

2001

Exploration of Federal Sport Policy on Youth Elite Sport in Canada: A case study of Gymnastics Canada Canada Gymnastique

Laura Misener

Western University, lmisene@uwo.ca

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/kinpub>



Part of the [Kinesiology Commons](#)

Citation of this paper:

Misener, Laura, "Exploration of Federal Sport Policy on Youth Elite Sport in Canada: A case study of Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique" (2001). *Kinesiology Publications*. 17.
<https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/kinpub/17>

**EXPLORATION OF FEDERAL SPORT POLICY
ON YOUTH ELITE SPORT IN CANADA: A
CASE STUDY OF GYMNASTICS CANADA
GYMNASTIQUE**

by

Laura Misener

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research
through the Faculty of Human Kinetics in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of Master of Human Kinetics at the University
of Windsor**

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2001

© Laura Misener



**National Library
of Canada**

**Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services**

**395 Wellington Street
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

**Bibliothèque nationale
du Canada**

**Acquisitions et
services bibliographiques**

**395, rue Wellington
Ottawa ON K1A 0N4
Canada**

Your file Votre référence

Our file Notre référence

The author has granted a non-exclusive licence allowing the National Library of Canada to reproduce, loan, distribute or sell copies of this thesis in microform, paper or electronic formats.

L'auteur a accordé une licence non exclusive permettant à la Bibliothèque nationale du Canada de reproduire, prêter, distribuer ou vendre des copies de cette thèse sous la forme de microfiche/film, de reproduction sur papier ou sur format électronique.

The author retains ownership of the copyright in this thesis. Neither the thesis nor substantial extracts from it may be printed or otherwise reproduced without the author's permission.

L'auteur conserve la propriété du droit d'auteur qui protège cette thèse. Ni la thèse ni des extraits substantiels de celle-ci ne doivent être imprimés ou autrement reproduits sans son autorisation.

0-612-62256-8

Canada

ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the process(es), rationale(s) and strategy(ies) that are appropriate when addressing issues related to high performance youth sport within federal government policy. A case study of Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique aided in creating a contemporary framework for youth sport policy development. Youth involved in elite sport are in a subsidiary position to those who control the sport environment, and therefore are in need of certain levels of protection. High performance youth athletes may be subject to numerous problems such as competitive anxiety, disrupted family life, and excessive physiological and psychological stress. In order to explore these issues in relation to federal sport policy, the following sub-problems were identified:

- a) What are the process(es), legitimation(s) (rationale) and attribution(s) (strategies for action) of federal government sport policies (1961-2000) in relation to youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes?**
- b) What structure currently exists within Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique (GCG) in relation to youth elite athletes?**
- c) What issues are relevant to those affected by policy (i.e., coaches and athletes)?**
- d) How are the proposed process(es), emerging legitimation(s), and attribution(s) for the development of federal sport policies pertaining to youth elite athletes reflective of academic/activist approaches concerning youth sport?**

These sub-problems were investigated through a four (4) step methodology. The first step involved an adapted version of L. Chalip's Critical Policy Analysis (1995, 1996), in order to examine fifteen (15) federal sport policy documents (1961-2000). This analysis of sport policy documents the rationales and related actions towards youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes. This allowed for a historical understanding of the role of federal

government's intervention in high performance sport, and identified the lack of attention given to issues of youth elite athletes.

Interviews were then carried out with three administrators from Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique. This information provided a contemporary understanding of policies for youth elite athletes in one national sport organisation. Issues related to youth in high performance gymnastics were also identified. Despite the prominence of youth in elite gymnastics, GCG has done little to deter the potential negative outcomes associated with high levels of youth involvement. Interviews were then carried out with four national level athletes and four national level coaches that further identified problems associated with competitive involvement of youth in gymnastics. Coaches (2 male, 2 female) readily spoke on some of the negative effects associated with involvement, and provided insight into future resolution of these issues. Elite youth gymnasts who were interviewed (2 male, 2 female) demonstrated a lack of understanding of these issues and an inability to critically comment on their intense involvement in the sport.

Finally, a draft proposal for a policy for youth elite athletes was developed and submitted to experts/activists for feedback. The proposed framework aligns with the academic literature in the area of sport policy and builds upon the federal sport policy concepts of an athlete-centered system. Further, it allows for youth elite athletes to be viewed as a separate group in need of specific types of protection. The proposal contributes towards the creation of a sporting environment that develops safe, healthy and well adjusted high performance athletes.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family, who have continued to be a constant source of inspiration: Dad, thanks for always supporting me and teaching me to believe; Mom, thanks for your patience, understanding, and for instilling in me a desire to learn; Rob, thanks for encouraging me to explore new directions and to think in new ways. Special thanks also to my extended family, who have supported me throughout this journey.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have had a great impact on my life during this journey and have aided in making this thesis possible. I could not have got this far without your belief and support.

First of all, I would like to thank Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique for being open and willing to take part in this research. Special thanks to all administrators, coaches and athletes who participated in this study. Your openness and enthusiasm to share your stories made this a truly enjoyable project.

A special thanks goes to my committee members: Dr. Holman, Dr. Burr, and Dr. Donnelly. Your commitment to this project was greatly appreciated. Thank you for your insight, knowledge, and willingness to believe in my work. I would like to especially thank my advisor, Dr. Victoria Paraschak. I am grateful to you for your guidance, support, and passionate belief in this research. You have been a constant source of inspiration and continue to challenge me to think in new ways, to explore my own beliefs, and to seek out the 'roads less traveled'.

Finally, to all those I have met throughout my university career: students, faculty, Mac-Masters, Winstars, and friends ... you have all helped make this a worthwhile effort. Thanks for being there and supporting me throughout this endeavor. My education would not be complete without all of you. You have all taught me something about life and about myself. I am forever grateful.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	iii
DEDICATION	v
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	vi
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES	ix
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS	x

CHAPTER	PAGE
1. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND	
I. Introduction	1
II. Literature Review	3
i. Youth Sport	3
ii. High Performance Youth Sport	8
iii. Canadian Federal Government Involvement in Sport	11
III. Theoretical and Practical Justification.....	14
2. RESEARCH FRAMEWORK	
I. Research Problem.....	18
II. Data Collection and Analysis.....	19
III. Research Assumptions	29
IV. Delimitations and Associated Limitations.....	31
3. CANADIAN FEDERAL SPORT POLICY	
I. Critical Policy Analysis and Related Historical Concepts.....	36
II. Trends in Canadian Federal Youth Sport Policy.....	70

4. NATIONAL SPORT ORGANISATION CASE STUDY	
I. Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique	75
II. Contemporary GCG Policies	77
5. ISSUES IN YOUTH ELITE SPORT	
I. Coach and Athlete Perceptions	91
6. YOUTH ELITE SPORT POLICY	
I. Draft Proposal.....	102
II. Revised Proposal	106
III. Reflections on Proposed Framework.....	123
7. SUMMARY, CONTRIBUTIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
I. Summary.....	125
II. Research Contributions	127
III. Recommendations for Future Research.....	130
EPILOGUE	132
REFERENCES	134
APPENDIX A: Federal Government Policy Documents.....	144
APPENDIX B: Bill of Rights for Young Athletes	145
APPENDIX C: Policy Analysis Framework	146
APPENDIX C: Interview Guide	148
APPENDIX D: Researcher Autobiography.....	155
APPENDIX E: Rationale for Federal Government Involvement In Sport.....	159
APPENDIX F: Draft Proposal Framework for Youth Sport Policy	160
VITA AUCTORIS.....	172

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Administrator Perceptions: Legitimations and Attributions for Youth Sport	85
Table 2: Coach Perceptions: Legitimations and Attributions for Youth Sport Policy	96
Table 3: Athlete Perceptions: Legitimations and Attributions for Youth Sport Policy	97

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The Honourable John Munro's Model of Sport in Canada	44
Figure 2: Youth Sport Policy Process	107

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists	ACTRA
American Association for Health Physical Education and Recreation	AAHPER
The Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance	CAHPERD
Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport	CAAWS
Canadian Olympic Association	COA
Canadian Sports Advisory Council	CSAC
Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique	FIG
Fitness and Amateur Sport Act	FASA
Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique	GCG
National Coaching Certification Program	NCCP
National Physical Fitness Act	NPFA
National Sport Organization	NSO
Sport Funding and Accountability Framework	SFAF

Chapter 1 –Historical Background

I. Introduction

Participation in competitive sport in Canada has increased at a dramatic rate over the past century due to a variety of factors including government intervention into the domain of physical fitness and sport. Early in the growth of competitive sport, recognition of the poor fitness levels of the general population, coupled with the highly publicized weak international performance of Canada's amateur athletes, prompted the federal government to become involved in the provision of sport. A belief by some government officials that a feeble showing in international competition (in particular hockey) was bringing loss of prestige for Canada on the world scene enabled the federal government to see how sport initiatives and larger political and social goals were tightly connected.

The provision of high performance sport has been of central importance in developing federal government policy initiatives, and an athlete centred approach has become an important principle underlying government programs in recent years. Donnelly (1993, 1997) has argued that youth¹ in high performance sport are in a particularly vulnerable position and often suffer from problems such as competitive anxiety, disrupted family life, and excessive physiological and psychological stress. Research shows that sexual, physical, and mental/emotional abuses together with long hours of training and competition, high rates of injury, and controlling adult behaviour (by coaches, parents, administrators) has increased dramatically over the past several

¹ For the purpose of this paper *youth* is defined as **children** and juveniles between the ages of 6 and 18 considered to be under the legal age of competence, having not attained an age at which one should be treated as an adult, and in need of certain levels of protection (United Nations Conference on the Rights of the Child, 1989). The term youth will be used synonymously with the term child.

decades (i.e., Chan and Micheli, 1998; Creff, 1985; David, 1993a, 1993b; Donnelly, 1993, 2000; Martens, & Seefeldt, 1979; Ryan, 1995). This research has raised great concern over the conditions of youth in high performance sport.

While concerns for children/youth in high performance sport are not new, as demonstrated by evidence as early as the 1930's (AAHPER, 1938)², it has been only recently that substantiated research evidence has strongly supported the need for action to protect youth elite athletes. The issue of athletes' rights has been addressed to a limited extent (e.g. Kidd & Eberts, 1988), however little attention has been focused on the specific rights and protections of youth athletes. Donnelly (1993, 1997) has suggested various ways of dealing with the problems of youth sport including the implementation of child welfare laws or child labour laws. Federal government policy initiatives have also been cited as an important option for action towards the support and betterment of youth elite sport (Donnelly, 1997).

This research explores the following problem:

What process(es), rationale(s) and strategy(ies) might federal government policy initiatives include when addressing the issues arising in relation to high performance youth sport?

Analyses of government policy initiatives help to interpret the methods by which the social constructions of sport, including the meanings attributed to sport that direct and constrain policy discourse, give structure to emergent sport policies. One purpose of this research is to examine Canadian federal government policy initiatives in sport concerning youth involvement, and in particular youth in high performance sport from 1961-2000

² The *American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation*, recognising the potential physiological and psychological problems for youth athletes, stated in 1938 that physical education emphasis in schools should be on play and fitness games, rather than competitive sport for youth.

(see Appendix A). An examination of the rationales for policy development and specific actions that address those rationales allows for a more complete understanding of the social constructions related to sport policies with a particular focus on youth sport. Furthermore, this research promotes a critical appreciation for policy issues relating to youth sport, and suggests policy actions for the resolution of issues problematic to youth in high performance sport.

II. Literature Review

Policies are not formed in isolation from the greater social context in which they are developed. Each of the policy documents put forth by the federal government is linked to a larger political, social, and historical environment. Therefore, a brief historical understanding of both federal government involvement in sport and youth involvement in sport is important when developing a critical appreciation of youth elite sport policies and contemplating future developments related to high performance youth athletes.

Youth sport in Canada

The present conditions surrounding competitive sport for youth are a culmination of the development of sports for children of all ages over many years. To understand the current construction of the sport delivery system for youth and its underlying rationales and attributions, it is helpful to reflect on the historical developments that have directly affected sport and physical activity for youth in Canada. While a large amount of literature details sport throughout the history of Canada, little literature directly relates to youth sport from a historical perspective in Canadian society. An examination of

histories of the physical education system, government documents, theses relating to Canadian Sport Policy development, and literature detailing youth sport in the United States provide important insights into the development of competitive youth sport in Canada.

Early involvement of Canadian children/youth in sport emerged primarily from a desire to enhance leisure time, and to deter juvenile delinquency (Berryman, 1975; Donnelly, 2000; Seefeldt, 1996); in these ways sport was seen to have important social value. Sport for youth, primarily boys, was believed to “develop moral character, and foster desirable patriotism” (Redmond, 1977, p. 16), and the virtues learned through sport were assumed to be transferable later in life. By the middle of the 20th century, enthusiasm for male youth sports prompted community recreation directors to expand operations beyond play areas to more highly developed sports centres for all ages. This growth enhanced the opportunity for further development of leagues and youth sport organizations throughout North America. The expansion of these programs was not only beneficial for activity pursuits, but was also seen as an important factor in the social control of youth (Coakley, 1994; Donnelly, 2000).

The “Baby Boom” following World War II significantly impacted sports and recreation programs, as the outgrowth of new families and increased numbers of youth put greater demands on the recreation industry to develop programs to meet the needs of children of all ages and varying skill levels. Between 1951 and 1961, the number of youth ages 10-19 increased by more than a million (Owran, 1996). Competitive sports clubs and organizations such as the YMCA and Little League Baseball for boys expanded opportunities for various levels of play to meet the demands of this growing population.

Organized sports clubs for men often included junior programs for boys aimed at youth involvement in competitive sport. It soon became apparent to advocates of physical fitness that North Americans believed in the power of competitive sport to promote physical fitness, general education, democracy, and sportsmanship (Wiggins, 1996).

Advocates for the development of physical education programs in Canada argued that sport for children should emphasize children learning to play games and the joy of physical activity (Cosentino and Howell, 1971; Morrow, Keyes, Simpson, Cosentino, and Lappage, 1989). Increased youth sport involvement had prompted physical education researchers of the 1950's to recognise the values of sport involvement; however, at the same time they slowly began to identify the negative effects of competitive sport such as commercialism, questions of value, and the psychological and physiological damage that may be incurred by young athletes (Morrow et al, 1989; Wiggins, 1996). The win-at-all-costs attitude that had developed in schools, combined with an overemphasis on physical prowess, was seen to be detrimental to the development of children (Berryman, 1975, 1996; Murphy, 1999). In addition, the general population was acknowledging that children were in need of certain levels of protection, generally, including sport, to ensure safety and happiness in the unique stages of development during childhood. Concurrently, many physical educators, teachers, medical professionals and child development experts in North America believed that youth programs should stress involvement and development of sport skills rather than the competitive nature of sport (Murphy, 1999; Berryman, 1975).

By the late 1950's, the values of sport were seen to far outweigh the negative effects on youth, as sport increasingly became a prominent part of Canadian male culture.

With the teenage culture of juvenile delinquency and advocacy for general freedom in Canada during this time, the inclination in the sporting environment was to focus on and promote the positive values associated with sport. Financial support for recreation development programs, physical education programs, and sports/recreation facilities became available across the country as club programs for youth sport involvement increased at a dramatic pace (Paton. 1975). Adult involvement with youth sport in roles such as coaching and administration grew at this time to meet the demand for competitive sport programs for children and youth (Donnelly, 2000; Hall et al, 1991; Redmond, 1985).

At the same time as sport and recreation were growing at the community level, amateur sport at the provincial and national levels was becoming increasingly popular. A dramatic upsurge in the number of Canadian sport associations governing amateur sport involvement can be linked to the increased involvement of government at the federal, provincial, and municipal levels. The number of National Sport Organizations increased twofold between 1950 and 1970 (Redmond, 1985). This had a profound effect on the level of youth club sport involvement, as many of these governing bodies began to take control of youth sport programs, increasing opportunities for youth to become involved in highly competitive sport.

Youth involvement in club sport was an integral part of leisure activity by the 1970's. Service clubs such as the Kinsmen, Lions, and Optimists were financially involved in youth sport by contributing to the development of parks and sporting facilities (Wankel and Mummery, 1996). Increased exposure to high levels of sport through the media (i.e., television) and marketing campaigns emphasising the

competitive nature of sport, further fuelled youth involvement. Sport organizations continued to stratify their levels of competitiveness for children and youth to meet the growing demands of the population. Focus on a win-at-all-costs mentality was quickly being instilled in the general population with increased involvement in sport at a young age.

During the 1980's there was a significant increase in the number of elite sport clubs available for youth competitors. This was especially true of Olympic sports that highlighted competitive involvement at a young level, such as skiing, skating, aquatic sports, gymnastics, and track and field (Macintosh, 1996). A 1988 national survey indicated that 42% of males and 37% of females between 10 and 14 years of age reported participation in a competitive club sport at least once a week (Stephens and Craig, 1990). This is indicative of more highly organized programs meeting the demands of both parents and sport organizations for increased skill development and higher levels of competitive performance (Wankel and Mummery, 1996). As sport became an integral part of Canadian life, professionalisation of coaching and sports administration continued to emphasize involvement at all levels.

By 1992, 45% of Canadians between the ages of 10 and 15 were involved in a competitive club sport at least once a week, often in more than one sport (Statistics Canada, 2000). This points to the importance Canadians have placed on competitive sporting activities for the youth of our nation. Clubs supportive of competitive sport for all ages were a part of almost every community across the country by the 1980's due to the infusion of money by the federal government into grassroots sports (Rodgers, 1985). Perceived benefits such as improved health, improved self esteem, development of

positive peer groups, and reduced rates of youth delinquency motivated adults to continue to expand youth sport programs in order to reap the benefits (Canadian Heritage, 2000).

High performance youth sport

While growth in competitive club sport programs was important for the general involvement of youth in physical activity, youth participation in high performance sport was also growing at a dramatic rate. Early in the development of youth club sport, elite levels of play were an integral part of sport for children. The American Association for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation defined highly competitive sport as:

Any athletic activity which involves a considerable amount of leisure time of the youngster in formalised practice, which encourages extensive attendance by adult spectators, which is limited to the outstanding players, and which involves selection of winners on state, regional, or national basis (AAHPER, 1952, p. 423).

It is apparent even in early definitions of elite sport that this level of competitiveness imposed the hyper-competitive rationale of the adult world on children in a highly organized manner. Dubois (1986) argues that competitive sport becomes meaningful and valuable simply by the act of engaging in it with proper spirit. However, inherent in this pursuit is the quest for the ultimate prize, self-adulation, and often the dehumanisation of one's opponent. These aspects of youth competitive sport are too often socialised as part of a youth's involvement in sport at the elite level.

Competitive sport for youth has developed exponentially over the past 50 years. While almost every sport has elite levels of competition, several sports have supported

the establishment of youth participation at very high levels. In particular, sports such as gymnastics, figure skating, diving, swimming, hockey, and tennis involve child elite athletes conforming to the standards of the adult win-at-all-costs competitive attitude.

As early as 1948, Barbara Ann Scott showed the world that her petite form was capable of performing unique figure skating manoeuvres, helping her to win an Olympic Gold medal. The world was mesmerized by the 'doll-like' figure who was capable of performing such athletic feats (Ryan, 1995). The following Olympics another youth, a 13-year-old swimmer, demonstrated to the world the possibility of extraordinary athletic talent at a very young age (Cantelon, 1981). Probably the most significant and visible shift in the sporting culture of youth high performance athletes³ was in the sport of gymnastics. In 1972, Olga Korbut of the USSR amazed the gymnastics world with her talented compact figure. Four years later, the sporting world met Nadia Comaneci, a 14-year-old Romanian gymnast who astoundingly scored seven perfect 10's (Ryan, 1995). She confirmed to the world that youth had a place in elite sport.

In the past 25 years of competitive sport, youth involvement at extremely competitive levels has increased exponentially. Disciplines such as gymnastics, figure skating, and diving have increasingly stressed an infantile morphology as advantageous for performing the difficult manoeuvres and reaching the elite levels of performance (Creff, 1984). The average profile of Olympic female gymnasts in 1968 was 18.6 years of age, five foot three inches tall and 110 pounds. By 1992, the average gymnast was 15.7 years of age, four feet nine inches tall and weighed only 83 pounds (Wilson, 1997).

³ The Canadian federal government defined a high performance (elite) athlete as: "A person of high skill level seriously committed to sport belonging to national and/or provincial sport organisations through team or club and heavily involved in competition having attained high levels through intensive training, skill, technical development, and competitive success." (Cadieux, 1992)

The professionalisation of coaching and sport administration in Canada directly coincides with an increase in the number of children/youth participating in high performance sport. In 1971, the Coaching Association of Canada was formed in response to the criticism of children's sport programs and the lack of 'qualified' coaches (Macintosh, 1988). Its development corresponded with Canada's mission to increase prestige through the accomplishment of elite athletes on the international scene. More opportunities became available for youth to become involved in high levels of competition with the increased number of certified coaches. The push to identify talented young athletes who could be moulded into future Olympians was an important component of the coaching certification program.

Increasingly over time a competitive emphasis has been placed on youth athletes. This has gone relatively unchallenged since sporting success is considered by most supporters of high performance competition to have extensive positive psychological and physiological effects. Increased self-efficacy, discipline, and enhanced self-confidence have been important benefits attached to the development of high performance youth sport. However, detrimental effects associated with elite levels of competition have called into question this phenomenon of the decreasing age of many high performance athletes (Nash, 1987).

Canadian Federal Government Involvement in Sport –Brief overview 1900-1960

Increased involvement in sport over the past several decades by the federal government is connected to the state's development of its role in all social contexts. The federal government attempted early in sport development to advance its own agenda by using sport as an instrument of social cohesion, economic development, promotion of foreign policy, and social development (health and welfare). Further, it has been apparent in the policy documents produced by the federal government that sport is viewed as an ideal vehicle to foster a healthier nation, encourage more physically active youth, and develop national prestige through augmented athletic performance on the international scene.

Lord Strathcona brought about the earliest association of government and physical activity through the education system in 1909. The *Strathcona Trust Fund* was set up to encourage provincial programs in school physical education curricula by allotting money to programs emphasising physical activity (Paton, 1975). Funding of this program did not involve direct government participation, as Lord Strathcona was the sole financial proprietor; however, government departments were involved in the distribution of the funds. The aim of the program was to encourage the physical fitness of young boys as preparation for military involvement (Morrow et al., 1989). Despite its education-oriented purpose, it was obvious even at this early stage of government involvement that the physical fitness of the nation was of importance to the state. However, the general population was not enticed to participate in physical activity by this movement.

Significant interest in the physical condition of the general population gained momentum again in the 1930's, compelling the federal government to consider action on

this issue. The provision of fitness and sport to this point had not been considered a vital need of Canadians, and thus had not been tied directly to the government's socio-political agenda. However, many government officials considered early on in the development of sport programs that fitness and sport could be tied to the right to work and the right to health. The *Dominion Youth Training Act* was developed in 1937 to encourage occupational training and, after 1939, to provide industrial training for war work (Howell & Howell, 1969). The ideology underlying this act was concern over the demoralization and employability of workless youth (Harvey, Beamish, and Defrance, 1993a). Politicians labelled this a problem of 'forced idleness', thus the primary focus of this Act was exercise, health, and employability. While federal and provincial government involvement was integral to its creation, the impetus for its inception arose more from concern over occupational readiness than physical fitness, further referencing the government's role as supportive of gainful pursuits rather than recreational activities (Harvey, 1988). However, reference to fitness in the Act proved that it was an issue worthy of federal government initiatives.

Into the 1940's sport on the international scene was growing in popularity and the ideals of physical fitness were spreading across the country. Substantial recognition of the importance of physical activity as a government venture was realised with the enactment of the *National Physical Fitness Act* (NPFA) in 1943, which was designed to encourage physical fitness and recreation for Canadians (Macintosh, Bedeck, and Franks, 1987). The act was controversial in nature due to its stringent design. Sport organisations were uncertain regarding the range of actions allowable within its narrow parameters. It was rescinded in 1954 due to procedural problems concerning its

confining structure; however, physical fitness remained an important issue for federal action (Paraschak, 1978).

In 1950, a series of meetings held with the existing National Sport Governing Bodies⁴ led to the formation of the Canadian Sports Advisory Council (CSAC) (Redmond, 1985; Macintosh, et al., 1987). This Council, representing all major sports and recreation governing bodies, acted in an advocacy role to promote the involvement of the federal government in sport. The issue of the declining fitness of Canadians came to the forefront as a concern of the CSAC (Paton, 1975), resulting in extensive research and lobbying of governmental departments for financial and moral support. In addition, involvement of the Canadian Medical Association would force steps toward government action in the areas of sport and physical fitness (Cosentino and Howell, 1971). Recognition of the poor fitness levels of the general population, coupled with the highly publicized weak international performance of Canada's amateur athletes, at this time, prompted the federal government to redefine its involvement in sport (Harvey and Proulx, 1988). Realisation that a feeble showing in international competition, in particular men's ice hockey, was bringing loss of prestige and prominence for Canada on the world scene convinced the federal government to see how sport initiatives and larger political and social goals were connected. Subsequently, by the end of the 1950's the federal government began to make recommendations that reflected its own motives for an association with sport. Political advocates of federal government involvement in sport emphasised its importance in safeguarding public order, improving the physical fitness of the population, and most importantly the assertion of national prestige (Harvey and

⁴ National organisations controlling sport were originally called National Sport Governing Bodies until the change was made to the current title National Sport Organisations (NSO)

Proulx, 1988). These factors were important in guiding the federal government to formulate consistency concerning what form state intervention would take. As well, by asserting politically useful goals that were in line with social policy objectives, government involvement in sport was justified to political-sport adversaries as a necessary form of social intervention.

III. Theoretical and Practical Justification

Within many historical reviews of federal government involvement in sport (e.g. Anderson, 1974; Hallett, 1987; West, 1973), analyses of the greater social structure and cultural milieu in which sport functions have largely been secondary. Those that have looked at the social significance of federal policy for sport (e.g. Harvey and Cantelon, 1988; Harvey 1988; Macintosh, Bedeck, and Franks, 1987) have failed to look at the involvement of youth as an important group, particularly in discussing high performance youth athletes as a group in need of certain levels of protection and attention.

Donnelly argues that, "responses to social change and the development of social policy for sport need to be based upon researched evidence" (2000, p. 167). In this analysis of federal sport policies, the perceived social context and intervening social variables affecting youth in high performance sport will be identified through the legitimations (rationale for policy) and attributions (actions based on the rationale) included within these policies.

Youth in high performance sport are susceptible to various degrees of harm and exploitation. Increasingly, concerns for youth in elite level sport have been addressed in the media and academic literature (i.e., Ryan, 1995; Donnelly, 1999, 2000). The dropout

rate of youth in sport has increased dramatically over the past several decades as sport has become increasingly competitive and less emphasis has been placed on the enjoyment of sport. Coakley (1992) argues that sport participation “has become a developmental dead end” (p. 273) for youth when they no longer feel as though they have meaningful control over their own lives, and in turn reject participation in high levels of sport. To enhance the opportunities for youth in sport and increase the attractiveness of competitive sport for youth, progress needs to be taken to improve the quality of sport programming and ensure healthy, safe, and fun sport experiences for youth. This progression towards more dependable competitive sport programming is possible through the development of sport policy initiatives that promote, reinforce, and employ healthy and beneficial experiences for youth in competitive sport.

Currently the structure of the high performance sport system is an unregulated environment where athletes are expected to devote themselves to the ultimate goal of winning and continually demonstrate a strong work ethic. This in itself may have underlying problematic issues; however, potential problems are further enhanced when children and youth in subsidiary positions are those involved in high performance sport. Kirby et al. (2000) purport that the regulations, laws, and policies which should offer the rights and avenues of redress are non-existent, for the most part, in the sporting environment. “This disempowering structure then sets the stage for exploitation and silence” (Kirby et al., 2000, p.26).

