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# PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH SPORTS: AN EXAMINATION OF TEAM GREENVILLE

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PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH SPORTS: AN EXAMINATION OF TEAM  
GREENVILLE

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A Thesis  
Presented to  
the Graduate School of  
Clemson University

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In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Master of Science  
Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Management

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by  
Christina Mazer  
August 2012

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Accepted by:  
Dr. Denise Anderson, Committee Chair  
Dr. Dorothy Schmalz  
Dr. Robert Barcelona

## ABSTRACT

Considerable research suggests that parents play an important role in the youth sports environment, however we are often unaware of the motivations that influence parents' involvement, or lack thereof, in their child's sports activities. This study examined the role of parent involvement in the youth sports environment, specifically among youth swim team participants. Interviews were conducted with parents to examine their level of involvement with their child's youth sport. A transcendental or psychological phenomenology was used to analyze the data that emerged from the interviews. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed and limitations and suggestions for future research are noted. Results revealed what parents view as involvement, that parents are involved because they want to spend time together with their child at swimming, and parents' views of other parents' involvement.

## DEDICATION

To my husband, your constant support and encouragement made my graduate school experience much more manageable.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## CHAPTER ONE

### Introduction

Annually, 44 million children participate in youth sports (National Council of Youth Sports, 2010). Parent involvement is needed in youth sports to create a positive environment in which the athlete can successfully master a skill and personally develop is the goal of youth sports. Youth sport leagues often require support from parents who serve as volunteers, coaches, and fundraisers. Athletes themselves also need both the support of a parent and parental involvement in the sport, as support from parents may help the child become a better athlete. It is also important for the athlete and the parent to agree on the ideal amount of parent involvement. However, at a young age, it is more challenging for athletes to vocalize that parents may be too involved and therefore the athletes feel pressured or pushed to be the best at the sport.

Youth sports are situated in a complex environment where parents place their children to learn a new skill, gain life skills, and to possibly become successful athletes. Parents' expectations of what the child/athlete will receive from participation in youth sports varies from family to family and also changes the involvement and level of support each parent provides. The benefits of children playing in youth sports include learning a new skill, learning life lessons, and being physically active. To facilitate their children realizing these benefits, it is important that parents play a role in supporting, helping, and assisting their child in the sports environment (Cote, 1999).

## Background

Parents help to develop the athletic ability of young athletes. Fredricks and Eccles (2004) acknowledged that parents play three distinctive roles in their involvement with their child's youth sport: provider, interpreter, and role model. As provider, they offer a sample of sports and play opportunities for their child to try. The parent then becomes more invested in the child and in a particular sport. They drive them to practice and pay for uniforms and extra sport related activities such as camp or private lessons. This support is needed in order for the child to be a successful athlete at the next level of his or her career (Cote et al., 2003). Through the interpreter role, the parent helps the child to judge his or her success and knowledge of the sport. The more positive and encouraging the parent is, the more the child will enjoy the sport and become more successful at it. Finally, a role model is a silent role that parents play and do not always realize. Their children watch them interact with coaches and officials and they learn proper ways to react after winning or losing (Lauer et al., 2010).

Wuerth, Lee, and Alfermann (2004) examined the involvement of parents in youth sports across the career stages of initiation, developmental, and mastery. The initiation stage is when the child starts to play a sport and the goal of sport in this stage is to have fun. The developmental phase occurs when the child is more committed to the sport and he or she focuses on improving his or her skills and begins competing at a more competitive level. The mastery stage is when the sport becomes the athlete's main focus with regards to sports. Wuerth et al. (2004) surveyed both German athletes of team sports (e.g., hockey) and individual sports (e.g., swimming) and parents of the athletes. The

majority of the athletes viewed parents to be supportive and somewhat involved, but surprisingly reported a low level of push or instructional behavior from the parent. Interestingly, athletes viewed the involvement of mothers and fathers to be equal. However, mothers did not view their support to be the same as the fathers' support. Mothers viewed themselves as more supportive and involved than fathers in the athlete's sport. Fathers reported that they gave more sport specific advice to the athlete, informing the athlete of what he or she could do better. The study also found that athletes who were positively supported with little push from the parent were more successful at moving through the phases than those athletes with less encouragement and support. Athletes who moved through the phases also experienced more direction about their skills from their parents than those who did not progress to the next phase. A balance of push and praise from parents appears to be necessary for an athlete to excel in his or her sports career. However, it is vital to understand that this push and praise is more important at a younger age. In order to provide appropriate levels of push and support it is important that parents understand their child's needs and wants in sport development (Wuerth et al., 2004).

Parent involvement is necessary for athletes to be successful in youth sports. Parents provide transportation to and from practices and competition, financial support for fees, equipment, and other expenses incurred during the season, and finally, they provide encouragement. The involvement of the parent increases the chances that the athlete will continue to participate and transition through the different stages of sports competition (Wuerth et al., 2004). Often parents feel responsible for their child's success

in youth sports, which causes the parents to become involved in their child's youth sport program. Parents often choose to be involved with their child's youth sports experience because they understand the value of what their child can gain from participating in youth sports (Dukes & Coakley, 2002).

The support the parent gives affects how children view their athleticism and satisfaction with a sport. Children show more satisfaction with a sport and have more confidence in their athleticism when parents are encouraging and provide positive reinforcement and praise. When parents are overly critical of their child it creates stress for the athlete. Athletes may become dissatisfied with the sport because they lack confidence in their athletic ability. How children view their athletic ability is directly related to the kind of support they receive from their parents (Lavoie & Stellino, 2008). The child's ability to be successful at a sport is partially determined by the amount and kind of support received from the parents. Support from parents varies from being uninvolved to overly involved.

In order to better understand parent involvement in sports, and for continued youth participation in sports it is important to understand what motivates parents to be involved in youth sports. Increasing positive parent involvement in youth sport could help create a positive sport experience for the child, which would likely increase continued participation in youth sports. The purpose of this study was to explore what motivates parent involvement in youth sports. Understanding why parents are involved or uninvolved in their child's sports experience may allow sports leagues to ensure more

optimal involvement by parents, thus creating a positive youth sport experience for the child participating in youth sports and possibly long term continuation in sports.

#### Purpose Statement

Parents' motivation for registering their child for youth sports can vary from wanting their child to have fun to using it as inexpensive childcare. Understanding parents' motivation for being involved or uninvolved in their child's youth sports program can shed important light on their involvement in youth sports, potentially lead to better sports programming for youth, and help to develop more effective avenues for parents to be involved in sports programs, while at the same time fostering a better relationship between a parent(s) and child. The purpose of this study was to explore the reasons why parents register their children for a sports league and what motivates the parent's level of involvement in the youth sports league.

#### Research Questions

1. What is the nature of parent involvement in youth sports, specifically youth swimming?
2. What motivates parents to be involved in their child's swimming?

#### Delimitations

This study focused on one sport and while results might be applicable to other sports the results are only from swimming and might not be applicable to all sports. The study only focused on parent involvement with the swim team. In addition, only parents were interviewed; youth were not being interviewed for this study. Of the parents interviewed some parents were relatively new to the sport of swimming and had younger

children. Other parents had been involved with youth sports and Team Greenville for many years.

## CHAPTER TWO

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### Introduction

The purpose of the study was to understand what motivates parent involvement in youth sports. Parent involvement is needed for youth sports leagues to be successful. Parents provide support to athletes and without parent involvement in youth sports, athletes might not continue to play sports or will not feel supported or encouraged in their athletic abilities. This study focused on why parents choose to be involved in their child's youth sports. The following chapter highlights the literature on youth sports participation, parent involvement in youth sports and how parent involvement affects the athlete

#### Youth Sports

Youth sports can provide a valuable learning environment for boys and girls of all ages. They offer children an opportunity to interact with their peers, to be part of a group, to develop confidence, and to learn life skills related to leadership and other traits (Dunn, Kinney, & Hofferth, 2003). Participation in youth sports has also been shown to improve academic success. Approximately 45% of American youth participate in youth sports outside of the school environment (Chambers, 1991). Parents choose youth sports for their children for several different reasons which include to become better athletes, to have an enjoyable experience, to become physically fit, to do something they can excel at, and because the parents enjoyed participating in the sport competitively (Ewing & Seefeldt, 1996).

Youth sports are situated in a complex environment. That is, practice times vary, meets or games are played at a variety of locations, and often children participate in multiple sports or extracurricular activities. This complex environment is where children may learn a new skill, gain life skills, and possibly become successful athletes. Parents' expectations of what the child/athlete will receive from participating in youth sports varies from family to family and also impacts the involvement and level of support each parent provides (Wiersma & Fifer, 2008).

The child's decision to play a sport generally stems from a parent choosing a sport for the child to participate in. However, a child might show an interest in a certain sport leading a parent to enroll him or her in a particular activity. Most often parents choose a sport for their child for the social interaction (Wuerth, Lee, & Alfermann, 2004). Possibly, the parent played a certain sport and they may want their child to play that sport too. Regardless of how the sport is chosen, the role the parent plays can have a positive or negative effect on the child's performance, long-term involvement, and overall enjoyment.

Parents generally work to socialize their children through many different environments, one being youth sports (Anderson, Funk, Elliott, & Hull, 2003). However, the child's positive or negative experience in the sport can be influenced by the level of parent involvement and whether it is encouraging or stressful. Given that parents play such an important role in their child's participation in youth sports, it is important to explore what might be the appropriate level of parent involvement for the success of the child (Barber, Sukhi, & White, 1999). Parent over involvement or under involvement can

affect the child's desire to play the sport, continued sports performance, and overall sports experience. Holt, Tamminen, Black, Sehn, and Wall (2008) stressed that in order for sports leagues to be successful, they must utilize the support of parents and understand how their involvement affects the quality of the youth sports program for the child.

### Parent Participation in Youth Sports

To further explain the role of parents with regard to the development of the athlete's skill, Lauer, Gould, Roman, and Pierce (2010), on the suggestion of the United States Tennis Association, interviewed professional tennis players to understand the role their parents played during the early years of their sport involvement. Additionally, the researchers also explored how parents' attitudes and expectations affected the athletes' long term commitment to play the sport. Four male and five female athletes ranging in age between 16-24 years old were interviewed. The researchers also interviewed the coaches and parents of the nine athletes. Seven of the coaches were male and in their mid-forties with an average of 28 years of coaching experience. The study revealed that the players felt parents provided most of their support by transporting them to practice and games, supporting them emotionally through wins and losses, and setting practice and match schedules. In addition, they had witnessed parents making financial or time sacrifices for the athlete to continue to play tennis. For the athlete to view this as having a positive effect on his or her success in tennis, this sacrifice had to be made in a way where the parent did not expect anything in return such as winning a certain number of matches. The study also differentiated between motivation and push by the parent.

Motivation came through positive communication and encouragement after wins or losses. Push referred to parents requiring additional practices and following through on the athletes' commitments to those additional practices.

Parental pressure is not always intentional. Rather, the parent often fails to recognize how the child and/or athlete views the parents' behavior. It is important to realize that athletes can become great with or without push; success often depends on the athlete's internal motivation and the attitudes of the parents (Lauer et al., 2010). What one athlete considers push and stressful, another athlete might consider as normal. According to Holt et al. (2008), parents believe that if they have experience playing the sport and an understanding of the skill, they are able to contribute to their child's instruction during practices, games, or even at home. While parents might feel they have the qualifications to contribute to the child's sport because of their past experience and knowledge, extra instruction from the parent can interfere with the coaching and can attract additional attention to the child.

Lauer et al. (2010) found that the tennis parents showed less negative behavior at the initiation stage of learning in youth sports. Instead they were very supportive and gave the athlete many opportunities to learn the new skill and to improve. At times, during the early stage of tennis, parents played tennis with the athlete to help develop his or her skill and teach other life lessons such as good sportsmanship. During the developmental stage, parents tended to become less motivating and pushed the athlete more, wanting him or her to compete and practice more frequently. Also during this stage, parents became concerned with national rankings of the athlete and became more

upset during matches. This negative behavior caused some athletes to not progress to the next level of the sport and dropout. During the mastery or elite years, parents became involved by finding an excellent coach and retreated from pushing the athlete too much to allow the athlete to become more independent (Lauer et al., 2010).

Parenting styles are often viewed as autonomous, supportive, or controlling for a youth athlete (Holt, Tamminen, Black, Mandigo, & Fox, 2009). Those parents who support the autonomy of their child report being highly committed to their child and the sport, yet do not try to pressure or control the child's performance in the sport. Parents who support their child's independence in a sport provide a structured environment in which the child can learn a new skill. The child has the freedom to determine their level of involvement for the sport that he or she desires. For the relationship between autonomous and supportive parents and their children to work, there needs to be an open line of communication and a willingness to listen. The opposite of autonomous and supportive parents are those parents who are controlling of their child's sports involvement and environment. Controlling parents are overly involved in their child's sport, allowing the child no independence. These parents' great expectations for the child often require the athlete to practice longer or more often. Finally, controlling parents do not provide an open line of communication and are often unaware of their child's feelings towards the sport (Holt et al., 2009). An appropriate level of parent involvement is difficult to determine.

