      guide-for-campus-recreation.pdf

National Center for Education Statistics. (2017). Digest of Education Statistics: 2017 Chapter 3:

      Postsecondary Education https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/ch_3.asp

NCAA. (n.d.). How we support college athletes. Retrieved March 14, 2021, from

      https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/ncaa-101/how-we-support-college-

      athletes

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794 et seq. (1973).

      https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/reg/ocr/edlite-34cfr104.html

Rimmer, J. H., Riley, B., Wang, E., Rauworth, A., Jurkowski, J. (2004). Physical activity

      participation among persons with disabilities: Barriers and facilitators. *American Journal*

      of Preventive Medicine, 26(5), 419-425.

Office of Civil Rights. (2013, January 25). *Dear Colleague letter*. United States Department of

      Education. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201301-504.pdf

Pope, R. L., Reynolds, A. L., & Mueller, J. A., (2014). *Creating multicultural change on*

      campus. John Wiley & Sons.

Powis, B. (2020). *Embodiment, identity and disability sport: An ethnography of elite visually*

      impaired athletes. Routledge.

Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage*

      handbook of qualitative research (3rd ed., pp. 443–466). Sage.

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 6, 2006,

https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-

with-disabilities.html

Weston, M. A. (2017). The international right to sport for people with disabilities. *Marquette

Sports Law Review, 28*(1), 1-35.

Wolbring, G. (2008). The Politics of Ableism. *Development*, *51*(2), 252–258.

https://doi.org/10.1057/dev.2008.17

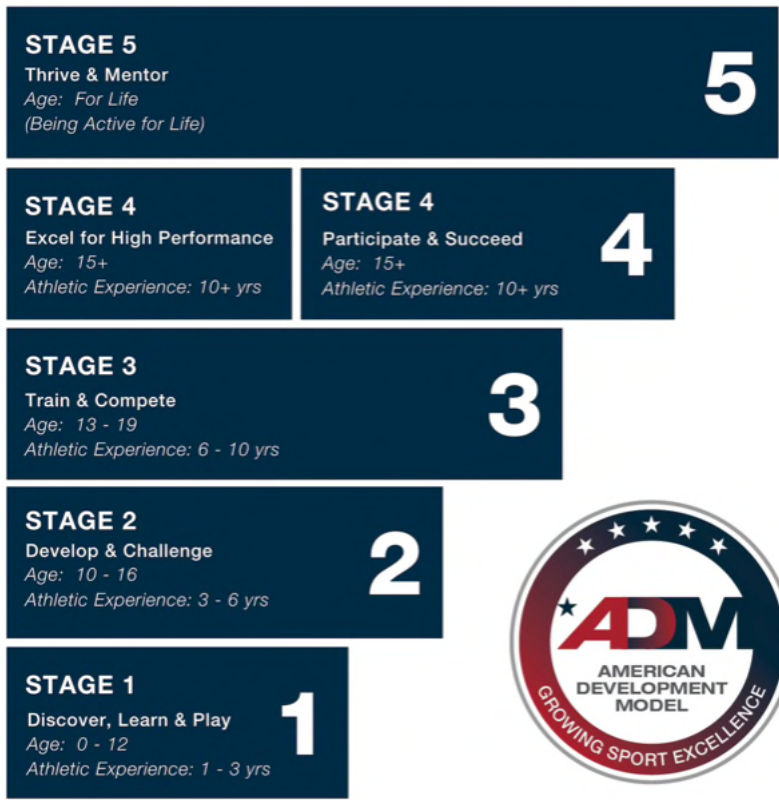Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. (6th ed.). Sage.

Appendix A

United States Olympics & Paralympic Committee Athlete Development Model

Appendix B

Barriers to Sport Participation
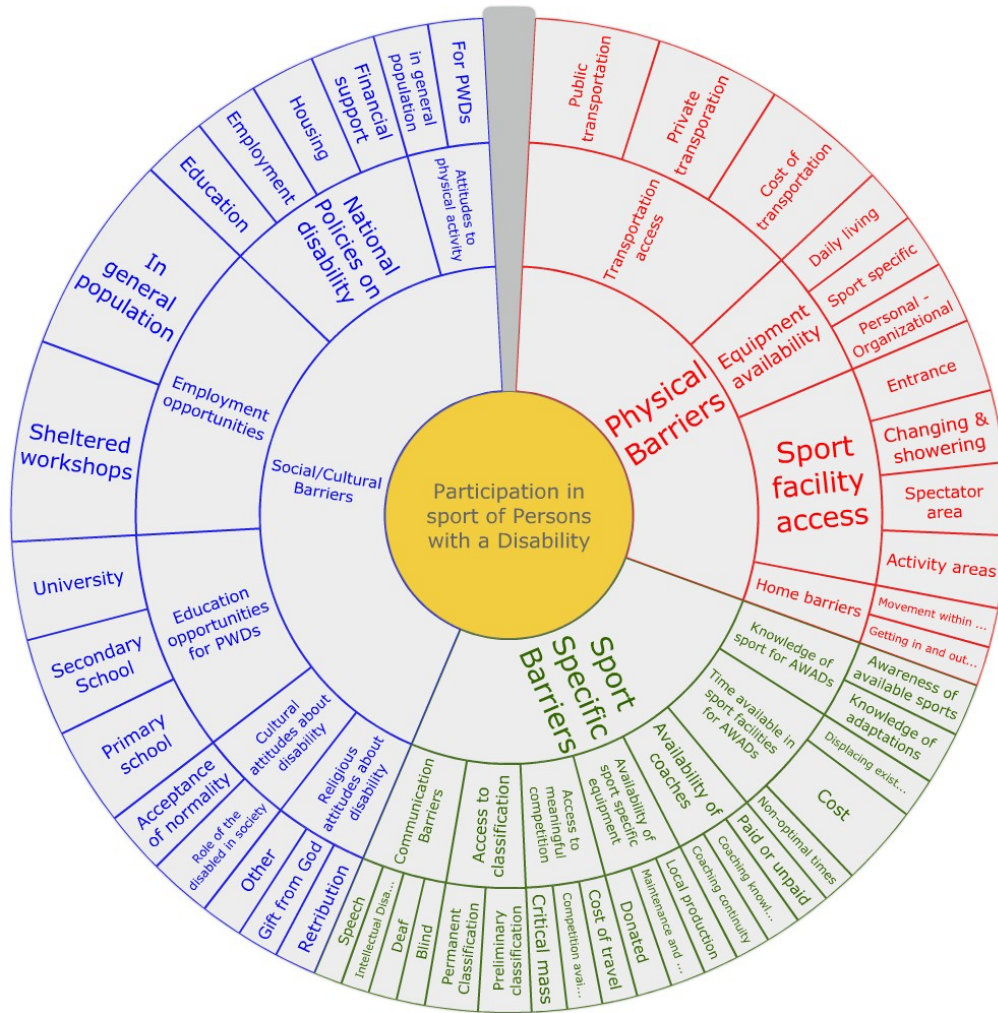
Legg, D., Higgs, C., Douer, O. F., Bukhala, P., & Pankowiak, A. (in press). A framework for understanding barriers to participation in sport for persons with disability. *Palaestra*.

Appendix C

Organizational Continuum in Sport Governance
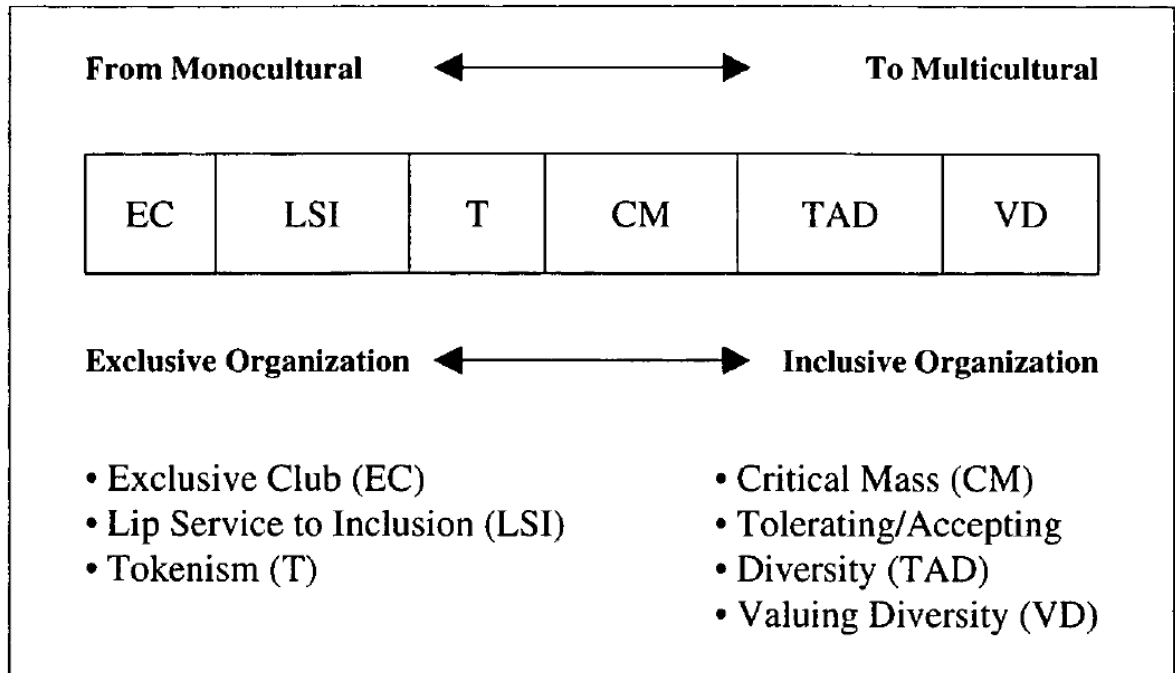
From Monocultural	⟵⟶	To Multicultural

EC	LSI	T	CM	TAD	VD

Exclusive Organization	⟵⟶	Inclusive Organization

- Exclusive Club (EC)
- Lip Service to Inclusion (LSI)
- Tokenism (T)

- Critical Mass (CM)
- Tolerating/Accepting
- Diversity (TAD)
- Valuing Diversity (VD)

Fay, T., & Wolff, E. (2009). Disability in sport in the twenty-first century: Creating a new sport opportunity spectrum. *Boston University International Law Journal, 27*(2), 231-248.

Appendix D

Continuum of Multicultural Organization Development
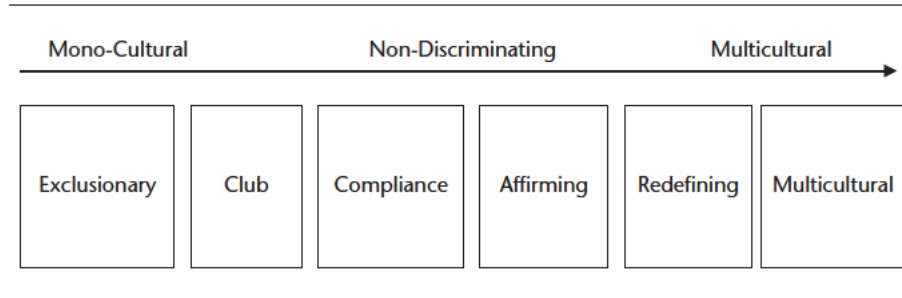
Mono-Cultural		Non-Discriminating		Multicultural	
Exclusionary	Club	Compliance	Affirming	Redefining	Multicultural

Jackson, B. W. (2006). Theory and practice of multicultural organization development. In B. B. Jones & M. Brazzel (Eds.), *TheNTL handbook of organization development and change: Principles, practices, and perspectives* (pp. 139–154). Pfeiffer.

Appendix E

A Process Model of Capacity Building
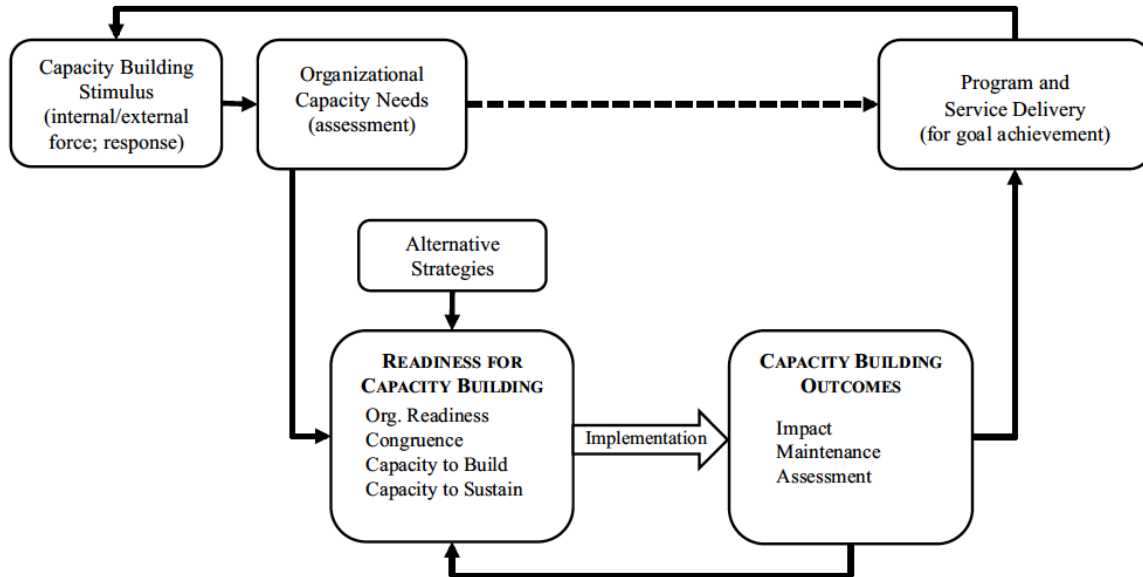
Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2016). Capacity building in nonprofit sport organizations: Development of a process model. *Sport Management Review*, *19*(4), 365–377. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2016.01.002

Capacity Building in Campus Recreation: Collegiate Goalball

Capacity Building in Campus Recreation: Collegiate Goalball

Although colleges and universities seek to promote diversity, there remain educational inequities and opportunity gaps that keep underrepresented student groups from full participation in campus life. This includes the access to campus recreation by students with disabilities. This study aimed to examine the organizational capacity of campus recreation to achieve their missions of equity, diversity, and inclusion and satisfy the needs of students with disabilities. A multiple case study approach afforded analysis of the organizational attributes critical for the development of goalball programs. With only a handful of long-standing collegiate programs, goalball was chosen specifically because it is a nontraditional sport and allows for participation among students with and without disabilities. Results attest that capacity building initiatives are both context dependent and resource intensive, but campus recreation should still reach beyond compliance to develop (goalball) programs for students with disabilities.

Key words: campus recreation, higher education, disability, goalball, case study

Capacity Building in Campus Recreation: Collegiate Goalball

The student population in higher education continues to be molded in response to changes in society. Promoting diversity has become an initiative, a social responsibility, toward "the promise of equal educational opportunity for all students" (King et al., 2016, p. 3). The notion of *all,* however, is still bounded and often reduced to the social construct of race and ethnicity (Taylor et al., 2020), and although warranted, this leaves disability a rarity in conversation around student access and inclusion. Nonetheless, since the passing of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in 1990, the number of students with disabilities on college campuses has increased. The landmark legislation extended rights that (allegedly) unlocked access to every aspect of operation within higher education – every facility, program, and service a college or university had to offer (Evans et al., 2017). Quantifying this change, however, is problematic. Given the fluidity of the disability concept, there exist discrepancies among approaches and standards used to classify, measure, and report the numbers and percentages of students with disabilities (Evans et al., 2017); thus, data are at best approximations (e.g., 19%; NCES, 2017). Even so, that faces (and bodies) are changing on college campuses is indisputable.

In defiance of the growing diversity in higher education, ableist policies and practices as well as deeper assumptions, norms, and expectations remain rigidly in place (Pope et al., 2014). Consequently, students with disabilities continue to encounter personal and institutional barriers that marginalize their student experience (Marshak et al., 2010). This is partly attributed to the narrowed focus of support services on academics (e.g., instructional materials) and legal compliance, to the detriment of social involvement and, thus, disregard for consideration of the whole person (Evans et al., 2017; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Promis et al., 2001). In fact, research

indicates that greater involvement in student life leads to greater persistence (Getzel, 2008) and academic achievement (Henchy, 2011). The successful, well-rounded student thrives "because they are connected to others, they develop new skills and they maintain a balance within life" (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 199). Accordingly, social and extracurricular activities are not trivial and should be deemed a priority to ensure students with disabilities have equal opportunity in attaining success.

Full and balanced involvement in student life includes opportunities to engage in sport, recreation, and physical activity. The popularity and benefits (physical, social, learning) of participation in campus recreation are well documented for the greater student body (Forrester, 2014, 2015; Henchy, 2011). Though literature is scarce about the experiences of students with disabilities, benefits seem to be similar. Blinde and McClung (1997), Blinde and Taub (1999), and Wessel, Wentz, and Markle (2011) all reported that participation in campus recreation and sport for students with physical disabilities impacted the physical self, by increasing perceived competence in their abilities, as well as the social self, by providing meaningful social interactions. These benefits are heightened when programs are inclusive. Gillies and Dupuis (2013) along with Lundberg et al. (2008) reported that positive socialization among students with and without disabilities in campus recreation helped raise awareness and create opportunities to renegotiate stigmatized identities and misinformed stereotypes.

In spite of known benefits, persisting structural and cultural barriers maintain exclusionary practices within campus recreation programs and services (Devine, 2016; Young et al., 2016). Accessibility, for example, is often less than satisfactory for full participation (Yoh et al., 2008) particularly because it "refers not only to architecture but also to the programs provided and availability of information" (Fujii & Woodard, 2006, p. 6). Students with

disabilities are less likely to participate in campus recreation, not by choice due to a lack of

interest (Lakowski, 2013) but rather because of the challenges imposed by inaccessible fitness

centers and minimal opportunity for competitive and recreational athletics (Evans et al., 2017;

Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Yoh et al., 2008).

In addition to its structural and organizational implications, accessibility also embodies a

social dimension. Just because students can enter the front door, or even join a program, does not

mean they are being greeted by a welcoming and inclusive climate (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013;

Young et al., 2016). A recent study by Devine (2016) showed that students with disabilities

encountered polarized expectations of their ability to participate. While some were discouraged

from active engagement in physical activity, others were thought of as extraordinary and heroic

for their efforts (Devine, 2016). In other words, their experiences were still tainted by a culture

of marginalization, their participation still marked by 'otherness'. Even for campus recreation

staff who outwardly value and commit to inclusion, Daniels et al. (2017) found that students with

disabilities continue to be excluded because of an 'incomplete knowledge' about how to organize

and implement programming that fully accommodates their needs and interests.

Thankfully, these discrepancies have not gone completely unnoticed. NIRSA, the

national governing body for collegiate recreation, recently embraced six new strategic values in

response to the changing landscape of higher education – one of which is the value of Equity,

Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI; Motch-Ellis, 2019). NIRSA espouses commitment not just to their

core belief that everyone (including students with disabilities) should have the opportunity to

participate in physical activity and recreation (Young et al., 2016) but also to the pursuit of

conscious and intentional efforts that can make this goal a reality (Motch-Ellis, 2019). "There are

several forms of advocacy, and in relation to EDI, advocacy [according to NIRSA] is about

empowering others, eliminating barriers, and creating access and equal opportunity for others to be fully included" (Motch-Ellis, 2019, pp. 11-12). This value, and the commitment to achieve it, should be uplifted now more than ever with the enactment of the U.S. Department of Education's 2013 Dear Colleague Letter. This policy guidance clarified existing obligations of schools under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 to provide students with disabilities equal opportunity to participate in extracurricular athletics (OCR, 2013). In acknowledgement that extracurricular athletics "are an important component of an overall education program" (OCR, 2013, p. 1) at all education levels, the guidance includes campus recreation. It states, "Students with disabilities at the postsecondary level must also be provided an equal opportunity to participate in athletics, including intercollegiate, club, and intramural athletics" (p. 1-2).

The degree to which inclusion and equal opportunity are truly implemented in extracurricular athletics varies from university to university. To close the margin between principle and practice requires addressing the knowledge gap in program development and implementation (Daniels et al., 2017; Fines & Block, 2020). It is critical to understand the organizational perspective in which campus recreation can serve and provide programs for students with disabilities (Wicker & Breuer, 2014). Again, NIRSA has not been a bystander to this need. Recognizing that applying EDI concepts "can be challenging and require daily thought and intentionality," NIRSA advocates for capacity building initiatives that enable its members to anticipate and address issues and needs that often go unnoticed or position them in reactive situations (Motch-Ellis, 2019). For the purposes of this paper, those issues and needs are the lack of opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in campus recreation. So, in order for NIRSA and its members to effectively institute their strategic value of EDI and gain the

competencies necessary to organize programs for students with disabilities, this paper will next examine a capacity building framework used within the nonprofit sport body of literature.

Capacity Building Framework

Organizational capacity refers to an organization's ability to draw on various resources and assets in order to perform and achieve its goals and satisfy the needs of its stakeholders (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003; Millar & Doherty, 2016). Over the last several years, it has been an increasing focus within the nonprofit and community sport sectors. Research has sought to understand the critical dimensions of capacity (e.g., human resources, financial, planning, infrastructure, and network;] Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al, 2003) to determine the strengths and challenges faced by community sport clubs in regard to achieving their missions of providing recreation and sport as well as the associated social policy objectives (e.g., health and wellbeing) important to the individuals and communities they serve (Doherty et al., 2014). Wicker and Breuer (2014) expanded this inquiry to the work of disability sport clubs that aim to accomplish the same mandates but specific to individuals with disabilities. Though NIRSA and its members have their own unique sport management culture, this multidimensional framework can provide the basis for a holistic analysis of the factors necessary for achieving their goal of providing full and equitable opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in campus recreation.

As a logical next step, research has recently undergone a shift in focus, turning from the *what* to the *how*. Scholars are currently vested in understanding the conditions and mechanisms through which organizations can alleviate challenges, build upon their assets, and ultimately strengthen their capacity to fulfill their missions (e.g., Millar & Doherty, 2016, 2018). Emerging from the work of organizational capacity, the dynamic model of capacity building is a strategic

approach for introducing planned change within an organization to address a gap in

organizational effectiveness (Millar & Doherty, 2016, 2018). It is rooted in organizational

change and strategic management, important because true inclusion – the elimination of

exclusive and oppressive practices – cannot be attained without systemic change (Pope et al.,

2014; Young et al., 2016). As Diane Richler, the President of Inclusion International, stated:

"Inclusion is not a strategy to help people fit in the systems and structures which exist in our

societies; it is about transforming those systems and structures to make it better for everyone"

(NCPHAD, n.d.). A one-size-fits-all approach will not be adequate to meet the diverse needs of

students with disabilities within the existing infrastructure of campus recreation (Young et al.,

2016), so it is the aim of this project to better understand the process and strategies for doing so.

Millar and Doherty (2016) developed a process model of capacity building framed by

their work with community sport organizations but intended for broad application. Thus, this

paper extends its use within the context of campus recreation.

> The model contends that capacity building is initiated based on a stimulus (force and
>
> response), [in this case the 2013 Dear Colleague letter], in the organization's internal or
>
> external environment that subsequently triggers the organization to assess its capacity to
>
> respond to that stimulus. The review of capacity and identification of needs ideally
>
> frames the capacity building objectives going forward, prompts a review of the
>
> organization's readiness to undertake the capacity building efforts, initiates the
>
> generation and selection of capacity building strategies, and, finally, informs a review of
>
> the short- and long-term impact of those. (Millar & Doherty, 2020, pp. 3-5)

Since research is lacking on capacity building in campus recreation, this study focused on the

second progressive state, what Millar and Doherty (2016) name the 'Organizational Capacity

Needs (assessment).' The assessment should "highlight both the particular capacity needs to be able to respond to the environmental force and the organizational assets that may be critical in supporting any capacity building initiative" (p. 372). As such, this study aimed to highlight the capacity needs and assets of campus recreation to meet the changing student needs (the stimulus) on college campuses. Specifically, as discussed next, the purpose of this study was to examine the propensity of campus recreation to provide the sport of goalball for students with visual impairments.

Collegiate Goalball

Goalball is the most popular team sport for athletes who are blind and visually impaired. The sport originated after WWII (as did many adapted or disability sports) to keep wounded veterans physically active. Goalball is unique because it doesn't have a traditional sport counterpart, unlike wheelchair basketball for example. Two teams of three blindfolded players face each other on a volleyball-sized court that is lined by string so players can maintain their orientation. The object of the game is to roll a three-pound, basketball-sized ball with bells inside across the other team's goal line. Defending players listen for the ball and try to block it with their bodies, usually by sliding and laying fully outstretched on the court (USABA, n.d.).

Current goalball research is mainly situated within an elite or Paralympic context. Studies focus on game performance (e.g, Alves et al., 2018; Monezi et al., 2019) and physical fitness (e.g., Petrigna et al., 2020). The few studies focused on youth development highlight the physical (da Cunha Furtado et al., 2016) and social (Hague et al., 2020) value of goalball. Research within the collegiate context, however, is almost absent. This, in part, can be understood because, until recently, there has simply been a lack of opportunity. But as the number of collegiate programs increase on college campuses (Block, 2019), there is a need to understand how and why they are

being developed and to what benefit. This understanding is important so students with disabilities (visual impairments) can access and gain from every aspect of student life.

There are only three studies that have examined collegiate goalball, and each with a different purpose. Van Rheenen (2016) discussed the implications of offering goalball as an academic course. Results focused on the value of combining athletics and engaged scholarship to increase awareness and challenge ableist assumptions about disability. MacDonald et al. (2020) examined the experiences of goalball players with and without visual impairments on a collegiate team. Findings showed that an inclusive sport opportunity can increase positive self-image and dispel stereotypes about (dis)ability by being an enjoyable and competitive experience for all participants. The study helps inform campus recreation about *why* collegiate goalball is important, but, in general, lacks in-depth insight about *how* programs should be developed.

One case study by Fines and Block (2020) provides a more detailed narrative of the process of developing collegiate goalball. Using components of the change process (exclusion to inclusion) for multicultural organization development, the authors reported that goalball development benefits from both individual (e.g., student) and institutional (e.g., campus recreation) leadership. Further, in regard to the latter, campus recreation has to present a state of 'organizational readiness' for development to be successful and sustainable, meaning campus recreation has to be committed to their mission of EDI and reach beyond compliance to put their mission into practice. Comparable to prior discussion, including the two aforementioned studies (MacDonald et al., 2020; Van Rheenen, 2016), Fines and Block (2020) reported that the provision of goalball has physical and social benefits for everyone involved. Even more, a small footprint can have a ripple effect to create an informed and inclusive community that welcomes difference rather than isolates it.

The contention of this paper, therefore, is to expand the current knowledge base about the process of developing collegiate goalball. Through the lens of capacity building, the purpose was to understand the organizational capacity of campus recreation to implement such programming. The cases of six collegiate goalball programs were cross-examined in relation to the dimensions of critical organizational attributes provided by Hall et al. (2003) and Doherty et al. (2014), which include human resources, financial, network, infrastructure and process, and planning and development capacities. Since the capacity to develop collegiate goalball will be a function of one or more of these attributes, findings may be used to help campus recreation identify the needs and assets critical to supporting their efforts of EDI (Motch-Ellis, 2019). Where any of these capacities are deficient, building (developing and strengthening) may be necessary to ensure that students with disabilities are no longer pushed to the margins of campus life (Millar & Doherty, 2016; Promis et al., 2001).

Methods

Design

A multiple case study approach was applied as the basis of inquiry to ultimately present cross-case conclusions (Yin, 2018) about the organizational capacity of campus recreation to satisfy the needs of their stakeholders (i.e., students with disabilities). After IRB approval was granted, a purposeful sample was used to gather insight about the capacity of campus recreation to provide goalball programs (Miles et al., 2020). Using a strategy of snowball sampling, thirteen participants were recruited, all who played a significant role in developing and sustaining their respective collegiate goalball programs, which are the six 'cases' presented in this study. A description of each case and its informants are provided in the Findings and Discussion section

of this paper in order to also incorporate background information about the "stimulus" (Millar &

Doherty, 2016) which prompted the building of each collegiate goalball program.

The study followed a pragmatic paradigm. Interested in 'what works' (Patton, 2015) to

problem-solve and expand opportunities for students with disabilities to participate in campus

recreation, this inquiry originally worked from the reduced view that pragmatism equals

practicality. However, the paradigm of pragmatism realizes that the "meaning of an event cannot

be given in advance of experience" (Denzin, 2012, p. 82), and experience is a "continual back

and forth movement between beliefs and actions" (Morgan, 2014, p. 1049). This broadened view

allowed me to not only focus on the practical steps and outcomes of program development but to

do so while remaining in tune with the relationship I had with the participants and their

narratives. I took a conscious backseat in trying to fix what I identified as a problem in favor of

giving voice and power to those more intimately involved in the process of creating goalball

programs.

Data Sources

Semi-structured interviews were the main source of evidence. The protocol was laid out

in three phases: Questions focused on how the goalball program was started, the current nature of

the program, and the leader's vision for the program as well as collegiate goalball as a whole. All

participants were interviewed by the sole researcher at a time convenient to them, each lasting

between 30 and 90 minutes. After obtaining verbal consent, twelve interviews were audio-

recorded during video conferencing, while the remaining interview was conducted by phone with

extensive field notes taken to capture full quotations. During and following all interviews,

reflection notes were hand-written and later revisited to clarify ambiguities in data interpretation,

whether they stemmed from the author's bias, an informant's tone inflection, or simply word

choice. These notes, transcribed interviews, and relevant artifacts (campus recreation websites

and sport club materials were not cited for the purpose of maintaining anonymity) constituted the

data sources for this study.

Data Analysis

Data analysis, as an active process, involves continuous and evolving engagement with

the data (Braun et al., 2016; Miles et al., 2020), both in part (by case) and as a whole (cross-

case). Thus, the author utilized the reflexive model of thematic analysis provided by Braun et al.

(2016) to allow forward and backward movement within the analytic process to stay truthful to

the accounts of each informant. Before engaging in coding, the author first immersed herself in

the data, reading the transcripts multiple times to form preliminary insights about the holistic

development of each goalball program. Once conversant with the different accounts of each case,

the author then "tagged" words, phrases, and sentences using the capacity dimensions provided

by Hall et al. (2003) and Doherty et al. (2014) yet also remained open to new concepts and

themes that might emerge within each of them. This was essential for ensuring truthfulness of the

study since organizational capacity is both context-specific and multidimensional, so even the

same attributes may prove to have varying influence on an individual organization's ability to

achieve its goals (Doherty et al., 2014). Coding, therefore, was both deductive and inductive

(Miles et al., 2020). For example, though each transcript was highly marked with the code "HR"

(i.e., human resource capacity), each case and informant had different experiences and examples

to share that called for different coding schemes, such as "HR knowledge" or "HR continuity".

Though the author was careful not to jump to conclusions (Braun et al., 2016) and adhered to the

concept of constant comparison to identify any deviant evidence (Miles et al., 2020), the coding

of capacity dimensions ultimately provided the cross-case themes that gave structure to the

infinite nuances between each of the goalball cases. With the aim of transferring the 'experiential knowledge' of the informants (Stake, 2005), it is these themes and nuances that are presented in the following section.

Findings and Discussion

This section first presents background information about each goalball program, including the participants and stimulus which initiated the development process, in order to contextualize each individual case before then making cross-case comparisons using the capacity dimensions provided by Hall et al. (2003) and Doherty et al. (2014). Informant quotations and summaries are discussed in relation to previous research in order to promptly highlight comparable and deviating elements that contribute to the organizational capacity of campus recreation to fulfill their missions of inclusion.

Goalball Cases

The following are brief descriptions of each goalball program along with the informants who helped lead the development process. Goalball programs were assigned random letters (A, G, K, N, W, Z) plus the letter "U" for university, and representative informants were assigned the same letter plus another to tag their identity: student (S), student with a visual impairment (SV), campus recreation staff (R), faculty member (F), or community partner (CP). Because "capacity building is stimulated as a result of an organization's decision to respond to or act on some environmental force" (Millar & Doherty, 2016, p. 372), included in these descriptions are the specific stimuli that prompted program development from the outset. This is significant "as particular capacity needs, further strategies, and readiness to build are intimately linked to that stimulus" (Millar & Doherty, 2016, p. 372).

AU Goalball

AU is a large public research university on the West Coast of the United States. Two informants provided data about the goalball program. The first was a recent hire of the school's campus recreation department as the first Inclusive Recreation Coordinator (AR). The second was a Program Director with a local disability sport organization (ACP). In collaboration with the community organization, AU goalball was initiated by a graduate student who "wanted to start a class that studied the academic side of athletics and people with disabilities and also gave them an engaged athletic experience" (ACP). Hence, the program started as an academic course intentioned to integrate the sport experience with engaged scholarship so students with and without disabilities could think and play together in a nontraditional classroom. Though the graduate student is no longer instructing the class, it has been maintained by campus recreation.

GU Goalball

GU is a small public liberal arts college in the Northeast. Four informants provided data about the development of the school's goalball program. One was a faculty member in Adapted Physical Education (GF); the other three were students who held leadership positions on the team at one point during the development process (GS; GSV1; GSV2). GSV1 transferred to GU his sophomore year and "tried meeting with the club sport advisor…[but] he wasn't interested in that time…he didn't think that there'd be enough support in the college" (GSV1). But then, his senior year, GF emailed GSV1 about a tournament another school was hosting. The student was able to quickly assemble a team, and, a year later, the team became a club sport through the existing infrastructure of campus recreation.

KU Goalball

KU is a large research public university in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Three informants provided data about the goalball program. The first was KSV who initiated the

process of starting a goalball club. He contributed his success to the help of the other two

informants: his high school goalball coach (KCP) and the assistant director of competitive sports

in campus recreation (KR). After organizing an intramural tournament to assess interest and

feasibility, KU goalball became a club sport the following semester.

NU Goalball

NU is a small public university in the Northeast. A faculty member in Adapted Physical

Activity (NF) and one of her graduate students (NS), who was also the current club president,

provided information about the school's goalball program. The team originated from the

popularity of a sports camp for the blind that led to the development of a high school team. Then,

when one of the original high school players attended NU, it "was a natural change for us to have

goalball into college" (NF). The team has now been a club sport within campus recreation for

about five years.

WU Goalball

WU is a small public college in the Northeast. A faculty member in the school's Physical

Education department (WF) was the sole informant about the goalball program.

> To start the team, essentially a student came to me; he has a visual impairment in fact,
>
> and said, I'm a national goalball player…I'm really interested in pursuing [goalball]. And
>
> so, I sat down and talked with him…and we sort of came up with the process of having to
>
> go through club sports. (WF)

Unfortunately, the club sport director at the time –

> was not interested in allowing him to pursue goalball as a club sport… maintaining
>
> student interest over time was a concern of his. He didn't believe it to be a real sport…so
>
> I pulled together some students with [the student's] help. I went to the chair of my

department, who agreed to fund the team…and we started from there. I developed a one-

credit course. (WF)

Hence, WU goalball is offered as an academic course, though unlike AU, this was not the

original intention. WU is a "deviating case" because still today campus recreation has not taken

initiative to (re)assess its capacity to provide goalball.

ZU Goalball

ZU is a public research university on the west coast of the United States. The sole

informant of its goalball program was the Inclusive Recreation Coordinator (ZR). When ZR

took this position at ZU…goalball and wheelchair basketball I knew were the two most

popular sports. So those were the two things I wanted to make sure we got incorporated

fairly quickly…so we started the program right away with a partnership (ZR)

with a local disability sport organization. Currently, the goalball program remains housed as an

inclusive recreation opportunity (not a club or intramural sport) within campus recreation.

Capacity for Collegiate Goalball

This section describes the critical attributes, or subthemes, related to program

development that emerged from analysis within each capacity dimension. Since financial

capacity was not a topic discussed extensively by participants, instead of counting it as its own

theme, data are intertwined within the narratives of the other four dimensions. They are

expounded upon as follows: human resources, network, infrastructure, planning and

development.

Human Resources

Human resources capacity is "the ability to deploy human capital (i.e., paid staff and

volunteers) within the organization, and the competencies, knowledge, attitudes, motivation and

behaviors of these people" (Hall et al., 2003, p. 5). Human resources was an indispensable

dimension in the process of program development for goalball: "A lot of it came from people and

then having people there to help me create the team" (KSV). Research in the community sport

context has consistently identified it as a precondition for developing all other capacities (Hall et

al., 2003; Millar & Doherty, 2016; Wicker & Breuer, 2014). Program leaders spoke from

experience about their own human resources capacity and also in a manner of imparting advice

to future programs. As evidenced by ACP's all-encompassing demand – "There just has to be

somebody who's got the enthusiasm, energy, support, and will be there for a while, who can take

it on; because if you don't have that, it doesn't matter what resources you have"– three critical

elements emerged: need for a champion, need for support, and need for succession. These are the

attributes and conditions of human resources capacity that campus recreation should consider for

successful development of goalball programs.

Need a Champion. "You got to have the champion" (ACP) – a leader who is persistent,

passionate, and knowledgeable about goalball. Program informants spoke with urgency about the

importance of identifying the "core person that can be the go-to person to keep plugging" to

develop goalball, conceding that often "it's a hard thing" (NF). The right person(s) needs to be

willing to go the distance, "willing to go to the mat all the time, who's going to show up every

week and set up the program" (ACP).

In order to be persistent, champions require passion: "If you lack the passion, you're

never gonna [make it]. You gotta have a passionate person; or else…they're not going to give the

time to recruit, fight for the space, do those things" (ZR). This parallels with what Doherty et al.

(2014) define as enthusiasm – "individuals' passion, dedication, and energy for the club, the

sport and the work to be done" (p. 131S). Talking about the champion leadership of GS, GF said,

"I just love his motivation, his intrinsic drive…he's lit that spark in other people." Passion is an invaluable trait, and thus needs to be cultivated, because it can be transmitted to others, helping gain and mobilize more human resources capacity (Wicker & Breuer, 2014).

Finally, the champion should possess "[h]uman capital, or the valued skills, knowledge, and experience pertaining to…the sport or particular tasks that need to be accomplished" (Doherty et al., 2014, p. 131S). "You definitely want somebody who has some knowledge of the sport…some experience with the sport is helpful because then you can impart your knowledge on others and then kind of grow your collective knowledge together" (GSV1). This human capital is important whether it comes from visually impaired students with playing experience (GSV1, GSV2, KSV), or campus recreation staff with playing experience: "I was on the US team for goalball" (ZU), or even supporting faculty advisors: "My career's been with kids with visual impairments" (GF).