Problematic attitudes such as “children play sports to entertain adults”, “adults must organize sport for youth”, and “child athletes are miniature adults and should be treated the same”, have grown as competitive sport for youth has developed. The ‘Bill of

Rights for Young Athletes' developed by Martens and Seefeldt (see Appendix B) acknowledges a child's rights in sport (1979). While this document presents important philosophic guidelines for children in competitive sport, it acknowledges no direct action towards youth elite athletes. In 1978, the House of Commons tabled Bill C-204, *An Act Respecting the Rights for Children*, presenting more behavioural guidelines for youth, however this bill did not include mention of sport participation. The 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child contains a number of Articles which, while not directly related to high performance sport, are regularly violated in children's high performance sport (Kidd and Donnelly, 2000; David, 1993b). With this increasing understanding of problems youth face in competitive sport, it is imperative to enhance the limited amount of action that has been taken to ensure the rights and protection of youth elite athletes.

The connecting of high performance sport involvement to child labour issues has raised some debate over the past decade. Various authors have called for the protection of athletes' and children's rights through labour laws applied to sport (i.e., Cantelon, 1981; Beamish and Borowy, 1988; David, 1993a; Donnelly, 1993, 1997). Further, Donnelly has cited the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television, and Radio Artists (ACTRA) as a progressive organization that has recognised the need for protection of youth through labour policies in its collective agreement (1997). The agreement reflects issues such as working conditions, schedules of work, and dangerous work (i.e., stunts). These issues are comparable to those faced by youth athletes in various sports (i.e., gymnastics). Federal government policy action that directly relates to protection of youth athletes not only advances its commitment to respecting the rights of children, it also

allows government to be proactive in acknowledging the significance of safe and healthy sport in the lives of youth.

Chapter 2 - Research Framework

I. Research Problem

The problem addressed in this research is:

What process(es), rationale(s) and strategy(ies) might federal government policy initiatives include when addressing the issues arising in relation to high performance youth sport?

This problem was addressed through four sub-problems, which were explored through various measures:

- 1) What are the process(es), legitimation(s) (rationale) and the attribution(s) (strategies for action) of federal government sport policies (1961-2000) in relation to youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes?
- 2) What structure currently exists within Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique (GCG) in relation to youth elite athletes?
 - a) What policies currently exist in the GCG that guide behaviours relating to youth elite athletes?
 - b) What process is currently used in the generation of rules/policies within GCG?
 - c) How, if at all, are athletes involved in the generation of behavioural guidelines?
 - d) What issues have arisen within this organization that might be addressed through the existence of a policy relating to youth elite athletes?
 - e) What legitimations and attributions are seen to be relevant to those affecting policy?
- 3) What issues are relevant to those affected by policy (i.e., coaches and athletes)?
 - a) What issues have arisen pertinent to those affected by policy that might be addressed through the existence of a policy relating to youth elite athletes?
 - b) What legitimations and attributions are relevant to those affected by policy?

- c) What process would they see being relevant for the development of policy?
- 4) How are the proposed process(es), emerging legitimization(s), and attribution(s) for the development of federal sport policies pertaining to youth elite athletes reflective of academic/activist approaches concerning youth sport?

II. Data Collection and Analysis

Sub-problem #1

What are the process(es), legitimization(s) (rationale) and the attribution(s) (strategies) of federal government sport policies (1961-2000) in relation to youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes?

In order to examine this sub-problem, a critical examination of federal sport policy documents (1961-2000) was employed. Interpretive and critical methods of policy analysis differ from mainstream analytical frameworks as critical analyses are used to elicit meanings about social policies. These methods incorporate discursive and interpretive elements that aid in the discovery of values and goals critical to the formulation of social policy objectives (Weimer, 1998). Policies are used to direct, redirect, or constrain social, political, and economic behaviour, thus becoming an important tool of social change. Rational analytic frameworks have primarily been used to analyse policies in sport management (Amis and Burton, 1996). While these methods are widely accepted practices for analysing policy in a highly structured, systematic fashion, flaws exist in these methodologies due to the constraining manner in which policy action and orientation are viewed. Rational analytic frameworks do not allow for the identification of specific groups, including the rationales and specific policy actions directed at these groups. It is more suitable to analyse policy from a holistic perspective,

allowing for an interpretive approach to understanding the foundation and assumptions underlying policy action.

Critical methods of policy analysis “have been advocated as a way to clarify the parameters of policy problems and thereby improve policy formulation and implementations” (Chalip, 1995, p. 1). A modified version of Chalip’s (1995, 1996) Critical Policy Analysis framework has been used to determine the meanings of federal sport policy objectives, thus eliciting information in regard to sub-problem #1. This method, derived from critical theory, allowed for questioning and appraising the dominant conceptions of social problems and the resultant social policies. A combination of the legitimations critique and attributions critique was used to examine the discourse surrounding fifteen (15) federal sport policy documents (1961-2000). The legitimations critique allows for an examination of policy goals to determine the rationale underlying the development of policies. The attributions critique focuses on the presumed cause of social problems that direct policy creation, by identifying recommended actions towards addressing the problem. This analysis thus allows for the systematic identification of policies/recommendations pertaining to specific groups. Chalip argues that this type of analysis “advances social knowledge and ethical debate as a consequence of the resulting confrontation among varied interpretations” (p. 312), and thus is likely to challenge the dominant social and political ideologies.

After considering the existing literature that has examined federal sport policy documents (i.e., Anderson, 1974; Hallett, 1987; Harvey 1988; Harvey and Cantelon, 1988; Macintosh, 1996; Macintosh, Bedeck, and Franks, 1987; Paraschak, 1978), directional propositions were formed which include:

1. Youth have largely been ignored as an important group in the sport delivery system.
2. A greater focus has been placed on the development of high performance sport in general, and concerns/support specific to elite youth athletes have not been addressed.
3. The existing literature on the problems of youth in high performance sport (i.e., Chan and Micheli, 1998; Creff, 1985; David, 1993a, 1993b; Donnelly, 1993, 2000; Martens, & Seefeldt, 1979; Ryan, 1995) has not been used to develop rationales for federal policy action.

Each Critical Analysis of a federal sport policy document followed a specific procedure to ensure consistency, which supported the collection of more accurate information. This procedure involved analysing a single document at a time using the following steps (see Appendix C):

- 1) Preliminary overview of document
 - i. Identify authors
 - ii. Identify key persons with input
 - iii. Identify general purpose of document
 - iv. Identify process underlying document
- 2) Identify specific policy(ies)/recommendation(s)/programme(s) related to:
 - a) Youth
 - b) Elite Athletes
 - c) Youth Elite Athletes
- 3) Identify legitimization(s) for each policy identified
- 4) Identify attribution(s) for each policy identified

All recommendations/policies relating to youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes were placed in the appropriate section of framework. The corresponding legitimations and attributions were noted in relation to each recommendation. Sections of each document (i.e., preamble) that did not include recommendations or policies, but related to youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes were noted in a comments section of the policy analysis framework. All recommendations in relation to youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes was used to formulate the historical understanding of how each group has been included/excluded from government sport policy initiatives from 1961-2000. Comments were included in the analysis if they pertained directly to a specified legitimization or attribution for one of the groups identified. Findings for each of the documents are included in the historical framework of rationales for federal government involvement in sport, in relation to the existing literature of the associated time period. Similarities and differences in the process(es), legitimization(s) and attribution(s) of all documents are discussed to formulate a historical account of policy development in relation to youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes.

Sub-problem #2

What structure currently exists within Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique (GCG) in relation to youth elite athletes?

- a) What policies currently exist in GCG that guide behaviours relating to youth elite athletes?*
- b) What process is currently used in the generation of rules/policies within GCG?*
- c) How, if at all, are athletes involved in the generation of behavioural guidelines?*

- d) *What issues have arisen within this organization that might be addressed through the existence of a policy relating to youth elite athletes?*
- f) *What legitimations and attributions are seen to be relevant to those affecting policy?*

Interviews were conducted with three key policy officials (1 professional administrator, 2 volunteer administrators) within Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique to identify the types of policies (formal and informal) that currently exist, for youth elite athletes, and thus guide behaviour within this organisation. Further, the interviews sought to investigate any issues that have arisen that would be addressed through the existence of a policy for elite youth athletes (see Appendix D). Interview candidates were specifically selected due to their extensive involvement in the organisation. The information obtained in the interviews aided in the development of a contemporary representation of key rationales, attributions, and appropriate policy development processes for youth high performance athletes. The information collected is discussed in the context of the data collected in the critical policy analysis to identify similarities and differences with this information.

The interview phase allowed the researcher to immerse herself directly in the respondent's subjective world, evoking candid responses pertaining to the social problems considered in the development of policies. Ultimately, the interview allowed for a more interpersonal environment for the solicitation of opinions, perceptions, justifications, and motivations for policy development. Patton (1990) suggests that the purpose of interviews is to assess the perspective of the person being interviewed, in order to determine opinions and views that cannot be directly observed. While the

Critical Policy Analysis allowed for a greater understanding of policies related to youth in sport historically, the analysis is not fully representative of the contentious issues and demands addressed in the current policies of a sample organisation. Interviews allowed for a more informed perspective when determining the current process, legitimations(s) and attribution(s) related to policy development for youth in high performance sport from the point of view of an NSO administrator/volunteer.

Interview candidates were contacted initially through a letter of intent explaining the research, requesting an interview, and ensuring confidentiality. Candidates were then contacted by phone to set up an interview time and forwarded a copy of the questions for the interview. All of the personal interviews were conducted at a mutually agreed upon and private location or by phone. Each interview was simultaneously tape-recorded with the consent of the respondent and documented through notes for further in-depth evaluation (Patton, 1990). Transcribed information was re-submitted to interview candidates to ensure accurate information and allow for interviewees to comment further. All interview tape recordings and transcribed information is accessible to only the researcher to ensure confidentiality. All material from these interviews will be retained and kept confidential by the primary researcher and will be used for academic purposes.

The interviewing process is critical to the success of the research, and therefore to ensure interview questions were worded clearly, they were open-ended, neutral, singular, non-dichotomous, and succinct. Due to the limited experience of the interviewer, questions were reviewed by the thesis committee to ensure that the questions were representative of the material and would allow interviewees to respond in a manner reflective of his/her full repertoire of possible responses (Patton, 1990). Further, three

trial interviews were performed (1 provincial level administrator, 1 national level athlete, 1 provincial-national level coach) to ensure clarity and accuracy of questions. These trial interviews were performed using the same process as the actual interviews, with candidates not in the subject pool, but having similar qualifications to those within the subject pool.

Information collected from the interviews was analysed to further develop a contemporary understanding of the current policy structure of a sample NSO. The process, legitimations, and attributions identified in these interviews were related back to historical federal sport policy information obtained from the critical policy analysis. The information was also related to sub-problem #3 (those affected by GCG policy) and used in the formulation of a model for future development of policy for youth elite athletes.

The following directional propositions were formulated from the literature and the researcher's knowledge of the sport of gymnastics in relation to sub-problem #2:

1. GCG has specific policies and procedures that relate to youth elite athletes.
2. GCG has a specific process of policy development that involves athletes in the formulation of policies.
3. Specific issues have arisen within the organization that might be addressed through the existence of a policy relating to youth elite athletes.
4. GCG administrators will identify legitimations and attributions relevant to youth sport policy

Sub-problem #3

What issues are relevant to those affected by policy (i.e., coaches and athletes)?

- a) What issues have arisen pertinent to those affected by policy that might be addressed through the existence of a policy relating to youth elite athletes?*
- b) What legitimization(s) and attribution(s) are relevant to those affected by policy?*
- c) What process would they see as being relevant for the development of a youth sport policy?*

Interviews were conducted with significant individuals representing youth in high performance sport (i.e., 2 male elite gymnasts, 2 female elite gymnasts, 2 male elite gymnastic coaches, and 2 female elite gymnastic coaches). Interviewees were randomly selected from a pool of candidates who met the criteria for participation in this study. To ensure representation from each region of Canada, candidates were divided into four sections of Canada (Ontario, Quebec, East, and West). Once an interview candidate was selected from a region, that region was excluded until all regions had been represented. Further, no candidates belonging to the same organization/club were interviewed to ensure full confidentiality and complete disclosure of information. Interviews were performed with both male and female coaches and gymnasts in order to be attentive to the possible differing perceptions due to gender. Interview candidates were selected to the candidate pool based on the following criteria:

1. Coaches: 8+ years involvement in elite level gymnastics coaching (2 Olympic Cycles); current coach of a national team member.

2. Athletes: involvement in elite level gymnastics for 4+ years⁵.

These interviews were carried out to further investigate the appropriate process for policy development, legitimations and attributions related to youth high performance athletes in federal sport policy from their perspective. These interviews were to aid in the identification of the value orientation(s) of those affected by elite youth sport policy outcomes and strategies in order to enhance policy proposals related to elite youth sport in the draft framework. The interview protocol followed the same format as in sub-problem #2.

The information obtained from these interviews was analysed concerning the perceptions of the athletes and the coaches. These perceptions will be discussed in relation to process, legitimations, and attributions cited by the GCG administrators and/or identified in the historical analysis of federal sport policies. This information has been used to develop a draft framework for a policy relating to youth elite athletes.

Directional propositions formulated in relation to this sub-problem include:

- 1) Athletes and coaches in high performance sport are aware of specific issues that have arisen that might be addressed through the existence of a policy on youth elite athletes.
- 2) Coaches and athletes will provide feedback for legitimations and attributions they consider pertinent to the development of a policy for youth elite athletes.
- 3) Athletes and coaches will have specific ideas about the process for policy formation and want to be involved in this process.

⁵ Not all criteria for selection of athlete interview candidates have been disclosed as they are easily identifiable and many are under the age of 18. Therefore, for confidentiality reasons these criteria have been withheld.

Sub-problem #4

How are the proposed process(es), emerging legitimization(s), and attribution(s) for the development of federal sport policies pertaining to youth elite athletes reflective of academic/activist approaches concerning youth sport?

The final stage of this research process was to solicit the opinions of academic experts/activists in relation to the development of a youth sport policy. These academics/activists were chosen due to their interest and informed opinion in this area⁶. The information collected from the policy analysis and interviews was used to determine rationale(s) and strategy(ies) for youth in high performance sport. This framework incorporates key components from the research (process(es), legitimations(s), attribution(s)) relevant to the development of social policies addressing concerns/support for youth in high performance sport. A draft framework for the development of a policy reflecting the data collected from the previous three sub-problems was submitted to these academic/experts. These key persons were sent a copy of the developed framework from the collated data, with specific questions pertaining to the significance of the information based on their informed opinion. They were asked to review the model and provide feedback via electronic mail regarding the model and the information collected in this study. This feedback is presented in relation to the process, rationale(s) and strategy(ies) that federal government policy initiatives might include to address the issues arising from high performance youth sport.

⁶ Jay Coakley from the University of Northern Colorado and Bruce Kidd from the University of Toronto agreed to participate as experts/activists in this process.

Directional Proposition:

1) A critique of the proposed framework for policy development by academics involved in this area of study will provide minor, but insightful additions to the youth sport policy proposal.

III. Research Assumptions

a) *Federal government sport policy initiatives should aid in protecting youth [elite] athletes from harm and exploitation.*

Youth participation in elite sport has gained somewhat controversial recognition in amateur sport. Childhood is seen as an important and unique stage of development in which children/youth are in a relatively weak position in terms of societal status, therefore requiring certain levels of protection. Children/youth who participate in high performance sport are particularly vulnerable to a wide range of problems (e.g., harassment, abuse, injury, over training) due to the pressures flowing from elite sport and the nature of power relationships existent in this domain. More specifically, children/youth are in a subsidiary position to coaches, administrators, and parents, leaving them exposed to the possibility of physiological and psychological exploitation. In the last 25 years, there has been an increasing involvement of children in intensive and specialized training, placing them in these particularly vulnerable positions (Donnelly, 1999).

b) *Concerns for the ethical nature of youth sport should be addressed as an issue of human rights more generally.*

Human rights have become an important issue in the realm of sport and society.

For example the care and protection of children has become a major concern with increased publicity of legal cases such as sexual harassment and abuse involving child athletes (Donnelly, 1999). As discussed previously, federal sport policy is assumed to align with social policy. Therefore, federal sport policy should address the issue of human rights as an important social policy objective tied to sport. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) states in the preamble that Children, because of their vulnerability, need special care and protection (New Internationalist, 1997). It also emphasises the need for legal and other protection of the child.

c) *Policies should be developed to maintain certain standards of conduct for the enhancement of youth elite sport.*

The main role of the federal government is to represent the broad public interest in the sport system. Recognising that sport and physical activity are desirable ends in themselves and are an integral part of the individual quality of life for Canadians, the best interest of the federal government should be to proactively ensure the utmost health and safety in this sporting environment. This end will be attained through the development of policies reflective of the needs and interests of those in the most vulnerable positions, of society, such as youth elite athletes.

IV. Delimitations and Associated Limitations

- a) *The study has been delimited to include federal sport policy documents from 1961 to 2000.*

Federal government involvement in sport has been apparent to a limited extent since 1909, however a significant event in the history of federal government involvement in sport came with the 1961 passing of Bill C-131, the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act*. This Act led to federal government involvement in fitness, and more importantly to this study, amateur sport. While for the most part, little direct federal action was taken initially following the 1961 document, it remains an important historical event in the enactment of federal initiatives towards sport more generally in Canada. As well, the occurrences in sport such as the Canada Games, which began in 1967, and the youth movement of the 1960's, are important to our understanding of federal sport policy action towards selected groups such as youth.

Federal government policy documents have been chosen for the purposes of this research because the federal government is concerned primarily with high performance sport. The exclusion of provincial and municipal sport initiatives does not allow for a complete appreciation of government involvement in sport. While provincial/territorial and municipal governments have a part to play in policies related to elite sport at the community and provincial/territorial levels, federal jurisdiction has been central to the development of policies for high performance athletes.

- b) *This study has been delimited by the use of the policy analysis framework proposed by L. Chalip (1995, 1996).*

The framework is used in a socio-political context to elicit specific information regarding youth as a crucial group worthy of attention in the federal policy documents. This analysis helped to systematically identify policy statements that relate to youth and elite athletes' involvement in sport, and more specifically youth in high performance sport. The chosen framework aids in the development of a clear, concise understanding of historical policies related to high performance youth athletes. This critical method of policy analysis helps to identify the dominant conceptions, social problems, and the resultant social policies related to a particular group. The analysis serves as a background for understanding why these policies were created, and allows for further investigation of key issues relating to policies specific to [elite] youth athletes. Rational policy analysis methods may be useful in understanding the design of policies, however critical policy analysis methods allow for the identification of specific legitimations and attributions. This is important to this research as legitimations develop the key rationales for policy development and attributions develop the ascribed action for policy based on these rationales. This policy analysis method can only focus on select information through the analysis and thus not allow for a complete description of policy initiatives towards youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes.

- c) *Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique has been chosen as a sample organization due to the extensive involvement of youth at elite levels of competition in gymnastics. This case study was further delimited through the inclusion of only one discipline, artistic gymnastics, in the current research.*

This organization serves as an important example of the current policies for one NSO and how it is affected by federal sport policy initiatives. While this sample

organization is not meant to be representative of other NSO's, it serves as an important case study for future policy development in keeping with the exploratory design of this study. With the recent controversies visible in artistic gymnastics for girls (Ryan, 1995; Wilson, 1997), it serves as an example of an organisation's approach to dealing with these issues in comparison to federal government initiatives. The use of Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique also aids in highlighting some of the policy issues related to youth in high performance sport since elite female artistic gymnasts are primarily under the age of 18. Elite male artistic gymnasts who are primarily between the ages of 18 and 25, present a potential limitation to this research since they fall outside the operational definition of youth used for this study.

- d) *Specific persons directly involved in the development of policies within Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique, and those persons directly affected by federal sport policies have been chosen as interview candidates in order to solicit specific information regarding policy recommendations.*

These key persons were chosen specifically to ascertain opinions and information in order to obtain a clearer sense of policy legitimations and attributions. The exploratory nature of this study supports the use of a limited number of interviews in order to solicit clear, relevant opinions from those interviewed. Interviews with significant policy makers were used to discern policy legitimations and attributions from persons who operate from a policy administration point of view. These interviews allow for a more complete development of rationales for policy actions and for the development of strategies significant to federal sport policies pertaining to youth elite athletes. The interviews with athletes and coaches allow for the development of rationales and

legitimations from an important stakeholder perspective. Furthermore, the selected academics/activists aid in the formulation of a more complete exploration of the proposed policy process.

- e) *Interviews were conducted with both male and female coaches and athletes, however questions were not focused specifically on the experiences of male versus female gymnasts.*

Interview questions were worded clearly and concisely to ensure accurate collection of information. Despite the fact that many of the concerns/issues in relation to elite gymnastics pertain primarily to females, questions did not explicitly explore this gender difference. Interviewees were allowed to speak about either male or female gymnastics depending on their preference. This may have limited responses that would highlight gendered differences on these issues, since several of the candidates spoke primarily about female gymnastics and did not address men's gymnastics where concerns of this nature are not as apparent.

- f) *The researcher's interest and close involvement in youth elite sport not only offers a unique perspective for framing the analysis, it allows for a strong psychological understanding of the material presented in the policies (see Appendix E).*

Recognizing that this enhanced knowledge of gymnastics and youth sport might be a limiting factor to the researcher's critical analysis of the literature, objectivity is enhanced by maintaining a strict framework for the analysis and clearly worded, well-developed interview questions. The nature of this study allows for a well-rounded exploration of the literature and related information pertaining to youth and elite athletes,

thus enhancing the perspective of the researcher. The insider position of the researcher within the gymnastics community allowed for greater access to information regarding the interview candidates. Interviewees that were familiar with the researcher tended to disclose information more readily, whereas those who were not familiar with the researcher were not as forthcoming. The use of researchers/academics in the of area of youth sport policy for reviewing the developed framework, was another method for ensuring that any visible biases or oversights on the part of the researcher have been identified and addressed.

Chapter 3 – Canadian Federal Sport Policy (1961-2000)

I. Critical Policy Analysis and Related Historical Concepts

Government involvement in amateur sport became an important issue beginning the late 1950's. The following section will outline selected historical events in relation to sport policy, integrated with the critical policy analysis of federal government sport documents from 1961-2000. Issues such as national unity, health and fitness, and public accountability have developed as issues tied to government involvement in sport. The analysis considered three distinct groups: youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes. For the most part youth have not been designated as a special target group. Rationales for federal government involvement in sport have driven policy recommendations in a direction that provides the greatest political payoff for government, often without regard for many groups' needs.

In 1960, the Rt. Honourable John Diefenbaker made a speech regarding the involvement of Canadians in sport, stating that necessary action would be taken to encourage the involvement of youth in amateur sport (Hallett, 1981; Paraschak, 1978; Westland, 1979). Subsequently, the first piece of legislation was developed that committed the government to involvement in sport and physical activity in the lives of Canadians, linking fitness and elite sport for the first time. The end product of these efforts, Bill C-131 the *Fitness and Amateur Sport Act* (FASA), was passed in September of 1961. The enactment of this bill was an important development for fitness and amateur sport in Canada. Money was committed towards grants for National Sport Organizations (NSO), scholarships for professional study, physical activity at the

provincial/territorial and municipal levels, and technical and training aids for sport (Cosentino and Howell, 1971; Macintosh et al., 1987; Paraschak, 1978; Paton, 1975).

The enactment of Bill C-131 did little, initially, to improve fitness and sport programming for the general population. Few people were able to elicit a clear, concise idea of how to accomplish the goals put forth in the Act. The federal government annually allocated Five million dollars to agencies, organisations, and institutions interested in furthering the objects of the Act to improve programs in fitness and amateur sport. However, less than half was actually spent initially, revealing further barriers to the enactment of policies developed from the legislation. The Act noted no specific interest in or recognition of particular groups of individuals; it was worded broadly to encompass all Canadians. By the mid 1960's many NSO's had improved their programs and organizational administration to reap the financial benefits offered by the FASA program. Federal government staff also recognised the need to engage full-time professional staff in these organizations to realise the full potential of the program (Department of National Health and Welfare, 1969; Macintosh and Whitson, 1990).

One debate that emerged from the sweeping framework of Bill C-131, in the years following the implementation of the Act, was over the bottom up (i.e., grass roots) versus the top down (i.e., elite) model of development of sport and recreation in Canada. Initially, many key state officials involved in the implementation of the FASA assumed that promoting mass fitness and sport programs would produce improved Canadian performances in international competition. The Act was designed to allow for the amalgamation of mass sport/fitness programs and elite sport. However, further into the decade this concept was becoming increasingly difficult to hold together. At the broader

level, the federal government was finding increased political resistance towards efforts to influence and change the social framework through its sport cost sharing agreements with the provinces. The FASA made no reference to any particular groups, including youth, despite the rhetoric of political activism and influence of radical ideals promulgated by the youth movement at this time (Owran, 1996). Additionally, focus on national unity had become such a major issue on the government's agenda that state intervention in all areas of social policy focused on promoting nationalism. Many politicians believed that with a redefinition of the state's role in sport, the federal government could directly use sport to enhance national unity (Macintosh et al., 1987).

Sports officials and coaches, sports reporters and politicians placed increased pressure on the government to financially assist high-performance athletes. Elite sport advocates believed athletes needed more time training and competing, as well as access to greater coaching resources, in order to be competitive on the international scene. The federal government validated this interest and involvement in elite sport by linking elite sports to the government's current social policy objectives (i.e., national unity), in order to aggressively promote elite sport in the late 1960's (Macintosh, 1988).

While the FASA had been very influential in promoting fitness and amateur sport within the organisations that took advantage of cost sharing agreements, continued disputes over federal-provincial jurisdiction created great obstacles to the full enactment of the shared policy objectives. Further, the federal/provincial cost sharing programs were not accomplishing the desired goal of stimulating mass participation in sport and fitness. Although the legislation had committed the government to the amelioration of low fitness levels of Canadians and reflected changes in attitude towards amateur sport

involvement, the general phrasing of the legislation indicated the government's role as merely supportive of existing agencies and organizations (Macintosh et al., 1987).

In 1967, as part of the centennial celebrations, various groups representing the nation sought extended programming for sport. New program grants were made to special groups at this time such as paraplegic sport teams, and Indian and Inuit groups. Despite the upsurge of youth in the nation at this time, as a direct result of the 'Baby Boom', no efforts were made by the federal government to involve youth in sport and physical recreations programs. There were no initiatives taken during the 1960's that suggested youth were important benefactors of sport. The youth culture of juvenile delinquency was brought to the forefront of the attention of Canadians during this time, yet government did not promote sport as a means of deterring such activities. Despite a belief by the general population in the positive values of sport involvement, teenage popular culture was shifting to an emphasis on material goods and artificial pleasures, and sport and physical activity were not as important to youth as a leisure activity (Owran, 1996).

The efforts put forth for sport in the 1960's were important to the future of federal sport policy direction. Focussing on national unity and promoting the successes of major events such as the 1967 Canada Games were important in selling the significance of sport for achieving federal social policy objectives. By 1968, Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau was in office asserting strong views on federalism and the importance of culturally significant activities including sport. Trudeau made good on his 1968 campaign promise to develop a task force responsible for investigating amateur sport in Canada, since he viewed sport as part of Canadian culture and important to the issue of national unity.

The 1969 federal government document, *Report of the Task Force on Sport for Canadians*, built on the philosophies developed in the 1960's that asserted that the federal political agenda would be best served through involvement primarily in elite sport. Recommendations of this report addressed all levels of sport, however high-performance sport, coaching initiatives, and the sport delivery system structures were of greatest importance (Department of National Health and Welfare, 1969). These initiatives were believed to have greater visibility and a more attractive political payoff than mass sport and fitness (Harvey and Proulx, 1988). The task force (W. Harold Rhea, Dr. Paul Wintle DesRuisseaux, Nancy Greene) appointed by Trudeau focused on sporting issues that were seen to be pertinent to Canadians, and federal government initiatives in sport that could assist in accomplishing socio-political goals relating to unity and nationalism.

