

Attitudes and Re-enrollment Intentions to Participate in Youth Soccer among Parents, Coaches, and Players in Central Texas

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ABSTRACT

Physical activity in youth declines with age, which may be due in part to decreased sports participation. However, few studies include perspectives from parents/coaches as well as players when examining reasons for participation and dropout from organized sports such as soccer. **PURPOSE:** To describe and compare soccer-related attitudes and intention to re-enroll among parents/legal guardians, coaches, and players at a youth soccer program in Central Texas. **METHODS:** Parents (n=152), coaches (n=55), and players (n=28) completed an online survey in November-December 2018. Participants were eligible if they 1) coached and/or had children aged 10-17 years who played soccer or 2) were aged 10-17 years and played soccer at the youth soccer program during the September–November 2018 season. Parent and coach surveys (20-items) examined motivation for youth participation in soccer. The player survey (20-items) examined commitment and continued involvement in soccer. All participants were asked demographics. In addition, youth and parents were asked about intentions to re-enroll. Chi-square and Fisher's exact tests, were used to compare parent and coach responses. **RESULTS:** Parents (61% female) and coaches (87% male) were predominantly White (64% and 78%, respectively), with 43% of coaches having coached soccer for ≥ 4 years. Players ($M_{age}=11.8$ years) were predominantly male (57%), with 71% having played soccer for ≥ 3 years. A majority of players (86%) intended to re-enroll in next season, with 25% agreeing that they feel they must keep playing although they think about quitting, and 43% agreeing that people would be disappointed if they stopped playing soccer. Fourteen percent of parents and 8% of coaches did not intend to re-enroll their child. Further, there were significant differences between parents and coaches on items regarding expectations for coaches. Twenty-six percent of coaches versus 45% of parents agreed that coaches should make all training and game decisions ($p=0.032$), and 33% of coaches versus 61% of parents agreed that it should be clear to anyone watching that the coach is in control ($p=0.001$). **CONCLUSION:** Few adolescents meet physical activity guidelines. Therefore, parent, coach, and player opinions are all important considerations when examining attitudes related to sports participation. Differences between these groups regarding expectations and motivation for participating should be further examined as potential reasons for dropout in order to help maintain physical activity levels in youth.