## Involvement

Participation in sports can lead to different outcomes for each child. For some children playing a youth sport is pleasant and fun while for other children it can be a stress filled environment creating a negative experience for the child. Parent involvement can affect the experience a child has playing youth sports (Gould, Tuffey, Udry, & Loehr, 1997). Involvement can also help a parent have more control over his or her child's behavior and skill development in the sport (O'Connor et al., 2009). Understanding why parents want to influence their child's participation in youth sports will allow league coordinators, coaches, and even parents to understand the best level and type of involvement that allows the child to excel in the sport.

Parent involvement is often referred to as what the parent invests for the child to participate and succeed in the sport. This includes the money paid for registration, equipment, and other fees to play the sport effectively, time spent driving to games and practices, time spent at practices and games, and the overall energy given to the sport for their child to have the best experience possible (Weiss & Hayashi, 1995). Involvement can range from too much involvement to uninvolved. Understanding the "appropriate" level of involvement from the parent in youth sports allow youth sports organizations to better understand the positive and negative effects that involvement has on a child's long term participation in the youth sports league. Stein, Raedeke, and Glenn (1999) conducted a quantitative study to examine if athletes' perceptions of parent involvement created a positive and fun environment or negative and pressure filled environment for the child. Results showed that children viewed both the mother's and the father's

involvement in relation to amount of time the parent was involved as neither creating a stressful or fun filled environment. What is more important is the extent and depth of the parent's influence on the quality of the youth sport experience for the child. Efforts need to be made to find the right level and quality of involvement for the best sport experience for the child. Different types of involvement may produce different outcomes.

### Involvement through Coaching

Youth sports are a growing recreation activity that is primarily supported by parents and volunteers, with 44 million children and nearly three million adults involved (National Council of Youth Sports, Smith & Smoll, 1997). Generally, to offer sports programming for a reasonable price, recreation centers and other community organizations seek the help of parents to serve as volunteer coaches. Generally these coaches have been fathers of athletes who have played the sport (Coakley, 2006). Parents who serve as coaches can function as positive assets to youth sports; however, when parents coach their own children, it can affect the child's enjoyment of the sport. More importantly, it can affect the relationship between the parent and child.

With an interest in new trends related to the parent-coach role in youth sports, Weiss and Fretwell (2005) interviewed parent-coaches, children coached by a parent, and other teammates. Their study focused on six boys (11-12 year old) who were being coached by their fathers in a soccer league. Two teammates of each youth not being coached by their parent were also interviewed, along with the parent-coaches of the youth boys. The boys had been playing soccer for 4-8 years and the fathers had 6-15 years of coaching experience. Interviews were used to explore the positive and negative effects on

the player whose father is the coach, and what the father viewed as positive and negative problems with coaching his own child. The study revealed that sons playing for their fathers had more perks—for instance, they had more information about the schedule, were able to call their coach “dad,” and had the ability to affect the decision making of the coach. The sons also indicated that they received extra help from their father-coach at home and that their fathers better understood their ability level. The sons also felt more motivated because their fathers were their coach and they enjoyed the special attention and motivation given to them from their fathers.

Fathers agreed in the interviews that coaching their children allowed them to spend valuable time together as they were involved in their child’s social interactions. The fathers enjoyed seeing their sons excel, felt that they contributed to the development of their athletic ability, and relished the opportunity to teach them the importance of discipline and life skills. Teammates felt the experience of playing for their friends’ fathers was enjoyable when all athletes were treated equally. When the father was knowledgeable about the skills needed in soccer, the teammates felt more positive about their coach and his ability to provide instruction (Weiss & Fretwell, 2005). The authors suggested that parents need to evaluate their skill level before they choose to coach their sons or daughters team during the initiation stage of sport participation. That is, if the parent is not knowledgeable enough on the sport or had not played the sport when they were younger, they will not gain the respect needed from the athletes and from other parents (Weiss & Fretwell, 2005).

Parent coaching can offer very rewarding experiences for parents and provide athletes a healthy environment in which to learn when the coaching from the parent is positive and conducted in a way to help athletes develop their athletic abilities and gain life skills on and off the field. However, not all experiences of parents coaching their own children are positive. Weiss and Fretwell's (2005) study also exposed the negative effects of fathers coaching their own sons. For instance, some sons experienced more anxiety when playing for their fathers, which sometimes created disagreement between the father and son. Higher expectations of the fathers for their own sons created negative responses to mistakes and the father did not show much support towards the son. Sons also reported being treated differently by teammates who felt the father showed favoritism towards them. Fathers found coaching their own sons difficult and they had a difficult time separating the roles of parent and coach when dealing with their child. This, at times, caused the child to act out. Fathers also had a difficult time not giving preferential treatment to their own sons. Fathers wanted them to excel and placed extra pressure on the son to perform better and felt their sons' performance was a reflection of their ability to coach. Teammates agreed that most father coaches showed their sons special treatment. Teammates also viewed the father coach negatively if they felt the father lacked knowledge of the skill or yelled a lot (Weiss & Fretwell, 2005). Parent involvement is needed for youth sports to be successful; however, creating a positive environment in which athletes can master a skill and develop personally is a primary goal of youth sports.

Weiss and Fretwell's (2005) study of fathers as coaches exposed the positive and negative effects that fathers as coaches can have on children and the family. With these findings in mind, it might seem that coaches are generally male. Fathers are more likely to coach because they claim to be the experts in sports. While the success of the child in a sport reflects on the success of the parent, it tends to be more on the father (Coakley, 2006). American society today has seen an increase in single parent households or households where both parents are working full time. A modern view has placed the role of developing a child primarily on the parent, historically raising a child took the parents and a whole community, neighbors and extended family. Now with the role of raising children placed solely on the parents, fathers have become more involved in raising children and household chores (Pleck & Masciadrelli, 2004). Youth sports create an environment where fathers can be involved with their child without affecting their gender identity, as youth sports are and have historically been controlled by men. Men and fathers often serve on league committees, as coaches, and as officials. With the help of fathers and other men, youth sports have created an environment that assists youth to become adults (Coakley, 2006). Also, when a child masters a sport, it is often the father who makes the important decisions about training, coaches, and other advancement decisions to help the athlete succeed (Coakley, 2006). A father is considered successful when he helps his child excel in the sport.

#### Support as Involvement

The support a parent gives physically, emotionally, and financially to a child participating in youth sports is important; however, fathers' involvement specifically can

often bring added pressure. Kanters and Casper (2008) studied the support role parents play in youth sports and questioned if the support given from the parents generally created more pressure for the athlete. They studied 9 to 11 year old athletes and parents from 12 teams who competed in a travel league for ice hockey. Demographic information only included age and location of the athletes; however, it should be noted that ice hockey—the focus of the study—is an expensive sport and most of the athletes likely came from upper socio-economic households. Results revealed that the pressure from fathers created negative feelings towards hockey and that parents are unaware of the pressure they place on their child to perform well in the sport. The study also showed that it is fundamental that parents and children agree on the level of support provided by the parent in order for the child to have a positive experience in youth sport. Lack of involvement from the mother in masculine sports like ice hockey contributed to athletes having negative feelings towards their father's involvement (Therberge, 2003). The findings suggest a vital need for more agreement of the level of parent involvement between both parent and athlete in sports and coaching.

In Kanter and Casper's (2008) study, when fathers felt the child had learned the skill well, the child's view of his or her ability to play ice hockey increased. Athletes often feel more pressure from fathers to do better; more negative behavior comes from the father, which affects the relationship between the athlete and father (Lauer, Gould, Roman, & Pierce, 2010). Fredricks and Eccles (2004) explained the importance of understanding the demands of the sport and the support needed from parents. Both must

be met in order for parents to have control over their child's attitude for the sport, which can motivate participation and performance in the activity.

Youth sport leagues need support from parents who serve as coaches as well as provide financial support to the leagues. Athletes also need the support of a parent and, as discussed previously, appropriate levels of involvement and support from parents are very important in helping the athlete to progress and become a better athlete. However, it is important for the athlete and the parent to agree on the appropriate amount of parent involvement. At a younger age, it is more challenging for athletes to vocalize that they are feeling pressured or pushed by their parents (Lauer et al., 2010). At an older age, parents and children should come to an agreement on the level of involvement the parent should have in the athlete's sport. Parents are often unaware of how their push or pressure is being perceived by the athletes. Athletes who feel supported by parents and do not perceive to be pressured tend to have a more favorable experience with the sport and are more knowledgeable of the skills required for the sport (Lauer et al., 2010). Athletes who felt parent involvement was negative and overly pressured did not feel confident in the skills required for the sport and were more likely to stop playing the sport. Parents who possess and display positive values and expectancies tend to exhibit pro-social behavior and provide support and encouragement towards children (Kanters & Casper, 2008). When a child feels that the parent is encouraging of his or her athletic ability the child will be more confident in his or her athletic ability. Other children might be pressured by their parent, causing them to perform poorly in the sport and then quit playing. Therefore,

it is important that parents learn cues of when their child has had too much push and is experiencing stress.

The support of parents affects how children view their athleticism and their satisfaction with a sport. Children have more confidence in their athleticism and show more satisfaction with a sport when parents are encouraging and provide positive reinforcement and praise. When parents are overly critical of their children it creates stress for the athlete and they may become dissatisfied with the sport because they may lack confidence in their athletic ability. How a child views his or her athletic ability is directly related to the kind of support he or she receives from his or her parents (Lavoie & Stellino, 2008). Support from parents varies from being uninvolved to over involved. Too much support can cause the child to experience more anxiety and feel that they do not want to disappoint their parent (Barber et al., 1999).

#### Involvement Definitions

Within the youth sports environment there are varying levels of involvement. However, some individuals tend to associate themselves with a particular sport and/or organization. Dimanche and Havitz (1999) define involvement “as an unobservable state of motivation, arousal or interest toward a recreational activity or associated product” (p. 122). The more involved someone is with a particular activity the more they will continue to participate in it. Behavior is affected by involvement and increased involvement will motivate a particular behavior, the more one is involved with a particular activity the more they continue to do that activity (Dimanche & Havitz, 1999).

## Involvement Types

Involvement is often thought of as an individual's association with a product, service, and/or activity. Individuals who attach a certain level of appreciation and apprehension to the particular product, service, and/or activity are thought to experience an enduring involvement (Havitz & Howard, 1995). This enduring involvement often occurs with a particular product, service, and/or activity and how the individual associates with the product, service, and/or activity. The encouragement that a parent provides to his or her child during youth sports activities is a form of enduring involvement (Denmision, Straus, Mellitis, & Charney, 1988). This encouragement given at practices and/or competitions places an expectation on the child to perform to a desired level that the parent is encouraging, thus causing the child to have a positive or negative view of his or her ability based on the level the parent is encouraging (Chalip & Green, 1997). Antil (1984) referred to involvement through enduring in the same way the individual is motivated to place a certain level of importance on that activity or sport. Parents' levels of involvement are often enduring or long term, which has the potential to affect youth and their potential success within the youth sports activity.

Research regarding involvement is often found in the consumer product field. Laurent and Kapferer (1985) created the Consumer Involvement Profile (CIP) scale to help explain the factors of enduring and conditional involvement. The CIP scale considers the following factors: importance of the product, value of the product, symbolic value associated with the product, risk of purchasing the product, and consequences of purchasing the product. While not directly related to sports involvement, the CIP scale is

often used to understand leisure involvement. Parents often engage in increased levels of enduring and situational involvement which allows the value, risk, and consequences of choosing to be involved with or involving their children in a particular sport to be taken into consideration (Havitz & Howard, 1995). Understanding the CIP scale and how it measures an individual's choice to purchase a product or be engaged in an activity is important for youth sports programs and organizations.

The extent to which an individual is involved with activities directly affects his or her view of the program and/or organization (Dimanche & Havitz, 1999). The individual's involvement with the program and organization can be positive or negative and affect the extent of involvement. Involvement level can be directly related to how connected an individual feels towards a program, organization, and the management. It is important to note that those who are highly involved are often sought as a source of information about the program and/or organization (Dimanche & Havitz, 1999). Parents who are more involved and knowledgeable about youth sports report generally being more satisfied with the program and/or organization. The more involved parents are with the sport and the stronger commitment they feel to the organization increases their satisfaction of their child's youth sports activity (Green & Chalip, 1997). Satisfaction and involvement are strongly related. If parents are satisfied with their children's youth sports organizations, then they are more likely to get involved. The more involved they are, the more satisfied they become.