Various groups were addressed in the task force report including youth. Physical education programs in the schools were viewed as an important opportunity for developing the benefits of sport such as harmonious physical development of the child, adaptation to physiological effort, and promotion of emotional stability and sociability (p. 64). Therefore, the task force emphasized that in order to accomplish these ends, age appropriate sport programs should be implemented in schools and emphasis placed on activities that had carry over for later in life, thus promoting sport as a life long pursuit.

The focal point of discussion in federal documentation at this time shifted principally towards promoting elite sport through recommendations such as the recognition of outstanding athletes by a system of awards, and promotion of teams that were worthy of strong international competition (p.68). The government was promoting equal opportunity for athletes vying for a team spot on a national team, while at the same

time asserting standards of conduct and behaviour. The task force demonstrated this commitment by stating that standards of performance and sportsmanship should be developed within each sport in order to recognise and support the performance and conduct of the athletes. These standards of conduct were to be overseen by the national team coach. This is the first effort that the federal government made to establish control mechanisms for athletes in order to promote the concepts of unity, nationalism, and international image.

Uniquely, at a time when athletes and coaches seemed to have no control over the administration of their sporting programs (Macintosh, 1987), the task force recommended that adequate representation of Olympic athletes be a part of Canadian Olympic Association (COA) committees (p.73). The task force suggested that it was important to involve fresh minds, and specifically those who had been directly involved in the experience of elite sport, to develop sound, suitable programs to counter many of the problems encountered by the COA. This was a step toward including athletes as viable members of the sporting community. Further, it was the first mention of athletes being involved in the decision-making processes; an idea that would not be realised until 30 years later.

While youth elite athletes were not recognised by the federal government as a distinct group at this time, the recognition and development of talented youth was important for sustaining an athlete base. The task force promoted the notion that developing a system of identifying and fostering talented youth would provide better opportunity for skilled young athletes to develop into future national team members. Initiative was to be taken by the National Coaching Association to develop a system of

talent identification through qualified leadership (i.e., coaches) in order to enhance the opportunities of young athletes (p.61). While this recommendation did not directly signify recognition of youth involvement at elite levels of sport, nor address any of the issues associated with youth sport involvement, it did acknowledge that youth were a part of the sporting system. Further, it acknowledged that youth were an important resource for government to use when asserting its political goals of nationalism through sport.

In 1969, P.S. Ross and Partners were commissioned to carry out a research report on physical recreation, fitness and amateur sport in Canada. The purpose of this study was to describe and assess the total sport and recreation system and the population it serves in Canada at that time. This study was also supposed to recommend a set of national objectives for recreation, fitness, and amateur sport. Many of the references in this document were in line with those objectives set out by the task force. In general, there were no policy statements or recommendations linked to youth sport or elite athletes within this document: rather it served as a cursory overview of the sporting system with much emphasis on recreation. Youth play an important role in this document, however the classification of youth in this document ranges from ages 18-25, which is outside the scope of the definition of youth for the current research. The only mention of child or adolescent programs noted that recreation is important for this group, however current programs did not meet the particular needs of this group.

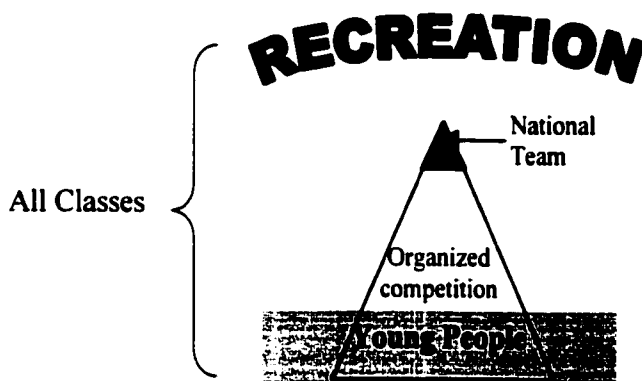
Organizations such as Sport Canada, Recreation Canada, and the Coaching Association of Canada were formed in the 1970's through the impetus of policy papers such as the *1969 Task Force Report*, the *1969 Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness, and Amateur Sport in Canada*, the *1970 Proposed Sport Policy for Canadians* and the

1971 Sport Canada/Recreation Canada. The wave of documents relating to fitness and sport at this time corresponded to the federal government's refocusing on elite sport, and its political agenda relating to national pride. The emphasis of policies and propositions made by the various groups' reports advocated a restricted scope centred on competitive excellence in the international scene (Macintosh and Bedeck, 1987).

Following numerous reports such as the *Task Force Report*, *Ross report*, and a variety of other independent studies on sports and leisure, John Munro presented A *Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians* (1970) to the House of Commons. This document was aimed at increasing participation in sports and recreational activities, and upgrading the calibre of international competitors. Recommendations concerned with high performance athletes focussed on providing financial aid for costs of training through the use of scholarships and grants-in-aid. It was important to develop high-level athletes and to provide the opportunity to continue to train at an elite level.

For the first time since government had become involved in sport, problems associated with the over competitiveness of youth sport were raised. Munro suggested in the report that this attitude of competitiveness may be reasonable for a highly professional sport, however it was not justifiable for youth sport (p.19). The focus of systematized, adult-led, structured programs for youth was viewed as problematic; emphasis at a young age should instead be on the joy of play and physical activity.

Figure 1: The Honourable John Munro's Model of Sport in Canada – *Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians* (p. 28, 1970)



Further mention of this notion was provided in the model of sport developed in the document to demonstrate the echelons of the sport system (see Figure 1). Youth were placed at the bottom level of the sporting pyramid and not integrated into competitive programs or national team involvement. This demonstrates the viewpoint that either elite athletes are not considered to be youth, or that youth are not considered part of the competitive sports structure.

John Munro sought to reorganize the federal government-sport linkages with the creation of *Sport Canada/Recreation Canada* (1971). His concept was to further increase participation in sports and recreation through the development of two new government departments, Sport Canada and Recreation Canada. This restructuring was purported to be a step towards enhancing the objectives of the *Proposed Sports Policy*. These actions were in line with the goals of the new focus of federal government intervention in sport and fitness, which included promotion of national unity, encouragement of private sponsorship, improved status in international competition, promotion of Canada's international image, and social development (Harvey, Lavoie, and Saint-Germain, 2000). Sport Canada was to oversee the development of high performance sport in the pursuit of

sporting excellence while Recreation Canada was to provide opportunities for Canadians to become involved in recreational activities and the promotion of physical fitness. The responsibility of the federal government was now more focussed on ways to develop its own social policy objectives rather than the facets of sport and recreation. From a youth perspective, the development of such organisations was beneficial to those who might pursue high performance sport, however this contradicted Munro's earlier belief that youth were to be involved in sport for the joy of physical activity and to improve sport skills for the future.

Sport Canada/Recreation Canada further acknowledged the need for financial support of elite athletes. Once again, the concepts of scholarships and grants-in-aid were reiterated as important for ensuring that athletes had the fiscal resources to train and pursue education. On the other hand, this document conceded the need for youth to become more actively involved in sports and physical activities that would express the joy of movement and health fitness. However, the general vagueness of both of these recommendations left room for the federal government to pursue its own interests in expanding its intervention into elite sport.

It became important, in the mid 70's, to redefine the nature of Sport Canada's and Recreation Canada's association with the federal government in order to establish a clear direction and a set of objectives for sport and physical activity. The efforts put forth in the development of the 1976 document *Unification of Sport* were focussed on bringing together departments that would be responsible for the sporting community. The concepts of responsibility for the sport environment as a whole, shared leadership and partnership among organisations and leaders in the field of sport at all levels were central

to the recommendations of this document. A committee (Dan Pugliese, Christopher Land, Louis Lefaive, William McEwen, Wallace Halder, and John Russell) headed by Bryce Taylor, president of the Canadian Gymnastics Federation and Director of Physical Education at York University, set out to define a direction for amateur sport in Canada. The development of new organisations at all levels of government to govern sport, and the overlapping interests of Sport Canada and the National Sport and Recreation Centre, meant a clear direction for the sport development system was necessary. The objects therein were to provide co-ordinated and planned competitive opportunities for athletes of excellence in national and international competition. Further reiterating previous recommendations to assist elite athletes and implement a co-ordinated effort, provision of technical advice, information, consultation, training and evaluation would provide for a system of recognising superior athletes and classifying them accordingly (p.9). While no effort was made in this document to stress youth and/or youth athletes, it is the first effort made to focus on the accountability of the sport federations to their athletes. This was to be done through the coordination of shared leadership and partnership among organisations and leaders in the field of sport at the national, provincial, and municipal level.

The 1976 Olympics awarded to Montreal was to be a promotion of culture, national unity, and sporting excellence. The appointment of Iona Campagnolo in 1976, as the first Minister of State responsible for Fitness and Amateur Sport, emphasised government commitment to effecting change in sport in a manner conducive to its policy objectives, thus further exerting the prominence of sport in the House of Commons. Her commitment to sport policy initiatives included increasing participation in fitness and

amateur sport, thereby improving the Canadian sport delivery system and improving the quality of sport participation for all Canadians. Campagnolo also identified that the first priority of the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport was the provision of high-performance sport and future policy objectives would support this contention (Hallett, 1981). While this focus on high performance sport was in line with enhancing social policy objectives of the federal government, it neglected important subsidiary groups, such as youth, impacted by federal actions.

Three important documents, produced in the late 1970's following the 1976 Olympic Games, related to the new direction of policy development: *Toward a National Policy on Amateur Sport: A working paper* (Campagnolo, 1977), *Toward a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation*⁷; and *Partners in Pursuit of Excellence – A National Policy on Amateur Sport* (Campagnolo, 1979). The 1977 'green paper' on sport was an important event as it was the first time a position paper of its type was tabled in the House of Commons and put forth to the sporting community for feedback. This inclusion of the sporting community was an important step by the federal government toward developing a more collaborative approach to policy development. While many organizations responded to the paper, concerns varied widely about the direction sport should take in Canada. Many responses showed contempt for the government's outright ignorance towards mass participation and its primary focus on elite sport (Macintosh and Whitson, 1990).

⁷ The 1979 *Toward a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation* has not been used in this analysis as it pertained specifically to recreation (this research is exploring elite sport), and did not address issues of youth or elite athletes.

The primary focus of the 1977 green paper on sport was to set out recommendations for policy formulation in the areas of sport administration, technical development, promotion, and other programs related to elite sport. This focus on elite sport is pervasive throughout the document with recommendations toward youth focussing on the need to foster skill in young athletes so that they can become more competitive in international competition. The 1976 Olympics brought the spectacle of Nadia Comaneci front and centre to Canadians. Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique is cited in this document as a progressive organization responding to the youth demands of the time for increased involvement in competitive levels of sport (p.6). Promotional endeavours and programs for young girls were seen in towns across the country encouraging the development of elite level youth gymnasts.

Campagnolo further reiterated the need to develop a system of identifying and fostering talented youth. She also documented the need for promotion of youth athletes in 1977 through recommendations highlighting the need to foster skill levels of youth national team members by financially supporting and encouraging them to compete internationally (p.15). This recommendation is thus legitimized as being an important tool for promoting Canada's international image. The ideals of the Eastern Bloc sport system were becoming prominent on the international scene, pressuring Canadians to perform up to the standards set forth by these countries in international competition. One of the most prominent mechanisms for achieving this end was to promote the development of youth athletes for international competition. None of the concerns over the competitiveness of sport for youth that were noted by Munro in the early 1970's were

visible in this policy documentation: such concerns were set aside in favour of more desirable federal policy initiatives such as international image.

During these initial stages of profiling high-performance sport in policy initiatives, agencies associated with sport focused on contributing to elite sport in a positive manner. The National Coaching Certification program (NCCP) was developed in 1974 and by 1978-79, thirty-six sports had developed Level 1 coaching certification programs and many organizations had higher levels developed or were in the process of developing them (Macintosh and Bedeck, 1987). Initiatives such as these helped provide the momentum for programs of mass participation in sport and further development of competitive programs with a greater number of qualified coaches. A significant number of coaches went through the NCCP programs in its early years, adding to the growing sport system. Sport clubs across the country with programs for youth increasingly had qualified coaches to promote and implement their programs.

After having seen the 1979 policy document *Partners in Pursuit of Excellence* by Iona Campagnolo, sport organizations were sceptical that their recommendations regarding the previous green paper had been taken into consideration. The objective of this policy paper was to develop a new plan for the direction of sport in Canada and to further define the federal government's role in improving of the sport delivery system. The document was to be a coordinated effort through a compilation of conferences, meetings, and interviews with individuals within the sport community. The premise of the process was to ensure appropriate national goals and standards in sport, health, and fitness were addressed. However, the lack of recommendations towards groups such as disadvantaged populations, women, and youth demonstrated the lack of commitment to

any social objectives. Further, as mass participation was almost entirely ignored in this document, despite input from the sport community to the contrary, the federal government demonstrated its priority for elite sport in order to promote its own policy objectives. While this move was important for ensuring the federal objectives of unity and nationalism were promoted, the lack of clear national goals and standards in health and fitness were considered to have given a lack of direction for sport in the future.

In 1980, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch discontinued its responsibility for recreation, which fit more appropriately within provincial jurisdictions, and focused solely on fitness and amateur sport. The federal government's task force policy papers on sport indicated its indecision over objectives (fitness and mass participation versus selective elite sport) for sport at the end of the 1970's. This left some instability as to the future of federal government involvement in sport. Finally, *A Challenge to the nation: Fitness and Amateur sport in the 80's* (Regan, 1981) was produced, which reconfirmed the government's agenda of pursuing its commitment to the betterment of elite sport. In addition, the document outlined the importance of promoting physical activity for women, the disadvantaged, and the disabled in order to be more in line with federal social policy objectives (Macintosh and Bedeck, 1987). The new policy statements provided in this paper also directed the government to give priority funding to sport organizations aligned with the goals of the federal government and showing a consistent commitment to increasing sporting excellence. Objectives of this document included the establishment of national training centres, increased athlete assistance, and a new hosting policy showing the government's firm commitment to sporting excellence. These

attributions were seen to be an important step towards fostering achievement through the inclusion of a variety of centralized services/resources.

While this policy document confirmed government initiatives to expand resources for those organizations with a direct interest in sport, it did little more than mention other important groups in the sport delivery system such as women, and disadvantaged populations. Youth were included as an important benefactor in the sport system, and recommendations were made for Fitness Canada to develop modified rules and regulations to encourage involvement in sport at any age and/or ability (p.70). This recommendation was legitimized as an important mechanism for encouraging youth of all ages to become more involved in physical activity, thus encouraging a healthier lifestyle. Gerald Regan, Minister of State responsible for Fitness and Amateur Sport,

acknowledged the importance of physical activity in the lives of children and youth, however he all but ignored their involvement in elite level sport. Incongruously pictured on the front cover of this document is 14-year-old elite level gymnast, Elfi Schlegel. While this photo promotes the standard of talented youth in high levels of sport, no mention of these athletes is included in the document.

The system of carding for athlete financial assistance developed by the Canadian Olympic Association has been in existence since 1973 (Macintosh et al, 1987). A merging of the various components of the program in the early 1980's allowed for a steady increase in the number of carded athletes and government funding supplied for those athletes (Kidd and Eberts, 1982). An effort was being made to establish a core of amateur athletes who could successfully compete in the international arena and symbolically promote government ideals of a strong, dynamic nation. Macintosh et al

(1987) have argued that at this point an increased effort was being made to prepare athletes for international competition. However, many of the high-performance athletes were too young and inexperienced to compete at the levels obtained by Soviet Union and Eastern Bloc countries, thus negating the government's desired outcomes. Ironically, in many sports, international competitors on the world scene from these countries have continued to decrease in age demonstrating their youth based system for developing elite athletes.

During the late 1970's and early 1980's shifts in government and department changes caused confusion concerning the role of government in sport and the direction of elite sport. In 1982 an internal restructuring of Sport Canada to pursue the federal sport policy objectives resulted in four new departments (Macintosh and Bedeck, 1987). State intervention in sport was progressing toward a more professionalised sport system, fostered through continued interest in sport (elite sport over mass participation) and forced alliances (government and private sector). While government funding for the improvement of the sport delivery system almost doubled from 1979-1987, programs aimed at increasing private sector funding for sport organizations were also set up to direct the attention of NSO's towards finding financial support for program goals elsewhere. In 1985, the Sport Marketing Council was set up by the federal government to provide support for sport organizations in acquiring private sector support to sustain the sport agenda (Harvey et al. 2000). Sport organizations, after this point, would see a decrease in federal government assistance. This would prove detrimental for many sport organizations that were not television friendly and attractive to corporate sponsors as an advertising medium.

Many special target groups had been ignored in sport policy documentation to this point, including women. During the 1970's several initiatives were taken made to focus attention on women in sport programs, such as the 1974 National Conference on Women in Sport. Neither the 'green paper' nor the 'white paper' on sport had included women as an important group. Throughout the early part of the 1980's, several initiatives, such as the creation of the Women's program within the Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch and the establishment of the Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport (CAAWS), helped foster increased federal government involvement. Advocacy for women's sport programs culminated in 1986 with the development of *Women in Sport: A Sport Canada Policy* (Jelinek, 1986). While this policy was a step in the right direction, it primarily structured social conditions to be slightly more favourable for women's participation, rather than promoting gender equity within the sport delivery system (Ponic, 1994). Only one recommendation was made involving youth: to develop more sport participation for girls. This recommendation was to be developed by integrating sport up to puberty and then stratifying it by gender thereafter (p.20). This structure was to be implemented in clubs and education programs. However, defining the age of puberty was once again a difficulty and this recommendation still failed to promote physical activity and sport for girls any more than previous recommendations. Additionally, policy recommendations aimed at equalizing opportunities and services provided to high performance athletes acknowledged 'women' and 'men' in elite sport and not youth (i.e., girls and boys) (p.21).

Despite the disregard for programs aimed at elite athletes and youth elite athletes, the *Women in Sport Policy* provided the first acknowledgement of the Canadian Charter

of Rights and Freedoms as it applies to sport. This attempt to make social issues and the movement towards monitoring behaviours in sport more prevalent demonstrates the need to encourage equal opportunity regardless of race, sex, religion, **age**, or mental/physical ability. The policy also conceded that programs are required to continue to improve the sport environment for disadvantaged individuals or groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, nationality, colour, religion, sex, **age**, or ability. While this recommendation does not acknowledge youth as important group, it does recognize that age is an important issue and those in need of certain levels of protection (i.e., youth) should be provided with such provisions in the sporting environment.

The federal government connected its socio-political objectives of unity and nationalism to the commodification of high-performance athletes with the *Best Ever '88* program. The five-year plan was designed to give financial assistance to NSO's to improve performance in the 1988 Calgary and Seoul Olympics. This end was to be accomplished through increased competitive opportunities for elite athletes, improved coaching resources, improved facilities, enhanced training opportunities, athlete assistance, and improved technical and administrative support. Eventually, because of the large number of medals won by Canadian athletes, the program was renewed from 1988-1992 (Harvey et al., 2000). The federal government thus perceived that its pursuit of national prestige was best achieved through the attainment of high-level performances at the 1988 Olympics.

Jean Charest, the Minister of State for Fitness and Amateur Sport, commissioned a group of individuals actively involved in voluntary and professional aspects of the sport system to create a task force aimed at reinforcing and strengthening the various elements

of the sport system. The outcome was the 1988 document entitled *Toward 2000: Building Canada's Sport System*. This report provided a comprehensive overview of the sport system and initiatives aimed at re-clarifying roles and responsibilities, and coordinating administrative, financial and technical abilities. It documented a complete array of social, financial, administrative, and technical needs of those involved in the sport system, thus building on the working sport documents of the late 1970's and early 1980's.

Analysis of *Toward 2000* demonstrates that this document signalled the first target intervention of the federal government in incorporating youth as an integral part of the sport system. The first policy recommendation supported promoting and integrating sporting opportunities for children and youth to strengthen the grass roots sport system. This recommendation was justified to help develop a pool of talented youth who could be drawn upon for high performance athletes in the future (p.40). To accomplish such an end, youth are to be introduced to a variety of skill initiation programs and related participation opportunities as part of the educational system. A connection between the sport system and the education system was professed to be beneficial in the development and identification of talented youth suited for elite level sport. Further attributions included the development and enhancement of competitive participation programs in accordance with the child's physical, psychological, and social needs to ensure maximum participation levels. The task force also called for core sports such as **gymnastics**, swimming, skating, skiing, and athletics to be emphasised in elementary school. All of these potential programs demonstrated the federal government's disposition toward

including youth as important patrons of the high performance sport system, while disregarding the negative effects of competition on youth.

The second policy recommendation aimed at youth in this report encouraged school systems and educational institutions to recognise and accept responsibility for educating youth about the history, tradition, and cultural values of sport in Canada. This recommendation was aimed at fostering an appreciation and understanding of sport, which would make the experience more memorable and promote positive vitality, while raising the profile of sport in Canadian culture (p.45). With physical education as a mandatory requirement in schools, this could be incorporated as part of the curriculum to convey the federal government's desired message of enhanced well-being through sport. This effort further emphasised the importance of youth in the sport system and the importance of developing programs to foster youth involvement in competitive sport.

Federal government priorities had moved to a greater focus on high performance sport: thus policy recommendations within this report reflected this concentration. Objectives of policy initiatives aimed at elite athletes centred once again on the attainment of government objectives of national unity and international image. The core recommendation for elite athletes focused on developing athletes capable of competing on the international scene through the development of appropriate financial standards and facilities, with the possibility of building multi-sport centres (p. 56). This concept was to bring athletes together in a competitive training environment in order to foster desirable objectives.

Several recommendations centred on the need for fiscal support of national level athletes to ensure competent competitors on the international scene. The task force

conceded that through enhanced legitimacy and funding of the essential professions required to develop and to sustain an effective high performance system, Canadian athletes would hopefully gain prestige on the international scene. Further, the task force acknowledged the need to financially support the athletes through public subsidies, private sector sponsorship, prize money, and/or income from 'employment as athletes' (p.43). This is the first recognition by the federal government of the notion that athletes participate in sport as a type of employment. The consequence therein was not acknowledged or investigated by the federal government in this document.

The task force also supported the ideals of sport participation without interfering significantly in the educational, cultural, or life objectives of the athlete. This in itself has important consequences for the manner in which sport is structured, in particular for youth sport, which often interferes with a child's physical, psychological and social development. Additionally, the task force recommended that schools adopt high performance programs to meet the needs of student athletes. Vocational studies for athletes are also considered to be an important part of developing the high performance athlete and preparing that athlete for post-sport careers (p.46). Therefore, in order to integrate these initiatives, more coordinated programs focussing on the athletes' needs were recommended. The task force supported this by suggesting superior and additional information needs to be provided through elected athletes' involvement in the sport system decision-making processes. All of these recommendations maintain a system that is more athlete-centred: focussed on meeting the needs of all athletes and making athletes an active participant in the decision-making process.

Finally, the 1988 task force acknowledged once again the need to develop a system that recognises Canadian athletes' contributions to the sport system through a national program of awards. It was rationalized that by associating this program with the making of memorable and positive images, reflecting the vitality and benefits of sport for Canadian identities, national unity would be promoted. This program not only recognised that the high performance system was in its infancy and needed to be developed through recognition, but also allowed for young athletes to aspire to attain this recognition (p.47). The encouragement of such programs to foster youth talent ignores the problems associated with youth sport, and also perpetuates them by rewarding the win-at-all-costs mentality. In this way, youth in high performance sport, an important group in need of certain levels of protection and care to ensure safety, health and happiness, were still being neglected in policy during the late 1980's.

With a redirection of federal government-sport ties in the 1980's, a new drive towards a structured system of high performance athletes became important. The images of high performance athletes were central to the nation once again in 1988 with the Calgary Winter Olympics. However, the Seoul Summer Olympics brought about great turmoil for the ideals of high performance sport in Canada. Ben Johnson, who won a gold medal for Canada, tested positive for steroids and was stripped of his victory, resulting in an outcry from the Canadian sporting community. The federal government's desire for a positive international image on the sporting scene was tarnished irreversibly. The impact on Canadian amateur sport was overwhelming.

In 1990, *The Dubin Report* was published following an inquiry into the Ben Johnson drug scandal (Dubin, 1990). Not only did this report identify the national

identity crisis suffered in sport due to the incident, but it also made strong recommendations for the sport delivery system in general in Canada. In response to the criticisms and recommendations made in this report, a task force commissioned by Pierre Cadieux, Minister of State responsible for Fitness and Amateur sport produced a report entitled *Sport: The Way Ahead* (1992). The task force (J.C. Best, Marjorie Blackhurst, and Lyle Makosky) made it clear that the goal of federal sport policy was to create a supportive and co-operative partnership between the government, sport organizations, and the corporate sector. The idea was to develop policies and programs through a collaborative approach where all stakeholders involved in the sport delivery system, including athletes, coaches, sport scientists, educators, and all levels of government (federal, provincial, and municipal), would work together through shared leadership to enhance the sport experience for all athletes (Harvey et al, 1995; Semotiuk, 1995).

The principal concern of the 1992 Task Force focused on the reduction of financial support to the number of sports receiving federal funding, based on the historical, cultural, geographical and developmental importance of their contribution to the greater social structure in Canadian society. To address this concern, greater emphasis was placed on structured, financially accountable programs such as a sport plan for Canada, an athlete centred sport system, equitable and accessible sport, values and ethics in sport, and development of volunteer and professional sport leaders. Pierre Cadieux argued that this structure and vision for change was more suitable for enhancement of sport performances, citing similar steps taken by Australia, France, and Norway (Semotiuk, 1995). Further, for the first time since government involvement, the

Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch was encouraged to build a framework of social expectations and responsibilities for all involved in the sporting community.

Specific policy recommendations were made for youth and high performance athletes in this document. The emphasis for youth focused on recommendations that enhance their sporting opportunities and facilitate positive, healthy experiences for children. The Canada Fitness Awards program was cited once again by the federal government for its social value and as a method for continuing to promote physical activity among children and youth (p.109). This was also legitimized as a promotion of the cultural significance of sport and physical activity in Canada. Further, helping enhance the physical, mental, and moral development of youth through funding sport was intended to help maintain sport's contribution to Canadian culture, national pride, and heritage (p.93). The task force asserted that the promotion of sport in the lives of youth was important for its development as a lifelong physical activity pursuit and a cultural trademark of our society.

While this document is an important step towards addressing some of the social concerns for youth in sport, it presents a contradictory view of the sporting ideal for children and youth. In one section of the document, the task force recommends the creation of a new sport development model for youth that focuses on the concerns of equity, access, values, and ethics in sport. Thus, community programs developed from this initiative should emphasize the positive experience for youth. Aligning with this recommendation is the reference to basic-movement programs for children and a wide variety of sport experiences for youth. Emphasis is placed on avoiding sport specialization at too early an age for children and youth (p.105). The Seneca College

program, a co-operative venture between the college (athletics program) and the North York Board of Education is also commended for its athletic programs focussing on the specialization of sport for youth at high levels (p.102). It has been praised for its provision of services for youth in elite sport such as academic counselling, nutritional sessions, sport psychology, and sport physiology. While these services provide for the holistic (physical, psychological, educational, and emotional) development of young athletes, the risks associated with specialization at very early ages (7, 8 years old) are not addressed. This example demonstrates uncertainty by the task force concerning the position of youth in Canadian sport. Further, while acknowledging that youth are in need of certain levels of protection, the federal government takes no initiative to provide for such enrichment.

The foundation of the 1992 document continued to move toward a more athlete centred approach to the sport system: thus policy recommendations for elite athletes reflected this. Issues such as increased athlete representation in the decision making process, the development of a Canadian association of athletes, and the revision of athlete agreements all focused on ensuring that the rights of athletes are fully represented and not violated. Additionally, legitimations for many recommendations centred on the concept that it is immoral to condone practices and conditions that could physically or psychologically harm an athlete. The Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms is cited as an important cornerstone to rely on in developing and valuing the morals and ethics espoused in sport (p.141). Acknowledging that the health and safety of athletes should be a priority was an important step in further improving the condition of the sport system for all athletes, including youth.

