



LiFE*sports*
LEARNING IN FITNESS AND EDUCATION

2009 ANNUAL CAMP EVALUATION REPORT APRIL 2010



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Camp and Study Overview

Learning in Fitness & Education (LiFE) Sports is a comprehensive youth development initiative at Ohio State University (OSU). LiFE Sports is built upon a historical community outreach program operating at OSU for the past 40 years, the National Youth Sport Program (NYSP). Originally developed in 1968, NYSP provided economically disadvantaged children and adolescents, ages 9-17, with sport and education instruction in a safe and nurturing environment during the summer months. In 2006, all funding was cut from the federal budget to support NYSP. As a result, the College of Social Work and the OSU Department of Athletics partnered to develop LiFE Sports into a national model of community outreach.

Mission and Objectives

OSU's LiFE Sports camp is designed to enhance the social and athletic competence of economically disadvantaged youth during the summer months. Specifically, the mission of LiFE Sports is: "to foster social competence among youth through their involvement in sport, fitness, and education activities." Table 1 provides an overview of both the primary and secondary outcomes anticipated for youth participating in LiFE Sports.

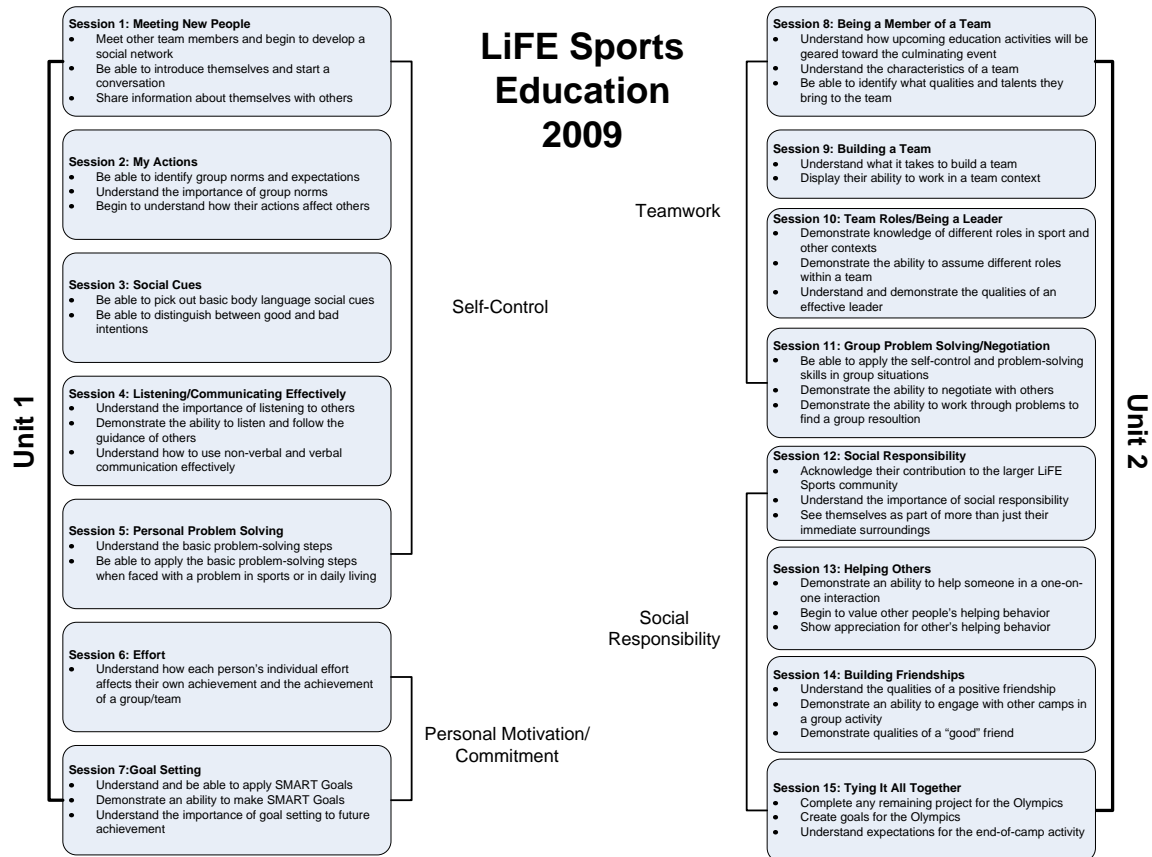
Table 1. Primary and Secondary Objectives Identified for Youth Participating in LiFE Sports

Primary Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase social competence among youth participants• Increase self-control, personal motivation/commitment, teamwork, and social responsibility• Youth will demonstrate a sense of belonging and connection to the LiFE Sports program and its staff
Secondary Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Increase participants' perceptions of athletic competence• Increase participants' exposure to university/college life and interest in pursuing a higher education• Refer participants to other youth organizations and opportunities in Columbus

Camp Design 2009

LiFE Sports operated during the summer of 2009 for 19 days for 6.5 hours/day. Each day focuses on a sport-based foundational skill, as well as a social skills related to broader social competence and emotional/behavioral functioning. Specifically, the first week focuses on competencies related to *Self-Control in Sport*, the second on *Personal Motivation/Commitment in Sport*; the third on *Teamwork*; and the fourth on *Social Responsibility in Sport*. Daily activities also incorporate scenarios and role plays involving the application of these social skills in other social settings. Figure 1 showcases the social competence curriculum. In addition to these sessions, participants receive instruction in 8 different sports, such as basketball, swimming, and soccer. They also engaged in a College Access, Career Day and culminating Olympic event.

Figure 1. Social Competence Curriculum Outline.



Methods

Study Design

Three methods were used to evaluate the LiFE Sports camp: 1) site observations, 2) reflective questions, and 3) pre/post-test surveys. First, site observations were conducted by the researchers. These observations provided important information regarding how the camp was implemented. That is, these visits allowed the researchers to see first-hand how staff interacted with youth, examine what the activities looked like in practice, and observe how youth were engaged in the activities.

Secondly, participants were asked a series of reflective questions about their experience in the LiFE Sports camp. For instance, participants answered questions at the end of the camp regarding whether they enjoyed the LiFE Sports camp, and whether they gained important skills and developed valuable 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, it also is important to assess outcomes resulting from camp participation. To do this, camp participants completed a survey at the beginning and end of the camp. This design allowed the researchers to examine the impact the LiFE Sports camp had on certain skills and behaviors, as well as helped determine areas of programmatic strength and weakness within the camp.

Pre and post-test survey measures were aligned to the primary and secondary objectives. The pretest survey included measures of social competence, social competence in sport, self control in sport, effort in sport, teamwork in sport, social responsibility, transfer of skills learned in sport to other settings, belonging, general and specific athletic competence, and intentions to go to college. At posttest, participants completed the same measures as they did at pretest, as well as reported on measures of autonomy support, relatedness, leader support, perceptions of skill development, and overall satisfaction.

Study Procedures

Eleven site observations were conducted randomly through the LiFE Sports camp by the evaluators. These site visits were staggered throughout the duration of the camp.

Pre-surveys were distributed by the LiFE Sports 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. The pre-survey was completed during the second day of the camp. Youth were allowed to ask questions and could choose to stop participation in the study at any time.

Post-surveys were distributed by the LiFE Sports 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. The post-survey was completed during the second to last day of the camp. In all cases, youth were allowed to ask questions and could choose to stop participation in the study at any time. In addition to the pretest measures, the post-test included formative questions that assessed end-of-the-program perceptions of satisfaction and enjoyment of the camp and various program impacts.