Involvement generally involves a behavior or an act of doing something, such as volunteering at a sporting event, participating in sports or parents volunteering to help at

a swim meet, that is labeled as involvement. Loyalty is also a behavioral act that is often an outcome of involvement (Crompton, Kim, & Scott, 1997). The more involved a parent is with a particular sport and/or organization the more loyal they become to that sport and organization. Parents might feel more committed to that particular sport, thus causing them to be more connected to the sport and organization. Often it is the parent who signs the child up for the youth sports activities. While the child is the one experiencing the activity, the parent's involvement makes the opportunity available to the child, meaning the parent and the child have different experiences within the youth sports environment (Chalip & Green, 1997). The parental role of socializing their child in youth sports is important and their involvement in the purchasing or choosing a sport for their child ultimately affects their level of involvement. Many organizations make parents aware of how involved they might need to be with that particular sport, thus at the time of signing their child up that parent is choosing his or her level of involvement with their child's sport. Youth sports organizations need to understand this when programming for the sport. They must also plan for how to satisfy parents to increase their involvement with their child's youth sports activities.

Youth sports are a great environment for children to develop into athletes and their continued satisfaction with the sport is often determined by the parent's level of involvement. Parents choose a particular youth sport in which to socialize their child. While the sport activity provides an environment for the child to socialize, the parents get the opportunity to socialize within the organization (Green & Chalip, 1997). Organizations often rely on parental involvement as a volunteer source of labor for the

sporting activity. It is important that organizations provide programming that satisfies the parents' expectations for their child's youth sports experience, while also providing the parent an opportunity to be involved. This study will seek to explain why swim team parents are involved in their child's youth swimming and what motivates their level of involvement.

## CHAPTER THREE

### METHODS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to understand what motivates parent involvement in youth sports. Interviews with parents were conducted to gain a better understanding of motivations for involvement. There were two research questions posed: What is the nature of parent involvement in youth sports, specifically youth swimming? What motivates parents to be involved in their child's swimming?

Qualitative interviews were conducted for this study following Moustakas's (1994) phenomenology method. Moustakas's transcendental phenomenology is the study of the lived experience. Moustakas places the importance on the experiences of the participant; the researcher must set aside her own experiences in order for the participant experience to be told in the data. Following Moustakas' guidelines for phenomenology, the data were analyzed for significant statements and those significant statements were placed into themes, these themes are discussed in great detail in the following sections.

#### Participants

Parents of youth whose children are members of the Team Greenville swim team that practices at the Greenville County Recreation Department's Westside Aquatic Center in Greenville, South Carolina, served as the population for this study. Purposeful sampling was used to select the parents who were interviewed regarding their parental involvement. Following the guidelines set by Moustakas with respect to phenomenology, individual interviews were conducted until data saturation was reached. For this study

data saturation was reached with a sample size of 11 parents. The researcher spent time at swim team practices to observe parents. This allowed the researcher to recruit participants for interviews. Purposeful sampling was used to recruit parents of swimmers for different age and ability groups. The Team Greenville booster club e-mailed all parents of Team Greenville informing them of the study and directing them to contact the researcher if they were willing to be interviewed. Once parents consented to participate in the study, the researcher arranged a date and time for the interview to take place.

#### Data Collection Procedures

All research procedures were approved through Clemson University's Institutional Review Board. The data collected included the parental views of their own involvement or lack of involvement in youth swimming, opinions the parent had about being involved or uninvolved in his/her child's sport, and personal reasons the parent had for being involved in his/her child's youth sports program. Further, the data examined if the parent felt that he/she needed to be involved to show that they are a good parent or if he/she felt that the program needed additional help with coaching or other administrative roles. The study was delimited to youth swim team participation. Interviews consisted of questions about the parent's past sports experience, what the parent viewed as involvement, how the parent felt about being involved or uninvolved and if being involved made the parent feel like they are doing their job as parent. Other questions that helped to explain why parents were involved or not involved in their child's youth sport. One on one interviews were completed before, during, or after swim team practices. Interviews were conducted throughout the entire duration of the fall/winter 2011/2012

swim team season. Interviews were digitally recorded and field notes written during the interviews. Semi-structured interviews were 30 to 60 minutes in length. See appendix B for a list of interview questions.

#### Data Instrument

The researcher conducted semi-structured interviews using the phenomenology approach. Moustakas's (1994) transcendental, or psychological, phenomenology allowed the researcher to focus on the description of the experiences the parents were having rather than the researcher's interpretations of the experience. The researcher recorded her personal experiences, observations, opinions, and biases about the subject prior to and during the interviewing process in order to account for her own biases.

#### Reliability and Validity

To insure validity, the researcher acknowledged any biases regarding parental involvement in swimming before, during, and after interviews, and used written bracketing techniques to address the biases and strived to place them aside during the interviews (Moustakas, 1994). As the researcher has experience with swimming and had worked in aquatics for several years, it was important that this prior experience with swimming be acknowledged and noted. Debriefing occurred between the researcher and her chair after the first few interviews. Debriefing kept the researcher on track with her methods and with the data collection process. Finally, member checking was conducted during the interviews and after the data had been coded, questions were asked to confirm the interviewees' responses. This provided participants the opportunity to ensure that their thoughts were being properly represented and understood by the researcher. To

address reliability, the researcher took detailed field notes that could be referred to while transcribing the taped interviews. The data were coded by additional coders and codes compared to measure intercoder reliability.

### Data Analysis

The researcher transcribed the interviews, which were then coded for themes. The researcher analyzed the interview transcripts using a constant comparative method to identify recurring themes. After reading all of the interview transcripts to gain a general sense of the data, the transcripts were then read again initiating open coding, which involved the examination and categorization of the data to identify recurring themes. During open coding, the researcher examined the transcripts line by line and underlined significant statements, many of which became codes and initial categories in the analysis.

During coding, the researcher read through the transcripts again in order to compare and re-conceptualize the categories. Then the researcher interpreted the emerging themes. Significant statements were selected from the interview transcripts and then organized within the recurring patterns generated in order to compare the data within those themes. This process allowed the researcher to discuss the participants' experience and involvement with Team Greenville.

### Data Analysis Strategy

The first step in data analysis began with transcribing all interviews verbatim. Pseudonyms were assigned to participants' interviews. The transcribed interviews were read several times for main topics and important passages to develop a holistic sense of the data. The data was then coded for main themes that were revealed from the main

topics and important passages. No pre-determined categories were used. Each unit was compared to the other units in the category to ensure cohesive categories. These main topics and passages were reviewed as a complete body of work and then the researcher reviewed each interview individually, looking for individual themes. Meaning was inferred from the coded categories in order to understand the data within the context of youth sports.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### RESULTS

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explain why swim team parents are involved in their child's swimming and what motivates their level of involvement. Qualitative interviews with swim team parents whose children swim for Team Greenville were conducted to better understand their reasons for involvement and what motivated their level of involvement. The following chapter will explain the process of coding and identify themes in the data. The main themes from the interviews will be discussed. In conclusion, the individual participants' responses will be shared.

#### Description of Participants

Eleven parents of swimmers participated in the individual interviews. Team Greenville is a year round competitive swim team program. All parents have at least one child currently swimming for Team Greenville. The age of the swimmers ranged from eight years old to seventeen years old and only one parent per child was interviewed

The characteristics, which include number of swimmers/children who swim for Team Greenville, ages of children, if the parent is activity participating with Team Greenville parent booster club, if the parent has experience playing sports, if the children swim for the summer swim team SAIL not associated with Team Greenville, and how long the child has been swimming for Team Greenville. These characteristics of the participants can be found in Table 1.1. Each participant has been given a pseudonym to protect his or her identity. Of the 11 parents interviewed, seven were female and four

were male. The swimmers, both male and female, and had been swimming with Team Greenville for anywhere from a few months to six years. The swimmers practice with different age groups and on different days but all swimmers are members of Team Greenville and the parents are all members of the Team Greenville parent booster club.

Table 1.1: Characteristics of Participants

<p>Chad Male 2 swimmers Sons ages 14 &amp; 16 President of the booster club Played youth sports growing up Length of time with Team Greenville 6 years participating with Team Greenville</p>	<p>Mindy Female 1 swimmer Daughter age 13 Active on the booster club Played youth sports growing up Kids swim for SAIL &amp; play other sports 4 years participating with Team Greenville</p>
<p>Heather Female 2 swimmers Daughter age 10 &amp; son age 12 Not active with the booster club No experience playing youth sports Kids swim for SAIL &amp; play other sports 2 years participating with Team Greenville</p>	<p>Kate Female 2 swimmers Daughter age 8 &amp; son age 11 Not active with the booster club No experience playing youth sports Kids swim for SAIL &amp; play other sports 1 year participating with Team Greenville</p>
<p>Lori Female 2 swimmers Daughters ages 6 &amp; 13 Active on the booster club No experience playing youth sports Kids have no other sports participation 5 years participating with Team Greenville</p>	<p>Brad Male 1 swimmer Son age 10 Not active with the booster club Played youth sports growing up Kids swim for SAIL &amp; play other sports 1 year participating with Team Greenville</p>
<p>Alexis Female 1 swimmer Son age 9 Active on the booster club Played youth sports growing up Kids have no other sports participation 1 year participating with Team Greenville</p>	<p>Jane Female 1 swimmer Daughter age 10 Active on the booster club Played youth sports growing up Kids participate in other sports 3 years participating with Team Greenville</p>
<p>Andy Male 1 swimmer Daughter age 11 Active on the booster club Played youth sports growing up</p>	<p>Kendra Female 1 swimmer Son age 16 Active on the booster club Played sports grouping</p>

Kids swim for SAIL & play other sports 1 year participating with Team Greenville	Kid participate in other sports 11 years participating with Team Greenville
Brandon Male 1 swimmer Son age 15 Active on the booster club Played youth sports growing up Kid swims for SAIL & play other sports 1 year participating with Team Greenville	

Description of the Setting

Interviews with the parents were conducted at the Westside Aquatic Center in Greenville, South Carolina. Team Greenville swimmers practice and participate in meets at the Westside Aquatic Center. While parents are not required to stay for the entire duration of the practice, 10-15 per practice session stayed to watch their child practice. Swimming is unique in the fact that youth swimming, like Team Greenville, is different from other sports for the simple fact that there is often a paid full time coach. Youth swimming also serves youth of all ages, with swimmers ages 6 years old through 18 years old. This section will outline the nature of USA Swimming, Team Greenville, and parental responsibilities with Team Greenville. The distinctive characteristics of swim teams will be discussed in the discussion of this study.

USA Swimming

USA Swimming is a national governing body for the sport of swimming. There are 3,000,000 plus members of the USA Swimming organization. USA Swimming is responsible for the time trials that determine who swims at international events like the Olympics. After swimmers are chosen to swim at these national events, USA Swimming is the organization responsible for the swimmers' coaching and training. Swimming clubs

like Team Greenville must follow the USA Swimming guidelines and regulations under the Olympic and Amateur Sports Act, which outlines club requirements for practice, coaching, and swim meets. All swimmers pay yearly membership dues to swim at USA sanctioned swim meets. There are approximately 2,800 sanctioned USA Swimming clubs in the United States. While there are many other swimming clubs, it is important to know that not all swim clubs are sanctioned by the USA Swimming organization meaning they do not have the same guidelines and regulations that Team Greenville follows. USA Swimming has a high standard of coaching and training and is responsible for USA Swimmers who swim at the Olympics.

#### Team Greenville

Team Greenville is a USA Swimming sanctioned swim club in Greenville, South Carolina. Although swimmers can practice year round with Team Greenville, the competitive swim team season usually lasts nine months, September through May. Swimmers of Team Greenville range between the ages of six to eighteen. Swimmers practice with other swimmers based on their age and ability level; there are eight different ability levels. Team Greenville's coaching staff consists of three full time coaches and an additional six to eight part time coaches; all coaches are paid staff of the Greenville County Recreation District. The coaching staff of Team Greenville is trained and certified through the USA Swimming Association. Team Greenville utilizes the *On Track Developmental Progression* training program to instruct swimmers. *On Track Developmental Progression* is a training and performance plan that focuses on skill, speed, suppleness (flexibility), stamina, and strength. This training plan allows coaches

and swimmers to have fun while improving fitness and swimming fundamentals. Swimmers generally practice anywhere from an hour up to three hours per day depending on the swimmers' ability group. Practice sessions are offered six days a week with attendance requirements varying among ability groups. Younger and beginner ability levels are asked to practice two to three times a week while older ability levels are asked to practice four times a week. Swimmers have the opportunity to participate in an average of two swim meets per month during the peak of the swim team season. Please see Appendix C for descriptions of ability groups and practice schedules.

