Sport for Development, Peace, and Social Justice

Robert J. Schinke, Ed.D.
Laurentian University

Stephanie J. Hanrahan, Ph.D.
University of Queensland

Editors

FiT

Fitness Information Technology
A DIVISION OF THE INTERNATIONAL CENTER FOR PERFORMANCE EXCELLENCE
262 Coliseum, WVU-CPASS
PO Box 6116
Morgantown, WV 26506-6116

6

Rethinking Community-based Crime Prevention through Sports

Douglas Hartmann

In the 1990s, a new wave of social interventions appeared on the American urban landscape: community-based, sports-oriented crime prevention programs. Touted as innovative, inexpensive, and remarkably effective approaches to crime prevention and targeted typically at racial minorities, these initiatives came in a variety of types and sizes. Some were small, single-sport programs located in schools or operated at community centers. Others were city-wide, multi-sport summertime projects, and still others were run by sports experts at Olympic training centers or sports foundations. They ranged from police athletic leagues to prison boot camps and used sporting practices as diverse as basketball, calisthenics, martial arts, and motor-cross. But whatever the specifics, the idea of using sport to prevent crime (and reduce risk) was both popular and well-publicized, and helped shape an entire generation of sports-based social programming in the United States and elsewhere (Pitter & Andrews, 1997; see also: Cameron & MacDougall, 2000; Nichols, 2007).

For all of this publicity and positivity, however, sports-based crime prevention was not well thought through or understood. For example, although relatively inexpensive in and of themselves, such programs were often the ironic, unintended result of the cutbacks and privatization of public parks and recreation facilities in many locales (Crompton, 1998; Crompton & McGregor, 1994; Schultz, Crompton, & Witt, 1995), and sports-based initiatives certainly couldn't replace all social services that were being eliminated or reconstituted as neo liberalism took shape in American metropolitan areas (Harvey,

2005; Wacquant, 2009). Also, these programs were often predicated on troubling images and stereotypes of minority populations (for analysis, see Cole, 1996; Hartmann, 2001; for a broader critique of the racialized character of neoliberalism, see Goldberg, 2008). Moreover, in spite of the supposed novelty of these projects, there was actually a long legacy of such programs stretching back at least to the urban playground movement of the early 20th century that used physical activities to combat the perceived deviance and delinquency of the children of new immigrants (Cavallo, 1981). Perhaps most problematic, empirical evidence that these programs actually served to reduce risk or prevent crime was sparse at best.

To the extent that formal evaluations or scholarly analyses of sport-based crime prevention existed, they were mostly program-based case studies lacking in the comparisons and controls that proper, systematic assessment requires. The most comprehensive and rigorous survey of the American literature at the time (Sherman, Gottfredson, MacKenzie, Eck, Reuter, & Bushway, 1998) listed only one scholarly study that focused explicitly on recreation-based programs (Howell, 1995), and its findings about community-based, after-school recreation programs were limited and contradictory. Documentation and assessment was also lacking outside of the United States (for a British example, see Utting, 1996). It is also worth noting that numerous, well regarded risk prevention programs run by organizations such as the Boys and Girls Clubs, 4-H, or the YMCA include athletic activities, but these initiatives tend not to be sport-based or even use physical recreation as a point of entry.

I am not suggesting that community-based sports programs did not or, for that matter, cannot contribute to crime prevention and risk reduction. Rather, the point is that little was known about sports-oriented crime prevention when these programs were first launched. This limited knowledge, I believe, suggests that these programs were not always implemented properly and thus may not have had the outcomes that were expected—which may, in turn, help account for our inability to systematically document positive, pro-social effects.

Fortunately, in the last decade or so a new body of scholarly work has emerged to help us better understand sports-based crime prevention and how such programming can be most effectively implemented and administered. It is now well documented, for example, that sport is a powerful tool for outreach, recruitment, and retention of program participants (Hartmann & Wheelock, 2002; Sotiriardous, Shilburg, & Quick, 2008). The theoretical foundations of how sports-based programming can contribute to crime prevention are now more firmly grounded and thoroughly conceptualized (Coakley, 2002; Hartmann, 2003; Holt, 2008; Martinek & Hellison, 1997; Nichols, 2007; Witt & Crompton, 1997), and case studies have helped us understand who is most likely to benefit from such interventions (Correira, 1997; Nichols, 2004; Zarrett, Lerner, Carrano, Fay, Peltz, & Li, 2008).

Researchers are also beginning to appreciate the broader public and symbolic importance of these programs in the cities and communities in which they are implemented. And although documenting the effectiveness of such initiatives still remains a challenge, a more sophisticated framework for measurement and assessment is now in place (Baldwin, 2000; Nichols & Crow, 2004; Witt & Crompton, 1997).