All study procedures were approved by the Ohio State University Institutional Review Board.

Study Sample

A total of 589 youth registered for the LiFE Sports camp during the summer of 2009. Of these 589, 529 received parent/guardian consent (and youth assent) representing an 89.8% enrollment 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 the post-test sample and the demographics of the participants that completed both the pre-test and post-test are discussed separately.

Post-Test Sample

310 LiFE Sports 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, 55.3% were male and 44.7% were female. With regard to ethnicity, 79.1% of the participants self-reported as African American, 11.1% self-reported as Multi-racial, 1.7% reported as White/Non-Hispanic, 3.4% self-reported as Native American, and 3.0% self-reported as Other. Participants' ages ranged from 9- to 16-years-old ($M=12.08$, $SD=1.57$).

Pre-Test and Post-Test Sample

297 LiFE Sports participants received parent consent and completed the pre-test and post-test. Please note that not all of these participants completed all sections of the 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, 55.1% were male and 44.9% were female. With regard to ethnicity, 78.2% of the participants self-reported as African American, 11.8% self-reported as Multi-racial, 1.4% reported as White/Non-Hispanic, 3.8% self-reported as Native American, and 3.8% self-reported as "other". Participants' ages ranged from 9- to 16-years-old ($M=11.98$, $SD= 1.60$).

Data Analyses

Site observation data were formatively recorded on an observation sheet. Themes across visits emerged and overall strengths, weaknesses, and areas for improvement were identified. Measures of satisfaction and program features (i.e., enjoyment of camp, sense of leader support) were examined descriptively at post-test. Pre- and post-test survey responses were examined to assess changes in participants' perceptions across their LiFE Sports involvement. Additionally all data analyses examined three groups: high attenders (those attending 90% of camp or more), low attenders (those attending less than 90%), and all campers. These analyses specifically looked at the campers who participated 90% of the time or more, as these campers are the ones most likely to benefit from the camp's design.

The results section is organized around each of the primary and secondary objectives (i.e. see table above for review of primary and secondary objectives). The LiFE Sports Evaluation Team also conducted rigorous statistical analyses on each scale construct (i.e., self control in sport) to determine which items best represented each construct. While the details of these analyses are 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 two parts. The first part provides the results of the site observations. The second part provides the results of both participants' reflections about the LiFE Sports camp and comparative results of the pre-test and post-test data, which address each of the primary and secondary objectives.

Site Observations

In 2009, over the course of 19 days, 11 site observations were completed by research faculty, staff, and graduate research assistants. These site observations monitored implementation fidelity by tracking youth time on task, leader behavior (autonomy supportive and behavior management practices), and group management behaviors. Key findings included both strengths and limitations to the current

camp. Strengths for the camp included that education curriculum was implemented well and had a specific focus on social skills, campers were exposed to a variety of sports, small groups were often utilized during activities, and adequate sports equipment was available.

Additionally, in relation to camper-staff relationships, activity leaders and/or group counselors only made negative requests (such as “please stop doing that!” and “shhhh”), one time per site observation. This indicates that camp staff were utilizing appropriate behavior management strategies and only occasionally reverting to ineffective methods. Additionally, it was clear that many campers had developed strong relationships with LiFE Sports staff, and appeared to be enjoying their experience at camp. However, on average, less than one youth per site observation was observed to be serving as a leader within the activity. This indicates that more structure needs to be provided to the adult leaders as to how to engage youth in leadership roles within activities. Additionally, the education curriculum wasn’t always adhered to by enrichment leaders, and at times recreational staff did not maximize campers’ engagement in activities. Sometimes too much time was spent in instruction; whereas other times activities were structured so that only a few campers were actively engaged. These observations can be utilized to enhance future programming.

Pre- and Post-Test Data Assessing Primary and Secondary Objectives

Important insights were gained in regards to program objectives through youth participants’ reflections on their LiFE Sports experience and through comparing results between pre- and post-test measures. More specifically, the reflection data highlighted whether participants were satisfied with the camp and enjoyed their experience. In addition, these data provided information regarding whether participants’ felt they gained important skills as a result of the camp. Please note that the results are presented according to each key camp objective.

Comparing the results of the pre-and post-tests provides information regarding what skills and behaviors were impacted during the course of the LiFE Sports camp. 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 results are presented according to each key camp objective.

Primary Objectives

Objective 1: Increase social competence among youth participants.

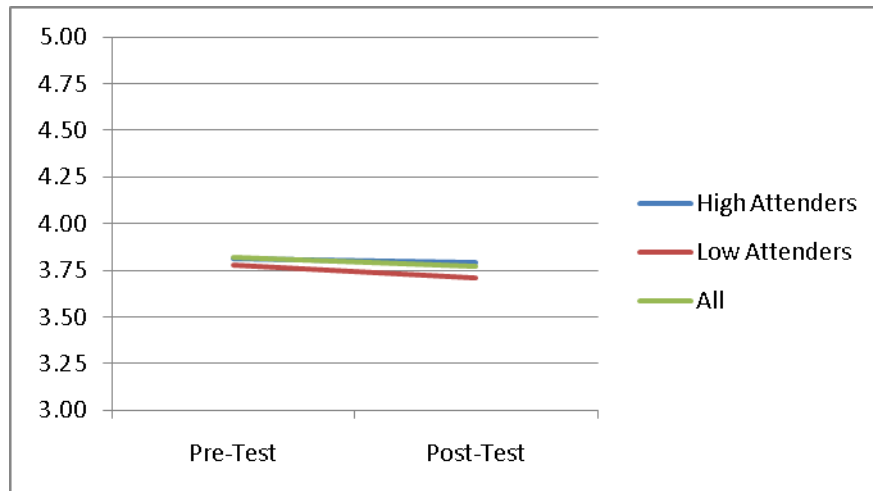
Social Competence

The primary objective of LiFE Sports is to increase social competence among youth participants through participation in sport, fitness, and education activities. 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.”

Although not statistically significant, participants’ social competence decreased from 3.82 to 3.77

from the beginning to the end of the camp. This trend also was found in relation to both high (M=3.81 to M=3.79), and low attenders (M=3.78 to M=3.71).

Figure 2. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of Social Competence

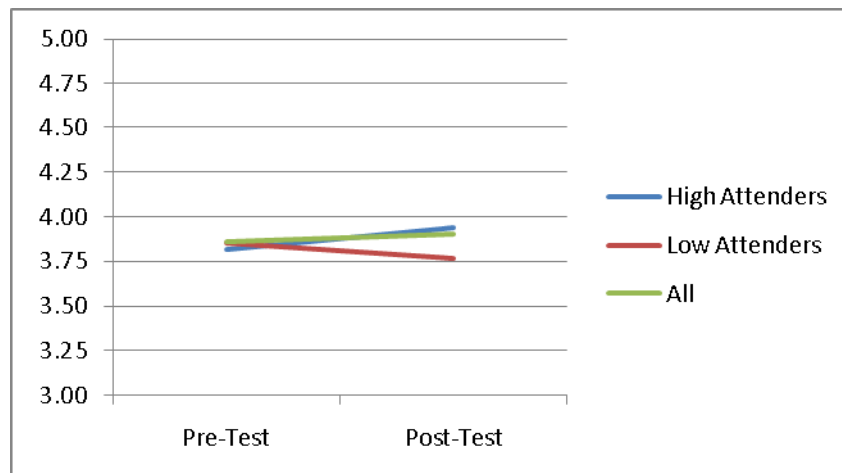


Social Competence in Sport

Sport specific social competence was measured using items modified from the Perceived Social Competence Scale (Anderson-Butcher, Iachini, & Amorose, 2008). Example items included “I help others when playing sports” and “I am good at making friends in sport.”