#### Parental Responsibilities with Team Greenville

Parent responsibilities for any youth sport vary and can include paying for the activity, volunteer coaching, transportation to practice and/or games, providing snacks, and finally, making sure the child has what is needed to be a successful athlete. With Team Greenville, parental participation begins when the parent pays the \$200 per child fee plus the Westside Aquatic Center fee of \$25 a month for a youth membership or \$55 a month for a family membership. Parents of swimmers are required to sign a financial and volunteer obligation form when the child joins Team Greenville. See Appendix D. While the yearly fee covers coaching, pool time, swim cap, and t-shirt, that fee does not cover the costs of meets, which range between \$6-\$15 depending on the event and meet, swimsuits, goggles, and additional equipment or supplies. In addition to the financial and volunteer obligation form, parents also sign a parent volunteer commitment form which commits one parent to volunteer per swim meet session; some swim meets can have up to 12 different sessions. Other parent volunteer responsibilities include color group parent,

swimmer recognition committee, team administration, swim meet officials, swim meet timers, booster club board of directors, and many additional responsibilities related to swim meets. Appendix E is an entire list of the parent volunteer responsibilities.

### General Themes

In order to understand what motivates parents to be involved in their child's youth swimming activities, interviews with parents were conducted and analyzed. The general themes that came from the data analysis of all the interviews collectively included: *ways in which parents feel they are required to be involved, togetherness, what parents hope their children will gain from swimming, and perceptions regarding percentage of parents involved*. These general themes helped to answer the research questions: What is the nature of parent involvement in youth sports, specifically youth swimming? What motivates parents to be involved in their child's swimming? These research questions and interview themes will be discussed and explained in this section.

#### Ways in which Parents Feel they are Required to be Involved

The first general theme to come from the interviews addressed the responsibilities or tasks related to swimming that a parent viewed as involvement. Team Greenville lets parents know when they need volunteers and what tasks the parents are responsible for with regard to his or her child's swimming. Parents also seem to have things that they do that they feel are required of them for their child to be successful swimming. Ways in which parents feel there are baseline expectations for involvement can be placed into three main categories: transportation, volunteering at meets, and financial support with Team Greenville. These different categories of involvement will be discussed below.

Team Greenville outlines and communicates to parents ways they can be involved and help the swim team. Parents discussed Team Greenville's need for parent involvement. Brandon described parent involvement overall well when discussing the baseline of involvement Team Greenville expects: "At the outset Team Greenville does a great job of basically letting you know what the drill is. It's not just a pick up drop off sort of thing. They want you to be part of the team and to that extent participation is expected."

Team Greenville lets parents know that involvement with their child's swimming is important and a minimum level of involvement is required. Andy discussed that Team Greenville expresses the Team's need for parents to be involved he said "I think Team Greenville does a good job of expressing the need for parent involvement without becoming heavy handed about it. Heavy handed like 'you need to do this or else'." The balance between educating parents on how they can be involved in their child's youth sports activities and what the team actually needs can be challenging. The parents of Team Greenville seem to have a good understanding of the basic ways they are involved with their child's swimming and that involvement generally begins with transporting them to practice and/or meets but involvement does not end after transportation and from many parents involvement is much more than transporting their children to and from practices and meets.

### *Transportation*

The most basic level at which parents are involved is in the transportation of their children to practices and/or meets or arranging the carpool and taking their turn driving in

the carpool. When asked how they are involved in their child's youth sports activities, many parents responded initially by discussing the simple task of transportation.

Chad mentioned transportation, "from the most basic pickup and delivery level," as a primary way to be involved. Other parents also seemed to understand that transportation is the simplest way to be involved. Andy mentioned that serving as a primary facilitator for his daughter's swimming participation is the way in which he is involved with swimming, "I'm primarily the facilitator, as a facilitator and transportation wise for the daughter with Team Greenville. It's to the extent we are getting her to practices and [to] the meets." While Brandon expressed that there are "numerous ways [to be involved] like any other parents, making sure they get here and back of course" is a primary mode of involvement. Kate explained her involvement with youth swimming as tied to transportation, "I take them back and forth to all their practices and to their meets."

Transportation is necessary for children to get to practice and meets and is a primary way for parents to be involved in their children's youth swimming. Many of the parents discussed that the majority of their time spent involved in their child's swimming was spent transporting their child to practice and/or meets. As Lori stated, when asked in what ways are you involved with your children's youth sports activities?, "Um, obviously, commuting them there over and over and over again."

The importance of facilitating and managing transportation was an obvious theme; however, some parents felt that this was a minimum requirement or rather should not be viewed as involvement. Some parents do not view transportation as a way to be involved. Heather expressed that her involvement with her child's swimming is more

than transportation, in fact she does not feel that transportation is really being involved in the child's swimming. Heather said this about her involvement, "for my husband and I, if we are going to do something, we are going to be involved in it and not just drop off and pick up, that type of thing." Involvement through transportation allows many parents to spend time with their child and to contribute to their child's participation. However, swim team provides parents the opportunity to be more involved than simply transporting their child to practice and meets. While providing transportation is an important type of involvement, perhaps some parents felt that there are additional involvement responsibilities that allow them to feel part of the team.

#### *Volunteering at Meets*

Swim meets are large competitive events that require the help of parents to be able to make the swim meet happen. Team Greenville informs parents at the beginning of the swim team season that they would like one parent per child to volunteer per session at all home swim meets. During home swim meets there can be anywhere between three to twelve sessions, each session can last two to four or five hours. Parents seem to have a good understanding that their involvement is required at swim meets as expressed by Chad, "they ask at least one of the parents to be involved on a meet day in some aspect." Heather also had an understanding that parents are needed to volunteer at meets, "I mean, definitely attending meets, volunteering whenever there is a need." Furthermore, Mindy also mentioned that she was involved by "being at the events, volunteering when there's a swim meet." Parents are needed to help at swim meets, without the help of parents swim meets would not be successful.

Volunteering at swim meets often requires parents to complete a specific task or an assigned responsibility. These tasks and responsibilities vary and include timing, concessions, deck marshal, officiating, and ribbons. Timing seems to be the easiest swim meet responsibility as Chad said this about timing at swim meets: “You come in on the day of the meet, and you click the stopwatch a couple hundred times, and go home.” Many parents mentioned timing during swim meets as a way that they are involved in their child’s swimming. Chad, who is a professional photographer, mentioned his more unique responsibilities during swim meets, “During swim meets, I’m usually on the deck one way or another: either timing or shooting the pictures.” Alexis, when discussing her involvement with swim meets stated, “I’m a timer. I time every single meet that is here.” While Brandon might not volunteer at meets, he mentioned, “my wife is a timer.” Kate also understood that timing is an important swim meet responsibility, “for the home meets I volunteer. I go online and sign up. I’m usually a timer.” While timing often requires the bulk of parent volunteers during swim meets, other parents are willing to help wherever is needed. Mindy indicated that there are other volunteer responsibilities during the swim meets. “I time and do whatever they ask” said Mindy. Timing is often viewed as the simplest way to be involved at a swim meet. Unlike other swim meet responsibilities, it does not require additional training or certification.

Parents mentioned other meet responsibilities as ways to be involved. Heather discussed her specific meet responsibilities, “My husband I both are actually stroke and turn officials and he is an official.” Brandon also talked about these as other meet responsibilities, “We also volunteer as members of Team Greenville as parents working

as deck marshals.” Parents suggested that they play an important volunteer role when it comes to running swim meets, as well as the type of commitment required. For instance, Andy explained how parents can volunteer at meets when he stated, “with Team Greenville this meet coming up is Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday. I’ll spend probably 8 or 10 hours volunteering and my daughter isn’t even swimming and they have locked me in [to volunteering].” Through parent meetings, weekly e-mails for the swim team booster club, and swim team news letters parents are made aware that they are required to volunteer at meets. Lori said, “In the beginning when you register it says they are expecting you to have at least 20 hours of volunteer time per family.” Team Greenville asks parents to volunteer at swim meets, they have an easy online system that allows parents to sign up to volunteer at swim meets, Team Greenville sends out many e-mails reminding parents to go online and sign up. The need for volunteers at swim meets is great and the booster club, staff, and coaches of Team Greenville ask for volunteers repeatedly until they have enough parents to run the swim meets, and Kate mentioned, “Truthfully, I do the bare minimum they asked you to volunteer, so I volunteer.”

#### *Involvement through Financial Support*

The cost for a swimmer to participate with Team Greenville is \$200 per season, plus the membership cost for the pool. Additional expenses include costs of swimsuits, goggles, and meet fees. A reoccurring theme related to finances emerged when parents were asked how they are involved? Alexis expressed her financial involvement with regards to equipment, “buying every single swimsuit, the nicest goggles. We want to make sure he feels he fits into the sport.” Kate also commented on expenditures, “For

swimming it is a big financial commitment, it's a big financial commitment, it's definitely, yeah, a big financial commitment.”

Responses about financial involvement suggest that parents view the amount they pay for the sport as a way of being involved in their child's swimming. Alexis' mind-set about wanting her child to fit into swimming and to look like a swimmer was illustrated when she discussed “buying every single swimsuit, the nicest goggles. We want to make sure he feels he fits into the sports.” This statement seemed to drive her financial involvement; she was the only parent who spoke about wanting her child to fit into the sport and she views her financial involvement important for helping her son look like a swimmer. Other parents spoke more specifically about how they view their financial involvement. Mindy discussed the additional costs of meets and clothing:

The swim meets get pricey. I don't let her know. She's thirteen and a half and I don't think that's something she needs to worry about. The t-shirts sometimes she'll question ‘is this too much?’ I substitute teach too, I'm trying to get a lot of jobs so I can do that.

While Mindy talks easily about the financial commitment she is making for her daughter, she did not want it to affect her daughter or for her daughter to know about the costs associated with swimming. Andy mentioned that his daughter knows swimming is costing her parents:

Financially, for Team Greenville, the monthly cost. The cost it is for her to train and to enter the meet, yes, that is one side of the equation. Perhaps the financial responsibility for other sports is smaller and comes under the view of

entertainment for the children, for Team Greenville my daughter knows when she swims for Team Greenville, it's costing mom and dad money.

Swimming with Team Greenville can be more costly than other sports and/or even other recreational swim teams. Brad explains how the financial involvement can increase depending on the nature of the team:

With swimming with the neighborhood swim team, we would have them involved and depending on how well they did or their interest level we would see how they reacted to it and if they wanted to do something like Team Greenville, which requires more time and definitely more money. So financially we have to budget for when we decide to do something like team Greenville. In order to make that decision we have to plan ahead and budget for it.

*Summary of ways in which parents feel they are required to be involved*

For parents of Team Greenville swimmers, their involvement includes transportation responsibilities, volunteering at swim meets, and the financial expense. Brandon expressed it well when he said this about parent involvement with Team Greenville:

I think it's great. Parents being involved is the glue that holds everything together. I think an organization like Team Greenville gets its strength from the parent involvement. I've seen it at the high school level where high schools that have very active parent booster club. Where the parents are really passionate and involved and it floats all the boats so to speak.

## Togetherness

The second general theme to emerge from the interviews was that parents enjoy the opportunity to be with their children to have something that they do together. When asked what motivates them to be involved with their child's sports, particularly with Team Greenville, parents often discussed that they enjoyed the time spent together. The idea that swimming was a sport that all the children in the family could participate in, unlike most sports, often makes it easier for parents to be involved. Additionally, parents often shared that they enjoyed being with their children at practice and/or swim meets. The time spent together motivated the parent to be involved with his or her child's swimming and with Team Greenville. When asked why he became more involved in their child's swimming, Chad said:

So instead of the parent dragging the kids to the pool, I was here anyway. The master's team swam when they [my kids] did, so I joined. That contributed to my involvement and it's given me an extra level too, because they can talk to me about things that they can't talk to their mother about, that she doesn't understand.

Brad also mentioned that swimming is an activity that he has in common with his son. Brad said "swimming is something that my son and I shared. Something that we have in common. I want him to remember the experience and that it was a good one." Chad expressed feeling more connected to his children because they shared their enjoyment of swimming. In these instances, swimming is now something that the parent and swimmer are able to discuss and talk about together outside of the aquatic environment. Swimming is now something that bonds them together. Brad expressed it best in explaining that he

wanted it to be a memory his son would have and that the common bond that brought them together was swimming and that it was a positive experience.

Not all parents have the experience of swimming competitively like their children but this does not take away from the feeling of togetherness that parents feel when they are involved in their child's swimming and Team Greenville. Heather expressed why they choose to be more involved with swimming than other sports, "just because we like to make it part of our family. Everyone joins in and helps when they can." Heather is referring to swim practice and swim meets and the parental involvement needed to help swim meets to be successful. Making swimming part of the family can easily be accomplished when it is something that the whole family can do together. Family members attended practice with the children swimming and parents watching. Also, family members can attend swim meets with parents volunteering and children competing.

