



2008 NATIONAL YOUTH SPORTS PROGRAM ANNUAL  
EVALUATION REPORT  
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**Written By: Dawn Anderson-Butcher, Aidyn Iachini, Allison Boester, Rebecca Wade-Mdivanian, Jerry Davis, & Anthony Amorose**

For more information, contact Dawn Anderson-Butcher, College of Social Work, The Ohio State University, 614-292-8596, [anderson-butcher.1@osu.edu](mailto:anderson-butcher.1@osu.edu)

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## PROGRAM & STUDY OVERVIEW

### ***History and Origins of the National Youth Sports Program***

In 1968, representatives for the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) and the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports piloted the National Youth Sports Program (NYSP) concept during the summer at two university athletic facilities. On March 17, 1969, the White House announced that the federal government was committing \$3 million to establish a sports program for economically disadvantaged youth, and NYSP was born. From 1969 through 2006, the National Youth Sports Program nationally has served over two million youth at over 200 colleges/universities.

Specifically, NYSP was designed to provide children ages 9-17 from economically disadvantaged backgrounds with sport and education instruction in a safe and nurturing environment. The program is offered for 20 days over a period of four weeks during the summer. Participation is free, as is transportation to and from the program. Key program components include sport instruction, educational activities, and breakfast and lunch meals. Additionally, free physical examinations are provided to youth who need them. Historical program objectives include:

- Serve underserved youth between the ages of 9-17
- Provide a healthy start through good nutrition and physical fitness
- Teach youth-centered activities in a safe, positive and enjoyable college/university environment
- Provide youth-centered activities that nurture the dreams and aspirations of youth
- Promote respect, citizenship, and sportsmanship in a diverse society
- Provide quality service and reward excellent performance

In addition to daily activities in sport, participants were required to complete 15 hours of instruction. The subjects included alcohol, drugs, personal health, nutrition, disease prevention, career opportunities, higher education, and job responsibilities. Two enrichment providers facilitated enrichment sessions for approximately 300 children at a time.

Despite the vast number of youth served in programs nationally, in 2007, federal funding for NYSP was not appropriated and existing programs were responsible for securing funding for the camp. As a result, only about thirty institutions nationally provided the program to youth in 2008, one of which was the Ohio State University (OSU).

### ***History and Improvements of OSU's National Youth Sports Program***

OSU was one of the first institutions to offer NYSP. Originally offered to Columbus youth in 1968, OSU's NYSP served an average of 600 children annually. As federal funding was provided for this program, the OSU model aligned directly with guidelines put forth by the national NYSP model. Beginning in 2008, as federal funding was no longer available, OSU began to make incremental improvements to their overall program model. The following provides a brief overview of the changes made to OSU's NYSP during 2007 and 2008.

In an effort to improve the sport training and skill development of participants, as well as incorporate time daily for enrichment activities, the 2008 program focused on the following sports/physical activity:

- Volleyball
- Football
- Swimming
- Aerobics
- Soccer
- Track & Field
- Whiffle Ball
- Basketball

The sport activities for the first time were led by current OSU athletes from the respective sport teams as well as other sport instructors. In the past counselors were responsible for monitoring the youth as well as provide sport instruction. This modification allowed for counselors to focus on mentoring and behavior management, while the athlete taught proper sport technique and skill.

For the first time in 2008, every child in the program was provided with a one-hour enrichment session each day. Every week the child participated in a new enrichment topic. Three enrichment topics were included in the 2008 camp model: health/wellness, drug & alcohol, and social skills (respect, anger management, and problem-solving skills).

To facilitate this enhanced enrichment component, NYSP hired eight additional enrichment providers, who have a background in either education or social work. Each enrichment session was one-hour in length and enrichment classes had approximately 25 participants. In addition, to these enrichment topics, youth also participated in a career day.

As national funding was cut for NYSP, the OSU Department of Athletics, dedicated to the program for 40 years, decided to provide funding for OSU's program for the summer of 2008 in hopes that this program could document effectiveness and secure sustainable funding. This following study was conducted in response to this need.

### ***Purpose of the Study***

While NYSP had been on college campuses since the late 60's, little research related to program design and associated outcomes had been completed at the national or local level. Specifically, OSU's NYSP had never conducted a program evaluation. In 2007, the OSU Department of Athletics partnered with the College of Social Work to conduct a program evaluation assessing key outcomes and impacts of the program. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of the National Youth Sport Program (NYSP) offered at OSU in partnership with the OSU Athletic Department, the OSU Recreation Department, the OSU College of Social Work, and the Boys and Girls Club of Columbus. Specifically, the aim of this study was to gain an understanding of program strengths and areas for programmatic improvement. An additional aim of this study was to understand the experiences and benefits participants derive through the NYSP program.

The following report is intended to present key findings from this systematic program evaluation. Please note that this report is intended to highlight key findings, not present all related findings. All procedures used in this study were approved by The Ohio State University Institutional Review Board.