Participants reported an increase in their perceptions of social competence in sport from the beginning to the end of the camp (M=3.86 to M=3.90), although the finding was not statistically significant. When analyses examined youth engaged in the camp over 90% of the camp (i.e., 17 days), statistically significant improvements in perceptions of social competence in sport were found (M=3.82 to M=3.94). Additionally, those youth with low attendance (less than 17 days or 90%), social competence in sport decreased from 3.85 to 3.77. There appears to be a dosage effect, as significant benefits were noted among those youth attending LiFE Sports more regularly.

Figure 3. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of Social Competence and Social Competence in Sport

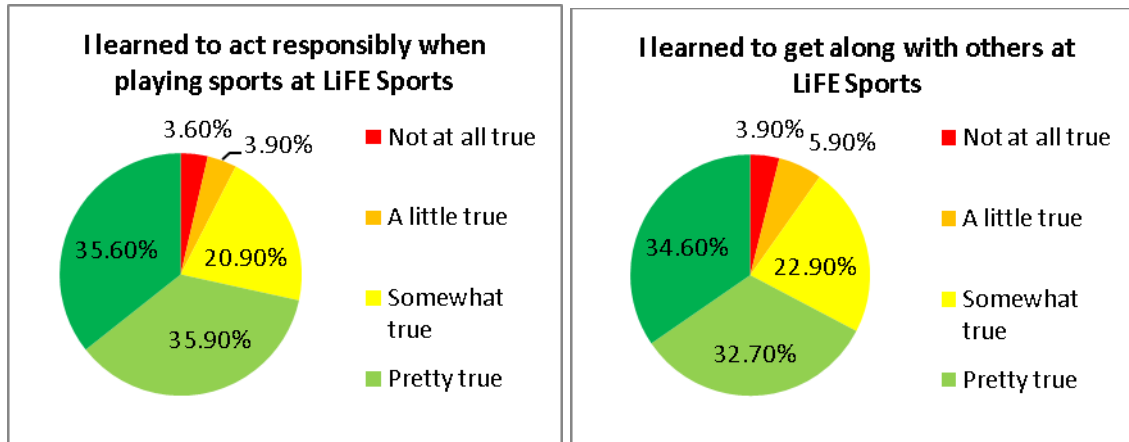


Objective 2: Increase self-control, personal motivation/commitment, teamwork, and social responsibility

Social and Personal Skills

The vast majority of participants perceived that they learned social skills at LiFE Sports. For example, 71.5% of participants indicated that they learned to act responsibly when playing sports at LiFE Sports. 67.3% of participants indicated that they learned to get along with others at LiFE Sports.

Figures 4 and 5. Social and Personal Skills Items

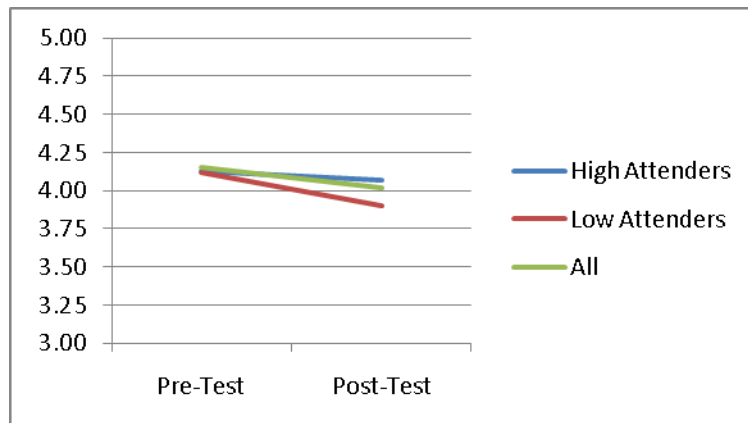


Self Control in Sport

Self control in sport was assessed using a scale that is currently being validated. The items tapped participants' perceptions of their ability to keep control in sports. Some example items include "I control my temper when I play sports" and "I play sports fairly even when an adult is not around."

Participants' perceptions of self control in sport decreased from 4.15 to 4.02 over the course of the camp. This trend was also not as apparent among high (M=4.13 to M=4.07); but a clear decrease was evident among low attenders (M=4.12 to M=3.90).

Figure 6. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of Self Control in Sport

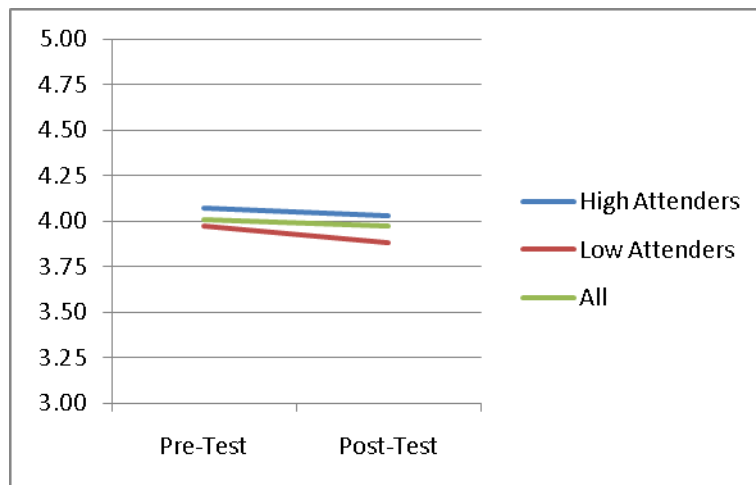


Effort in Sport

The commitment subscale of the Multidimensional Sportspersonship Orientations Scale (MSOS-25) was used to measure effort in sport (Vallerand, Brière, Blanchard, & Provencher, 1997). This subscale consisted of 5 items tapping participants' perceptions of their respect for commitment to sports participation.

There were no differences in perceptions of commitment (i.e., effort) in sport among campers from the beginning to the end of the camp (M=4.0 to M=3.97). Low attenders decreased their perceptions of commitment, however (M=3.97 to M=3.88),; whereas high attenders perceptions remained relatively stable (M=4.07 to M=4.03) .

Figure 7. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of Effort in Sport

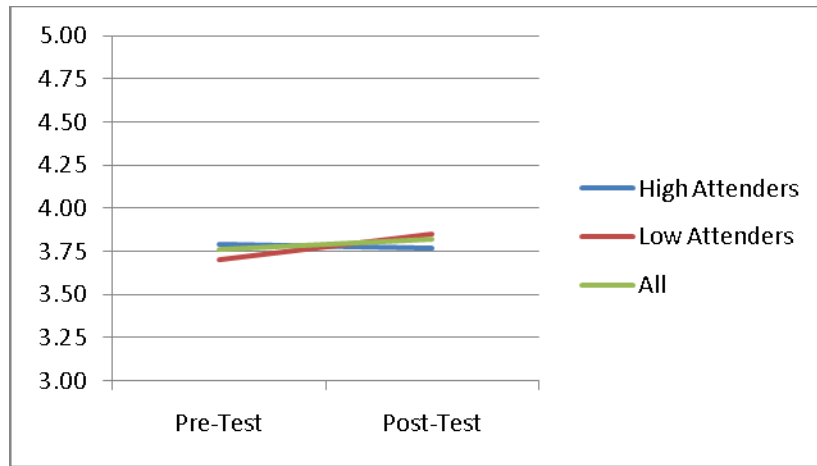


Social Responsibility

Social responsibility was measured using three items tapping community and civic involvement. This scale was originally created to measure twenty-first century skills and is currently being validated (Anderson-Butcher, 2008). This scale measures participant's thoughts about helping others in their community.