Parents also expressed the idea of being together at swim practice and meets, simply wanting to be there for their children. Often parents felt that being at meets and practices allowed them to be together with their child even if not physically together in the pool. Lori expressed this idea when describing her involvement with Team Greenville:

I like to be around when my kids are swimming, since I am the swim team mom. I was asked and I said sure. For the most part it's really not a huge requirement of involvement with it, but you know, I like to be there when my kids are at meets. I

like to be there at their practice. I like to watch them interact with their learning. It gives you something to do while doing that (being a team mom).

Kate also expressed that her favorite thing about swimming was the ability to be together as a family:

I don't know why it's my favorite sport to be around with the kids. I like it.

Another big plus for swimming is we can all do something. We can both volunteer. All three kids can swim. Something the whole family can be involved in. That's important to me.

Swimming and the fact that it is a sport the whole family can be a part of allows parental involvement with swimming to be viewed as a fun and positive experience rather than an obligation.

Interviews also revealed that when swimmers enjoyed participating with Team Greenville, parents also enjoyed being involved. Mindy expressed her involvement when asked what motivated her to be involved in her children's youth sports. She said "this is something they enjoy and I want to be a part of it and I'm either at baseball or swimming." Later in the interview when asked what she had hoped her children would remember about her involvement, Mindy said: "how much fun we had doing it."

Parents want their children to have a positive memory of their involvement in their child's youth sports activities. For the parents whose swimmers participate with Team Greenville, the ability to be together at practices and meets helps them to make lasting memories. While the entire swim team experience might not be positive, parents seemed to believe that being together makes an enjoyable environment for parents and swimmers.

### *Summary of Togetherness Theme*

The ability for parents and swimmers to have fun together and make lasting memories is what motivates some parents to be more involved with their child's youth sports activities, in particular with Team Greenville. Swimming is a sport for ages 6 to 18, meaning that all the children in one family can participate in the same sport at the same time, making it easier for parents to be with all of their children at the same time. Many parents enjoyed the opportunity to be with their children, as the entire family can experience the activity together. The environment of swimming allows families to build relationships and enjoy each other's company and support.

### *What Parents Hope Child will Gain from Swimming*

The third main theme was what parents hope their child will gain through participating in youth swimming, specifically Team Greenville. Interviewed parents discussed what they hoped their child would gain from participating on Team Greenville and in youth swimming. Many parents might hope their children gain similar things from swimming but they can vary from parent to parent. A parent can have different hopes for their different children. Lori mentioned "I have two year round swimmers and what I hope they get out of it sometimes varies for each of them." Chad discussed how children can gain and be driven by different factors:

Swimming is one of the only sports where you are judged against yourself. I have seen swimmers win events and be disappointed because they gained time, and I have seen swimmers finish dead last and be thrilled because they dropped three seconds from their personal best.

Health as an outcome from swimming was often mentioned when parents discussed what they had hoped their child gains from participating and swimming with Team Greenville. Kendra said “discipline and perseverance, meaningful friendships with his teammates, and physical health and well-being” when discussing what she hopes her child gains from swimming. Much like Kendra, Mindy also hoped her child gains “good health habits and self confidence.” With respect to self confidence, Lori discussed in more detail what she hopes her child gains from swimming:

I do want them both to get the physical exercise, and to realize that they can have fun at the same time. Being in different situations than they are used to being in gives them the skill of adjusting to change. Or if they don't gain the skill of adjusting, they at least see that they CAN.

Parents can assist their child in obtaining these gains from swimming. Many parents discussed how their support of their child helps facilitate what they want their child to gain from swimming. Chad mentioned:

They see us supporting the team. They see us putting in our time. They see us supporting them and their friends, and hopefully by our setting that example of dedication and involvement, their perception of commitment will be influenced in a positive way.

Agreeing with Chad, Lori said “I think that by being involved in their swimming and the team as a whole it teaches them that their commitments are important to me also and that I also have to manage my time to fit in everything.”

Parents' involvement helps to facilitate with what they hope their child gains from

participating in youth swimming. These athletes receive support and encouragement from their parents. Kendra has been involved with youth swimming for 11 years and had much to say about how she helps to facilitate what she hopes her son gains from participating in youth swimming with Team Greenville:

I encourage him to continue even when it is hard. We have a rule in our family that you are not allowed to quit anything in the middle, and my enforcement of that rule prevented my son from impulsive decisions (like quitting when he couldn't seem to shave any time) when he was younger. This helped him develop the self-discipline and perseverance that he has now. My involvement created friendships between me and the parents of his teammates, which provided the kids more opportunities to spend time together outside of the pool developing their own friendships. The friendships Thomas has, especially with a couple of specific teammates, will probably continue into adulthood. As far as the physical benefit of the rigor of competitive swimming goes, I don't think my involvement affects that much if at all. He would gain the physical benefits of the daily workouts whether I was involved as a volunteer or not, as long as he got there. He is now old enough to do everything for himself, and requires little input or guidance from me, but I will still stay involved because it is precious time spent with my son before he heads off to college.

#### *Summary of What Parents Hope Their Child will Gain from Swimming*

Through being involved with their child's youth swimming, parents are able to see how their child is developing and learning. Parents are able to contribute and assist

their child and ultimately help to see that the child is gaining and benefiting from participating in youth swimming. Whether they hope their child has physical gains or develops strong friendships, parents are aware that their support can assist their child to a certain degree. This support helps the child to process and gain benefits from the sport with the assistance of their coaches.

#### Perceptions of Parents' Involvement

The fourth main theme to emerge from the interviews was the perception regarding other parents' levels of involvement. Those parents interviewed realized that they might be more involved than other parents and often mentioned that 20% of the parents do 80% of the volunteer work with Team Greenville. Some parents even talked about why other parents might not be as involved and what could be done to get more parents involved. Chad, who is the president of the Team Greenville swim team booster club, said this when asked about the percentage of parents involved at more than the minimum of dropping off or picking up their swimmer. He said "Unfortunately, about 20%. ....actively part of the booster club probably 20-30%. We just had a meeting and 15% showed up. We are working on that."

Chad indicated the fact that something needs to be done to get more parents involved with Team Greenville. What one parent called the 80/20 rule was a common theme in the interviews. "I wouldn't have much way of knowing, but if I had to put a number on it, I'm a firm believer of the 80/20 rule. I think 20 percent do 80 percent of the work. That's a pretty tried and true number for active involvement," said Brandon.

Brandon and Andy had similar views on the 80/20 rule although Andy acknowledged that,

Team Greenville is a different animal and more is expected of the swimmer and the parent and I'd think I would revise the 80/20 thing. Maybe it's more like I've always done it for a few months. I don't want to despair the Team Greenville folks. Maybe the involvement is greater than I think it is and I haven't been there long enough. So if I had to say maybe more than half of them are the really involved folks.

Much like Andy's later statement—maybe the 80/20 rule is different for these parents—Team Greenville might be unique compared to other sports and that more parents are involved than initially believed. Lori also agreed, saying “probably more than half, a third of the people or beyond really are involved. Usually you see the same people and the same names.”

Since most of the parents interviewed were very involved in their child's swimming, some mentioned knowing that their friends are very involved too. Alexis said: “It seems pretty high. My friends seem to be really involved. This might be high, but I do hear nightmare stories of moms just dropping their children off. So, I'd say it's at least 80 percent I hope.”

Finally, many parents felt that Team Greenville has a higher number of parents involved doing more than what Team Greenville ask of parents, volunteering at meets, and mentioned that up to 80% of parents are involved. Statements like this came from a few parents interviewed. Brad said “with Team Greenville you're probably looking at

about 80 percent of the parents that are taking an explicit involvement in what's going on mainly because you have to." Kate's statement about percentage of parents involved aligned with Brad's comments "for Team Greenville I'd say 80 percent." Trying to get an idea of how many people are involved is challenging. From the interviews, it appears like Team Greenville might be unique, meaning parents are more involved.

Parents often talked about why some parents are more involved with Team Greenville. Many reasons for why some parents are not involved were given such as having children who play other sports, work, and simply being busy. Some parents interviewed expressed that they might be more involved than other parents. The researcher asked the parents what could be done to get other parents more involved, Heather said:

Unfortunately some people just aren't going to help out, but sometimes I do think some people don't know what's expected of them or they might be nervous about signing up for something or thinking 'I can't do it, I'm not trained.' Like I said before, it doesn't take any special skills to sell a heat sheet or sell food at concessions. Those type of things, I think, sometimes parents are hesitant. Some parents are nervous. I don't know, it's hard without just going up and asking what you are going to do for this meet.

Kate expressed her feelings about other parents:

I think parents are busy people and spread thin. People feel like I got them signed up, I'm getting them here, I don't need to do much else. But a swim meet takes a lot of people and no one should just be sitting watching their kids. People need to

be timing or selling concessions. It's frustrating when you've broken your back to do so much because it's not just about getting your child there. It's about running the meet too and helping out.

Like Kate, many parents who are very involved and enjoy being involved in their child's youth sports often are challenged by ways to get more parents involved to the level that they are. Often it seems like either a parent, to be involved or not. While this might be true, the longer the child participates in swimming the more comfortable the parent becomes thus motivating them to become more involved. Lori's knowledge of the sport has increased allowing her to interact more with her swimmer, other parents, and coaches. When asked what could be done to get more parents involved Lori said:

I don't know. I don't know how you magically make people do it. Maybe having some sort of trial class where they see what is involved in something or, I don't know, some buddy system and they make you team up with someone who has done it or tried something new together. I mean I know when I do a new volunteer thing at a meet it is much easier to do it with someone that I know at the meet, so maybe something with that. I don't know.

Often it is hard for parents who are involved to express what could be done to get more parents involved. For instance, in Lori's situation she views it as her responsibility to be involved but she admits not all may feel that way.

Interviewed parents suggested that not all parents are comfortable volunteering and being more involved with their child's swimming. However, Alexis feels that all parents should be as involved as she is and said:

Know what's going on and know if they are improving or not improving. And I think it's important to watch your child, not just drop them off. Minimally, if you swim three times a week, at least show up for one of the practices so you see the strengths and weaknesses so when the coach talks to you, you have a clue about what he is talking about.

Alexis also stressed that parents should have good communication with the coach and be eager to volunteer. When asked why she is more involved than the minimum level she answered:

I honestly think some parents, I don't want to say they don't care, I think some are maybe overwhelmed with it. I know there are some teachers here or some with several kids on the team and they are being spread too thin right now. It's a good time for me. I have parents that live nearby, so I can volunteer for meets. Having a support system is really important and some people have less of a support system, so when I need someone to babysit my little one, I can just drop them off, but I know there are some people here who don't have that.

It is interesting that Alexis feels that all parents should be as involved as she is yet she explains how her support system allows her to be more involved. The idea of a family support system—either a spouse or extended family—can make being involved easier than for other parents who might lack additional support. Many parents interviewed seemed to have opinions about how parents should be involved but yet, like Alexis, had a special circumstance that allowed them to be more involved.

Team Greenville is a well established swim team program and seems to do an effective job of educating parents on how they need them to be involved. “I don’t know. I think Team Greenville does a good job of expressing the need for parent involvement without becoming heavy handed about it,” said Andy about Team Greenville. Andy seems to have a positive perception of Team Greenville and how they handle parent involvement. Mindy said this about Team Greenville:

Now, with Team Greenville, they have the parent meeting every quarter. They talk about what they need the parents to do. Give a pamphlet. The big state meet coming up next couple of weeks, asking for parents’ help, selling sponsorships, and stuff like that. Usually the coach lets you know. If the coach has picked several parents, then those parents will filter it down.

Brandon also talked about his observation of Team Greenville’s current parental involvement:

Team Greenville gets its strength from the parent involvement. I’ve seen it as very active parent booster club...where the parents are really passionate and involved and it floats all the boats so to speak. I think it’s great. I think that can be taken to an extreme, but parent involvement is critical. Again, because it’s hard for a young person to stay motivated, if their parents are indifferent or if their parents don’t care. I think a lot of a child’s motivation comes from seeing their parents being there. Watching them cheering them on. It’s great, but again, don’t take it to the level that my kid is better than yours.

### *Summary of Perceptions of Parents Involvement*

Many parents are very involved in their child's swimming; however, involved parents see other parents who are not as involved. These parents listed reasons for why they feel some parents are not involved, yet they also gave ideas for how to get more parents involved. Team Greenville seems to do a good job of letting parents know of ways to be involved, having a booster club, and holding regular meetings. Parents who are more involved have the ability to help motivate these parents who are not as involved and to possibly put these ideas of how to get more parents involved into place.