## **METHODS**

### ***Study Design***

Three methods were used to evaluate the NYSP program. First, site observations were conducted by the researchers. These observations provided important information regarding how the program was being implemented. That is, these visits allowed the researchers to see first-hand how staff interacted with youth, what the activities looked like in practice, and how youth were engaged in the activities.

Secondly, participants were asked a series of reflective questions about their experience in the NYSP program. Specifically, participants answered questions at the end of the program regarding whether they enjoyed the NYSP program, and whether they felt they gained important skills and relationships as a result of participation. Participants also provided information regarding their future physical activity/sport and educational intentions.

While these reflective questions provide important insight into participants' experiences and future intentions, there also is importance in assessing the outcomes resulting from program participation. To do this, a pre/post

survey design was used. That is, program participants completed a survey at the beginning, and end, of the program. This design not only allowed the researchers to gain an understanding of the impacts the NYSP program had on student skills and behaviors, but it also allowed the researchers to determine areas of programmatic strength and weakness.

The pre-survey and post-survey for this study were developed through an iterative process. First, conversations with key program leaders and staff resulted in a list of key intervention targets within NYSP. Additionally, the NYSP Evaluation Team, comprised of IRB-approved university faculty and graduate students, consulted the youth development and sport/recreation literature to ascertain other critical areas important to assess in any youth development program. A synthesis of this information allowed the NYSP Evaluation Team to determine the key intervention targets of NYSP, and thus the constructs assessed through both the pre- and post- survey. Particular constructs of interest included social competence, belonging, athletic competence, and personal and social responsibility. Each construct is discussed further in the Results Section of this report. If you are interested in learning more about the tools that were developed and utilized in this study, please contact Dawn Anderson-Butcher.

### ***Study Procedures***

Ten site observations were conducted randomly through the NYSP program by three of the evaluators. These site visits were staggered throughout the duration of the NYSP program.

Pre-surveys were distributed by the NYSP Evaluation Team to participants who had signed parent/guardian consent forms. If participants were 14 years of age or older, they also signed youth assent forms. Dependent upon the participant's age, the pre-survey was either completed during the first day of the program, or during the first two to three days of the program to allow for more time. In all cases, youth were allowed to ask questions and could choose to stop participation in the study at any time. Key measures of interest included: social competence, belonging, social responsibility in sport, transfer of skills, relationships with caring adults, sportsmanship, athletic competence, and physical activity participation.

Post-surveys were distributed by the NYSP Evaluation Team in the same manner as the pre-surveys. Only participants with parent/guardian consent (and assent if 14 or older) participated in the post-survey. Dependent upon the participant's age, the post-survey was either completed during the final two days of the program. In all cases, youth were allowed to ask questions and could choose to stop participation in the study at any time. Again, key measures assessed social competence, belonging, teamwork and social skills, social capital, relationships with caring adults, sportsmanship, social responsibility in sport, transfer of skills, athletic competence, intentions to attend college, future physical activity intentions and satisfaction/enjoyment. Additionally, formative questions were also included that assessed end-of-the-program perceptions of satisfaction and enjoyment of the camp and various program impacts.

### ***Study Sample***

A total of 602 youth participated in the NYSP camp during summer of 2008. Of these 602, 408 received parent/guardian consent (and youth assent) representing a 67.7% response rate. Because of the pre/post study design, the number of participants who completed the pre- and post-survey differed. As such, the demographics of each sample are discussed separately.

#### **Pre-Test Sample**

350 NYSP participants received parent consent and completed the pre-test. Please note that not all of these participants completed all sections of the pre-survey. Therefore, the data provided in the results section only reflects those students who had complete data (listwise deletion was used to deal with missing data).

Out of these participants, 59.8% were male and 40.2% were female. With regard to ethnicity, 79.2% of the participants self-reported as African American, 9.2% self-reported as Multi-racial, 3.3% reported as White/Non-Hispanic, 2.7% self-reported as Native American, and 5.7% self-reported as Other. Participants' ages ranged from 9- to 16-years-old (M=11.95. SD=1.64).

### **Post-Test Sample**

214 NYSP participants originally enrolled in the study completed the post-test survey. Please note that not all of these participants completed all sections of the post-survey. Therefore, the data provided in the results section only reflect those students who had complete data (listwise deletion was used to deal with missing data).

Out of these participants, 57.3% were male and 42.7% were female. With regard to ethnicity, 76.7% of the participants self-reported as African American, 10.2% self-reported as Multi-racial, 2.9% reported as White/Non-Hispanic, 4.9% self-reported as Native American, and 5.3% self-reported as Other. Participants' ages ranged from 9- to 16-years-old (M=12.01. SD=1.57).

### **Data Analyses**

Site observation data were formatively recorded on an observation sheet. Themes across visits were created and overall strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement were identified. Pre- and post-test survey responses were examined to assess changes in participants' perceptions across their NYSP involvement. The NYSP Evaluation Team also conducted rigorous statistical analyses on each scale construct (i.e., social responsibility in sport) to determine which items best represented each construct. While the details of these analyses will not be elaborated upon in this report, please note that all scales reported here have adequate psychometric properties and good reliability.