This chapter draws upon a decade of my own research on one of the most prominent and highly politicized of such sport-based crime prevention initiatives—the late night, basketball-based programs known as midnight basketball—to illustrate and elaborate several key points that have emerged from recent research in this area. These points include a) the role of sports and leisure activities in recruitment and retention of otherwise hard-to-reach populations; b) the theoretical principles underlying successful, individual interventions; and c) the public visibility and symbolic value of such sports-based initiatives at the wider, community level. Working through these points in the context of the broader ideas about development through sport that are the focus of this volume will provide an understanding of what sports-based crime prevention programs can reasonably be expected to accomplish, how they can be better evaluated, and ultimately, how they can be more effectively implemented.

MIDNIGHT BASKETBALL BASICS

The midnight basketball concept originated in the late 1980s. (The basic background information on midnight basketball is drawn from original archival research and interviews, and my own previous writings.) Midnight basketball was the brainchild of a man named G. Van Standifer, a retired systems analyst and former town manager in Glenarden, Maryland, who had become convinced that one of the keys to the problems of poor, inner-city young men was the absence of safe, constructive activities during what he believed to be the high crime, late-night hours. Standifer's solution was to organize a basketball league that would operate in his Washington, D.C., area community between 10:00 PM and 2:00 AM Standifer's basketball-based program was intriguingly simple and inexpensive: it operated only during summer months and had three core components: first, that the target participant group was young men between the ages of 17 and 21; second, no game could begin before 10 o'clock at night; and third, that two uniformed police officers had to be present and visible at each game. The basic idea was that a sports program would provide an alternative to the non-productive or even destructive activities of the street.

With statistics and support from local law enforcement, Standifer claimed great success for his program—a 30% reduction in late-night crime in his community in its first three years of operation. A Prince George's County corrections chief, for example, claimed, "I haven't seen a single one of these basketball players back in my jail since the program began" (quoted in Hartmann, 2001, p. 347). After seeing a story about the program in the

New York Times, public housing officials in Chicago began planning a league of their own. It was this league that brought the idea of midnight basketball to national attention.

In the fall of 1989 the Chicago Housing Authority—with a matching grant of $50,000 from the Department of Housing and Urban Development under the direction of Jack Kemp, a former Congressman who had made his reputation as a professional football star and cheerleader for the Reagan administration's supply-side economics—organized leagues in two notoriously troubled housing projects (the Rockwell Gardens and the Henry Horner Homes). Within weeks, the Chicago leagues were featured on ABC's *Good Morning America,* one of NBC television's national NBA broadcasts, and in dozens of newspapers and magazines across the country. On the strength of the public support of and widespread attention to the Chicago project, Standifer created Midnight Basketball Leagues, Inc., and began to sanction affiliated programs all over the United States. Within three short years, the organization became the National Association of Midnight Basketball, Inc., and included 38 official midnight basketball programs in major metropolitan areas all across the country. Each chapter, according to the parent organization, was a "non-profit, community-based organization adhering to formal training, rules, and regulations" based upon the original Standifer model.

Over the course of the following decade, dozens more communities adopted midnight basketball programs and hundreds of copycat programs appeared (Schultz et al., 1995). Indeed, sport sociologists Robert Pitter and David Andrews (2007) described midnight basketball as the "paradigmatic" project for the entire "social problems industry" that emerged in the last decade of the 20th century on the American sporting scene. Midnight basketball was and is unique in several respects. Its target population was clearly older than that of most youth-oriented programs and largely dominated by African American young men in most communities. These leagues also proved to be far more controversial and widely politicized than other such sport-based social initiatives (Wheelock & Hartmann, 2007). But even with these caveats in mind, midnight basketball and my research on midnight basketball illustrate many of the key points about the benefits and potential drawbacks of sports-based crime prevention.

OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT

Probably the best place to begin rethinking the preventionist potential of youth sports programs such as midnight basketball is with the elements that every program necessarily begins with: outreach and recruitment. Not only are outreach and recruitment the first concern of any social policy initiative (you can't have a social program without participants), it is the one area in which midnight basketball programs and all sports-based crime prevention initiatives have been able to clearly document their effectiveness and success. This unique ability to recruit and retain otherwise hard-to-reach populations has

been true for the all of the various midnight basketball programs I have studied or with which I have been otherwise associated. Consider the case of a basketball-based program I worked with in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in the late 1990s called "Stay Alive."

I had initiated research with Stay Alive with the idea of using the program as a model to assess (and hopefully document) the effectiveness of basketball-based programs. My attempts in this regard failed rather miserably. The problem wasn't that my research assistants and I were unable to document any systemic positive effects (though we weren't); the problem was that we never really got to ask the question in the first place. The program was so poorly organized and operated that we were unable to conduct even a basic analysis of its effects, positive or problematic (Hartmann & Wheelock, 2002). Nevertheless, the one area that was an exception to these failures and disappointments was in the Stay Alive league's ability to reach out and recruit the otherwise hard-to-reach target population of Native American and African American men aged 18-25.