Although not statistically significant, participants indicated an increase in social responsibility over the course of camp (M=3.76 to M=3.82). The high attenders scores were relatively high at pre-test; and reported little change in perceptions of social responsibility over the course of the camp (M=3.79 to 3.77). The low attenders had more "room to grow" as their scores on the pre-test were much lower than the campers who attended more regularly. In the end, the low attenders significantly increased their perceptions of social responsibility over the course of the camp (M=3.70 to 3.85). This may suggest the camp has great impact on those campers who are perceive themselves as less socially responsible at the beginning of camp.

Figure 8. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of Social Responsibility



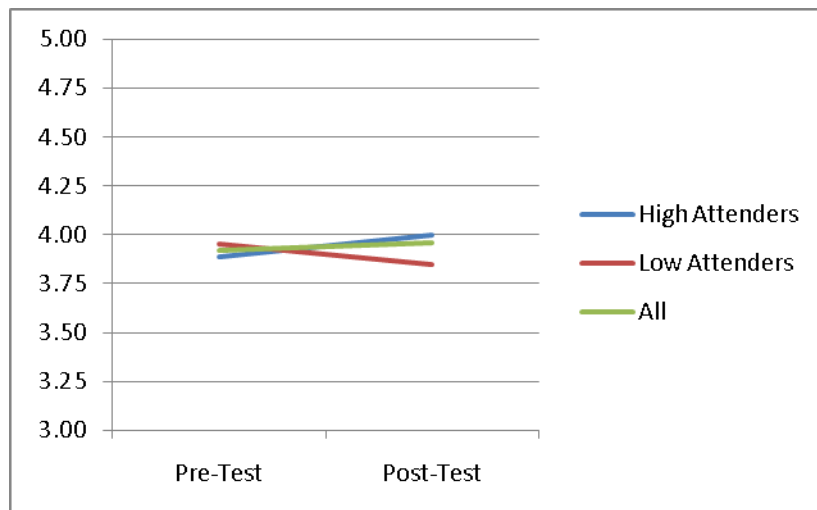
Teamwork in Sport

Teamwork in sport was measured using a teamwork scale that is currently under development (Anderson-Butcher, 2008). The ten item scale is comprised of items tapping participant's perceptions of different aspects of teamwork in the sport context. The stem "When playing sports..." is followed by several items such as "I think teamwork is important" and "I feel confident in my ability to work in a team." The final scale used in this study consisted of seven items.

There was an increase in participants' perceptions of teamwork in sport from 3.92 to 3.96 over the course of camp, although not statistically significant.

Findings point to improved outcomes in relation to teamwork for high attendees. Specifically, campers who participated in the program for 17 days or more showed significant increases in their perceptions of teamwork in sport over the course of camp (M=3.89 to M=4.03), while low attenders decreased in their perceptions (M=3.95 to M=3.85).

Figure 9. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of Teamwork in Sport



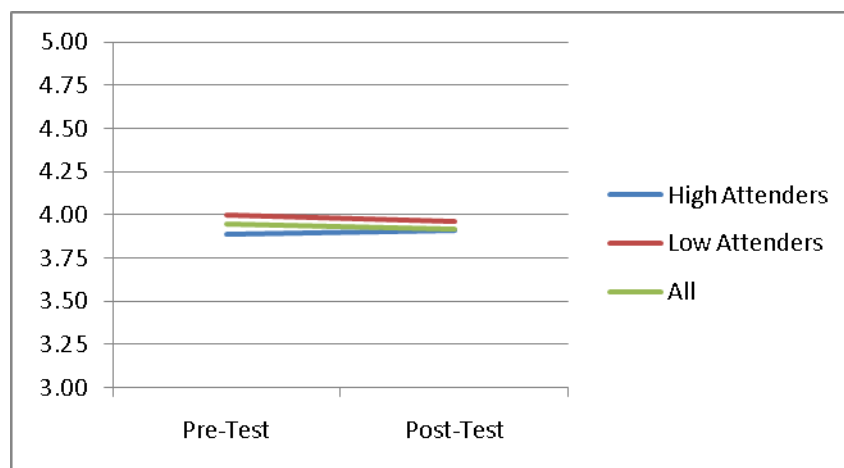
Transfer of Skills Learned in Sport

Three items were used to measure participants' ability to transfer skills they learned in sport to other settings. Items included "The skills I learn in sport are useful to me in other parts of my life," "I take many of the skills I learn in sport and use them outside of sport" and "I learn skills in sport that I use in other places."

Perceptions of one's ability to transfer skills learned in sport to other settings remained stable over the course of camp (M=3.95 to M=3.92). This also also was the case when only looking trends related to high attenders, (M=3.89 to M3.91) and low attenders (M=4.00 to M=3.96).

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 10. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of Transfer of Skills Learned in Sport



Objective 3: Youth will demonstrate a sense of belonging and connection to the LiFE Sports camp and its staff

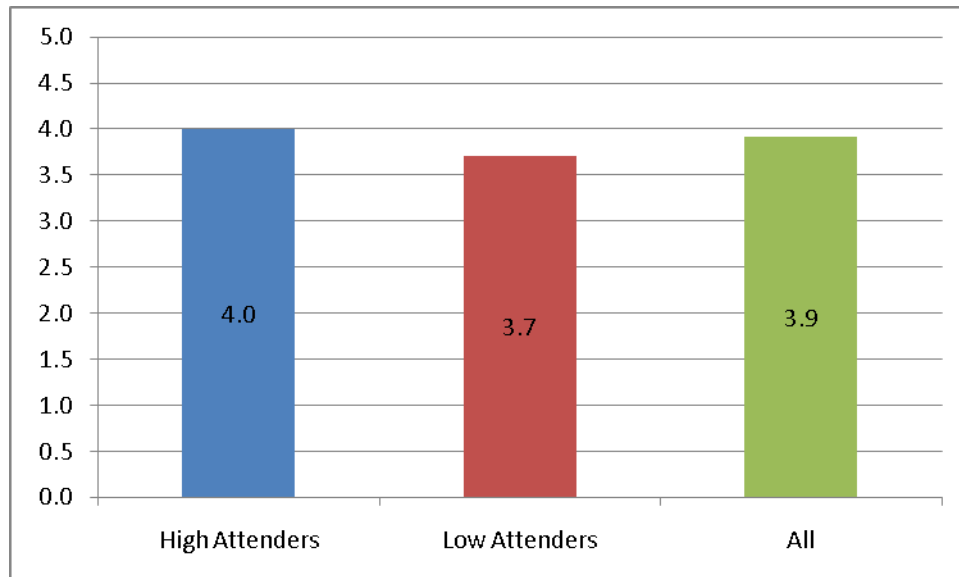
Several measures were used to assess participants' perceptions of their sense of belonging and connection to the LiFE Sports camp and staff. Specifically, campers completed scales measuring perceptions of belonging, autonomy support (i.e., choice/decision-making), relatedness, and leader support.