## **RESULTS**

This section of the report is divided into three parts. The first part provides the results of the site observations. The second part provides the results of participants' reflections about the NYSP program. The third part provides the comparative results of the pre-test and post-test data.

### **Site Observations**

Notes from the site observations were also combined. Several key theme areas of successes and improvements were identified. Key indicators of positive programming present within the program, include:

- Many counselors within the program were effectively able to engage and support youth.
- Parent/staff relations were strengthened through the parent liaison. These relations were able to support effective behavior management during NYSP.
- Staff demographics were representative of youth demographics.

Areas of improvement also were noted from the site observations. Improvement areas included the need for:

- Staff training in youth development best practices and behavior management
- Integration of enrichment curriculum with sport programming
- Strengthened enrichment and sport-based curriculum focused on targeted outcomes (social competence, leadership, cooperation, teamwork, self regulation)
- Enhanced staff management and oversight

## Participants' Reflections about NYSP

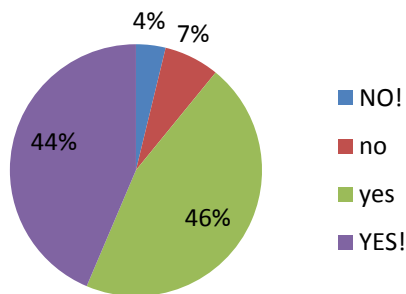
Important insights were gained through participants' reflections on their NYSP experience. More specifically, these data highlighted whether participants were satisfied with the program and enjoyed their experience. In addition, these data provided information regarding whether participants' felt they gained important skills and developed relationships with caring adults as a result of the program. Insight into NYSP participants' future intentions also were gained through these data. Future intentions were determined at post-test only. Please note that the results are presented according to each of the key constructs assessed.

### Satisfaction/Enjoyment

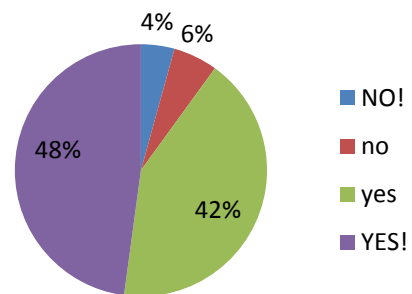
Overall, 89.1% of participants reported strong satisfaction with the NYSP program and 90.1% of participants indicated they enjoyed the program.

Figures 1 and 2. Perceptions of Campers' Satisfaction/Enjoyment Items

Overall, I am satisfied with the NYSP program



I enjoyed the NYSP program

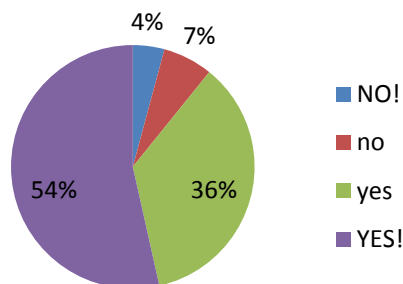


### Sport Skills

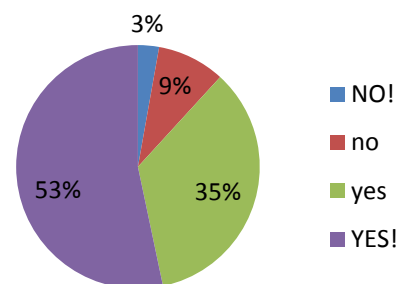
At the end of the program, 88.2% of participants reported that they learned new sport skills. Additionally, 89.2% of participants indicated that they enhanced their sports skills through participation in the NYSP program.