The task force was adamant in representing the sport community's view that there needed to be changes in the system to ensure the wellness of the athlete as a whole person. However, it also re-established the principle of the pursuit of excellence as the driving force in the Canadian sporting system (p.15). In addition, the task force referenced youth and athletes as separate groups with different intentions or goals for sport involvement without clearly distinguishing such goals (p.105). Despite the focus on values and ethics ascribed to in this document, the conflicting notions of youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes creates confusion over the development of an ethical system for youth in sport.

In 1993, as part of a major reorganization by the federal government, responsibility for fitness was moved to the Department of Health, and amateur sport responsibility was moved to the Canadian Heritage Department. Accordingly, fitness and amateur sport lost its ministerial status, which had some individuals in the sporting community concerned over the role of the federal government in sport. With the new administrative structure came budget cuts to all areas of sport, and organizations embarked on a variety of courses towards financial self-sufficiency by increasing ties to the corporate sector (Semotiuk, 1998). Organizations able to establish ties with the private sector were better positioned to deal with the significant reductions in federal government support. Thus, sport organizations focussed less on the importance of social outcomes of sport involvement and more on finding ways to obtain financial support.

In the early 1990's social and ethical issues such as harassment, abuse, and power relations in sport were coming to the forefront in the media. The 1992 United States Women's Gymnastics team was highly criticized for the petite stature and unhealthy

appearance of the young female athletes (Wilson, 1997). Sports Reporter, Joan Ryan published a book entitled, Little Girls in Pretty Boxes: The Making and Breaking of Elite Gymnasts and Figure Skaters detailing the neglect, abuses, and social turmoil for young American girls involved in the two sports (1995). While many of these cases were considered to be isolated and not a Canadian problem, several high profile cases have challenged that assumption. In 1993, The Canadian Broadcasting Corporation publicized a case of secretive patterned sexual abuse of female rowers in Woodstock, Ontario (Kirby, Greaves, and Hankivsky, 2000). Further, in 1996 Sheldon Kennedy [Canadian] came forward detailing sexual abuses he incurred as a youth hockey player, exposing the horror of the situation in sport. Subsequently, numerous cases of harassment and abuse in various sports in Canada came out focussing the attention of Canadians on patterned abuse in sport, primarily hockey (Kirby et al, 2000). For the first time since government involvement in sport began, attention was focussed on the power relations existent in the sporting environment and the possible negative results for youth in sport.

With greater attention focussed on the social, ethical, and moral obligations of sport, the Department of Canadian Heritage, in consultation with the sporting community, developed the *Sport Funding and Accountability Framework* (SFAF) (1996). The objective of this framework was to support amateur sport excellence through fair and ethical means. Attention was focussed on high-performance athletes and programs, coaches and coaching development, delivery services, access for women, disabled and aboriginal persons, and initiatives contributing to the achievement of broad social and economic policy objectives. Important social factors included national unity, social development, youth integration, and growth and prosperity in sport. The elements of the

framework included eligibility, purpose, and accountability. A focus on the athlete centred approach to ensuring the health and safety of sport participants was the general rationale underlying many recommendations.

The SFAF was designed to align the new Sport Canada funding system with federal government priorities in sport, thus ensuring accountability as a part of the government and NSO relationship. Primary areas for the accountability guidelines included athlete assistance, training and competition, and coaching support. Three particular groups (women, disabled, and aboriginal peoples) were central to the funding requirements in order to ensure equity and access. Furthermore, programs of each NSO were to be in line with the goals and objectives of all federal accountability guidelines to be eligible for funding.

Youth were considered at this point to be an integral part of the sporting system. No policy programs in this document focused solely on youth, however several of the program guidelines have a direct affect on youth. The first recommendation that is significant for youth in sport was a program that funds sport organisations whose primary competitive environment is within Canada, is culturally significant to Canadians, and consists of a positive, sufficient youth membership. Funding was to be designated to support the national and novice age group programs and other youth domestic programs to ensure that youth are involved at a competitive level in these sports. This program would allow for the sporting opportunity to be expanded beyond the scope of only those sports viewed as 'Olympic' or core sports (p. 6).

The second element of the SFAF that has a direct relation to the social, moral and ethical concerns of sport was that of harassment. The SFAF directed all NSO's,

receiving Sport Canada funding to have a harassment policy and harassment officers in place to receive that funding (p.5). Dispute and appeal mechanisms were also required for resolution and neutral arbitration to deal with problems. This showed the federal government's intent to promote a safe and healthy environment for sport involvement through direct government intervention. While not specifically tied to youth athletes, this action was relevant for youth involved in sport in need of these kinds of protection.

Support for elite athletes and the pursuit of excellence in high performance sport was of central importance within the 1996 SFAF. Increased athlete assistance and funding of national sport centres was considered important to support high performance athletes in achieving their objectives of international success. This recommendation would assist the athletes in attaining their goals while also serving the federal government's interest of portraying a strong international image. Although the intention of this document was to allow for greater accountability in the funding provided to sport organisations, the current design and structure emphasised the win-at-all-costs mentality by tying the funding structure to the performance of elite athletes.

An important step in moving to a greater athlete centred approach to sport policy development and integration in the sport system was the concept of athlete representation in NSO governance. A formal policy within the SFAF to include athletes in the decision-making and administration process was of particular importance in achieving the social and moral objectives of the new framework. Again, while the notion did not directly apply to youth athletes, it did allow for greater representation of their needs and interests in the decision making process. Funding tied to the development of such initiatives

forced sport organisations to take a pro-active approach in implementing the policies supportive of the health and safety of athletes.

By the late 1990's, a collaborative outlook on sport policy development was visible in federal government initiatives. The SFAF was being continually revised and upgraded to reflect changes in the sporting system. Up to this point, federal government initiatives towards amateur sport had been primarily supportive, with few recommendations taking as directive a position as in the Accountability Framework. This shift demonstrated Sport Canada's and the federal government's willingness to get involved in sport and support desired social, moral, and ethical objectives while still pursuing the political goals tied to elite sport.

Despite the revision of the SFAF each year following its implementation, there were still challenges to be faced in the various sectors of sport (Mills, 1998). The 1998 report, *Sport in Canada: Everybody's Business* put forth by the Heritage Canada Subcommittee of the Study of Sport in Canada (Dennis Mills, Albini Guarnieri, Denis Coderre, George Proud, Inky Mark, John Solomon, Pat O'Brien, Peter MacKay, Suzanne Tremblay), demonstrated the federal government's interest in the development of a sport policy reflective of various social issues within Canada including ethical issues, disadvantaged populations, and health concerns. Collaboration involved 47 political leaders from around the country, 41 influential personnel in the sport industry, 215 sport organisations who responded to questionnaires, and reviews of academic, comparative, and media literature related to sport, to provide an analysis of the various sectors of sport and to recommend future directions (p.3). Once again the concept of a more integrated, mutually responsible approach to sport policy was recommended. The creation of this

report reflects a reciprocal effort between persons wielding power within the political system, along with the sporting community who provided researched information. Through this more 'integrative' approach, issues of economics, and social and cultural aspects of sport are addressed to a greater extent than ever before, tying together sport policy objectives from the past thirty years.

"From the physical and moral development of our youth to the presentation of our nation's character on the world stage, sport represents a powerful social, cultural, and economic force in our society..." (Mills, 1998, p. 46). This notion guides the development of the current policy documentation relating to amateur sport. The concept of sport for youth stems from a growing interest in sport as a means of social intervention for youth at risk, however the proposals for youth sport support the notion of competitive programming to build a stronger athlete base. The government is encouraged to consider a non-refundable child sport tax credit to encourage parents to register their children in local sports and recreation programs. The tax credit would be used to help alleviate some of the financial burdens associated with involvement in sport (registration fees, equipment, travel, etc.). This program would to help develop a healthier population, and aid youth at risk. Further, it is also considered an important step toward providing a strong base of youth athletes for future development at the elite level (p.80).

The education system and sport system are often closely related in the development of youth, however there still exists a lack of cooperation among the school, community, and sport clubs. The sub-committee addresses the valuable role that schools play in the development of sport-related programs in Canada. Providing school sport as a part of high quality physical education, equipping Canadians with knowledge, basic skills

and positive attitudes about sport. was important for expanding school sport programs such as the Quality Daily Physical Education Program of CAHPERD. Also it emphasised further is the need to promote school sport programs to encourage participation of more students regardless of gender, economic status, and ability. While these recommendations demonstrated the value placed on sport for youth as an integral part of their lifestyle. it ignored the possible negative outcomes associated with sport involvement, such as the general focus on competitiveness, and it failed to include any rationales or methods that might deter negative outcomes.

While it appears that the emphasis on youth in sport development lies with the schools and ignores their place in the high performance sport system, a photograph of 16-year-old gymnast Lori Strong at the 1992 Olympics is used in the section entitled High Performance Athletes and National Sport Organisations. This pictorial representation signifies the committees' view that youth elite athletes are grouped with all elite level athletes, with no acknowledged differences in needs and interests.

The focus at this time was on high performance sport and an athlete centred system as purported in the 1992 document *Sport The Way Ahead*, thus it is surprising that there is only one definite recommendation dealing with elite athletes. This proposal is focused on the restrictive, inconsistent funding structure given to elite athletes. Therefore, the system of funding needed to be revamped to ensure that individuals were not unfairly deprived from receiving funding for sport to increase opportunities to train and compete. It is also proposed that the finance department consider the possibility of creating a non-refundable tax credit to help parents meet the significant expenses associated with high performance sport (p.65). These recommendations represent the

interest of the federal government in helping to support elite athletes of all ages, and all levels.

In 1998 the liberal government announced \$10 million in funding for 5 years to support athletes, coaches, world calibre training, and encouragement of particular groups (aboriginal people, women, and disabled) to become involved in sport. To encourage and manage sport, a new position within the Department of Heritage was created. In 1999, Prime Minister Jean Chretien appointed Denis Coderre to the position of Secretary of State for Amateur Sport. Coderre had been the vice-chair of the sub committee on the study of sport in Canada that created the 1998 document *Sport in Canada: Everybody's Business*, thus he was very familiar with the current state of sport in Canada. With the coming of the 2000 Sydney Olympics, there was much anticipation over whether the goals of national unity and international image would be recognised on the world scene. Youth were to play an important role in sport programs as members of the 1999 Pan American team and the 2000 Olympic team. This represents a significant amount of youth involved in elite sport, even though the federal government had grouped these individuals with all elite athletes, thus ignoring their particular needs.

The development of federal sport policy over the past forty years has been directly linked to economic, political, and socio-cultural objectives of the federal government (see Appendix F). Many important issues surrounding the provision of physical fitness and amateur sport have developed as crucial issues deserving of policy attention. As demonstrated through the policies of the past four decades, sport is not viewed in isolation from the greater social context of government goals and objectives. Each of the policy documents developed by the federal government is important in

linking government involvement in sport to the Canadian social context. Policies thereby continue to reflect the economic, political and social issues important in the lives of Canadians.

II. Trends in Canadian Federal Youth Sport Policy

A critical analysis of federal sport policies from 1961 to 2000 revealed a variety of rationales and attributions towards youth, elite athletes, and youth elite athletes as discussed in the preceding historical framework. The following section outlines the trends revealed in this policy analysis as they apply to youth in high performance sport. Furthermore, specific issues and discernible policy recommendations as they pertain to youth sport in general and youth in high performance sport specifically are discussed in relation to the directional propositions.

Directional Proposition #1:

Youth have largely been ignored as an important group in the sport delivery system.

The critical analysis demonstrated that while youth in physical education programs and certain issues of youth sport programming were addressed, for the most part youth have not played a significant role in federal policy documentation. Early government documentation relating to sport (1969, 1970) notes the importance of programs such as the YMCA and Boy Scouts, thus reveals an interest in sport for male youth, however no direct government intervention is taken at that time. The 1969 document entitled *Report of the Task Force on Sport for Canadians* marks the first attention given to youth in the sporting system. It identified the need to link physical education programs and sport in

order to foster the harmonious physical, psychological, and social development of youth. By encouraging school programs to revitalize, expand, and develop more sport centred skill programs, youth would be exposed to sport and be more likely to become involved. These ties between sport and physical education programs became a visible trend for youth from this time forward in sport policy. The concept of education-sport ties for youth was evident in seven (7) out of the fifteen (15) documents making it the most common rationale in relation to youth.

A further recommendation that related to youth addressed their general low level of fitness. This issue became visible in policy beginning with the 1971 *Sport Canada/Recreation Canada* document. This document legitimized those attributions such as the Canada Fitness Award Program, and general activities such Stampede Flare⁸ should be implemented by the federal government to ensure the general fitness of the youth population. This legitimization is reiterated in 1981 and again in 1992, showing that it is a reoccurring theme for federal government intervention in sport as it appeared in three (3) out of fifteen (15) documents.

An important aspect of the sport system throughout the policy documentation is the concept of youth as a viable source for the development of future national team members. While this links to the concepts of building sport-physical education ties, it is a legitimization that emerges specifically in relation to youth elite athletes. As the focal point of sport-government ties moved towards the enhancement of elite sport, the concept is reiterated in several attributions such as the development of talent identification standards for coaches, increased development of Canada Fitness Awards programs to

⁸ Stampede Flare was a program for youth incorporated into the Calgary Stampede to encourage youth involvement in sport.

identify talent, and greater financial support of youth teams. Five (5) documents make reference to the need to identify talented youth and foster this talent as a valuable resource for future elite athlete development.

Directional proposition #2

A greater focus on the development of high performance sport in general and concerns/support specific to elite youth athletes has not been addressed.

In general, a large part of the policy documentation pertained to elite athletes. In particular, federal policy documents after 1976 related most specifically to elite athletes, once it was purported by the Minister of State Responsible for Fitness and Amateur Sport that it was of greater importance for the federal government to support this level of athletes, since they more directly served government objectives. Thirteen (13) of the fifteen (15) documents had specific recommendations relating to high performance athletes, and the three that did not were written prior to 1976. Many of the attributions such as funding for elite athletes, development of skilled coaches, development of national training centres, revision of athlete agreements, development of an arbitration process, and an awards system for outstanding athletes, related to youth in high performance sport, however they ignored the inherent problems of competitive sport for youth and issues related to elite youth athletes.

While there were several policy recommendations that pertained to elite athletes that could be directed also at youth in elite sport, there was only one recommendation in the fifteen (15) documents that was directed specifically at youth in high performance sport. This recommendation came about following the enormous outpouring of interest in sport following the 1976 Olympics in Montreal. The 1977 recommendation stated that

there is a need to foster skill in youth athletes to become more competitive in international competition. The attribution for accomplishing this end focused on financially supporting and encouraging youth national teams to compete internationally. This did acknowledge the federal government's support and interest in youth elite athletes, and it is the only recommendation of its kind, however it did not address any problems for youth in high performance sport.

Directional Proposition #3

The existing literature on the problems of youth in high performance sport has not been used to develop rationales for federal policy documentation.

While John Munro was the first to address the problem of over competitiveness for youth in sport in the 1970 *Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians*, little academic literature existed at that time detailing the extensive problems faced by youth in high performance sport. Later (1988-2000) in the development of federal policy documentation, several issues such as harassment, exploitation, athlete rights, qualified leadership, and holistic services (physiological, psychological, and sociological) that pertain to youth in sport were addressed to a limited extent. In general, the most progressive step taken by the federal government in a directive manner to ensure the safety of athletes emerges with the *Sport Funding and Accountability Framework*. However, youth concerns were not addressed to a significant extent in this policy and the existing academic literature pertaining to youth sport problems was not used to develop a rationale for federal policy action.

The analysis of the fifteen (15) federal sport policy documents revealed that youth concerns arose in the policy to a limited extent. However, youth in high performance

sport were largely ignored. It is interesting to note that while youth elite athletes were not integral in the policy documentation, four (4) out of fifteen (15) federal documents contained a photograph of a female elite gymnast under the age of seventeen. This does not acknowledge the federal government's interest in the well-being of these athletes, but rather acknowledges that these athletes are an integral part of the sporting system. Therefore, while issues pertaining to this group have not been addressed in the past despite such obvious recognition, they do need to be addressed in the future.

Chapter 4 –National Sport Organization Case Study

I. Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique

Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique (formerly know as the Canadian Gymnastics Federation) was formed in 1969. This national sport governing body is responsible for all areas of gymnastics in Canada (artistic, rhythmic, trampoline and tumbling). Further, GCG represents the Canadian gymnastics community internationally with representation on the Federation Internationale de Gymnastique and nationally as a member of the Canadian Olympic Association. GCG's mission is "to promote international competition for the benefit of its members" (GCG website, 2001). GCG emphasises fostering a positive, nurturing, constructive approach, which strives to help individual members, clubs, provincial/territorial organisations, and partner national federations achieve their aspirations and potential. GCG claims to take an athlete centred approach to the delivery of gymnastics, supporting an ethical, healthy, safe, and harassment free sporting environment. The organisational objectives are:

1. Lead the Canadian gymnastics system to ensure a healthy, integrated delivery system for meeting the needs of our members.
2. Direct high performance programs in the pursuit of international excellence.
3. Guide the development of other competitive programs.
4. Facilitate general gymnastics activities. (GCG website, 2001)

GCG began as a small organization set on governing the limited amount of gymnastics occurring in the Canadian sporting community. During the early years of its development, the organization grew rapidly as gymnastics grew in popularity throughout Canada. With the events of the 1972 and 1976 Olympics showcasing athletes such as

Olga Korbut and Nadia Comaneci, young girls from across the country were enticed to join the sport, and by 1979 membership had increased by 62% (Waller, 1995). GCG and the provincial governing bodies were forced to meet the demands of a developing sport. In 1977, Iona Campagnolo, Minister of State Responsible for Fitness and Amateur Sport, commended the organization for its progressive response and promotional endeavors for sport and for supporting the needs of those within the sport system (Campagnolo, 1977). By 1981 GCG had the highest number of registered participants in the National Coaching Certification Program.

During the late 1970's and early 1980's, GCG had problems resolving disputes over technical programs to be implemented across Canada and Board related decisions at an organisational level. A task force set up by GCG recommended a dispute resolution system to resolve this turmoil and help move the organization ahead. GCG also faced financial problems and the task force recommended a new financial plan for the future. Between 1985 and 1989, major restructuring took place within the organization and new recommendations for promoting the sport through marketing and television campaigns were implemented.

Gymnastics in Canada continued to increase in popularity throughout the 1980's and 1990's as Canadian gymnasts were being recognised for their excellence in international competition. Increased numbers of competitive programs for all ages of youth were being implemented throughout Canada with increasing numbers of certified coaches and the influx of European and Eastern European Coaches. By 1994, GCG was forced into another major reorganization as recommended by its strategic organisational renewal plan. This action was designed to restructure the development of gymnastics in

Canada and place the focus on the development of high performance gymnastics. This was seen by the Board of Directors to be more in line with the federal objectives for sport. From this point forward, GCG has focussed on achieving high levels of prestige in international sport through achievement in high performance gymnastics. While the organization has now expanded its governing role to include Rhythmic, Sport Aerobics, and Trampoline and Tumbling, its primary interest lies in promoting artistic gymnastics for men and women.

II. Contemporary GCG Policies

Interviews were conducted with three (3) Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique administrators, to capture a contemporary snapshot of existing policies and the impact of federal sport policies on one National Sport Organization that has extensive youth involvement. In addition, two (2) of these administrators provided documented information regarding the interview questions; this information has been used to enhance the explanation of policies and procedures of GCG. The following chapter details information collected during these interviews in relation to the five sub problems and the three directional propositions. Information gathered during the interviews has been considered in relation to the trends and issues identified through the critical policy analysis.

Sub-problem #2a:

What policies currently exist in the GCG that guide behaviours relating to youth elite athletes?

Directional Proposition:

GCG has specific policies and procedures that relate to youth elite athletes.

While each administrator⁹ supported the notion that GCG policies such as the harassment policy, code of ethics, policy on equity and access, and provision for independent arbitration were aimed at all of the athletes including those under the age of 18, the administrators made no reference to specific policies that were directed at youth elite athletes. Policies such as the coaching code of ethics were seen to directly affect the athletes as they set out specific standards of conduct for coaches. The primary source of policy control cited by GCG administrators was the national team agreement that all national team members must sign. This agreement outlines certain standards of behaviour and codes of conduct for team members. Administrator A noted the cursory nature of the agreements in that they touch on behaviours such as no smoking, no cheating, and rules about alcohol consumption. A review of the athletes' agreements for three disciplines (Women's Artistic, Men's Artistic, and Trampoline & Tumbling) demonstrated that there are differences between the agreements, but they lie mainly with variations according to legalities rather than rights or behaviours. For example, the women's team agreement forbids the consumption of alcohol [according to the legal age guidelines], whereas the trampoline and tumbling agreement states that athletes will not consume "unreasonable" amounts of alcohol, with no mention of the legal age. Administrator B stated "Women's artistic is much stricter than men's, which may be due to the age differences" (2001), however the only discernible portion that acknowledges the age of the athletes is the release form that must be signed by a parent or guardian for an athlete under the age of 18.

Administrator C stated that while there are no direct written standards other than codes of conduct within the national team agreement, there are unwritten standards for athletes and coaches. These standards relate to the moral and ethical behaviour of athletes and coaches, and are instilled in the mentality, primarily, of the female national team members. For example, there is no written regulation that the girls may not engage in social gatherings while away at a competition, however this behaviour is highly frowned upon by the coaches, as it is not conducive to optimal competitive performance (Administrator C, 2001). Unwritten standards which apply most significantly to the athletes relate to their expected standard of behaviour at competitions, training camps, and when traveling with the team. These standards not only demonstrate the ingrained culture of high performance sport, but also demonstrate the inherent power relationship that exists in the sport of gymnastics for young girls.

Several of these guidelines such as the harassment policy, equity and access policy, and codes of conduct, stem from the federal governments' *Sport Funding and Accountability Framework*. Administrator A noted that GCG has had to continue to make changes in order to be in line with the **minimum** standards required by Sport Canada (2001). While none of these guidelines specifically address youth elite athletes, many of the issues of concern for youth (i.e., harassment, ethical conduct, qualified leadership) are issues that are now being addressed to a limited extent by GCG. For example, the youth sport literature suggests that youth are entitled to qualified leadership in the sport environment (Martens and Seefeldt, 1982; Ryan, 1995). GCG has attempted to address this by developing coaching standards such as requiring all coaches of national level athletes to be level 3 NCCP certified and coaches of national team members to be

⁹ For reasons of confidentiality, administrators will be referred to as administrator A-C

level 4 NCCP certified. This step is to encourage a professional, structured environment that promotes the safety of these athletes (Administrator A, 2001).

Sub-problem #2b:

What process is currently used in the generation of rules/policies within GCG?

Sub-problem #2c:

How, if at all, are athletes involved in the generation of behavioural guidelines?

Directional Proposition:

GCG has a specific process for policy development that involves athletes in the development of policies.

While the administrators alluded to a process that was used in the GCG, no clear response was obtained from the interviews. Administrator A did note that as a non profit sport governing body, run by a volunteer board of directors, they used the “Carver Model” of policy governance, however he/she could not explain the facets of the model. The Carver Model allows the Board of Directors to have commensurate authority to govern. Authority is to be legitimately wielded by the Board to focus on the broadest, high level issues while the organisational staff focuses on the daily operations and issues (Carver, 2001). This means that the staff has the authority to make daily decisions without having to continually consult the Board of Directors (Shay, 1998). Administrators appeared to demonstrate an understanding that it was the responsibility of the Board of Directors to focus on broader issues for the gymnastics community rather than daily operations. The Carver Model does not allow for involvement of the constituents (i.e., coaches and athletes) in the decision making process. “GCG was

reluctant to even include athlete representation on the board of directors, which may have something to do with the [Carver] model that is followed (Administrator C, 2001).

Recognition that the process of policy development in GCG is not a straightforward intra-organisational process is important to the understanding of its structure. GCG is a member of a number of other organisations such as the Fédération Internationale de Gymnastique (FIG), and the Canadian Olympic Association (COA); policy decisions are often handed down to GCG by these organisations. While GCG has a stake in these organisations, they have little control over the policies that directly affect their organisation. Guidelines from these organisations also play an important role in the development of policy guidelines in GCG. For example, the national team member agreement is adapted from an agreement put forth by Sport Canada with general guidelines for compliance. Administrator B noted that the extent of their governance over this issue might become even less in the future as Sport Canada plans to develop a standard athlete agreement for all national team members rather than allowing for variations between sports. "This will not allow for the differences inherent in each sport to be addressed in the agreement, which I think is a bad thing and should be brought to the attention of Athletes Canada" (Administrator B, 2001).

The most prominent policy guidelines set forth by the federal government that have affected GCG policy development lie within the Sport Canada *Funding and Accountability Framework*. This framework became important in 1999 as it was tied more directly to funding. GCG has recently adopted a system of including athlete representation on the Board of Directors and all working groups. Administrator A admitted that GCG was forced to adopt this policy and implement it into the GCG

guidelines [shows GCG technical policy handbook as reference] to comply with funding regulations (2001). However, this position of athlete representation on the Board of Directors has only been in place for eight months despite the *Accountability Framework's* existence since 1996. Additionally, while the position exists, there is no formal orientation process to facilitate the representative making truly informed decisions regarding issues that arise. Noting the lack of the orientation and guidance regarding the policies and procedures, one administrator commented that, "Without being truly informed, do athletes really have a vote?" (Administrator B, 2001).

Athlete representation on the Board of Directors and all working groups seems to be a step toward ensuring that the needs of the athletes are met. GCG has several working groups, with the most prominent being the Program Committees (women's, men's, trampoline and tumbling). When first questioned regarding representation of athletes on these working committees, each administrator noted that there was adequate athlete representation. After probing further, it was discovered in all three interviews that there was no female athlete representation on any of the working committees.

Currently there is no representation for the women's program committee, which is directly related to the issue of age, because most of the athletes are under the age of 18, [thus] the appropriateness of having a representative is a problem. There is a captain of the women's team but she does not actively sit on the Board or any committees (Administrator A, 2001).

A variety of alternatives were raised by the administrators in response to this line of questioning such as having former athlete representation, having representatives from each region so they do not have to travel as far to meetings, or possibly having a female

coach as a representative. One administrator voiced the irony of this viewpoint. “We have no problem allowing these kids to travel half way around the world with limited supervision for competitions, but we don’t feel they are competent enough to travel a couple of hours to be involved in decisions that directly affect them” (Administrator C, 2001).

Sub-problem #2d

What issues have arisen within GCG that might be addressed through the existence of a policy relating to youth elite athletes?

Directional Proposition:

Specific issues have arisen within GCG that might be addressed through the existence of a policy relating to youth elite athletes.

Sub-problem #2e:

What legitimations and attributions are seen to be relevant to those affecting policy?

Directional Proposition:

GCG administrators will address legitimations and attributions relevant to youth sport policy.

In exploring these sub-problems, questions relating to both the positive and negative aspects of elite sport involvement were addressed. The majority of administrators and staff within GCG are former competitive athletes and thus have a unique perspective on the gymnastics environment. Administrators identified specific issues/incidents, and perceptions in relation to gymnastics that might be of concern for the sport. While the administrators provided a variety of opinions regarding the issues of

elite involvement in gymnastics, they were split on the need to develop a policy to regulate such involvement. Administrator A was adamant that a policy of this nature would only detract from youth involvement in sport at any level, while administrator C believed that such a policy would be an excellent point to start with when dealing with some of the problems visible in the sport. Administrator B was torn between a belief in the value of sport and the negative aspects of elite involvement. Furthermore, each administrator contributed ideas towards specific legitimations and attributions for a youth sport policy (see Table 1).