Need for Support. As made evident by the goalball case descriptions, many programs were student-initiated. In response to bottom-up program development, these participants called for top-down support: "The people who have power make a difference…Although the process is on the students to initiate and handle, if you don't have support from the higher-ups, then you're just going to fail with goalball" (KSV). The "higher-ups" ranged from campus recreation staff (e.g., KR), faculty advisors (e.g., GF and NF), and even university 'outsiders' (e.g., KCP), all of whom shared the qualities of a champion – passion, dedication, and experiential knowledge. As stated by Gillies and Dupuis (2013), to develop a campus community of inclusion, there needs to exist "strong working relationships between those who hold power to create, regulate and enforce policies, and those most affected by them" (p. 200). There needs to be a balance in responsibility, dependable relationships that are "fair in terms of give-and-take" (Doherty et al.,

2014, p. 137S). A collaborative approach can provide and direct students with disabilities to

necessary resources and supports for program development while also taking their needs into

account for a more holistic analysis of organization effectiveness (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Millar

& Doherty, 2016; Pope et al., 2014; Yoh et al., 2008). If campus recreation has or builds the

human resources capacity to do this, their support won't go unrecognized. For instance, KSV

longs to prove that investing in goalball is worthwhile:

> I want to make sure that goalball is like a role model club for campus rec because of all
>
> the support they've given us. So, you know, it's like you've given us so much; now I
>
> want to make sure goalball gives back to you.

Need for Succession. Champions are critical for both developing and sustaining goalball

programs. However, if program development and maintenance is the responsibility of students,

it's inevitable they will leave, causing the program to lose "a little bit of momentum" (AR). ACP

stated, "if you keep having turnover in your leadership, if it's a student-run program, it's very

hard to keep it at a sustainable level." Previous studies demonstrate that turnover impacts the

effectiveness of a program, particularly when knowledge doesn't get passed along to incoming

human resources (i.e., students; Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003). Sustainability may

require finding the right champion over and over again, but succession, the smooth transition of

human capital, is critical to prevent the program from having to start over (Doherty et al., 2014).

The commitment of campus recreation can help with this continuity. ACP advised, "If you do

have someone on campus who's responsible for inclusive sports then that can help" (ACP). Only

AU and ZU had full-time campus recreation staff dedicated to supporting and advancing sport

and recreation opportunities for students with disabilities. Although faculty advisors are also

long-term positions on campus, Inclusive Recreation Coordinators don't have to worry about

"double-dipping with their other roles" (AR). They also have direct access to other campus recreation resources and systems. Capacity building is often a resource-intensive process (Millar & Doherty, 2020), but as NIRSA emphasizes, all campus recreation professionals have a responsibility to develop the competencies needed to apply EDI concepts. Those that don't reinforce the idea that it's someone else's responsibility (Motch-Ellis, 2019). In other words, inaction reinforces indifference. Devoting resources, which includes staff, must be part of the fabric of conducting programming to achieve inclusion and accessibility (Young et al., 2016).

Network

Network capacity is the ability to draw on relationships with external stakeholders (Hall et al., 2003). In the case of goalball, the partnerships formed became an extension of the support needed in human resources capacity. The essential network for goalball development included: personal connections, community partnerships (nonprofit organizations and local schools for the blind), and university-based partnerships (student organizations, disability support services, and academic departments). Campus recreation should consider the social capital and value-added to create and maintain each of these relationships dependent on their individual contexts (Millar & Doherty 2016).

Personal Connections. Establishing personal connections was important for building goalball programs. AR mentioned its importance for generating awareness: "It's been a lot of one-on-one meetings…[with] a bunch of other campus groups to kind of just let them know that I'm on campus; I'm an ally and that we have these programs." Personal connections were also necessary for recruiting participants: "We don't have too many people that are just out of the blue like, whoohoo, let me try this sport. So, most of them have some connection to somebody else that's either played or they know of somebody who played" (ZR). Matching qualities of the

needed champion, informants often had to be persistent and scrappy in establishing personal

connections: "For this kind of program, you have to do outreach all the time. And if you get a

hint of a possible participant, you have to go after it" (ACP). Finally, engaging the right people

helps gain access to desired resources. GSV1 said, "definitely knowing how your university is

organized so you know who to talk to…like [GF] is a big advocate for this field, so she knows

who to talk to." GF confirmed her role in making personal connections, "For some reason they

have to go through the athletic director, and I'm friends with him, so he's helped us a lot with

getting uniforms and shirts and things." These personal connections demonstrate how the

mobilization of social capital is important for program development (Doherty et al., 2014).

Community Partnerships. Networking with community organizations was important for

gaining specialized knowledge and access to adapted equipment for program development. AU,

GU, and ZU benefited from partnerships with disability sport organizations in their respective

communities. The organizations provided "knowledge of the sport" (AR) as well as knowledge

of disability to "train our staff" (ZR). NIRSA, in fact, recognizes that developing staff training to

meet the diverse needs of students is one aspect of inclusion (Motch-Ellis, 2019). Community

partnerships with disability sport organizations also provided access to "equipment for balls and

pads and whatnot" (GSV1). ZR emphasized the "give-and-take" of resources (Doherty et al.,

2014, p. 137S) between the university and organization, for example, the exchange of equipment

for use of facility space. As encouraged by Gillies and Dupuis (2013), the sharing of resources

and engagement of the wider community can enhance services and provide programs that may

otherwise not be available. Also, though not a sport organization, the "Lion's Club

philanthropy…[whose] focus is literally on people with sensory impairments" (GF) can be

another beneficial community partnership, particularly to help with strengthening financial

capacity by providing alternate revenue sources (Doherty et al., 2014).

Schools for the blind were another community partnership discussed as a source of

expertise and resources. Though not in current collaboration, ACP and NF noted the potential

value. Both participants talked about how the partnership could help "channel [players] into the

school" (ACP). KU goalball, in particular, relied heavily on this source of collaboration to start

its program – for facility space, equipment, and even coaching. Overtime, according to KSV, the

relationship evolved, particularly in reference to space. Once held at the high school's gym,

practices are now taking place in campus recreation facilities, which is an essential move toward

equal opportunity and inclusion (Fines & Block, 2020; Young et al., 2016). This demonstrates

that organizational capacity is context dependent and can be shifted (Millar & Doherty, 2016).

External relationships are often cultivated when they have to be, when in search of specific

supports at a specific time in the process of program development (Wicker & Breuer, 2014).

University Partnerships. Establishing relationships with various university-based

entities was another key element for program development. AU was the only program that

highlighted its success with other student groups on campus. "We have a campus organization

called Students for Adaptative Sports, SAS as they call themselves…they are kind of helping us

maintain the program while we continue to search for those student athletes" (AR). "The other

place we've had a lot of support is from the Delta Gamma Sorority. They provide volunteers"

(ACP). Beyond campus recreation staff, other campus organizations can provide essential human

capital to help sustain goalball programming.

Connections with certain academic fields and departments were also helpful for access to

various resources – including people and equipment. For example, GU's strong Adapted

Physical Education program "had all the goalball equipment…so we didn't have to buy our own" (GS) and "help[ed] us lure people in" (GSV2). NF acknowledged that their Adapted Physical Activity program advantaged longevity: "I really think that [it's] the reason we can plug along that [other teams] can't." Even though KU does not have disability-specific majors, KSV recognized the importance of, "getting other university departments to take note of goalball and see how it can be beneficial to their students." He mentioned the fields of education, occupational therapy, and nursing throughout the interview. As many informants alluded to during their interviews, the opportunity of goalball can provide a mutual benefit to these departments (Doherty et al., 2014) by supporting the academic culture and "start[ing] student conversation" (WF) about disability and EDI concepts.

Most goalball programs made the obvious decision to establish a connection with their office of disability support services, a task specifically recommended by Young et al. (2016). "I would say every school probably has a disabled students' program…so that's your first base of support for getting started" (ACP). This is especially valid since, "most students with visual impairments or blind are registered at the disability resource center because they need some kind of adaptive format…[whereas] other physical disability populations might not even be signed up" (ZR). In other words, the partnership should provide direct access to potential players. Unfortunately, working with disability support services was less than satisfactory for many programs. KCP explained that "Disability services fall short because they don't have the resources." KR elaborated that it's easy to "get frustrated with DSS because they're super short staffed. Their mandate is always getting bigger…they're not great partners just because they're not programmers. That's not what they do. They're support specialists." This upholds NIRSA's statement that relying on disability support offices is insufficient. Every campus recreation

professional must personally move through levels of action, from awareness to advocacy (Motch-Ellis, 2019). At the same time, campuses that do not provide equitable accommodation and opportunities, including athletic opportunities, for students with disabilities are at risk of legal and legislative challenges from advocates for those students.

Overall, goalball programs were strengthened by the connections they fostered outside of their immediate community, gaining from a shared wealth of abilities and resources (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). As indicated by Wicker and Breuer (2014), disability sport clubs often have significantly more relationships with other organizations than their traditional counterparts. They form partnerships with the intention to exchange resources, knowledge, or personnel, and thus, increase their organizational capacity through collaboration with a strategic network of support. Likewise, to fulfill their missions of inclusion, campus recreation will need to do the same.

Infrastructure

Infrastructure and process capacity refers to aspects pertaining to internal structure and daily operations (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003). As shown in the case descriptions, all goalball programs had an association with campus recreation at one point in development. All but one (WU) still do. Yet, programs were structured in three different ways: as a club sport, academic course, or an open recreation opportunity. This is important because in assessing its capacity to provide goalball, campus recreation may need to consider varying modes of delivery that are distinct from typical operations (Millar & Doherty, 2016). Literally, as emphasized by ZR, the "Dear Colleague Letter states that hey, you're supposed to give that equal opportunity. Well how is that an equal opportunity if we're not offering it in any way, shape or form?" (OCR, 2013).

Club Sport. Three goalball programs were offered as club sports, each initiated by students with visual impairments – GU, KU, NU. "A cornerstone of the sport club program is, it's student run; they're student leaders" (KR). While this empowers students to develop programs important to them (Yoh et al., 2008), it can place undue burden on students with disabilities who already have to champion their own academic welfare (Evans et al., 2017) and contend with an inaccessible and marginalized culture that often questions their ability to participate in sport and recreation (Devine, 2016; Van Rheenen, 2016). In actuality, as made evident by both human resources and network capacities, the support of campus recreation and external stakeholders is critical: "There's a system in these club sports and everyone needs to have buy-in" (KCP). Whereas members of KU campus recreation grew "excited…to offer something for everyone" (KR), WU "couldn't get on board with the idea of students actually wanting to participate in this kind of sport [the director] had never heard of" (WF). Program effectiveness will rely on an interdependence between students and campus recreation (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013).

If the champions and support are in place, however, there is "already a path to take because of club sports" (KCP). There is already an element of formalization to the process of program development (Doherty et al., 2014). Club sports have a formalized governance structure and constitution with clearly defined roles. KSV described the leadership responsibilities of the student president, vice president, secretary, and treasurer, while KR and NF talked about the advisory council and faculty advisor roles that support student leadership. There are also written policies and procedures that are both essential and extensive: "The policies are really geared towards guidance on how to do certain things, like how to submit a travel request, how to book hotels, how to go by airfare…the handbook is just how to get stuff done" (KSV).

However, sometimes to "jump through all these hoops to be a club sport" (GF) becomes a tedious barrier for building goalball programs. One rule in particular, the "10 player minimum" (KSV), loomed wearily over several participants, who continuously struggled to recruit and build commitment. But as WF pointed out, "This is also the problem with the whole club sport rule of you need at least 10 people, right? Because clearly for a goalball team, you need fewer than that" since goalball is played 3v3. KR emphasized flexibility in order to achieve equity in regard to this one rule: "I think we need to prop up these programs, so there is something for everyone." He encouraged other campus recreation professionals to "think past the rigid requirements to see what are the benefits behind it" (KR). Equity, defined by NIRSA as understanding differing needs and "providing everyone what they need to be successful" (Motch-Ellis, 2019, p. 2), is a core principle to ensure equal opportunity. Changing the status quo will require reaching beyond compliance, so students with disabilities can meaningfully participate in all aspects of university life (Devine, 2016; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Young et al., 2016).

Academic Course. Two programs offered goalball as courses for credit. WU's decision was not a choice. After meeting resistance in becoming a club sport, the structure of an academic course provided a source of funding and access to facility space and equipment. In fact, "without the teaching component" (WF) the lack of resources would have hindered program development. Though the one-credit course provided experiential learning for students, WF still believed goalball should become a club sport and "have the status as everything else." To achieve inclusion, campus recreation should provide the same opportunities to students with disabilities (OCR, 2013; Promis et al., 2001; Young et al., 2016), but it may be that creating an academic course can be a steppingstone in getting there.

In contrast, AU was intentional about offering goalball as an academic course: "The academic part [was important]…it wasn't just about athletics, but it was about how they intersect" (ACP). Formalization under academics broadened goalball's potential by both the deliberate integration of scholarship and engagement of students without disabilities (MacDonald et al., 2020; Van Rheenen, 2016): "You're not just teaching them about the sport of goalball, but you're also bringing in guest lecturers. You're spreading awareness of disabled rights…It's beyond just playing. It's about the perspective you gain in seeing sports through another lens" (AR). However, AR recognized that delivery still needs to be strategic to avoid negative unintended consequences (Millar & Doherty, 2016), "making sure to keep it under the framework of this is a competitive sport that people play on a high level. This isn't something to take super lightly as a charitable giving experience." In order to provide a structurally and socially accessible goalball program, campus recreation will need to be conscious and intentional in their efforts so to mitigate polarized assumptions that undermine respect for all abilities. (Devine, 2016; Motch-Ellis, 2019; Van Rheenen, 2016). As long as program leaders remain sensitive to the outcomes, goalball as an academic course is a "sustainable model, where people of all abilities can play in the hopes that build it and they will come…because if you don't even have able-bodied people playing in the program, [VI students] don't even have the opportunity to play" (AR). Only thinking about inclusion in terms of mainstreaming students with disabilities into traditional programming can perpetuate a marginalized status (Devine, 2016; Wicker & Breuer, 2014). Building capacity will require campus recreation to imagine a spectrum of opportunities, which may include creating new and different programs that are inclusive of students with and without disabilities (OCR, 2013).

Open Recreation. ZU goalball is offered as an open recreation opportunity to avoid "the different hoops [of being under club sports or intramurals] because there's just a smaller number of [folks with VI] in general" (ZR). The "hoops" avoided by ZU goalball were the same challenges faced by club sports – the turnover of student leadership and the minimal number roster requirement. In benefit of the former, the program is maintained by campus recreation staff. In regard to the latter, offering ZU goalball as 'open' and 'inclusive' increases participation by inviting the wider community. This includes high school students who may then "choose to come to [ZU] because of the goalball program" (ZR). A commitment to providing goalball will ensure students with disabilities have a more seamless transition into campus life (Evans et al., 2017; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013) because they will "feel welcomed and inspired to participate in a campus recreational sports program from the moment they walk through the door" (Young et al., 2016, p. 25). In fact, beyond goalball, ZU shows commitment to inclusion by designating an "overall inclusive budget" (ZR) specific to disability sport and recreation. It offers financial support for students with disabilities to participate in community programs "because if we can't offer it here as a competitive opportunity, we want to make sure that there's an opportunity for them to compete" (ZR). As stated by Young et al. (2016), "Devoting resources needed to achieve accessibility and inclusion must be part of the fabric of conducting the overall program including both staff and financial resources" (p. 32). Otherwise, students with disabilities are likely to directly or indirectly receive the message that certain activities are off limits to them because of polarized assumptions about their ability to participate (Devine, 2016). In the case of ZU, however, because campus recreation offered choice and opportunity, VI students were "confident enough in the rec-center that we would be able to make accommodations…for them to be successful" (ZR). To meet the diverse needs of students, campus recreation "should embed

the making of accommodations as part of the culture of doing business…[and] should be

founded on the culture of all are welcome and will be included" (Devine, 2016, p. 188). In fact,

no matter the type of infrastructure, goalball programs had greater success if there was an

existing (or emerging) culture of inclusion embodied by campus recreation (Gillies & Dupuis,

2013; Motch-Ellis, 2019).

Intercollegiate Competition. Although all goalball programs found a home within an

existing university infrastructure, conversations unveiled the desperate need for national

governance to help with operational components, such as developing more teams and

opportunities for competition. With a vision to "see more divisions" (ZR), "college goalball

needs to be more organized" (KCP). Currently, "there's not accountability in college goalball.

There's all these moving factors, and you know, no one's brought 'em together" (KSV). Right

now, individual programs exchange responsibility for organizing tournaments, but it becomes an

added layer of stress in the fight to keep their own teams afloat. Similar to research that shows

the importance of formal board structures and constitutions in community sport clubs (Doherty et

al., 2014), a governing body is needed to grow collegiate goalball, whether as suggested by ACP

and KSV that is the United States Association of Blind Athletes (USABA) or as recommended

by GSV2 and ZR that is NIRSA. In actuality, the development of collegiate goalball programs

has created a new stimulus for capacity building at the national level (Millar & Doherty, 2016).

Planning & Development

Planning and development capacity is described by Hall et al. (2003) as the development

and deployment of strategic and program plans. Doherty et al. (2014) identified strategic

planning, creativity, and actual plan implementation as critical elements for community sport

club performance. These three elements applied for campus recreation as well, specifically in

considering how and why goalball should be provided as an inclusive opportunity.

      Strategic Planning. Strategic planning refers to the need for a vision and direction for

the long-term future with consideration of how goals can be achieved (Doherty et al., 2014).

Though it was not an objective of interviews to discuss the specific strategic plans of campus

recreation, under the umbrella of NIRSA, its members should be working toward the value of

EDI (Motch-Ellis, 2019). AR, KR, and ZR spoke specifically to the inclusive mission of their

individual departments, and, with the exception of WU, those represented in this study are

demonstrating the value to some extent by providing goalball programs. Yet, a question did

emerge in conversation related to strategic planning. Programmatically, does it make sense to

provide goalball? Informants shared pros and cons concerning program development, which are

factors campus recreation will need to consider in planning and design of effective programming.

      Goalball is "an accessible sport" (GS) in regard to both implementation and participation.

With minimal equipment (compared to wheelchair basketball or power soccer; ACP), "It's not an

expensive sport. The ball's the most expensive thing; but string and gym floor tape, it's not

horrible" (ZR). The biggest barrier was often viewed as the playing field – the setup time of the

court and the need for it to be a quiet space. In regard to participation, ACP stated: "As far as we

could tell, the largest community of students with [physical] disabilities on campus were people

who are blind or visually impaired." Even if "the numbers just aren't that high" (ZR), "there's an

equalizing factor of the blindfolds," so students "with visual impairments and without visual

impairments can play together on an equal basis" (GF). In other words, the game is not exclusive

to students with visual impairments. Several informants did mention that "knowing that

everybody wears goggles is kind of intimidating" (NS) for students without VI: "I don't think

people are comfortable with losing a sense that they rely on so heavily" (GS). But they discussed the ways in which to build confidence and comfort with the game, like "hyping up the game but diving in slowly with the skills" (KCP) or playing first "without eyeshades, so they can get a feel for what the sport's rhythms and sounds are like" (ACP). Overall, goalball is reasonable to implement; it is a naturally inclusive opportunity that can "break down social barriers" (KSV); but it should be provided under the direction of trained and knowledgeable campus recreation staff and leadership to make the experience enjoyable for everyone (Daniels et al., 2017; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; Wicker & Breuer, 2014).

Creative Planning. Goalball is an unknown sport; "it's not a household name in the sports world" (GSV2). Compared to wheelchair basketball or sitting volleyball, it doesn't have a traditional sport counterpart, which makes it challenging to promote: "I've never found a successful way to really get it across to people because it's not an adapted sport. It's a sport in its own right" (ACP). The explanations provided by informants were long and variable: "goalball is really hard to explain…Like I never gave the same speech twice" (GSV2). But a common approach was to "find ways to relate it to other sports" (GS). Across interviews, informants suggested a combination of two or more of the following: soccer, handball, reverse dodgeball, bowling, ping pong, and/or volleyball. The conclusion being, "It's not really a sport that's derived from anything else. It's completely unique, so it takes a little bit of understanding" (AR). "You have to make an effort…to show people what it is" (GF).

Therefore, the development and promotion of goalball will require creative strategies and persistent awareness measures, wherein campus recreation is open to new ideas and actively thinks outside the box (Doherty et al., 2014). Instead of verbally explaining goalball, which can be confusing, it's often better to provide a visual (at least to sighted individuals). To bypass a

long-winded explanation, for example, ACP said he keeps "a couple of short videos on my

phone" so it makes more sense. Beyond that, it is better to experience it. For example, ACP

talked about the success of increasing visibility through a goalball showcase:

> We had Paralympic athletes come, bring their medals, give speeches, did a demo. We
>
> allowed the community or anyone to come and play and just try out goalball for the first
>
> time. So that was a really positive experience and helped kind of increase notoriety
>
> around campus and spread the word.

Similarly, KU hosted an intramural tournament before becoming a club sport. The event was

used as an assessment tool to "see whether the campus would show interest" (KSV), and though

the turnout was minimal, the event increased buy-in and support from campus recreation staff.

KR and ZR also talked about how goalball was integrated into other promotional programming,

like when welcoming students back on campus at the start of a semester.

Traditional ways of recruiting students (e.g., digital and social media, flyering, even

activity fairs) will also take creative, out of the box thinking (Doherty et al., 2014; Gillies &

Dupuis, 2013). KR said: "we really market for the whole sport club program and not necessarily

goalball in particular." According to Daniels et al. (2017), this broad approach is common within

campus recreation; however, a one-size-fits-all approach will not be enough for adapted sports

program development (Young et al., 2016). Accessibility includes access to information (Fujii &

Woodard, 2006; Yoh et al., 2008), so marketing strategies that specifically target students with

disabilities will be necessary for effective capacity building (Daniels et al., 2017; Gillies &

Dupuis, 2013). For now, it seems that campus recreation staff rely on "word of mouth" (ZR) and

"a lot of one-on-one meetings" (AR) with various individuals and groups around campus.

Awareness and advocacy are essential elements of capacity building toward inclusion (Motch-

Ellis, 2019), and because goalball is untraditional, campus recreation will have to demonstrate a

commitment and persistence to each in order to develop accessible programming.

        Plan Implementation. Missions of EDI are hollow statements without actual plan

implementation (Doherty et al., 2016; Motch-Ellis, 2019). Opportunities for students with

disabilities to participate in campus recreation are limited (Young et al., 2016). For goalball,

"You have the Paralympics, then you have these adult teams, and then you have some school for

the blind teams, but there's nothing like in between" (GF). The gap in opportunity needs to be

corrected, in part, because campus recreation is beneficial for student involvement (Forrester,

2014, 2015). Unfortunately, campus recreation staff remain unprepared to accommodate students

with disabilities (Daniels et al., 2017; Motch-Ellis, 2019) or rationalize, as ACP suggested, that

there is not enough demand (Lakowski, 2013; Promis et al., 2001): "What they [administration]

always come back with is well, nobody's asking for it, you know, nobody wants it." The issue

with this logic is that students with physical disabilities, specifically visual impairments, is a low

percentage on college campuses. Also, it is likely that these students have been "excluded from

after-school sports" (GF) before entering higher education. As one player told ACP, "When I

was in high school, we would play this game to see how many marshmallows we could stuff in

our mouths because we were just off on the sides. We were holding the coats, you know?"

(ACP). Hence, "the people you're envisioning as athletes may not be athletes yet" (ACP), and

collegiate goalball may be their first opportunity to discover and unleash their athleticism.

"Interest and ability rarely develop in a vacuum; they evolve as a function of opportunity and

experience" (*Cohen v. Brown University*, 1996, Section F). Therefore, to meet institutional

obligations under ADA, campus recreation leaders will need to advocate for the application of

EDI concepts, which should include implementing programs designed with students with disabilities in mind.

Further, relying on students (particularly students with visual impairments) to start programs becomes a barrier to their full and equitable participation in campus life. This paradox was specifically brought to light with discussion about the infrastructure of club sports. KR said, "Universities don't start clubs. It's individuals that start clubs…There has to be students on a university campus that say, I want to start a goalball club. It happens that way, not the other way around." But does it have to be that way? As evidenced by prior research and discussion, students with disabilities have unique needs that will not allow for the provision of standard programming, support, and strategies (Evans et al., 2017; Fines & Block, 2020; Wicker & Breuer, 2014). Instead, campus recreation will be required to reach beyond compliance and engage in capacity building efforts in order to fulfill its mission of providing equal access and enjoyment of its programs. There needs to be movement from strategic planning to plan implementation, from valuing inclusion to actual systemic change (Motch-Ellis, 2019; Young et al., 2016): "If we're preaching that we're making this whole push towards inclusion, I think it's really important that we show up and prove that we're doing it" (AR).

Impact of Plan Implementation. As expressed by informants and prior research, the implementation of goalball positively impacts students, campus recreation, and the university as a whole. Participation in goalball allows students with visual impairments to alter their self-perceptions of physical and social competencies (Blinde & McClung, 1997; Blinde & Taub, 1999; MacDonald et al., 2020; Wessel et al., 2011). "Sport can show them what they are capable of" (KCP) and "reinforce the value [they] feel in themselves" (ACP). They become "empowered by being able to think of themselves as athletes" (ACP). Sport also provides the opportunity to

socialize with others; goalball is "a great place to come and make relationships, friendships, and just have a fun place to go" (KSV).

Participation in goalball also positively impacts students without disabilities, mainly by breaking down stigma through experiential learning (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013; MacDonald et al., 2020; Van Rheenen, 2016). GSV1 spoke to this: "It gives them the ability to go outside of their comfort zone…build empathy and understanding...There's such a big stigma…people think the threshold of achievement for people with visual impairments in sports is a lot lower than what it really is." Other informants agreed that goalball highlights ability rather than 'otherness' and can be just as fun for students without disabilities: "They can be supportive of their friends…they found they can be competitive, still show their athleticism but in a totally different way" (ZR).

Finally, goalball proves that campus recreation and universities have the potential to serve the increasing numbers of students with disabilities on college campuses (Marshak et al., 2010; Motch-Ellis, 2019), that "they really do fulfill their mission and values; like they're really putting their money where their mouth is" (KR). AR, KCP, and ZR went more in-depth about why this is important. Goalball "provides visibility of the university, of the accessibility and resources they have" (KCP). Showing that campus recreation does "truly welcome, support, develop, and serve everyone" (Motch-Ellis, 2019, p. 14) can embolden younger, high school students to pursue college degrees and rest assured that their experience will be well-rounded. But the benefits won't come without strategic and creative planning alongside deliberate plan implementation that ensures "a sustainable model for those future generations to come" (AR).

Concluding Remarks

Despite organizational focus on inclusion and diversity, campus recreation departments continue to fall short of providing physically and culturally accessible environments that allow

students with disabilities to meaningfully integrate into the everyday college experience. The

purpose of this paper was to understand the organizational capacity (needs and assets) of campus

recreation departments to meet the needs of this growing subpopulation on college campuses. To

do so, the cases of six collegiate goalball programs were examined in relation to capacity

dimensions found relevant in sport-specific organizational contexts (e.g., Doherty et al., 2014).

The study makes an important contribution by uncovering several key elements within human

resources, network, infrastructure, and planning and development capacities that campus

recreation should draw on to achieve their responsibility to provide full and equal participation

for all students (Motch-Ellis, 2019). Regarding the first two dimensions, campus recreation

should not rely solely on students with disabilities to initiate program development. Instead, they

should take collective action by identifying impassioned leaders who will be steadfast in

enacting change as well as university and community partners who will support such change by

providing resources and expertise. Regarding the latter two dimensions, campus recreation will

have to be creative and reach beyond compliance to meet the interests and abilities of students

with disabilities. This may mean that program development occurs outside of typical practices

and procedures. As with goalball, different modes of delivery may be valuable to increase

student interest and awareness about disability and disability sport, though all should be inclusive

opportunities for student with and without disabilities. Overall, campus recreation should

respond to their mission of inclusion, but it may not be with goalball. Other sports (e.g., sitting

volleyball) may be more appropriate depending on a university's broader context. Capacity

building is a model that practitioners may consider using to determine their readiness to develop

other adapted sports programming, and then to continuously and systematically assess whether

capacity was built and can be maintained (Millar & Doherty, 2016; 2020). Further, the work

cannot start and stop with *one* new program. The time has come for students with disabilities to have equal opportunity in all aspects of college life, which means campus recreation will have to engage in ongoing capacity building efforts to bring students with disabilities from the sidelines to the playing field.

References

Alves, I. S., Kalva-Filho, C. A., Aquino, R., Travitzki, L., Tosim, A., Papoti, M., & Morato, M.
P. (2018). Relationships between aerobic and anaerobic parameters with game technical
performance in elite goalball athletes. *Frontiers in Physiology*.
https://doi.org/10.3389/fphys.2018.01636

Blinde, E. M., & McClung, L. R. (1997). Enhancing the physical and social self through
recreational activity: Accounts of individuals with physical disabilities. *Adapted Physical
Activity Quarterly*, *14*(4), 327–344.

Blinde, E. M., & Taub, D. E. (1999). Personal empowerment through sport and physical fitness
activity: Perspectives from male college students with physical and sensory disabilities.
Journal of Sport Behavior, *22*(2), 181.

Block, M. E. (2019). Editor's corner: University adaptive sports programs growing. *Palaestra,
33*(1), 4.

Braun, V., Clarke, V., & Weate, P. (2016). Using thematic analysis in sport and exercise
research. In B. Smith & A.C. Sparkes (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of qualitative research
in sport and exercise* (pp. 191–205). Routledge.

Cohen v. Brown University, 101 F.3d 155 (1996).

da Cunha Furtado, O. L. P., Morato, M. P., Potenza, M., & Gutierrez, G. L. (2016). Health-
related physical fitness among young goalball players with visual impairments. *Journal
of Visual Impairment & Blindness*, *110*(4), 257-267.

Daniels, E., Cottingham, M., Walsh, D. W., & Pearson, D. (2017). An evaluation of university
recreation center outdoor programs for people with disabilities: Perspectives from

professionals. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership*, *9*(1), 83–97.

https://doi.org/10.18666/JOREL-2017-V9-I1-7451

Denzin, N. (2012). Triangulation 2.0. *Journal of Mixed Methods Research, 6*(2), 80–88.

Devine, M. A. (2016). Leisure-time physical activity: Experiences of college students with

disabilities. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, *33*(2), 176–194.

https://doi.org/10.1123/APAQ.2014-0241

Doherty, A., Misener, K., & Cuskelly, G. (2014). Toward a multidimensional framework of

capacity in community sport clubs. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *43*(2S),

124S-142S. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764013509892

Evans, N. J., Broido, E. M., Brown, K. R., & Wilke, A. K. (2017). *Disability in higher

education: A social justice approach*. Jossey-Bass, a Wiley Brand.

Fines, A., & Block, M. (2020). Building collegiate adapted sports: Goalball case study. *Sport,

Education and Society*. https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2020.1729113

Forrester, S. A. (2014). The benefits of campus recreation. *NIRSA: Leaders in Collegiate

Recreation*. Retrieved from: https://nirsa.net/nirsa/wp-

content/uploads/Benefits_Of_Campus_Recreation-Forrester_2014-Report.pdf

Forrester, S. (2015). Benefits of collegiate recreational sports participation: Results from the

2013 NASPA assessment and knowledge consortium study. *Recreational Sports Journal,

39*(1), 2–15.

Fujii, T., & Woodard, R. (2006). Accessibility in campus recreation programs. Palaestra, 22(3),

6–7.

Getzel, E. E. (2008). Addressing the persistence and retention of students with disabilities in

higher education: Incorporating key strategies and supports on campus. *Exceptionality*, *16*(4), 207–219. https://doi.org/10.1080/09362830802412216

Gillies, J., & Dupuis, S. L. (2013). A framework for creating a campus culture of inclusion: A participatory action research approach. *Annals of Leisure Research*, *16*(3), 193–211. https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2013.832646

Hague, N., Swain, S., & Madigan, D. (2020). The 'goalball family': A exploration of the socilal value of goalball amongst players and communities in the UK. *Goalball UK & York St John University*. Retrieved from: https://ray.yorksj.ac.uk/id/eprint/4694/1/Sport%20-%20Goalball%20Final%20MAIN%20Report.pdf

Hall, M., Andrukow, A., Barr, C., Brock, K., de Wit, M., Embuldeniya, D., Jolin, L., Lasby, D., Levesque, B., Malinsky, E., Stowe, S., & Vaillancourt, Y. (2003). The capacity to serve: A qualitative study of the challenges facing Canada's nonprofit and voluntary organizations. *Canadian Centre for Philanthropy*. http://sectorsource.ca/sites/default/files/resources/files/capacity_to_serve_english.pdf

Henchy, A. (2011). The Influence of Campus Recreation Beyond the Gym. *Recreational Sports Journal*, *35*(2), 174–181.

King, J.B., Mitchell, T., McIntosh, A., & Bell-Ellwanger, J. (2016). Advancing diversity and inclusion in higher education: Key data highlights focusing on race and ethnicity and promising practices. *Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development; Office of the Under Secretary; U.S. Department of Education*. Retrieved from: https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/research/pubs/advancing-diversity-inclusion.pdf

Lakowski, T. (2013). Q and A: Disability in sport dear colleague letter. *Active Policy Solutions*, Washington, D.C. http://www.activepolicysolutions.com/disability-qa/

Lundberg, N. R., Zabriskie, R. B., Smith, K. M., & Barney, K. W. (2008). Using wheelchair

sports to complement disability awareness curriculum among college students. *SCHOLE:*

A Journal of Leisure Studies and Recreation Education, 23(1), 61–74.

https://doi.org/10.1080/1937156X.2008.11949610

MacDonald, C., Bryan, R., Lieberman, L. J., & Foley, J. T. (2020). "You think differently after

playing this sport": Experiences of collegiate goalball players. *Recreational Sports*

Journal. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1558866120964812

Marshak, L., Wieren, T. V., Ferrell, D. R., Swiss, L., & Dugan, C. (2010). Exploring barriers to

college student use of disability services and accommodations. *Journal of Postsecondary*

Education and Disability, 22(3), 151-165.

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods*

sourcebook (4th ed.). Sage.

Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2016). Capacity building in nonprofit sport organizations:

Development of a process model. *Sport Management Review*, *19*(4), 365–377.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2016.01.002

Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2018). "You can't just start and expect it to work": An investigation of

strategic capacity building in community sport organizations. *Journal of Sport*

Management, 32, 348–361. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2017-0233

Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2020). Readiness to build capacity in community sport organizations.

Managing Sport and Leisure. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2020.1763830

Monezi, L. A., Magalhães, T. P., Morato, M. P., Mercadante, L. A., Furtado, O. L. P. D. C., &

Misuta, M. S. (2019). Time-motion analysis of goalball players in attacks: Differences of

the player positions and the throwing techniques. *Sports Biomechanics*, *18*(5), 470-481.

https://doi-org.proxy01.its.virginia.edu/10.1080/14763141.2018.1433871

Morgan, D. L. (2014). Pragmatism as a paradigm for social research. *Qualitative Inquiry, 20*(8),

1045–1053.

Motch-Ellis, W. B. (2019). Equity, diversity, & inclusion: A resource guide for leaders in

collegiate recreation. *NIRSA*. Retrieved from:

https://nirsa.net/nirsa/wp-content/uploads/nirsa-equity-diversity-inclusion-resource-

guide-for-campus-recreation.pdf

NCES. (2017). *Digest of education statistics: 2017 – Chapter 3: Postsecondary education*.

National Center of Education Statistics. Retrieved from:

https://nces.ed.gov/programs/digest/d17/ch_3.asp

NCHPAD. (n.d.). *The pathway to inclusion: From principle to profit*. NCHPAD. Retrieved

September 1, 2020 from https://www.nchpad.org/602/2551/2008-12-Iss

Office for Civil Rights (OCR), United States Department of Education. (2013, Jan. 25). Dear

colleague letter, January 25, 2013. Retrieved from

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-201301-504.pdf

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and

practice* (4th ed). SAGE.

Petrigna, L., Giustino, V., Zangla, D., Aurea, S., Palma, R., Palma, A., & Battaglia, G. (2020).

Physical fitness assessment in goalball: A scoping review of the literature. *Heliyon*, *6*(7),

e04407. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2020.e04407

Pope, R. L., Reynolds, A. L., & Mueller, J. A., (2014). *Creating Multicultural Change on*

Campus. John Wiley & Sons.

Promis, D., Erevelles, N., & Matthews, J. (2001). Reconceptualizing inclusion: The politics of

university sports and recreation programs for students with mobility impairments.

Sociology of Sport Journal, *18*(1), 37–50.

Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage

handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 443–466). Sage.

Taylor, M., Turk, J. M., Chessman, H. M., & Espinosa, L. L. (2020). Race and ethnicity in

higher education: 2020 supplement. *American Council on Education*. Retrieved from:

http://1xfsu31b52d33idlp13twtos-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-

content/uploads/2020/11/REHE-2020-final.pdf

USABA. (n.d.). Goalball. *United States Association of Blind Athletes*. Retrieved from:

https://www.usaba.org/sports/goalball/

Van Rheenen, D. (2016). The blind leading the blind: Goalball as engaged scholarship. *Journal

of Postsecondary Education and Disability, 29*(1), 25–34.

Wessel, R. D., Wentz, J., & Markle, L. L. (2011). Power Soccer: Experiences of Students Using

Power Wheelchairs in a Collegiate Athletic Club. *Journal of Postsecondary Education

and Disability*, *24*(2), 147–159.

Wicker, P., & Breuer, C. (2014). Exploring the organizational capacity and organizational

problems of disability sport clubs in Germany using matched pairs analysis. *Sport

Management Review*, *17*(1), 23–34. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2013.03.005

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. (6th ed.). Sage.

Yoh, T., Mohr, M., & Gordon, B. (2008). Assessing satisfaction with campus recreation facilities

among college students with physical disabilities. *Recreational Sports Journal*, *32*(2), 106–113.

Young, S. J., Ramos, W. D., York, S. L., & Fletcher, A. L. (2016). On the 25th anniversary of the ADA: How inclusive are campus recreation programs. *Journal of Legal Aspects of Sport*, *26*(1), 22–35.