Figures 3 and 4. Sport Skills Items

Since participating in the NYSP program, I have enhanced my sport skills



Since participating in the NYSP program, I learned new sport skills

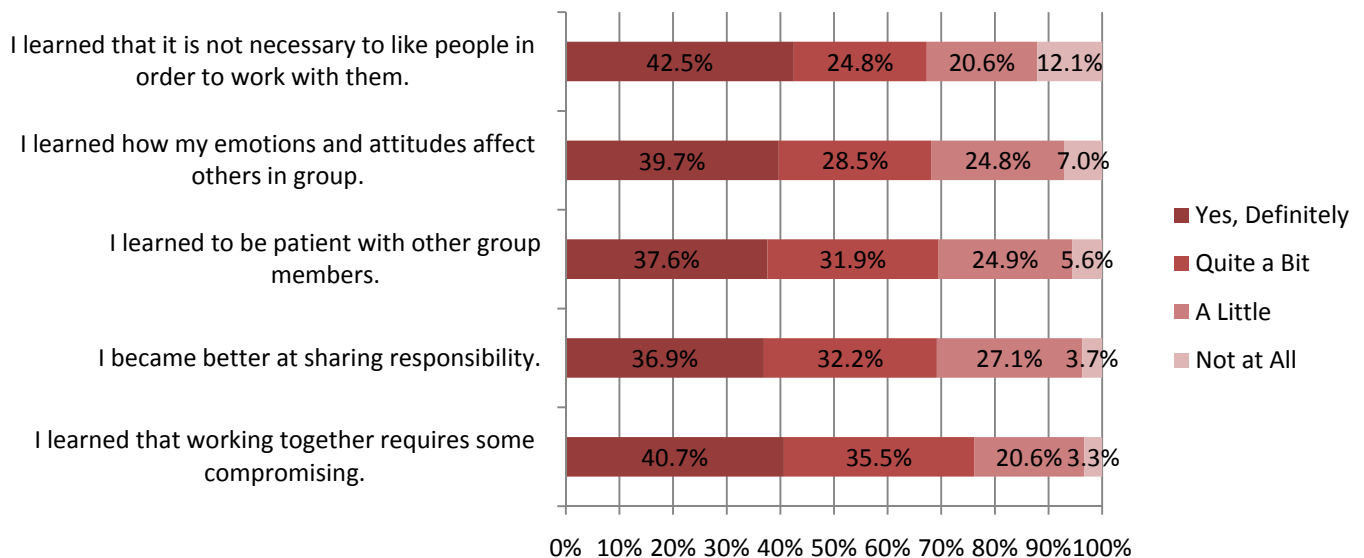




## Teamwork/Social Skills

Participants held varied perceptions regarding the extent to which they learned teamwork and social skills. For example, 42.5% of participants indicated that they learned it is not necessary to like people in order to work with them. However, 12.1% of participants indicated that they did not learn this skill. Many participants also indicated that they learned that working together requires some compromising.

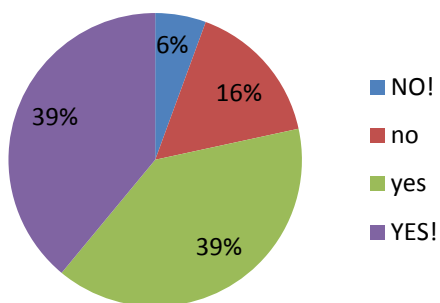
Figure 5. Comparison Chart of Teamwork/Social Skills Items



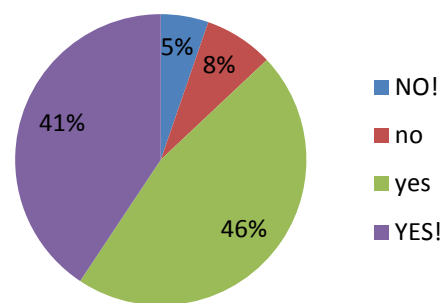
78.4% of participants indicated that they increased their ability to get along with others, and 87.1% reported feeling better about themselves since the NYSP program.

Figures 6 and 7. Comparison Chart of Additional Teamwork/Social Skills Items

**Since participating in the NYSP program, I have increased my ability to get along well with others**



**Since participating in the NYSP program, I feel better about myself**

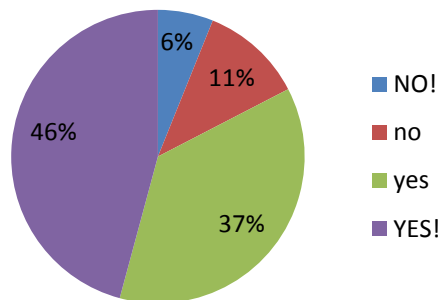


## Relationships with Caring Adults & Community Members

Overall, 82.6% of NYSP participants felt they developed at least one relationship with a caring adult.

Figure 8. Relationships with Caring Adults & Community Members Items

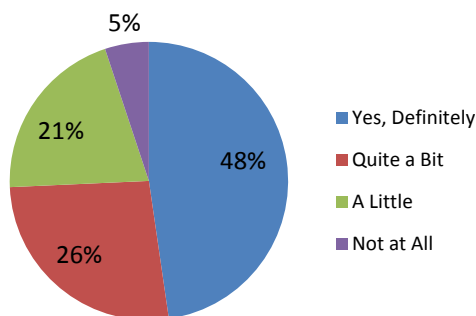
Since participating in the NYSP program, I have at least one relationship with a caring adult



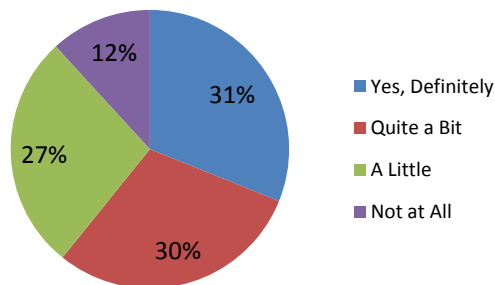
Additionally, many participants felt they developed relationships with others in the community. For example, 47.7% of participants reported getting to know people in the community.