All of the administrators conceded that there are very positive aspects to elite sport involvement, such as increased self-esteem, self-confidence, time management skills, communications skills, self-concept, and well-being. However, administrator B did qualify these concepts by adding that they are only developed with the proper leadership, environment, and support. The administrators commented that if a policy was developed relating to youth elite athletes, it must be used as a way to enhance these aspects of sport for youth. Administrator A noted that the majority of gymnasts who were members of the national team have gone on to do extraordinary things and are very impressive individuals. While the positive aspects of the sport at elite levels were addressed in the research interviews, limited responses were obtained from administrators in relation to this line of questioning as compared to the negative effects and issues of concern.

Table 1 – Administrator Perceptions: Legitimizations and Attributions for Youth Sport

	Legitimizations	Attributions
1	High performance athletes lack time to play, socialise, complete schoolwork, and spend time with family (B.C) ¹⁰ .	Youth in sport should have time to develop life skills (C).
2	Youth in elite sport need to understand that there are services and avenues for pursuing problems and complaints (A.B.C).	Athletes should have equal access to services offered to them and be fully aware of the confidential grievance and arbitration procedures (A.B.C).
3	Youth involved in high levels of sport participation need support when the decision is made to leave the sport (C).	Support should be given to athletes when retiring by offering support services for athletes during these transition stages (C).
4	Coaches need to be aware of and understand the special circumstances for youth involved in elite levels of sport (B.C).	Aspiring national level coaches should be required to apprentice with current national level coaches for a set period of time as part of the certification program (B.C).

¹⁰ Letter corresponds to administrator who discussed the legitimization/attribution in the interview.

In recent years, highly publicized issues such as the Kerri Strug¹¹ incident, eating disorders in gymnasts, and harassment and abuse cases have been amplified by the media critics, exposing the sport to negative public attention. In the United States, a program entitled the *Athlete Wellness Program* has been introduced to educate national team members about healthy lifestyles and the support services available to athletes (Williams, 1999). While Wilson (1997) reported that GCG provides workshops for athletes and coaches on healthy eating habits, according to the current GCG administrators interviewed, no such programs exist and the organization has not responded to the criticisms of women's gymnastics. Despite the fact that certain organisations such as Gymnastics Ontario have taken a proactive approach toward education, such as a mandatory Risk Management course for all competitive coaches, administrator A openly replied, "In Canada, we don't have these problems. For the most part, issues that arise in the media are responses to isolated cases that don't really apply to Canadian athletes" (2001). Support for athlete wellness is cursory at best. The onus is on the young athletes to keep GCG informed of their health situations. "Regular evaluations by the National team coach and the gymnasts' personal coaches are also performed to ensure the health of the athletes" (Administrator A, 2001).

The reluctance by administrator A to acknowledge any problems associated with elite participation in gymnastics is in direct contrast to Administrator C's critical view of the current problems associated with this level of involvement. This view most predominantly reflects current academic research in the area of youth sport.

¹¹ Kerri Strug was a member of the 1996 United States Olympic team. In the final day of competition, she hurt her ankle performing a vault. Encouraged by her coach Bela Karolyi to compete the second vault, she performed on the severely injured ankle.

General public opinion of gymnastics is that it is termed 'legalized child abuse', as my [family member] would say. My own experience as a competitive athlete demonstrates that it is not necessarily the child's desire to be involved. When I started, did I really want to do it? Sure it was fun but my parents made me do it. Once you realise that you are succeeding, it becomes fun. I think it happens, you reach a point where you can make a decision. Most of these kids who are 14, 15 years old, when it's time to peak, truly can't think for themselves. Their parents are shipping them off or whatever. You hear stories about girls on the national team being weighed every day, as much as they deny it. I knew a girl who had a terrible time in the sport due to her size, not that she was overweight, just not 'ideal'. Views of women's gymnastics are very negative, you look at the Olympics and despite the age being 16, these girls look like they are 10. (Administrator C, 2001).

These comments reiterate the prominence of problems that are relevant even in Canada. Administrator C also pointed out that harassment cases are brought to the Board of Directors but are considered isolated cases and thus the Board does not respond. However, "you have to start to wonder when you have seen several just in recent memory" (Administrator C, 2001). Problems are supposedly dealt with through the arbitration procedure set forth in the GCG policy guidelines; however the administrators could not clarify this procedure. This lack of knowledge for the procedures demonstrates an inadequacy in the federal guidelines in dealing with these issues as they arise.

It is unclear where responsibility lies for promoting the holistic development of the athlete. While administrators suggested that the onus was on coaches to develop

these athletes, there is a lack of regulation. While there are certain standards set by GCG regarding national level coaches (e.g., coaches code of conduct), these standards do not seem to reflect current trends in other sports. Administrator B noted that while a national level coach is required to have NCCP level 4, this process is generally structured differently from the rest of the sporting system. There is no real standard across all sports for this level of certification and “in gymnastics, we tend to isolate ourselves, saying that they don’t understand us and our sport, yet we don’t make the effort to educate them either” (Administrator C, 2001). While a system of apprenticeship exists in many sports for developing coaches at this level, gymnastics does not use such a system. Further, each administrator noted, coaches need to have specific qualities such as good communication skills, team leadership, and psychological skills training, however there is no provision to ensure that coaches who are developing Canada’s top national gymnasts have such skills.

The critical policy analysis of federal documents revealed that the issue of education and retirement for athletes has been raised to a limited extent. While no formal federal policies are in existence regarding issues of retirement and separation from the sport, Athletes CAN is making a concerted effort to provide these services to athletes, and the national federations need to be responding at the same time (Administrator B, 2001). Services are thus available to the athletes to ensure their well-being; however, without the active involvement of GCG, it is difficult to ensure access for youth athletes, who are dependent on others to provide the opportunities.

I don’t think we do a good job at all, no policies, or anything regarding the well-being of the athlete. There is nothing, like education for example, sure your

coach will say, stay in school but that's it. There is even no phase out period. once you decide that you're done and off that national team, that's it; they don't care about you anymore (Administrator C. 2001).

When athletes leave the sport they leave a huge part of their life behind and to date the sport system has been reluctant to ensure that there is an adjustment phase. "You have to admit that most elite athletes are pretty messed up people, just not balanced at all. So a lot of them have a very tough time when they leave the sport, especially when they are just kids and it's like the life they have known forever is over" (Administrator B. 2001). GCG takes no formalised approach to aiding youth athletes in the transition phase from their career as an elite athlete to being a member of the general society. GCG thus demonstrates no formal responsibility for these athletes/youth once they leave the realm of gymnastics. The belief is that "gymnastics has prepared them to deal with life" (Administrator B. 2001), therefore no steps are necessary to help these kids adjust to a different lifestyle.

Despite changes that GCG has made in recent years to be more in line with the federal government guidelines put forth by the *Sport Funding and Accountability Framework*, elite youth gymnasts still remain ill protected. In 1996, FIG introduced a change in eligibility for gymnasts in international competition. Gymnasts are required to be sixteen (16) years of age in the year of the Olympic games or World Championships in order to be eligible to compete. This change was made to address some of the apparent problems of the tiny female elite youth gymnasts showcasing to the world their starved, underdeveloped, injury ridden bodies (Wilson, 1997). Despite this change GCG administrators' responses were minimal. "Canada has always had the highest average age

of the athletes. we were already sending 18. 19 year olds so this did not affect things dramatically. and [we are] the healthiest” (Administrator A, 2001). In fact, at the 2000 Olympics, six (6) out of the seven (7) women’s artistic team members were under the age of 17, and four (4) were seriously injured, but still allowed to train and compete (GCG website). While the FIG change that was made helped to a limited extent to spread some light on the current problems of women’s gymnastics, and GCG was forced to make some minor adjustments, the mentality regarding the age of the athletes still needs to be changed. “Despite the changes in policy, if there is not education, and a change in the attitude towards youth involvement in high performance sport, nothing will change and the problems will continue to grow” (Administrator C, 2001).

While the federal government has addressed some of the problems associated with youth in high performance sport to a very limited extent, the lack of a solid commitment to making change is visible the GCG. GCG administrators demonstrated an awareness for the issues addressed in the literature associated with youth sport involvement, however policies do not reflect the needs, rights, and opportunities of youth. This disempowering structure sets the stage for exploitation. “...Something needs to be incorporated. Especially at a young age too, letting them know that, for example, when your coach is weighing you, or yelling at you, there is somebody else to talk to, that won’t go back to the coach and [so you don’t have to] fear getting reprimanded” (Administrator C, 2001). By exploring the rationales, issues, and incidents that are associated with gymnastics, we can see a lack of support for youth elite athletes and the need to take steps to ensure the holistic well-being of these athletes.

Chapter 5 – Issues in Youth Elite Sport

I. Coach and Athlete Perceptions

Four (4) national level gymnasts and four (4) national level gymnastics coaches¹² were interviewed to identify what issues were relevant to those affected by policy. These interviews revealed significant differences in the perceptions of athletes compared to those of the coaches. Each group identified key issues of concern for youth in high performance sport, with the coaches being more aware of issues/incidents relating to youth. The coaches and the athletes also had important suggestions for improving the development and delivery of sport for youth. While care was taken to ensure that both male and female athletes and coaches were interviewed, as well as representatives from across Canada, the only difference discernible is that the female coaches tended to be more precise in focussing on issues of youth in high performance sport. The following chapter details the perceptions of athletes and coaches, relating them to the responses of administrators developed in the proceeding chapter and the critical federal sport policy analysis.

Sub-problem #3a

What issues/incidents have arisen pertinent to those affected by policy that might be addressed through the existence of a policy relating to youth elite athletes?

Directional Proposition

Athletes and coaches in high performance sport are aware of specific issues/incidents that have arisen that might be addressed through the existence of a policy in relation to youth elite athletes.

¹² Athletes and Coaches will be identified as M1, M2 or F1, F2 to ensure confidentiality while maintaining awareness of the male/female perceptions of each of the sub-problems.

Athletes had few issues to comment upon with regards to this line of questioning in comparison to the coaches. These differences may be due to the relative point of view of each group, level of involvement, age, or a variety of other factors. Athletes recognised the possibility of problematic issues arising such as coaches yelling at athletes, or the risk of injury, however they could not identify specific incidents that they were aware of to support these contentions. One athlete acknowledged, "some of the young girls in my gym always seemed to be hurting which doesn't seem right for them at such a young age". However, later in the interview he commented, "feeling pain all of the time just comes with the territory, it's part of being a high level gymnast" (Athlete M1, 2001). The lack of respect these athletes showed for their bodies (i.e., normalization of pain) and those of other youth athletes, substantiates the lack of critical understanding elite athletes have of their own safety and well being.

On the other hand, coaches outlined several examples that could raise concern for youth in high performance sport. Each of the coaches addressed the issues of extensive hours of training, and lack of free time for socialization. One coach remarked that training hours is a huge concern, "it's like a full time job plus going to school" (Coach F2, 2001). Another stated, "there are many important factors of childhood lost due to extensive involvement" (Coach F1, 2001). Most significant to this sub-problem was a remark by coach M2, who talked about a colleague who required the athletes to complete all of the compulsory practice lists before they were allowed to leave. This often meant kids spending upwards of five and six hours in the gym per day. However, he did qualify his statement by stating, "this doesn't happen anymore and it is unlikely that the parents or the [provincial gymnastics] federation would allow such practices" (Coach M2, 2001).

Coach F1 identified a very specific incident that demonstrates another of the problems associated with youth involvement in competitive sport.

There is often a lack of supervision for these kids at competitions. They are there with their coaches, but coaches have a lot of duties and are not always attentive to the athletes. It happened this year, at a competition where a coach was called to a coaches' meeting and a stranger accosted her 12-year old athlete. It really puts things into perspective for you as a coach. (Coach F1, 2001)

Young athletes are unknowingly put into extremely vulnerable positions, as demonstrated by this situation. However, the nature of the sport of gymnastics often precludes regard for cautionary measures in favour of attaining the ultimate goals of competitiveness.

The coaches each mentioned some of the possible negative outcomes of high performance sport for youth, such as lack of socialization, loss of family time, and loss of educational opportunities. Coach F2 commented on her knowledge of several incidents of physical and psychological abuse by a coach towards an athlete, however would not describe specific details. She explained the significance of the power relationship that exists in this training environment between coach and athlete. She understood the confounding factors of this relationship that could very easily lead to problematic relationships (Coach F2, 2001). Coach M2 also stated that he had never been privy to a harassing or abusive situation, but was certain that these incidents do occur in Canada and are not necessarily isolated cases as often believed (2001). This contradicts the viewpoint of GCG administrators that these are 'isolated' incidents that do not need specific attention. Further, each coach noted that when cases of this type do occur, they are not aware of any avenues of redress for dealing with the problems. The *Sport*

Canada Funding and Accountability Framework requires national sport organisations to have a harassment policy and methods of neutral arbitration in place, however it appears that gymnastics coaches and athletes are not aware of such procedures. In the interviews, administrators revealed that GCG has a harassment policy and an arbitration procedure, yet national team coaches and athletes were unaware that such procedures exist within this organisation.

The interviews revealed coaches' and athletes' attention to some of the pertinent issues, but also their abhorrence of the lack of measures to deal with these issues/incidents. Coach M1 talked in detail about a coach at a national competition who was on the floor, drinking alcohol during the meet. Even after being reported to the meet director and GCG officials, no action was taken as no recourse for arbitration of this issue was in place. Further, no persons of authority were willing to address this episode, brushing it off as another 'isolated incident.' "What if something had happened, who really has the authority in that situation? We all could have been in serious trouble and no one was willing to take control of the situation. It's sad, really" (Coach M1, 2001).

Coaches showed a critical understanding of the nature of competitive sport involvement that supports the academic literature regarding the problematic issues such as harassment, over training, and lack of socialization (i.e., David, 1993a, 1993b; Donnelly, 1993, 1997). Furthermore, the interviews supported the contention that athletes directly involved in high performance sport will not view the problematic issues related with involvement in a critical fashion. This may be due to the direct association they have with the sport or the fear of being reprimanded by those in control of the sporting environment.

Sub-problem #3b

What legitimations and attributions are relevant to those affected by policy?

Directional Proposition

Coaches and athletes will provide feedback for legitimations and attributions they consider pertinent to the development of a policy for youth elite athletes.

Coaches had definite ideas regarding the implementation of guidelines that would make the sport safer and more enjoyable for youth (see Table 2). Athletes perceived their sport to be impeccable for the most part and saw no concrete reason for changes to be made affecting the involvement of youth at high levels, except to reiterate the positive aspects of involvement (see Table 3).

Coaches demonstrated their keen knowledge of the sport and their ability to think critically about the close relationship between coach and athlete. While their responses do not cover the entire scope (i.e., emotional stress, disrupted family life, injuries, dietary problems, politics) of problems visible in the academic research for youth athletes, they do suggest awareness of the concerns for youth in high performance sport. One coach concluded by saying, "I am so afraid that some day these kids are going to look back on their 'careers' as a gymnast and regret the things they missed out in life, and that doesn't seem fair for them" (Coach F2, 2001).

Despite the close attachment to and involvement in the sport of gymnastics, high performance athletes that were interviewed saw few problematic issues in elite sport involvement. Table 3 demonstrates that the athletes suggested only two direct rationales and recommended actions in the interviews. While both recommendations extend upon those given by administrators and coaches, the lack of a clear explanation or critical

Table 2: Coach Perceptions: Legitimizations and Attributions for Youth Sport Policy

	LEGITIMATIONS	ATTRIBUTIONS
1	Youth need to be supported financially in their quest for excellence without compromising their integrity (M1).	Support travel financially within Canada for youth athletes to foster a healthy atmosphere and appreciation for the Canadian culture of sport (M1, M2, F2).
2	Youth in high performance sport need support services available to ensure that their needs are met (M1, M2, F1, F2).	Services such as psychological counselling, social counsellors, tutors (education), and medical aid (physiotherapy and other needed services) need to be readily available to elite youth athletes (M1, M2, F1, F2).
3	Developing high performance level coaches need available resources to ensure they develop the skills required to coach youth at elite levels (communication skills, psychological preparation skills, technical skills) (M1, M2, F1, F2).	To develop skills for high performance sport, current elite level coaches should mentor developing coaches. They should be required to attend sessions (i.e., nutritional, psychological) that help to ensure the holistic wellness of the athlete (M1, M2, F1, F2).
4	Athletes who do not attain the 'ultimate' goal [Olympic team] still <i>endure</i> the same avenues to get to that point and need to feel appreciated (M1, F2).	There needs to be a recognition or awards system for all youth athletes in high performance sport to ensure that they are valued (M1, F2).

5	Athletes need to be treated with fairness and respect and when this is not occurring, they need to have avenues of redress (M1, F1, F2).	There needs to be formal, confidential grievance procedures for athletes, to encourage them to speak out about indecencies against them (F1, F2).
6	Young athletes need support in deciding to leave the system. "Many are disillusioned by the whole process" (F2).	Education and support services need to be readily available to athletes as they make the decision to retire. These services need to be visible and easily accessible for athletes in this transition phase (F1, F2).

Table 3: Athlete Perceptions: Legitimizations and Attributions for Youth Sport Policy

	LEGITIMATIONS	ATTRIBUTIONS
1	The risk of injury in gymnastics is very high and this needs to be addressed to ensure the safety of athletes (M1, M2, F2).	Greater precautionary measures in setting up equipment, and athlete preparation (physical and mental) need to be addressed to ensure the safety of the athletes (M1, M2, F2).
2	Coaches need to know how to mentally prepare an athlete (F1, M2).	Coaches should be required to take courses in sport psychology to ensure they are capable of aiding their athletes in psychological preparation (F1, M2).

understanding behind the rationales was apparent. One athlete demonstrated her naïveté as she described having heard of coaches who yell at the athletes, but only saw this as part of the sport. "...sure it happens and it might not be good, but what can you do about it [said cynically]" (Athlete F1).

Furthermore, despite the age discrepancy between female gymnasts (15-18 years old) and male gymnasts (23-26 years old) interviewed, there were no distinct differences in their views of problems in the sport. The two main rationales for increasing standards of youth in high performance sport were to reduce the risk of injury and to ensure that coaches were well qualified to make certain that athletes were prepared for competition in all aspects, and in particular in psychological readiness. This demonstrates a lack of support for the directional proposition that athletes would have specific knowledge of problematic issues of youth in high performance sport. This attitude may be due to the fact that these athletes are readily involved in the current sport system and have not had the opportunity to reflect on the issues and the environment to which they are so closely attached.

Sub-problem #3c:

What process would coaches and athletes see as relevant in the development of a youth sport policy?

Directional Proposition:

Athletes and coaches will have specific ideas about the process for policy formation and want to be involved in this process.

Coaches and athletes were relatively unaware of the current process that GCG or the federal government uses in the formation of policy, however they had distinct ideas

for ensuring that the needs and rights of the athletes are met through this process. Coach M2 believed that GCG currently uses the Carver Model of policy governance, suggesting, “this model does not allow for the involvement of athletes and coaches which might not be appropriate to ensuring that the opinions of the constituents are understood” (2001). Further, they validated the directional proposition that athletes and coaches would want to be involved in the decision-making process. Only one of the athletes could say with some certainty that athlete representation was a part of the GCG policy development process (Athlete M2, 2001) but all coaches and athletes believed that this was an important aspect to be included in the process.

Currently, GCG has athlete representation on the Board of Directors and on several of the program committees. All athletes and coaches were very surprised that there was no female athlete representative on the Women’s Program Committee, and felt that this needed to be changed. The female athletes were appalled that GCG would ignore their opinions and outwardly choose not to have representation due to their age (Athletes F1, F2, 2001). One of the male athletes poignantly commented, “I am surprised that they are allowed to discriminate so outright like that, and nobody says anything” (Athlete M1, 2001). The interviews revealed that the coaches and the athletes felt that athletes representation in the decision making process was very important. Further, coaches suggested there also needs to be representation from individuals who provide services to the athletes such as medical aid, psychological counsellors, social counsellors, and educational advisors to ensure that their needs are met.

Finally, those interviewed felt that the process of developing a policy for youth athletes needs to involve several open forums of discussion, as it would affect the way the

sport is developed and administered. "With GCG being so top heavy, the last thing we need is to have more money put into a program that only the Board of Directors has decided on and is aware of. We need to be involved" (Coach M1, 2001). Furthermore, a concern was expressed for ensuring that those with the decision making power [Board of Directors] have an unbiased point of view and ensure that the athletes' interests come first. "I don't know how you accomplish something like this, maybe that's why, like you're talking about, federal government policy, that affects all sports, might be a way to getting at some of the issues" (Coach F2, 2001).

The interviews, performed for the express purpose of exploring the opinions of coaches and athletes, demonstrated that coaches and athletes have distinct ideas about the issues relevant to youth in high performance sport. While coaches demonstrated a critical understanding of some of the concerns for youth in elite levels of sport, the ignorance of the athletes to these issues is problematic. The interviews suggest a sport culture that facilitates ignorance in the athletes through a lack of clarity on the system in which they are so deeply involved. Furthermore, this research demonstrates the coaches' unique understanding of problems relevant to youth in high performance sport. The rationales and recommended actions developed from these interviews are important in understanding this culture of youth sport and in developing policy to ensure the holistic well-being of athletes within the sport system.

Finally, the interviews with athletes and coaches extended upon the research citing the need for the protection of youth athletes through legal standards. Academic literature has expressed a variety of resolutions such as labour laws (Beamish and Borowy, 1988; Cantelon, 1981; Donnelly, 1997, 2000), and child welfare laws

(Tenebaum, 1996; Donnelly, 1997, 2000). This research provides viable evidence that extends upon the concepts of youth in need of protection in high performance sport. While it does not coincide directly with research in terms of labour laws or child welfare laws, coach and athlete interviews have provided support for implementing political or legal action towards ensuring the holistic well-being of youth athletes.

Chapter 6 – Youth Elite Sport Policy

I. Draft Proposal

Information drawn from the critical policy analysis and interviews with administrators, athletes, and coaches was compiled to develop a draft proposal for a youth sport policy (see Appendix G). This proposed framework incorporates the key issues gleaned through the interviews and identifies core federal government values as expressed in federal government sport policy documentation. The primary underlying assumption that guides the framework is that the federal government should take an active role in the regulation of youth athletes to ensure their holistic well-being, which is more important than performance outcomes.

The proposed framework builds upon the central values expressed by the federal government. Key organisations from the sport community are identified in order to encompass a wide representation in the decision making process. Athletes play a fundamental role in the development of the youth sport policy to ensure that the needs and rights of young athletes are expressed and deeply considered. The proposed behavioural outcomes reflect the thoughts of those involved in the interviews, however may not fully reflect individuals throughout the sporting community, and therefore serve as a starting point to build upon. The proposed legitimations and attributions provide an important foundation for reflecting on the needs and rights of youth athletes in a holistic manner. They are not complete, however they do provide important information as gathered through research from those directly affected by youth sport policy.

Sub-problem #4:

How are the proposed processes, legitimations, and attributions for the development of federal sport policies pertaining to youth elite athletes reflective of academic/activist approaches concerning youth sport?

Directional Proposition:

A critique of the proposed framework for policy development by academics involved in this area of study will provide minor, but insightful additions to the proposal.

The proposed framework was submitted to experts/activists (Dr. Jay Coakley and Dr. Bruce Kidd) in the area of youth sport to attain feedback. These academic experts were asked to provide feedback regarding the following criteria:

- a) Are the problems and issues consistent with research in the area of youth in high performance sport?
- b) Are the proposed recommendations congruent with the researched needs and rights of youth athletes?
- c) Is the proposed framework reflective of academic/activist research in the area of youth sport and federal sport policy?

Responses from the experts were returned via electronic mail to ensure complete information was attained. These responses revealed that the proposed framework is reflective of academic/activist research in the area of youth sport policy. There were several minor adjustments suggested by the experts/activists to the proposed framework. The following lists the suggestions made on the proposed framework to bring it more in line with academic research in this area:

- a) The need to use more informed, distinct terminology was noted by the experts as being important for enhancing the legitimacy of the proposed framework. The concept of “happiness” was called into question. This term does not provide a concrete concept that can be measured. Dr. Coakley suggested instead the following: “opportunities to develop physical skills in settings where spontaneity and expressiveness are encouraged.” This concept builds upon the notion of ensuring the holistic well-being of youth athletes. Furthermore, it would be valuable to identify who “the sporting community” is, as well as the NSOs to be involved in order to increase clarity within the framework.
- b) The experts/activists stated that the proposed recommendations were generally congruent with the researched needs and rights of youth athletes. However, Dr. Coakley noted the need to add the concept of informed consent under problem #3 for youth. This concept suggests that youth under a certain age cannot lawfully make their own decisions; therefore, requiring them to sign contracts or set outcome goals is not realistic. The concept of informed consent for youth in high performance sport needs to be explored in greater detail.
- c) The issue of building age appropriate programs was implicitly built into the proposed framework, however, the need to develop age-appropriate forms of support was noted as being an important point to add to problem #4. This would increase the possibility that the needs of all levels and ages of athletes are being met. Furthermore, included in this concept is the development of

education and support for parents with children involved in high levels of support (Coakley, 2001; Kidd, 2001).

- d) The concept of a national task force to address youth in high performance sport is considered by the academics as an important step toward addressing youth sport outcomes. However, Dr. Kidd notes that there needs to be a more developed framework that details the extent of youth involvement, and demonstrates the legitimate jurisdiction of the federal government (2001).
- e) Parents of elite level athletes are integral in high performance youth sport. Therefore, they should be included as part of the process in developing a youth sport policy (Kidd, 2001).

II. Revised Draft Framework (revisions are bolded)

DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH ELITE SPORT POLICY

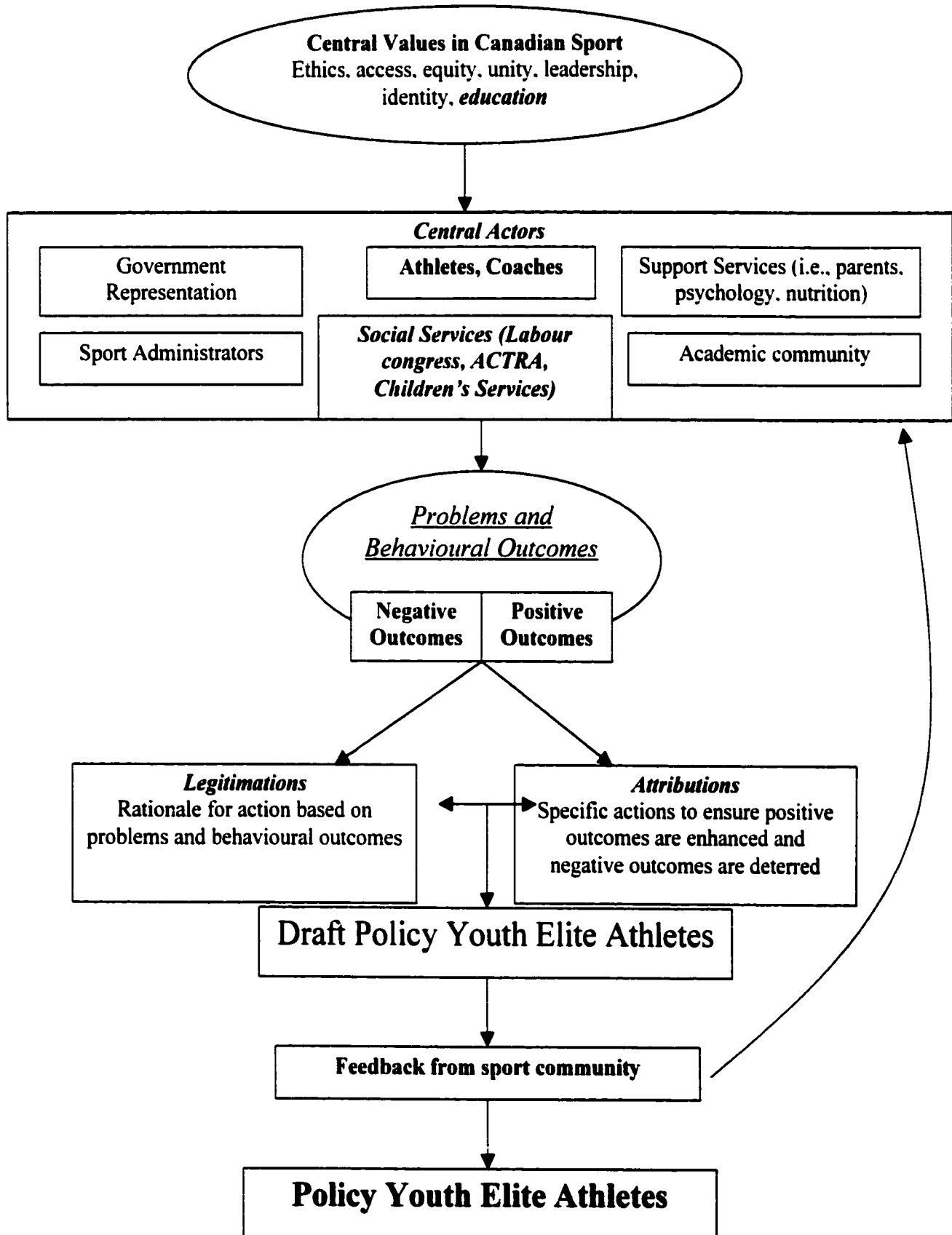
The following is a proposed framework for developing a federal policy pertaining to youth in high performance sport. Analysis of federal sport policy documentation has demonstrated the federal government disregard for this important group. Interviews with administrators, coaches, and athletes involved in elite levels of gymnastics for youth have supported the need to develop guidelines pertaining to youth high performance athletes in order to ensure their health, and safety ***in an environment that fosters opportunities to develop physical skills and encourages in spontaneity and expressiveness.*** This proposed framework addresses key issues gleaned through the interviews with administrators, coaches, and athletes. Elements within the proposal build upon the responses obtained in the interviews, and are placed within an adapted guiding framework from Chalip's Critical Policy Analysis (1995, 1996).