Searching for Solutions to Grow Intercollegiate Adapted Athletics:

Lessons Learned from Women's Sport Participation

Searching for Solutions to Grow Intercollegiate Adapted Athletics:

Lessons Learned from Women's Sport Participation

The history of competitive sports, like many societal systems, is one of inclusion and exclusion. In some ways, the exclusiveness of sport is inevitable. Competition naturally selects for winners and losers, particularly as athletes move up the development pipeline. Sport no longer becomes a right but a privilege, and only a talented few are able to successfully reach the top. However, the exclusiveness of sport has also been intentionally unkind to certain identity groups based on presumptions of their athletic potential, or rather lack thereof (e.g., DePauw, 1997; Fay, 1999; 2011; Robeznieks, 2020). Both women's sport and disability sport have shared similar stories from this perspective, yet, while women have been able to enter the intercollegiate arena, athletes with disabilities linger on the sidelines.

The purpose of this paper is to raise understanding about the nature of intercollegiate adapted athletics and take forward strides in resolving its absence by learning from the women's history. A select few papers have made similar comparisons and will be acknowledged throughout this discussion (Fay, 2011; Fay, 1999; Larkin et al., 2014; Robeznieks, 2020). Each is written with the conviction that entry of adaptive sports into the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) is a desirable goal. This paper does not refute that mission but will provide a unique suggestion regarding the development of a separate organization (or committee), similar to what women's sport had for 10 years prior to their absorption by the NCAA. The option is intended to create more deliberation, not further divide and isolate athletes with disabilities. Critical to this paper is understanding that (a) students with disabilities are a growing population on college campuses, and (b) they deserve equal opportunity to play and compete in sport (Comerford, 2018; Fay, 2011; Office of Civil Rights, 2013).

There are many athletes with disabilities who have been "able" enough to successfully mainstream and compete against their able-bodied peers in the NCAA (Fay, 2011; Fay & Wolff, 2009; Weston, 2017); however, these athletes are the outliers. Absent from the rosters are athletes who require accommodation because their "disability is more significant or does not easily allow them to fit within the common rules of the able-bodied version of their sport" (Fay, 2011, p. 78). Therefore, attention will be directed toward these "outsider" athletes and, correspondingly, favor discussion about the provision of separate parasport (i.e., disability sport; adapted sport) programs (Ackerman & Fay, 2016; Office of Civil Rights, 2013). To do so, it is important to consider where we have been, where we are now, and how far we have yet to go. The project of ableism is introduced first as a lens for understanding the invisibility of disability in collegiate sport. The current status of disability in the NCAA is outlined next. This includes an overview of promising inclusion initiatives that, for now, seem to be collecting dust. Discussion then contextualizes the legal landscape surrounding disability and sport, juxtaposed to the history of women's intercollegiate sport, before finally presenting commonalities (and differences) in the experiences of women which may be applied to the parasport context.

Ableism

The concept of ableism is important for understanding why exclusive practices in sport persist. As a construct underlying all individual, structural, and cultural barriers to sport participation, it helps bring into focus why formalized sport institutions are guarded and resistant to outsiders. Ableism also sets the scene for why comparisons can be made between the contexts of disability and women's intercollegiate sport. Finally, and more optimistically, ableism can attest to the immense potential of sport to promote inclusion if we can only view sport and disability through its lens.

Wolbring (2008) defines ableism as:

> a set of beliefs, processes and practices that produce – based on abilities one exhibits or
>
> values – a particular understanding of oneself, one's body and one's relationship with others
>
> of humanity, other species and the environment, and includes how one is judged by others.
>
> (p. 252)

Similarly, Campbell (2013) describes ableism as "a schema of perfection, a deep way of thinking

about bodies, wholeness, and permeability" (p. 4) that produces a particular kind of self and body

(the corporeal standard) to which society uses as a measurement to being "fully human"

(Campbell, 2001). Thus, it creates tension between how we are and how we should be, and as

such, "is a network of thought that differentiates, ranks, and negates people" (Leo & Goodwin,

2016, p. 158).

Ableism, though naturally associated with disability, is not confined to the narrative of

the physically impaired body. Rather, it serves as the common denominator between inclusion

and exclusion in the NCAA for multiple bodies of difference (e.g., race, sex, and gender;

Crincoli, 2011; DePauw, 1997; Hoffman et al., 2009). "[T]he coveting of 'essential' abilities and

types of bodies" (Powis, 2020, p. 32), and thus rejection of others, provides the basis for

eligibility and access to (or refusal from) different fields of play.

DePauw (1997) provides a simple framework, comprised of three key aspects –

masculinity, physicality, and sexuality – in which we can begin to understand traditional claims

of the 'essential' body, and, by implication, the inclusion or exclusion of those that deviate from

the norm. In general, these ideals have narrowed the image of athletic achievement, causing

those who fall outside of normative boundaries to have to fight for entry into sport systems and

constantly prove their value as legitimate competitors. Over time, yet always contested, some

identity groups (i.e., female; race) have had greater success in gaining access than others

(disability; (trans)gender). Without a critical mass of athletes with disabilities, those who are

"able enough" to enter the NCAA can be isolated as anomalies with their impact on inclusion

being every short-lived (Fay, 1999).

Another reason why disability may still be excluded is that ableism, though practiced, in

many ways remains elusive. It has not been delineated in a way that has given permission to all

bodies to enter various sport institutions. "[U]nlike sexism or racism, there is little consensus

among scholars as to what practices and behaviors constitute ableism. Hence, individuals may be

unaware of the ableist assumptions and actions they harbor and practice" (Leo & Goodwin,

2016, p. 158). "Falling back on a hard-wired reaction to *difference*, the public instinct is to

question, stare, and often, mock that which is less understood" (Crincoli, 2011, p. 186). This is

particularly true for athletes with disabilities whose difference is even more so *outed* through

their participation in sport (Powis, 2020). In fact, unlike other marginalized bodies, these athletes

cannot argue that they are not physiologically different. And when their different bodies impede

"normal" functioning and require accommodation (like use of a wheelchair), it is harder to break

down the entrenched value system of sport (Powis, 2020; Promis, 2001). Thus, sport remains a

site of resistance.

Given the pervasiveness of norms in society, higher education, and sport, there will

remain a level of support for the status quo in intercollegiate athletics until actively challenged.

Therefore, if this paper is to have any significance, there must also be the belief that sport can be

a site of transformation. The way things are (the status quo) is not the way they have to be. The

very notion of athletic competition can demonstrate the universality of the human condition and

disrupt the dominant understanding of what types of bodies are best suited to take part (Crincoli, 2011; Powis, 2020). In turn, this can (re)define athleticism in a way that doesn't equate being different with being inadequate or inferior (Promis, 2001). Sport has the power to change ableist assumptions that currently disvalue, disenfranchise and disempower athletes with disabilities. This realization is critical to generating momentum for the advancement of equal opportunity in intercollegiate sport.

Intercollegiate Adapted Athletics

Research consistently acknowledges the inequity in access to sport participation for people with disabilities (e.g., Carty et al., 2021). The pervasiveness of individual (e.g., interests, perceived ability), structural (e.g., accessibility), and cultural (e.g., societal norms) barriers (e.g., DePauw, 1997; Legg et al., in press) hinders not only the opportunity to play and compete but also the resounding benefits that come with resultant social and educational experiences (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006; Robeznieks, 2020). This amplifies the need to provide opportunity from the playground to the podium (Ackerman & Fay, 2016). "Sports are too potent a force in society and have too much of an impact on an individual's health, confidence, and self-esteem" for us not to work toward creating the same opportunities for students with disabilities; "Anything less is not true equity" (Lakowski, 2011, p. 99).

Currently "there are proportionally fewer opportunities for persons with a physical disability to compete at a collegiate level when compared to persons with no disability based on a population to program ratio" (Robeznieks, 2020, p. 7). This gap in the athlete development pipeline needs to be remedied, but barriers to program development are comparable at the intercollegiate level as with any other (e.g., Robeznieks, 2020). It can be argued that one of the

greatest barriers is apathy. Sport systems are biased by the assumption that students with disabilities are "inherently less interested in playing sports" (Lakowski, 2013, Section 19) and, similarly, that there are simply not enough numbers to justify creating new programs. But sometimes the opportunity needs to be presented first. In fact, look no further than the participation of women in intercollegiate athletics. The historic emphasis of men's sports – of ableist, hypermasculine ideals – contributed to lower participation rates for women as well as differences in the number of sports and scope of competition offered (A Policy Interpretation, 1979). Though the impact of the past still lingers, the dramatic increase in women's participation since the passage of Title IX shows that a lack of opportunity, not a lack of interest, excluded female athletes from intercollegiate sport. As stated in the court ruling of *Cohen v. Brown University* (1996), "interest and ability rarely develop in a vacuum; they evolve as a function of opportunity and experience" (Section F). The same applies for individuals with disabilities. If opportunity and experience don't exist, then their interest and ability will remain unrealized. Ableist ideals preserved by sport institutions need to be overturned so parasport, and its athletes, can flourish.

Commitment to Inclusion

Despite the shortage of opportunities, the pledge to provide them exists. Most sport systems have dedicated themselves to principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion. Unfortunately, what will become clear is that policy statements don't always evolve into immediate and impactful action. This section and paper focus on the claims made by the NCAA, but other national and collegiate sport organizations share similar assurances meant to promote inclusion and equality of athletes with disabilities. For example, in June 2019, the United States Olympic Committee changed its name to the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee

(USOPC; USOPC, 2019), "projecting a view that athletes with and without disabilities hold

equal status" (McGinniss et al., 2020, Discussion section, para. 1). This is important because the

USOPC at the national level is akin to the NCAA at the intercollegiate level. Both organizations

are responsible for promoting and protecting their athletes, championing the integrity of sport,

supporting member organizations and programs, and managing high-level competition (NCAA,

n.d.-h; Team USA, n.d.).

Another example is the work of NIRSA, the national governing body for collegiate

recreation, which embraced the strategic value of equity, diversity, and inclusion in 2012. The

organization is commissioned to provide full and equal participation for every member of the

campus community, including students with disabilities (Motch-Ellis, 2019). Unlike varsity

sports, where its status is less clear (e.g., Robeznieks, 2020), participation in campus recreation is

not a privilege but a right. (While this is true, it is worth noting that individuals with disabilities

have the right to try out for varsity sports without discrimination). Participation within this level

is important because athlete and sport development often start with recreational and

developmental opportunities – club sports emerge to varsity status (e.g., triathlon and cheer), and

club athletes can be recruited to varsity teams. This is all to say, although this paper focuses on

the NCAA, opportunities for parasport should exist at every level, especially if a sporting body

has professed a commitment to inclusion.

NCAA's Inclusion Statement

The NCAA exists for the purpose of administering intercollegiate athletics, "dedicated to

providing a pathway to opportunity for college athletes" by prioritizing academics, well-being,

and fairness (NCAA, n.d.-b). As a member-led organization, it is composed of approximately

1,100 colleges and universities, and serves nearly half a million student-athletes that compete in

24 sports across 3 divisions (NCAA, n.d.-h). The NCAA's governance is complex and

fragmented, having multiple sites in which regulation occurs, including individual institutions,

conferences, divisions, and the national governing body itself (Robeznieks, 2020). Regulation is

interdependent, working both top-down and bottom-up. Power through unanimity, therefore,

does not belong solely within the NCAA; instead, the organization is "constrained in its action

by multiple accountability relationships" (Robeznieks, 2020). Structural fragmentation disallows

effortless, unrefuted, sweeping policy change across all organizational levels. Be that as it may,

the NCAA has extensive influence that must be prodded and pursued by the parasport industry.

The national body plays a crucial role in preserving societal (ableist) ideals in (intercollegiate)

sport, and certain change should be mandated to provide equal opportunity to athletes with

disabilities.

Within the last decade, the NCAA has restructured and recommitted itself to a core value

of "diversity, inclusion, and gender equity" to better serve the ever more diverse and complex

higher education community, which includes its student-athletes (NCAA, n.d.-e). The NCAA

asserts that an "inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation" enhances organizational

excellence and improves the learning and athletic experiences of student-athletes (NCAA, n.d.-

e). To promote and sustain this value, the Office of Inclusion "will provide or enable

programming and education" across, at the very least, five areas of inclusion: race and ethnicity,

women, student-athletes with disabilities, LGBTQ, and international student-athletes.

Specific to disability, "The NCAA encourages participation by student-athletes with

disabilities (physical or mental) in intercollegiate athletics and physical activities to the full

extent of their interests and abilities" (NCAA, n.d.-g). Largely absent from its efforts, however,

are practical strategies that address the profound lack of opportunity for this core group (Fay,

2011). The NCAA policy lacks intentional direction in how to "provide and enable

programming" to meet those interests and abilities. For now, inclusion of disability is still lip-

service. The NCAA "encourages" but does not enforce. It's endorsement of the "Adaptive Sports

Model" put forth by the Eastern College Athletic Conference makes this evident.

ECAC Inclusive Strategy

In 2014, the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) became the first NCAA-

sanctioned conference to adopt an Inclusive Sport Strategy focused on expanding championship

sport opportunities for student-athletes with disabilities (Comerford, 2018; NCAA, n.d.-g;

McGinniss et al., 2020). In fact, it remains the only NCAA-sanctioned conference that has shown

any deliberate movement within this core area of inclusion. The strategy encompasses four

principles of inclusion for athletes with a Paralympic-eligible disability (permanent physical,

visual, or intellectual impairments), none more or less important than the other:

5. Inclusion of athletes with a Paralympic-eligible disability onto existing teams,
    competitions and Championships without any sport-specific accommodations required.

6. Inclusion of athletes with a Paralympic-eligible disability onto existing teams,
    competitions and Championships with reasonable sport-specific accommodations
    provided.

7. Inclusion of athletes with a Paralympic-eligible disability through the addition of specific
    adaptive (Para) events into existing competitions and Championships in an **array [of]
    individual Olympic/Paralympic sports** (e.g., track & field, swimming, tennis, rowing,
    alpine & cross country skiing, golf and fencing).

8. Inclusion of athletes ***with and without disabilities*** through the creation of specific
    adaptive (Paralympic) team sport in new leagues, competitions, and Championships (e.g.,

wheelchair basketball, sled hockey, goalball, sitting volleyball and wheelchair rugby)

(Ackerman & Fay, 2016, Slides 6-7).

The first and second principles are often met by athletes who are "able" enough to

mainstream and compete against able-bodied competitors (Fay, 2011; Fay & Wolff, 2009;

Weston, 2017). Fay (2011) and Robeznieks (2020) provide examples of athletes with disabilities

who have successfully completed in intercollegiate athletics. These athletes, however, are the

outliers. They "are standing athletes who were first good enough to compensate for their

particular disability and secondly were able to compete within the rules of their sport without an

accommodation that gave them a unique or unfair advantage" (Fay, 2011, p. 78). Absent from

these examples are the student-athletes who can't "fit in" because there is a significant enough

difference created by their disability (e.g., high levels of amputation, sensory loss, spinal cord

injuries) that precludes them from compensating and competing within the common rules of a

given sport (Fay 2011; Legg et al., 2009). Their bodies don't prevent their participation in sport,

rather their participation is limited by the ableist traditions that are instantiated in competitive

sport.

The ECAC had early success with the third principle by integrating adapted sport

demonstrations at both the 2016 ECAC Track & Field and Swimming & Diving Championships.

The following year, wheelchair races were added as point-earning events in the 2017 Collegiate

Para Track & Field Championship (Comerford, 2018). The NCAA supported the inclusive

initiative by promoting it on their website and even making it a topic of focus within its Inclusion

Forum series in subsequent years. However, in most cases, actions speak louder than words.

Despite early enthusiasm, efforts appear to be at a standstill, and "there are no concrete signs of

future support for systematic inclusion of student-athletes with disabilities from the NCAA"
(McGinniss et al., 2020, Discussion section, para. 4).

Finally, there has been no evidence of progress in regard to the fourth principle. Collegiate
recreational opportunities are rising in sports such as goalball, boccia, soccer, and outdoor
adventure (Block, 2019), but competitive offerings remain fixed at three sports: wheelchair
basketball, wheelchair tennis, and wheelchair track. While many of these competitive sports have
had long-standing programs (e.g., University of Illinois; NWBA, n.d.-a), teams and
championships are not sanctioned by the NCAA and are rarely affiliated with their institution's
athletic department. Existing outside of NCAA infrastructure, intercollegiate adapted athletics
fall short of being "equal" in comparison to any able-bodied program (Comerford, 2018; Larkin
et al., 2014). Also, important to progress, or lack thereof, is observance of the principle's specific
mention of "inclusion of athletes with and without disabilities" in new teams and leagues. So far,
this is not being practiced by competitive programs (i.e., wheelchair basketball). There is a
general understanding among stakeholders that the addition of able-bodied players can increase
opportunities, but established programs (and the NWBA) do not feel pressed to make changes to
rules at this time. Current literature does not express why, but like the NCAA, we can assume
they are bound to practices to the past in attempt to preserve their power and legitimacy (Fay,
1999; Robeznieks, 2020). In order to effect change, all sides must be willing to move away from
the status quo.

Although much of the discussion in this paper is relevant to all four inclusion principles, the
focus is on creating new teams and leagues and what might be learned from the evolution of
women's intercollegiate sport. The NCAA and its members are not known, as one scholar put it,
for taking "the lead with respect to the civil rights and social justice concerns of its athletes,

coaches, or administrators, but instead, consistently acting as a reactionary, obstructionist cartel bent on maintaining its male hegemonic status quo" (Fay, 1999, p. 255). However, the NCAA has shown that when properly motivated (e.g., in response to Title IX or even the rise of eSports), it has the means to (re)act and (re)organize with surprising conviction (McGinniss et al., 2020). This paper continues by looking at the legal landscape that should stimulate this transformation to meet the needs of athletes with disabilities.

Legal Landscape

Examining the legal basis for providing equal opportunity is a critical first step toward the expansion of intercollegiate adapted athletics, especially in juxtaposition to progress made by other marginalized identity groups, of which women's intercollegiate sport is the focus here (see Fay, 1999 and Fay, 2011 for correlation to MLB). Comparison is necessary to unpack, and ultimately uproot, dominant presumptions about athletic achievement and disability as well as "discover new and different possibilities and limitations for equity in intercollegiate sports" (Hoffman et al., 2009, p. 144). The subsequent subsections, therefore, identify significant legislation related to equal opportunity in sport for women and individuals with disabilities. There is not enough room to provide the intricacies of each discriminatory history, so these sections cannot fully disclose the contrast in reality between enacting policy and actually achieving equity through systemic change. However, discussion does highlight some unique clauses, similarities and differences, critical to informing strategy for advancing intercollegiate parasport. In short, there is precedent for change, so sport industries should take action.

1972 Title IX

Though every history has unique nuances, some which rise and fall and rise again, the history of women's intercollegiate sport can be presented as a before and after narrative. Title IX

of the Education Amendments of 1972 marked the ultimate shift in the purpose of education and, subsequently, the purpose (and equal pursuit) of athletic participation for women (Hoffman et al., 2009). Before Title IX, gender-differentiated roles and expectations discredited female athleticism due to an ideology of femininity that prescribed the female body as too fragile and unsuited to compete (Buzuvis, 2020; Crincoli, 2011; Hoffman et al., 2009). After Title IX – to the credit of unrelenting advocacy and endless lawsuits – women were able to enter the intercollegiate, competitive sports arena. Their entry into the NCAA is momentous, but only to the degree we remember that access is not the equivalent of inclusion. Still today, the ideal of true equality and equity remain in question (Buzuvis, 2020).

Modeled after Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which banned race discrimination in federally funded programs, Section 901(a) of Title IX provides:

> No person in the United States shall, on the basis of sex, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

Initially, the primary concerns of Title IX regarded areas of graduate and professional educational and employment discrimination, with no consideration of the policy's effect on collegiate and scholastic sports. It wasn't until a move by the NCAA and major member institutions to block the law's application to men's revenue-producing sports that athletics became a primary issue of contention (Buzuvis, 2020). Instead of entering the fray itself, Congress delegated authority to the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW; predecessor to the Department of Education) to write (clarifying) regulations about what Title IX means for athletics – the law's "unintended consequence" (Buzuvis, 2020; Edwards, 2010).

The regulation issued by the Department of HEW for implementing Title IX "with respect to intercollegiate athletic activities" became effective in 1975 (Section 844; A Policy Interpretation, 1979, Section Legal Background). It established a three year transition period to give institutions time to comply with equal athletic opportunity requirements. The transition period expired on July 21, 1978, and in receiving "nearly 100 complaints alleging discrimination in athletics against more than 50 institutions of higher education", the Department determined it should provide further clarification on what constitutes compliance with Title IX in intercollegiate athletic programs (A Policy Interpretation, 1979, Section Purpose of Policy Interpretation).

1979 Policy Interpretation

In December 1979, the Department of HEW, via the Office of Civil Rights (OCR), issued its final Policy Interpretation. The regulation clarified how Title IX applied to athletic programs and provided a means to assess an institution's compliance with its equal opportunity requirements. With focus on intercollegiate athletics, the Policy detailed a set of standards to be adhered to in three separate areas: compliance in financial assistance (scholarships); compliance in other program areas (e.g., equipment, support services, and other athletic benefits and opportunities); compliance in meeting the interests and abilities of male and female students (A Policy Interpretation, 1979).

Despite this guidance, movement toward compliance was not without resistance. For example, the decision in *Grove City v. Bell* (1984) stripped women of progress when courts determined that athletic departments do not receive federal funding and, thus, are not "programs" under Title IX jurisdiction. The Civil Rights Restoration Act (1988) reversed this outcome and restored the original, broader interpretation of Title IX to include intercollegiate athletics, but not

before greatly disrupting prior gains in development (Fay, 1999; Hoffman et al., 2009; Rosner, 2011). Title IX was the start to equal opportunity in intercollegiate athletics, but the crusade to procuring equality is ongoing (Buzuvis, 2020).

1973 Section 504

Just a year after Title IX, the Department of Education passed the first federal civil rights law in the United States for people with disabilities (Arnhold et al., 2013). Designed to protect the rights of individuals in programs and activities that receive federal financial assistance, the law mirrors the language and intent of Title IX. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 provides:

> No other qualified individual with a disability in the United States shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any educational program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance. (Rehabilitation Act, 1973)

The OCR enforces Section 504 in beneficiaries, including public school districts, institutions of higher education, and other state and local education agencies. Additionally, unlike Title IX, the law issued regulations that specifically address athletics and require the provision of "equal opportunity" for students with disabilities.

> A recipient that offers physical education courses or that operates or sponsor interscholastic, club, or intramural athletics shall provide to qualified handicapped students and equal opportunity for participation. (Rehabilitation Act, 1973)

However, compared to the historical context of women's intercollegiate sport, there wasn't a torrent of backlash and upheaval of policy after policy, due to the lack of a critical mass of pressure, both individually and institutionally. The NCAA wasn't threatened, or even intrigued

by the potential impact of Section 504, and at that time sport was just starting to be thought of as a right for people with disabilities. Also, in contrast to Title IX and the 1979 Policy Interpretation, Section 504 lacked additional guidance and specificity on what constitutes "equal opportunity" and compliance toward it with respect to school sports, and it wasn't until 30 years later that any was given (Lakowski, 2013). Between that time, however, there were other statutes passed that support progress toward equal opportunity in intercollegiate sports.

1990 ADA

Enacted in 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) became the landmark civil rights legislation for people with disabilities. Congress took notice of their inferior status within society, recognizing that "historically, society has tended to isolate and segregate individuals with disabilities" and although "physical and mental disabilities in no way diminish a person's right to fully participate in all aspects of society…[they] are frequently precluded from doing so because of prejudice, antiquated attitudes, or the failure to remove societal and institutional barriers" (Sec. 12101(a)(2)). Thus, ADA afforded similar protections against discrimination to disability as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 did for other identity groups (Fay, 2011). With broader coverage reaching both public and private entities, it was meant to strengthen and augment the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Though more comprehensive in nature, and despite its basis in non-discrimination, ADA did not include any language or regulations relative to participation in sport and physical activity. However, it has been applied to the sport context at all levels of competition (Comerford, 2018), mostly focused on issues of access to and accessibility of facilities and venues rather than equal opportunity (Fay, 2011).

The additions of Titles II and III of ADA (1990) were important. Title II prevents public entities (state and local) from excluding participation or denying benefits of their services,

programs, or activities to individuals with disabilities. Title III extends regulations to private

entities, further prohibiting discrimination "on the basis of disability in the full and equal

enjoyment of the goods, services, facilities, privileges, advantages, or accommodations"

provided by such entities (Sec. 12182(a)). This is the section under which most plaintiffs bring

claims against athletic governing bodies, including the NCAA. Based on the purpose of ADA

and prior litigation, the NCAA is subject to Title III because it maintains control over places of

accommodation – athletic facilities (Trainor, 2005). However, the scope of Title III is limited in

that places of public accommodation are not required to make "reasonable modifications to

policies or procedures" if they "would fundamentally alter the nature" of their services

(Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990). The magnitude of the clause is exemplified by the

"arguably predictable, individualized approach that courts will take in an athlete's case"

(Comerford, 2018, p. 536). It has subsequently been the case that institutions have prevailed

with the defense that modifications could undermine the scholastic or athletic integrity of their

programs (Trainor, 2005).

2008 Maryland Fitness & Athletic Equity Act

Stemming from a court case brought forward by Tatyana McFadden against her high

school, the state of Maryland passed a statute ahead of its time. A wheelchair track athlete (and

now highly decorated Paralympian), McFadden was prohibited from racing on the track at the

same time as her teammates. Under the Rehabilitation Act, in 2006, McFadden sued and was

granted her request for preliminary injunction for the right to practice and race on the track

alongside students without disabilities (but only be scored against other female athletes using

wheelchairs; Lakowski, 2009). In response, the state of Maryland took leadership and issued the

first piece of legislation that specifically outlined actions and obligations schools must provide in

scholastic sport for students with disabilities (Comerford, 2018).

Under the 2008 Maryland Fitness & Athletic Equity Act, school boards must (a) ensure

students with disabilities have equal opportunity to participate in mainstream physical education

and athletic programs, (b) ensure the provision of reasonable accommodations to participate in

such mainstream activities to the fullest extent possible, and (c) ensure that adapted, allied, or

unified physical education and athletic programs are available (Fitness and Athletic Equity Law

For Students with Disabilities, 2008). Similar to ADA, there is a contingency clause regarding

student safety and the fundamental nature of the mainstream program; however, the law also

states that county boards shall develop policies and procedures to promote inclusion as well as

submit annual reporting detailing their compliance with the provisions. This statue is impressive

because it was passed before and is, in many ways, more explicit than the 2013 Dear Colleague

Letter discussed next. New Jersey passed similar inclusive legislation in 2014, and scholars

encourage other states to do the same (Comerford, 2018).

2013 Dear Colleague Letter

After being prompted to investigate how schools provide physical education and

extracurricular athletics for students with disabilities, the U.S. Government Accountability

Office (GAO) released a report in June of 2010 identifying several factors (e.g., lack of training,

resources, and teacher support) that limit equal opportunity for students with disabilities to fully

participate in and benefit from such activities (Arnhold et al., 2013; Comerford, 2018). In

response, the Department of Education's OCR (the same office in charge of Title IX) published a

Dear Colleague Letter on January 24, 2013 to provide guidance regarding what equal

opportunity in extracurricular athletics looks like for students with disabilities under Section 504

(Lakowski, 2013). Four key areas were addressed (Office of Civil Rights, 2013): (a) general legal requirements of Section 504; (b) prohibition of operating "on the basis of generalizations, assumptions, prejudices, or stereotypes about disability generally, or specific disabilities in particular" (p. 5); (c) affordance of "equal opportunity for participation" in nonacademic and extracurricular athletics, which includes making "reasonable accommodations" (p. 6); and (d) discussion regarding the provision of separate or different athletic opportunities for students with disabilities who cannot participate in the school's existing programs.

The fourth section, in particular, sparked lots of attention (and controversy), stating: "When the interests and abilities of some students with disabilities cannot be as fully and effectively met by the school district's existing extracurricular athlete program, the school district should create additional opportunities for those students with disabilities" (Office of Civil Rights, 2013, p. 11). "Many started to insinuate that the Guidance should function like Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972…In fact, scholars have argued that this is exactly how the regulations under Section 504 of the Rehab Act should be interpreted" (Comerford, 2018, p. 537). However, the OCR later released "guidance on the guidance" that expunged this comparison. Under Section 504, schools are not required to develop separate adapted sports teams or programs for students with disabilities (Comerford, 2018; Office of Civil Rights, n.d.-a). In addition, it does not mean every student with a disability has the right to be on an athletic team. As with any other student, students with disabilities must be qualified to participate – "school districts can require a level of skill or ability for a student to participate in sport, so long as the selection criteria are not discriminatory" (Lakowski, 2013, Legal Obligations section).

For now, it seems as though the current ableist landscape enables a narrowed view in what constitutes an "essential" sport program, just as it does for an essential body. Apparently,

similar to the contingency clause in ADA, the creation of separate and different athletic opportunities for students with disabilities is an "undue burden" on schools. Nevertheless, "[d]espite not having as large of an impact as scholars may have initially thought, there has still been an increase of opportunities for student-athletes with disabilities at the high school level since the 2013 Dear Colleague Letter" (Comerford, 2018, p. 538). With the rise of high school participation, and to fortify the athlete development pipeline, doors also need to open at the "postsecondary level" (Office of Civil Rights, 2013, p. 2), to which the Letter also applies. The Letter also notes that students with disabilities deserve "equal opportunity to participate in…intercollegiate, club, and intramural athletics" (p. 2). As discussed previously, the ECAC inclusive strategy is an opening wedge that now must be executed with intentionality by the NCAA and across each organizational level. The context of women's intercollegiate sport is examined next to understand what policies and actions may also be profitable for the advancement of adapted intercollegiate athletics (Robeznieks, 2020).

Achieving Equal Athletic Opportunity

Title IX "set off a series of shock waves through both interscholastic and intercollegiate athletics in the United States because it attempted to rebalance a very unbalanced equity paradigm between boys and girls and young men and women" (Fay, 2011, p. 71). Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act passed only one year later. It contained practically identical language, but it's "effectiveness hasn't matched Title IX because it lacked the same precedent setting legal challenges and policy clarifications that helped define compliance with Title IX" (NCAA Champion Magazine, 2013, Evolution to Revolution section, para. 9). That is, at least from an intercollegiate athletics standpoint, disability law didn't unnerve the NCAA in the same way as did Title IX. This is true even after the clarification provided by the 2013 Dear Colleague Letter.

With the exception of the ECAC's inclusive initiative, the standard of "equal opportunity" for

students with disabilities has been vastly ignored.

The evolution of Title IX suggests there may be space for policies that attend to issues of

equity for students with disabilities with the same rigor as applied to race and gender (Fay,

2011). Comerford has suggested (2018), the NCAA proactively work to assist other conferences

and institutions to follow the ECAC's lead in expanding opportunities for students with

disabilities. The following statement from Jeffrey Orleans, former executive director of the Ivy

League, similarly argues that the NCAA has to push forward, move past the ambiguity, and

exercise its influence to create change:

> There is not an organization that I can see who is equipped or has the interest to lead,
>
> except the NCAA. We have the most institutions, the most athletes, the most students, the
>
> most opportunities in intercollegiate athletics. Now that it's out there [the Dear Colleague
>
> Letter], we have a responsibility. And we'll have to figure out what that responsibility
>
> looks like. (Hendrickson, 2013, para. 12)

Although not the only entity that needs to enact change (e.g., NIRSA; NWBA), the NCAA lags

behind in the arena of inclusion. Moreover, the history of the NCAA, on such issues as access

and resources for women's sport, or Name, Image and Likeness rights for student athletes,

suggests that when the NCAA has not been proactive on issues of equity and rights claims, court

action and legislation have been used by external parties to effectively induce change in NCAA

policies and practices. This paper will now address the potential ways the NCAA and others

seeking to create more opportunities for intercollegiate adapted athletics could learn from the

history of women's sport to bring about change. The following sections will consider four

critical applications: Compliance toward Interests and Abilities; Designations for inclusion; the

Emerging Sports for Women program; and the separatist strategy of the Association for

Intercollegiate Athletics for Women.

Compliance in Meeting Interests and Abilities

While the statutory language of Title IX and Section 504 mirror each other, their

clarifying regulations, the Policy Interpretation (1979) and Dear Colleague Letter (2013), had

different target audiences. The former was designed specifically with intercollegiate athletics in

mind, and the latter focused on elementary and secondary school contexts (though both apply to

the other settings as well). Because the audience differed, the specificity in language also

differed. Title IX intended to measure gender equity in athletic departments based on the

following three provisions: financial assistance, student interests and abilities, equal treatment in

athletic benefits comparable to men's programs (OCR, 1979). The 2013 Dear Colleague Letter,

on the other hand, left unclear how goals of increasing inclusion and diversity will be evaluated

and monitored (Hendrickson, 2013). Also, contrary to initial interpretation, the guidance does not

require the creation of separate and different opportunities for students with disabilities

(Comerford, 2018; Office of Civil Rights, 2013), and, historically, when left to their own

devices, schools do not assume responsibility for forging such parasport programs (Lakowski,

2011). This passivity or negligence is reminiscent of the slow, and still ongoing, progress of the

women's intercollegiate context as well.

Even with a legal foundation, policy does not always beget immediate change toward

equity. Often social movements, student protest, legislation and litigation are need to drive

change, as was the case with creating access and opportunity for women in intercollegiate

athletics. The NCAA does have policy saying it will "provide or enable programming" for

student-athletes with disabilities (NCAA, n.d.-e) and is committed to providing equitable

participation that meets "the full extent of their interests and abilities" (NCAA, n.d.-g). However, as should now be inferred, this commitment falls short of action. The NCAA does not sanction any parasport Championships, competitions, or programs. Fay (2011) asserted, "If just 10% of NCAA members agreed to add one or two additional sports this would mean a 100 fold increase in opportunities from 15 to 150 institutions which would be an average of 3 colleges or universities per state" (p. 87). To see this growth in equal opportunity, there needs to be mechanisms to chart progress. The policy and compliance measures of Title IX, specifically outlined in the 1979 Policy Interpretation, are worth analyzing to determine what may be applicable to the context of intercollegiate parasport.

The 1979 Policy Interpretation clarifies the meaning of "equal opportunity" in intercollegiate athletics and sets forth standards of compliance by which institution's will be held accountable. The Policy provides guidance in the three areas already noted, of which the third, Compliance in Meeting Interests and Abilities, is the focus here: "Pursuant to the regulation, the governing principle in this area is that the athletic interests and abilities of male and female students must be equally effectively accommodated" (A Policy Interpretation, 1979, Section IV) – which includes "equal opportunity in both the selection of sports and levels of competition made available to both sexes" (Section VII.C.). The application of these will be explored individually as each has their own compliance guidelines that the parasport context is currently without. Before doing so, it's important to acknowledge that the NCAA was adamantly opposed to the implementation of such regulations in the beginning. "It viewed Title IX as disruptive…destructive, and surely counter-productive" (Plyley, 1997, p. 9). Therefore, new additions made within the parasport context could meet similar resistance. Yet, without such

compliance measures, women's intercollegiate sport would probably be a mere speck in the eye of the NCAA, and so shall intercollegiate adapted athletics remain.

Application to Determination of Athletic Interests & Abilities

The Policy Interpretation states, "Institutions may determine the athletic interests and abilities of students by nondiscriminatory methods of their choosing" (A Policy Interpretation, 1979, VII.C.3) provided adherence to four tenants. These standards are listed below and can be applied to the parasport context with minor considerations, thus have been edited (denoted in italics) to represent such relevant changes.

a. The methods of determining interest and ability do not disadvantage *students with disabilities*. (This standard was originally listed second in the 1979 Policy but is now prioritized so to inform the others by setting an early reminder that processes should not be discriminatory.)

b. The processes take into account the nationally increasing levels of interests and abilities of *students with disabilities as proportionate to their population numbers*. (This standard realizes that athlete demand at the institutional level will rarely, if ever, be convincing.)

c. The methods of determining ability take into account *Paralympic* performance records *and are scaled to befit the intercollegiate level*.

d. The methods are responsive to the expressed interests of *students with disabilities* capable of intercollegiate competition. (In the context of parasport, this will require a paradigm shift, disentangling ableist assumptions about athletic achievement.)

Application to Selection of Sports (program building)

The Policy Interpretation states, "In the selection of sports, the regulation does not require institutions to integrate their teams nor to provide exactly the same choice of sports to men and

women" (A Policy Interpretation, 1979, VII.C.4). However, where an institution sponsors a sport

for male athletes, it may be required to sponsor a separate team for female athletes under certain

circumstances:

a. The opportunities for members of the excluded sex have historically been limited;

b. There is sufficient interest and ability among the members of the excluded sex to sustain

   a viable team and a reasonable expectation of intercollegiate competition for that team;

   and

c. Members of the excluded sex do not possess sufficient skill to be selected for a single

   integrated team, or to compete actively on such a team if selected. (this third clause is

   only pertinent for noncontact sports; A Policy Interpretation, 1979, VII.C.4)

Lakowski (2011) suggested these regulations should extend to the parasport context as well.

The author divided the second condition into two unique standards, and also added the clause

"even with reasonable accommodations" to the third (p. 98). Lakowski (2011) emphasized, "The

creation of these regulations would supplement, not replace, the existing regulations [of Section

504] that require students with disabilities to always have the opportunity to try out for the

mainstream team" (p. 98). As directed by the 2013 Dear Colleague Letter, students with

disabilities should be included "to the maximum extent appropriate to the needs of that student

with a disability" (Office of Civil Rights, 2013, p. 11), which means they should have the

opportunity to compete on mainstream teams and in adapted programs. Unfortunately, the

creation of these additional opportunities – ones that meet the needs of students who cannot "fit

in" to existing sport structures – is not required by schools (Comerford, 2018). To ensure

students with disabilities have educational and athletic experiences comparable to their able-

bodied counterparts, institutions cannot be left to their own devices. The NCAA needs to be

proactive in its efforts, remembering that (a) opportunity will drive interest (*Grove City v. Bell*, 1984), and (b) new adapted programs can be inclusive of students with and without disabilities (Ackerman & Fay, 2016; Robeznieks, 2020).

Application to Levels of Competition (the 3-part test)

The Policy Interpretation states, "institutions must provide both the opportunity for individuals of each sex to participate in intercollegiate competition, and for athletes of each sex to have competitive team schedules which equally reflect their abilities" (A Policy Interpretation, 1979, VII.C.5). The regulation sets out a three-part test to which an institution's compliance is assessed in any one of the following ways:

a. The number of male and female athletes is substantially proportionate to their respective enrollments; or

b. The institution has a history and continuing practice of expanding participation opportunities responsive to the developing interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex; or

c. The institution is fully and effectively accommodating the interests and abilities of the underrepresented sex.