Figures 9 and 10. Additional Relationships with Caring Adults & Community Members Items

As a result of participating in NYSP, I got to know people in the community



As a result of participating in NYSP, I came to feel more supported by the community



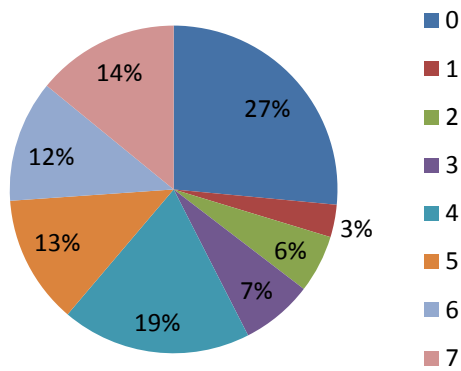
## Intentions to Continue Participation in Sport and Physical Activity

Participants held varied perceptions regarding the extent to which they might continue being physically active and engage in various sports. For example, at the end of the NYSP program, 57.5% of participants indicated that they

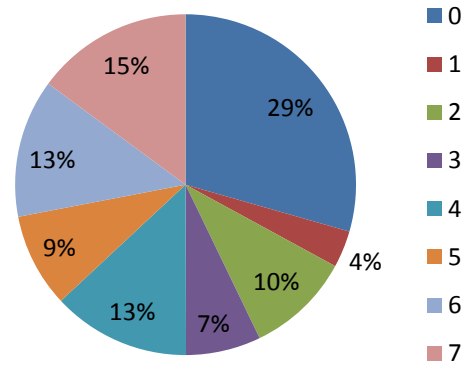
would continue playing sports for at least 4-7 days per week. However, approximately one-fourth of program participants indicated that they would not continue this sport participation.

Figures 11, 12, 13 and 14. Intentions to Continue Participation in Sport & Physical Activity Items

**Continue exercising or participating in sports for 20 minutes that made you sweat or breathe hard**

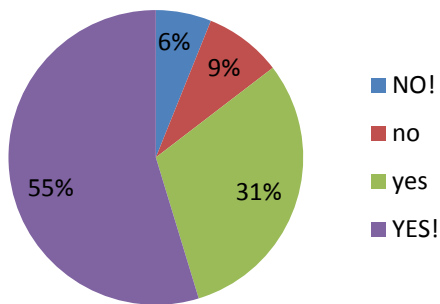


**Continue participating in other physical activity for 20 minutes**

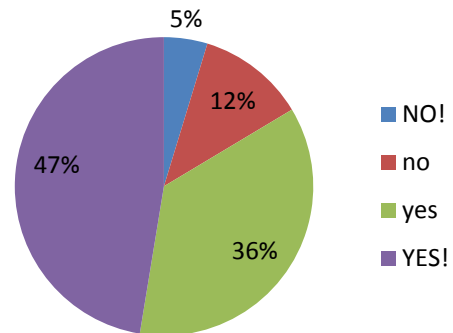


Additionally, 85.4% of participants indicated that they plan on joining a sports team at school or in the community after participating in NYSP, and 83.6% of participants reported feeling better overall about participating in sport and recreation since the NYSP program.

**I plan on joining a sports team either at my school or in my community after NYSP**

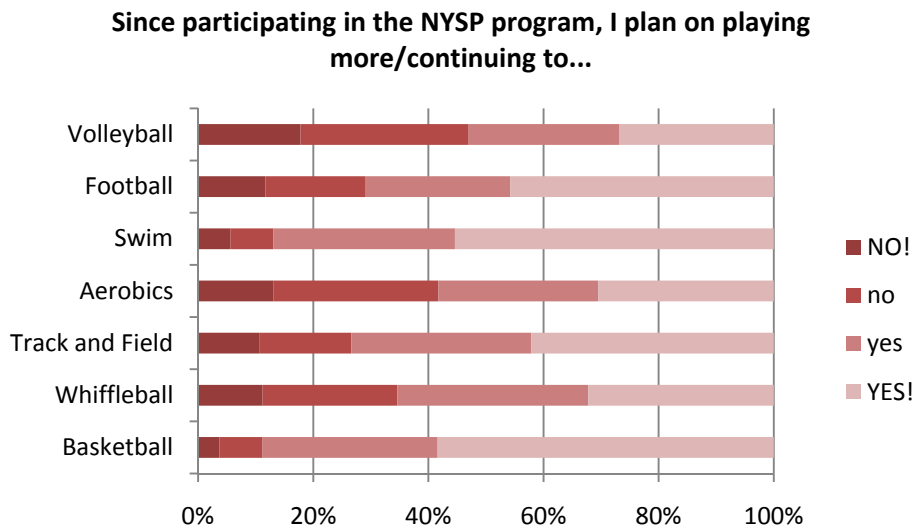


**I feel better about participating in sport and recreation since attending the NYSP program**



Many participants also indicated that they plan on continuing with a variety of the sports and physical activities introduced in NYSP.