Belonging

Participants' sense of connection to the LiFE Sports camp 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 LiFE Sports" and "I am part of LiFE Sports."

Participants' reported a strong sense of belonging to the camp at post-test (M=3.91). Not surprisingly, high attenders (M=4.00) had stronger connections than low attenders (M=3.71). The following chart synthesizes the comparative data presented above.

Figure 11. Post-Test Comparison of Belonging

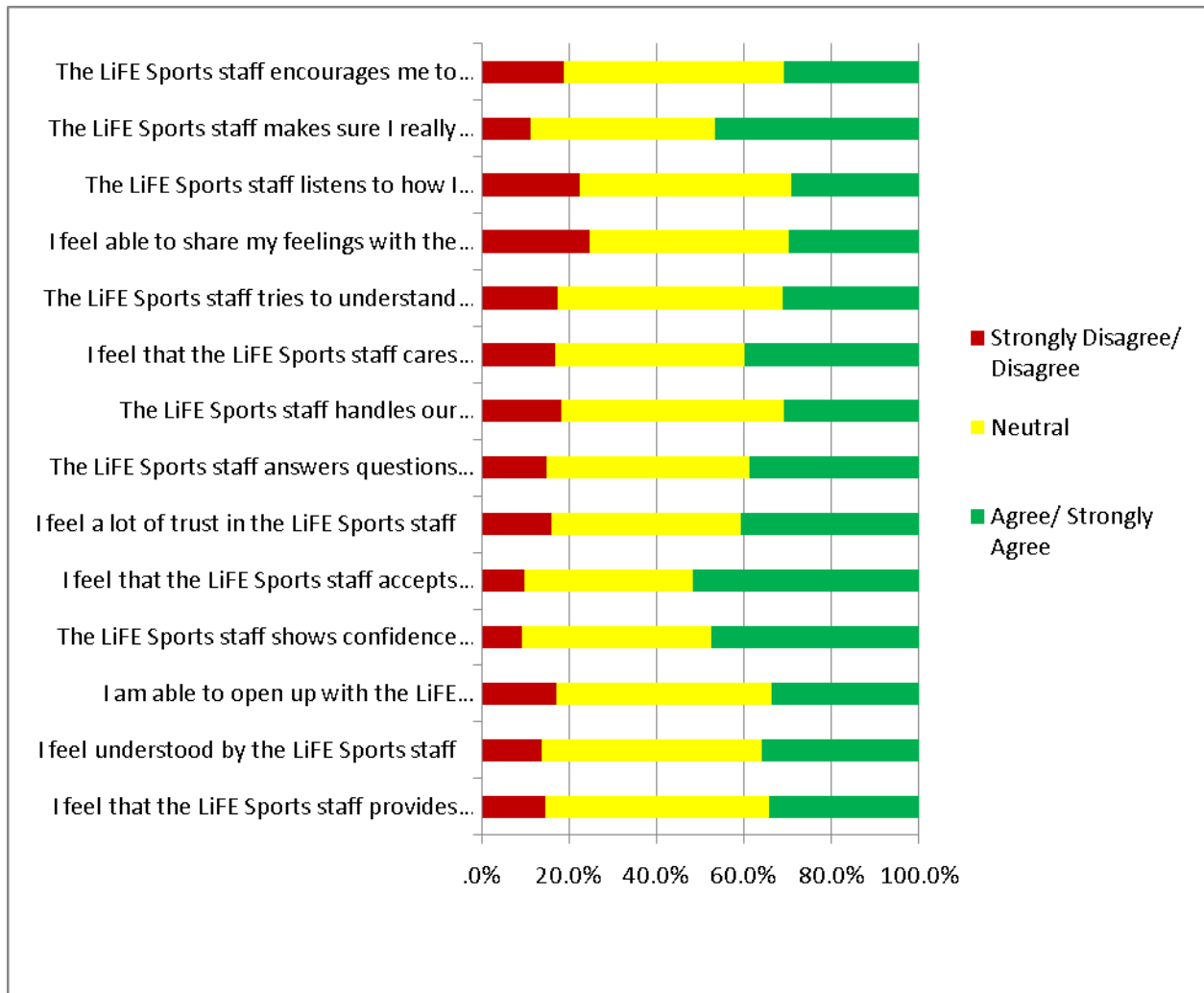


Autonomy Support

A modified version of the Learning Climate Questionnaire (LCQ) was used to assess the degree to which campers felt their autonomy (i.e., choice/decision making) was supported by camp staff at post-test. Autonomy supportive environments can be described as when “an individual in a position of authority (e.g., an instructor [or counselor]) takes the other’s (e.g. student’s [or camper’s]) perspective, acknowledges the other’s feelings, and provides the other with pertinent information and opportunities for choice, while minimizing the use of pressure and demands” (Mageau & Vallerand, 2003, p. 886).

Many participants indicated that they felt a lot of trust in the LiFE Sports staff (40.8%). 47.6% of participants agreed that the LiFE Sports staff showed confidence in their abilities to do well in LiFE Sports. Additionally, those participants who were high attenders (4.61) reported higher levels of autonomy support than low attenders (M=4.57).

Figure 12. Autonomy Support Items

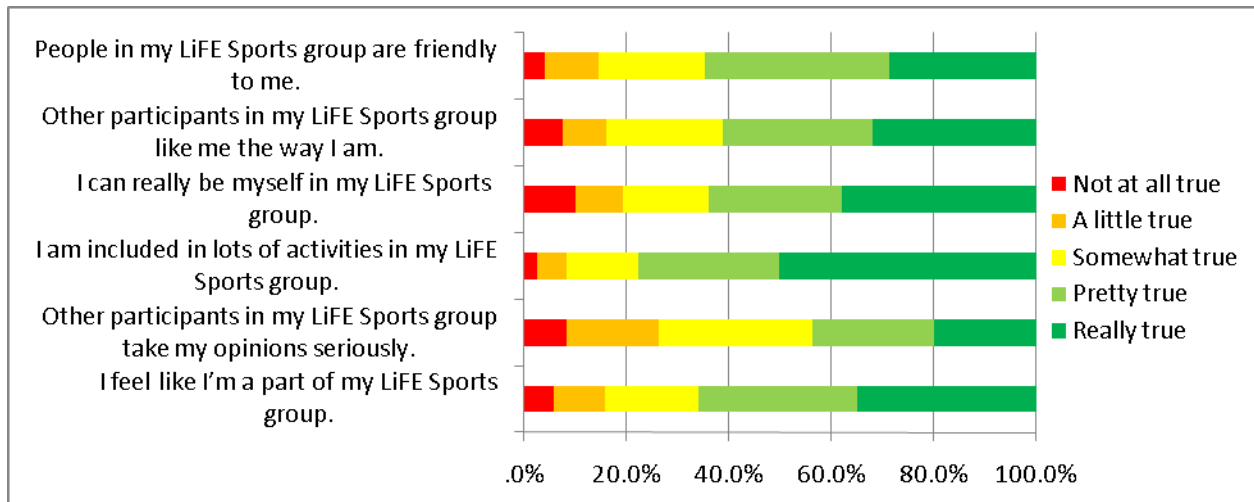


Relatedness & Leader Support

An individual’s perception of relatedness to his/her LiFE Sports group and perceptions of leader support were assessed using a modified version of the Psychological Sense of School Membership Scale (PSSMS; Goodenow, 1993). This original scale was modified by Cox and Williams (2008) for the physical activity context. In the current study, the relatedness scale consisted of 6 items. The leader support scale also consisted of six items. Please note that those participants that completed the post-test were included in these analyses.