This three-part test is the most well-known enforcement mechanism of Title IX, but as is consistent with the history of women's intercollegiate sport at large, institutional compliance with any of these prongs wasn't consistent. Athletic departments were ill-equipped to expand their existing infrastructures to include women's sports. The quick, unpopular solution became making economic cuts in one area to fund another, which only heightened resentment, particularly among the more vulnerable men's Olympic sport programs (Hoffman et al., 2009; Buzuvis, 2011). While the three-part test helped open opportunities for women's competition, it

also disrupted the status quo, one completely content in its hypermasculine traditions. The three-part test created enough backlash for further clarification in 1996, driven by the case *Cohen v. Brown University*, and again in 2003 (Office of Civil Rights, n.d.-b). Despite this, each prong still faces scrutiny. The first measure is often criticized for being a quota system, a "safe harbor" that in actuality neglects female interests (Rosner, 2001). It is unlikely that institutions can meet compliance of the second measure. If they are truly showing a "continuing practice" toward compliance, then most should have hit proportionality, at some point since Title IX became law (Jenkins, 2019). Another obstacle is that prong two requires "expanding participation opportunities", or creating additional programs, which means the reduction of men's sport does not satisfy compliance (Richards, 2011). Lastly, in regard to prong three, schools have been warned to only count athletic opportunities that are "real, not illusory", meaning they are equal in both opportunity and treatment (Buzuvis, 2011, p. 443).

The continuing inability to achieve compliance experienced by women's intercollegiate sport will surely resonate for scholars of adapted athletics as well. This is especially true since the same 'critical mass' is absent, with a smaller pool of athletes and leaders positioned to impose unrelenting pressure "on the way things are." Nonetheless, enforcement of compliance measures is necessary but is currently lacking from the parasport context. The historical controversy surrounding the three-part test and modify regulations could ensure a quicker turnaround in providing equal opportunity and treatment for students with disabilities. For example, to Fay's (2011) point, while the right to access adapted athletics applies to all Title IV institutions, it may be appropriate to enable schools to set strategies for developing different time lines and different approaches to achieving a compliant varsity-level adapted sport program. A first step in determining compliance might include strategically identifying schools that could become

"hosts" to adapted athletic programs based on existing programs, resources, geography, and campus accessibility (Robeznieks, 2020). These host locations would then be supported by the NCAA.

Other mechanisms for compliance may need to be considered as well. For instance, the Racial and Gender Report Card (RGRC) is an assessment of hiring practices of women and people of color, in relation to overall patterns in society, within leading sporting organizations in the United States, including the NCAA (TIDES, n.d.). The inclusiveness of a given institution or organization is appraised and allocated a letter grade, not to scold failure but to provide benchmarks for progress and systemic change. The next report card should include all five NCAA dimensions of inclusion, extending to disability, LGBTQ, and international student groups. In general, further research and analysis is necessary to address the complexity of compliance for disability equity.

Designation for Inclusion

"The senior woman administrator (SWA) is the highest-ranking female in each NCAA athletics department or conference office" (NCAA, n.d.-g). The designation was created in 1981 – the same year women's championships were added – to promote meaningful representation and involvement of women in the male-dominated administration of intercollegiate athletics (NCAA, n.d.-g). The SWA is, therefore, not synonymous with a senior *women's* administrator or restricted to the individual supervising of women's sports (NCAA Office of Inclusion, n.d.). Rather, the designee acts as a key decision-maker in issues concerning both men's and women's sports, as well as sports deemed revenue and nonrevenue generators (NCAA, n.d.-f; NCAA Office of Inclusion, n.d.). At least this is the ideal. Research indicates mixed opinions about the support (e.g., training, mentorship) received upon designation for women to actually be

instrumental voices at the institutional, conference, and national levels (NCAA Office of

Inclusion, n.d.). Still, it's promising that 99 percent of schools have an SWA though the position

is not legislatively required (NCAA, n.d.-f).

As Robeznieks (2020) suggested, intercollegiate adapted athletics could benefit from a

similar designation, a senior disability or inclusion administrator to advocate for students with

disabilities. Actually, in January 2020, the Athletics Diversity and Inclusion Designation (ADID)

was legislated within all three divisions of the NCAA (Lapchick, 2020). The ADID is an

appointed staff member of the university who serves as a conduit for issues of diversity and

inclusion, particularly by promoting and disseminating information about initiatives,

programming, and resources between conferences, campuses, athletic departments, and the

NCAA (Dent, 2020).

The position has great potential for creating policy change necessary to ensure inclusive

practices but is still problematic in regard to disability and sport. First, the ADID doesn't have to

be employed by the athletics department. Although they should have regular correspondence

with athletes, coaches, and administrators (Dent, 2020), there will inevitably be a divided focus

between athletics and other university matters. Second, disability will, more than likely, remain a

symbolic concern under a position that has a broader inclusion focus. Participants in Robeznieks'

(2020) study agreed that different stakeholders "would have a bias as to which initiatives would

be dealt with greater importance" (p. 124), and, historically, issues of sex and race win out. In

fact, the ADID was proposed by the NCAA's Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee

(MOIC), which according to Division I bylaw (21.2.4.2) is meant to serve and advocate for those

who are ethnic minorities, LGBTQ, or who have disabilities, yet, on the NCAA webpage, this

purpose is abbreviated to "champion the causes of ethnic minorities" (NCAA, n.d.-d). It

shouldn't be a competition since about 15 to 20 percent of the population lives with a disability and will identify with these other minority labels as well, but, unfortunately, the likely hierarchy of support that will result will further existing inequities.

Ultimately, each of the five core areas of inclusion need to be supported with deliberate intention. It may be appropriate then to have a designee to represent each. However, as Robeznieks (2020) points out, "From an organizational standpoint, having that many designations could cause disorganization" (p. 124). Also, there is probably not someone with a disability to be a representative voice in every athletic department as there is with the SWA designation. So perhaps a realistic start is not at the institution level, but at the conference or divisional level, or at the very least the national level, the NCAA. Despite potential arguments that there aren't enough athletes with disabilities to warrant a position equivalent to the SWA, disability needs to be central to inclusion. It's not enough to merely list disability as a core area of inclusion. It can be argued that under the non-discrimination protections of Section 504 and ADA (and the Fourteenth Amendment), disability must be accommodated to the extent of the law, in all facets of policy and decision-making within intercollegiate sport administration.

Emerging Sports for Women Program

In the early 1990s, nearly twenty years after Title IX was passed, female student-athletes only had about 30 percent of the athletic opportunities offered by NCAA institutions. Faced with that reality, the NCAA recognized their responsibility in helping its member institutions reach compliance (Buzuvis, 2011; NCAA, n.d.-c). Based on guidance from the NCAA Gender Equity Task Force, the Emerging Sports for Women (ESW) program was created in 1994 in an effort to grow women's intercollegiate sport. Managed by the Committee on Women's Athletics (CWA), the program provides a framework to develop sports that have the potential to reach certain

benchmarks to be considered for NCAA Championship status. As a mediator, the CWA

"oversees the application process for applicant emerging sports and recommends to each division

through the NCAA governance structure to add or remove sports from the NCAA's Emerging

Sports for Women program" (NCAA Emerging Sports for Women, n.d., p. 1). Each division is

ultimately responsible for determining which sports receive emerging status and whether to

sanction a division Championship for sports that attain legislated requirements. As incentive,

schools can count emerging sports toward NCAA sport-sponsorship requirements for all

divisions and financial aid awards for Divisions I and II (Buzuvis, 2011; NCAA Emerging

Sports for Women, n.d.).

Chief among the benchmarks, according to the published ESW program process guide, is

whether the applicant activity is a sport – defined as an activity involving "physical exertion for

the purpose of competition" with an "intercollegiate competition structure" regulated by at least

one governing body (NCAA Emerging Sports for Women, n.d., p. 1) – and whether it has

potential for growth. Many sports have an active club or recreational presence on campus, but to

show potential for growth, a sport must demonstrate that at least 20 schools offer varsity or club

teams at the time of application and a minimum of 10 have committed to sponsor the sport at the

varsity level. There must also be evidence of interest in college-level competition as "illustrated

by high participation rates in college intramurals, high school teams, or non-scholastic

competitive teams, and support from governing bodies, conferences, the U.S. Olympic

Committee, and professional organizations" (Buzuvis, 2011, p. 456). Once on the emerging list,

sports have a 10-year window to reach 40 institutional sponsorships (50 for men's sports) at the

varsity level to become a Championship sport. Extensions can be granted if the sport

demonstrates "steady progress" toward that goal (NCAA Emerging Sports for Women, n.d., p. 8).

Accomplishing gender equity involves both anti-exclusionary and inclusionary objectives (Jackson, 2006), and the ESW program is a model for this two-part goal. It demonstrates a "dedication to Title IX's basic purpose of prohibiting sex-based discrimination, while simultaneously providing athletic opportunities to the underrepresented sex" (Richards, 2011, p. 33). The same could be true for the purpose of Section 504, prohibiting discrimination based on disability and providing athletic opportunities for students with disabilities. Therefore, intercollegiate adapted athletics could benefit from a similar sport development framework. To do so, learning from the trajectories of different sports, both those which have found or been denied success, could enlighten how to navigate, modify, change, or create policy for the development of intercollegiate parasports.

Since the ESW program was established in 1994, five women's sports have earned NCAA championship status: rowing (1996); ice hockey (2000); water polo (2000); bowling (2003); and beach volleyball (2015). Five sports are currently listed as emerging status: equestrian, triathlon, and most recently added in August 2020, wrestling and acrobatics and tumbling (NCAA, n.d.-c). According to Jean Merrill, the NCAA's Director of Inclusion, the common thread across these sports is "they have a foundation, an infrastructure, a presence at all levels of competition" (Gewirtz, 2019, para. 4). Each sport, however, has also taken its own journey, being both challenged by and benefiting from different criteria of the published ESW program. Women's rowing, for instance, was the first sport elevated to championship status in the 1996-1997 school. Yet, the sport's growth was not expected . First, high school participation rates have been low, narrowing the pool of talented athletes. Second, women's rowing is largely

unknown. The sport is both outside the realm of experience (i.e., understanding the sport itself) and control (i.e., located off-campus) of many athletic administrators (Rosner, 2001). Juxtaposed to ESW criteria, women's rowing is a sport, yes, but one that doesn't seem to demonstrate desired potential. If granted emerging or championship status, parasport would surely be another anomaly in regard to both of these points. Participation opportunities are limited, recruitment numbers are low, and even the parasports that are adapted from a traditional, standing version (e.g., wheelchair basketball, sledge hockey, sitting volleyball) disrupt (ableist) understanding due to the addition of equipment or simple rule changes (Berger, 2008). However, despite these challenges, as women's rowing demonstrates, requirements set forth by the ESW program can be overcome.

In general, the ESW program provides a framework for growing opportunity. Sports benefit from the internal infrastructure and inherent exposure gained upon entry (Larkin et al., 2014), but, ultimately, it's a fight to the finish. Maybe it shouldn't be, but as confirmed by Merrill, "There's a process, and it's not one to be taken lightly – nor should it," said Merrill. "The whole purpose of the emerging sports program is to provide these really robust, enriching athletic opportunities that parallel our other NCAA sports. That's not an easy task to do and requires some time and investment. It's a long haul" (Gewritz, 2019, para. 7). Though NCAA recognition would serve to substantiate adapted athletics (Larkin et al., 2014), similar to the women's context, it would be inaccurate to assume every parasport would experience the same trajectory. Therefore, this paper will give a more in-depth examination of the ESW's framework in application to wheelchair basketball, possibly the only sport that can be warranted such consideration because of its long-standing history of intercollegiate competition (NWBA, n.d.-a).

Wheelchair Basketball

Debate constantly circulates amid stakeholders about wheelchair basketball's potential within the infrastructure of the NCAA (Robeznieks, 2020). However, there is little extensive research on the issue. One article does provide a launching point for further critical analysis. Larkin et al. (2014) assessed the value of the ESW framework for growing wheelchair basketball at the college level. In general, the authors asserted that NCAA governance "would provide a measure of endorsement and authentication" (Larkin et al., 2014, p. 169), raising the profile of the sport and its athletes. However, they also identified five primary stipulations that would impact the sport's development in light of ESW program requirements.

First, the requirement of 20 teams at the time of application is problematic. In the 2019-2020 season, there were 11 men's and 5 women's intercollegiate wheelchair basketball teams registered with the National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA), so even combined numbers fall short of the ESW standard. In their discussion, Larkin and colleagues (2014) ascertained that the rule is meant to ensure that the applicant sport has institutional support and sustainability. Based on this assumption, wheelchair basketball has proven longevity – the University of Illinois program, for example, was established in 1948 (Chamberlain, n.d.) – therefore, the NCAA would be justified in extending a rule exemption or modification related to the requisite number of teams needed to achieve emerging status.

Second, there might be an issue of "divisional alignment" since programs are represented by all three divisions. However, Larkin et al. (2014) quickly acknowledged NCAA Bylaw 20.8.1, which allows for interdivisional competition if there are not enough teams for separate championships. In fact, several sports that have successfully received championship status through the ESW program are listed under this bylaw (i.e., women's beach volleyball, women's

bowling, women's ice hockey). The only disparity is that access to resources might give some teams a competitive advantage, but this, in actuality, is already the case for current teams.

The third issue is "academic eligibility". The current NWBA bylaws allow student-athletes five years of eligibility rather than the typical four allowed by the NCAA. Larkin et al. (2014) assessed that this distinction could easily be remedied by the NWBA. On the other hand, an exemption to allow five-year eligibility could enhance competition by providing more time for athlete and team development, especially in consideration of athletes who acquire their disability later in life.

Next, the authors noted the disproportionate numbers between men's and women's teams. Focusing solely on the development of women's wheelchair basketball would neither benefit institutions trying to reach Title IX compliance nor come close to meeting the requirements set forth by the ESW program (Larkin et al., 2014). For now, it may be reasonable to consider wheelchair basketball as a whole unit in assessing its compatibility with the ESW program, particularly because teams have the option of being coed (e.g., Edinboro).

The last issue brought forth by Larkin et al. (2014) was "institutional recognition". Becoming an NCAA emerging or championship sport does not guarantee bottom-up support and recognition from individual institutions that still must choose to sponsor wheelchair basketball under their own athletic departments. This of course has been the natural evolution of sport development in intercollegiate athletics. However, for the purpose of growing parasport, specifically wheelchair basketball, the NCAA may need to have a more targeted strategy, as discussed previously, to meet proportionality standards in terms of disability. Then, as Larkin and colleagues (2014) infer, this NCAA "symbolic recognition" would naturally create more incentive for schools to become hosts to wheelchair basketball.

After giving consideration to these five issues, Larkin and colleagues (2014) reasoned that integration within the NCAA shouldn't be a heavy burden. Nonetheless, the authors hesitated to afford any rule modifications, wary that special expectations could jeopardize wheelchair basketball's reputation and legitimacy. They maintained a belief that "disability sport must meet as many standards of the non-disability sport world [as possible] to avoid paternalism" (p. 180). Unfortunately, this is too often the reality; sports that are not self-sufficient by standards of the existing intercollegiate sport system are valued as sub-par (Berger, 2008; Hoffman et al., 2009; Robeznieks, 2020). This is revealing of enduring ableist norms about sport and athletic achievement central to the NCAA's approach that may leave the organization and its institutions vulnerable to future rights claims and litigation from advocates for para-sports.

Larkin et al.'s (2014) concern is well-founded, but it is the continued premise of this paper that the way things are can be changed. The NCAA needs to reach beyond compliance to include parasport within their infrastructure. Instead of trying to "fit in" the current ESW program, which was specifically developed in response to gender issues, the NCAA could establish a new program in response to disability issues – one for Emerging Parasports. For growth to ensue, as demonstrated by the women's context, a modified framework could help "focus program expansion in ways likely to produce a sufficient number of teams for meaningful championship-focused competition" (Buzuvis, 2011, p. 455). If anything, there would be less worry over legitimacy because the creation of a disability-specific initiative would demonstrate that the NCAA is taking its commitment to inclusion seriously.

Alternate Structure & Philosophy

The dominant paradigm in shaping interpretation and implementation of Title IX has been a competitive, commercially oriented understanding of intercollegiate sports. But before, and even for a while after Title IX, women's intercollegiate athletics adopted a separate structure and philosophy, one rooted in a self-development discourse instead of a corporate model (Hoffman et al., 2009). The Association of Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW) arose with Title IX in 1972 and worked for 10 years to administer women's intercollegiate athletics under this separatist strategy before its assimilation into the NCAA in 1982. This section considers how a separatist strategy could benefit or hinder the development of intercollegiate adapted athletics. By circumstances and choice, wheelchair basketball already lives under this separatist strategy with the NWBA. However, the intention of this paper is to think more broadly about an umbrella organization for all of adapted athletics – wheelchair basketball, wheelchair tennis, wheelchair track, and the other parasports that could arise, such as goalball, soccer, wheelchair rugby, and sitting volleyball. This section will present a brief overview of the AIAW's history followed by themes of governance to consider in potentially developing an organization specific to disability and intercollegiate sport.

Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women

Intercollegiate athletics became an important feature of the extra-curriculum at the start of the Progressive Era in 1890, when men and women began attending coeducational institutions. "These institutions differentiated the purpose of education for students based on gender; thus, women's athletics were shaped by the separate purpose of educating women students" (Hoffman et al., 2009, p. 133). Notions about what was 'good' for women proscribed their feminine and fragile bodies incompatible with athletics. Friendly recreation, or "play days,"

replaced any head-to-head competition that was thought to be harmful to their health as well as their 'duty' to the feminine ideal (Crincoli, 2011; DePauw, 1997; Hoffman et al., 2009; Sinisi, 2012). Focused on personal maturation, this participatory, social model was loosely formalized when the American Physical Education Association formed the Committee on Women's Athletics (CWA) in 1917. The CWA published standards for women's sport "based on the limitations, abilities, and needs of the sex rather than the continuation of applying a set of rules and standards designed primarily for men" (Plyley, 1997, p. 3). The committee opposed high level, elite sport in favor of rewarding educational experience through athletics. There were alternatives to this trend, but most competitive programs eventually fell captive to the dominant women's physical education movement (Hoffman et al., 2009).

In 1927, the CWA became the National Section on Women's Athletics (NSWA) and for decades was the authority on women's athletics in educational institutions (Plyley, 1997). While the NSWA stayed faithful to the "sport for all" philosophy, men's sport had at least 20 years to continue developing into their more "serious" competitive and corporate enterprise. It wasn't until the late 1950s, around the time the feminist movement and civil rights battles were surfacing, that women began to challenge their gender-differentiated model and embrace the competitive nature of athletics (Hoffman et al., 2009; Plyley, 1997). In 1958, the NSWA was elevated to the Division for Girls and Women's Sport (DGWS) under the auspices of the American Association of Health, Physical Education and Recreation. Women still disapproved of the commercialization rampant in men's athletics but "recognized the need to break away from the strict anti-competitive philosophy of the past in favor of a structure that would increase the opportunities for women and improve athletic programs for female students" (Plyley, 1997, p. 5). In 1965, the DGWS created the Commission on Intercollegiate Athletics for Women

(CIAW) to govern women's intercollegiate sport and, by 1972, national championships existed in seven different sports for female athletes. Even still, these changes did little to motivate and increase individual institutional financial support and recognition. Something about how little $ support and recognition they received from institutions.

Despite significant advances in women's opportunities, members of the DGWS traded the risk of instability for the vision of an "educationally sound and fiscally prudent model for intercollegiate programs" (Plyley, 1997, p. 6). On July 1, 1972 an organization based on institutional membership was established. The CIAW came to an end and the AIAW was founded. Though more structurally stable, the governing body was primed with an alternative model. Drawing "heavily on the heritage of women's athletics from coeducation. The AIAW promoted a separate women-led model of women's competitive sport that emphasized the educational aspects of sport, distinct form the commercial aspect of men's sport" (Hoffman et al., 2009, pp. 136-137). As the "athletic guardian" of women's intercollegiate sport (Uhlir, 1982, para. 1), the AIAW upheld the ideal that "the game was meant for the girl, not the spectator or the business of the university" (Mattheessen, 2015, p. 148). The organization "helped energize and politicize the women's sports movement in a national agenda" but was no less scrutinized in its effort to promote its alternative model (Fay, 1999). In 1973, confronted with legal action by players and coaches, the AIAW lifted its original ban on athletic sponsorship, and thereafter its operations began to mirror the commercially oriented tenets of the NCAA (Fay, 1999; Hoffman et al., 2009; Mattheeseen, 2015).

Meanwhile, the NCAA continued to seek control over women's intercollegiate sport. Starting in 1967, the NCAA sought to manage its legal obligations under Title IX and investigated the feasibility of controlling women's athletics (Hedges & Holland, 2012). Title IX

became the tipping point, forcing the NCAA to consider women's sport more strategically. With the support of the College Football Association and its member institutions, it immediately challenged the application of Title IX for intercollegiate athletics in an effort to protect its revenue producing sports (men's football and basketball) (Fay, 1999; Hoffman et al., 2009). Despite rising tension between the AIAW and NCAA, leaders on both sides considered the potential of a joint or merged collaboration to govern women's intercollegiate sports (Hedges & Holland, 2012). All recommendations, however, fell short of equal representation in the eyes of the AIAW, but the NCAA persisted (even if it was only because it was losing the legal war). During the 1975 annual convention, the NCAA introduced a resolution calling for a strategy on the administration of women's athletics, "including the desirability and necessity of a pilot program of national championships" (Uhlir, 1982, para. 8). Then, in October 1979, it appointed a special committee to make recommendations regarding the development of women's programs and services and the accommodation of their interests. By the January 1980 convention, in a quick turnaround decision, the committee concluded that it was feasible for the NCAA to house women's athletics (Uhlir, 1982).

The 1981 NCAA Convention voted to hold women's championships in all 3 divisions (Proposal 72; Hedges & Holland, 2012; Uhlir, 1982). Consequently, during the 1981-1982 school year, national championships were held by the NCAA, AIAW, and the National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) in overlapping sports. The NCAA's strategy was straightforward. It scheduled 16 of its 29 events in direct conflict with AIAW tournaments and offered travel subsidies, which the AIAW could not afford. The NCAA also offered membership at no cost to AIAW institutions, which undercut the basis of AIAW's financial support (Fay, 1999; Uhlir, 1982). The AIAW lost championship participation, membership and

dues, and commercial revenue and exposure. The NBC television network couldn't compete with

CBS in covering NCAA championships and, thus, dropped their contract and coverage with the

AIAW. The AIAW allocated its remaining funds to completing championships in the 1981-1982

academic year and an antitrust lawsuit against the NCAA (Hedges & Holland, 2012; Uhlir,

1982). Financially depleted, the AIAW ceased operation in 1982. Women's intercollegiate sport

grew under the AIAW's distinct philosophy and separate governance system and continued to

grow after entering the corporate enterprise of the NCAA; however, given their heritage of

exclusion (whether by choice or discrimination), women's sports are still seen as second-rate to

men's intercollegiate programs, and their athletic performance as inferior (Buzuvis, 2020).

Women are still fighting for equality.

Considering the benefits of a separate organization.

The architecture of women's intercollegiate sport changed with the AIAW's demise and

the NCAA's takeover. To this day, some leaders of the era argue that the transition was "the

right thing for college women" (Hedges & Holland, 2012, p. 45), while others would have liked

to see women steer their own course, believing "the NCAA takeover slowed down the

development of women's sport" (Hedges & Holland, 2012, p. 52). However, both sides would

argue that women's athletics still fall short of being equal, though equality might mean different

things to different people (Buzuvis, 2020; Robeznieks, 2020).

This paper is not meant to make judgement on the past or meditate on what could have

been. Rather, its intention is to learn from the implications of this structural transformation in

application to the development of adapted athletics. Unlike women's intercollegiate sport, the

infrastructure of intercollegiate adapted athletics has been rigid. In particular, the organizational

structure of the NWBA has remained stubborn in their control over wheelchair basketball. What

is missing is an organizational structure for all adapted athletics, as the AIAW was for women's intercollegiate sport.

In consideration of an alternate model for intercollegiate adapted athletics, as opposed to "fitting into" the NCAA, the following themes are explored: need for governance, philosophy of governance, representation in governance, rules of governance, and equity in governance.

Need for governance. The structural configuration of existing adapted sport programs varies widely. Though each sport has a national governing body (NGB) – wheelchair basketball: NWBA and wheelchair tennis: USAT – institutionally, programs are housed under various university entities – disability services, academic departments, and very rarely athletic departments. In the same way the NCAA "encourages" participation of students with disabilities, NGBs promote the creation of parasport programs, but institutions are left on their own to start, manage, and sustain parasport opportunities. Only a handful of programs have endured. There is a need for national governance to advance intercollegiate adapted athletics, whether by creating a new infrastructure or integrating into an existing one.

Similar to the women's context, intercollegiate adapted athletics could benefit from an alternate model to the NCAA. The AIAW was created to provide an effective entity for the development of equal opportunity for women both athletically and administratively (Hedges & Holland, 2012; Plyley, 1997). This targeted purpose allowed the organization to claim growth even within its short tenure. Its first year, the AIAW had 278 members and oversaw 7 sports with 7 championships. By 1980, it grew to 960 members, representing all 50 states and Washington DC, with governance over 19 sports and 41 championships in 3 divisions (Hedges & Hollan, 2012). With full autonomy, the AIAW could also provide state and regional level programming that existed outside traditional sport seasons and national championships. Overall, the focus on

"women's athletics not only created athletic opportunities but also facilitated greater public awareness and interest in women's sports" (Plyley, 1997, p. 34). Creating a separate organization for the purpose of administering and promoting intercollegiate adapted athletics may prove useful for similar growth in opportunity and interest for parasport. There is also an international level under the governance of the International Paralympic Committee (IPC).

However, to organize sports in a segregated manner could also hinder development and the achievement of equality. As Fay and Ackerman (2016) proscribe, strategies for growing the intercollegiate varsity game should be "Within, not beside" (slide 20). At the administrative level, this belief came true when United States Olympic and Paralympic committees merged in 2019 (USOPC, 2019). At the intercollegiate level, this could be replicated with the addition of a committee for adapted athletics within the NCAA or a more strategic approach to implementing the inclusion initiatives and policies it already endorses. Women's programs continued to grow under authority of the NCAA; however, parasport will need extra attention to benefit in the same way, not only by the Office of Inclusion but also by the structures in charge of overseeing sport participation opportunities.

Whether the argument is made for separate or integrated governance, "institutions engaging in intercollegiate athletics are dependent both upon each other and their joint membership in a national intercollegiate governing body" (Plyley, 1997, p. 24). Institutional membership to the AIAW or NCAA "ensured the right to compete in sponsored championships, potential large television revenues and reimbursements, fair and equitable competition, and 'educational credibility'" (Plyley, 1997, p. 24). In short, national governance is important for the success of intercollegiate sport, so, if anything, adapted athletics should consider how to proceed from a united front. In pursuit of an equitable participation model within the NCAA, the Council

of Collegiate Women Athletic Administrators (CCWAA) filled this role for women's sport

starting in 1979. The original purpose of the council was "to develop a forum for women in

intercollegiate athletics to exchange ideas with the ultimate goal of achieving increased

opportunities for women collegiate athletes at all levels" (Hedges & Holland, 2012, p. 22). It's

"primary focus was on 'opening doors' within the NCAA and not on shutting down the AIAW"

(Hedges & Holland, 2012, p. 24). In 1992, the CCWAA became the National Association of

Collegiate Women Athletics Administrators (NACWAA) and then, in 2017, Women Leaders in

College Sports, and continues to advance equality and equity in all areas of women's athletics

(Women Leaders in College Sports, n.d.). Athletes with disabilities would greatly benefit from

an organization dedicated to championing their participation.

Philosophy of Governance. The AIAW and NCAA were divided in their philosophy of

the purpose of intercollegiate athletics. The AIAW used "separate but equal" as its guiding

principle. Embracing the educational model, the organization believed "the focus of women's

intercollegiate athletics should remain on the individual participant in the primary role as college

student" (Hedges & Holland, 2012, p. 3). Sport was the mechanism for personal self-

development, an avenue to equal opportunity in society. An excerpt from the AIAW coaches

handbook highlights this ideal:

> Competitive sports provide practice opportunities in making value judgments and
>
> developing social relations…The coach should recognize the uniqueness and worth of
>
> each individual and help her to develop confidence, exhibit cooperation, and make a
>
> contribution to herself and others around her. (Mattheessen, p. 148)

The Paralympic Movement originates from a similar "participation for all" philosophy.

After WWII, sport was a rehabilitative tool to help injured veterans (re)integrate into society

(Legg et al., 2009; Legg & Steadward, 2011; Tweedy & Howe, 2011), and it continues to serve that purpose for many individuals with disabilities today. An alternate model to the NCAA, which allows parasport to remember its roots, could provide opportunity that better serves the unique needs of students with disabilities.

On the other hand, as the CCWAA believed about the AIAW, a separate philosophy could potentially inhibit the advancement of adapted athletics and delegitimize athletic achievement (Fay, 1999; Robeznieks, 2020). By avoiding the "evils associated with men's athletics" that make it elite and commercialized, as the AIAW did (Hedges & Holland, 2012, p. 22), a redundant structure could actually deny students with disabilities some of the equal opportunities due them under the law and relapse progress made thus far (Fay, 1999; Robeznieks, 2020). Regardless of feelings toward the NCAA's philosophy, women's sport witnessed a significant increase in the critical mass of women participating in intercollegiate athletics after entering the NCAA, despite lack of Title IX compliance. It's ability to offer high level and highly visible national championship events and athletic scholarships sparked interest in women's intercollegiate sport (Fay, 1999). NCAA recognition provides legitimacy to sport and could do the same for adapted athletics (Berger, 2008; Larkin et al., 2014; Robeznieks, 2020).

Although women's intercollegiate sport escalated from a recreational to competitive model under both AIAW and NCAA governance structures, it continues to fall captive to a self-development discourse because of ableist assumptions about sporting achievement. As non-revenue producing sports, the game is for the good of the student-athlete (Hoffman et al., 2009). This corresponds with the parasport context as well. The philosophy and model of the Paralympics "shift[ed] from sport as rehabilitation to sport as recreation to elite sport" (Bailey,

2007, p. 90) and witnessed "the transition from patient to athlete and from athlete to citizen" (Legg & Steadward, 2011, p. 1112). While mostly positive, the rise of elite sport has its implications. "Notably, the quest for high performance places the disabled body under intense scrutiny; athletes and their impairments are constantly judged by coaches, competitors, classifiers and journalists alike" (Powis, p. 1). In other words, the evolution of the Paralympics has helped legitimize parasport(s) but not disability itself. Like women's sport, the Paralympics continue to fight their heritage to become truly parallel (and equal) to the Olympics. Because of its current lack of support, intercollegiate adapted athletics will undoubtedly have to fight even harder.

Representation within Governance. The AIAW was created by women for women. Women leaders were the voice of their own needs and interests in every facet of the organization (Hart & Oglesby, 1979; Uhlir, 1982). And with the expansion of programs over time came thousands of new opportunities for their leadership to manifest. They were able to serve as role models and ensure student-athletes were well-represented in all sport committees and major forums (Uhlir, 1982). Individuals with disabilities are an underrepresented population in the workforce and sports industry. They could benefit from an intercollegiate organization led by people with disabilities for people with disabilities.

When women's intercollegiate sport entered the NCAA, a generation of female leadership and expertise was eliminated. Autonomy was wrested from female leaders and coaches at both the national and institutional levels, denying them "a significant and equitable voice and vote in the governance of university sport" (Hart & Oglesby, 1979, para. 3). Although the number of women in leadership in intercollegiate athletics is recovering, equity has yet to be fully restored (Lapchick, 2020). Leadership of disability is already lacking in the NCAA, and it's

expected that the NCAA will react somewhat predictably when pressed to let in "outsiders". If

they cannot deny entrance, they will try to assign these newcomers to positions outside the

decision-making chain or at least under the thumb of a person from the established in-group

(Fay, 1999; Robeznieks, 2020). Therefore, the immediate fate of equal or proportionate

representation of disability in the NCAA isn't reassuring. However, it will have to be prioritized

if the NCAA is to fulfill its commitment to inclusion and promote equitable participation of

students with disabilities to the full extent of their interests and abilities (NCAA, n.d.-e; NCAA,

n.d.-g).

  Rules of governance. There were sharp contrasts between AIAW and NCAA rule

structures, revealing of their philosophical differences. The AIAW "fashioned a rules structure

that insisted the athlete be a student in every sense of the term, and the rules system emphasized

that student-athletes should choose a college or university because of the institution's academic

programs" (Uhlir, 1982, para. 4). NCAA rules, on the other hand, spotlight athletic ability, not

just academic potential. Though the organization advocates in favor of academics, it also enables

commercial and competitive pressures for athletic success that present significant obstacles to

student athletes' academic success. In particular, there were three main NCAA practices

disapproved of by the AIAW: allowing recruiting (e.g., home and campus visits), the

determination of eligibility (e.g., scholarship, academic, and financial aid limitations regardless

of gender), and the accounting of revenue and expense (e.g., reimbursements; Hedges &

Holland, 2012).

  For parasport, one set of rules could help foster opportunity, but not necessarily equity in

outcomes. As discussed by Larkin et al. (2014), uniting under the NCAA could enhance

legitimacy and stimulate growth of wheelchair basketball. For this to be realized, the authors

recommended that the NWBA relinquish some rule differences, such as five-year player

eligibility. This compromise would start development on equal footing and prevent the sport

from being seen as inferior. However, this is not a perfect world and ableist beliefs will still

inform much thinking about parasport and its athletes. There will inevitably be disparities upon

entry into the NCAA. Since parasport is at a vastly different state of development, rules

appropriate for its development may differ from current NCAA bylaws.

      Equity in Governance. The NCAA primarily earns income from membership dues and

marketing of national championships to spectators, sponsors, and TV exhibitors (Plyley, 1997).

Therefore, "the NCAA, because of men's basketball, had the financial resources to provide better

opportunities for the women in terms of championships and travel reimbursement than the

AIAW could" (Hedges & Holland, 2012, p. 9). In the late 1970s, some women started

campaigning that "Only the NCAA could take women's sports to the next level of better

recruitment, greater funding, and, ultimately, more recognition" (Hedges & Holland, 2012, p.

11). Though dollars invested in women's collegiate sport were growing under the AIAW, it was

challenging. Women often had to do their own fundraising (e.g., bake sales), and the AIAW

didn't live long enough to reap a great return on their investment (Hart & Oglesby, 1979; Uhlir,

1982).

      Similar to the AIAW, on its own, intercollegiate adapted athletics is stretched for

resources. Creating an alternate governance structure would be asking a greater financial

commitment of institutions. In other words, institutions would have to pay a separate

membership fee to join the governing body and also provide money to create a new nonrevenue-

producing parasport. While a significant financial investment, providing adapted athletics would

be esteemed under mission and value statements about diversity, equity, and inclusion and could

reduce the need for future legislation and rights claims on behalf of student access to adapted

athletics . Entry into the NCAA, on the other hand, could provide a platform for growth to "the

next level" for the same reasons stated previously. Yet, there is a caveat. There is always a limit

to resources. As declared by Fay (1999):

> If required to expand their services to new target groups (and thus dilute their resources),
>
> they [referring to sport institutions] will reprioritize their existing goals and activities
>
> focusing on those which preserve those which can best maintain the rewards for the
>
> entrenched group unless provided with additional resources to support the new activities.
>
> (p. 436)

Women's sport entered the NCAA but has yet to realize "gender equity." One observation is,

"An athletic program is gender equitable when either the men's or women's sports program

would be pleased to accept as its own the overall program of the other gender" (Plyley, 1997, p.

128) – let alone, compliance under Title IX. Adapted athletics would have to expect a similar

fate. As discussed previously, parasport will have to "earn" an equal seat within the NCAA until

ableist assumptions are overcome.

Conclusion

"Real" inclusion means that individuals with disabilities have the same choices to

participate in sport as those afforded to their able-bodied counterparts (Fay, 1999). The purpose

of this paper was to examine the inclusive efforts of the NCAA in affording such opportunity

within the intercollegiate context. Currently, there exists a gap between policy aspiration and

implementation. Therefore, the author looked to the integrative history of women's

intercollegiate sport to understand how the NCAA might learn from the policies and programs

that helped increase female participation, in order to increase participation for individuals with

disabilities. The added consideration of developing a separate organization from the NCAA was meant to call attention to the need for a united front. Ultimately, it is the contention of this paper that boundless determination for equal opportunity cannot solely come from a marginalized identity group; there must be transformative action from the oppressive system as well. To truly embody an inclusive culture, the NCAA must be made to be more proactive, creative, and strategic in its efforts to expand separate and different sport opportunities for the benefit of a growing population within its member institutions, students with disabilities.

References

Ackerman, P., & Fay, T. (2016). *Creating new high performance opportunities for inclusive*

    sport for athletes with Paralympic-eligible disabilities [PowerPoint slides]. NCAA

    Inclusion Forum.

    https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2016_Inclusion_Forum_Creating_New_Inclusive

    _20160426.pdf

A Policy Interpretation: Title IX and Intercollegiate Athletics, 44 C.F.R. § 239 (1979).

    https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/t9interp.html

Arnhold, R., Young, L., & Lakowski, T. (2013). Part I – The historical and legal background

    leading to the Office of Civil Rights "Dear Colleague Letter." *The Journal of Physical*

    Education, Recreation & Dance, *84*(8), 20–23.

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq. (1990).

    https://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm

Bailey, K.D. (2007). *Athlete first: A history of the Paralympic movement*. John Wiley & Sons.

Berger, R. J. (2008). Disability and the dedicated wheelchair athlete: Beyond the "supercrip"

    critique. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *37*(6), 647–678.

    https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241607309892

Block, M. E. (2019). Editor's corner: University adaptive sports programs growing. *Palaestra,*

    33(1), 4.

Buzuvis, E. (2020). Title IX: Separate but equal for girls and women in athletics. In D. L. Brake,

    M. Chamallas, & V. L. Williams (Eds.), The Oxford handbook of feminism and law in

    the United States (forthcoming). Available at

    SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=3734582 or http://dx.doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.3734582

Buzuvis, E. E. (2011). The feminist case for the NCAA's recognition of competitive cheer as an

emerging sport for women. *Boston College Law Review*, *52*(2), 439–464.