In 1999, the first year for which we had full data, the Stay Alive program served some 256 players. Of these, 75% had a residence in the city of Minneapolis proper, 60% were African American, and 28% were Native American. (The rest were either White, Hispanic, or claimed a "multi-racial" ethnicity). The majority (i.e., 57%) of participants were within the program's 17-30 year old target range. These numbers were a bit lower than program administrators had hoped, but were explained by the presence of several teams of 15- and 16-year-old youth who had entered the league in hopes of finding older, more physically mature and experienced competition. Perhaps more important and far more positive, at least 45% of participants 18 or older in the league had criminal history records with the Minneapolis Police Department.

These demographic characteristics may not sound like a lot, but they constituted a huge accomplishment in the context of the homicide prevention program of which Stay Alive was part in the city of Minneapolis. The basketball program was originally only one of a dozen pilot programs that were given small grants in the first year of the campaign. The Stay Alive program was not only continued but expanded because it was the only one of the pilot programs that came close to reaching out and engaging the difficult-to-reach 18–25-year-old minority male population that had been identified by city researchers as the focal point of the homicide explosion. That is not to suggest that city bureaucrats were convinced Stay Alive would be an effective homicide prevention program; only that basketball was the only activity they had going that could claim to do anything remotely proactive in terms of bringing young men of color into a structured, safe environment.

This case is, in my experience, reading, and research, not at all unusual. For all of the challenges of sports-based risk reduction initiatives, I have rarely heard of a program shutting down for lack of participants. To the contrary, recruitment is one of the things that no one seems to question. Indeed, the claim that sport is a powerful tool for outreach and

recruitment is so common sense and taken for granted among sport scholars and sport policy makers that it is rarely analyzed anymore. Sometimes the lack of such evidence and examination raises concerns for the analyst; in this case, however, I think it indicates an area in which sports-based crime prevention is an unquestioned success (see also Witt & Crompton, 1996).

Of course, recruitment is only just the beginning of any successful intervention. Once participants are brought into a program (any program), the question quickly becomes: what does the program do with them now that they have gotten them in the door? What does the program actually do? These questions are where the policy challenge really begins, and the need for better understanding is most pressing for both program implementation and evaluation.

THEORIZING SPORT'S ROLE IN PREVENTION

One of the first things that anyone working in and around sports-based prevention programs learns is that there are many different visions of what prevention is and how sport is believed to contribute to it. Probably most common and important are the ideas related to direct, individual-level interventions and effects. Midnight basketball's effect on at-risk young people was not explicitly theorized by the funders and operators who brought it into being; however, at least two different rationales (or underlying justifications) that informed and inspired the initiative can be identified.

One of those draws upon basic conceptions of deterrence and prevention as a matter of physical containment, surveillance, and control. The idea, in short, is that as long as participants are involved in a controlled physical activity, they cannot be involved in delinquency and offending. Their energies and risk-oriented proclivities are thus controlled and diverted toward other pursuits, pursuits that are physically contained and that have the additional benefit of being exciting, challenging, and physically demanding. This containment-and-control rationale for sports-based programs as crime prevention is probably what made midnight basketball so popular among conservatives in the late 1980s and early 1990s. "Keep 'em off the street" was a simple but concrete social control notion, consistent with the larger push toward more prisons and police as the key to crime prevention in urban areas.

The second rationale that animated midnight basketball supporters was informed by a more ostensibly proactive, development-oriented set of ideas. It was the traditional, idealistic notion that sport participation is associated with character-building, self-discipline, and socialization. The assumption here is that simply playing sports builds self-esteem and social skills that teach otherwise undisciplined and disorderly young people principles of social order and self-control. Containment and control, in this conception, is exercised by individuals themselves through their own socially-directed self surveillance.

Both of the approaches have roots in the conception of crime prevention and social intervention as matters of containment, surveillance, and control that has taken hold in the neoliberal era (e.g., Wacquant, 2009). In previous work I have argued that the unique synthesis of these two different visions of using sport for crime prevention was what made the concept of basketball at midnight so popular and compelling when it was first introduced to the public (Hartmann, 2001). The obvious tensions between these two approaches also help account for the political controversy that unfolded around midnight basketball in the context of the 1994 American crime bill debates (Wheelock & Hartmann, 2007). But as approaches to individual level risk reduction, both visions have fundamental problems.