### Summary of General Themes

After analyzing the data as a whole, four general themes surfaced. Parents' first level of involvement is transportation. Second, parents enjoy being involved in their child's youth sports activities because it allows them to be together with their child making memories. Third, what parents hope their child will gain from swimming and how their involvement helps to assist their child to obtain specific outcomes from swimming. Fourth, there are varying degrees of perceived percentages of parent involvement. A majority of the parents interviewed all felt that being involved first started with making sure their children got to practice and meets. It was often mentioned that this was the bare minimum required for parents to be involved in their child's youth sports activities. A handful of parents truly enjoy the opportunity to be involved in their child's youth sports activities. Swimming has provided these parents a chance to be part of their child's sports, to the extent that parents feel they share the experience with their children and make memories.

### Summary of Findings

The purpose of the study was to understand what motivates parent involvement in youth sports. The interviews revealed that parents are aware of the basic ways to be involved in their child's youth sports. However, many parents are involved beyond the "minimum" of providing transportation and financial support. Many of the parents involvement includes volunteering at swim meets. The findings suggest that these parents are more involved because they enjoy being with their children and want the opportunity to be together with them at swimming. Through this togetherness allows their parents to see how their child is benefiting from swimming and what outcomes they are achieving from swimming. This study found that many parents of Team Greenville swimmers maybe more involved with swimming than with other youth sports, and that the nature of Team Greenville might affect how involved parents choose to be.

## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION

#### Discussion

The findings suggest that motivation for involvement in youth sport can vary from one parent to another, yet all parents interviewed seemed to be involved to some degree. Fredricks and Eccles (2004) acknowledged that parents play three distinctive roles in their involvement with their child's youth sport: provider, interpreter, and role model. As provider, they offer a sample of sports and play opportunities for their child to try. The parents then become more invested in the child and in a particular sport. They drive them to practice and pay for uniforms and extra sport related activities such as camp or private lessons. This support is needed in order for the child to be a successful athlete at the next level of his or her career (Cote et al., 2003). Through the interpreter role, the parent helps the child to determine his or her success and knowledge of the sport. The more positive and encouraging the parent is, the more the child will enjoy the sport and become more successful. Finally, a role model is a silent role that parents play and do not always realize. Through supporting the child and being involved through volunteering, parents are setting an example that being part of the team is important. Parents' attitudes towards the sport can set an example for the child to have a positive attitude. Parents also help the child to deal with winning or losing, assist the child, and help at swim team. Engaging in

these types of activities sets a good example for the child and makes the parents a role model for their children.

The findings illustrated ways in which parents are playing the roles of provider and interpreter. Team Greenville provides parents the opportunity to be involved with their child's swimming. Parents can stay and watch their child practice and are required to volunteer at home swim meets. The ability to be a part of Team Greenville's support system allows parents to feel part of the team and often more connected to their child; this connection might be identified as loyalty. Loyalty to a product, service, or in this study, a sport or team comes from involvement (Crompton et al., 1997). While the parents interviewed might have different experiences with Team Greenville, they all expressed a sense of loyalty to Team Greenville and a willingness to volunteer and be involved. While serving as provider and interpreter, some parents volunteered and were involved to the level that Team Greenville asked, other parents interviewed were more involved than other parents and expressed this sense of loyalty to Team Greenville. Although degree of involvement and loyalty can change, this study did not reveal if too much involvement or loyalty negatively affects the team, parents, or athletes. However, in other sports or a different team with a different set of coaches and parents, there might be a negative image surrounding parental involvement.

Team Greenville provides parents the opportunity to be involved in their child's swimming through being part of the booster club and volunteering at swim meets. Parents mentioned ways in which they are involved with their child's swimming including transportation to practices and meets as a form of involvement. This was often mentioned

first when discussing their involvement with Team Greenville and their child's swimming. It is natural that transportation would be viewed as the most basic form of involvement. A majority of the parents' time might be spent transporting their child to practices and/or meets or arranging the carpool to make sure their child has a ride to practice. Team Greenville serves the entire county of Greenville but attracts swimmers from Pickens, Anderson, and Spartanburg counties, thus some parents spend up to an hour round trip transporting their child to practice. Away swim meets can also require parents to transport their child even further; meets can be an hour to two hours from Greenville.

Transportation seemed to be viewed as the most basic way for parents to be involved. A few parents mentioned that this level of involvement is sometimes not enough; parents should do more. One parent indicated that parents should come in and watch practice, not just transport their children to practice. While some parents viewed transportation as important and a way to be involved in their child's swimming, other parents mentioned that there might be better or more important ways to be involved in their child's swimming. Some parents questioned transportation as a form of "involvement." There seemed to be a delineation between involvement and meaningful involvement, for some parents interviewed, transportation was not necessarily seen as involvement or meaningful involvement. This conflict regarding transportation as involvement should be noted. Swim team programmers might not view transportation as involvement and should note that some parents view transportation as a way to be involved.

Wiersma and Fifer (2008) discussed that involvement level varies from parent to parent and is related to what the parent hopes their child will gain from participating in youth sports. Parents who are not very involved in their child's swimming might have a lower expectation of what the child will gain from swimming. It might be that not very involved parents do care and feel involved, but they are choosing to not be more involved because their child is getting what they expected from swimming. Parents expressed wanting their children to gain increased physical health, meaningful friendships, and self confidence from swimming. Parents often choose to be involved with their child's youth sports experience because they understand the value of what their child can gain from participating in youth sports (Dukes & Coakey, 2002). The desire to see children gain positive outcomes from swimming often motivates parents to be more involved. Parents felt their involvement helped to support their child and contributed to what the parent wanted their child to gain from participating in youth swimming.

Other ways parents felt they were involved with their child's swimming was by volunteering at swim meets. Team Greenville has a web-based system that allows parents to sign up for different swim meet volunteer positions such as concessions, selling heat sheets, deck marshal, officiating, and timing events, which is often viewed as the easiest activity for which to volunteer. Swim meets can last the entire day, eight hours, or can be up to three days long with 9 to 12 different sessions. A typical session lasts three hours and parents are generally required to sign up to volunteer for one session at each home swim meet. Sometimes parents are needed to cover more sessions. Swim meets make up the bulk of the need for volunteers and parents often view Team Greenville's greatest

need for volunteers at swim meets. For youth sports to be successful, they must utilize parental support and parental involvement (Holt et al., 2008). Swim meets could not be successful without parent volunteers to run them.

Holt et al. (2008) also discussed that parents need to understand how important their involvement is and how it affects the child. It is important that parents understand the importance of their involvement and, more specifically with this study, how important their involvement is with regard to swim meets. Barber et al. (1999) discussed that children can feel anxiety when given too much support. They do not want to let their parents down. It is important to understand that support and involvement, while they might seem similar, are different. When parents sign their child up for swimming or when they buy their child swimsuit and goggles, they are supporting their child's participation on the swim team. Involvement is physically taking on more responsibility with regards to their child's swim team participation. Parents can also verbally support their child by offering words of encouragement and cheering for them at swim meets. Involvement is the act of being part of the swim team organization by providing them with extra support. In youth sports, many parents support their child and support the team, while other parents take support a step further and become more involved with the team and physically assist with additional responsibilities such as working at swim meets. Parents discussed that other parents might support their child, but might not be involved with physically assisting the team. This study revealed ways in which parents felt they were involved specifically with swim meets and revealed that many parents understand the importance behind their involvement.

Parents' initial support with their child's swimming occurs when they sign the child up and pay the fee for them to swim. An increased level of enduring, lasting appreciation, and situational involvement occurs when parents are choosing to be involved and involving their children in a particular sport (Havitz & Howard, 1995). For swimming, the financial involvement does not stop with this initial fee; although it might feel like a situational level of involvement, the longer the child participates with swimming the more enduring and lasting that financial involvement becomes. There are swimsuits, goggles, swim meet fees, and other added expenses that parents have to pay while their child swims for Team Greenville. Parents provide their children with the opportunity to participate in a particular sport. This is where parent involvement with sports begins (Chalip & Green, 1997). Through this financial involvement, parents are also supporting the first phase of parent involvement that Fredricks and Eccles (2004) term "the provider." The financial involvement allows parents to provide their child with the sports experience that also offers parents the opportunity to be involved in their child's swimming. Parents are also the providers of swimsuits, goggles, and other needed equipment. Equipment and the actual decision to purchase specific equipment allows parents to become more involved with the sport, creating a feeling of togetherness. Team Greenville costs the family more than other sports, but it is what they decided is important. Financial involvement is simply a fact, in order for the child to swim with Team Greenville parents have to pay, creating a financial commitment to Team Greenville. It is important to note that not all parents viewed the financial commitment as involvement. Some parents did not even mention the cost of the program at all.

## Involvement Timeline

Figure 1.1

Introductory Involvement	Intermediate Involvement	Advanced Involvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Occurs when parent and swimmer are new to the team and/or sport</li><li>•Parent signs child up for sport</li><li>•Parent purchases needed equipment and supplies the child needs for the sport</li><li>•Parent makes sure child gets to required practices and meets</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Swimmer has swam with the team for at least a year, generally a few years</li><li>•Parent completes all involvement items in the initial involvement</li><li>•Parent also volunteers to help more than what is required of them by the team</li><li>•Parent might be a color group parent</li><li>•Parent attends parent meetings and booster club meetings</li><li>•Parent might serve on additional committees</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>•Swimmer has swam with the team for at least 5 years</li><li>•Parent completes all involvement items in introductory and intermediate involvement</li><li>•Parent holds a leadership position the booster club or is a chair of a committee</li><li>•Parent has a major role in the organization with home swim meets</li><li>•Parent is knowledgeable on team information and policies</li><li>•Parent is a source of information for new parents</li></ul>

While parents did not discuss a formal involvement structure or timeline, the data indicate that parents progressively became more involved with their child's swimming. It seemed that parents whose children had only been swimming with for Team Greenville for less than a year were nervous to become more involved or volunteer for any task other than what was required. These parents who were new to Team Greenville seemed to still be learning their role. While new parents discussed knowing there were other ways they could be involved, they seemed to still be "getting their feet wet". Once their comfort level increased, they seemed like they became more involved. Other parents whose children had been swimming with Team Greenville for several years seemed have a better understanding of what help Team Greenville needed and understood that Team Greenville desperately needed their help. Involved and experienced parents also

expressed a view that new parents are not as involved and often gave reasons for why some parents are not as involved.

Figure 1.1 shows how parent involvement appears to change over time with youth swimming according to the data in this study. Introductory involvement is similar to what Fredicks and Eccles (2004) refer to as being the provider. These parents are introducing their child to a sport and providing them with the opportunity to participate in a sport. The longer that child participates in a sport the more involved the parents become because they are satisfied with the experience their child is having on the team and with the sport. In intermediate involvement, parents volunteer for additional responsibilities such as committees and color group parents. Color group parents are the liaisons between the coach and the parents of a particular practice group. This responsibility requires an experienced and knowledgeable parent. Finally, advanced involvement occurs when the child has been participating with a particular team for at least five years. This is the parent who has moved through introductory and intermediate involvement and has become increasingly more involved and is now at the advanced level. These parents serve as committee leaders and play an active role in the operation of home swim meets.

Many parents expressed that involvement with their child's swimming, specifically Team Greenville, provides them with the opportunity to connect with their child. While not all parents reported being part of a swim team when they were young, many discussed memories they had playing a sport. This history allows them to connect to their child. The sports experience becomes something the parent and child have in common. One parent mentioned being able to relate to his daughter because they share a

common sports experience. He found it important for her to experience having a coach and being on a team, but enjoyed that they could talk about sports outside of swim team. This is often important to parents and creates a connection to their child. Even if the parents did not swim on a swim team when they were young, the experience of participating on a team and in a sport allows the parents to connect to their children. When the child first begins to swim for Team Greenville, parents might not know the technical swimming terms and concepts but the more their child swims, the more the parents learn about the sport and the more they become a part of the sport. One mother discussed that she did not swim when she was young but since her children have swam for a few years now she feels that she knows more. She has more knowledge of swimming better and also knows many other parents and swimmers. Knowledge of the sport allowed this mother to say that swimming was her favorite sport. Not all parents will say that swimming is their favorite sport but the more their child participates with swimming, and the more involved the parent becomes, they have the ability to understand their child's experience with swim team. However, some parents have experience playing sports or, more specifically, swimming. This experience and previous knowledge of swimming at times allows parents to feel that they can contribute to their child's coaching (Holt et al., 2008), causing the parent to become more involved in their child's swimming.