Campbell, F.K. (2001). Inciting legal fictions: 'Disability's' date with ontology and the Ableist

body of the law. *Griffith Law Review, 2*, 42–62.

Campbell, F. (2013, November 27). *Problematizing vulnerability: Engaging studies in ableism

and disability jurisprudence.* [Keynote session]. Legal Intersections Research Centre,

University of Wollongong, New South Wales, Australia.

https://documents.uow.edu.au/content/groups/public/@web/@law/@lirc/documents/doc/

uow166211.pdf

Carty, C., van der Ploeg, H. P., Biddle, S. J. H., Bull, F., Willumsen, J., Lee, L., Kamenov, K., &

Milton, K. (2021). The first global physical activity and sedentary behavior guidelines for

people living with a disability. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health, 18*, 86-93.

Chamberlain C. (n.d.). *Tim Nugent: The father of accessibility*. United States Olympic &

Paralympic Museum. Retrieved on September 1, 2020, from https://usopm.org/tim-

nugent-the-father-of-accessibility/

Cohen v. Brown University, 101 F.3d 155 (1996).

Comerford, D. M. (2018). A call for NCAA adapted sports championships: Following the

Eastern College Athletic Conference's lead to nationalize collegiate athletic opportunities

for student-athletes with disabilities. *Marquette Sports Law Review*, *28*(2), 525–552.

Crincoli, S. M. (2011). You can only race if you can't win—The curious cases of Oscar Pistorius

& Caster Semenya. *Texas Review of Entertainment & Sports Law*, *12*(2), 133–188.

Dent, G. (2020, August 10). *New designees set to champion diversity and inclusion: Each*

school, conference is naming contact to help share information. NCAA.

https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/new-designees-set-champion-

diversity-and-inclusion

DePauw, K. P. (1997). The (In)visibility of DisAbility: Cultural contexts and `sporting bodies.'.

Quest (00336297), *49*(4), 416-430.

Edwards, A. R. (2010). Why sport? The development of sport as a policy issue in Title IX of the

Education Amendments of 1972. *Journal of Policy History, 22*(3), 300–336.

Fay, T. (2011). Disability in sport it's our time: From the sidelines to the frontlines (Title IX--B).

Journal of Intercollegiate Sport, *4*(1), 63–94.

Fay, T. G. (1999). *Race, gender, and disability: A new paradigm towards full participation and

equal opportunity in sport* [Ph.D., University of Massachusetts Amherst].

http://search.proquest.com/pqdtglobal/docview/304515532/abstract/7A00A945639F4AA

FPQ/1

Fay, T., & Wolff, E. (2009). Disability in sport in the twenty-first century: Creating a new sport

opportunity spectrum. *Boston University International Law Journal, 27*(2), 231-248.

http://sectorsource.ca/sites/default/files/resources/files/capacity_to_serve_english.pdf

Fitness and Athletic Equity Law for Students with Disabilities, MD. Educ. § 7-4b (2008).

https://www.disabilityrightsmd.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/09/Fitness-and-Athletic-

Equity-Law-For-Students-with-Disabilities.pdf

Gewirtz, J. (2019, January 16). NCAA emerging sports at 25: Three sports remain on the list to

gain full championship status. *SportsTravel*.

https://www.sportstravelmagazine.com/ncaa-emerging-sports-at-25/

Hart, K., & Oglesby, C. (1979, March). *AIAW resist 'sub'merger with NCAA*. Athletic

Business. https://www.athleticbusiness.com/college/aiaw-advocates-resist-sub-merger-with-ncaa.html

Hedges, B. A., & Holland, J. R. (2012). *Women's collegiate sports: AIAW to NCAA*. CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform.

Hendrickson, B. (2013). *Institutional role in providing for disabled athletes discussed*. NCAA. http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/news/institutional-role-providing-disabled-athletes-discussed

Hoffman, J. L., Iverson, S. V., Allan, E. J., & Ropers-Huilman, R. (2009). Title IX policy and intercollegiate athletics: A feminist poststructural critique. In E. J. Allen, S. Iverson, & R. Ropers-Huilman (Eds.), *Reconstructing policy in higher education: Feminist poststructural perspectives* (pp. 129-146). Routledge Taylor & Francis Group.

Jackson, B. W. (2006). Theory and practice of multicultural organization development. In B. B. Jones & M. Brazzel (Eds.), *TheNTL handbook of organization development and change: Principles, practices, and perspectives* (pp. 139–154). Pfeiffer.

Jenkins, W. (2019, October 23). Hundreds of colleges may be out of compliance with Title IX. Here's why. The Chronicle of Higher Education. https://www.chronicle.com/article/hundreds-of-colleges-may-be-out-of-compliance-with-title-ix-heres-why/?cid2=gen_login_refresh&cid=gen_sign_in

Kraus, A., & Ridpath, M. (2016). *Inclusive of all: Present and future opportunities for student-athletes with disabilities*. NCAA Convention, San Antonio.

Lakowski, T. (2009). Athletes with disabilities in school sports: A critical assessment of the state of sports opportunities for students with disabilities. *Boston University International Law Journal*, *27*(2), 283–316.

Lakowski, T. (2011). Advancing equity for students with disabilities in school sports. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, *4*(1), 95–100.

Lakowski, T. (2013). Q and A: Disability in sport dear colleague letter. *Active Policy Solutions*, Washington, D.C. http://www.activepolicysolutions.com/disability-qa/

Lapchick, R. E. (2020). The 2020 racial and gender report card. TIDES, The Institute for Diversity and Ethics in Sport. https://43530132-36e9-4f52-811a-182c7a91933b.filesusr.com/ugd/8af738_3b5d1b6bdb10457ebe8d46cc5a2fcfd0.pdf

Larkin, B., Cottingham, M., & Pate, J. (2014). Exploring the legitimacy of wheelchair basketball as an NCAA emerging sport. *Journal for the Study of Sports and Athletes in Education*, *8*(3), 168–185. https://doi.org/10.1179/1935739714Z.00000000029

Leo, J., & Goodwin, D. (2016). Simulating others' realities: Insiders reflect on disability simulations. Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 33, 156-175. http://dx.doi.org/10.1123/APAQ.2015-0031

Legg, D., Fay, T., Hums, M. A., & Wolff, E. (2009). Examining the inclusion of wheelchair exhibition events within the Olympic Games 1984-2004. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *9*(3), 243–258.

Legg, D., Higgs, C., Douer, O. F., Bukhala, P., & Pankowiak, A. (in press). A framework for understanding barriers to participation in sport for persons with disability. *Palaestra*.

Legg, D., & Steadward, R. (2011). The Paralympic Games and 60 years of change (1948–2008): Unification and restructuring from a disability and medical model to sport-based competition. *Sport in Society*, *14*(9), 1099–1115. https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2011.614767

Mattheessen, C. (2015). *A brief overview of the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for*

Women. https://www.eiu.edu/historia/Clara%20Mattheessen%20historia%202016.pdf

McGinniss, K. T., Goutos, D., & Tuakli-Wosornu, Y. A. (2020). Diversifying diversity, equity, and inclusion in American college athletics: The case for adaptive (and other non-traditional) sports. *The Sport Journal.* https://thesportjournal.org/article/diversifying-diversity-equity-and-inclusion-in-american-college-athletics-the-case-for-adaptive-and-other-non-traditional-sports/

Motch-Ellis, W. B. (2019). Equity, diversity, & inclusion: A resource guide for leaders in collegiate recreation. *NIRSA.* Retrieved from:

https://nirsa.net/nirsa/wp-content/uploads/nirsa-equity-diversity-inclusion-resource-guide-for-campus-recreation.pdf

NCAA. (n.d.-a). *How we support college athletes.* Retrieved March 14, 2021, from

https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/ncaa-101/how-we-support-college-athletes

NCAA. (n.d.-b). *About the NCAA.* Retrieved September 1, 2021, from

http://www.ncaa.org/about

NCAA. (n.d.-c). *Emerging sports for women.* Retrieved April 1, 2021, from

https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/emerging-sports-women

NCAA. (n.d.-d). *Minority Opportunities and Interests Committee.* Retrieved April 1, 2021, from

https://www.ncaa.org/governance/committees/minority-opportunities-and-interests-committee

NCAA. (n.d.-e). *NCAA inclusion statement.* Retrieved April 1, 2021, from

https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/ncaa-inclusion-statement

NCAA. (n.d.-f). *Senior Woman Administrators.* Retrieved April 1, 2021, from

https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/senior-woman-administrators

NCAA. (n.d.-g). *Student-athletes with disabilities*. Retrieved April 1, 2021, from

http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/student-athletes-disabilities

NCAA. (n.d.-h). *What is the NCAA?* Retrieved April 1, 2021, from

https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/media-center/ncaa-101/what-ncaa

NCAA Champion Magazine. (2013). *Boundless determination: Wheelchair sports advocates are*

steadily toppling barriers. http://www.ncaa.org/champion/boundless-determination

NCAA Emerging Sports for Women. (n.d.). *NCAA Emerging Sports for Women Process Guide*.

Retrieved from

https://ncaaorg.s3.amazonaws.com/inclusion/emsports/INC_EmergingSportsForWomen-

ProcessGuide.pdf

NCAA Office of Inclusion. (n.d.). Senior Woman Administrator: Understanding the designation

and her role on your senior management team. Retrieved June 7, 2021, from

https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/SWA_Brochure_11_2011_FINAL%20%281%29

.pdf

NWBA. (n.d.-a). *Dr. Tim Nugent Endowment*. National Wheelchair Basketball Association.

Retrieved September 1, 2020 from https://www.nwba.org/timnugent

NWBA. (n.d.-b). Intercollegiate Men. National Wheelchair Basketball Association. Retrieved

September 1, 2020 from https://www.nwba.org/page/show/5249550-intercollegiate-men

Office of Civil Rights. (2013, January 25). *Dear Colleague Letter*. United States Department of

Education. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201301-504.pdf

Office of Civil Rights. (n.d.-a). *Dear Colleague Letter: Students with disabilities in*

extracurricular athletics (January 25, 2013): Background and Fast Facts. U.S.

Department of Education. Retrieved June 7, 2021 from

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/dcl-factsheet-201301-504.html

Office of Civil Rights. (n.d.-b). Intercollegiate Athletics Policy: Three-Part Test-Part Three. The

Department of Education. Retrieved June 7, 2021 from

https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/title9-qa-20100420.html

Plyley, D. E. (1997). *The AIAW vs. the NCAA: A struggle for power to govern women's athletics*

in American institutions of higher education 1972-1982 [Master's thesis, University of

Western Ontario]. National Library of Canada.

https://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk2/ftp03/MQ28637.pdf

Pope, R. L., Reynolds, A. L., & Mueller, J. A., (2014). *Creating Multicultural Change on*

Campus. John Wiley & Sons.

Powis, B. (2020). *Embodiment, identity and disability sport: An ethnography of elite visually*

impaired athletes. Routledge.

Promis, D., Erevelles, N., & Matthews, J. (2001). Reconceptualizing inclusion: The politics of

university sports and recreation programs for students with mobility impairments.

Sociology of Sport Journal, *18*(1), 37–50.

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794 et seq. (1973).

https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/reg/ocr/edlite-34cfr104.html

Richards, E. E. (2011). Putting down the pom poms: The National Collegiate Athletic

Association should stop ignoring competitive cheer and grant these athletic teams NCAA

emerging sport status. *DePaul Journal of Women, Gender and the Law*, *1*(1), 5–40.

Robeznieks, E. (2020). Examining the potential inclusion of adaptive sport in the NCAA [MBA

Major Research Paper, Ryerson University]. Ryerson University Digital Repository.

https://digital.library.ryerson.ca/islandora/object/RULA%3A8862

Rosner, S. R. (2001). The growth of NCAA women's rowing: A financial, ethical and legal

analysis. *Seton Hall Journal of Sports Law*, *11*(2), 297–330.

Sinisi, J. V. (2012). Gender non-conformity as a foundation for sex discrimination: Why Title IX

may be an appropriate remedy for the NCAA's transgender student-athletes. *Villanova*

Sports & Entertainment Law Journal, *19*(1), 343–370.

Team USA. (n.d.). *About the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee*. Retrieved June 7, 2021,

from https://www.teamusa.org/about-the-usopc

Trainor, K. M. (2005). The NCAA's initial eligibility requirements and the Americans with

Disabilities Act in the post-PGA Tour, Inc. v. Martin era: An argument in favor of

deference to the NCAA. *Boston College Law Review*, *46*(2), 423–460.

Tweedy, S., & Howe, P. D. (2011). Introduction to the Paralympic movement. In Y.C.

Vanlandewijck, & W. R. Thompson (Eds.), *The Paralympic athlete* (pp. 3-30). Wiley-

Blackwell.

Uhlir, A. (1982, July 11). *Political Victim: The dream that was the A.I.A.W*. The New York

Times. https://www.nytimes.com/1982/07/11/sports/political-victim-the-dream-that-was-

the-aiaw.html

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 6, 2006,

https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-

with-disabilities.html

USOPC. (2019). U.S. Olympic Committee changes name to U.S. Olympic & Paralympic

Committee. https://www.teamusa.org/News/2019/June/20/US-Olympic-Committee-

Changes-Name-To-US-Olympic-Paralympic-Committee

Wolbring, G. (2008). The Politics of Ableism. *Development*, *51*(2), 252–258.

https://doi.org/10.1057/dev.2008.17

Women Leaders in College Sports. (n.d.) About: Our purpose. Retrieved on June 7, 2021 from

https://www.womenleadersincollegesports.org/WL/about/our-purpose/WL/About/our-

purpose.aspx?hkey=44fec3dc-e1fe-4825-8645-286560bb09a9

The Inclusion of Student-Athletes with Disabilities in the NCAA:

A Case Study of Notre Dame Track & Field

The Inclusion of Student-Athletes with Disabilities in the NCAA:

A Case Study of Notre Dame Track & Field

The National Collegiate Athletic Association's (NCAA) inclusion statement encompasses the provision of equitable participation for student-athletes with disabilities. Unfortunately, there exists a gap between policy aspirations and implementation. The current competitive landscape is insufficient to meet the needs and interests of student-athletes with disabilities. This is significant because athletics are an integral part of the collegiate experience as well as a building block within the athlete development pipeline. This study aimed to understand how athletes with disabilities are included in the existing infrastructure of intercollegiate sport. Using a process model of capacity building, the study employed an intrinsic single-case study design to examine how the University of Notre Dame Track & Field program included Sam Grewe, a single-leg amputee Paralympic high jumper. Participants represented three stratification levels of stakeholder engagement – athletes, management (coaches and trainers), and administration. Interview transcripts served as the primary source of evidence for integrated analysis regarding top-down (administrator-driven) and bottom-up (athlete-driven) processes and practices that influenced the inclusion of Sam. Findings illuminated a set of actions that were taken by Notre Dame to include Sam Grewe, why and how these were implemented and sustained, and to what result. Overall, the case study adds unique insight to the literature to ultimately expand the spectrum of opportunities for student-athletes with disabilities to participate in varsity sports at the college level.

Key words: disability, inclusion, intercollegiate sport, capacity building, case study

The Inclusion of Student-Athletes with Disabilities in the NCAA:

A Case Study of Notre Dame Track & Field

Disability is a complex and multidimensional concept and a definitive/undeniable "part of the human condition" (World Health Organization & The World Bank, 2011, p. 3). Global reports estimate that 1.5 billion people are currently living with a disability worldwide, and most people likely to experience disability in varying degrees in their lifetime. (Carty et al., 2021). "Disability can be understood as an interaction between personal, biological, societal, and environmental factors that can prevent "full and effective participation in society on an equal basis with others" (Carty et al., 2021, p. 86). Therefore, disability is a human rights issue, one which includes the right to participate in sport, recreation, leisure, and play (United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, 2006). This is significant because sport is known to have both individual (e.g., physical, social, psychological) and societal benefits for people with disabilities (Bentzen et al., 2021).

Unfortunately, barriers to sport participation for people with disabilities are numerous and impactful (Cottingham et al., 2016; Fay, 2011; McLoughlin et al., 2017). People with disabilities are at least twice as likely to be physically inactive as those without disability, causing further social, economic, and health marginalization (Carty et al., 2021). Their underrepresentation in sport and physical activity contexts are attributed to individual (e.g. interest, perceived ability), structural (e.g., funding, programs), and cultural (e.g., societal norms) factors (Hanlon et al., 2019; Legg et al., in press; Nixon, 2007). In sport development, these may also be classified as demand-side (i.e., individual circumstances) and supply-side (i.e., societal procedures and practices) barriers, both of which can account for the lack of opportunity and compromised engagement of people with disabilities in sport (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018; Kitchin

et al., 2019; Legg et al., in press; McLoughlin et al, 2017). Consequently, inequity in sport is persistent, but creating opportunities for inclusion "can help eliminate such barriers by changing perceptions, emphasizing strengths and abilities, promoting personal resilience, and having onward impact on inclusion in society" (Carty et al., 2021, p. 86).

Sport participation is important from the playground to the podium (Hutzler et al., 2016); thus, inclusive opportunities should be developed with a lifespan perspective. As a rights-based issue, persons with disabilities should be able to access all fields of play (Fay & Wolff, 2009; United Nations Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities, 2006). This means they should be offered a choice of participation options (Nixon, 2007), with each operationalized by inclusive practice (Kitchin et al., 2019). Misener and Darcy (2014) state that "inclusion from [a choice] perspective is about accepting responsibility for the provision of sporting opportunities and taking necessary steps to ensure that everyone is given equal chance to participate" (p. 4). In other words, sport organizations must work to bring people with disabilities from the margins of society to become integral members in their desired sporting communities (Fay, 2011; Fay & Wolff, 2009; Townsend et al., 2021). Unfortunately, as demonstrated by long-standing barriers created when left to their own devices, sport organizations do not assume this responsibility, at least not with great conviction.

In placing greater emphasis on expanding opportunities for participation and performance, procedures have evolved in an attempt to address inequities in sport for people with disabilities, mainly by way of new policy development. Implementation of such policy "involves government goals being operationalized by sports organizations" (Kitchin et al., 2019, p. 424). Internationally, the United Nations Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities "clearly outlines how organizations responsible for the provision of sport must take

appropriate measures to encourage and promote increased participation of disabled people"

(Townsend et al., 2021, p. 1). The United States has not ratified this universal human rights

framework but does protect the rights of individuals with disabilities to access athletic

opportunities through the enactment of public law (i.e., the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; Comerford, 2018). Despite the impact of these statutes

in social inclusion over the last half century, people with disabilities continue to be marginalized

and routinely excluded from the spectrum of sport opportunities that their able-bodied peers take

for granted, particularly at the collegiate level (Fay, 2011).

In the United States, unlike many countries, schools are a major source of athletic

opportunities for children and young adults. This includes colleges and universities. In fact, sport

is an integral part of the educational experience (Devine, 2016; Promis et al., 2001). Although

the number of students with disabilities on college campuses is increasing, there is a lack of

inclusive opportunities for sport participation (Devine et al., 2016; year; Promis et al., 2001).

There is an even greater shortage of competitive opportunities (McGinniss et al., 2020;

Robeznieks, 2020). Within the last decade, the National Collegiate Athletic Association

(NCAA), the primary governing body of intercollegiate sport, has committed itself to a core

value of "diversity, inclusion, and gender equity," with disability being one of five "inclusion

core areas" (NCAA, n.d.-a). The organization encourages the participation of student-athletes

with disabilities and "will provide or enable programming" (NCAA, n.d.-a) to "the full extent of

their interests and abilities" (NCAA, n.d.-b). Unfortunately, there is a gap between policy

aspirations and implementation. Missing are initiatives for increasing participation of athletes

with disabilities in intercollegiate sport.

As advised by Kitchin et al. (2019), peak sport agencies, such as the NCAA, need to articulate policy more effectively to clarify direction on inclusive efforts, understanding that greater efforts may be necessary to engage people with disabilities in sport. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the capacity of the NCAA and its member institutions to implement policy to include and accommodate athletes with disabilities within their existing infrastructure. Since inclusion of disability is not yet the norm, this paper will specifically examine a single case of inclusion of an athlete with a physical disability (Sam Grewe) within an NCAA (Notre Dame) Track & Field program. Findings can inform strategy and practice with regard to disability equity in intercollegiate sport and highlight considerations for the development and implementation of other related policies, research, and practices that can reduce barriers and create opportunities for sport participation for people with disabilities.

Ableism in Sport

Critical to this research is an understanding of ableism and how ableist ideology privileges certain (physical) bodies and, thus, provides the basis for eligibility and access (entry or refusal from) various fields of play. Ableism is defined as a schema of perfection that produces a particular kind of self and body, one which society uses as a measurement to being "fully human" (Campbell, 2009; Wolbring, 2008). As "the coveting of 'essential' abilities and types of bodies" (Powis, 2020, p. 32), and thus the rejection of others, ableism is an underlying construct that underpins all individual, structural, and cultural barriers to sport participation. Expectations of (sporting) ability influence our perception of disability in sport (DePauw, 1997), "resulting in fewer opportunities to compete for some and exclusion from competition for others" (Quinn et al., 2020, p. 8).

Ableism, though naturally associated with disability, is not confined to the narrative of

the physically impaired body. Rather, it has served as the common denominator between

inclusion and exclusion from the intercollegiate sport system for multiple bodies of difference

(e.g., race, sex, and gender; Crincoli, 2011; DePauw, 1997; Fay, 2011). DePauw (1997) provides

a simple framework, comprised of three key aspects – masculinity, physicality, and sexuality – in

which we can begin to understand traditional claims of the 'essential' body, and, by implication,

the inclusion or exclusion of those that deviate from the norm. In general, these ideals have

narrowed the image of athletic achievement, causing the individuals that fall outside of their

boundaries to have to fight for their entry into sport systems and constantly prove their value as

legitimate competitors. Some identity groups (i.e., female athletes and athletes of color) have had

greater success in gaining access than others (i.e., athletes with disabilities and transgender

athletes).

It is not surprising that sport can be a site of resistance to the disabled body, one that

obviously "stands (or sits) in contradiction to the hegemonic ideal" impressed on by society

(Berger, 2008, p. 649) and whose difference is even more so *outed* through participation in sport

(Powis, 2020). In fact, unlike other marginalized bodies, these athletes cannot argue that they are

not physiologically different. And when their different bodies impede "normal" functioning and

require accommodation (e.g., use of a wheelchair or prosthetic limb), it is harder to break down

the entrenched value system of sport (Powis, 2020; Promis, 2001).

Sport, however, can also be a site of transformation and empowerment (Berger, 2008).

The very notion of athletic competition can demonstrate the universality of the human condition

and disrupt the dominant understanding of what types of bodies are best suited to take part

(Powis, 2020). In turn, this can (re)define athleticism in a way that being different doesn't equate

with being inadequate or inferior (Promis, 2001). There has been forward momentum toward inclusion and acceptance of disability in sport, but there are still gaps in the pipeline of opportunity. The work of DePauw (1997) is yet again helpful in understanding the current and desired evolution of sport participation for people with disabilities. She sets out a three-tiered framework relating to the visibility of disability in sport, which states:

> individuals with disabilities (a) have been invisible or excluded from sport (invisibility of disability), (b) have become visible in sport as disabled athletes (visibility of disability in sport), and (c) are increasingly becoming visible in sport as athletes [(in)Visibility of disability in sport]. (p. 424)

Unfortunately, based on this framework, the collegiate context is lagging behind and is, at best, in transition between the first two situations. Therefore, a clear direction in how to implement policies (Kitchin et al., 2019) and negotiate barriers (McLoughlin et al., 2017) to create more opportunities is crucial. Just because certain identity groups have gained entrance and become more visible in the sporting world doesn't mean they have become full and equal participants. Given the pervasiveness of norms in society, there will remain a level of support for the status quo in college athletics until actively challenged. Therefore, this researcher does her best to use this broad lens of ableism, and keep it at the forefront of this research, to better understand inclusion as it pertains to athletes with disabilities in intercollegiate sport.

Policies Related to Disability in Intercollegiate Sport

The United States has not ratified the United Nation's Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, thus, is not bound by its policy to increase participation of people with disabilities in sport. However, the nation is accountable to its own legal mandates, the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, which

protect the interests of individuals with disabilities, including athletes with disabilities. "Both statutes prohibit the exclusion of qualified athletes on the basis of disability and require athletic programs to provide reasonable accommodations to ensure athletes with disabilities have access to athletic opportunities" (Comerford, 2018, p. 529). Access to athletic opportunities includes interscholastic, intercollegiate, and professional sporting contexts (Comerford, 2018).

The Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights published a Dear Colleague Letter in 2013 to clarify protections regarding equal opportunity in extracurricular athletics. The Guidance addresses four key areas (Office of Civil Rights, 2013): (a) legal requirements of schools under Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act; (b) warning against operating under assumptions or stereotypes about disability; (c) affordance of "equal opportunity for participation" in nonacademic and extracurricular activities, which includes the provision of "reasonable accommodations" (p. 6); and (d) discussion regarding the creation of separate or different athletic opportunities for students with disabilities who cannot participate in the school's existing programs. "Although the Guidance addresses K-12 activities specifically, the main principles of inclusion and equal access that it embodies apply to postsecondary schools, and also to interscholastic athletic associations" (Comerford, 2018, p. 536). Hence, the considerable lack of opportunities for students with disabilities in intercollegiate sport may be evidence of a lack of *equal* opportunity and, thus, a violation of legal standards by the NCAA and its institutions (Comerford, 2018). Institutions need to be mindful of the potential consequences of litigation and legislation over this issue in the future, particularly considering recent legislative action and legal rulings against the NCAA on the rights of student athletes to capitalize on their own name, images and likenesses (NIL).

The Letter (2013) impacted the actions of at least one collegiate conference. The Eastern

College Athletic Conference (ECAC) responded by adopting an "Inclusive Sport Strategy" to

concentrate efforts on expanding athletic opportunities for student-athletes with disabilities at the

college level (Ackerman & Fay, 2016; Comerford, 2018). To do so, Ackerman and Fay (2016)

introduced four principles of inclusion for athletes with physical (Paralympic-eligible)

disabilities to be included (a) onto existing teams and competitions without any sport-specific

accommodations, (b) onto existing teams and competitions with reasonable sport-specific

accommodations, (c) through the addition of specific (para)events into existing competitions, and

(d) through the creation of specific adaptive sports alongside peers without disabilities.

These principles imitate ideologies offered by the 2013 Dear Colleague Letter and demonstrate

the continuum of opportunity that is needed to ensure students with disabilities have a choice of

options (Nixon, 2007).

The conference had early success with integrating adapted sport demonstrations at both

the 2016 ECAC Track & Field and Swimming & Diving Championships. Also, the following

year, wheelchair races were added as point-earning events in the 2017 Collegiate Para Track &

Field Championship (Comerford, 2018). The NCAA supported the inclusive initiative by

promoting it on their website and even making it a topic of focus within its Inclusion Forum

series in subsequent years. However, despite early enthusiasm, the efforts of the ECAC appear to

be at a standstill (McGinniss et al., 2020). The "ECAC's first move in expanding collegiate

athletic opportunities is impressive, but they will need some help if they want the movement to

expand greater than it already has" (Comerford, 2018, p. 545). More intentional involvement by

the NCAA can continue the momentum through a domino effect within its conferences and

institutions. Without direct support, in competition for attention with other identity groups, disability always seem to fall short of priority (Kitchin et al., 2019).

In fairness, the NCAA has not been completely silent on the disability front. Within the last decade, the NCAA has restructured and recommitted itself to a core value of "diversity, inclusion, and gender equity" with the belief that an "inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation" enhances organizational excellence and improves the learning and athletic experiences of student-athletes (NCAA, n.d.-a). To promote and sustain this value, the NCAA's Office of Inclusion "will provide or enable programming and education" across, at the very least, five areas of inclusion: race and ethnicity, women, student-athletes with disabilities, LGBTQ, and international student-athletes. Specific to disability, "The NCAA encourages participation by student-athletes with disabilities (physical or mental) in intercollegiate athletics and physical activities to the full extent of their interests and abilities" (NCAA, n.d.-b).

Besides showing support of the ECAC inclusive initiative, recently, there have been steps taken to enhance solidarity between the collegiate landscape and the Olympic and Paralympic movements. "The United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee (USOPC) Collegiate Advisory Council recommended a set of NCAA autonomy reforms aimed at strengthening the pathway for student-athletes who are competing at both the collegiate and international levels" (Team USA, 2019, para. 1) and, in part, seeks to "offer broader inclusion of Paralympic sport within NCAA policies" (para. 3). If enacted, these policies may help fill a gap in equal opportunity for student-athletes with disabilities (McGinniss et al., 2020).

The NCAA is now being faced with top-down (USOPC) and bottom-up (ECAC) pressure to increase participation of student-athletes with disabilities. These sport policies can provide a framework to address inequity and promote action, but they will be more successful when paired

with a business-driven approach focused on achievement (Hanlon et al., 2019). In other words,

they will be more successful when initiatives to support policy implementation are introduced

simultaneously (Hanlon et al., 2019). This is evident in the increase of female participation

through Title IX policy and initiatives like the Emerging Sports for Women program. A more

recent example is the rise in support, investment, and growth of eSport, or competitive video

games (McGinniss et al., 2020). What remains uncertain is the capacity of the NCAA and

member institutions to adopt policies about disability and encourage the inclusion of student-

athletes with disabilities, with accommodations or otherwise, onto existing teams, competitions,

and championships (Ackerman & Fay, 2016). For now, there remains a gap between policy and

practice.

Building Capacity to Increase Inclusion in the NCAA

To implement intercollegiate policies that encourage the inclusion of athletes with

disabilities, the NCAA and its member institutions need the capacity to implement initiatives

and/or build the capacity to do so. Capacity building is ultimately about introducing planned

change within an organization to address a gap in organizational effectiveness (Millar &

Doherty, 2016; 2018), which, for the purposes of this paper, equates to the NCAA's ability to

include athletes with physical disabilities. Millar and Doherty (2016) developed a process model

of capacity building framed by their work with community sport organizations but intended for

broad application. This research extends its use within the context of intercollegiate sport. The

model contends that capacity building is a strategic, dynamic process initiated based on new or

changing situations in the organization's internal or external environment. This triggers the

organization to assess its capacity to respond to that stimulus (force; Millar & Doherty, 2016).

Organization capacity is defined as an organization's ability to draw on various resources

and assets in order to perform and achieve its goals and satisfy the needs of its stakeholders

(Doherty et al., 2014; Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020; Hall et al., 2003). In the nonprofit sport

literature, "[t]here is increasing consensus that organizational capacity is a multidimensional

concept, with organizations relying on a range of elements that operate in tandem to impact

performance" (Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020, p. 240). These elements are most commonly defined

using Hall et al.'s (2003) capacity dimensions: human resources, infrastructure and process,

financial resources, planning and development, and external relationships. Though the NCAA

has its own unique sport management culture (Robeznieks, 2020), Andrassy et al. (2014)

examined organizational capacity in the context of student-athlete development and showed that

the critical dimensions significant to community sport (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003) are

also meaningful to intercollegiate sport. Studies by Wicker and Breuer (2014), Kitchin and

Crossin (2018), and Kitchin et al. (2019) show that these capacity dimensions also apply to

organizations providing disability sport. Therefore, these same dimensions of organization

capacity will be applied within this paper.

Within the process of capacity building, where an organization is lacking capacity,

certain needs may be identified that ultimately frame capacity building objectives going forward.

Effective capacity building efforts rely on an organization's readiness to engage in the process

and achieve such objectives (Hanlon et al., 2019; Millar & Doherty, 2018; 2020). Readiness for

capacity building reflects the extent to which "an organization and its members are inclined to

accept, embrace and adopt a particular plan to purposefully alter the status quo" (Holt &

Vardaman, 2013, p. 10). Millar and Doherty's (2016) process model includes a multidimensional

conceptualization of the construct, encompassing the psychological (attitudes, beliefs, intentions,

efficacy), operational, and structural factors that may facilitate or inhibit the execution of capacity building. More specifically, organizational readiness (psychological dimension) refers to the ability, willingness, and commitment of organizational members; congruence (operational dimension) refers to the alignment, or disruption, of capacity building strategies with existing processes, systems, and organizational mandates; and the capacities to build and sustain (structural dimensions) refer to an organization's reliance on existing competencies and skills to achieve short-term and long-term goals (Millar & Doherty, 2016; 2020).

The review of an organization's capacity needs and readiness should then initiate the generation and selection of capacity building strategies, and, finally, inform an evaluation of the short and long-term impact of those chosen strategies (Millar & Doherty, 2020). The process of capacity building is cyclical, providing a constant feedback loop through which organizations can build upon their assets, alleviate barriers, and ultimately strengthen their capacity to implement (sport) policies and initiatives (Hanlon et al., 2019; Millar & Doherty, 2016; 2018; 2020). This study adopts the capacity building model to identify whether NCAA member institutions have the capacity to include athletes with physical disabilities and describe any capacity building undertaken to do so.

Purpose Statement

Although the NCAA commits itself to a value of inclusion and diversity, and has, in fact, supported the implementation of inclusive initiatives (e.g., ECAC strategy), there has not been enough done to assess how to facilitate the participation of student-athletes with disabilities within its existing teams and competition structures (Ackerman & Fay, 2016). The purpose of this study, therefore, was to investigate the capacity of intercollegiate athletics to do so. How could "atypical" athletes be included within the very traditionalist sport system of the NCAA?

Specifically, a qualitative case study approach was utilized to gain a deeper understanding in an

area where there is currently limited knowledge (Millar & Doherty, 2018, 2020). Framed by the

process model of capacity building (Millar & Doherty, 2016), the paper examined Sam Grewe's

– a single-leg, Paralympic high jumper, who requires assistive technology to compete (i.e.,

prosthetic leg) – inclusion in Notre Dame's Track & Field program. The hope was to illuminate a

set of actions taken by Notre Dame to include Sam Grewe, why and how these were

implemented and sustained, and to what result. Findings can inform strategy and practice,

specifically in regard to Ackerman and Fay's first two principles of inclusion, to ultimately

expand the spectrum of "equal opportunity for participation" (Office of Civil Rights, 2013) for

athletes with physical disabilities in intercollegiate athletics.

Methods

This study employed a case study approach both because of what is being studied (i.e., as

a topic) and how it is being studied (i.e., as a method). In regard to the former, this study was

undertaken primarily because of an *intrinsic* interest in the case itself (Stake, 2005). That is, the

driving force of this study is not theory building but rather a deep intrigue regarding the case of

Notre Dame Track & Field, specifically the inclusion of Sam Grewe within its existing

infrastructure. Atypical of everyday occurrences, the case is what Yin (2018) would call

"extreme" or "unusual" (p. 50). And thus, an intrinsic single-case study approach was justified to

probe its particularity (and ordinariness) in expectation that findings may reveal insights about

normal processes and practices as well (Stake, 2005; Yin, 2018).

More than any topical association, the case study is also an empirical method and was

utilized as such in this research. It provided an effective 'logic of design' for the research

problems and circumstances this study sought to understand, the issues of "how" and "why"

Notre Dame included Sam Grewe (Yin, 2018). This research exploited the empirical advantage

of case studies to investigate not only if programs work, but also how they work – to reach

beyond the question of effectiveness and "deal with the tracing of operational processes over

time, rather than mere frequencies or incidence" (Yin, 2018, p. 10). Using the process model of

capacity building, (Millar & Doherty, 2016) this study aimed to examine a set of actions, based

on organization needs and assets, that have been taken by Notre Dame to include Grewe into

their existing infrastructure.

The Case and Context

The University of Notre Dame is located adjacent to South Bend, Indiana, the center of a

metropolitan area with a population of about 300,000. The university itself serves an

undergraduate student population just shy of 9,000. Academic departments and faculty

participate in a mission to ensure their Catholic character informs all of their teaching, research,

and student life endeavors (Notre Dame, 2020). Notre Dame's athletic department is an NCAA

Division I (DI) institution that houses 13 Men's and 13 Women's varsity sports. The Track &

Field program is a member of the Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC). The program has

traditionally been more successful in distance events. Most recently, the Men's Fighting Irish

took fourth place in the 2021 ACC Outdoor Championships and sent three male distance runners

and one shot-putter to the NCAA Track & Field Championships (Notre Dame, n.d.).

Sam Grewe was accepted at Notre Dame for his academic merits. He started his college

journey during the 2017-2018 academic year. He became an NCAA student-athlete the following

2018-2019 academic year, as a sophomore, when he joined the Track & Field program as an

unrecruited walk-on in the high jump. Sam did not rank in the top 20 ACC high jumpers this past

2021 season. Sam's personal record of 1.9 meters (6'2.5") falls short of the top-ranked ACC high

jumper's mark of 2.17 meters. However, the 'novelty' of Sam is that he is a single-leg amputee. His story has been told through various media platform to varying degrees. I received a glimpse as well, from his socialization into sport, back into sport after his surgery, to his future career plans. The details provided here are only the bare bones of his story but what I determined essential for 'setting the scene' of his inclusion at Notre Dame.

Sam was diagnosed with bone cancer (osteosarcoma) in his right leg in December of his seventh-grade year. Chemotherapy treatment was not sufficient enough to remove the tumor in his femur. His doctor provided him with two options – limb salvage (i.e., joint reconstruction) or amputation. Although the first option would restore cosmetic appearance, the second would provide a better chance of returning to an athletic lifestyle. As a multi-sport athlete, Sam chose to amputate his leg. During his cancer treatments in South Bend, Sam was invited to become an honorary member of the Notre Dame football team. Players and the athletic director followed his story, visited him during treatments, which was an "amazing and helpful experience" that "provided inspiration for me to keep going" (Sam).

While still learning how to run, let alone walk, with his new prosthetic leg, Sam returned to team sports with his peers by his freshman year of high school. Later that same year, he was introduced to adaptive sports by way of Para Track & Field. His first experience participating was exhausting but inspiring:

> Right off the bat, it was really cool for me to see so many athletes who look like me, who are arm or leg amputees or use the wheelchair and just to see them running, throwing, jumping faster, higher, further than anyone I had ever seen, you know, even with two legs or with two arms, whatever it may be. And so that was really inspiring to me because it kind of showed me what's really possible. (Sam)

Sam "had never done Track & Field before, and so I signed up for every event that was offered

to me…and high jump was actually one of the last ones" (Sam). But that first instance launched

Sam's trajectory into becoming a two-time World Champion and decorated Paralympian,

winning silver at the 2016 Rio Paralympic Games. Though he "didn't know any of the form or

approach" when he took his first attempt, the presence and encouragement of "the head coach of

the U.S. National Paralympic team who just happened to be there at the high jump…was enough

to convince me. So I went home and started training high jump" (Sam). Sam experienced rapid

progress toward elite competition after that and quickly came to dominate his discipline.