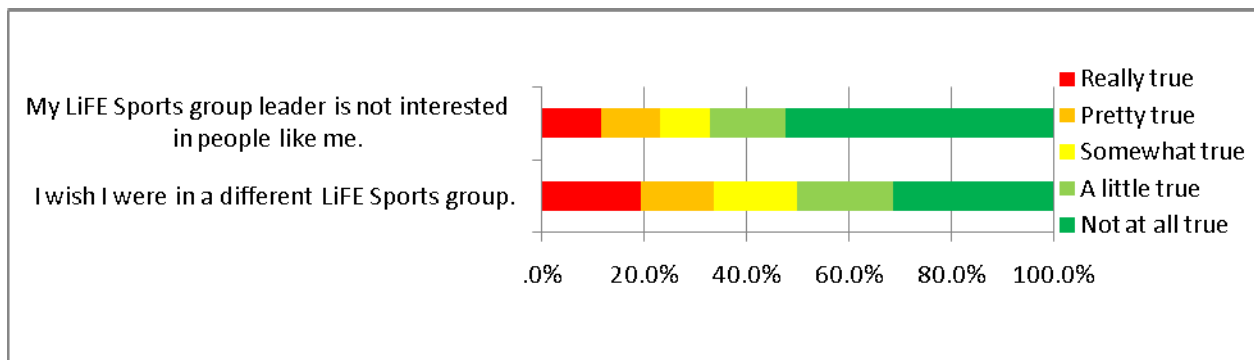
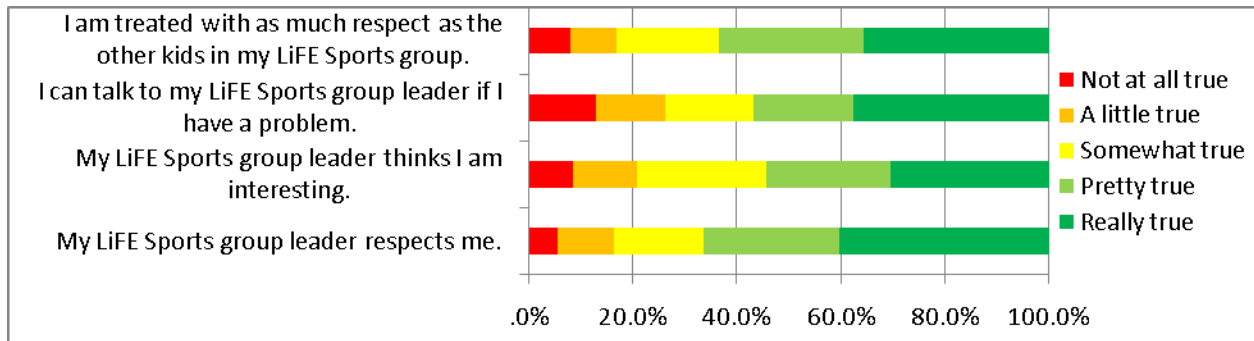
Relatedness – 65.8% of participants agreed that they felt like part of their LiFE Sports group. The majority of participants also agreed that they could really be themselves in their LiFE Sports group (63.8%). Additionally, high attenders reported greater amounts of relatedness (M=3.85) in comparison to low attenders (M=3.55).

Figure 13. Relatedness Items



Leader Support – 56.8% of participants agreed that they could talk to their LiFE Sports group leader if they had a problem, while 66.4% reported that their group leader respected them. Additionally, those participants who were high attenders (3.77) reported higher levels of leader support than low attenders (M=3.54).

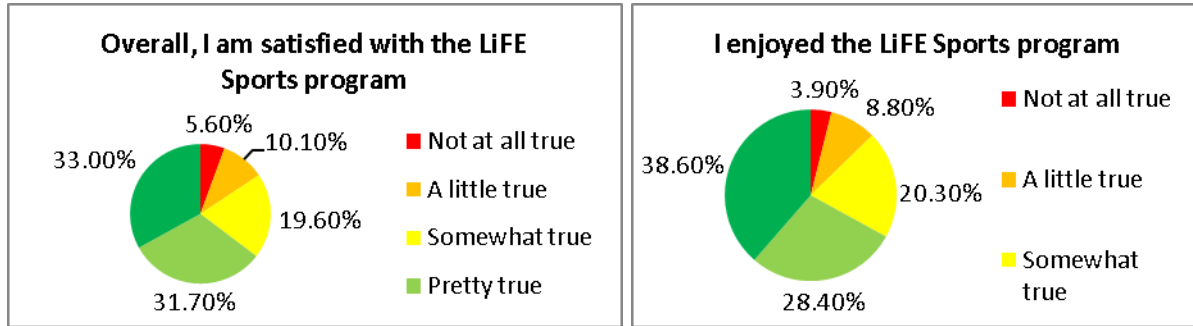
Figures 14 and 15. Leader Support Items



Satisfaction/Enjoyment

Overall, 64.7% of participants reported strong satisfaction with the LiFE Sports camp and 67.0% of participants indicated they enjoyed the camp.

Figures 16 and 17. Satisfaction and Enjoyment Items



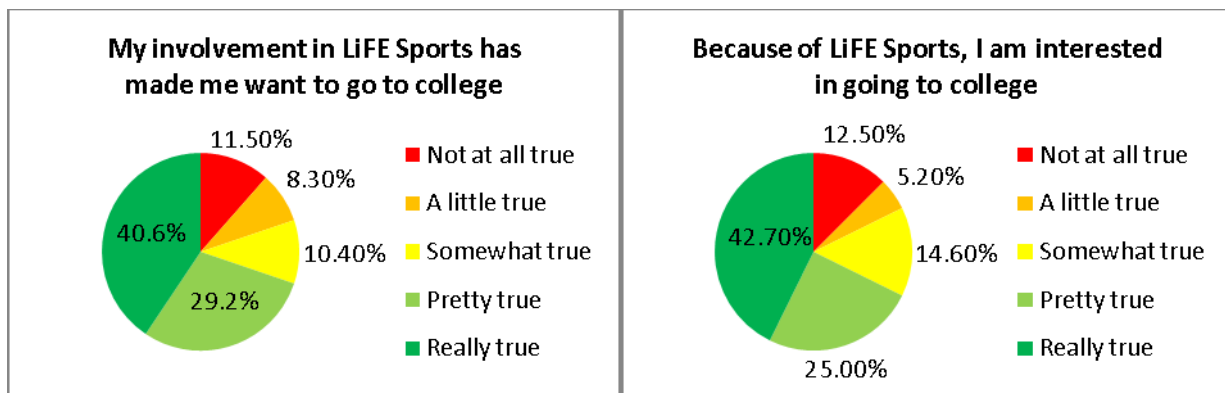
Secondary Objectives

Objective 1: Increase participants' exposure to university/college life and interest in higher education

Intentions to Attend College

To examine progress toward meeting this objective, we examined data only from campers who attended the camp on Career Day and completed both pre- and post-tests (n=253). (Please note that 359 campers were in attendance for Career Day). As a result of the LiFE Sports camp, participants indicated a strong desire to attend college. For example, 69.8% of these campers indicated that their involvement in LiFE Sports has made them want to go to college. Additionally, 67.7% of reported that are interested in going to college because of LiFE Sports.