Many parents discussed having participated in sports while growing up; however, they do not seem to provide additional coaching and instead it allows them to feel closer to their children. While parents interviewed did not mention wanting to coach their child

at Team Greenville, these same parents might feel the need to step in and provide additional coaching if they were not confident with the coaches skill level or ability to coach. Swimming coaches coach individual swimmers who participate on a larger team, this makes swimming different from other sports. Team Greenville's coaches' are part and fulltime paid coaches who have coached for several years. This might make parents of swimmers more comfortable and feeling like they do not need to provide additional coaching. Unlike other sports, Team Greenville swim team allows 6-18 year old youth to participate on the same team, which means that if the parent chooses, all children in the same family can participate on the same team. Many parents discussed that having the ability to have all the children compete for the same team allowed them to be more involved with their child's swimming. The opportunities that parents have to be involved with their child's swimming allows the parent to be the interpreter for the child (Fredricks & Eccles, 2004). Through involvement the parent can help the child process or interpret the sports experience, allowing the parents to feel more connected to their child. Through volunteering and being involved with Team Greenville, parents reported making memories and having fun.

Lavoi and Stellino (2008) discussed that a child's perceived athletic ability is related to the support the child receive from their parents. Greater parent involvement could help children to view their athletic ability more positively. In this case, it means the child might be more confident in his or her swimming skills or they might feel as if they are a good athlete. Regardless if the child feels like a better athlete or not, parental involvement allows parents to feel connected to their child and provides the atmosphere

for parents to make memories with their children. When discussing what they hoped their child would remember about their involvement with swim team, parents expressed that they wanted their child to remember how much fun they had together at swimming. Youth sports should be a good memory that children have when they grow up. It should be remembered as a fun experience where their parents were supporting them through their involvement.

Team Greenville communicates the need for parents to be involved from the beginning when parents first sign their child up for the team. But it became clear through the interviews that parents have different levels of involvement. The basic level of involvement seemed to be providing transportation to practice and meets. The next level above a basic level of involvement was the parent transporting the child to practice and meets, volunteering at meets, and doing what the coaches or booster club asked parents to do. Finally, heavily involved parents seemed to attend all meets and practices, attend all parent meetings, and seek out ways to be involved with Team Greenville. While these levels are not technically formal levels, throughout the interviews parents seemed to express that there are parents who are not as involved as they are. While parents seemed to indicate that not all parents are equally involved, these parents who are more involved expressed that more parents should be involved. They also offered reasons why some parents are not as involved includes work responsibilities and other personal commitments. The more involved a parent is, the higher their ability to be a source of information (Dimache & Havitz, 1999). The idea that these involved parents are more knowledgeable of how to be involved is important. These parents have the potential to

inform and educate other parents on ways to be involved with Team Greenville. It was mentioned in the interviews that parents might not volunteer or become more involved because they have a fear of messing up or doing something wrong. The more involved parents have the knowledge and need to make an effort to help other parents to become more involved. Dimanche and Havitz (1999) explained that parents who are more involved than other parents and knowledgeable of the sport are often more satisfied with the sport and/or organization and are often sought out as a source of information about a particular team. This knowledge and satisfaction needs to be communicated to those parents who are not as involved with their child's swimming. The more involved parents need to understand their role of sharing their knowledge and expressing their satisfaction with being involved with their child's swimming to other parents. In this study, it seemed as if the more involved parents have become frustrated with those parents who are not as involved. Instead of communicating their knowledge about ways to be involved, they now complain about these less involved parents.

The findings of this study revealed that parents are involved in many different ways and that involvement seems to have different levels. While many parents sign their children up for swimming and make sure they are transported to practice and meets and volunteer, other parents choose to be a part of the team by being more involved with Team Greenville. While spending time with swimming, parents become more knowledgeable and are able to help interpret the sports experience for their child. When involvement is enduring, it allows the parent to become loyal to Team Greenville.

Swimming and Team Greenville provides parents and swimmers an opportunity to become better athletes and role models.

### Implications

This study focused on the Team Greenville swim team. While the implications from this study are directed towards Team Greenville, the implications could be applied to other youth swim team programs. Findings from this study can also provide a guide for parental involvement in other youth sports.

This study revealed information on parental involvement in youth swimming. Many sports rely on some form of support or involvement from parents and this study showed ways in which parents felt that they are involved. The three ways in which parents felt they were most involved included transportation, financially supporting the swimmer, and volunteering at swim meets. Understanding ways in which parents feel they are most involved has the potential to help coaches and program staff for Team Greenville to understand what parents view their involvement to be. Also what motivates parents to be involved or more involved than other parents was revealed in this study and provides possible insight on ways to get other parents more involved. While transportation and financial involvement is possibly a requirement for the child to simply participate with Team Greenville, Team Greenville has a great need for parents to be involved at swim meets and with the swim team booster club. The study revealed that a majority of parents are involved with their child's swimming on some level; however, is the current amount of parent involvement fulfilling the needs Team Greenville has for

parent volunteers? Finally, parents might view their involvement differently than the coaches and staff of Team Greenville.

In addition, many parents felt that they were more involved than other parents, and that involvement could be classified into different levels of involvement. Although these levels of involvement have not been codified by Team Greenville, it is interesting that parents seemed to place other parents into different involvement levels. Team Greenville might not create formal levels; however, this finding will help the coaches and staff to realize that involvement is an evolving activity that has the potential to be enduring, meaning continuing and lasting involvement, if parents progress through the different involvement levels. Just like children progress through the different stages of sports participations, parental involvement has the potential to move from basic involvement to enduring involvement. These different levels could be introductory, intermediate, and advanced. The introductory level would include new parents involved with Team Greenville for one year or less. Their involvement would be minimal and consist of transportation and swim meet volunteering. The intermediate involvement level would be parents who have been involved with Team Greenville for two to four years. Their involvement would consist of transportation, swim meet volunteering, and serving on the swim team booster club. Lastly, an advanced level of involvement would consist of parents who have been with Team Greenville for five or more years and are involved through transportation, swim meets, and booster club, and would include being a source of information and knowledge for new parents. Team Greenville coaches and staff and other youth sports often do not fully understand that involvement is a process that parents

move through (see Figure 1.1). Often youth sports program staff might desire for parents to be very involved with a particular sport. However, they must be aware that not all parents are ready to be heavily involved at the onset of their child's participation with the sport. This is a good reminder for Team Greenville that parents need time and confidence to become more involved and that these levels of parental involvement might need to be acknowledged.

The findings also seemed to suggest that those parents who are more involved and view their involvement as more than financial or transportation have personal reasons for being more involved with Team Greenville. The most common reason for being more involved with Team Greenville was that parents wanted to spend time with their child. While Team Greenville cannot force parents to want to spend more time with their child, they could consider educating parents on the importance of their relationship with their child in regards to the athlete and the sport. In essence, Team Greenville could help parents to understand that they play an important role as provider, interpreter, and role model to their child within this sport or athletic environment. It was mentioned in the interviews that Team Greenville distributes newsletters with tips on how parents can support their swimmer and support Team Greenville. Team Greenville might consider additional mediums to help parents to be more knowledge able regarding their role, possibly through parent meetings or a parent training class at the beginning of the season. Although the study did not provide specific ways in which to encourage additional involvement, it is important that Team Greenville help guide parents to a healthy level of involvement with their child's youth swimming.

Finally, the study revealed that parents have views and opinions of each other's involvement. Some parents held the perception that a majority of the volunteer work for Team Greenville is done by the same small group of parents. The thought that the same few people do most of the work is not new to youth sports; however, the study also showed that parents felt that other parents could be more involved. Fear is a reason given for why parents are not more involved with Team Greenville. Parents mentioned that other parents might not be as involved or do not volunteer for meets because they are afraid that they will do something wrong. Those parents interviewed mentioned different ways to help parents to be more comfortable and more involved with Team Greenville and at swim meets. Training classes or partnering experienced parents with new parents were offered as ways to help parents to feel more comfortable being involved with Team Greenville. Team Greenville should consider offering a few volunteer training clinics each year. Additional steps need to be taken to help parents feel comfortable being involved with their child's swimming and with Team Greenville.

#### Limitations

Limitations occurred with this study. Youth swimming and Team Greenville were the study population and this affects whether the results can be applied to other youth sports and even other youth swim teams. Secondly, youth swimming is a unique sport, as it generally lasts up to nine months, unlike other sports that are sometimes shorter in length. Youth swimming, like Team Greenville, is different from other sports for the simple fact that there is often a paid full time coach. Youth swimming also serves youth of all ages, with swimmers ages 6 years old through 18 years old. Third, parents

interviewed had all been involved with Team Greenville for varying amounts of time. Some parents had only been involved with Team Greenville for a few months while other parents have been involved with Team Greenville for several years. Fourth, no uninvolved parents were interviewed. The opinions of these parents who might be viewed as uninvolved are not included in this study. Lastly, the researcher's experience with swimming could bias the results; however, steps were taken to address this limitation.

#### Recommendations for Future Research

Further research on parental involvement in youth sports is needed to better understand how to get more parents involved with youth sports. This study interviewed parents exclusively involved with Team Greenville. Future research could interview program staff and coaches to recognize their expectations of parental involvement. Additionally, a similar study could be conducted with a variety of sports to see if parental involvement is different among sports.

To further advance the findings of this study, future research might also examine youth swimmers. The study could address if youth appreciate or have an understanding of the ways their parents are involved in their swimming. Does parental involvement affect the athlete? If athletes are affected by parental involvement is the effect positive or negative? As previously mentioned, Lavoie and Stellino (2008) discussed that a child's perceived athletic ability is related to the support they receive from their parents. A future study could explore whether perceived athletic ability changes with the child's age. If it indeed does change, when is parental support the most important? How does support

transition into involvement? When does parental involvement have the greatest effect on a child's view of his or her athletic ability?

### Conclusion

The current study revealed ways in which parents felt they were involved and motivated with their child's youth swimming. Through involvement with their child's swimming, parents felt a sense of togetherness which may help create a greater sense of enduring involvement and loyalty to the sport (Crompton et al., 1997). Ultimately, this study provided important information related to why and how parents are involved in their child's youth sports and further contributes to the parental involvement literature in this area.

This study explored how parents support Team Greenville through their involvement in youth sports. Most youth sport leagues—such as Team Greenville—require assistance from parents who serve as volunteers, coaches, and fundraisers in an effort to support the league. By facilitating their child's youth sports experience, parents can come to understand the positive effects that youth sports can have on their child. With these benefits in mind, it is important that parents play an active role in supporting, assisting, and nurturing their child in the youth sports environment.

## APPENDICES

## Appendix A

### Informed Consent Form

Information about Being in a Research Study  
Clemson University

### **Motivation For Parent Involvement in Youth Sports**

#### **Description of the Study and Your Part in It**

Dr. Denise Anderson, along with Christina Mazer are inviting you to take part in a research study. Dr. Denise Anderson is an Associate Professor at Clemson University. Christina Mazer is a student at Clemson University, running this study with the help of Dr. Denise Anderson. The purpose of this research is to explore what motivates parent involvement in youth sports.

Your part in the study will be to answer question regarding your level of involvement in youth sports.

It will take you about forty-five minutes to be in this study.

#### **Risks and Discomforts**

We do not know of any risks or discomforts to you in this research study.

#### **Possible Benefits**

We do not know of any way you would benefit directly from taking part in this study. However, this research may help us to understand how to get more parents involved in youth sports

#### **Protection of Privacy and Confidentiality**

We will do everything we can to protect your privacy and confidentiality. We will not tell anybody outside of the research team that you were in this study or what information we collected about you in particular. All interviews will be anonymously transcribed and saved on password protected computer files.

## **Choosing to Be in the Study**

You do not have to be in this study. You may choose not to take part and you may choose to stop taking part at any time. You will not be punished in any way if you decide not to be in the study or to stop taking part in the study.

## **Contact Information**

If you have any questions or concerns about this study or if any problems arise, please contact Dr. Denise Anderson at Clemson University at 864-656-5679. If you have any questions or concerns about your rights in this research study, please contact the Clemson University Office of Research Compliance (ORC) at 864-656-6460 or [irb@clemson.edu](mailto:irb@clemson.edu). If you are outside of the Upstate South Carolina area, please use the ORC's toll-free number, 866-297-3071.

## **Consent**

**I have read this form and have been allowed to ask any questions I might have. I agree to take part in this study.**

Participant's signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A copy of this form will be given to you.

## Appendix B

### Interview Questions

In what ways are you involved in your child's youth sports activities?

What is the minimum requirement for you to be involved in your child's youth sport activities?

How is your child affected by this minimum level of involvement?

Are you more involved than what is required of you by the swim team league?

Why are you more involve in your child's youth sports activities?

What motivates you to be more involved in youth child's youth sports activities?

Do you have any experience playing sports?

In what ways does this influence your involvement?

How does your child respond to your involvement in his or her youth sports?