The underlying assumptions that guide the framework are:

- a) The framework should build upon previous work regarding federal sport policy and youth sport.
- b) The framework should ***identify and involve*** individuals who will be responsible for implementing the policy and those who will be affected by its creation.
- c) The federal government should take an active role in the regulation of youth elite athletes.
- d) The holistic well-being of youth elite athletes is more important than performance outcomes.

Process (See Figure 2)

Figure 2 – Youth Sport Policy Process



1. ***Research pertaining to children and youth in high performance sport will be developed further to demonstrate the need for a national task force on youth elite sport before commencing this process. This research should also demonstrate the extent of youth involvement (i.e., number and ages of children/youth involved in elite level sports, and the number of sports affected). Substantial evidence demonstrating the federal government's jurisdiction in this matter will be clarified before pursuing policy development and implementation.***
2. Central values espoused by the Canadian Federal Sport System need to be clarified and confirmed as a starting point. Key values which were expressed in the federal documents reviewed (see appendix 1, p. 122) are:
 - i. Ethics, equity, and access in sport (6,10,11,12,13,14,15)¹³
 - ii. Cultural identity of sport (6,7,8,12,13,14,15)
 - iii. Health and fitness through sport (2,3,4,6,7,8,9,11,12,13,14,15)
 - iv. Canadian identity (5,7,12,13,14,15)
 - v. Promotion of core values (3,7,11,12,13,14,15)
 - vi. ***Education***
3. Key persons should be selected to form a task force to oversee the development of the policy. Each of the following organisations will select key individual(s) to be involved in the process and to encompass a wide variety of points of view. Adequate representation should be sought from the following organisations ***representing the sporting community:***

¹³ Number corresponds to the federal sport policy document where the value was expressed.

- i. *Sport Canada (2)* – This organization governs key aspects of the sport system in Canada including the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework, which should be used to aid in the implementation of the policy. Therefore they should have key persons (2) involved in the decision making process.
- ii. *Athletes CAN (2)* – While there should be many athletes involved in the decision making process, this organization offers special services to athletes and has a key interest in the well-being, needs, and rights of athletes. Furthermore this organization should play a key role in ensuring the implementation of the policy, and therefore should be adequately represented during the decision making process.
- iii. *Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (1)* – This organization offers key support services to athletes on the national team to ensure fair and ethical treatment of athletes. Individuals should aid in the provision of several of the recommendations that relate to services for athletes and therefore should be involved in the decision making process.
- iv. *Coaching Association of Canada (1)* – The Coaching Association will be required to take part in several of the recommendations, if carried out, relating to coaches and programs to ensure education regarding youth sport issues. Therefore this organization should be represented to ensure its interests are voiced in the decision-making process
- v. *Canadian Olympic Association (1)* – Policy decisions and changes will affect those involved in national level sport and members of the national

team who will/may be members of the COA, therefore this organization should be represented in developing a policy of this nature.

- vi. *National Sport Organisations* - Special consideration shall be given to ensuring that there is adequate (40%)¹⁴ representation by athletes on the task force. National Sport Organisations that have extensive involvement of youth at elite levels (i.e., gymnastics, figure skating, swimming) will be given priority consideration to ensure that representatives from the Youth National Teams (1), and the Senior National Teams (2) are selected to the task force. Interviews with coaches and athletes revealed that these individuals' needs and rights are being taken for granted and are not being heard by those in positions of power, therefore this group should have the opportunity to be directly involved regarding decisions that will affect them. Further, ***representation (volunteer (1) and professional staff (1)) from seven randomly selected NSO's, which have extensive high performance youth involvement, will be included as part of the task force committee.***
- vii. *Academic Institutions* – Special consideration will be given to ensuring that three (3) academics/experts in the area youth sport will participate in the development of a policy for youth elite athletes. These persons have access to special resources and information regarding the areas of policy being addressed. Furthermore, they can offer an external critical point of view since they are not attached to an organization with a key interest in the sport system.

viii. *Support Service Personnel* – The following individuals will be commissioned by Athletes CAN to participate in the process: Sport Psychologist (1), Sport Nutritionist (1), Education Personnel (1), Harassment Officer (1), Medical Expert (1), *parents of elite athletes (1 male, 1 female)*, *Labour Congress (1)*, *ACTRA (1)*, *Children's Aid Society (1)*. These persons play a key role in ensuring the health, safety, and happiness of elite athletes. They should have the best interest of the athletes in mind and therefore be involved in decisions that will affect their services to youth athletes.

4. Formulation of a policy that aids in ensuring the health, safety, and happiness of youth participants will be addressed through ad-hoc committees of members of the task force. The task force as a whole will first agree on a list of problems, and positive and negative behavioural outcomes. Each ad-hoc committee will maintain no more than 6 persons with at least 2 athletes per committee. Each committee will formulate a set of legitimations and attributions for addressing the issues of youth high performance athletes. The chair of the task force (elected by the members of the task force) will compile and categorize the recommended actions. These will be assembled into a set of workable actions and rationales and resubmitted to the committee as a whole to debate. A series of meetings will be conducted to refine the legitimations and attributions and to decide on the most appropriate mechanisms to address these problems and recommendations.

¹⁴ Task Force n=35; 40% athlete representation=14

5. The task force will create a document outlining the proposed rationales and actions for the youth sport policy to submit to the sporting community for feedback. A timeline for feedback will be given with the document to ensure timely input from the sport community.
6. The committee as a whole will meet again to discuss the feedback from the sport community and to finalise the recommended rationales and attributions. Further, they will finalise a three-year plan for implementing the revised policy from the recommendations of the various ad-hoc committees. This plan will include an appropriate timeline for implementation, and the organisation(s)/personnel to implement the recommended actions. It will also include evaluation measures for assessing the policy actions throughout its implementation.

Draft Behavioural Outcomes for Youth Elite Athletes

<i>NEGATIVE OUTCOMES</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injuries (high risk skills, aggression, violence) (A2,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K)¹⁵ • Over training (long hours of practice and competition) (A1,A3,CF1,CF2,CM2,AM1; A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K) • Social Issues (loss of childhood, missed social opportunities, lack of social network) (A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; A,D,F,G,H,J,K) • Educational Issues (missed schooling, missed educational advancement opportunities) (A3,CF1,CF2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; C,D,E,F,G,H,J,K)

¹⁵ Refers to gymnastics administrators, coaches, and athletes who addressed these behavioural outcomes in the interviews, as well as the academic sources that referenced these outcomes.

- **Support Network** (psychological, social, physiological)
(A1,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AM1; A,D,F,G,H,I,J,K)
- **Family Issues** (missed time with family, sibling rivalries)
(A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1; A,E,F,G,H,I,J,K)
- **Specialization** (too early to have opportunity for choices, negative physical effects) (CF1,CF2,AM2; A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K)
- **Retirement** (social problems, educational concerns, lack of direction and support) (CF1,CM1,CM2; F,G,H,I,J,K)
- **Harassment and Abuse** (A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1; A,E,F,G,H,I,J,K)
- **Negative Physical Activity** (as punishment) (CF1,AM2; A,C,E,G,J,K)

POSITIVE OUTCOMES

- **Discipline** (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2;
A,C,D,E,F,G,J,K)
- **Time Management** (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2;
E,F,G,J,K)
- **Self-Confidence** (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF2,AM1; E,F,K)
- **Leadership** (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM2,AM2; E,J,K)
- **Goal setting** (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,AM2; C,G,I,J,K)
- **Co-operation skills** (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; A,I,K)
- **Communication Skills** (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM2,AF1,AM2; F,I,K)
- **Group work and team cohesion**
(A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; C,G,I,J,K)

Draft Recommendations for Youth in High Performance Sport

The following recommendations address problems that relate to specific issues emerging from the research interviews with administrators, coaches, and athletes involved in high performance gymnastics for youth. The negative outcomes addressed by the research participants provide a basis for the rationale(s) of the recommended action(s). Further, the positive outcomes relate to the beneficial aspects of elite sport involvement addressed in the research, which should be enhanced by the implementation of the recommended action(s).

1	PROBLEM: YOUTH IN HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT SPEND EXTENSIVE TIME IN TRAINING AND COMPETITION RESULTING IN LOSS OF TIME FOR DEVELOPING SOCIALISATION SKILLS AND EXPERIENCING OTHER ACTIVITIES ¹⁶ .	
Negative Outcomes: overtraining, social problems, specialisation, family issues		Positive Outcomes: time management skills, social skills
Legitimisations		Attributions
Youth in high performance sport should be viewed as children first and athletes second. Children need time to play, socialise, complete schoolwork, and spend time with family.		National Sport Organizations should regulate the number of allowable hours per day and per week of training for youth under the age of 18. Guidelines set by the federal government for youth labour shall be used as a starting point.

¹⁶ Relevant interviews: A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K

2	PROBLEM: SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO ATHLETES ARE NOT WELL KNOWN BY COACHES AND ATHLETES AND INADEQUATE SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOUTH IN HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT ¹⁷ .	
Negative Outcomes: education issues, family problems, harassment and abuse, social problems		Positive Outcomes: leadership, social skills, self-confidence, goal setting, communication skills
Legitimations		Attributions
Youth in high performance sport need to understand the potential ramifications of their commitment to the sport and to be aware of the support services available to them. Further, they need to understand that there are free confidential services and avenues for pursuing problems and complaints.		National Sport Organisations will be required to hold a seminar for all national team members to inform athletes of their rights. In conjunction with Athletes CAN and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, each NSO will ensure that all athletes have equal access to services offered to them and are fully aware of the confidential grievance and arbitration procedures.

¹⁷ Relevant interviews: A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: E,F,J,K

3	<p>PROBLEM: IT IS STANDARD PRACTICE FOR ELITE YOUTH GYMNASTS TO START PARTICIPATION AT A VERY EARLY AGE (5,6 YEARS OLD) AND OFTEN TO MOVE AWAY FROM HOME AND FAMILY TO ATTEND NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES OR TRAIN WITH A SPECIFIED COACH¹⁸.</p>
<p>Negative Outcomes: family problems, negative physical activity, harassment, specialisation, social problems</p>	<p>Positive Outcomes: social skills, self-confidence, goal setting, time management</p>
<p>Legitimizations</p>	<p>Attributions</p>
<p>Youth should be afforded the opportunity to experience a variety of activities with the support of their family social networks and without emphasis on competitive sport.</p>	<p>Each National Sport Organization must set up a structure of participation for youth that does not emphasise specialization at too early an age. This will be regulated in keeping with the National Coaching Certification Program guidelines.</p> <p>Furthermore, competition for youth under the age of 13 will be minimised and emphasis placed on participation in a variety of physical activities. Further, Athletes CAN and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport will actively monitor competition at the youth elite level.<i>[informed consent]</i></p>

¹⁸ Relevant interviews: A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K

4	<p>PROBLEM: ATHLETES IN HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT (IN PARTICULAR YOUTH) HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME WHEN LEAVING THE SPORT. THE SPORT SYSTEM IS NOT OFFERING PROPER EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE IN LEAVING HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT¹⁹.</p>
<p>Negative Outcomes: social problems, educational issues</p>	<p>Positive Outcomes: social skills, self-confidence, goal setting, time management, communication skills</p>
<p>Legitimations</p>	<p>Attributions</p>
<p>Youth involved in high levels of sport participation need support when the decision is made to leave the sport.</p>	<p>Each NSO will set up an education program for elite athletes <i>and parents</i> regarding their post sport career options. Special consideration and support will be given to athletes under the age of 18 when retiring <i>with age appropriate education</i>. It will be the responsibility of the NSO to set up a program offering support services for athletes during their retirement stages.</p>

¹⁹ Relevant Interviews: A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1 and Relevant Literature: E,F,G,H,I,J

5	<p>PROBLEM: COACHES IN GYMNASTICS DO NOT SEEM TO BE AWARE OF SOME OF THE NEGATIVE OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH YOUTH ELITE SPORT INVOLVEMENT. FURTHER, LACK OF RECOGNITION BY GCG TO THESE OUTCOMES FOSTERS IGNORANCE AMONG THOSE INVOLVED WITH THE ORGANIZATION UNLESS THEY ARE EDUCATED ABOUT THESE FUNDAMENTAL OUTCOMES²⁰.</p>
<p>Negative Outcomes: family problems, harassment and abuse. athlete rights, social problems, overtraining, injuries</p>	<p>Positive Outcomes: social skills, self-confidence, communication skills</p>
<p>Legitimizations</p>	<p>Attributions</p>
<p>Coaches need to be aware of and understand the special circumstances for youth involved in elite levels of sport.</p>	<p>The CAC and NSO's in conjunction with academic institutions will develop a program for educating coaches regarding the issue of youth in sport. Each aspect of the NCCP (theory, technical, and practical) shall contain a component regarding the special issues for youth in high levels of sport. Aspiring national level coaches will be required to apprentice with current national level coaches for a set period of time as part of the certification program. National level coaches will be required to take upgrading courses in Risk Management, Athlete Nutrition, <i>Sociology</i>, and Sport Psychology.</p>

²⁰ Relevant Interviews: A1,A2,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: C,E,G,H,J,K

6	<p>PROBLEM: COACHES AND ATHLETES DO NOT FEEL THAT THEIR OPINIONS ARE VALUED. THERE IS A LACK OF FEMALE ATHLETE REPRESENTATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES. WHICH DEMONSTRATES A LACK OF COMMITMENT TO ATHLETE INVOLVEMENT. COACHES AND ATHLETES FEEL THAT YOUTH ARE COMPETENT ENOUGH TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION MAKING THAT AFFECTS THEIR SPORT INVOLVEMENT AND ARE NOT BEING INCLUDED IN THIS PROCESS²¹.</p>
<p>Negative Outcomes: family problems, negative physical activity, harassment and abuse, athlete rights, specialisation, social problems, overtraining, injuries, support services, educational problems</p>	<p>Positive Outcomes: leadership, goal setting, time management, communication skills</p>
<p>Legitimisations</p>	<p>Attributions</p>
<p>Youth in high performance sport have a right to participate in the decisions that affect their sport involvement.</p>	<p>All National Sport Organisations and the Canadian Olympic Association will be required to have adequate (20%) athlete representation on all working committees. Those NSO's that have extensive youth involvement at elite levels must ensure that representation is also attained from youth national team members.</p>

²¹ Relevant Interviews: A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: F,J,K

7	PROBLEM: THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF SPORT INVOLVEMENT NEED TO CONTINUE TO BE EMPHASISED ²² .
Positive Outcomes: leadership, social skills, self-confidence, goal setting, time management, communication skills, co-operation skills, group cohesion skills	
Legitimisations	Attributions
Youth in high performance sport have a right to participate in an environment that emphasises the positive outcomes related to elite sport involvement.	Sport Canada will oversee the implementation of the previous six (6) attributions through the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework, while continuing to emphasise the positive outcomes associated with high performance sport involvement. A series of guided workshops for the high performance athletes and coaches will be developed by Athletes CAN and the Centre for Ethics in Sport to formally develop skills systematically towards these positive outcomes.

²² Relevant Interviews: A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: C,H,I,K

Appendix 1

Federal Government Policy Documents

1. 1961 – Bill C- 131 The Fitness and Amateur Sport Act
2. 1969 – Report of the Task Force on Sport for Canadians
3. 1969 – Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness, and Amateur Sport in Canada (P.S. Ross Report)
4. 1970 – A Proposed Sport Policy for Canadians
5. 1971 – Sport Canada/Recreation Canada
6. 1976 – Unification of Sport
7. 1977 – Toward a National Policy on Amateur Sport
8. 1979 – Toward a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation
9. 1979 – Partners in Pursuit of Excellence – A National Policy on Amateur Sport
10. 1981- A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80's
11. 1986 – Sport Canada - Women in Sport Policy
12. 1988 – Toward 2000: Building Canada's Sport System
13. 1992 – Sport The Way Ahead
14. 1996 – Sport Funding and Accountability Framework
15. 1998 – Sport in Canada: Everybody's Business

REFERENCES FOR YOUTH ELITE SPORT POLICY

Interviews

3 Gymnastics Canada Administrators (A1.A2.A3)

2 Female Gymnastic Coaches (CF1, CF2)

2 Male Gymnastic Coaches (CM1, CM2)

2 Female Gymnastic Athletes (AF1, AF2)

2 Male Gymnastic Athletes (AM1, AM2)

Academic Literature Relevant to Proposed Framework

- A. Chan, K.. & Micheli, L. J. (eds.) (1998). Sports and children. Hong-Kong: Williams and Wilkins Asia Pacific Ltd.
- B. Coakley, J. (2000). Sport in society: Issues and controversies. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- C. Creff, A. (1985). No medal is worth a child's health. Médecine du sport, 59, 710-713. Saint Michel, Paris: Confederation Force Ouvrière.
- D. David, P. (1993a). La protection des droits de l'enfant dans le sport de haute compétition. (The protection of children's right in elite sport). Geneva, SW: Défense des Enfants-International.
- E. David, P. (1993b). Children and sport: Accomplishment or exploitation? International Children's Rights Monitor, 10(4), 8-12.
- F. Donnelly, P. (1993). Young athletes need child protection law. Canadian Speeches: Issues of the Day 7, (March 10), 47-51.
- G. Donnelly, P. (1997). Child labour, sport labour: Applying child labour laws to sport. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 32(4), 389-406.

- H. Donnelly, P. (2000). Youth sport in Canada: Problems and resolutions. In R. Jones, and K Armour (eds.). The sociology of sports in practice. Harbour, UK: Pearson Education.
- I. Nash, H.L. (1987). Elite child-athletes: How much does victory cost? The physician and sports medicine, 15(8), 129-133.
- J. Ryan, J. (1995). Little girls in pretty boxes: The making and breaking of elite gymnasts and figure skaters. New York, NY: Warner Books.
- K. Wilson, T. (1997). What price glory? Effects of gymnastics on physical and emotional health. Sojourner: The women's forum, 22(8), 9-10.

III. Reflections on the Proposed Framework

The guiding assumption for this research was that federal government sport policy initiatives should assist in protecting youth athletes from harm and exploitation. The proposed framework builds upon this concept by suggesting specific actions for developing a policy that would aid in the protection of youth athletes. However, the proposed framework is only a beginning point in addressing concerns over the ethical nature of youth sport. While policies can act as a guiding context for enhancing the principles of health and safety for youth in sport, they are not sufficient outcomes in themselves. Continued research in the area of youth in high performance sport will allow for a more complete understanding of the mechanisms available for the protection of youth. Policy is only one method for illuminating and addressing concerns regarding elite youth athletes. There needs to be a greater emphasis on education to address the issues discussed in this proposed framework.

The proposed policy actions allow for a proactive approach towards the health and safety of youth. Previous methods for addressing the issues of youth in high performance sport have included education, child welfare laws, and child labour laws (Cantelon, 1981; Beamish and Borowy, 1988; David, 1993a; Donnelly, 1993, 1997). The connection of high performance sport involvement to child labour issues and child welfare issues joins with this research's focus on the holistic development and well-being of youth in sport. Policy action develops another method for attempting to resolve some of the problems; however, it is not adequate on its own. Informing policy action with child labour laws and child welfare laws would be useful when developing a framework that enhances the well being of youth athletes.

Chapter 7 – Summary, Contributions, and Recommendations

I. Summary

This research was designed to explore what process(es), rationale(s) and strategies might be appropriate when addressing issues arising for high performance youth in federal sport policy initiatives. The problem was addressed through a historical analysis of federal sport policy documents (1961-2000) and a contemporary exploration of one National Sport Organisation, Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique. This process provided important insights for developing a proposed framework for a youth sport policy. This framework serves as a starting point for developing policy that attempts to ensure the safety, health and happiness of youth in high performance sport.

Federal government sport policy documents were used as a foundation for understanding sport policy in relation to youth in high performance sport. Throughout the development of sport policy (1961-2000) youth became increasingly more important and a prominent benefactor of sport policy. However, youth elite athletes have not been identified as an important group in sport policy, despite the federal government's increasing emphasis on high performance sport. Rather elite athletes are regarded as a homogeneous group with the same interests and rights.

The historical analysis of how sport policy included/excluded youth as an important group provided a basis for exploring current sport policy in one National Sport Organisation, Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique. Interviews with administrators in this organization revealed the lack of policy development or programming to deter some of the negative behaviours associated with youth elite sport. While no policies or programs exist within this organisation, administrators were aware of many concerns such as over

training, lack of socialization, loss of educational opportunities, and harassment associated with youth involvement in high performance gymnastics. Administrators offered no proactive methods to address these issues within the current Canadian sport system.

Interviews with key beneficiaries of sport policy (coaches and athletes) in gymnastics provided important insights for developing rationales and strategies for the implementation of a youth sport policy. Coaches (i.e., adults) were well aware of the problematic issues associated with elite sport involvement, while athletes (i.e., youth) lacked a critical understanding of the problems associated with elite sport involvement. This may well stem from the unequal power relationship that exists in the sport system (Kirby et al. 2000), with youth being subordinated by adults in terms of power, and particularly as it concerns knowledge about their sport conditions. Furthermore, these athletes represent a distinct group of elite who have excelled and stayed in the sporting environment, therefore may not represent the array of possible negative outcomes associated with elite sport involvement.

The development of a draft framework for a youth sport policy built upon the rationales and actions identified by administrators, coaches, and athletes. The draft proposal provides a basis for future development of policies promoting the holistic development of youth athletes. The proposed framework aligns with academic literature in the area of sport policy and builds upon the federal sport policy concept of an athlete centred system. Further, it acknowledges youth elite athletes as a separate group in need of particular attention. This researched framework thus provides an understanding of

how social change might be facilitated through proactive approaches to sport delivery that ensure the safety and health of youth athletes.

II. Research Contributions

Sport Management

The framework utilised for the Critical Policy Analysis was adapted from Chalip's work in the area of sport policy (1995,1996). Chalip's work has focussed on examining sport policy through the use of two key procedures (legitimations critique and attributions critique) to identify the assumptions underlying sport policy. This research used a model similar to the legitimations critique and the attributions critique to advance the existing sociological knowledge about and ethical debate on youth in high performance sport. Frisby and Crawford (1994) have argued that through examination of policy and an understanding of its ability to shape sport's social impact, sport management research can be used as a tool for social change. This research extends that concept not only by critically examining policies in terms of a particular social group, but also by suggesting future actions/processes for promoting change. Therefore, this research advances the literature on sport policy research by critically focussing on a neglected group, rather than reinforcing the status quo, in examining sport policy.

Power Relations and Social Change

The nature of youth sport facilitates the consistent subordination of youth by adults in positions of authority. Adults possess the power to construct, implement, and enforce rules, regulations, and policies for youth in high performance sport. This structure presents the paradox that defines youth sport today. Is sport for youth to be the

inherent pursuit of the ultimate prize, or the act of encouraging the integration of physical and social activity in pursuit of holistic development? The current research provided insight into this dilemma by exploring the prevailing perceptions of those directly involved in the delivery and consumption of elite level sport. Interviews with administrators supported dominant conceptions of a top-heavy system that fails to meet the needs and rights of its constituents, despite changes made at the federal level to create a more balanced system (Amis and Burton, 1996; Semotiuk, 1996).

Research in the area of youth sport has presented issues of concern that relate to the culture of elite sport. Youth in high performance sports such as gymnastics risk suffering from a number of issues such as physical and psychological problems, lack of social development, loss of family commitment, and harassment and abuse (Chan and Micheli, 1998; Creff, 1985; David, 1993a, 1993b; Donnelly, 1993, 2000; Martens, & Seefeldt, 1979; Ryan, 1995). The nature of these issues stem from a system that is dominated by adults in the pursuit of excellence. Coaches and parents of youth in high performance sport may be concerned about the issues attached to elite levels of involvement, however it is apparent that an over emphasis on increased performance outcomes can lead to a variety of problems. This research supports that notion, as administrators and coaches (i.e., adults) readily identified issues of concern for youth in high performance sport consistent with the academic literature. However, despite acknowledging the existence of problems, few changes in the system have been made to deter the negative outcomes. Illuminating further the nature of power relations that exists for youth in sport, were the elite level gymnasts interviewed as they were unaware of problems inherent in elite level gymnastics participation, and saw no need and/or felt they

had no ability to change the current system. It is, however, possible that this orientation stems from having never been exposed to any problems in their competitive experience or an inability to view the issues as being problematic at this point in their competitive careers. Furthermore, these athletes represent individuals who have excelled in their particular sport and stayed in the competitive environment. This requires that they “buy into” the values embedded in the socially constructed sport environment. Therefore they may not be representative of the problems that exist in this environment.

Donnelly argues, “responses to social change, and the development of social policy for sport, need to be based upon researched evidence” (2000, p. 167). This research provides concrete evidence relevant to the construction of social policy for youth sport. Further, it offers one procedure for examining issues of an oppressed group (i.e., youth) and determining possible resolutions for improving the holistic well being of this group. While Donnelly states that “Canada has been among the more progressive societies in recognising and attempting to resolve problems with youth sport” (p. 168, 2000), this research does not support that statement, because the GCG has not addressed the problems for high performance youth athletes despite knowledge about possible negative consequences. The federal government has made an attempt to recognise the issue of harassment within the *Sport Funding and Accountability Framework* (1996), however this research revealed that it had little affect on GCG methods for pursuing excellence in young children. This research supports the need to focus on neglected groups, their social context and underlying relations of power in order to enhance social change.

III. Recommendations for Future Research

The nature of this research is exploratory; nevertheless, it provides important insights into future research in the area of youth sport and federal sport policy. This research demonstrated that the federal government has generally ignored the well-being and safety of youth athletes in policy, which is mirrored by the actions of one national sport organisation. Future research should expand upon this notion by exploring policies, programs, and rationales within other national sport organisations. For example, sports such as women's gymnastics and women's figure skating are often seen to involve a number of the same problematic issues (Ryan, 1995), therefore research comparing these sport organisations would be important for identifying commonalities and differences pertinent to sport policy development.