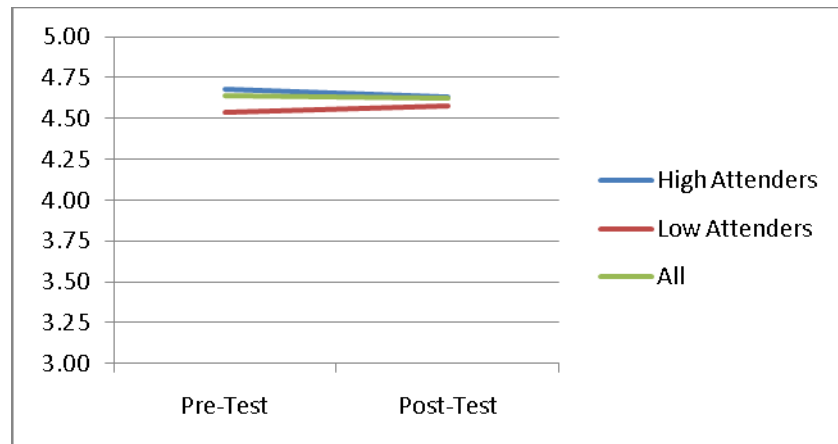
Figures 18 and 19. College Items



Intentions to go to College

Participant's intentions to go to college were measured at pre and post-test using five items. Items included "I want to go to college," and "I set goals that will help me get to college." Again, only data from campers attending the LiFE sports Career Day were examined for these analyses. There was little difference between participants' intentions to go to college at pre and post-test (M=4.64 to M=4.62). This trend was also consistent for both high (M=4.68 to M=4.63) and low attenders (M=4.54 to M=4.58). These trends may be partly due to the high levels of intentions to go to college originally reported by camp participants. In other words, there was very little room for improvement. The following chart and table synthesizes the comparative data presented above.

Figure 20. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of Intentions to go to College



Objective 2: Refer participants to other youth organizations and opportunities in Columbus

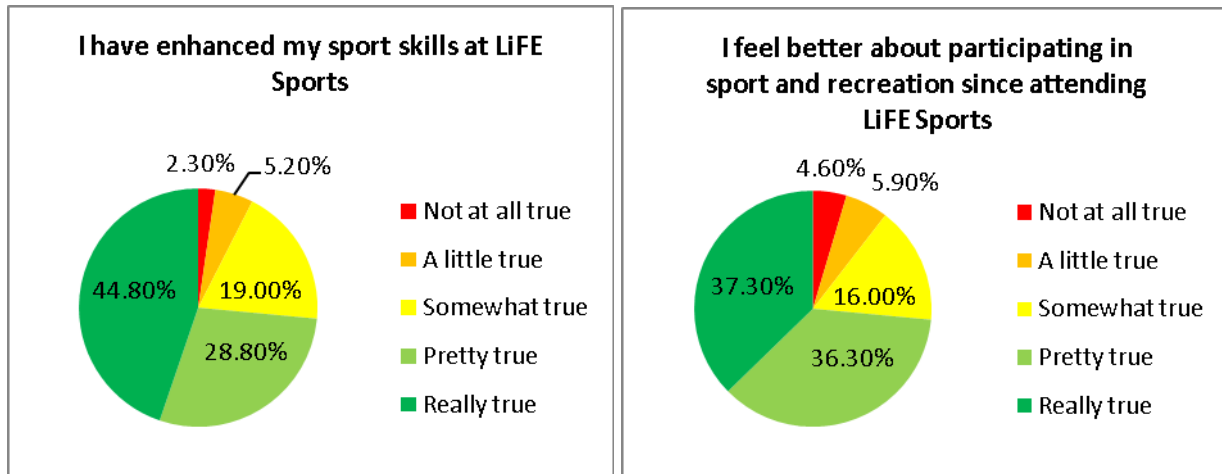
One of the secondary objectives of the LiFE Sports camp is to refer participants to other youth organizations and opportunities in Columbus. In 2009, participants were given the opportunity to be dropped off at the Boys & Girls Club of Columbus after camp each day. This provided them with extended programming. Nine LiFE Sports campers took advantage of this additional opportunity. 326 campers also indicated on their application that they were interested in being a member of the Boys and Girls Club of Columbus.

Objective 3: Increase participants' perceptions of athletic competence

Sport Skills

At the end of the camp, 73.6% of participants reported that their sport skills improved over the course of the camp. Additionally, 73.6% of participants indicated that they feel better about participating in sport and recreation since attending LiFE Sports.

Figures 21 and 22. Sport Skill Items



Athletic Competence – General and Sport Specific

Athletic competence was assessed using three items tapping youth perceptions of how much ability they have in the sport context (Amorose, 2002). The first item asked “How good do you think you are at sport?” Responses fell along a 5-point likert scale ranging from (1) *Not good at all* to (5) *Very good*. The second item asked “When it comes to sports, how much ability do you think you have?” Responses ranged from (1) *Not much ability at all* to (5) *A whole lot of ability*. The third item asked “How skilled do you think you are at sports?” and responses ranged from (1) *Not skilled at all* to (5) *Very skilled*.

In this study, youth perceptions of competence in specific sports also were measured. The 3 items outlined above were modified for each individual sport. For example, there were three items tapping perceptions of competence in volleyball (i.e. How good do you think you are at volleyball; How much ability do you think you have when it comes to volleyball; How skilled do you think you are at volleyball). The 3 items were averaged for each sport to create a total score representing perceptions of competence in that sport.

The following chart highlights changes among LiFE Sports participants in perceived general athletic competence and athletic competence by sport. Please note participants showed increased athletic competence in almost ALL sports (there was no change in basketball, track, or football). This trend was especially evident for participants who attended 17 or more days. There were significant differences from pre to post test on perceptions of football skills for these high attenders. Low attenders did not have increases in sport competence in all sports. Specifically low attenders showed slight decreases in general sport competence and basketball competence. Please note that an (*) indicates a significant increase. In the end, data show that campers increased their perceptions of competence in varying athletic sports overall. These trends were particularly evident among campers who attended camp regularly throughout the summer.