Participants

Because this study's case is at the program level (i.e., Notre Dame Track & Field), an

embedded design was employed (Yin, 2018). The subunits used mirror the three stratification

levels of stakeholder engagement adopted by Fay's (1999) organization continuum in sport

governance: athletes, management (coaches and training staff), and administration. Addition of

these subunits provided space for "integrated" analysis, to reflect focus on the interaction

between different stakeholder levels, particularly the top-down (administrator-driven) and

bottom-up (athlete-driven) processes and practices that influenced the inclusion of Sam.

Participant information based on these analytic levels is presented in Table 1. The voices and

perspectives of these insiders was privileged throughout the research process in attempt to

capture the "experiential happenings" (Stake, 2005, p. 449) of those "living the case" (p. 445).

Creating space for the knowledge and lived experience of these important stakeholders was

essential to understand what is important about the case within its own world, which is not my

own, and "develop what is perceived to be the case's own issues, contexts, and interpretations,

its "thick description"" (Stake, 2005, p. 450).

Important to note is that a challenge of this study was anonymity. It is a single-case study design that highlights an "unusual" phenomenon (Yin, 2018) – the inclusion of a single-leg amputee track athlete on an NCAA team. The approved IRB addressed this concern, and, gratefully, Notre Dame agreed that real names and titles could be used in reporting. Participants were contacted by emails from Notre Dame Athletics staff directory and represented all subunits of analysis (see Table 1). They were explicitly made aware of the issue of anonymity and given the option to decline participation or drop out of the study at any time. Member checks were also used during data analysis to verify interpretation and conclusions, allowing respondents to spot information that could threaten their professions (Miles et al., 2020). Because "[q]ualitative studies call for continual refocusing and redrawing of study parameters" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 26), the idea of "informed consent" was an ongoing process between the researcher and participants so to be transparent about nature of the study.

Table 1

Notre Dame Participants

Stratification Level	Participant Name	In-text Citation	Participant Role
Athletes	Sam Grewe	(Sam)	High Jump, Senior
	Sarah Flight	(Sarah)	High Jump, Sophomore
Management	Matt Sparks	(Sparks)	Director of Track & Field and Cross Country, 2018
	Rodney Zuyderwyk (Coach Z)	(RZ)	Assistant Coach – Hurdles, Vertical Jumps, Multievents, 2018

	Colleen Looney	(Colleen)	Assistant Strength and Conditioning Coach for Olympic Sports
	Morgan Buchs	(Morgan)	Associate Athletic Trainer/Physical Therapist, Cross Country and Track & Field
Administration	Cody Brousek	(Cody)	Director of Operations, Track & Field and Cross Country
	Claire Leatherwood Slebonick	(Claire)	Assistant Athletics Director (Policy Management)

Data Collection

This study used documentation, interviews, and observation to seek out what is both common and unique about the case (Stake, 2005). As a form of data triangulation (Patton, 2015), this helped develop conversing lines of inquiry and ultimately helped strengthen the trustworthiness (construct validity) of the story being told. Documentation was collected prior to and during the interview process for three main reasons: (a) to "set the scene" and familiarize myself with relevant issues, (b) to identify potential informants that I had yet to consider, and (c) "to corroborate and augment evidence from other sources" (Yin, 2018, p. 115). Some examples of pertinent documentation were news articles and press releases, team schedules and training plans, and Track & Field rules and regulations. Various media outlets were significant as well, such as YouTube to watch some of Sam's previous competition performances (which also served as a form of observation). Observation was a limitation of this study because of the virtual nature of data collection. I deliberately chose not to ask participants to live record themselves during

training sessions or competitions. However, direct observation, though restricted to what could

be captured on a screen, was relevant to the interview process by adding new dimensions of

meaning to what was being said (Yin, 2018).

Interviews are the most important sources of case study evidence and were used as such

in this research. They allowed for a retrospective approach while still gathering in-depth

narratives of the participants who not only experienced the inclusion process but also helped

construct it. As common in qualitative case study research, interviews employed an "intensive"

or "unstructured" style, resembling "guided conversations rather than structured queries"

wherein my actual stream of questions were fluid rather than rigid (Yin, 2018, p. 118). Yet,

having some standardization by using an interview guide helped avoid collection of superfluous

information while still providing space for particularities to emerge. Therefore, conversation

with participants addressed, at the very least, four broad topics: Sam's walk-on process, training

sessions, competition experiences, and the impact of his inclusion. Three separate interviews

were conducted with Sam since it the perspective of the person with a disability that should hold

the most clout. All other participants engaged in single interviews via Zoom that took anywhere

from 30 to 60 minutes. While conducting these open-ended interviews, I did my best to always

act with an intentional alertness in order to maintain an intimacy with the issues and data but also

to take advantage of the unexpected opportunities that arose in discussion about Notre Dame's

capacity to include Sam (Yin, 2018).

Data Analysis

The primary source of data was transcribed interviews with the eight participants of this

study (i.e., ten edited Zoom transcripts), and thus coding was the main method of discovery and

I, the main analyst. Most data, therefore, was be studied by hand. The study underwent two

major stages of coding (Saldaña, 2016). The first stage also had sub-phases. First, I performed a round of provisional coding using descriptive methods to allow novel facets of data to emerge without any preconceived notions of their meaning (Miles et al., 2020). Then, I utilized a priori codes self-generated using various elements of Doherty et al.'s (2014) organization capacity dimensions (e.g., human resources, financial infrastructure, planning and implementation) as well as Millar and Doherty's (2016) capacity building process model (e.g., organization needs and assets). In other words, to describe and analyze all possible patterns of interrelationships, coding started inductively but then transitioned to a deductive process that revealed codes gradually and then within the parameters set by the conceptual framework. The second stage of coding focused on "clustering" the initial summaries or tags into smaller categories, themes, or concepts (Miles et al., 2020, p. 276). Referred to Pattern coding, this process helped keep the study's focus targeted by condensing large amount of data while also elaborating "a cognitive network" or "bigger picture" configuration for understanding the phenomenon within its real-world context (Miles et al., 2020, p. 79).

Throughout these stages of coding and ongoing analysis, several tactics were used to establish the quality and trustworthiness of the research. For example, I engaged in what Miles et al., (2020) refers to as jottings and analytic memos. Jottings were my "fleeting and emergent reflections and commentary" on the issues that materialize during data collection and analysis (Miles et al., 2020, p. 86), and analytic memos are extended narratives of my jottings. In many ways, these memos acted as tentative progress reports about how I was interpreting and piecing together the emerging patterns found within the data. (Miles et al., 2020). They provided reminders to stay critically reflective about my personal biases and research practices, and the potential consequences of those decisions, as well as to stay in ongoing dialogue with theory

(Quinn et al., 2020). Further, multiple sources of evidence were used to triangulate data and as

mentioned previously, 'member checks' were utilized so participants could add, modify, or

redact information about the evolving conceptual framework derived from analysis (Yin, 2018).

Peer review was another technique used to verify appropriate use of coding and triangulation.

Finally, no participant was left unheard within the study's write up. This is important because

multiple perceptions can help clarify areas of uncertainty and reconcile any differences or

deviant information unearthed in the data (Miles et al., 2020; Stake, 2005), which was true for

various topics of discussion within this study (e.g., see discussion about competition policy). In

addition, all data is linked back to theoretical propositions and concepts presented in the study's

guiding frameworks (Miles et al., 2020; Yin, 2018), and the "findings include enough "thick

description" [regarding the case and its context] for readers to assess the potential transferability

and appropriateness for their own settings" (Miles et al., 2020, p. 307).).

Findings and Discussion

Findings of this case study are presented under the four main stages of the process model

of capacity building – stimulus, capacity assessment, capacity building, outcomes. Discussion

within each part is systematically illustrated with verbatim excerpts and based on the elements

developed in the conceptual framework.

Stimulus

The process of capacity building is stimulated by an organization's decision to respond to

some environmental force, representing some opportunity or threat to the organization's internal

or external environment. Effective capacity building acknowledges what prompted it from the

outset because all decision-making should be intimately linked to that stimulus (Millar &

Doherty, 2016). Therefore, it is important to understand that Notre Dame was not acting upon

any top-down directive from the NCAA or ACC. Coach Sparks even admitted he was unaware

of any national or intercollegiate policy. Rather, the stimulus came from the individual level –

from Sam – affirming the gap between policy development and implementation in regard to

expanding opportunities for athletes with disabilities. Critical to bridging this gap then is to

provide more detail about his role as the stimulus.

Sam was not recruited but accepted to Notre Dame on his academic merit. He was a

Paralympic athlete who wanted to keep training but was finding it hard to do so without access to

resources and facilities, unfortunately not an unusual challenge for even elite athletes with

disabilities (Hutzler et al., 2016). Empowered by his athletic achievements – "silver medal in

Rio, a World Championship title" – Sam figured "maybe I could try to walk on to the Notre

Dame team" (Sam).

> At the bare minimum, I was just hoping for an opportunity to train with the team, to use
>
> the resources, to use the weight room, the high jump pit, the indoor and outdoor track.
>
> You know, I would love to compete, and I think I deserved to compete, but I knew that's
>
> asking for a lot. If nothing else, let me just train. (Sam)

In his requisition, Sam was looking for access not inclusion. In fact, he doubted the possibility of

his inclusion on the team. His conviction competed with a disbelief in the intercollegiate sport

system, and even more, he didn't know how to enter its ableist traditions (DePauw, 1997; Fay,

2011). He "was a freshman…new to the whole system of college as well as college sports [and]

did not know how the leverage there works" (Sam). Therefore, he "continued training on my

own for that year" (Sam).

With the arrival of a new head coach and jumps coach his sophomore year, Sam decided,

"What the hell? I'll give it a shot again." (Sam). His requisition was similar to the first, an

expression of internalized ableism (Fay, 2011). He sent an "email just presenting who I am, what I'm hoping for, which wasn't a spot on the team, it was a place to train" (Sam). Regardless of expectations, when Coach Sparks transitioned to his new role as head coach, "Sam was one of the first things across my desk" (Sparks). He didn't dismiss Sam's request, instead he mentioned it to the new jumps coach, and "it must have been a few weeks later or something, we actually sat down and started talking about it" (RZ). This conversation, the capacity assessment process they engaged in, is discussed in the next section.

Although many collegiate Track & Field athletes do their own bidding, there remains an invisibility of disability within intercollegiate sport (DePauw, 1997), at least within the recruitment process. Sam's story is not unlike many others. Anthony Robles (amputee wrestler) and Hunter Woodhall (double-leg amputee sprinter) are examples of other elite athletes with disabilities who were overlooked and had to bargain their own narrow entryway into intercollegiate athletics. "With regard to mainstream (or traditional) sports, the regulations are clear that schools must include qualified students 'to the maximum extent possible'" (Comerford, 2018, p. 542), but if the stimulus is always from the individual level (bottom-up), rather than from the national or institutional level (top-down), then athletes with disabilities will be kept in the margins of intercollegiate athletics (Fay, 2011).

Capacity Assessment

There may have been additional forces at work that remained unaccounted for during interviews. For example, if not disability-specific sport policy, the influence of broader equity and diversity initiatives could have been at play. Nevertheless, Sam was the primary stimulus, and it was Sam's request across the desk of Coach Sparks that initiated an informal capacity assessment process. To engage in such a decision, the inclusion of Sam, organizational capacity

theory contends that certain organizational assets and resources are critical to organizational

effectiveness (Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020). Notre Dame Track & Field referenced three of Hall et

al.'s (2003) capacity dimensions to assess their capacity to include Sam. Therefore, the

presentation of findings and discussion in regard to capacity assessment are framed using these

three dimensions – human resources, infrastructure, financial resources.

Human Resources

Human resources capacity broadly refers to the deployment of the competencies,

knowledge, attitudes, and behavior of staff by an organization to achieve its goals (Doherty &

Cuskelly, 2020; Hall et al., 2003). Research has consistently identified human resources capacity

as the most critical dimension that leads to all other capacities (Hall et al., 2003; Millar &

Doherty, 2016). The case of Notre Dame is no exception. All participant stratification levels

(athlete, management, administration; Fay, 2011; Fay & Wolff, 2009) were taken into

consideration and influenced the decision-making process.

Topics about coaching disability are rarely infused within mainstream coach education

pathways. The result is that many coaches demonstrate a 'fear of the unknown' in working with

athletes with disabilities, thus limiting opportunities for participation. (Cushion et al., 2020). This

case study was possible because Sam was in fact included in Notre Dame's Track & Field

program, but the first promising sign was Coach Spark's willingness to even consider the Sam's

inclusion, even if "the talks occurred honestly over my head to start off with" (Sparks). "Sam

was kind of included in the athletic department" (Claire) already because "Long story short, the

Notre Dame football team basically 'adopted' me onto the team" (Sam) when he was a cancer

patient. During that time, Sam also met the athletic director, who "fell in love with my story [and

became] very close to the family and helped us get through a lot" (Sam). He had the support of

Notre Dame administration, which granted him legitimacy. (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). Until

disability has become an inherent feature of intercollegiate sport, this allied relationship is an

important component of expanding inclusive opportunities. Inclusion will take a collaborative

approach "between those who hold the power to create, regulate and enforce policies, and those

who are most affected by them" (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 200).

>   With this top-down prompting, Coach Sparks underwent some assessment on his own,

asking questions that any coach probably would:

>> How do we include him? This was all a new process for me as well, obviously, it was my
>>
>> first time as a director, but also my first time dealing with a person with a disability. And,
>>
>> never having really seen him compete, the initial question in my mind to our jumps
>>
>> coach, to Coach Z, was how big of concessions that we would have to make? And, how
>>
>> challenging is that going to be for us *and for him* to include him? (Sparks)

The last part of his stream of conscious is essential. Coach Sparks demonstrated even early on

that inclusion is two-sided. It would not just be about the program's capacity to include Sam but

also Sam's capacity to include himself. But, to address his part, Sparks turned to his staff and

quickly came to the conclusion, with their support, that including Sam wasn't a risk. This is

revealed by the more affirmative nature of his questions:

>> I took all of about 10 minutes to talk to the athletic trainer, the strength coach, and Coach
>>
>> Z. "Why would this not work?" was the bigger question that we asked. You know, we
>>
>> couldn't come up with an obstacle other than there wasn't one. (Sparks)

>   The staff were all in agreement, and having a "common focus" or being "on the same

page" is a critical element to human resources capacity (Doherty et al., 2014). The staff

demonstrated this existing capacity despite not having extensive knowledge or experience

working with athletes with disabilities. However, maybe they had just enough that led them

toward acceptance of Sam's inclusion. The athletic trainer, Morgan, also had a background in

physical therapy. Neither degree provided much detail about athletes with disabilities, but

physical therapy emphasized "care long-term for a broader patient spectrum, so both degrees

merged really well into track and field" (Morgan), equipping Morgan with additional skill to

work with various populations and injuries. The strength coach, Colleen, said there was

absolutely no mention of disability in her education, but she grew up in a military family, and "I

did an internship with Special [Operations], so I've seen guys with amputations lift and train, and

I've had conversations with some of them. I haven't actually programmed for anyone before Sam.

So, it wasn't something I was worried about" (Colleen). Finally, probably the most important

perspective under consideration was that of Coach Z, who would be his primary jumps coach.

Coach Z did not have formal education or experience working with athletes with disabilities, but

he did have incredible exposure:

> I've seen a lot of disabled athletes competing at our just regular open meets, like in
>
> Australia. You know, they would have their own division or own race, but it would
>
> certainly be included in our championships…I mean, Sam or anyone with a disability has
>
> just as much right to compete at the highest level…And so I think, because of that, I had
>
> been exposed to it, I see it as a real sport, I was on board with it. (RZ)

Coach Z's conceptualization demonstrates the value of the (in)visibility of disability (DePauw,

1997). "The importance lies in seeing all bodies in the context of the sport in which they

compete…It is important to appreciate elite disability sport on its own merits" (Purdue & Howe,

2012, p. 203). However, this does not imply we wait for the transformation of ableist sport

systems to occur "naturally" through these visual portrayals of athletic achievement. Consistent

with the literature, the backgrounds of these staff members, to no fault of their own, are revealing

of an underdeveloped workforce because disability is absent or at best "ad hoc" in coaching

education (Townsend et al., 2021). Coaches are generally not trained in the specific

circumstances of disability and parasport and their various contexts (Cushion et al., 2020), which

rings true of many other disciplines as well. How we, as educators, researchers, and practioners,

view and engage disability matters if we are committed to expanding inclusive opportunities for

sport participation (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018).

In regard to human resources capacity, Sam was obviously part of the consideration too.

First, "he obviously already had some great athletic prowess" (Claire), proven by his athletic

accolades: "I had won two World Championship Paralympic titles and was in Rio, and I think

they did not really understand like really what that means, but I think they just thought that was

super cool" (Sam). Sam also demonstrated the characteristics of a well-rounded student-athlete:

> His marks were competitive enough…He was a good student. That's always a question
>
> we have for a kid that we're inviting to walk on the team or that asks for a spot on the
>
> team. How are your grades? How's your personality?...For a 19/20 year old kid he was at
>
> the time, he was mature beyond his age and so that made it easier. It was just a no brainer
>
> to afford him that opportunity. (Sparks)

Sam's athletic, academic, and personal resume met all program expectations, which was

reinforced by Claire, "I mean administratively if you've got somebody of Sam's caliber, it's not

hard to say yes to that."

Infrastructure and process

Infrastructure and process was another capacity dimension critical to Notre Dame's

decision to include Sam. Infrastructure capacity is concerned with day-to-day operations of any

organization (Doherty et al., 2014), including "the processes, practices, accumulated knowledge, and support structures within an organization that help it to function" (Hall et al., 2003, p. 37). This dimension was mostly embodied by Claire, which is logical because of her role as sport administrator for the team, her own cross country and track background, as well as other higher-order duties she held within the athletic department. The infrastructure of the athletic department, Track & Field as a sport, and the high jump as an event, all strengthened Notre Dame's capacity to include Sam.

First, the governance structure of the Notre Dame athletic department is rare within intercollegiate sport.

> At Notre Dame, we've decentralized the model, so that means that each sport gets its own sport administrator, including cross country and track…We work really closely together…so it is great, because the whole goal of having a more decentralized model is that you become much more embedded in the program, and you're a lot closer to the student-athletes, you're a lot closer to staff. (Claire)

Strong working relationships between all levels of sport governance (athletes, management, administration; Fay, 2011; Fay & Wolff, 2009) are critical for advancing missions of inclusion. This is particularly true since those with the most authority are the main decision makers, who are influential in shaping the culture of the athletic department as well as responsible for providing accountability measures necessary to enact change (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013).

Second, the infrastructure of Track & Field was considered a built-in strength in capacity assessment. "Track, because of its individual nature, I think lends itself in general to making really individual requests and options happen…that kind of inherent feature in track and field was really helpful when Sam approached the coaching staff about joining it" (Claire). This

"individual nature" makes Track & Field "very flexible and very accommodating" (Claire) but also "one of the more complicated sports to administer just because of like the crazy amount of moving pieces" (Claire). Interestingly enough, this complexity actually made it easier to include Sam on the team, not just give him access.

> It was easier to put him on the roster than to try to like otherwise get him access, just from a like timing perspective like in the weight room, like it's just easier to have him go with the team than try to find him alternative times. And so, since a lot of the administrative stuff was easier if he was just on the team, and there was no reason not to have him on the team. Honestly, it just made more sense, it was more practical. (Claire)

Time is a unique resource that may be a critical element of more worthy of attention for infrastructure capacity specifically, or organizational capacity more generally. Claire also mentioned it about coaching availability:

> We only have so many coaches and they only have so many hours in the day, and they have to be strategic with how they deploy their time and their resources. Really, time is the biggest one because that's what you can't get more of. (Claire)

To drive home the benefit of Track's infrastructure even further, Claire made the comparison to a team sport –

> I could see there being more factors to consider in a team sport. If you're including para-athletes that don't objectively have the level of skill as a nonpara-athlete does, and if they're going to replace somebody on a roster, I think that has more factors to consider, right? But in the track world, we don't have a roster cap. He's not taking anybody's place. (Claire)

With this, she only scratched the surface of the different considerations that would need to be considered (Comerford, 2018). Track & Field obviously has an infrastructure that is compatible with the first two inclusion principles on which this case study targets – the inclusion of athletes with disabilities onto existing teams and competitions with or without accommodations (Ackerman & Fay, 2016). This was also made evident in the early success of the ECAC to include athletes with disabilities in their Track & Field Championships (Comerford, 2018). However, we must remember that "not all athletes with a disability are as fortunate to be able to compensate and compete within the mainstream or norm of a given sport" (Fay, 2011, p. 80).

Third, the high jump event was congruous with Sam's inclusion. Sam was filling a need: "When I got to Notre Dame and when I walked onto the team, there was no other male high jumper" (Sam). The opening may be due to the structural capacity again of the program as a whole: "Notre Dame track and field has historically been very distance-oriented" (Sam). Also, as will be discussed more in subsequent sections, Sam's high jump approach was similar to able-bodied athletes. Coaches "didn't have to reinvent the event [or] the training programs" (Sparks). An answer to the original question posed by Coach Sparks, Sam did not require any "concessions". He was "able enough" to "fit in" the existing infrastructure of the department, program, sport, and event (Fay, 2011).

Financial Resources

"Financial capacity refers broadly to an organization's revenues and expenses, and assets and liabilities" (Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020, p. 241). Because "every athlete costs the team money" (Sam), financial capacity was a consideration but not a concern for Notre Dame. As Claire stated, "Any time you have additional people on the roster, regardless of their able-bodiedness, it takes more resources." But, reflecting of the nonprofit sport literature, the strength

in human resources and infrastructure capacity (Doherty & Cuskelly, 2020) "enabled the

coaches, without really any additional resources, to be able to say yes" (Claire). Really, the main

financial concern was after Sam was offered a spot on the team and had to go through the

compliance office. As a Paralympic athlete and member of Team USA, "I get paid and receive

medal payouts and incentives. And to the NCAA Compliance Office that was just like a million

red flags because they hate when athletes make a dollar…[but] everything I had done was

compatible with NCAA laws" (Sam). If anything, assessing financial capacity to add Sam on the

team roster was part of the "culture of doing business" (Devine, 2016, p. 188). Unlike most

parasport contexts, financial capacity could be a strength of the intercollegiate context, at least

for a Division I university. That is, if institutions are open to making the difficult but necessary

decisions to reallocating economic resources, which hasn't always been the case (Fay, 2011;

Quinn et al., 2020). "These decisions are powerful ones, [and not to be taken lightly] in their

capacity to include and exclude" (Quinn et al., 2020, p. 15).

Overall, the capacity assessment undertaken by Notre Dame resounded in a yes to Sam's

inclusion in their Track & Field program. There is probably a residual amount of "What if"

questions that could have been asked. What if Sam competed in a different sport or event? What

if he wasn't a decorated Paralympian? What if there was an obvious concession or

accommodation? Answering these questions will require future research. What's important here

is that Sam was excited by the offer to walk-on to the team, which "was far more than I

expected…[they] actually saw the potential in me" (Sam). Also, in relation to capacity

assessment, these findings reinforce the relationality of the capacity dimensions provided by Hall

et al.'s (2003) framework (Millar & Doherty, 2018). There were indeed factors left untouched,

such as the broader dimensions of planning and network, but the starting organizational capacity of Notre Dame was enough. Other athletic departments might take this into consideration.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is any modification to organizational practices or "any activities that provides skills, knowledge, structures, or resources that allow organization to reach their full potential" (Millar & Doherty, 2016, p. 368). Rooted in strategic management, capacity building is an effort to enhance areas of weakness and refine areas of existing strength. To do so, an organization selects and implements specific strategies to address its capacity needs and objectives. "The generation of strategies implies that the organization is open to new and untried alternatives rather than simply relying on what it may have done before" (Millar & Doherty, 2016, p. 373). Further, the effectiveness of these strategies depends on whether individuals and organizations are ready (Millar & Doherty, 2020). This section speaks to Sam's inclusion in light of these components and processes of capacity building, specifically the modifications made to organizational practices within two broad themes: training and competition. Discussion about the former presents specific and generalized strategies for including Sam within different aspects of training, and discussion about the latter presents considerations regarding competition policy and management.

Training

In regard to Sam's training, "There's definitely more similarities than differences. We pretty much do the same workouts…There's not much that I do that he doesn't do or not much that he does that I don't do" (Sarah). All coaches agreed. Colleen said, "Honestly, I don't program for him any differently from a holistic sense than I would any other athlete." Because of this, readiness for capacity building was an inherent feature in Sam's inclusion story. Sam's

ability to fit in and compensate within normal training regimes (Fay, 2011) demonstrated

congruence – an alignment, not disruption, with existing processes (Millar & Doherty, 2016;

2020). Moreover, Notre Dame exhibited a capacity to build – a process that relies on skills,

abilities, and resources an organization already possesses (Millar & Doherty, 2016; 2018). The

organization and individuals could leverage their existing capacity to include Sam within typical

training systems, and thus, selected specific and generalized strategies, as discussed next, were

effective because they didn't require radical change to existing organizational practices (Millar &

Doherty, 2020).

Specific Strategies. Sam's training is mostly similar not the exact same. "His training is

different, right? And requires more flexibility. I mean, it's not like wildly different, but there are

some nuances that are certainly not the same" (Claire). Therefore, certain modifications to

organizational practices were needed as a result of these nuanced differences in Sam's training

(Millar & Doherty, 2016; 2018). Discussion of these minor, but essential, changes takes place in

six parts: training season, practice plans, high jump approach, strength training, athletic training,

and equipment.

Training Season. Sam's disability allowed him to train alongside his able-bodied peers

as a student-athlete at Notre Dame, but his greater goal was still training for the Paralympics.

Therefore, his training schedule was "built around not peaking at the end of the Notre Dame

season, like most athletes, but rather peaking…when my most important meets are," (Sam)

which were usually during the summer. Coaches made adjustments to prioritize Sam's elite para-

meets. Colleen stated, "We were focused [on] 'training through' most collegiate meets with the

bigger summer picture in mind." Claire reflected on all three dimensions of readiness in

discussion about this "process-based" strategy (Millar & Doherty, 2016, p. 370). Modifying

Sam's training schedule was congruent with the "ethos of the program" (Claire). Coach Spark's "philosophy is one that focuses on individualized attention and training plans already…So we're already kind of set up to do that. If you ran a program that was less like that, I could see more challenges" (Claire). And Coach Z had the organization readiness and existing capacity to implement this ethos and tailor Sam's training schedule: "Rodney I think was just willing to do it and had the time and capacity to do it" (Claire). The individualized nature of Track & Field and program culture allowed Coach Z to leverage an existing skill of "managing all his different buckets" (Claire) to not only include Sam but satisfy his needs (Millar & Doherty, 2016).

Practice Plans. Slight modifications were also made to weekly training sessions too. Sam jumps off his biological leg, but due to his cancer treatment, he is prone to injury – stress fractures, shin splints, ankle and knee pains. His "biological leg will not keep up with six days of impact training" (Sam) because "it takes so much force, even when I'm not practice, just during the day because it does everything for me" (Sam). To protect Sam's biological jumping leg, the strategy introduced was substituting certain high-impact running workouts with low-impact cross-training. Sam also worked with the athletic trainer, "doing therapy on my left leg to make sure it was staying up to snuff" (Sam), which any injured athlete would also do. These actions taken to maintain Sam's biological leg show congruence (Millar & Doherty, 2016; 2018). Sam wasn't being allowed a special privilege per se because Coach Z "does an amazing job of individualizing [practice] to every athlete…He's very receptive to the individual things" (Sam). Sam also wasn't being coddled; in fact, Coach Z is "always a little bit more conservative, honestly, with all my athletes, not just Sam…making sure we get the work done without overdoing it" (RZ).

Modifications to Sam's practice plans, "taking a day off here or there" did not "impact too much his overall performance at the end of the year because…he competes later in the year than most everybody else, so we have more time to develop the whole season and make sure he's ready" (RZ). Strategies taken for both season and practice plans aligned, keeping him healthy through two seasons of training, on and off the field. The ease in implementing these changes, however, would be less harmonious if Sam participated in a team sport or even a different Track & Field event where, as Coach Z mentioned, more running might be required to reach peak performance levels.

High Jump Approach. It's not unreasonable "that Coach Z and I guess any other coach would be a little bit more concerned about with me is that they wouldn't be well-versed in the mechanics of how I high jump" but "everything I do in high jump is essentially identical to every other high jumper. I don't make any changes" (Sam). Sam's high jump technique mirrors his able-bodied peers because he jumps off his biological leg, as do most Paralympic high jumpers because "with the way blades are, it's really hard to convert the energy forward. The blades are designed to propel you forward, not vertically" (Sam). Therefore, Coach Z had existing capacity (Millar & Doherty, 2016; 2018), his knowledge and experience of coaching able-bodied athletes, to fall back on. Coach Z said, "We try to mimic able-bodied athletes…everything all the way basically through the whole approach…we really try to mimic just regular jumping, just how everybody else would, you know, the same body positions is what we're still looking for."

Because Sam's technique mirrored the traditional high jump approach, Coach Z didn't engage in specific efforts to build capacity. He "mostly just used what I know" (RZ), and his one strategy was fleeting:

At the very initial stages, I might have done just a little bit of looking at some of the

video of some of these guys and just looking at the mechanics of it a little bit. But, I mean

very quickly we kind of decided that we're going to try to treat him as normal as possible,

you know within reason, and just be careful that we're avoiding injury. (RZ)

It's not right or wrong that Coach Z solely relied on his knowledge of able-bodied athletes, but

coaches should be careful not to downplay the immediacy of impairment because looking past

impairment blurs the lines with ableism – producing a particular kind of self and body

(Campbell, 2009). Even if not obvious, impairment directly impacts coaching practices.

Coaching athletes with disabilities requires an understanding of how impairment affects day-to-

day training, performance, classification, and planning cycles (Townsend et al., 2021).

Discussion of Sam's season and practice plans was evidence of this as well. Unfortunately, there

is a well-documented paucity of disability-specific and parasport-specific coaching resources that

could have otherwise illuminated some nuanced differences regarding context-specific strategies

and techniques that could have further benefited Sam's training and performance (Bentzen et al.,

2021; Townsend et al., 2021).

Sam's high jump training provides an example of why impairment matters and why there

is a need for more disability-specific knowledge. For the high jump approach, "you really need

to have it…stay on a particular line in order to generate the right rhythm, speed, and take-off

forces honestly, so your feet really should be on a very consistent curve" (RZ). Sam's movement

efficiency through this curve sometimes gets disrupted by his running mechanics, "mostly

because of the prosthetic, he's trying to deal with where he puts it down, you know occasionally

if he hits it slightly different off the ground it'll send a stride longer" (RZ). Coach Z rationalizes,

in comparison to able-bodied athletes, Sam doesn't have as much control, which impacts his

knee drive and leg swing, and creates "a little bit more body motion side to side just because he's trying to accelerate off a prosthetic" (RZ). Moreover, these changes were heightened when Sam got a new running leg. As with all sports equipment, his prosthetic got worn down and needed to be replaced and upgraded "to a big boy one" (Sam). Using the old one now "feels like I'm running with a flat tire" (Sam). Changing to the new running leg impacted Sam's training:

> It's got a significantly bigger blade, a lot more energy return, and so my previous approach, it kind of got scrapped, you know, I still know how to do it, but we had to re-figure out where my steps are, how I want to do it, how I'm going to build the speed because it works so different. And that actually proved to be really challenging…That's the big change from me to other athletes, is how a running leg can impact the approach. (Sam)

Coach Z recognized the need to be cognizant of this equipment change, understanding that it's an adjustment period for Sam. The newer blade "slightly changed his body position" so "took him a few weeks with jumping before he really got comfortable with it" (RZ).

If anything, Sam's use of assistive technology is still a disadvantage. Both Sam and Coach Z agreed. His blade might have spring-like qualities, but "it does seem to hinder his approach" (RZ). Sam was good enough to compensate for his amputation and compete within the rules of his sport without an accommodation that gave him a unique or unfair advantage (Fay, 2011). The fact that he was at a disadvantage to his fully limbed competition meant he was not a threat (Fay & Wolff, 2009). This topic is one that could be elaborated upon within the competition section, but it is beyond the capacity of this paper to do so. However, I did not want the issue of competitive advantage to go unrecognized since the implications of the 'cyborg' body are of growing interest in the field (e.g., Howe, 2011). Also, there have been other NCAA

athletes with leg amputations that this issue would be more suitable for (e.g., wrestler Anthony

Robles and sprinter Hunter Woodhall), so it should not be dismissed as a potential barrier toward

inclusion of disability in intercollegiate sport.

  Strength Training. "It's not like he's over in his corner doing his own program, like he

does the meat and potatoes of everyone else's with some modifications" (Colleen). Sam's

inclusion in the weight room required Colleen to engage in lite capacity building: "I would say

his program is definitely tailored towards him and his needs. And yes, there are specific things

for him that I wouldn't do with someone else that are more 'pre-hab' I would call them for that

other leg" (Colleen). Practical adaptations are typically for "whenever we do a single-leg

exercise" (Colleen). For example, "we'll do a banded hamstring curl, like something you would

see in rehab setting" (Colleen). If we get technical, Sam has knee flexion, but his muscles have

different functionality after his surgery on his amputated leg, so "Let's just not call it a hamstring

curl, it's a curl" (Colleen). Another example is substituting "steps-ups weighted on his bad leg

[for single-leg glute bridges] because he doesn't have balance, and I don't think it's safe"

(Colleen). But actually, Sam has progressed to "doing single-leg steps on that leg with a pause at

the top, and he might hold a 10-pound plate if he's feeling good" (Colleen). This modified

progression may not seem compatible with the elite able-bodied athlete, and could easily

stigmatize disability as "less than" ability (DePauw, 1997, p. 423; McLoughlin et al., 2017), but

Sarah made it clear that this is not the case: "With strength and conditioning, there's definitely a

lot of exercises that he has modified just because it'd be difficult to do it just with one leg…[but]

they aren't any easier, just different" (Sarah). Colleen also attested to Sam's ability, saying "He's

freaking strong. Sam is strong."

Despite Colleen's appreciation of Sam's ability, she still wrestled with ableist

assumptions about the fragility of the disabled body:

> When you're modifying this based on him, you know not having the one leg, I think
>
> sometimes I tend to underestimate his ability. And Sam's really good about hey like, I can
>
> do more, like I can do this. I'm okay like let's try it, let's go. (Colleen)

As research attests, the process of ableism in sport is still a barrier to seeing disability and sport

without any contradiction (DePauw, 1997; Quinn et al., 2020). Our "expectations of sporting

ability are impacted by the preferencing of able-bodiedness" (Quinn et al., 2020, p. 3).

Thankfully, Sam was empowered by his own body. His confidence in his ability (organization

readiness) helped build capacity in Colleen to be confident in his ability as well (Millar &

Doherty, 2016). "And like I said, he tackles every challenge I throw at him. Like we started with

a small box, he's like no I can go higher. Okay! Let's go!" (Colleen).

Athletic Training. Morgan had to make some tweaks to the standard protocol for

administering physicals to student-athletes. Whereas every other student-athlete "is going to have

a pretty much perfect medical record" (Sam), Sam's medical history is a bunch of red flags. Each

"could be pretty easily justified by my two years as a cancer patient, including surgeries and

amputations" (Sam), but results would otherwise be concerning. Any NCAA medical clearance

policies may need to be modified for athletes with disabilities, who are often more at risk of

diseases and comorbidities (Carty et al., 2020). Moreover, some of the treatment protocol will

need to be adapted. Morgan discussed changes she made for the EKG and Concussion protocols:

> The biggest difference with him was, when you do an EKG, you put the leads on the
>
> wrists, the chest, and then the ankles. So it has to be the same position on the legs on each
>
> side. So I had to move the pad on the biological leg up so it was the same level. (Morgan)

And then we also do concussion screens. And so, typically you balance…on the non-

dominant leg, and that's his surgical side, and so it didn't make sense. It was going to

really lower the bar for where we wouldn't be able to tell if he was concussed or not, if

we had to replicate it from his baseline. And so, we did his dominant side. (Morgan)

Morgan was very accommodating, but initially Sam was worried about the process: "That's

actually something I was kind of nervous about – Am I going to be able to pass these sometimes

arbitrary tests that aren't necessarily compatible with my body? But they were very good about

that" (Sam). Expanding opportunities for athletes with disabilities will require the transformation

of ableist systems that typically prefer "a finely tuned "able" body" (DePauw, 1997, p. 423).

Hopefully, as Morgan alluded to, the innate desire of an athletic trainer to "want to help people"

doesn't have to risk seeing the disabled body as an object of pity (DePauw, 1997; Berger, 2008)

but instead can "help people and help them succeed" to reach their full potential. Hopefully, this

professional value congruence (Millar & Doherty, 2020) will lead to the inclusion of more

athletes with disabilities in intercollegiate sport.

Speaking just generally, I feel like athletic trainers and physical therapists have that in

their mindset, like we want to help everybody, we want everybody to feel as comfortable

as possible. We don't want the training room to be an intimidating place. So we want

everyone to feel included. (Morgan)

Equipment. For the most part, Sam's equipment needs were typical of a Track & Field

athlete. Cody mentioned providing him with new training shoes and competition spikes, and

"being that he jumps on one leg and having to go through chemo…[Morgan] fitted him for

orthotics" (Morgan). Also, Morgan and Colleen both talked about how they were able to modify

exercises with the equipment and resources already at their disposal: "We have a lot of toys" (Colleen). Based on this exclamation, the organizational capacity of athletic institutions may be enough to fulfill principles one and two, including athletes with disabilities into the existing infrastructure of intercollegiate sport (Ackerman & Fay, 2016). Still, it would be irresponsible to ignore Sam's use of assistive technology. The prosthetic running leg that Sam wears, and has "to carry around" (Sam), is an added piece of equipment, and as Sarah pointed out, unique to his Track & Field experience: "That's definitely something that I'll obviously never have to deal with…those extra precautions" (Sarah). As equipment, his blade may "get loose" (Cody) and need an adjustment, "making sure his leg is working correctly and that it feels comfortable" (RZ), or even need to be replaced. The addition of equipment may call for capacity building in financial resources and disability-specific coaching knowledge and practice.