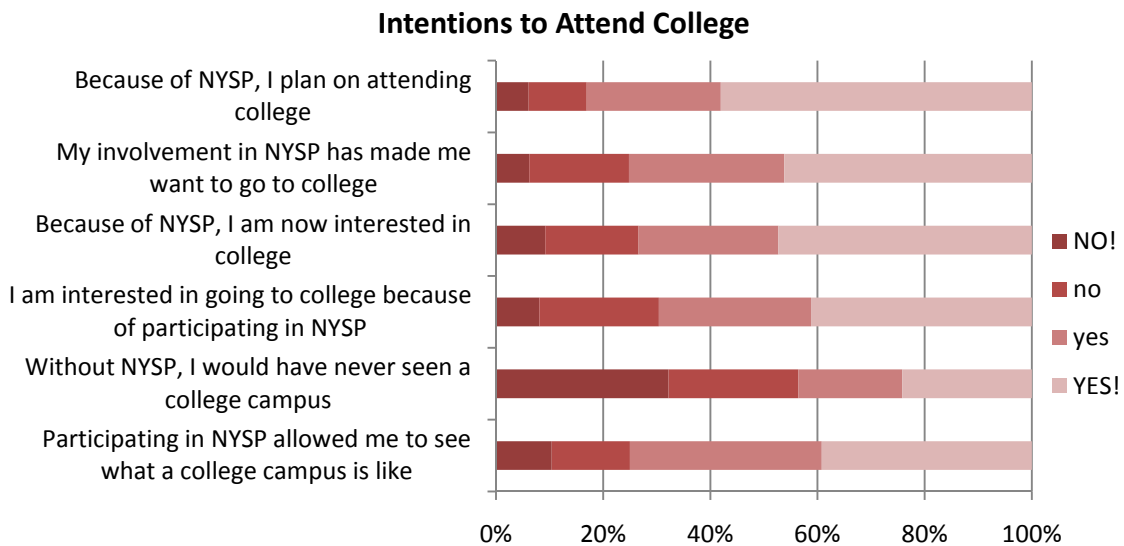
Figure 15. Comparison Chart of Intentions to Participate in Sport, Recreation, and Physical Activities Items



### Intentions to Attend College

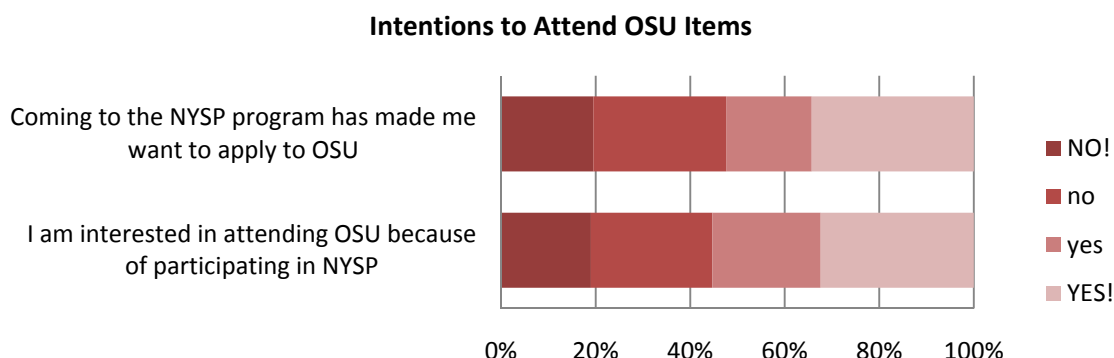
As a result of the NYSP program, participants indicated a strong desire to attend college. For example, 83% of participants indicated that they plan on attending college because of NYSP. Additionally, 43.6% of participants reported that they would have never seen a college campus without the program.

Figure 16. Comparison Chart of Intentions to Attend College Items



Many participants also indicated that they are now interested in attending OSU as a result of participating in NYSP. For example, 52.4% of participants indicated that they now want to apply to OSU.

Figure 17. Comparison Chart of Intentions to Attend OSU Items



### Comparative Results Between Pre- and Post-Tests

Comparing the results of the pre-test and the results of the post-test provides information regarding what skills and behaviors were impacted during the course of the NYSP program. The results of this type of comparison can be viewed from both a practical and statistical perspective. That is, one can look at the means of certain skills and behaviors and see if they increased or decreased from the pre-test to the post-test. Any increase or decrease at all may be important from a practical perspective. One also can run advanced statistical tests to determine if a difference in means is not solely due to chance. Both interpretations of these results are reported here. Please note that the results are presented according to each of the key constructs assessed. Also note that a summary table of these comparative data is provided at the end of this section.

### Social Competence

Participants’ abilities to interact prosocially and maintain positive relationships with others (i.e. social competence) was measured using the Perceived Social Competence Scale developed by Anderson-Butcher, Iachini, and Amorose (2008). Sample items included “I help other people” and “I get along well with others.”

From the beginning to the end of the program, participants’ social competence increased from 3.61 to 3.73. From a statistical perspective, however, this increase was *not* significant.

### Belonging

Participants’ sense of connection to the NYSP program was measured using the Belonging Scale developed by Anderson-Butcher and Conroy (2002). Example items to assess this construct included “I feel comfortable with people at the NYSP” and “I am part of the NYSP.”