No significant differences were noted in terms of the perceptions of coaches and athletes based on regional (i.e., across Canada) representation; however for many sports this may be an important factor. Future research in the area of youth sport policy should include greater representation of athletes and coaches from across the country to develop a more complete 'picture' of the issues surrounding youth sport.

The only difference noted in this research in terms of gender representation was that female coaches tended to be slightly more forthcoming regarding existing issues in gymnastics. Future studies could include greater representation from both men and women to develop a clearer understanding of the potential relevance of gender within this topic. As well, research could focus on exploring the differences between male and female youth elite gymnasts experiences.

The federal government policy documentation of the early 1990's presented a new model for sport that focussed on an athlete centred system. Despite that change in structure, this study showed GCG administrators' lack of action toward this resolution of problems, and the coaches' and athletes' lack of knowledge of support services available to them. This research, while limited in scope and in numbers of athletes, highlights a significant problem that may exist concerning a lack of communication and coordination within the sport system. Future research focussing on sport policy and elite athletes should address this concern, in order to develop a conceptual framework for understanding the nature of the sport system from the perspective of the needs and rights of athletes.

Finally, this research sought to explore a possible resolution for the problems inherent in youth elite sport. There needs to be research that extends upon this issue in order to encourage government and sport organisations to take an active role in ensuring the health and safety of youth elite athletes. This research only explored the perceptions of athletes successfully involved in the sport system, and thus may not represent the scope of problems inherent in this environment. Future research should include athletes who have retired or dropped out the sporting environment, to encompass a more complete view of the problems associated with elite sport involvement. This type of research contributes towards educating the sport community (i.e., coaches, athletes, administrators, government employees, support personnel), as well as promoting an environment that prioritizes athletes' needs and rights.

Epilogue

In 2001, the federal government is planning to develop a new plan for Canadian sport. A National Summit on Sport was held in Ottawa, Ontario from April 27-28. This Summit was a gathering of members of national, provincial, and municipal governments, members of the sport community, and academics in sport. The objective of this Summit was to discuss a future plan for a Canadian Federal Sport Policy. A proposed action plan had been developed prior to the Summit to guide discussion when developing initiatives for future federal sport policy.

The Proposed Action Plan for the Government of Canada (2001) focussed on a stronger collaboration of key partners within the sporting system concerning issues such as participation, accessibility, school sport and physical education, athlete development, coaching, international rankings, ethical issues, and resolution of disputes in sport. This discussion paper, produced prior to the Summit, summarizes the general outcomes of regional conferences on sport held over the past year. Concerns regarding youth in the discussion paper are similar to previous federal government policies, including stronger physical education programs (Department of Health and Welfare, 1969; Munro, 1971; Campagnolo, 1977, 1979; Regan, 1981; Jelinek, 1986; Makosky et al, 1988; Best et al, 1992; Mills, 1998), promotion of youth national teams (Campagnolo, 1977; Makosky et al, 1988; Best et al, 1992), and greater need for qualified leadership (Jelinek, 1986; Makosky et al, 1988; Best et al, 1992; Mills, 1998).

This document shows that youth are also considered a part of the excellence continuum that will aid in stimulating pride in Canadian achievement and promoting Canadian identity at home and abroad. As in previous federal policy documents, youth

are considered to be part of the feeder system for high performance sport. Therefore, opportunities for increased competition and support services for youth athletes are considered important. This directly contradicts the notion promoted by the general sporting community elsewhere in the proposed action plan. The latter concept asserts that youth sport has become too focussed on competitive outcomes rather than the joy of sport. This perspective directly aligns with the remarks of coaches in this research. The proposed Sport Summit action plan also states that members of the sporting community have cited an over emphasis on competition and violence in professional sport as a major deterrent for youth participation in sport. The action plan promotes the call for a focus on the needs of the athletes including prominent contributions to athlete health and well-being.

This research links well to the current plans for federal action on sport. While the focus still seems to be on outcomes and performance goals, there is an appeal for greater accountability and leadership to ensure the holistic development of athletes. While there is still no clear recognition of special outcomes of youth in high performance sport, there is recognition of the need to encourage fun and the joy of sport for youth rather than primarily competitive performance outcomes.

References

- American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (1938). Two important resolutions. Journal of health and physical education, 9, 448-449.
- American Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (1952). Are highly competitive sports desirable for juniors? Conclusions from the committee on highly organized sports and athletics for boys twelve and under. National Recreation Congress. Recreation, 46, 422-426.
- Amis, J. & Burton, T.L. (1996). Beyond reason: Formulating sport policy in Canada. Avante, 2(2), 17-36.
- Beamish, R., & Borowy, J. (1988). Q. What do you do for a living? A. I'm an athlete. Kingston, ON: The Sport Research Group, Queen's University.
- Berryman, J. W. (1975). From the cradle to the playing field: America's emphasis on highly organized competitive sports for preadolescent boys. Journal of Sport History, 2(2), 111-131.
- Berryman, J. W. (1996). The rise of boys' sports in the United States, 1900-1970. In F. L. Smoll and R. E. Smith. Children and youth in sport: A biopsychosocial perspective. Toronto, ON: Brown & Benchmark Publishers.
- Best, J.C., Blackhurst, M., & Makosky, L. (1992). Minister's task force on federal sport policy. Sport: The way ahead. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of State, Fitness, and Amateur sport
- Black, H.C. (1990). Black's law dictionary. St. Paul, MI: West Publishing Corporation.

Campagnolo, I. (1977). Toward a national policy on amateur sport: A working paper. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of State, Fitness, and Amateur Sport.

Campagnolo, I. (1979). Partners in pursuit of excellence: A national policy on amateur sport. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of State, Fitness, and Amateur Sport.

Canadian Heritage (2001). Regional conferences on sport: A discussion paper for the development of a Canadian policy on sport. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Heritage.

Canada (1961). An act to encourage fitness and amateur sport. Ottawa.

Cantelon, H. (1981). High performance sport and the child athlete: Learning to labour. A paper presented at the first international committee for sociology of sport regional symposium. Kingston, ON: Queens University Press.

Cadieux, P. (1993). Federal directions in sport. Response to the Minister's task force on federal sport policy. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of State, Fitness, and Amateur Sport.

Carver, M. (2001). The carver model of policy governance. Available online: www.miriamcarver.com/polgov.html.

Chalip, L. (1995). Policy analysis in sport management. Journal of Sport Management, 9, 1-13.

Chalip, L. (1996). Critical policy analysis: The illustrative case of New Zealand sport policy development. Journal of Sport Management, 10, 310-324.

Chan, K., & Micheli, L. J. (eds.) (1998). Sports and children. Hong-Kong: Williams and Wilkins Asia Pacific Ltd.

Coakley, J. (1994). Sport in society: Issues and controversies. St. Louis, MI: Mosby.

- Coakley, J. (2000). Sport in society: Issues and controversies. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- Creff, A. (1985). No medal is worth a child's health. Medecine du sport, 59, 710-713. Saint Michel, Paris: Confederation Force Ouvrière.
- David, P. (1993a). La protection des droits de l'enfant dans le sport de haute competition. (The protection of children's right in elite sport). Geneva, SW: Défense des Enfants-Internationale.
- David, P. (1993b). Children and sport: Accomplishment or exploitation? International Children's Rights Monitor, 10(4), 8-12.
- Department of National Health and Welfare (1969). Task force on sport for Canadians. Ottawa, ON: Queen's Printer.
- Donnelly, P. (1993). Young athletes need child protection law. Canadian Speeches: Issues of the Day 7, (March 10), 47-51.
- Donnelly, P. (1997). Child labour, sport labour: Applying child labour laws to sport. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 32(4), 389-406.
- Donnelly, P. (1999). Who's fair game? Sport, sexual harassment, and abuse. In P. White and K. Young (eds.), Sport and gender in Canada. Don Mills, ON: Oxford University Press.
- Donnelly, P. (2000) Youth sport in Canada: Problems and resolutions. In R. Jones, and K. Armour (eds.), The sociology of sports in practice. Harbour, UK: Pearson Education.
- Dubois, P. E. (1986). The effect of participation in sport on the value orientations of young athletes. Sociology of sport journal, 3, 29-42.

Frisby, W.. & Crawford, S. (1994). Participatory action research: Its potential application to sport management. Paper presented at the 9th annual conference of the North American Society for Sport Management.

Hall, A., Slack, T., Smith, G.. & Whitson, D. (1991). Sport in Canadian society. Toronto, ON: McClelland and Stewart.

Hallett, W.D. (1981). History of federal government involvement in the development of sport in Canada. Unpublished PhD Dissertation: University of Alberta.

Harvey, J. (1988). Sport policy and the welfare state: An outline of the Canadian case. Sociology of Sport Journal, 5(4), 164-189.

Harvey, J., Beamish, R.. & Defrance, J. (1993a). Physical exercise policy and the welfare state: A framework for comparative analysis. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 28(1), 53-62.

Harvey, J., Beamish, R.. & Defrance, J. (1993b). Culture politique, structure étatique et politique du sport: L'analyse comparative de la dynamique des rapports entre l'état et les organisations sportives. (Political culture, state structure and sport policy: A comparative analysis between the states and sport organisations). Sport Culture Tradition, 16 Mai, 209-220.

Harvey, J., Lavoie, M.. & Saint-Germain, M. (2000). Sport in Canada: its economic importance and impact and the role of the government. Available online: <http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/SSG/sg03425e.html#role>.

Harvey, J., & Proulx, R. (1988). Sport and the state in Canada. In J. Harvey and H. Cantelon (eds.), Not just a game: Essays in Canadian sport sociology. Ottawa, ON: Ottawa University Press.

Harvey, J., Thibault, L., & Rail, G. (1995). Neo-corporatism: The political management system in Canadian amateur sport and fitness. Sport and Social Issues, 19(3), 249-265.

Howell, N. & Howell, M. L. (1969). Sports and games in Canadian life – 1700 to the present. Toronto, ON: MacMillan of Canada.

Howell, m. L., & Howell, R.A. (1985). History of sport in Canada. Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing

Kidd, B. & Eberts, M. (1982). Athletes rights in Canada. Toronto, ON: Ministry of Tourism and Recreation.

Kirby, S., Greaves, L., & Hankivsky, O. (2000). Dome of silence: Sexual harassment and abuse in sport. Halifax, NS: Fernwood Publishing Ltd.

Lincoln, C. & Mills, D. (1998). Sport in Canada: Leadership, partnership, and accountability. Everybody's business. Ottawa, ON: Department of Canadian Heritage.

Macintosh, D. (1996). Sport and government in Canada. In L. Chalip, A. Johnson, & L. Stachura (eds.), National sports policies: A international handbook. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

Macintosh, D. (1988). Federal government and voluntary sports associations. In J. Harvey and H. Cantelon (eds.), Not just a game: Essays in Canadian sport sociology. Ottawa, ON: Ottawa University Press.

Macintosh, D., Bedeck, T., & Franks, C.E.S. (1987). Sport and politics in Canada: Federal government involvement since 1961. Montreal, QC: McGill-Queens University Press.

Martens, R. & Seefeldt, V. (1979). Guidelines for children's sports. American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance.

Morrow, D., Keyes, M., Simpson, W., Cosentino, F., & Lappage, R. (1989). A concise history of sport in Canada. Toronto, ON: Oxford University Press.

Munro, I. (1965). Early Canada. In V. Vliet (ed.), Physical education in Canada. Scarborough, ON: Prentice Hall.

Munro, J. (1970). A proposed sport policy for Canadians. Ottawa: Department of National Health and Welfare.

Munro, J. (1971). Sport Canada/Recreation Canada. Ottawa: Department of National Health and Welfare.

Murphy, S. (1999). The cheers and the tears: A healthy alternative to the dark side of youth sports today. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

Nash, H.L. (1987). Elite child-athletes: How much does victory cost? The physician and sports medicine, 15(8), 129-133.

New Internationalist (1997). Child labour – History, 292 (July), 26-27.

Owram, D. (1996). Born at the right time: A history of the baby-boom generation. Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press.

Patton, M. Q. (1990). Qualitative evaluation and research methods. 2nd edition. Newbury Park, CA: Sage publications.

Paton, G. (1975). The historical background and present status of Canadian Physical Education. In E. Zeigler (Ed), A history of physical education & sport in the United States and Canada. Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing Company.

Paraschak, V. (1978). Selected factors associated with the enactment of the 1961 Fitness and Amateur Sport Act. Unpublished MA thesis: University of Windsor.

Ponic, P. (1994). Herstory: The structuring of the fitness and amateur sport branch's women's program: 1970-1988. Unpublished MA thesis: University of Windsor.

Redmond, G. (1977). The first "Tom Brown's Schooldays" (1804) and others: Origins and evolution of muscular Christianity in children's literature. North American Society for Sport History.

Redmond, G. (1985). Developments in sport from 1939-1976. In M.L. Howell and R.A. Howell (eds.), History of sport in Canada. Champaign, IL: Stipes Publishing.

Regan, G. (1981). A challenge to the nation: Fitness and amateur sport in the 80's. Ottawa, ON: Ministry of State, Fitness and Amateur Sport.

Rodger, A. (1985). Youth and sport. Archivist, 12(3), 10-11.

Ross, P.S., and Partners (1969). A report on physical recreation, fitness, and amateur sport in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Department of Health and Welfare.

Ryan, J. (1995). Little girls in pretty boxes: The making and breaking of elite gymnasts and figure skaters. New York, NY: Warner Books.

Seefeldt, V. (1982). The changing image of youth sport in the 1980's. In R.A. Magill, M.J. Ash, and F.L. Smoll (eds.), Children in sport. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.

Semotiuk, D. M. (1998). Public accountability: Federal government initiatives in Canadian amateur sport. In K. Hardman, & J. Standeven (eds.), Cultural diversity and

congruence in physical education. Proceedings of the 10th biennial International Society for comparative physical education and sport. Hachi-ohji, Japan: ICSSPE.

Semotiuk, D.M. (1996). Federal government sport policy transition: New directions for Canadian amateur sport. In B. Svoboda, & A. Rychtecky (eds.), Physical activity for life: East and west, north and south. Proceeding of the 9th biennial conference of International Society for comparative physical education and sport. Prague, Czech Republic: ICSSPE.

Shay, P. (1998). Does the carver model of policy governance really work? Front and Centre, 5(3), 13-14.

Sport Canada (1986). Women in Sport Policy. Ottawa, ON: Department of Health and Welfare.

Sport Canada (1996). Sport funding and accountability framework. Ottawa, ON: Department of Canadian Heritage.

Stephens, T. & Craig, C. (1990). The well being of Canadians: Highlights of the 1988 Campbell's survey. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Fitness and Lifestyle Research Institute.

Task Force on National Sport Policy (1988). Toward 2000: Building Canada's sport system. Ottawa, ON: Minister of Supply and Services Canada.

Waller, L. (1995). History of GCG. Available online: www.gymcan.org.

Wankel, L. M., & Mummery, W. K. (1996). Canada. In P. De Knop, L. Engstrom, B. Skirstad, & M.R. Weiss (eds.), Worldwide trends in youth sport. Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics Publishers.

Weimer, D.L. (1998). Policy analysis and evidence: A craft perspective. Policy Studies Journal, 26(1), 114-128.

Weinberg, R. (1981). Why kids play or do not play organized sports. Physical Educator, 38, 71-76.

West, J. (1973). Fitness, sport, and the Canadian government. Ottawa, ON: Fitness and Amateur Sport Branch.

Westland, C. (1979). Fitness and amateur sport in Canada. Ottawa, ON: Canadian Parks and Recreation Association.

Wiggins, D. K. (1996). A history of highly competitive sport for American children. In F. L. Smoll and R. E. Smith, Children and youth in sport: A biopsychosocial perspective. Toronto, ON: Brown & Benchmark Publishers.

Williams, S. (1999). Mission: Health. International Gymnast, 4(6), 42-43.

Wilson, T. (1997). What price glory? Effects of gymnastics on physical and emotional health. Sojourner: The women's forum, 22(8), 9-10.

Appendices

Appendix A - Federal Government Policy Documents

- 1961 – Bill C- 131 The Fitness and Amateur Sport Act
- 1969 – Report of the Task Force on Sport for Canadians
- 1969 – Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness, and Amateur Sport in Canada
- 1970 – A Proposed Sport Policy for Canadians
- 1971 – Sport Canada/Recreation Canada
- 1976 – Unification of Sport
- 1977 – Toward a National Policy on Amateur Sport (green paper)
- 1979 – Partners in Pursuit of Excellence – A National Policy on Amateur Sport (white paper)
- 1981- A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80's
- 1986 – Women in Sport Policy
- 1988 – Toward 2000: Building Canada's Sport System
- 1992 – Sport the Way Ahead
- 1995 – Sport Funding and Accountability Framework
- 1998 – Sport in Canada: Leadership, Partnership, and Accountability - Everybody's Business

Appendix B - Bill of Rights for Young Athletes

- Right to Participate in Sports
- Right to Participate at a Level Commensurate with Each Child's Maturity and Ability
- Right to Have Qualified Adult Leadership
- Right to Play as a Child
- Right to Share in the Leadership and Decision Making
- Right to Participate in Safe and Healthy Environments
- Right to Proper Preparation for Participation in Sports
- Right to an Equal Opportunity to Strive for Success
- Right to be treated with Dignity
- Right to Have Fun in Sports

Martens, R. & Seefeldt, V. (1979). Guidelines for children's sports. American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance.

Appendix C: Sample Policy Analysis Framework

Document Title: Toward a National Policy on Amateur Sport

Year: 1977

Author(s)	Iona Campagnolo – Minister of Fitness and Amateur Sport	
Key persons with input		
General purpose of document	Set out recommendations for policy formulation in the areas of sport administration, technical development, promotion and other programs.	
Process of development	-Recognition of programs currently in place for sport programs; recommendations of areas and strategies for improvement of the sport delivery system - Focus on organisations and programs that are currently working to the advantage of the sport system	
Policy Youth	1. Recommendation for talent identification for sport	Legitimation -with the coming of the 1980-1984 Olympics it is important to identify youth who are talented in order to foster this talent to produce national level athletes
		Attribution -modifying the focus on the Canada Fitness Award Program to concentrate on sport specific test; better coordination of high school and intercollegiate sport programs with NSGB's and PSGB's; development of sports club programs; talent identification system for coaches
Policy Elite Athletes	1.	Legitimation(s)
		Attribution(s)

Policy Youth Elite Athletes	1. Recommendation for youth athletes to foster skills in order to become high performance athletes	Legitimation(s) Need to foster skill in youth athletes to become more competitive in International competition
		Attribution(s) Youth national teams to be financially supported more and encourage more competition internationally
Comments:		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cites GCG for its response to promotional endeavours and the draw of gymnastics for little girls in town across the country following the 1976 Olympics (Nadia Comaneci) – explains it is witness to a developing and successful program showing the importance of the federal governments role in sport - Boasts of having subsidised youth sport programs through schools - Focus on the promotion of amateur sport – opens door for the improvement of sport programs and initiatives for money towards these programs - The preceding document which led to the development of this one allowed for input on the various issue relating to the programs, however this document seems to be vague and undetermined in its development of programs looking towards the roles of each level of government rather than focussing on the issues arising in the primary document in relation to athletes and high performance 		

Appendix D- Interview Guide

Professional/Volunteer Administrator

Gymnastics Canada Gymnastique

5510 Canotek Rd.

Gloucester, ON

Dear [interviewee name],

My name is Laura Misener and I am a Masters Candidate with the Faculty of Human Kinetics, at the University of Windsor. I am conducting research in the area of federal sport policy and high performance youth athletes with a focus on artistic gymnastics. My purpose in this research is to help youth to become involved, and remain involved in healthy, safe, and advantageous sporting experiences through government initiatives aimed at high performance youth athletes.

As this research is exploratory in nature, it is vital to develop a thorough understanding of the issues relating to this topic through interviews with various persons from within the sporting community. I have specifically selected candidates who have been extensively involved in sport at high levels with a unique understanding of the sport experience. I would like to interview you to obtain your opinion on this interesting and important topic. Interviews will be performed at a mutually agreed upon location or by phone. Further, information obtained from the interviews will be interpreted and re-submitted to interviewees to ensure accurate information and interpretation. All interviews and information obtained therein will be strictly confidential.

Please find enclosed a copy of the research questions for your perusal. I will contact you personally to discuss the possibility of an interview and to schedule an appointment. Your input for this study is invaluable and I look forward to discussing it further with you.

If you have any questions regarding this study please do not hesitate to contact me at (519) 253-3000 ext. 2451 or by email: lmisener@hotmail.com or my advisor. Dr. Victoria Paraschak at (519) 253-4232 ext. 2445 or by email: parasch@uwindsor.ca.

Sincerely,

Laura Misener
Graduate Student Human Kinetics
University of Windsor

Questions: Administrator

- 1) What policies currently exist within GCG that pertain specifically to standards of behaviour for elite level gymnasts?
- 2) How have guidelines put forth by the federal government affected GCG policy? (i.e., SFAF)
- 3) What criticisms have emerged in recent years about gymnastics for young girls that you are aware of?
- 4) What types of programs have been developed or implemented to deter some of the negative behaviours associated with participation in high levels of gymnastics? (i.e., USGF healthy eating program...)
- 5) What process is currently used in the generation of policy within GCG?
- 6) How has this process evolved (emerged) or changed since you have been involved?
- 7) Has this process changed in relation to federal government changes in its involvement in sport?
- 8) How are athletes involved in the process of policy development?
- 9) How is the GCG athletes agreement developed?
- 10) Is the GCG athletes' agreement affected by Athletes CAN regulations or other sources of influence?
- 11) Does the athletes agreement read differently for youth (under 18) than it does for older athletes?
- 12) What are some advantages of being involved in competitive gymnastics?
- 13) What problems do you feel are associated with being an athlete/coach in gymnastics?
- 14) What problems/advantages do you see associated with participation in your sport at high levels at a very young age (i.e., novice age athletes and younger)?
- 15) What strategies do you feel are important for minimising risk of injury in gymnastics?
- 16) What aspects of the sport system impede youth from maintaining involvement in the sport system?

- 17) What is your feeling/opinion on minimum age limits for Olympic eligibility (i.e., gymnasts 16 years of age)?
- 18) How are GCG policies influenced by FIG policies?
- 19) How, if at all, do IOC policies and regulations influence GCG policies?
- 20) What reasons/rationales would you see as relevant to the development of a specific policy relating to youth elite athletes?

Name
Club Name
Club Address

Dear Athlete/Coach,

My name is Laura Misener and I am a Masters Candidate with the Faculty of Human Kinetics, at the University of Windsor. I am conducting research in the area of federal sport policy and high performance youth athletes with a focus on artistic gymnastics. My purpose in this research is to help youth to become involved, and remain involved in healthy, safe, and advantageous sporting experiences through government initiatives aimed at high performance youth athletes.

As this research is exploratory in nature, it is vital to develop a thorough understanding of the issues relating to this topic through interviews with various persons from within the sporting community. I have specifically selected candidates who have been extensively involved in sport at high levels with a unique understanding of the sport experience. I would like to interview you to obtain your opinion on this interesting and important topic. Interviews will be performed at a mutually agreed upon location or by phone. Further, information obtained from the interviews will be interpreted and re-submitted to interviewees to ensure accurate information and interpretation. All interviews and information obtained therein will be strictly confidential.

I would like to contact you personally to discuss the possibility of an interview and to schedule an appointment. Your input for this study is invaluable and I look forward to discussing it further with you.

If you have any questions regarding this study please do not hesitate to contact me at (519) 253-3000 ext. 2451 or by email: lmisener@hotmail.com or my advisor, Dr. Victoria Paraschak at (519) 253-4232 ext. 2445 or by email: parasch@uwindsor.ca.

Sincerely,

Laura Misener
Graduate Student Human Kinetics
University of Windsor

Nom
 Adresse
 Date

Chér(e) entraîneur/athlète,

Je m'appelle Laura Misener et je suis une étudiante de Maîtrise en Gestion Sportive à l'Université de Windsor. Présentement, je suis entrain de faire la recherche concernant la politique du sport et les jeunes athlètes à haute performance dans la gymnastique. Le but de cette recherche est d'améliorer la participation des jeunes athlètes dans un environnement pour promouvoir la santé, la sécurité, et l'expérience positive dans le sport. Le développement de plusieurs programs et des initiatives dirigé aux jeunes athlètes par le gouvernement pourraient réaliser ce but.

Puisque cette recherche est exploratoire, il est nécessaire de développer une compréhension complète du sujet en question. Pour approfondir cette compréhension du sujet, un procès d'entrevues avec des personness de la communauté sportive sera essentiel. J'ai choisi comme candidats, des gens qui participe dans la gymnastique à un niveau de haute performance (athlètes et entraîneurs), qui ont une compréhension unique de l'environnement de la gymnastique. J'aimerais passer une entrevue avec vous pour discuter votre opinion sur ce sujet. L'entrevue peut être fait quand ca vous convient. Toutes les entrevues et l'information obtenue seront maintenue à un niveau confidentiel. Après l'entrevue, je vous enverrai une copie de l'entrevue pour vous assurer que toutes l'information est acceptable et pour obtenir vos commentaires.

Votre opinion est très importante et j'aimerais vous contacter pour discuter la possibilité d'un entrevue en plus de details. Si vous avez des questions selon cette recherche, s'il vous plaît, me contacter à (519) 253-3000 ext. 2451; courrier électronique: lmisener@hotmail.com, ou mon adviseur, Dr. Victoria Paraschak à (519) 253-4232 ext. 2445; courrier électronique: parasch@uwindsor.ca. Merci beaucoup.

Sincerement,

Laura Misener
 Graduate Student – Human Kinetics
 University of Windsor

Questions athlete/coach

Demographic Information

- 1) History of involvement in sport.
 - a. How long have you been involved in competitive gymnastics?
 - b. What level of competition are you currently involved with?
 - c. Do you serve as an athlete's representative for any of the ad-hoc committees within GCG?
- 2) What are the advantages of being involved in high-level competitive gymnastics?
- 3) What problems do you see associated with participation in your sport at high levels at during adolescence?
- 4) What specific issues/incidents are you aware of that have arisen, causing concern for youth/children in high levels of gymnastics?
- 5) How great do you perceive the risk of injury to be in gymnastics?
- 6) Are you aware of the process that is currently used in the generation of policy within GCG?
- 7) How are athletes/coaches involved in this process?
- 8) What criticisms have emerged in recent years regarding gymnastics for young girls that you are aware of?
- 9) Are you aware of the FIG and/or IOC policies that affect your involvement in sport?
- 10) What do you feel are important qualifications for a coach of high performance athletes in your sport? Is this different dependant on the age of the athlete?
- 11) What is your feeling/opinion on minimum age limits for Olympic eligibility (i.e., gymnasts 16 yrs old)?
- 12) What aspects of the sport system encourage/discourage youth from becoming involved in high levels of sports competition?
- 13) What aspects of the sport system encourage/discourage youth from maintaining involvement in the sport system?
- 14) What standards do you see as important to minimising the incidents/risks associated with involvement in high levels of gymnastics for youth?

Interview Consent Form

The purpose of this study is to research the area of federal sport policy and high performance athletes, focusing specifically on artistic gymnastics. This research explores youth sport policy in order to better help youth become involved, and remain involved in healthy, safe, and advantageous sporting experiences through government initiatives aimed directly at high performance youth athletes.

All interviews will be simultaneously tape recorded to ensure accurate collection of information. In order to maintain confidentiality, only the principle researcher will access these tape recordings and transcribed information will be coded to ensure privacy. Participation in this research is completely voluntary. Interviewees have the right to answer as many or as few questions as desired and to terminate the interview at any time without penalty. Information obtained from interviews will be used for academic research purposes only (i.e., masters thesis, conference presentations, and scholarly publication).

I _____ understand and accept the terms of the
Please Print Name
 interview agreement.

Interviewee Signature _____ *Date* _____

Signature of Parent/Guardian (if under 18) _____

Researcher Signature _____ *Date* _____

If you have any further questions regarding this study, or any other thoughts you would like to discuss concerning this process, please feel free to contact the following individuals.