Generalized Strategies. Notre Dame coaches and staff are, in many ways, doing their jobs at the elite level. We can assume that they have profound capacity (i.e., knowledge and skills) within their given disciplines. But Sam was a unique case, resulting in the need for capacity building. The preceding training strategies provide an overview of *what* was modified but not *how* these modifications and decisions were made. There were two strategies discussed among Notre Dame staff members that helped them meet the needs of a non-traditional athlete. The first was trial and error and the second communication.

Trial & Error. Many coaches have limited or no training in coaching athletes with disabilities. The Notre Dame staff were not exempt from this norm. "As a result, coaches' learning experiences can be characterized by often being 'dropped in the deep end' without much support. Consequently, coaches' learning becomes anchored entirely in their experiences – a social practice characterized by 'trial and error'" (Townsend et al., 2021, p. 4). Colleen's strategy

in programming for Sam demonstrates this process, "How I first approached it was like okay, well, this is the program I wrote for all the high jumpers…And from there, it was just trial and error…we would just see what works, see what didn't, modify things as needed" (Colleen). Perceptions of 'what works' becomes based on coaching knowledge and experience of the able-bodied sporting context (Bentzen et al., 2021; McMaster et al., 2012; Townsend et al., 2021). "Such a situation can reproduce ableist assumptions which can become difficult to displace" (Townsend et al., 2021, p. 4). The positive is that Colleen did not overlook Sam's impairment. "I think it's important…we don't just ignore it. It works just as hard as his good leg when he's jumping…we still have to train what's left. So, it's just being super creative in how we do that" (Colleen). Colleen (and other participants) personified a 'lens of adaptability' found important to effective parasport coaching (Townsend et al., 2021), which inevitably embraces a spirit of creativity important for developing coaching capacity (Bentzen et al., 2021; Doherty et al., 2014; McMaster et al., 2012). The only catch is that creativity did have a ceiling cap. Colleen didn't see the need for any additional resources and said, "I think we've done a really good job of being creative with what we have." There is no obvious wrongdoing in this statement, and in fact, affirms, yet again, the greatness of existing capacity at the intercollegiate level. However, it also shows the congruence of actions with 'what (we think we know) works' based on able-bodied systems. A lack of disability and parasport-specific coaching training may hinder out of the box thinking necessary for the inclusion of the non-traditional athlete.

Communication. Doherty et al. (2014) identified communication as an essential element of infrastructure capacity. To be successful utilizing trial and error, participants benefited from an ongoing dialogue with each other, with Sam as the primary learning source. Colleen said, "I probably seek feedback more from Sam than I do other athletes." To do so, she and other

coaches often flooded Sam with questions, maybe to the point of annoyance. But these questions opened a "back and forth" (Colleen) dialogue that allowed coaches to "get a sense of his limitations" (RZ). Close collaboration – to work *with* athletes, not *on* them (Cushion et al., 2020, p. 139) – directs focus "on what *can* be done compared with what *cannot* be done in training" (Bentzen et al., 2021, p. 111). Further, a dialogical relationship between coach and athlete has proven significant in order to differentiate practice rather than expect athletes to adapt or fit into pre-existing coaching interventions or environments (McMaster et al., 2012; Townsend et al., 2021). Participants explained that a critical element of effective collaboration between athlete and coach was honesty. For example, Colleen said "I think probably the most important thing for Sam and I's working relationship is being completely candid with our conversation." This was echoed by Morgan in working with Sam and all bodies of difference:

> I guess the best thing I can do is [and] what worked for me and Sam is, I felt like I was honest with him from the start, and I feel like he appreciated that. And I'm like, I'm going to ask you a lot of questions and it's going to help me better treat you and develop a plan. So, as long as you're open and honest with the person you're treating, and not make them feel intimidated or different by any means, just conversations, then I think that's the best way you can handle someone who's different. And that could go for disabilities or a different cultural background or different lifestyle, as long as you're willing to have that open candor and dialogue, I feel like it's helpful just to get to know somebody on a personal level, in addition to their disability or their different background. (Morgan)

Sam did appreciate the candor of his coaches, and the coaches appreciated Sam's willingness to return the favor: "If I didn't have a feedback from him, it would, this would be really difficult" (Colleen). Morgan said, "I think I've been very lucky that Sam is the way he is…so I feel

comfortable asking him questions…so having those conversation with him has been fantastic in helping me learn." Allowing Sam to be the expert of his own body made goal achievement possible. This shows the importance of equal relationships between coach and athlete, where there is give and take, and each party can learn from each other out of mutual respect (Townsend et al., 2021).

Communication was also an important strategy utilized directly among coaches, mostly to understand Sam's needs. "At the beginning, we kind of had to hash it out a little bit about what he can and can't do, what the challenges would be" (RZ). Morgan said, "In my opinion, everybody's been very collaborative," but unlike the ongoing dialogue taken with Sam, communication between coaches is "not so much from the day to day anymore" (RZ). The strategy was deployed on an as-needed basis.

Only one coach mentioned communication with someone outside of the athletic department. Colleen built a personal connection with a local coach of a Paralympic triathlete, "So, conversations with him have been interesting, mainly because I can weigh in on his athlete and he can weigh in on Sam…but I don't honestly know a whole lot of college athletes that are going through this" (Colleen). Informal interactions like this one are not unusual in the parasport coaching community. The lack of disability-specific coaching education structures places importance on the social aspect of learning, and yet, as pointed out by Colleen, there is a much smaller coaching community to collaborate with because of an incomplete pipeline of opportunity for athletes with disabilities, especially at the intercollegiate level (McMaster et al., 2012; Townsend et al., 2021). Drawing upon and formalizing partnerships to create a more extensive network could help the NCAA expand collegiate opportunities for athletes with disabilities (Wicker & Breuer, 2014). The USOPC Collegiate Advisory Council is a step in the

right direction (Team USA, 2019), but they will need to extend collaborative efforts down to the grassroots level if they want to fulfill their mission of inclusion.

Competition

Similar to findings about training, Sam fit into existing Track & Field operations (congruence; Millar & Doherty, 2016). Cody went through 'the buckets' of his job as director of operations and never inferred Sam was a burden. "And really on the road…I don't make any special modifications for Sam. He travels just as all the rest of us do, you know whether that be bus travel, air travel, or hotel travel" (Cody). The only unique request made by Sam was for Cody's assistance to get NCAA meets "WPA approved, so any of my results would go towards Paralympic rankings" (Sam). "Those marks can count as long as we go through the proper chain of command" (Cody). The process was fairly simple, basically just an exchange of meet information, but it had to be submitted with "a four week notice in advance, along with all the details" (Sam). Unfortunately, Sam said, and Sarah affirmed that "the organization of our team is definitely questionable…It seems like everything we do is very last minute and very unplanned" (Sarah). This may be a challenge of a newer coaching staff, but it shows that even the most subtle organizational change can be a challenge in the process of capacity building to maximize opportunities within the environment (Millar & Doherty, 2016).

Sam competed alongside his able-bodied counterparts in the high jump during the Track & Field indoor and outdoor seasons. However, he did have a lighter competition load. One reason was because "he just doesn't need to jump as much as other people because…his season isn't the collegiate season, his season is later in the summer, the U.S. championship season…it's strung out longer" (RZ). Another reason was because "there's not a ton of competitions" (Sam) to choose from "because his bar height is lower" (RZ). A lack of competition options is a known

barrier to the parasport context (Hutzler et al., 2016), often because "in para you don't really hit that critical mass" (Sam), but might be a newer discovery for able-bodied Track & Field athletes too. The intercollegiate sport system favors the most elite (as the Paralympics favors the most "able") to the detriment of other student-athletes who could benefit from competition experience just as much or even more.

> I have a roster of 103 kids. Are all 103 kids going to be national champions and go to the Olympics? No, I've got one. I've got one that is a national champion that is looking at the sights of the Olympics, and I have Sam who's setting his sights to the Paralympics. That means I've got 101 student-athletes that will never reach that caliber. You've got to give them the same opportunities to compete that I do my top athletes. (Cody)

In fact, both Cody and Sam both talked about the value of "more competition reps" (Cody) to gain confidence, feel comfortable, stay focused, and avoid burn-out. Recent research in the parasport coaching context corroborates this notion that competition is a motivator for athletes with disabilities (McLoughlin et al., 2017). Notre Dame does their best to provide these essential competition opportunities to their student-athletes. Claire actually personifies the process of capacity building to make this a possibility:

> We have some kids on our team who will never be at the same meets...And they're even in the same event groups. Their abilities are not the same level, and so they need different things, which is one of the beauties of our sport, we can tailor the competition schedule to best meet their needs. But, it requires a lot more work, a lot more time from our coaching staff. It's very resource dependent on doing that. (Claire)

Research consistently attests to the resource-intensive nature of capacity building (Millar & Doherty, 2018). To meet Sam's competition needs, "one of the bigger things that we've had to

work through" (Sparks) was requesting a policy accommodation – lowering the starting bar

height. Discussion about the process and outcome of bending the rules are presented next.

Competition Policy. Every participant, except Colleen, talked about Sam's opening bar

height.

> Even though he is a world record holder and is an incredible Paralympian and para-
>
> athlete, the opening height at some meets is too high for him for an opening height. And
>
> so, there have been times when our coaching staff has had to petition to set the start lower
>
> so that he can participate in the competition. (Claire)

The request was made on at least "a couple of occasions" (Claire). Participants referenced either

a recent conference meet at Louisville or the 2020 ACC Indoor Championships. The focus of

discussion will be on the latter because as Coach Sparks stated, for smaller meets "it's very easy

to manipulate the starting heights of the bars, but traditionally at a conference championship, in

our coaching manual, there's a starting height posted." The distinction between the

administration of 'open' versus 'segregated' competition holds power over who has a right to

compete and in what competitions based on either personal identifiers or performance standards

(Fay & Wolff, 2009). This is the case for all athletes but tends to create an added barrier to the

mainstreaming of athletes with disabilities because of the differences in their sporting

performances compared to able-bodied athletes (Purdue & Howe, 2012). Therefore, the narrative

about Sam's inclusion at ACC Indoors raised some important considerations about equal

participation in intercollegiate sport. These findings are presented next in terms of process and

outcome.

The Process. Rather than trying to piecemeal the narrative with quotes from every

participant, conversation with Cody provided the essential elements from beginning to end:

Typically, Sam would be one of those student-athletes that we would not travel to a

conference championship if it was on the road. Simply because Sam's top mark…doesn't

quite meet that level…Since it was at home, we wanted to include Sam. We wanted to

make sure he was able to compete. So, before every ACC Championship, we have a

coaches meeting…We had all the coaches together. And, you know we weren't going to

have Sam jump unless everybody was on the same page and felt comfortable with it. So,

we posed it to all head coaches and all assistant coaches who were at this meeting. We

explained Sam's situation, and since he is a Paralympian, we gave his stat-sheet of what

he has achieved…Because of the conference level, they start the starting height from an

equation pretty much. They look back at the last how many years, and what it's taken to

get to the meet, and that's where they start their progressions. And the starting height that

we were requesting was below that mark, so it had to go to a vote. (Cody)

The vote was unanimous to let Sam compete, but there were differences in perceptions about that

decision across participants. Coach Z said the coaches were "excited" and "fine with it. Morgan

didn't see a problem either, "They were like yep, we'll do it. It's fine." She continued with,

"There was one coach that was asking a couple questions, but I didn't think it seemed out of

place" (Morgan). Raising questions seemed just a normal part of any decision-making process.

Coach Sparks, however, provided a little more insight about those questions: "One coach asked

if this is an ask because we're hosting, or is it going to be something we'll perpetually ask for as

we go to championships coming forward" (Sparks). The coaches wanted to understand the

impact of the choice. Cody perceived this as resistance:

There was some pushback from ACC schools, like is this going to be an every year kind

of deal? And we said No, you know this is simply because we are hosting the

championship. And it took some persuading from a few coaches that I'll choose not to

name…And I feel that, until there was a majority of 'hey this is a great idea, this is

fantastic' did those last couple coaches finally come around and say yeah let's go ahead,

we'll make that accommodation. (Cody)

Nobody else used a term similar to "pushback," yet several participants provided reason

for the possible hesitation of agreeing to Sam's participation. "I felt it was, oh, we're going to

slow down the competition. We're hindering the top percent to allow the inclusion of Sam"

(Cody). Coach Z matched that explanation, "If putting a starting height for him would impact the

competition, where it extends the length of competition quite a bit, then that can negatively

impact other athletes." Ironically, high jump competitions already take a long time regardless of

the opening height. Even so, Sam was weary of this outcome as well:

> Sam even told me…I don't want them to make a concession if there's any apprehension
>
> on anyone's behalf to do this. I don't want to be a burden to the other coaches or the other
>
> athletes competing. If this is going to impact someone else's performance, then don't
>
> lobby for this for me. (Sparks)

If even Sam, a decorated Paralympian, is hesitant about his inclusion in intercollegiate

competition, what does this mean for other athletes with disabilities? Continued dialogue with

participants highlighted some considerations regarding meet operations also discussed by

Comerford (2018). First, Claire talked about "what the point of the meet is." As previously

mentioned (Fay & Wolff, 2009), "Open" meets have "more flexibility" compared to

"Segregated" meets, such as "an invitational or elite meet, [which] tend to have time or mark cut-

offs that you need to have met in order to participate" (Claire). Will athletes with disabilities,

who typically have "lesser" performances, only be able to participate in "lesser" meets?

If athletes with disabilities are invited to compete in such segregated meets, timing and fairness become added elements that need to be taken under consideration (Comerford, 2018). "When you change the progression or change the height, then that can sometimes impact the timing of other athletes when they are doing multiple events," (Claire) which has the potential to "negatively impact other athletes" (Claire). Lowering the starting height would technically increase the size of the playing field, "And you don't necessarily want to have huge fields because it it's not a good competition experience for anybody, having to wait so long in between jumps. So, that part gets a little bit tricky to manage" (Claire). "[T]he NCAA would likely argue that there would be an undue hardship to implement these measures in already-long events" (Comerford, 2018, p. 548). Further, if the changed height only applies to Sam, is that fair to other able-bodied athletes who would then qualified based on the new standard? Maybe NCAA policy should utilize Paralympic qualifying standards so athletes with physical disabilities won't be limited to only certain competition contexts.

Sam's bar accommodation was not written into NCAA policy. Coaches had to make "a plea" (Sparks) on Sam's behalf before other meets as well (i.e., Louisville). For now, inclusion is a case-by-case inquiry (Comerford, 2018). Although Notre Dame and conference coaches reached beyond compliance once, doesn't mean they will do so again. Coach Sparks address this, "I think there's a bit of apprehension from the coaching body to manipulate the entire competition to accommodate time after time after time." Closing the gap between policy aspirations and practice implementation will require robust strategic planning from the NCAA (Comerford, 2018; Doherty et al., 2014). Notre Dame staff was not aloof to this need: "I don't know if you want different divisions, but then sometimes you don't want different divisions, you want to have an inclusive contest, but then that's going to require having way more people there

than the point of the meet" (Claire). Claire hit on a long-standing conversation, even within the

Paralympic Movement, about what may be best moving forward – separate competition, separate

events and divisions, or full inclusion (e.g., Legg et al., 2009; 2015). The findings of this case

study cannot resolve that debate, in part, because they only shed insight on one type of

impairment and one athlete with a disability. However, the findings can provide a basis for the

strategic planning and efforts required by the NCAA to mobilize capacity to include athletes with

disabilities in their existing sport systems (Kitchin et al., 2019).

The Outcome. Despite some apprehension, the vote was unanimous to let Sam participate

in the 2020 ACC Indoors Championship. The opening height was only lowered by one standard,

dropped from 1.95 to 1.9 meters. Coach Z discussed the impact of this minor change:

> It's still not *low* because the bar he had to enter actually was his world record. So then, he
>
> doesn't get the warm-up buzz. He doesn't get those lower bars that most people would
>
> have in order to build into the competition…so it's very tough to do. (RZ)

Sam said the cost of jumping alone, of "jumping back-to-back to back-to-back with one minute

in between" is that he can't "get competitive blood flowing" or "rest in between more and

recalibrate" (Sam). Sam was actually the only participant to mention the "60 seconds" rule

between jumps. When the sole high jumper, he's not just at the mercy of fatigue, but he also

doesn't have time to make mechanical adjustments if there are "difficulties with my prosthetics"

(Sam). In small meets, officials may be more gracious in giving Sam extra time to fix his

prosthetic between jumps "because it's kind of an evil thing not to" (Sam). But that's not always

the case. Sam said this about the rule:

> That really frustrates me is when officials blindly follow the rules that are in place
>
> without really considering why the rules are in place, you know, like a 60 second clock is

up there so that athletes don't just like take extreme rest in between that they don't need

and force their other opponents to lose their warm-up and have to re-warm up. But, it's

not in place to prevent Paralympic athletes from using their prostheses correctly. (Sam)

Without transformation of ableist sport systems, policies, and practices, the marginal person will

remain an 'outsider.' While allowed to enter a particular sport context, the marginal person will

never become a full and legitimate member (DePauw, 1997). "[W]hile accommodations to

difference may be necessary as a pragmatic response to inclusion, we should not lose sight of the

radical possibilities that may be made available to use when we equate "inclusion" with

"transformation" (Promis et al., 2001, p. 48)

The ACCs performance also spotlighted disability (Powis, 2020; Quinn et al., 2020).

Cody was sensitive to this, "I'm always worried to make that person stand out. I never want Sam

to feel like he's being treated differently" (Cody). Unfortunately, the elaboration given by

participants about the meet experience cannot be relived in full. Here is just one illustrative

example to set the scene:

> Sam at that competition, no heighted. He did not get over his opening bar. But, I have
>
> never in my years…At a collegiate level meet, I have never seen student-athletes from
>
> other institutions so involved and so supportive. And everybody's attention was there at
>
> that moment. Not just the student-athletes, but everybody that was in attendance…when
>
> Sam would go up and he'd be close, there was that audible 'Awwww' that you hear at a
>
> major championship. It's the same kinds of noises that I've heard at Olympic trials that
>
> I've worked in Eugene when somebody going for a world record misses a bar. I was
>
> hearing some of those same reactions that I heard when Sam jumped. And when Sam
>
> finally had his third miss, the reaction that his competitors gave him in support, nothing

I've ever seen. And that's not me just blowing smoke or exaggerating something. It was

one of those that gave me goosebumps when you watch the student-athletes come up to

Sam at that moment from other institutions in the conference. (Cody)

What's important to note are the differences in interpretations about this inclusive experience.

They represent the "concept of the Paralympic paradox, a tension created by the representation

of the Paralympian as either an impaired athlete or an athlete (with a disability)" (Purdue &

Howe, 2012, p. 190). Cody believed that Sam was being celebrated for his athleticism, that

others "recognized Sam for the competitor that he was and that he is .... They looked at their

competitor and they saw Sam as an equal. They saw him as a competitor, not somebody that's

like oh hey give him the pity clap" (Cody). Cody perceived the camaraderie within DePauw's

(1997) frame of (in)visibility of disability. Coach Sparks, on the other hand, was also amazed by

the "energy in the building by student-athletes supporting other student-athletes" (Sparks) but

invoked by the frame of (hyper)visibility of disability (DePauw, 1997; Quinn et al., 2021). He

said, "Because he's a bit of a neutral party, they knew he wasn't going to score a point or take

anything away from their accomplishment, so I think it was just genuine happiness…they

recognized the unique situations that it was" (Sparks). Maybe unintended, but this perception

shows that inclusion of disability may still be captive to the notion of "charitable goodwill"

(Berger, 2008, p. 647).

Then, on the opposite end of the spectrum, Sarah wasn't sure the cheering was

appropriate at all: "The fans definitely treat him differently. They all hype him up. And I think he

likes it sometimes, but I think other times it's kind of frustrating." The frustration resulting from

the perception of "Oh, they're just cheering for me because I'm an amputee and they don't see

many amputees compete" (Sarah). Sarah showed skepticism of the motivation(s) behind the

cheering and "hard-wired reaction to *difference*" (Crincoli, 2011, p. 186) from anyone other than Sam's inner circle (family, friends, teammates). Instead of Sam the equal competitor, the novelty of disability provoked admiration. While Coach Sparks placed positive value in the "visibility of disability", Sarah raised caution in underlying ableist assumptions, maybe because she wouldn't like it if "people were cheering for me just because it was a low bar and they felt bad" (Sarah).

The most important point of view to consider is Sam's. He expressed both sides of the Paralympic paradox. He understood that the visibility of his disability in sport had an alluring emotional appeal to his audience. "They haven't seen a kid with one leg high jump *with* them, they think it's really cool" (Sam), and at least to some extent, Sam thought it was "just fun to be that guy" (Sam). However, he also felt the weight of this spotlight:

> At able-bodied meets I always feel a certain pressure to prove myself because of my disability because I want to show people how capable I and the disabled-athlete community are. If I do poorly, I fear I may just prove their preconceived notions that we aren't capable of competing at an able-bodied level. Another factor that contributes to my nerves is that I am often the center of attention at these meets because most people on other teams and in the crowd have never seen someone with a blade compete before. There's also just the factor of me looking different from everyone. I don't really care about that much and I'm proud of who I am/what I look like, but it's a little jarring being the only one with a disability. (Sam)

Athletes with disabilities are still fighting a culture that expects inferior ability and performance from athletes with disabilities (McGillivray et al., 2021). Especially because inclusion is still the exception, there is still an "apparent pre-occupation with disability, rather than sporting achievement" (Purdue & Howe, 2012, p. 192). Sam wears the "supercrip" identity that hopes to

celebrate athletic success but sometimes is trapped by the human-interest story – the story of

overcoming disability that society longs for (Berger, 2008; McGillivray et al., 2021). "The

importance lies in seeing all bodies in the context of the sport in which they compete" and

"appreciate elite disability sport on its own merits" (Purdue & Howe, 2012, p. 203).

Capacity Building Outcomes

"The ultimate impact of capacity building cannot be determined without appropriate

assessment" (Millar & Doherty, 2016, p. 370). Capacity building is about the implementation of

strategies to achieve short-term outcomes and also the long-term maintenance of those outcomes.

Thus, assessment should consider both (Millar & Doherty, 2016). This research begins the

feedback loop for continued capacity building efforts for Notre Dame and across intercollegiate

athletic departments. Overall, Sam was included within Notre Dame's existing infrastructure.

Notre Dame demonstrated a "readiness" and a willingness to undergo change in order to do so

(Millar & Doherty, 2020). The ensuing discussion of capacity building outcomes should provide

motivation and hope, and maybe a hint of caution, about advancing opportunities for the

inclusion of athletes with disabilities. These outcomes are: inclusion is belonging; inclusion is an

asset; inclusion takes capacity building; inclusion creates awareness; inclusion strengthens

athlete development; inclusion is sustainable. While many quotes could have been used to

express each of these, the particular excerpts chosen provide the most illuminating examples.

Inclusion is belonging

Sam is "a great story of full inclusion. He's just a regular part of our program" (Claire).

"He a part of the team, and I wouldn't say he's like an asterisk" (Morgan). "Sam's just one of

everybody" (Cody). These sentiments reinforce an evolution of disability found within the

Paralympic Movement, where "persons with disability have made the transition from patient to

athlete and from athlete to citizen" (Legg & Steadward, 2011, p. 1112). Sam's inclusion implies

a sense of belonging (Devine, 2016; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013), which, in turn, provided him equal

rights and freedoms as a citizen of the sporting culture. However, the role Sam played in

becoming a citizen should not be downplayed. Sam was able to fit in within the existing systems

of intercollegiate sport because he could compensate for the lack of a right leg, due in part to his

exceptional ability (and charisma), the sport he chose (Track & Field), and the event (high jump)

he competed in within that sport (Fay, 2011). Although Notre Dame made modifications to their

existing processes and practices, it's not surprising that they were most ready to include Sam

because of his congruence with these same processes and practices (Millar & Doherty, 2020).

"Sam is very self-sufficient. I feel that I rarely have to make special accommodations" (Cody).

And, as a result, his disability, well, "you just don't think about it anymore, at all" (Morgan). To

some degree, as Sparks stated, this is constructive:

> I think it's a positive…I don't know that the kids on the team think of him as having a
>
> disability….and I don't think that's a drawback. I think that's probably what Sam wants
>
> more than anything is just to be a normal kid….I don't think anybody goes out of their
>
> way to hold the door for him, because he doesn't want that, if anything, Sam's rushing to
>
> the door to open the door for you. (Sparks)

However, we should take caution in equating the notion of normal with belonging. What we

define as normal, the status quo, is laced with ableist assumptions about disability in sport. If we

lose sight of disability, we risk underestimating structural and attitudinal barriers that many

individuals and athletes with disabilities still face (McGillivray et al., 2021). To be accepted as

'athlete' or 'citizen' should not have to mean disability is pushed to the background or denied

(Powis, 2020). Athletes with a disability should not have to lose their identity to be included, but

they often still feel and take a responsibility of presenting themselves in a certain way to prevent

conformity to stereotypes (Berger, 2008; Devine, 2016; Kitchin & Crossin, 2018). Sarah

demonstrates that Sam was no exception:

> It definitely takes someone special to be able to integrate himself on the team like he
>
> does. It could be really easy for him to kind of alienate himself and think of himself as
>
> different…But he definitely doesn't see himself like that. He sees himself as 100% part of
>
> the team, and I couldn't name anyone who thinks that any less of that. Like I said, he's
>
> connected to everyone on the team, he's not afraid to talk to anyone. He makes himself
>
> known like as soon as you meet him….Nothing is awkward about Sam…and he's just a
>
> very good people person. So I think, I think it definitely takes a certain kind of person,
>
> especially one that has like a prosthetic and an amputee. (Sarah)

Overall, Sam does belong – "The track team loves him. I think he's a really good addition," and

"He wants to do as much as he can and make this experience as positive as possible" (Morgan) –

but we just can't take for granted the role he played in belonging.

Inclusion is an Asset

Capacity building literature acknowledges that "organizations are not built on

deficiencies and needs, rather they are built on capacities and capacity building is a process of

enhancing the strengths and resources the organization already possesses" (Millar & Doherty,

2016, p. 368). The same reasons Sam was given the original 'yes' became the same reasons he

evolved as an asset to the team. His existing and strengthened caliber (capacity) as an athlete,

student, and person strengthened and built capacity at Notre Dame. Every participant attested to

Sam's embodiment of the ideal student-athlete. Claire provides just one example, and this is still

only the shell of all she had to say about Sam:

He's just a great human…and so anytime you can have more great humans as part of your

program, you want to maximize that, right?...Like everything from like character to work

ethic to like sense of humor to you know genuine care for teammates and other people,

like all the things that make somebody a good human, Sam is…He's also a world class

athlete, you know he's set world records, he's won gold medals, like anytime you've got

somebody who's done the things athletically that Sam has, you also want them a part of

your program because it only shows the rest of your athletes, like the right model…He

also does really well in school…at a place like Notre Dame where academics are again a

super huge part of what we try to do really well, he only helps to reinforce that you can

do all these things and do them well…I mean finally just the obstacles that he's overcome

to do what he has, is, I think, incredibly inspirational…I mean I don't want to say that

him losing a leg is a silver lining, but it reminds us of the positives that can come after

really terrible tragedies. (Claire)

In short, "Sam is easily recognizable, not just from the waist down but the waist up" (Cody). His

character and story add "to the richness and the diversity of our program" (Claire) and are valued

within a business-driven approach to promote inclusion (Hanlon et al., 2019). Notre Dame has

maximized the opportunity to support Sam: "The athletic department and Notre Dame as a whole

has definitely recognized how powerful my story can be when told correctly…[using] different

media things…to kind of just flex what Notre Dame has" (Sam). Sam said he doesn't "feel

tokenized by it" because Notre Dame hasn't "ever just slandered" his story. However, he

cautioned that there is a fine line of being "the token kid with one leg that looks great on a

promo" and actually "focusing on my story" and "the spirit of what I'm doing here" (Sam).

Otherwise, the promotional nature of Sam's story is at risk of being "inspiration porn is what it's

called" (Sam) – when the person with a disability is reduced to a symbol, represented as an

object rather than subject (McGillivray et al., 2021). Sam said, "there's a lot of things that I've

done that I would agree are inspirational, but, don't just say it's inspirational because I have one

leg." All participants would say the same, that Sam's inspiration goes beyond his disability. He is

"a great leader, a great role model" (RZ); "He brings a spirit to practice" (Cody) and

"competitive drive" (Colleen) that can "inspire other kids to try to get to that [next] level" (RZ).

Again, we just have to be careful that the "motivator to keep going" (RZ) and "be better at what

they're doing, to be happier with what they're doing in life" (Sparks) isn't inspired by an attitude

of 'if Sam can do it, then we can too.'

Inclusion Takes Capacity Building

Notre Dame had a sufficient structural foundation (existing capacity) on which they could

rely to include Sam (Millar & Doherty, 2020), exemplifying that intercollegiate sport may be a

ready-made context for greater inclusion. However, the generation and implementation of

specific strategies, even when minor, demonstrated that inclusion still takes capacity building to

meet the holistic needs of the disabled athlete. In many ways, this capacity building was an

amplification of existing competencies. For example, as Morgan indicated, we don't always

know what we don't know, but we can build off what we do know: "It was just very humbling to

say I really have no idea which muscles are involved, but I can tell you how we can fix

it.(Morgan) Coach Z already lived by an ethos of individualizing training plans, but Sam

"probably taught him how to be more flexible" (Sam). Colleen enjoyed sharpening her skills:

> I love programming for Sam because you actually have to put a lot of thought into it,
>
> being adaptive. When he's like no this isn't gonna work, you're like okay well what will
>
> work? Like then you have to think on the fly and so it's really a fun challenge. (Colleen)

And the beauty is that this learning and growth can have a snowball effect (Devine, 2016; Gillies & Dupuis, 2013). Morgan said, "I've had to educate the rest of the staff on how we did it, so they can replicate it in case he showed up for physical and I wasn't there." Capacity is building is a never-ending process.

There is one example of capacity building that should be elaborated upon regarding equity and advocacy. Research suggests that "approaches to recruitment, coaching, and mentoring of AWPD are not entirely dissimilar to those of able-bodied athletes" (McLoughlin et al., 2017, p. 423). However, they may need to be expanded to create equal opportunities for athletes with disabilities. This is particularly important if the NCAA truly seeks "to establish and maintain an inclusive culture that fosters equitable participation for student-athletes" (NCAA, n.d.-a). Sam "had the full use of all the resources that we offer. He's been integrated fully in that way, like full access to training room [and] weight room, full access to the training sessions…and he gets gear just like everybody else" (Claire). But there is a difference between access (and even equality) and equity. Equity requires capacity building, but as Claire alluded, the opportunity often passes by undetected:

> We were always, at least to my thinking, we were always happy to make the minimal [accommodation]…I don't think there's been a lot of opportunity for us to actually consider doing things differently, I guess is the best way of putting it. I'm not saying we wouldn't, we just haven't had to because Sam hasn't needed it or asked for it. (Claire)

Achieving equitable participation will require reaching beyond compliance, even if the athlete (allegedly) fits in to existing sport structures and practices. In hindsight, Cody admitted that Sam may not have received the same extended graces as another student-athlete who was an Olympic hopeful in the mile, whether that was "finding the right competitions," acquiring "special shoes,"

or meeting "at a special time to give him a different workout that's going to maybe help him find that extra second that he might need" (Sparks). Cody said,

> Sam's coach, I don't quite feel advocates [those same things] for Sam…Sam takes it upon himself when it comes to certifying this home track meet…where, for my Olympic standard athlete, it's his coaching taking the initiative coming to myself and saying we need to get [him] into better competition, where I feel Sam's coach doesn't make that same pitch. (Cody).

Unfortunately, even within the Paralympic movement, elite-level athletes with disabilities feel they are treated less equitably than their able-bodied counterparts (McLoughlin et al., 2017). Coach Sparks provided insight into why this might be the case for Notre Dame. He said, for able-bodied athletes, "we know what their special needs are, and so we channel them in that direction." For athletes like Yared, "We'll do whatever we need to do, or buy him that extra shoes he needs to be a second faster. But we're skilled at doing that. That's what we've done for our coaching careers. But Sam's situation is so unique" (Sparks). He admitted further, "Sam knows his special needs better than what I especially do" (Sparks). In short, Notre Dame staff could not be advocates because they were not informed advocates. The lack of equitable opportunities is exacerbated by an underdeveloped coaching workforce. Without disability-specific knowledge and experience, coaches risk reproducing oppressive ableist attitudes, values and practices creating, at best, radically uneven experiences for disabled people." (Townsend et al., 2021, p. 5).

As an added layer to this problem, athletes with disabilities often feel that they have to be as independent as possible to avoid the risk of being seen as parasites of "paternalistic provision" (Berger, 2008; Kitchin et al., 2019). They don't want to feed into existing stereotypes about their

disabled body. Even if it shouldn't be the sole burden of Sam, Coach Sparks wished Sam would have asked for something "to give him that extra inch" but then quickly countered with, "I think he's so accommodating to others, just by who he is and the way he conducts himself as a young man that he doesn't want to overstep boundaries by asking for things at times" (Sparks). This creates an equity paradox. While parasport coaches often rely on the direct line of communication with their athletes to develop disability-specific coaching knowledge (Bentzen et al., 2021), athletes with disabilities may hesitate to cast this line if they feel it may jeopardize their inclusion status. "[W]hile accommodations to difference may be necessary as a pragmatic response to inclusion, we should not lose sight of the radical possibilities that may be made available to use when we equate "inclusion" with "transformation" (Promis et al., 2001, p. 48). Otherwise, athletes with disabilities will only be included if they can adjust to existing able-bodied values and practices, and those with greater needs will continually be left on the sidelines of intercollegiate sport (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018). To achieve equitable participation for athletes with disabilities, hopefully the NCAA, like Notre Dame, "welcome[s] the opportunity to be educated on what that should look like" (Claire).

Inclusion Creates Awareness

A lack of public knowledge about disability and parasport hinders program development (Hutzler et al., 2016), but inclusion, as shown by Sam's story, can bring awareness to both (McGillivray et al, 2021). Sarah is an immediate example of "how important it is for others to witness the realities and lives of persons with disabilities or differences" (Gillies & Dupuis, 2013, p. 203) to deconstruct ableist ideals about the body society built by ignorance. She said, "you just work it up all in your head about how they're different" but continued to show that inclusion can mitigate the stigma of 'otherness' (Purdue & Howe, 2012):

I guess before I met Sam, I was a little nervous…I don't know too many people that have

prosthetics or amputees, so I wasn't sure like what to say. I didn't want to offend him in

any way. I didn't want to make him uncomfortable. I didn't want to be uncomfortable.

um. And so, I had a lot of like reservations before I actually met him. And then, it must

have been just at a Fall practice my freshman year… just the second I met Sam, it's as if I

had known him for years. He doesn't really miss a beat. He just kind of starts making

jokes and introducing himself. And you quickly learn that there's no question you could

ask Sam that would ever make him uncomfortable or ever make you uncomfortable…He

knows it's just a part of his life, and he just lives like that. (Sarah)

Sport as a site for inclusion created space where Sarah could unpack her assumptions, and

reservations, about disability.

Sport can also reframe what we assume about the physicality of the sporting body

(Berger, 2008; DePauw, 1997; Purdue & Howe, 2012). Morgan stated, "I think other athletes

from other teams aren't sure at first. Either they don't know or they didn't expect to see him

walking through the training room because he's the only Paralympic or para-athlete at Notre

Dame." Sam affirmed this observation – "There's definitely some appropriate confusion a lot of

times from other athletes. They don't really understand, or they don't expect me to actually be

jumping, especially like jumping *with* them" – and then stated its value – "I think it's really

important for anyone involved with sports, whether it's Track and Field or every sport that I'm

sharing the weight room with, just to kind of see what someone with a disability can do in sport"

(Sam). Inclusion can highlight disability and athletic prowess to where outsiders don't see any

contradiction (DePauw, 1997; Fay, 2011).

Finally, inclusion can raise awareness of other parasport opportunities, and hopefully to a point that provokes action to create more. Even the intercollegiate programs that do exist for athletes with disabilities (e.g., University of Alabama; University of Illinois) remain unknown: "I'll be honest, I didn't know that was a thing anywhere" (Cody). This is probably because these current programs are not sanctioned by the NCAA (Comerford, 2018; Robeznieks, 2020). Sam also said, "It's the Paralympic experience that people don't know about." It wasn't his disability that had to be explained but his participation in sport despite that disability:

> I don't think I have to explain the amputation or how I high jump. I do feel I have to
>
> explain like what I do for Paralympics a lot…They didn't know that I could compete like
>
> that, or they don't necessarily recognize how big the Paralympics are. It's just shitty in
>
> America. America does a very bad job of teaching people what adapted sports are. You
>
> go to like the UK or Germany or other European countries, it's like everyone knows, but
>
> that's more what I have to explain to people. (Sam)

Sam continued with, "I don't blame anyone for not knowing, and I try not get offended," but this should be a wakeup call for the NCAA and other sport institutions to take the next step, move from awareness to advocacy, and become active agents toward change.

Inclusion Strengthens Athlete Development

A continuum of opportunities for sport participation allows different ability levels to play and compete from the playground to the podium (Nixon, 2007). In the United States, collegiate sports are a unique opportunity within the athlete development pipeline. For some sports (e.g., lacrosse) and athletes, being an NCAA student-athlete is the end game, and for other sports (e.g., football) and athletes, it's the next step to 'going pro'. Sam was already a decorated Paralympian

when he entered the collegiate arena, but access to Division I resources still made him a better

athlete. Specially talking about Coach Z, Sam said:

> He's gotten me in the best shape of my life, no doubt…Since I joined the team, I've lost
>
> 15 pounds, and I am much more lean. I'm in a really good structured schedule, and I just
>
> feel a lot more confident going into any jumps because my body is just way more
>
> prepared to do it. (Sam)

Sam also gained a better kinesthetic awareness. He learned "how to be more receptive to how

I'm doing, like without him telling me," which is "really good, especially for competition it's

huge to be able to know what you're doing wrong or what you're doing right and to make

adjustments" (Sam). This rung in the performance ladder heightened Sam's (already prominent)

sense of bodily mastery and self-confidence in his physical ability (Berger, 2008).

Sam also mentioned other "hidden benefits to being a student-athlete" (Sam). For

example, he valued both the accountability of "good structure in my day" and tutoring services

for helping him "absolutely skyrocket academically" compared to when those things were not

available his freshman year. The benefits of being an NCAA student-athlete reach beyond

athletic achievement but toward personal and professional development as well. Therefore, the

opportunity to participate in intercollegiate sport may be even more advantageous for individuals

with disabilities who are undereducated and underemployed compared to the greater population

(McLoughlin et al., 2017; Robeznieks, 2020).