Figure 23. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of General and Sport Specific Athletic Competence – All Participants

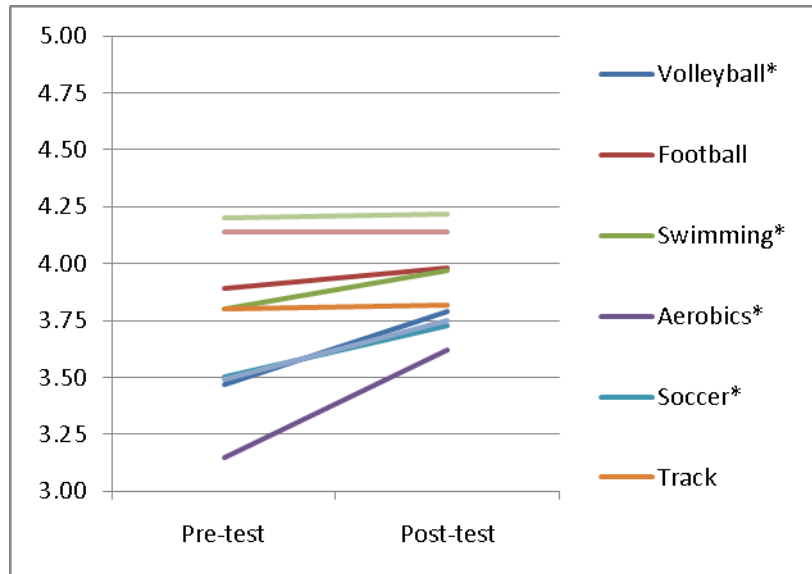


Figure 25. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of General and Sport Specific Athletic Competence – High Attenders

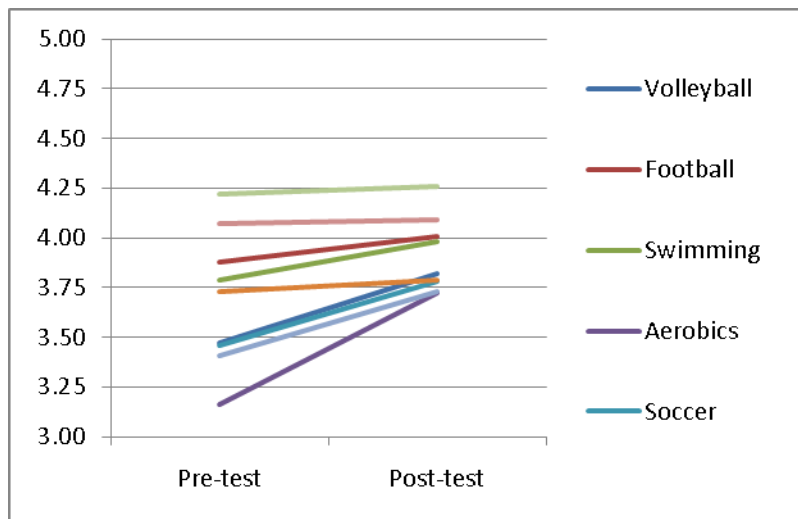
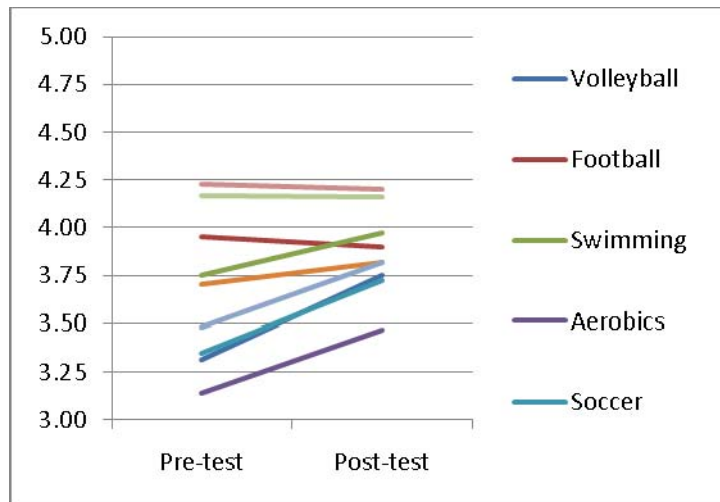


Figure 26. Pre- and Post-Test Comparison of General and Sport Specific Athletic Competence – Low Attenders



Attendance

Clearly, campers must be present and engaged at camp in order to reap the benefits of participation. In 2009, 534 of 589 registered campers came to camp for at least 1 day and 278 came 16 or more days. Average daily attendance was 381 campers / day. Findings suggest that there were differences in attendance based on the demographic characteristics of participants. For instance, females were more likely to still be in attendance at the end of camp, as were younger participants. On the other hand, those participants on free and reduced lunch had decreased odds of being in attendance at the end of camp. This may have important implications for campers with certain demographics given the possible dosage effects of attending camp 90% of the time.

Conclusion

The outcomes gathered from the research around each of the program objectives have implications for the 2010 LiFE Sports camp. Specifically, these implications are discussed below as they relate to primary and secondary objectives.

Overall, these data suggest that youth participants in the camp were very satisfied and enjoyed their experiences. Specifically over 400 youth were provided with a free, four week camp that appears to have both affects on participants' athletic competence and components of social competence.

As the 2009 evaluation data indicate, LiFE Sports youth participants as a whole did not show significant gains in social competence, but small gains were identified in personal motivation/commitment, teamwork and social responsibility. As this is the primary outcome for the camp, further analyses were completed to determine how to improve this outcome. First, when the data is looked at closer, the data indicates that those campers who attended 17 days or more (absent 2 or less days of camp) showed significant increases in a number of areas, including: sport social competence and teamwork. This

finding indicates that dosage is critical. In other words, attendance is critical to ensuring that camp has an effect on youth. Strategies to enhance retention of participants over the course of the camp are needed to ensure dosage response.

Additionally, given the importance of dosage, LiFE Sports in 2009 relied mainly on the education portion of camp to impact youth's social competence. Specifically, the social skill curriculum was only implemented in the education portion of the programming. To increase the dosage of this social skills curriculum, it is essential that these social skills are deliberately infused into the sports. To achieve this, it is suggested that curriculum is developed for each sport that contains activities and discussions that not only allow youth to learn how to play the sport but also how to use social skills within the sport. This infusion will provide additional opportunities for youth to enhance social skills during the camp day.

Along with increasing youth social competence, one primary outcome of LiFE Sports is for youth to demonstrate a sense of belong and connection to the camp and its staff. 2009 evaluation data suggest that while there was a slight decrease in the sense of belong and connect of the LiFE Sports camp and its staff over the 19 days, youth participants did identify relatively high levels of autonomy support, relatedness and leader support. These data suggest that staff matter! The LiFE Sports staff must be well prepared to build meaningful and caring relationships with youth. Based on these findings, it is suggested that LiFE Sports engage in strategies to improve the quality and expertise of the camp staff. Suggested strategies include the development and implementation of a formal interview process for all camp staff as well as once again provide a pre-camp training for all staff.

In relation to secondary objectives, LiFE Sports was found to increase participant perception of athletic competence in almost all sports. Data show that campers increased their perceptions of competence in varying athletic sports overall. These trends were particularly evident among campers who attended camp regularly throughout the summer. Given these trends, dosage appears to be very important to the overall outcomes of camp participants.

Overall, campers attending the Career Day reported strong intentions to go to college. Data explore pre- to post-test perceptions, however, showed, no changes in relation to intentions. To further enhance these outcomes, it is essential that LiFE Sports continue to provide College Access and Career Day but also increase the amount of exposure to college for youth, if this indeed is an important outcome desired from the LiFE Sports camp. To increase this exposure, it is suggested that more rigorous programming be provided to participants. One way to do this might involve focusing LiFE Sports booster sessions during the academic year on college access and planning, priorities.

Finally, research demonstrates that youth benefit from having lasting relationships with caring adults and mentors. Campers reported at post-test strong relationships with caring adults, a tight connection with the camp, and a strong sense of autonomy and leader support.

In summary, results from this program evaluation suggest that the LiFE Sports camp is making significant impact on the youth it serves. Findings support the camp's role in enhancing social and athletic competence among campers, especially the ones that attend on a regular basis. These data should be used to further enhance the LiFE Sports camp design, so that it may make a broader impact on the youth it serves in the future.

References

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