What could be done to get more parents involved in youth sports?

## Appendix C

### Ability Groups & Practice Schedule

## **TEAM GREENVILLE PROGRAM STRUCTURE 2011-2012**

Team Greenville employs the *On Track Developmental Progression* in accordance with standards established by USA Swimming. Swimmers are placed according to their developmental level and experience in the sport.

Within an athlete's development, particular "windows of opportunity" exist for maximum return on a training activity. These important periods occur as a result of biological and neuromuscular changes occurring in the child, allowing an enhanced response to the training stimulus. The degree of response to any training stimulus is also affected by other factors such as psychological readiness and previously established skill acquisition.

Development is individual and varies with each athlete's capabilities and maturation. Our *On Track Developmental Progression* emphasizes the five S's of training and performance:

• Skill • Speed • Suppleness (Flexibility) • Stamina (Endurance) • Strength

Team Greenville's *On Track* system places appropriate emphasis on fun, fitness, and fundamentals at each level.

Each Team Greenville practice group is designed to take advantage of specific windows of developmental opportunity. All new swimmers will attend an assessment session before they are officially placed in a group that best meets the individual swimmer's needs. Assessment sessions after the initial August assessment week are available upon request. Please call 220-0209 or e-mail us through our website [www.tgswim.com](http://www.tgswim.com) to make an appointment. Get *On Track* with Team Greenville today!

**The coaching staff is responsible for the placement of each swimmer in an appropriate group based on ability, experience, maturity, age, training level, attendance, and motivation. Group advancements are usually considered in September, December and April. Swimmer's age-up date is established by the staff based upon the championship meet dates within that trimester.**

[www.tgswim.com](http://www.tgswim.com) 864-220-0209 **TEAM GREENVILLE PRACTICE GROUPS**

All groups all offer either a discounted yearly fee or a 9-month payment plan. Swimmers also pay a yearly team registration and monthly facility fee.

**YELLOW GROUP Ages: Practices Offered: Practice Length:** YELLOW is primarily for swimmers age 6 and older who can perform a 25 of at least three strokes legally. Refining the four strokes and having fun are the main points of emphasis. Swimmers will also begin to focus more on proper turns and starts. Swimmers may attend up to three practices per week. Practices are one hour. Yellow is the first step of Team Greenville's *On Track* to success progression.

**6 & Older 3 per week 1 hour**

**RED GROUP Ages: Practices Offered: Practice Length:** RED is primarily for swimmers age nine and older not yet ready for the Blue group. Swimmers must be able to legally complete a 50 freestyle and a 100 IM. The focus is on proper technique, racing

skills, and building basic endurance development. Swimmers may attend up to five practices per week. Practices are one hour and fifteen minutes. Regular practice attendance (2-3/week) and meet participation is encouraged. Red is the second level of Team Greenville's *On Track* to success progression.

**8 & Older 5 per week 1 hour 15 minutes**

**BLUE GROUP Ages: Practices Offered: Practice Length:** BLUE is primarily for advanced swimmers age 9 and older. Swimmers must be able to perform a 200 IM. Swimmers prepare to compete up to the state and regional level. This group focuses on further refinement of technique and racing skills. Swimmers receive enhanced swim training and are introduced to dryland at this level. Swimmers may attend up to six practices per week. Practices are one hour and thirty minutes. Solid practice attendance (3-4/week) and meet participation is strongly encouraged. Blue is the third step within Team Greenville's *On Track* to success progression.

**9 & Older 6 per week 1 hour 30 minutes**

**GREEN GROUP Ages: Practices Offered: Practice Length:** Team Greenville's top-level age group program is primarily for advanced swimmers who have aspirations to swim on the Senior level. Swimmers should be able to train freestyle on a 1:40 per 100 yards base. Swimmers prepare for competition at the state and regional level. Technical excellence, more rigorous water and dryland practices, swimmer responsibility and commitment are emphasized. Swimmers practice up to six days per week for two hours. Strong practice attendance (4-6/week), meet participation, and increasing personal responsibility is expected. Green is the fourth level of Team Greenville's *On Track* to success progression.

**11 & Older 6 per week 2 hours**

**PRE-SENIOR GROUP Ages: Practices Offered: Practice Length:**

**13 & Up Up to 8 per week Up to 2 hours 30 minutes**

This group is for swimmers who are serious about pursuing competitive swimming at the state meet level and above, and preparing for the move to the Senior One group. High fitness levels are attained utilizing advanced pool and dryland training sessions.

Swimmers should be able to complete a 400 IM and train freestyle on a 1:30 per 100 yards base. This group focuses on long-range goal setting, training commitment, personal development and responsibility. Practice is offered up to 8 times per week for 2 or more hours. Strong commitment, attendance, full participation in championship meets, and personal responsibility are expected.

**SENIOR ONE GROUP Ages: Practices Offered: Practice Length:**

**13 & Up Up to 9 per week 2 to 3 hours**

This group progresses swimmers at the senior level. Senior One is for swimmers who are very serious about pursuing competitive swimming to the highest levels of state and sectional competition. Stroke technique is strongly emphasized. Very high fitness levels are attained utilizing advanced pool and dryland training sessions. Swimmers should be able to train freestyle on a 1:20 per 100 yards base. This group focuses on long-range goal setting, training commitment, personal development and responsibility. Senior One prepares swimmers for the move to the Senior Two group. Practice is offered 8 to 9 times per week for 2 to 3 hours. Senior One swimmers will maintain full commitment,

attendance (80%), full participation in championship meets, and personal responsibility.

**SENIOR TWO GROUP Ages: Practices Offered: Practice Length:** Participation in the Senior Two group is by invitation only. Swimming must be a top priority. Swimmers will continue to meet the highest standards of effort, attendance, attitude and long-range goal focus to remain in the senior group. Senior emphasis is on advanced technique, dry land, power and in-water training. Swimmers should be able to train freestyle on a 1:15 per 100 base. Swimmers in this group do maximum training to achieve results beyond the State level in preparation for USA Sectional and National competition. Swimmers are required to attend all practices (minimum 90%) and meets that they qualify for. Swimmers practice 8-10 times per week for 2 to 3 or more hours.

**13 & Up Up to 10 per week 2 to 3+ hours**

**HIGH SCHOOL Ages: Practices offered: Practice Length:** This group is for HS swimmers who want to continue to improve their swimming ability. Emphasis is on technique, skill development and having fun. Swimmers should be able to complete a 100 freestyle and a 50 of at least two other strokes without stopping. This is a month to month program.

**13 & Up 4 per week 1 hour 15 minutes**

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL PROGRAMS**

The supplemental groups are designed to offer newer and home schooled swimmers instruction, to supplement summer league or high school swimming, and to prepare for the TG competitive program. These groups offer a monthly or session payment plan. TG Champion Swim School, TG Home School, High School group, and Pre-SAIL Clinic focus on technique development. The main emphasis of sessions will be learning the four strokes: backstroke, breaststroke, butterfly, and freestyle as well as proper starts and turns. These groups are perfect for swimmers who are involved in many other activities.

**TG CHAMPION SWIM SCHOOL Ages: 12 & Under Classes: 45 minute classes**

The Swim School progression is ideal for children from beginners to swimmers ready to learn the four competitive strokes. Graduates will be proficient in freestyle and backstroke, have a good working knowledge of breaststroke and butterfly, and will be ready to enter the TG competitive program. Emphasis is on technique, fun and enjoyment. Swim School offers small group, hands on instruction.

**TG HOME SCHOOL INSTRUCTIONAL Ages: 12 & Under Classes: 4 week session, 45 minute classes twice per week**

The Home School progression offers two levels. **Stroke Readiness** is for youngsters ready to learn freestyle and backstroke. **Introduction to Competitive Swimming** is for swimmers proficient in freestyle and backstroke, and who are ready to learn breaststroke and butterfly. Emphasis is on technique, fun and enjoyment.

**TG HOME SCHOOL COMPETITIVE Ages: 12 & Under Practices: 4 week session, 60 minute practices twice per week** For advanced swimmers who want to improve their swimming ability. Emphasis is on technique, skill development, and having

fun. This is a month to month program.

**PRE-SAIL Ages: Practices Offered: Practice Length:** PRE-SAIL is offered one day per week in four week sessions. Sessions are offered beginning in the fall and continuing into the spring. The focus of the group is stroke technique and having fun.  
**Minimum age 8 or able to do all four strokes legally 1 per week 60 minutes**  
www.tgswim.com 864-220-0209

Appendix D

Volunteer Form

**Team Greenville Booster Club Financial and Volunteer Obligations Agreement**

I, (Parent/Guardian Name) \_\_\_\_\_ understand that the success of Team Greenville relies heavily on the financial and volunteer support of our parents. The TG Booster Club is comprised of the parents and swimmers in good standing with TG. The Team Greenville Booster Club exists to provide financial, organizational and other needed support for the team. I agree to do my fair share to support Team Greenville and the Team Greenville Booster Club including:

1. 2. 3. 4.

Timely payment of yearly registration for each family member swimming  
Fulfillment of our family volunteer obligation  
Participation in team fundraising  
Participation in Booster Club and other team functions

For a complete explanation of the Team Greenville Booster Club, see the Club Handbook.

**Yearly Registration Fees:** All swimmers except those in the supplemental programs must pay a yearly registration fee. This fee provides you with your USA Swimming registration and insurance coverage, team shirts and cap, relay entry fees, Booster Club membership, and more. It also contributes to the many socials, awards, recognitions, special events and other benefits that make the TG experience special for our members. Yearly registration fees are separate from and in addition to your monthly or annual practice dues and facility membership fees. All swimmers other than those in supplementary programs must pay the yearly registration fee regardless of their intent to participate in meets. Make checks payable to TG Booster Club.

**Yearly Registration:**

1 <sup>st</sup> swimmer in family	\$200	Nov. 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$75 due
2 <sup>nd</sup> swimmer	\$175	Nov. 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$50 due
3 <sup>rd</sup> swimmer	\$150	Nov. 1 <sup>st</sup>	\$25 due
Subsequent swimmers	\$125		
High School group	\$100		
\$100 due upon registration			

For swimmers registering after September yearly fees may be prorated.

**TG Meet Volunteer Obligation:** Volunteers are the heartbeat of TG! Each family is responsible for assisting in the operation of TG hosted swim meets. There are up to 50 positions to fill for each session of a meet and can be as many as 3 sessions per day. Volunteer sign up for all available positions will be made available through the TG website. Each family is responsible for volunteering in some capacity during home swim meets. Volunteer hours for all home swim meets will be tracked to help determine future volunteer obligations. If you have any questions, please ask!

I agree to fulfill the above-mentioned financial and volunteer obligations to the TG Booster Club.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

Date

## Appendix E

### Volunteer Responsibility Form

#### **TEAM GREENVILLE PARENT VOLUNTEER COMMITMENT**

Volunteerism is a very big part of what makes Team Greenville successful. Parental involvement is required to help our children thrive in their activities. Showing you care by giving of your time and efforts makes a difference! All members of Team Greenville are strongly encouraged and required to volunteer their time, talent, and support to help make our program the best!

Team Greenville hosts a number of meets each year to provide our swimmers with opportunities to swim at home. This saves money and time for our families and helps to maximize meet participation. Therefore, we ask that everyone pick one or more roles you are willing to fill for our home meets (boxed section below), as well as any other areas you feel you can assist with. Thank you in advance for your willingness to make our team the best it can be!

##### Home Swim Meets

Meet Director  Volunteer Coordinator  Deck Official (Stroke and Turn, Starter, Referee)  Timer  
 Clerk of Course  Computer/Timing System Operator  Ordering Awards Pre-Meet  Awards at Meet  
 Safety / Deck Marshal  Hospitality  Concessions  Runner / Post Results  Meet T-Shirts  Meet Sponsorship/Heat Sheet Ad Coordinator

##### Swimmer Recognition and Team Services

Swimmer Incentive Program  Semi-Annual Banquet  Swimmer's Socials  Parent's Socials  
 Championship Meet Parties  Championship Meet Spirit  Coach Appreciation

##### Booster Club Board of Directors (Elected Positions)

President Vice President Secretary Treasurer At-Large (Three)

##### Team Administration

Volunteer Coordinator  Practice Group Coordinator Chairman  Individual Practice Group Coordinator  
 Team Travel  Team Apparel  Data Compilation  Recruiting  Public Relations  New Member Orientation Fund Raising  Corporate / Grant Solicitation  Specialized Fund Raisers Multimedia  
 Webmaster  Videography  Photography  Multimedia Presentations (Banquet)

Please let us know if you have any questions and what specialized talents, skills, passions, or ideas that you may have that can benefit Team Greenville:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number(s) \_\_\_\_\_

E-Mail(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Swimmer Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

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