Compared to when participants began the program (M=3.34), participants’ sense of belonging increased over time (M=3.40). Although perceptions increased over time, this increase was *not* statistically significant.

### Sportsmanship

Participants’ sportsmanship was assessed using items based on the work of Shields et al. (2007). Specifically, these items tapped campers’ self-reported behavior in terms of both *good* sportsmanship (e.g., “play fairly even when my team is losing”) and *poor* sportsmanship (e.g., “say something to make another kid upset or angry”). Participants reported a significant increase in the frequency in which they demonstrated poor sportsmanship from the beginning to the end of the camp (M=3.31 to M=3.11) and a significant decrease in the frequency in

which they engaged in behaviors reflecting good sportsmanship (M= 3.28 to M=3.16). Please note high scores on poor sportsmanship indicate a low frequency of these behaviors, whereas the opposite pattern is the case for good sportsmanship.

### Social Responsibility in Sport

Participants’ social responsibility in sport was measured using 6 items tapping the degree to which youth believed they demonstrated self-control, personal responsibility, and cooperative behaviors while participating in sports. This scale reflects Hellison’s “self-control” level of responsibility (Hellison, 2008). Sample items included “I control my temper when playing sports”, “I act responsibly when playing sports”, and “I cooperate with others when playing sports.” Participants’ rating of social responsibility decreased over the course of the camp (M=3.47 to M=3.36), and this change was significant.

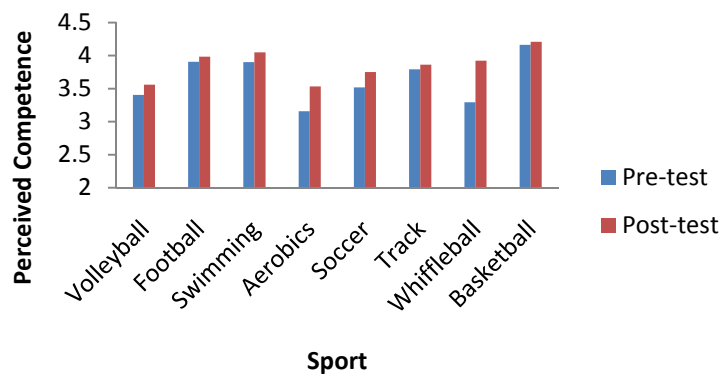
### Transfer of Skills

Campers’ perceptions of skill transfer were assessed with items such as “The skills I learn in sport are useful to me in other parts of my life.” There was not a significant change in perceptions of skill transfer from the beginning (M=3.41) to the end of camp (M=3.34).

### Perceived Athletic Competence

Participants’ perceptions regarding their skills and abilities at each sport offered through NYSP were assessed using an adapted version of Amorose’s (2002) perceived competence scale. Sample items included “How good do you think you are at *(insert sport name)*” and “How skilled do you think you are at *(insert sport name)*.” The following chart highlights changes among NYSP participants in perceived athletic competence by sport. Please note participants showed increased athletic competence in ALL sports.

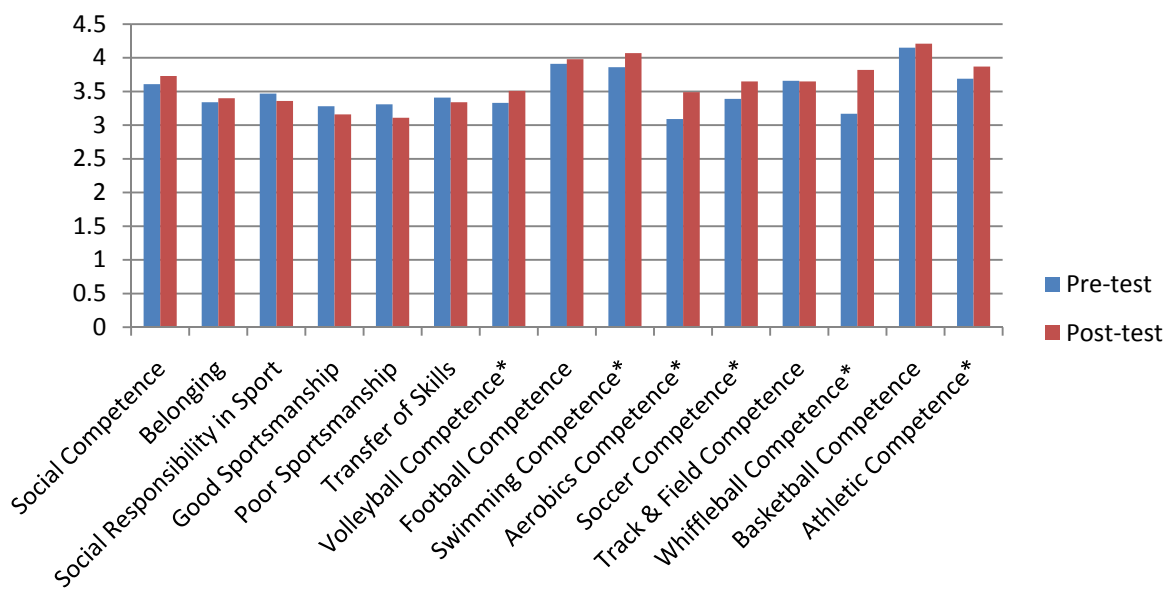
Figure 18. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of Perceived Athletic Competence



Changes in perceived competence were statistically significant in the following areas: volleyball, swimming, aerobics, soccer, whiffleball, and overall perceived athletic competence.