Laura Misener: (519) 253-3000 ext. 2451
 Email: lmisener@hotmail.com

Dr. Victoria Paraschak: (519) 253-4232 ext. 2445
 Email: parasch@uwindsor.ca

Thank you for your participation in this research.

Sincerely,
 Laura Misener
 Researcher

Appendix E: Autobiography of author's involvement in competitive sport

Like most children of my generation, I was enrolled in a variety of activities to try and help channel the immense amount of energy I had. Skating, swimming, and soccer were all activities I tried, but only one sport really interested me to any great extent. gymnastics. I started off in a local club program once a week at the age of four. Immediately I adored being in the gym as the older artistic and rhythmic gymnasts fascinated me, however the instructor with her stern accent and intimidating voice could not get me to overcome my shy nature and explore my talent.

It wasn't until the age of seven that I found a place where I felt a sense of belonging. My father and I were walking through a shopping mall one day, and saw a group of young gymnasts performing a demonstration. I begged my father to go and speak to the instructor and find out if I could join them. Reluctantly, my parents took me to join Sparks Gymnastics, which would be my home away from home for the next six years. Immediately I appreciated my coaches and got along very well with my teammates. I progressed quickly and started competing regionally at the age of eight.

I adored both competing and training. Despite the times when fear was a problem in attaining new skills, the feeling of accomplishing a skill that once seemed impossible helped me to become more confident in myself. The new sense of confidence led to success in competitions. I will never forget the first time my picture was in the newspaper after a competition and the feeling of being on top of the world. Being extremely shy had always been one of my major difficulties to overcome at school and with friends, but I knew that gymnastics was a way for me to be noticed without having

to be too overt. Teachers, friends, and my parent's friends who did not know me suddenly recognised me as the talented young gymnast. Reflecting on the false sense of importance and self-confidence that came with this recognition allows me to understand my constant fear; that if I got hurt or didn't perform well then everyone would know and think I was a failure.

Over the next few years, I advanced quickly and became very attached to both my coaches. I look back on my gymnastics career with very fond memories of both Lise and Dave Goertz. I realised even at a young age how lucky I was to have kind and caring coaches and a nurturing training environment. Further, as a coach myself now, I see how infinitely lucky I am to have such caring, understanding, and open parents who were supportive of all of my choices. At the age of twelve, winning the Provincial Championships was like winning the lottery. I received lots of free gifts and my picture was in papers across the province. That was the pinnacle of my career as a gymnast. I never had any great desire to be an Olympian, just to have fun doing what I loved to do until I didn't want it anymore.

Suddenly, my family made a decision to move to the other side of the province that devastated me. I adored my coaches and my training environment and did not want to leave. I had several options that I was presented with; Stay and live with my coaches and continue to train and go to high school in St. Catharines; move to Toronto to attend Seneca College Gymnastics School for elite gymnasts; move to Hawkesbury with my parents and attend a gymnastics club in Montreal (1 hour away); quit gymnastics altogether. I loved my coaches and my gymnastics very much, however my family was important to me and it scared me more than anything to be apart from them. I moved

with my family to a new home and started to train at a new club. After several practices. I decided that I didn't belong with those coaches, doing that long drive everyday, and being in that strict an environment. The decision to quit gymnastics was very difficult. To this day I have regrets about that decision, and often wonder what could have been had I not feared my new competitive gymnastics environment.

During my years of high school, the opportunity to experience many things became available. I tried to play all of the sports I had never played before, and got heavily involved in drama and student council. While I realise that I would never have had the experiences I did in high school, such as forming the first girls' rugby team. I thought about my life as a gymnast every day. Nothing had prepared me for the fact that suddenly people were better than I was at sports and that people didn't recognise me.

The desire to be involved in gymnastics burned inside me and I knew I had to become involved. I got involved in coaching at a local public school. I enjoyed it very much at first but soon quit because I could not agree with the unsafe conditions and equipment, and the ill prepared coaches who were helping out with the program. That was a defining time in my life as a young coach, as I believed that kids deserved to be treated with the utmost respect and dignity, and ought to have qualified caring coaches.

Not long after this I went to McMaster University where I became involved in gymnastics once again as an athlete and a recreational coach. I founded the McMaster Gymnastics Club to help give university students the opportunity to become involved in gymnastics, proving that this sport was not only for children. I also became actively involved in promoting masters gymnastics (18+) to encourage the sport for all ages. I became a certified judge and got actively involved in coaching competitive gymnasts. I

immediately found that my beliefs in a fair, ethical, and non-restrictive style of training elite athletes were not commonplace among coaches and athletes. I found after talking to other coaches and athletes that I was extremely lucky to have experienced such a fair, ethical, and non-abusive environment during my gymnastics career.

As I continue to coach and judge elite level gymnasts for all ages, I am consciously aware of the problems faced by these athletes. From my exemplary experience in sport to many of my fellow gymnast's horrendous experiences in sport, I have seen the full spectrum of difficulties that young athletes may face. I believe, with my experience as a primary example, that it is possible to produce healthy, happy, well-adjusted athletes through safe, fair, and ethical means. However, without education, political action, and advocacy for safe youth sport the current problems will continue.

Appendix F

<i>Rationale for Federal Government Involvement in Sport</i>		
<i>Sustained Rationale</i>	<i>Emergent Rationale</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health education focusing on certain values through physical education - Management of risk groups (e.g., young people) - Promotion of national unity - Instrument of economic development - Enhanced national status through international competition - Bringing nations together and fostering cooperation (e.g., Commonwealth Games) - Promotion of a country's international image - Promotion of sport as an instrument for promoting good health 	1909	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Encourage physical fitness for military involvement
	1930's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Youth Physical Fitness for occupational pursuits (<i>Dominion Youth Training Act</i>)
	1940's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Physical Fitness for military readiness
	1950's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Construction of sports facilities (facilitating construction industries) - Develop opportunities for larger families
	1960's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of foreign policy - Diplomatic pressure (boycotts etc.)
	1970's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reduction in inequality of access to sports facilities
	1980's and 1990's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Promotion of equity (male/female, minority groups etc.) - Encouragement of private sponsorship

Appendix G

DRAFT FRAMEWORK FOR YOUTH ELITE SPORT POLICY

The following is a proposed framework for developing a federal policy pertaining to youth in high performance sport. Analysis of federal sport policy documentation has demonstrated the federal government disregard for this important group. Interviews with administrators, coaches, and athletes involved in elite levels of gymnastics for youth have supported the need to develop guidelines pertaining to youth high performance athletes in order to ensure their health, safety, and happiness in the sporting environment. This proposed framework addresses key issues gleaned through the interviews with administrators, coaches, and athletes. Elements within the proposal build upon the responses obtained in the interviews, and are placed within an adapted guiding framework from Chalip's Critical Policy Analysis (1995, 1996).

The underlying assumptions that guide the framework are:

- a) The framework should build upon work that has been previously done regarding federal sport policy and youth sport.
- b) The framework should identify and involve individuals who will be responsible for implementing the policy and those who will be affected by its creation.
- c) The federal government should take an active role in the regulation of youth elite athletes.
- d) The holistic well-being of youth elite athletes is more important than performance outcomes.

Process (See Figure 2)

1. Central values espoused by the Canadian Federal Sport System need to be clarified and confirmed as a starting point. Key values which were expressed in the federal documents reviewed (see appendix 1) are:
 - i. Ethics, equity, and access in sport (6,10,11,12,13,14,15)²³
 - ii. Cultural identity of sport (6,7,8,12,13,14,15)
 - iii. Health and fitness through sport (2,3,4,6,7,8,9,11,12,13,14,15)
 - iv. Canadian identity (5,7,12,13,14,15)
 - v. Promotion of core values (3,7,11,12,13,14,15)
2. Key persons should be selected to form a task force to oversee the development of the policy. Each of the following organisations will select key individual(s) to be involved in the process and to encompass a wide variety of points of view. Adequate representation should be sought from the following organisations:
 - i. *Sport Canada (2)* – This organization governs key aspects of the sport system in Canada including the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework, which should be used to aid in the implementation of the policy. Therefore they should have key persons (2) involved in the decision making process.

²³ Number corresponds to the federal sport policy document where the value was expressed.

- ii. *Athletes CAN (2)* – While there should be many athletes involved in the decision making process, this organization offers special services to athletes and has a key interest in the well-being, needs, and rights of athletes. Furthermore this organization should play a key role in ensuring the implementation of the policy, and therefore should be adequately represented during the decision making process.
- iii. *Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (1)* – This organization offers key support services to athletes on the national team to ensure fair and ethical treatment of athletes. Individuals should aid in the provision of several of the recommendations that relate to services for athletes and therefore should be involved in the decision making process.
- iv. *Coaching Association of Canada (1)* – The Coaching Association will be required to take part in several of the recommendations, if carried out, relating to coaches and programs to ensure education regarding youth sport issues. Therefore this organization should be represented to ensure its interests are voiced in the decision-making process
- v. *Canadian Olympic Association (1)* – Policy decisions and changes will affect those involved in national level sport and members of the national team who will/may be members of the COA, therefore this organization should be represented in developing a policy of this nature.
- vi. *National Sport Organisations* - Special consideration shall be given to ensuring that there is adequate (40%)²⁴ representation by athletes on the task force. National Sport Organisations that have extensive involvement of youth at elite levels (i.e., gymnastics, figure skating, swimming) will be given priority consideration to ensure that representatives from the Youth National Teams (1), and the Senior National Teams (2) are selected to the task force. Interviews with coaches and athletes revealed that these individuals' needs and rights are being taken for granted and are not being heard by those in positions of power, therefore this group should have the opportunity to be directly involved regarding decisions that will affect them. Further, representation (volunteer (1) and professional staff(1)) from seven randomly selected NSO's will be included as part of the task force committee.
- vii. *Academic Institutions* – Special consideration will be given to ensuring that three (3) academics/experts in the area youth sport will participate in the development of a policy for youth elite athletes. These persons have access to special resources and information regarding the areas of policy being addressed. Furthermore, they can offer an external critical point of view since they are not attached to an organization with a key interest in the sport system.
- viii. *Support Service Personnel* – The following individuals will be commissioned by Athletes Canada to participate in the process: Sport Psychologist (1), Sport Nutritionist (1), Education Personnel (1), Harassment Officer (1), Medical Expert (1). These persons play a key role in ensuring the health, safety, and happiness of elite athletes. They should

²⁴ Task n=35; 40% athlete representation=14

have the best interest of the athletes in mind and therefore be involved in decisions that will affect their services to youth athletes.

3. Formulation of a policy that aids in ensuring the health, safety, and happiness of youth participants will be addressed through ad-hoc committees of members of the task force. The task force as a whole will first agree on a list of problems, and positive and negative behavioural outcomes. Each ad-hoc committee will maintain no more than 6 persons with at least 2 athletes per committee. Each committee will formulate a set of legitimations and attributions for addressing the issues of youth high performance athletes. The chair of the task force (elected by the members of the task force) will compile and categorize the recommended actions. These will be assembled into a set of workable actions and rationales and resubmitted to the committee as a whole to debate. A series of meetings will be conducted to refine the legitimations and attributions and to decide on the most appropriate mechanisms to address these problems and recommendations.
4. The task force will create a document outlining the proposed rationales and actions for the youth sport policy to submit to the sporting community for feedback. A timeline for feedback will be given with the document to ensure timely input from the sport community.
5. The committee as a whole will meet again to discuss the feedback from the sport community and to finalise the recommended rationales and attributions. Further, they will finalise a three-year plan for implementing the revised policy from the recommendations of the various ad-hoc committees. This plan will include an appropriate timeline for implementation, and the organisation(s)/personnel to implement the recommended actions. It will also include evaluation measures for assessing the policy actions throughout its implementation.

Draft Behavioural Outcomes for Youth Elite Athletes

<i>NEGATIVE OUTCOMES</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Injuries (high risk skills, aggression, violence) (A2,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K)²⁵ • Over training (long hours of practice and competition) (A1,A3,CF1,CF2,CM2,AM1; A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K) • Social Issues (loss of childhood, missed social opportunities, lack of social network) (A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; A,D,F,G,H,J,K) • Educational Issues (missed schooling, missed educational advancement opportunities) (A3,CF1,CF2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; C,D,E,F,G,H,J,K) • Support Network (psychological, social, physiological) (A1,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AM1; A,D,F,G,H,I,J,K) • Family Issues (missed time with family, sibling rivalries) (A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1; A,E,F,G,H,I,J,K) • Specialization (too early to have opportunity for choices, negative physical effects) (CF1,CF2,AM2; A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K) • Retirement (social problems, educational concerns, lack of direction and support) (CF1,CM1,CM2; F,G,H,I,J,K) • Harassment and Abuse (A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1; A,E,F,G,H,J,K) • Negative Physical Activity (as punishment) (CF1,AM2; A,C,E,G,J,K)
<i>POSITIVE OUTCOMES</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipline (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; A,C,D,E,F,G,J,K) • Time Management (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; E,F,G,J,K) • Self-Confidence (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF2,AM1; E,F,K) • Leadership (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM2,AM2; E,J,K) • Goal setting (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,AM2; C,G,I,J,K) • Co-operation skills (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; A,I,K) • Communication Skills (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM2,AF1,AM2; F,I,K) • Group work and team cohesion (A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2; C,G,I,J,K)

²⁵ Refers to gymnastics administrators, coaches, and athletes who addressed these behavioural outcomes in the interviews, as well as the academic sources that referenced these outcomes.

Draft Recommendations for Youth in High Performance Sport

The following recommendations address problems that relate to specific issues emerging from the research interviews with administrators, coaches, and athletes involved in high performance gymnastics for youth. The negative outcomes addressed by the research participants provide a basis for the rationale(s) of the recommended action(s). Further, the positive outcomes relate to the beneficial aspects of elite sport involvement addressed in the research, which should be enhanced by the implementation of the recommended action(s)

1	PROBLEM: YOUTH IN HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT SPEND EXTENSIVE TIME IN TRAINING AND COMPETITION RESULTING IN LOSS OF TIME FOR DEVELOPING SOCIALISATION SKILLS AND EXPERIENCING OTHER ACTIVITIES ²⁶ .
Negative Outcomes: overtraining, social problems, specialisation, family issues	
Positive Outcomes: time management skills, social skills	
Legitimations	
Attributions	
Youth in high performance sport should be viewed as children first and athletes second. Children need time to play, socialise, complete schoolwork, and spend time with family.	National Sport Organisations should regulate the number of allowable hours per day and per week of training for youth under the age of 18. Guidelines set by the federal government for youth labour shall be used as a starting point.

2	PROBLEM: SUPPORT SERVICES AVAILABLE TO ATHLETES ARE NOT WELL KNOWN BY COACHES AND ATHLETES AND INADEQUATE SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO YOUTH IN HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT ²⁷ .
Negative Outcomes: education issues, family problems, harassment and abuse, social problems	
Positive Outcomes: leadership, social skills, self-confidence, goal setting, communication skills	
Legitimations	
Attributions	
Youth in high performance sport need to understand the potential ramifications of their commitment to the sport and to be aware of the support services available to them. Further, they need to understand that there are free confidential services and avenues for pursuing problems and complaints.	National Sport Organisations will be required to hold a seminar for all national team members to inform athletes of their rights. In conjunction with Athletes CAN and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport, each NSO will ensure that all athletes have equal access to services offered to them and are fully aware of the confidential grievance and arbitration procedures.

²⁶ Relevant interviews: A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: A,C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K

²⁷ Relevant interviews: A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: E,F,J,K

3	PROBLEM: IT IS STANDARD PRACTICE FOR ELITE YOUTH GYMNASTS TO START PARTICIPATION AT A VERY EARLY AGE (5,6 YEARS OLD) AND OFTEN TO MOVE AWAY FROM HOME AND FAMILY TO ATTEND NATIONAL TRAINING CENTRES OR TRAIN WITH A SPECIFIED COACH ²⁸ .	
Negative Outcomes: family problems, negative physical activity, harassment, specialisation, social problems		Positive Outcomes: social skills, self-confidence, goal setting, time management
Legitimations		Attributions
Youth should be afforded the opportunity to experience a variety of activities with the support of their family social networks and without emphasis on competitive sport.		Each National Sport Organization must set up a structure of participation for youth that does not emphasise specialization at too early an age. This will be regulated in keeping with the National Coaching Certification Program guidelines. Furthermore, competition for youth under the age of 13 will be minimised and emphasis placed on participation in a variety of physical activities. Further. Athletes CAN and the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport will actively monitor competition at the youth elite level.

²⁸ Relevant interviews: A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: C,D,E,F,G,H,I,J,K

4	PROBLEM: ATHLETES IN HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT (IN PARTICULAR YOUTH) HAVE A DIFFICULT TIME WHEN LEAVING THE SPORT. THE SPORT SYSTEM IS NOT OFFERING PROPER EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE IN LEAVING HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT ²⁹ .	
Negative Outcomes: social problems, educational issues		Positive Outcomes: social skills, self-confidence, goal setting, time management, communication skills
Legitimations		Attributions
Youth involved in high levels of sport participation need support when the decision is made to leave the sport.		Each NSO will set up an education program for elite athletes regarding their post sport career options. Special consideration and support will be given to athletes under the age of 18 when retiring. It will be the responsibility of the NSO to set up a program offering support services for athletes during their retirement stages.

5	PROBLEM: COACHES IN GYMNASTICS DO NOT SEEM TO BE AWARE OF SOME OF THE NEGATIVE OUTCOMES ASSOCIATED WITH YOUTH ELITE SPORT INVOLVEMENT. FURTHER, LACK OF RECOGNITION BY GCG TO THESE OUTCOMES FOSTERS IGNORANCE AMONG THOSE INVOLVED WITH THE ORGANIZATION UNLESS THEY ARE EDUCATED ABOUT THESE FUNDAMENTAL OUTCOMES ³⁰ .	
Negative Outcomes: family problems, negative physical activity, harassment and abuse, athlete rights, specialisation, social problems, overtraining, uninjuries, support services, educational problems		Positive Outcomes: social skills, self-confidence, communication skills
Legitimations		Attributions
Coaches need to be aware of and understand the special circumstances for youth involved in elite levels of sport.		The Coaching Association of Canada, and NSO's in conjunction with academic institutions will develop a program for educating coaches regarding the issue of youth in sport. Each aspect of the NCCP (theory, technical, and practical) shall contain a component regarding the special issues for youth in high levels of sport. Aspiring national level coaches will be required to apprentice with current national level coaches for a set period of time as part of the certification program. National level coaches will be required to take upgrading courses in Risk Management, Athlete Nutrition, and Sport Psychology.

²⁹ Relevant Interviews: A1,A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1 and Relevant Literature: E,F,G,H,I,J

6	PROBLEM: COACHES AND ATHLETES DO NOT FEEL THAT THEIR OPINIONS ARE VALUED. THERE IS A LACK OF FEMALE ATHLETE REPRESENTATION IN THE DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES, WHICH DEMONSTRATES A LACK OF COMMITMENT TO ATHLETE INVOLVEMENT. COACHES AND ATHLETES FEEL THAT YOUTH ARE COMPETENT ENOUGH TO BE INVOLVED IN THE DECISION MAKING THAT AFFECTS THEIR SPORT INVOLVEMENT AND ARE NOT BEING INCLUDED IN THIS PROCESS ³¹ .	
Negative Outcomes: family problems, negative physical activity, harassment and abuse, athlete rights, specialisation, social problems, overtraining, injuries, support services, educational problems		Positive Outcomes: leadership, goal setting, time management, communication skills
Legitimations		Attributions
Youth in high performance sport have a right to participate in the decisions that affect their sport involvement.		All National Sport Organisations and the Canadian Olympic Association will be required to have adequate (20%) athlete representation on all working committees. Those NSO's that have extensive youth involvement at elite levels must ensure that representation is also attained from youth national team members.

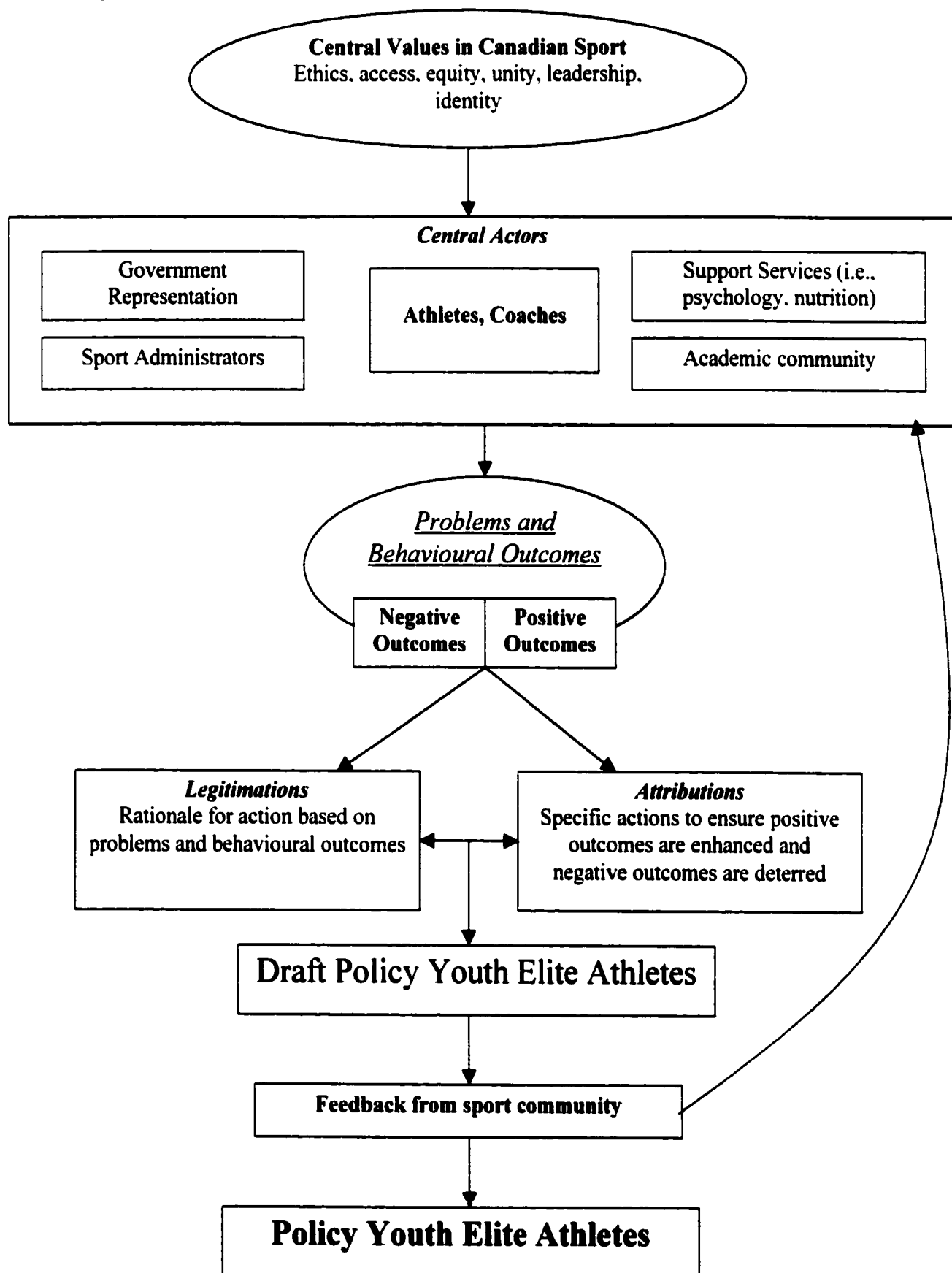
7	PROBLEM: THE POSITIVE OUTCOMES OF SPORT NEED TO CONTINUE TO BE EMPHASISED³².	
Positive Outcomes: leadership, social skills, self-confidence, goal setting, time management, communication skills, co-operation skills, group cohesion skills		
Legitimations		Attributions
Youth in high performance sport have a right to participate in an environment that emphasises the positive outcomes related to elite sport involvement.		Sport Canada will oversee the implementation of the previous six (6) attributions through the Sport Funding and Accountability Framework, while continuing to emphasise the positive outcomes associated with high performance sport involvement. A series of guided workshops for the high performance athletes and coaches will be developed by Athletes CAN and the Centre for Ethics in Sport to formally develop skills systematically towards these positive outcomes.

³⁰ Relevant Interviews: A1,A2,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: C,E,G,H,J,K

³¹ Relevant Interviews: A2,A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,CM2,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: F,J,K

³² Relevant Interviews: A3,CF1,CF2,CM1,AF1,AF2,AM1,AM2 and Relevant Literature: C,H,I,K

Figure 2 – Youth Sport Policy Process



Appendix 1
Federal Government Policy Documents

1. 1961 – Bill C- 131 The Fitness and Amateur Sport Act
2. 1969 – Report of the task force on sport for Canadians
3. 1969 – Report on Physical Recreation, Fitness, and Amateur Sport in Canada (P.S. Ross Report)
4. 1970 – A Proposed Sport Policy for Canadians
5. 1971 – Sport Canada/Recreation Canada
6. 1976 – Unification of Sport
7. 1977 – Toward a National Policy on Amateur Sport
8. 1979 – Toward a National Policy on Fitness and Recreation
9. 1979 – Partners in Pursuit of Excellence – A National Policy on Amateur Sport
10. 1981- A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80's
11. 1986 – Sport Canada - Women in Sport Policy
12. 1988 – Toward 2000: Building Canada's Sport System
13. 1992 – Sport The Way Ahead
14. 1996 – Sport Funding and Accountability Framework
15. 1998 – Sport in Canada: Everybody's Business

REFERENCES

Interviews

- 3 Gymnastics Canada Administrators (A1.A2.A3)
- 2 Female Gymnastic Coaches (CF1, CF2)
- 2 Male Gymnastic Coaches (CM1, CM2)
- 2 Female Gymnastic Athletes (AF1, AF2)
- 2 Male Gymnastic Athletes (AM1, AM2)

Academic Literature Relevant to Proposed Framework

- A. Chan, K., & Micheli, L. J. (eds.) (1998). Sports and children. Hong-Kong: Williams and Wilkins Asia Pacific Ltd.
- B. Coakley, J. (2000). Sport in society: Issues and controversies. New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Higher Education.
- C. Creff, A. (1985). No medal is worth a child's health. Médecine du sport, 59, 710-713. Saint Michel, Paris: Confédération Force Ouvrière.
- D. David, P. (1993a). La protection des droits de l'enfant dans le sport de haute compétition. (The protection of children's right in elite sport). Geneva, SW: Défense des Enfants-International.
- E. David, P. (1993b). Children and sport: Accomplishment or exploitation? International Children's Rights Monitor, 10(4), 8-12.
- F. Donnelly, P. (1993). Young athletes need child protection law. Canadian Speeches: Issues of the Day 7, (March 10), 47-51.
- G. Donnelly, P. (1997). Child labour, sport labour: Applying child labour laws to sport. International Review for the Sociology of Sport, 32(4), 389-406.

- H.** Donnelly, P. (2000). Youth sport in Canada: Problems and resolutions. In R. Jones, and K Armour (eds.), The sociology of sports in practice. Harbour, UK: Pearson Education.
- I.** Nash, H.L. (1987). Elite child-athletes: How much does victory cost? The physician and sports medicine, 15(8), 129-133.
- J.** Ryan, J. (1995). Little girls in pretty boxes: The making and breaking of elite gymnasts and figure skaters. New York, NY: Warner Books.
- K.** Wilson, T. (1997). What price glory? Effects of gymnastics on physical and emotional health. Sojourner: The women's forum, 22(8), 9-10.

VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Laura Misener

PLACE OF BIRTH: St. Catharines, Ontario

DATE OF BIRTH: April 1, 1976

EDUCATION: Vankleek Hill Collegiate Institute, Vankleek Hill, Ontario
1990-1995

McMaster University, Hamilton, Ontario
1995-1999

University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario
1999-2001