Finally, the hope is that Sam's own NCAA experience has set the stage for more athletes

with disabilities to be included. Sam has fortified the athlete development pipeline for at least

one individual through a "mentor-type relationship" (Sam). He offers his advice to another

single-leg amputee high jumper, Ezra Frech, who will soon be pursuing his own collegiate

career. But hopefully, Sam's influence can extend beyond his own impairment type and chosen

sport. That's Cody's hope too:

> I would like to think that Sam has opened that door…Sam is a leader, but I hope from an
> athletic standpoint, after Sam leaves, that door isn't closed…I hope that because of what
> Sam has done shows that you can still have the inclusive piece, while still being a
> competitive program. (Cody)

Unfortunately, Coach Sparks conveyed the current reality: "Is this going to open the door for

other people? I don't know." The NCAA needs to relaunch the conversation and first steps taken

by the ECAC in order to more formally support athletes with disabilities within their existing

infrastructure (McGinniss et al., 2020). If they did, more institutions would join the initiative,

expanding the "choice" of options (Nixon, 2007) for student-athletes with disabilities in

intercollegiate sport – "this is a large benefit as it would diversify the options that student-

athletes with disabilities can choose from and consider aspects they normally take into

consideration when they choose a college (e.g., cost, geography, legacy status, etc.)"

(Comerford, 2018, pp. 546-547).

Inclusion is Sustainable

Sam's inclusion story and its outcomes should not be taken for granted. "Millar and

Doherty (2018) found that capacity to sustain was, essentially, a foregone conclusion of

successful capacity building, in that clubs assumed that the outcomes of capacity building would

be sustained if the capacity building efforts themselves were undertaken" (Millar & Doherty,

2020, p. 7). The informal nature of planning and capacity building process undertaken by Notre

Dame will not be enough to ensure the long-term inclusion of athletes with disabilities. Lack of

initiative from the NCAA means the mobilization of capacity and capacity building efforts only

occurred due to the stimulus provided by Sam. What will happen when Sam is no longer a

present force? The literature reinforces the need for "a strong vision, strategic planning,

commitment from leadership, adequate resources and systematic pursuit of the objectives"

(Quinn et al., 2020, p. 9).

Capacity to sustain is dependent upon both existing and newly developed capacities

(Millar & Doherty, 2016). Therefore, the findings of this study can be a critical first analysis in

creating and modifying an existing agenda toward inclusion. For example, certain capacity

dimensions were identified that made Notre Dame "ready" to include Sam (Millar & Doherty,

2020). Administratively, Claire said, "Sam made it easy for us," (human resources capacity) and

his chosen sport and event did as well (infrastructure capacity; Doherty et al., 2016; Hall et al.,

2003). In Track & Field, "it's very easy to find another lane or another chance down the

runway," or at least easier than a true team sport (Comerford, 2018). This case study focused on

including athletes with disabilities into the existing systems of the NCAA (Ackerman & Fay,

2016), and yet, Sam is a unique case.

Overall, more capacity building needs to begin at all levels to ensure equitable

participation. Sam recognized he is still the exception to the norm:

> Notre Dame and pretty much every college has just an unbelievable amount further to go
>
> with adaptive sports and with inclusion…You know, if I was a wheelchair athlete, there's
>
> no comparable competition. For me, I high jump with people and it's the same mechanics,
>
> but it's not the same for a wheelchair racer. (Sam)

Sam regretted that he couldn't "have done more to kind of chip away at some of those

boundaries [set at] the NCAA level and help to make some change." This desire to 'pay it

forward' is a common message in the literature. Many elite athletes with disabilities are aware of

what their participation could mean for others, thus, feel a sense of duty to advocate for and educate others about disability in sport (McLoughlin et al., 2017). However, to recapitulate a primary argument of this paper, efforts toward equitable inclusion cannot directly nor exclusively rely on the marginalized group (Quinn et al., 2020). The NCAA needs to be proactive to make change happen, which, of course, may be resource-intensive (Millar & Doherty, 2018). Claire spoke to this when asked about a potential 'wish list' of resources that may have benefited Sam:

> I think part of the rub though is, we don't have additional resources, right? Like designated for this. We don't have a para-program with any resources, and so, if we are going to go down that route, then it needs to be a decision that's made by university leadership or our department leadership and funded appropriately, with like guidelines in place about how we're going to run the program. Whereas, with Sam's request, he fit in perfectly to our existing structure. He was, in that sense, just treated like any other athlete requesting to walk on. If there were going to need to be like you know huge strategic shifts in priorities or resources and how we use those then it would have to be a much more complicated decision-making process. (Claire)

Although Division I athletic institutions have the capacity to alleviate certain barriers of sport participation for athletes with disabilities, resources – human, financial, structural capital, or otherwise – are not infinite (Quinn et al., 2020). Furthermore, planning capacity is often limited by the urgency of day-to-day operations (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018) and, within an ever-changing environment, there will always be additional variables to consider (e.g., Streeter, 2021).

Finally, to progress and maintain inclusive outcomes, sport must be a site of transformation. Athletic institutions need to stop operating "on the basis of generalizations,

assumptions, prejudices, or stereotypes about disability" (Office of Civil Rights, 2013, p. 5).

Coach Sparks revealed that NCAA coaches fall victim to their own bias and elite-inspired

coaching philosophies:

> Some coaches…I think they maybe see Sam, see a disabled athlete as we're becoming a,
>
> we don't want our program to be a recreational program. We're here to win
>
> championships. And if that kid's not gonna help us win a championship, what are we
>
> doing out here with him? Is a bit of the culture that I think some coaches maybe look at
>
> things. But I guess, I think that more and more coaches look at it maybe the way I did is
>
> that I think he's bringing more to the table. (Sparks)

For now, the inclusion we see still conforms to ideals of the 'essential' body (DePauw, 1997;

Powis, 2020). For example, Sam's performance and his sporting body were viewed as athletic,

with only slight modification of societal views of athleticism. Sport has been and will continue to

be changed by the inclusion of different identity groups, but the development of equitable sport

opportunities requires a paradigm shift, one that moves away from equating disability with less

ability (DePauw, 1997).

Conclusions

This study was the first application of Millar and Doherty's (2016) process model of

capacity building to examine the inclusion of athletes with physical disabilities within the

existing infrastructure of intercollegiate sport (principles 1 & 2; Ackerman & Fay, 2016) –

specifically, the inclusion of Sam Grewe, a single-leg high jumper, within Notre Dame's Track

& Field program. The merits of utilizing capacity building as a framework were supported by

identifying the environmental stimulus (Sam Grewe), assessing existing capacity and readiness

to respond (Doherty et al., 2014; Hall et al., 2003), generating and implementing (training and

competition) strategies to build capacity, and determining outcomes to promote and maintain

inclusive practices. If the NCAA is serious about its Inclusion Statement (NCAA, n.d.-a), it

should work towards an integrated, strategic, and defined vision (Kitchin & Crossin, 2018) to

make good on its promise of encouraging "participation by student-athletes with disabilities

(physical or mental) in intercollegiate athletics and physical activities to the full extent of their

interests and abilities" (NCAA, n.d.-b). To do so, the NCAA could start by understanding 'what

works' from success stories of inclusion, such as this one (the case of Notre Dame), or from the

ECAC strategy, or even from the women's intercollegiate context (Fay, 2011). While careful not

to over-generalize and suggest the findings of this case study can apply across contexts (Yin,

2018), I believe in their usefulness, however small, in helping close the gap between policy

aspirations and practice implementation and, at the very least, in the comparison of future cases

(Kitchin et al., 2019). Due to recent legal and legislative reversals, the NCAA is reconsidering its

entire model now. Perhaps this is a time of opportunity for parasports.

The limitations of this study may be addressed with future research. As the main research

instrument, I attempted to capture what is important about the case within its own world by using

"thick description" and bracketing my own assumptions and personal agenda throughout the

research process (Yin, 2018). However, as someone with a vested interest in program

development for athletes with physical disabilities, my ability to engage with participants

without bringing my own bias was impossible. This could be said about the small sample of

participants as well, all of whom were Notre Dame stakeholders affiliated with the Track & Field

program and thus accountable to the outcomes. Engaging an outsider perspective (e.g., other

ACC coach and athletes) could increase understanding about the process and impact of Sam's

inclusion. Findings of this case study were based on a retrospective analysis and broad

conceptualization of capacity building. Both longitudinal studies and participatory action research could provide unique insight about strategy generation and outcomes associated with capacity building efforts, and the factors that contribute to their implementation and maintenance. Matching quantitative analysis used within the Paralympic Movement could also assist in greater program development for athletes with disabilities in the intercollegiate setting. For example, Hutzler et al. (2016) identified several models that describe the pathways and factors of successful sport systems that could be used to understand quality indicators of NCAA athletic institutions. Overall, this case study offers some preliminary practical implications about increasing the participation of student-athletes with disabilities in the NCAA that need to be reinforced with ongoing research.

References

Ackerman, P., & Fay, T. (2016). *Creating new high performance opportunities for inclusive*

sport for athletes with Paralympic-eligible disabilities [PowerPoint slides]. NCAA

Inclusion Forum.

https://www.ncaa.org/sites/default/files/2016_Inclusion_Forum_Creating_New_Inclusive

_20160426.pdf

Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, 42 U.S.C. § 12101 et seq. (1990).

https://www.ada.gov/pubs/adastatute08.htm

Andrassy, E. J., Svensson, P., Bruening, J., Huml, M. R., & Chung, M. (2014). The role of

organizational capacity in student-athlete development. *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*,

7(2), 218–244. https://doi.org/10.1123/jis.2014-0103

Bentzen, M., Alexander, D., Bloom, G. A., Kentta, G. (2021). What do we know about research

on parasport coaches? A scoping review. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 38*, 109-

137. https://doi.org/10.1123/apaq.2019-0147

Berger, R. J. (2008). Disability and the dedicated wheelchair athlete: Beyond the "supercrip"

critique. *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography*, *37*(6), 647–678.

https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241607309892

Campbell, F.K. (2009). *Contours of ableism: The production of disability and abledness*.

Palgrave Macmillan. doi:10.1057/9780230245181

Carty, C., van der Ploeg, H. P., Biddle, S. J. H., Bull, F., Willumsen, J., Lee, L., Kamenov, K., &

Milton, K. (2021). The first global physical activity and sedentary behavior guidelines for

people living with a disability. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health, 18*, 86-93.

Comerford, D. M. (2018). A call for NCAA adapted sports championships: Following the

Eastern College Athletic Conference's lead to nationalize collegiate athletic opportunities for student-athletes with disabilities. *Marquette Sports Law Review*, *28*(2), 525–552.

Crincoli, S. M. (2011). You can only race if you can't win—The curious cases of Oscar Pistorius & Caster Semenya. *Texas Review of Entertainment & Sports Law*, *12*(2), 133–188.

Cushion, C., Huntley, T., & Townsend, R. (2020). Disability sport coaching: 'You just coach the athlete not the disability'. In J. Wallis & J. Lambert (Eds.), *Sport coaching with diverse populations: Theory and practice* (pp. 131-141). Routledge.

DePauw, K. P. (1997). The (In)visibility of DisAbility: Cultural contexts and `sporting bodies.'. *Quest (00336297)*, *49*(4), 416-430.

Devine, M. A. (2016). Leisure-time physical activity: Experiences of college students with disabilities. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly*, *33*(2), 176–194. https://doi.org/10.1123/APAQ.2014-0241

Doherty, A., & Cuskelly, G. (2020). Organizational capacity and performance of community sport clubs. *Journal of Sport Management, 34*, 240-259. https://doi.org/10.1123/jsm.2019-0098

Doherty, A., Misener, K., & Cuskelly, G. (2014). Toward a multidimensional framework of capacity in community sport clubs. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, *43*(2_suppl), 124S-142S. https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764013509892

Fay, T. (2011). Disability in sport it's our time: From the sidelines to the frontlines (Title IX--B). *Journal of Intercollegiate Sport*, *4*(1), 63–94.

Fay, T. G. (1999). *Race, gender, and disability: A new paradigm towards full participation and equal opportunity in sport* [Ph.D., University of Massachusetts Amherst]. http://search.proquest.com/pqdtglobal/docview/304515532/abstract/7A00A945639F4AAFPQ/1

Fay, T., & Wolff, E. (2009). Disability in sport in the twenty-first century: Creating a new sport

opportunity spectrum. *Boston University International Law Journal, 27*(2), 231-248.

http://sectorsource.ca/sites/default/files/resources/files/capacity_to_serve_english.pdf

Gillies, J., & Dupuis, S. L. (2013). A framework for creating a campus culture of inclusion: A

participatory action research approach. *Annals of Leisure Research*, *16*(3), 193–211.

https://doi.org/10.1080/11745398.2013.832646

Hall, M., Andrukow, A., Barr, C., Brock, K., de Wit, M., Embuldeniya, D., Jolin, L., Lasby, D.,

Levesque, B., Malinsky, E., Stowe, S., & Vaillancourt, Y. (2003). The capacity to serve:

A qualitative study of the challenges facing Canada's nonprofit and voluntary

organizations. *Canadian Centre for Philanthropy*.

http://sectorsource.ca/sites/default/files/resources/files/capacity_to_serve_english.pdf

Hanlon, C., Millar, P., Doherty, A., & Craike, M. (2019). Building capacity of community sport

clubs to increase female participation. *Leisure Sciences*.

https://doi.org/10.1080/01490400.2019.1686445

Holt, D. T., & Vardaman, J. M. (2013). Towards a comprehensive understanding of readiness for

change: The case for an expanded conceptualization. *Journal of Change Management,*

13(1), 9–18. https://doi.org/10.1080/14697017.2013.768426

Howe, P. D. (2011). Cyborg and supercrip: The Paralympics technology and the

(dis)empowerment of disabled athletes. *Sociology, 45*(5), 868-882.

Hutzler, Y., Higgs, C., & Legg, D. (2016). Improving Paralympic development programs:

Athlete and institutional pathways and organizational quality indicators. *Adapted*

Physical Activity Quarterly, 33, 305-310.

Kitchin, P. J., & Crossin, A. (2018). Understanding which dimensions of organizational capacity

support the vertical integration of disability football clubs. *Managing Sport and Leisure,*
23(1-2), 28-47. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2018.1481764

Kitchin, P. J., Peile, C., & Lowther, J. (2019). Mobilizing capacity to achieve the mainstreaming
of disability sport. *Managing Sport and Leisure, 6*, 424-444.
https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2019.1684839

Legg, D., Fay, T., Hums, M. A., & Wolff, E. (2009). Examining the inclusion of wheelchair
exhibition events within the Olympic Games 1984-2004. *European Sport Management*
Quarterly, *9*(3), 243–258.

Legg, D., Fay, T., Wolff, E., & Hums, M., (2015). The International Olympic Committee-
International Paralympic Committee relationship: Past, present, and future. *Journal of*
Sport and Social Issues, 39(5), 371-395.

Legg, D., Higgs, C., Douer, O. F., Bukhala, P., & Pankowiak, A. (in press). A framework for
understanding barriers to participation in sport for persons with disability. *Palaestra*.

Legg, D., & Steadward, R. (2011). The Paralympic Games and 60 years of change (1948–2008):
Unification and restructuring from a disability and medical model to sport-based
competition. *Sport in Society*, *14*(9), 1099–1115.
https://doi.org/10.1080/17430437.2011.614767

McGillivray, D., O'Donnell, H., McPherson, G., Misener, L. (2021). Repurposing the
(super)crip: Media representations of disability at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.
Communication & Sport, 9(1), 3-32. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167479519853496

McGinniss, K. T., Goutos, D., & Tuakli-Wosornu, Y. A. (2020). Diversifying diversity, equity,
and inclusion in American college athletics: The case for adaptive (and other non-
traditional) sports. *The Sport Journal*. https://thesportjournal.org/article/diversifying-

diexity-equity-and-inclusion-in-american-college-athletics-the-case-for-adaptive-and-
other-non-traditional-sports/

McLoughlin, G., Fecske, C. W., Castaneda, Y., Gwin, C., & Graber, K. (2017). Sport
participation for elite athletes with physical disabilities: Motivations, barriers, and
facilitators. *Adapted Physical Activity Quarterly, 34*, 421-441.
https://doi.org/10.1123/apaq.2016-0127

Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., Saldaña, J. (2020). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods
sourcebook* (4th ed.). Sage.

Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2016). Capacity building in nonprofit sport organizations:
Development of a process model. *Sport Management Review*, *19*(4), 365–377.
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2016.01.002

Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2018). "You can't just start and expect it to work": An investigation of
strategic capacity building in community sport organizations. *Journal of Sport
Management*, *32*(4), 348–361.

Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2020). Readiness to build capacity in community sport organizations.
Managing Sport and Leisure, *0*(0), 1–19.
https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2020.1763830

Misener, L., & Darchy, S. (2014). Managing disability sport: From athletes with disabilities to
inclusive organizational perspectives. *Sport Management Review, 17*(1), 1-7.

NCAA. (n.d.-a). *NCAA inclusion statement*. Retrieved April 1, 2021, from
https://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/ncaa-inclusion-statement

NCAA. (n.d.-b). *Student-athletes with disabilities*. Retrieved April 1, 2021, from
http://www.ncaa.org/about/resources/inclusion/student-athletes-disabilities

Nixon, H. L. (2007). Constructing diverse sport opportunities for people with disabilities. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues, 31*(4), 417-433.

Notre Dame. (2020-2021). *This is Notre Dame*. https://www.nd.edu/assets/images/about/this_is_nd-compressed.pdf

Notre Dame. (n.d.). Track & Field. Retrieved June 7, 2021, from https://und.com/sports/track/

Office of Civil Rights. (2013, January 25). *Dear Colleague letter*. United States Department of Education. https://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/letters/colleague-201301-504.pdf

Patton, M. Q. (2015). *Qualitative research & evaluation methods: Integrating theory and practice* (4th ed). Sage.

Powis, B. (2020). *Embodiment, identity and disability sport: An ethnography of elite visually impaired athletes*. Routledge.

Promis, D., Erevelles, N., & Matthews, J. (2001). Reconceptualizing inclusion: The politics of university sports and recreation programs for students with mobility impairments. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, *18*(1), 37–50.

Purdue, D. E. J. & Howe, P. D. (2012). See the sport, not the disability: Exploring the Paralympic paradox. Qualitative Research in Sport, Exercise and Health, 4(2), 189-205. https://doi.org/10.1080/2159676X.2012.685102

Quinn, N., Misner, L., & Howe, P. D. (2020). All for one and one for all? Integration in high-performance sport. *Managing Sport and Leisure*. https://doi.org/10.1080/23750472.2020.1829989

Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. § 794 et seq. (1973). https://www2.ed.gov/policy/rights/reg/ocr/edlite-34cfr104.html

emerging sport status. *DePaul Journal of Women, Gender and the Law*, *1*(1), 5–40.

Robeznieks, E. (2020). Examining the potential inclusion of adaptive sport in the NCAA [MBA

    Major Research Paper, Ryerson University]. Ryerson University Digital Repository.

    https://digital.library.ryerson.ca/islandora/object/RULA%3A8862

Saldaña, J. (2016). *The coding manual for qualitative researchers* (3rd ed.). Sage.

Stake, R. E. (2005). Qualitative case studies. In N. K. Denzin & Y. S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage

    handbook of qualitative research* (3rd ed., pp. 443–466). Sage.

Streeter, K. (2021, March 31). *He's the ideal college athlete. So why did he quit? Hunter

    Woodhall made history in track and field, but N.C.A.A. restrictions on athletes' earnings

    drove him out of college sport*. New York Times.

    https://www.nytimes.com/2021/03/29/sports/ncaabasketball/ncaa-supreme-court-

    endorsements.html?searchResultPosition=1

Team USA. (2019, July 1). U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee Collegiate Advisory Council

    recommends NCAA autonomy reforms to strengthen national team pathway for student-

    athletes. https://www.teamusa.org/Media/News/USOPC/070119-USOPC-CAC-

    recommends-NCAA-reforms-to-strengthen-pathway-for-student-athletes

Townsend, R. C., Huntley, T. D., Cushion, C. J., & Culver, D. (2021). Infusing disability into

    coach education and development: A critical review and agenda for change. *Physical

    Education and Sport Pedagogy*. https://doi.org/10.1080/17408989.2021.1873932

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, December 6, 2006,

    https://www.un.org/development/desa/disabilities/convention-on-the-rights-of-persons-

    with-disabilities.html

Wicker P., & Breuer, C. (2014). Exploring the organizational capacity and organizational

problems of disability sport clubs in Germany using matched pairs analysis. Sport

   Management Review, 17, 23-34. http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2013.03.005

Wolbring, G. (2008). The Politics of Ableism. *Development*, *51*(2), 252–258.

   https://doi.org/10.1057/dev.2008.17

World Health Organization & The World Bank. (2011). *World report on disability*.

   https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789241564182

Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods*. (6th ed.). Sage.

Sport Development for Athletes with Disabilities:

Collegiate Opportunities are Works in Progress

Epilogue

Epilogue

The manuscripts that make up this dissertational work are only the beginning to an important line of research that seeks to understand how to increase participation of students with disabilities in collegiate sport and recreation. Typical of any inquiry, my research process and findings inspire more questions. I ask four broad ones here: What needs to change? What can organizations do to change? What are the benefits of change? What *else* will motivate change? My responses to each reflect some final words regarding my findings and their application as well as considerations (more questions) for future research. I would like to acknowledge my dissertation committee for filling in some of the holes in my own language and thought process and encouraging the continuation of this work. Some of the presented discussion (particularly about future research) I owe to conversations with them. Thank you to Drs. Martin Block, Brian Pusser, Diane Whaley, and Peter Youngs. I could not have done this without their guidance, wisdom, and support.

What Needs to Change?

Policy is not sufficient. Despite international (e.g., the United Nations Convention on the Rights for Persons with Disabilities), national (e.g., Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act), and institutional (e.g., statements of inclusion) policy of "equal opportunity", my findings attest to how ableist the collegiate sport arena is. There remains a lack of opportunity for students with disabilities to participate in sport within both varsity (i.e., NCAA) and recreation (i.e., NIRSA) settings. Even those individuals who can bargain their own entry into either context still work against a status quo that evades a practice of equity. The growth of goalball programs was often hindered by campus recreation's blind obedience to existing rules and procedures without consideration of a unique population. Sam Grewe had to overcome some normative reluctance

and policy to be included within Notre Dame's Track & Field team, and he did so on his own

merit. He was "able enough" to "fit in" existing policies, practices, and infrastructure of the

program. Moreover, neither NIRSA nor the NCAA have strategic initiatives to put their policies

of disability inclusion into practice and rectify the absence of students with disabilities within

their programs. Overall, collegiate opportunities are indeed works in progress. To truly bridge

the gap between policy and practice, the collegiate arena needs to be transformed. The next

sections briefly address why and how.

What Can Organizations Do to Change?

The overarching purpose of my dissertation was to understand how to advance

opportunities for students with disabilities to play and compete at the college level. I took a

pragmatic approach to address this goal. Use of a process model of capacity building (Millar &

Doherty, 2016) grounded by the construct of ableism unveiled some practical findings that

organizations and professionals responsible for providing sport and recreation on college

campuses can use to increase the participation of students with disabilities. Overall, it became

evident that people were and are the lifeblood of change.

Before summarizing some of the practical implications, it is important to first emphasize

that they can and should be applied to both campus recreation and varsity contexts. Campus

recreation may be a more logical starting point for program development because its directive is

to serve *all* students. However, there is already a presence of intercollegiate adaptive athletics,

even if minimal, which includes both disability-specific teams (e.g., wheelchair basketball) and

the mainstreaming of athletes with disabilities onto existing teams. This to say, focusing efforts

on only one context could risk the progress of the other. Both are worthy of attention. The work

will be different within each but just as important to ensure equal opportunity.

Respond to the Stimulus

People, not policy, were the driving force (stimuli) in this research. Program development was not initiated by top-down directive but rather bottom-up resilience. Students with disabilities instigated their own inclusion. Their participation was a result of individual agency. And thankfully, these case studies were possible because people responded. Campus recreation staff and faculty members supported the development and implementation of goalball programs, and Notre Dame coaches and administrators supported Sam's walk-on experience on the Track & Field team. Therefore, the first step is for administration to say yes when an opportunity arises to include disability. It is unlawful if you don't, and it is also the right thing to do. Of course, an even better practice is to be proactive. Do not wait for students with disabilities to do their own bidding. Actively recruit their presence within your existing programs and create new inclusive opportunities that will provide them a choice of options to play and compete. Further, do not disband programs when participation rates are low or students with disabilities graduate. Rather, expand and institutionalize opportunities to show incoming generations your commitment to inclusion. Research shows that there is often a "fear of the unknown" to engage with disability (e.g., Cushion et al., 2020) or an "incomplete knowledge" about how to organize effective programming that fully meets the needs and interests of students with disabilities (e.g., Daniels et al., 2017). Thus, raising awareness and building competencies through training activities about disability and sport might be a good place to start. Prepare coaches and staff with the confidence to say yes.

Identify and Build Capacity

Campus recreation and athletic departments are two separate organizational entities on college campuses with different purposes and management structures. However, as shown by

this research, both are equipped to include students with disabilities. Their existing capacity

provides a state of organizational readiness to respond positively to the inclusion of students with

disabilities. Yet, to provide equitable opportunities, these organizations must engage in specific

and ongoing efforts to build and refine their capacity to improve decision-making and make

practical changes that will provide students with disabilities access to various fields of play. If

they do so more strategically, they will experience greater gains from their building efforts

(Millar & Doherty, 2016).

Research has consistently identified human resources capacity as the most critical

dimension that leads to the building and maintenance of all other capacities (e.g., Millar &

Doherty, 2016). Findings of this dissertation were no exception. Again, people matter –

particularly the "right" people. Therefore, to effectively respond to the stimulus of inclusion,

campus recreation and varsity athletics should identify and develop leaders within their

organizations who will take on the responsibility of program development, which means that

efforts to include students with disabilities becomes part of their regular work. As shown by the

goalball manuscript, these leaders should be passionate, knowledgeable, and committed to

sustain change. If there is no one internally who can advocate for the interests and needs of

students with disabilities, then consider hiring or consulting with practitioners or professionals

outside the organization (Jackson, 2006). In fact, this research shows that creating strategic

partnerships is critical for advancing collegiate opportunities. Network capacity provided

advantages for campus recreation by building up reserves of human and social capital,

particularly the expertise and resources needed for the delivery of goalball programs. The

intentionality of establishing external relationships was not as evident in the Notre Dame case

study. Strong rapport between Sam and his coaches benefited his intercollegiate experience, but

collaborating with other university entities or community organizations could have maximized his development as a student and athlete.

How to build these connections was not a part of this research. However, I can provide two sources that will inevitably be obliging based on findings of this research and personal experience. The first source is individuals with disabilities. The students with disabilities within these case studies were highly responsible for their own inclusion. They also expressed a desire to pay it forward. They understood what their participation could mean for others and were eager to advocate and educate others about disability and sport. Thus, my suggestion is to seek their input and learn from their lived experience as students, athletes, and citizens with disabilities. Second, I recommend finding a disability-specific organization near you. One that's purpose is to administer sport and recreation will obviously be helpful (e.g., see Move United), but special schools, philanthropies (e.g., Lion's Club), rehabilitation clinics, and disability associations (e.g., Spina Bifida Association) will provide great resources as well. What will be significant for effective program development is to expand networks and build capacity beyond typical operations.

Make and Implement Decisions

This research intended to learn from existing programs (i.e., goalball and Notre Dame) and similar situations (i.e., women's intercollegiate sport) to understand how to include students with disabilities more effectively within collegiate sport and recreation. Because opportunities for participation are lacking, there was a small sample of cases to examine, and each was bound by unique circumstances. Therefore, findings about program development cannot be generalized, nor should they be without careful consideration of organizational capacity and context. Important factors that may influence an organization's decision-making process include the size

of the institution, accessible and available facilities (university-operated or otherwise),

equipment, other collegiate teams and programs, student interest (determined by school and

community-based participation), transportation, and potential support of external partners.

The type of opportunity an organization chooses to focus their efforts on should be

dependent on an organization's capacity and context. However, I would provide slightly different

suggestions for campus recreation and varsity athletics based on personal experience, this

research, and the current body of literature. Athletic departments may want to start with program

development focused on individual or Paralympic sports (e.g., swimming, wrestling, golf) – in

other words, the mainstreaming of athletes with disabilities onto existing programs and teams

(e.g., the case of Sam's inclusion within Notre Dame's Track & Field program). Creating

alternative opportunities should not be neglected, but mainstreaming will take less radical

capacity building and change efforts within a historically rigid sport system. Except, I would

strongly advise against waiting for students with disabilities to be the stimulus. Varsity coaches

should commit to an active recruitment process, and administration should hold coaches

accountable to growing disability-specific knowledge that will ensure equitable participation.

On the other hand, campus recreation may be better suited to provide alternative team

opportunities. This assumption is based on four main postulations about the infrastructure of

campus recreation. First, the mission of campus recreation is to serve *all* students on college

campuses, thus, they *should* already be mainstreaming students with disabilities into existing

programs. Second, campus recreation has a larger student population in which to recruit students

with and without disabilities to participate. Third, they already have an infrastructure which

allows for multiple modes of delivery (i.e., open recreation, intramural seasons and tournaments,

club sports). Thus, compared to intercollegiate athletics, campus recreation operations may have

more creative freedom when designing and implementing new programs for students with

disabilities. Finally, athlete and sport development often start with recreational and

developmental opportunities. Campus recreation programs would have time to grow and emerge

into intercollegiate opportunities if desirable. The actual sport selection would be based on the

contextual factors outlined previously, but to offer one suggestion, para (sitting) volleyball may

be a good starting point. The sport has an able-bodied counterpart (i.e., compared to goalball,

marketing could be easier), requires little to no new equipment (i.e., a lower net and smaller

court), and can be an inclusive experience for students with and without disabilities.

What is most important is to start somewhere – to make and implement decisions. Ability

and interest evolve from opportunity and experience; therefore, universities and colleges should

not assume that students with disabilities are not interested or able enough to play and compete.

They should take action to include students with disabilities. Traditional ways of program

development will not be sufficient to meet the diverse needs of student with disabilities. Lateral

thinking will be required to ensure a choice of options, and continuous program evaluation will

be essential to improve the delivery of such options.

What are the benefits of change?

If policy alone does not drive change, understanding the impact of an organization's

actions, or lack thereof, to provide equal opportunity (i.e., program implementation) can be

incentive for greater institutional responsibility. Outcomes of inclusion demonstrate the

importance of providing a choice of options for students with disabilities to participate in

collegiate sport and recreation. Specific examples are highlighted throughout the case studies of

this dissertation. In general, creating inclusive organizations and programs can benefit students

with disabilities (e.g., social belonging, bodily mastery, self-empowerment), individuals without

disabilities (e.g., disability awareness), and institutions (e.g., goal attainment of diversity

directives). These outcomes can be powerful stimuli to amplify change efforts but should not be

taken for granted. Organizations will have to engage in ongoing capacity building efforts to

maintain and mobilize their effects. Long-term impact will require a systematic pursuit of equity,

which means organizations will have to change policies and practices that support the status quo.

<p align="center">**What *else* will motivate change?**</p>

If organizations lived by doing the right thing, and enacted policy based on its

authoritative obligation or intended benefits (or consequences), then change toward equal

opportunity would already be in motion. Unfortunately, the invisibility of disability in the

collegiate arena demonstrates the stagnant behavior of organizations to close the gap between

policy and practice. Therefore, there is a need to understand what powerful factors might drive

forward change, or rather transformation, on a greater scale. What will inspire organizations to

act rather than react? What stimuli might be more provocative or controversial to motivate

progress? This section highlights some considerations and possibilities for future research.

Litigation and Legislation

Currently, there is not a critical mass in active pursuit for the rights of students with

disabilities, particularly the right to participate in extracurricular athletics. Institutions are at risk

of not being compliant with the law, but they don't seem to care very much. There is no obvious

conviction to initiate program development to meet the needs and interests of students with

disabilities on college campuses. And umbrella organizations, such as the NCAA, are rarely

compelled to change unless litigation forces them to do so. Consequently, it could be helpful to

think about the demands for change centered on the rights of individuals with disabilities. The

concept of rights-based claims begins with appeals to constitutional and human rights law. The

body of judicial precedent regarding the law's application to (collegiate) sport and recreation is growing, but lacking is any regulation that requires schools to develop programs for students with disabilities (Comerford, 2018). Therefore, a comparison to the legal challenges imposed by other marginalized groups could help uncover new and different possibilities for equity in sport. A continuation of the research contextualizing the growth of women's intercollegiate sport or an analysis of the recent Supreme Court decision about the NCAA name, image, and likeness policy could help negotiate policies and practices that exclude individuals with disabilities from fields of play. Overall, a deeper examination of the statutory language found in the Rehabilitation Act (1973), Americans with Disabilities Act (1990), Title IX, Title IV, and the 14th Amendment will be critical to understand how legislative action can induce institutions to move more swiftly toward inclusion.

Institutional Responsibility

Institutions of higher education have historically been sites and instruments of transformation and protest. Even as (alleged) nonpartisan organizations, they involve themselves in political advocacy. Therefore, another change factor to consider is institutional responsibility. How are universities and colleges advocating for the rights of students and student-athletes with disabilities? What might they do differently to create greater external support for inclusion? For change to ensue, organizations and their members will have to take ownership of policy implementation. They must have a sense of priority in working to remove and problem-solve identified barriers that prevent equal opportunity. If not by moral or legal obligation, maybe they can be incentivized in other ways to do so. For example, the United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee has partnered with the NCAA to strengthen the pathway for student-athletes who are competing at both the collegiate and international levels. These sport governing

bodies could provide grant funding to high-performing college programs to become Paralympic

training sites or, at least, actively recruit athletes with disabilities into their existing programs

(e.g., swimming, track & field, golf, etc.). As Sam's case study showed, Paralympic athletes

benefit from the resources and experience of competing intercollegiately. This type of initiative

could increase visibility, build individual and institutional reputation, and create awareness for

disability and disability sport.

Social Movements

This dissertation shows that students and individuals matter in bridging the gap between

policy and practice. However, it also shows that organizational responsiveness is on a case-by-

case basis – one program or institution at a time. For example, Sam was the protagonist to his

own inclusion story. During his time at Notre Dame, he inspired his teammates and coaches as

well as "outsiders" to the program (e.g., other conference competitors). How can we take

advantage of the impact he had on those around him? How can we amplify individual efforts?

Thinking about the components of successful (and unsuccessful) social movements may help

move the work of individual champions to collective action. Exploring what outside groups or

stakeholders could be organized to support change goals and initiatives for inclusion might be

one component of consideration. The backing of the Black Panther Party was key to allowing the

continued occupation of the San Francisco federal building during the disability-rights protests

for Section 504 in 1977. Can student organization, protest, and activism help change the

visibility and support for students with disabilities in a similar way? What if an entire college

campus withheld student fees, or donors withheld funds from athletic departments until more

inclusive policies and programs were developed? What if NCAA student-athletes took a knee in

protest of the inequities faced by students with disabilities? Sport has the power to unite people

in a way that little else does. Understanding how to capitalize that power through social

movements could inspire radical change of a sport system currently caged by its ableist

traditions.

Disrupting Norms

My research process undertook a pragmatic approach, examining current cases of

inclusion, to understand how to enhance program development for students with disabilities.

However, how something is implemented often depends on why it does not exist. Hence, a

deeper understanding of ableism, particularly its preservation within the collegiate arena, may

help advance equal opportunity. Organizational norms rarely shift from within, so future research

may want to study how such powerful norms are built and change over time. How has history

and society shaped beliefs about the qualifications of athleticism and athletic achievement? And

what will it take to uproot dominant presumptions that continue to exclude athletes with

disabilities from full and equal participation? For example, although Sam's accomplishments

should in no way be undermined, his inclusion story was not controversial (enough). Coaches

allowed a minor rule change (i.e., starting bar height) because he competed with little to no threat

to other competitors. His use of assistive technology (i.e., prosthetic running leg) did not afford

him a competitive advantage. Another athlete who is closer to the top of the able-bodied podium

(e.g., Paralympian Oscar Pistorius) could invoke more controversy to disrupt ableist norms

entrenched within the intercollegiate system. Athletes should not be exploited for their political

potential, but if told correctly, their stories could be powerful symbols to motivate change.

A Final Word

I look forward to continuing this research about how to advance collegiate opportunities

for students with disabilities in sport and recreation. I cannot thank enough the people who have

already awakened that learning process. Thus, I cannot think of a better way to close my

dissertation than with acknowledging once more the following pivotal people:

My steadfast advisor, Dr. Martin Block

The members of my dissertation committee, Drs. Brian Pusser, Diane Whaley, and Peter Youngs

The participants who graciously gave their time to be a part of these projects and discussions

My favorite family, Mary Ellen, Mark, and Cory Fines

My PhD friends and colleagues who shared their wisdom about the messiness of research

And the non-PhD friends whose encouragement and prayers kept me going

Thank you!

With love and gratitude,

Abby Fines

References

Comerford, D. M. (2018). A call for NCAA adapted sports championships: Following the

    Eastern College Athletic Conference's lead to nationalize collegiate athletic opportunities

    for student-athletes with disabilities. *Marquette Sports Law Review*, *28*(2), 525–552.

Cushion, C., Huntley, T., & Townsend, R. (2020). Disability sport coaching: 'You just coach the

    athlete not the disability'. In J. Wallis & J. Lambert (Eds.), *Sport coaching with diverse*

    populations: Theory and practice (pp. 131-141). Routledge.

Daniels, E., Cottingham, M., Walsh, D. W., & Pearson, D. (2017). An evaluation of university

    recreation center outdoor programs for people with disabilities: Perspectives from

    professionals. *Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership*, *9*(1), 83–97.

    https://doi.org/10.18666/JOREL-2017-V9-I1-7451

Jackson, B. W. (2006). Theory and practice of multicultural organization development. In B. B.

    Jones & M. Brazzel (Eds.), *TheNTL handbook of organization development and change:*

    Principles, practices, and perspectives (pp. 139–154). Pfeiffer.

Millar, P., & Doherty, A. (2016). Capacity building in nonprofit sport organizations:

    Development of a process model. *Sport Management Review*, *19*(4), 365–377.

    https://doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2016.01.002

Move United. (n.d.). *Find a location*. Retrieved July 18, 2021, from

    https://www.moveunitedsport.org/locations/