The following chart and table synthesizes the comparative data presented above. Please note that a (\*) indicates that there was a statistically significant difference between the pre-test and the post-test.

Figure 19 and 20. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of All Competence Scales



Construct	Pre-Test Mean (SD)	Post-Test Mean
Social Competence	3.61 (.73)	3.73 (.78)
Belonging	3.34 (.53)	3.40 (.51)
Social Responsibility in Sport	3.47 (.49)	3.36 (.55)
Good Sportsmanship	3.28 (.57)	3.16 (.60)
Poor Sportsmanship	3.31 (.62)	3.11 (.72)
Transfer of Skills	3.41 (.56)	3.34 (.61)
Volleyball Competence*	3.33 (.97)	3.51 (1.04)
Football Competence	3.91 (1.13)	3.98 (1.12)
Swimming Competence*	3.86 (1.09)	4.07 (1.04)
Aerobics Competence*	3.09 (1.17)	3.49 (1.16)
Soccer Competence*	3.39 (1.17)	3.65 (1.08)
Track & Field Competence	3.66 (1.24)	3.65 (1.24)
Whiffleball Competence*	3.17 (1.21)	3.82 (1.08)
Basketball Competence	4.15 (.96)	4.21 (1.01)
Athletic Competence*	3.69 (.58)	3.87 (.63)

## CONCLUSION

The LiFE Sports model provides OSU (and other universities) with a model to address identified needs in their communities through service and outreach to youth and their families. In addition, by researching this innovative model, OSU faculty members will be able to document best practices and related outcomes that will enhance the youth development field at large. Building on this research, OSU students will also benefit from hands-on learning while interning or working within LiFE Sports. It is the hope that this program will fulfill community need by improving social competence outcomes for underprivileged youth but also provide a research and training ground for tomorrow's youth development workers and youth coaches.



## APPENDIX

### *Comprehensive List of Survey Items with Response Percentages*

*Figure 21. Participants' Reflections about NYSP*

Item	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Overall, I am satisfied with the NYSP program.	3.8%	7.1%	45.5%	43.6%
I enjoyed the NYSP program.	4.3%	5.7%	42.2%	47.9%
Since participating in the NYSP program, I have enhanced my sport skills.	4.2%	6.6%	35.7%	53.5%
Since participating in the NYSP program, I learned new sport skills.	2.8%	9.0%	34.9%	53.3%
I learned that working together requires some compromising.	40.7%	35.5%	20.6%	3.3%
I became better at sharing responsibility.	36.9%	32.2%	27.1%	3.7%
I learned to be patient with other group members.	37.6%	31.9%	24.9%	5.6%
I learned how my emotions and attitudes affect others in group.	39.7%	28.5%	24.8%	7.0%
I learned that it is not necessary to like people in order to work with them.	42.5%	24.8%	20.6%	12.1%
Since participating in the NYSP program, I have increased my ability to get along well with others.	5.6%	16.0%	39.4%	39.0%
Since participating in the NYSP program, I feel better about myself.	5.3%	7.7%	46.4%	40.7%
Since participating in the NYSP program, I have at least one relationship with a caring adult.	6.1%	11.3%	36.8%	45.8%
As a result of participating in NYSP, I got to know people in the community.	47.7%	26.6%	20.6%	5.1%
As a result of participating in NYSP I came to feel more supported by the community.	31.1%	29.7%	27.4%	11.8%

*Figure 22. Participants' Intentions to Participate in Physical Activity*

Item	Days							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Continue exercising or participating in sports for 20 minutes that made you sweat or breathe hard	26.5%	3.2%	5.7%	7.1%	18.7%	12.7%	12.0%	14.1%
Continue participating in other physical activity for 20 minutes	29.4%	3.5%	9.9%	7.1%	13.1%	8.9%	13.1%	14.9%

Figure 23. Participants' Intentions to Attend College

Item	NO!	no	yes	YES!
Because of NYSP, I plan on attending college.	6.1%	10.8%	25.0%	58.0%
My involvement in NYSP has made me want to go to college.	6.2%	18.6%	29.0%	46.2%
Because of NYSP, I am now interested in college.	9.2%	17.4%	26.1%	47.3%
I am interested in going to college because of participating in NYSP.	8.1%	22.3%	28.4%	41.2%
Without NYSP, I would have never seen a college campus.	32.2%	24.2%	19.4%	24.2%
Participating in NYSP allowed me to see what a college campus is like.	10.4%	14.6%	35.8%	39.2%