The containment-and-control approach is limited as a crime prevention strategy by the basic limitations of midnight basketball programs: the number of at-risk people they serve and the nature and extent of their programming. For example, Standifer's original program in Maryland counted only 60 participants in its first year of operation, and still had only 84 in the year it was "discovered" by the national media. Similarly, the widely celebrated Chicago plan called for only 160 participants. Although this number may have been impressive as a basketball league, it paled in comparison with the estimated 6600 "at-risk young adults" residing in the housing projects in which the program was located (not to mention the hundreds of thousands at-risk young people not in public housing). Simply put, these programs do not serve enough individuals to make a significant dent in crime and delinquency rates. Even if they served more participants, most sport-based crime prevention programs operate only a few days a week for a limited number of weeks in a year, meaning that the extent of actual, physical containment and control is quite limited.

The shortcomings of the approach that posits sport as a builder of character and social skills are a bit more complicated, but at their root is the idealistic belief that simply playing sports is inherently and inevitably an effective, pro-social (and anti-risk) influence. This point is precisely what a generation of sport scholarship has taught us to question and challenge. Contrary to most popular assumptions, sport participation is not automatically a positive social force. It can be that, but if a program is not properly run or has poor leadership and role models, it can also have the opposite effect. Sport-based programming is better understood, like any other tool or technology, as an "empty form" (MacAloon, 1995)—a practice that can be positive, but can also be a problem if the energies involved are not directed and channeled appropriately. Too often, this understanding has not been in place for midnight basketball programs, rendering their actual intervention into the lives of at-risk young people limited only to physical containment and control.

The implication is that the success of a sport-based social interventionist program is largely determined by the strength of its non-sport components, what it does with young people once they are brought into the program through sport. The literature on sport and development—the larger focus of this volume—helps elaborate this point. In the sport

and development literature, scholars have distinguished between "sport plus" and "plus sport" programs (Coalter, 2009; Levermore & Beacom, 2009). On the one hand, "sport plus" initiatives "give primacy to the development of sustainable sports organizations, programmes and development pathways" (Coalter, p. 58) and then go on to address broader social issues. The "plus sport" model puts the sport/social intervention relationship the other way around, "giv[ing] primacy to social and health programmes where sport is used, especially its ability to bring together a large number of young people, to achieve some of their objectives" (Coalter, p. 58).

Clearly, this latter orientation and approach (see also Levermore 2009) is most proper and appropriate if a sport-based program is to be a significant force in the struggle against crime and delinquency. This framing also makes it easier to understand why many of the best, most effective programs include specific programming for education, mentorship, and skills training as well as what Witt and Crompton (2003) have called value-directed personal development. Time and again, case studies have revealed that the programs that are most promising and successful as crime prevention programs are those that incorporate non-sport, development-oriented elements (see, for examples: Hartmann, 2003; Nichols, 2007; Witt & Crompton, 1996). The main investment of any sport-based crime prevention program should be in its non-sport elements, in individual development, education, job training, and the like. Sport can't and shouldn't be dropped from the equation. After all, it functions as the essential "hook." Nevertheless, getting participants in the door is only one part of a successful outreach program. You also have to keep them in the program. In addition, you have to get them actively involved and interested and invested in the program as a whole, especially in its preventionist elements.

COMMUNITY-LEVEL EFFECTS

What can easily disappear from focusing on individual-level intervention and treatment (fundamental as that is) is the claim that midnight basketball advocates initially trumpeted in introducing their programs to the public in the 1990s: namely, that sports-based crime prevention can have broad, community-level effects, effects that extend well beyond the limited number of participants they directly service and serve. It is easy to be skeptical or downright dismissive of such claims. Indeed, a closer look at the claims Standifer made about his Prince Georges County Program (that they reduced crime by 30%) reveals little more than a spurious correlation where the implementation of midnight basketball simply coincided with declining crime rates throughout the region. Even the most extensive basketball-based programs operated only a few nights a week for a couple of months a year, and served no more than 200 individuals.

Still, it is important not to discount the possibility of community-level effects. Since James Coleman's (1961) classic study of the influence of interscholastic athletics on high

schools and teenage culture, sport scholars have known that sport has social consequence and cultural power that extends far beyond those individuals directly engaged in competitive physical activity. Sports-based programs such as midnight basketball are typically among the most visible and popular crime prevention programs any agency or community can offer. Surely, the prominence of these initiatives and the positive publicity typically associated with them has some kind of broader, community-level consequence or outcome.

Using some basic quantitative data and techniques, a colleague of mine and I took a first step toward addressing the possibility of community-level effects empirically (Hartmann & Depro, 2006). Our research strategy was fairly simple and straightforward. We identified cities that were early adopters of official midnight basketball programs and then plotted changes in their average violent and property crime rates across the period from 1985 to 2001 against the rates for cities without midnight basketball (all other American cities with populations over 100,000).

Our analysis yielded a number of revealing results. One was that cities that adopted official midnight basketball leagues had consistently higher rates of property and violent crime for the period 1985 to 2001 as compared with cities without the programs. They also tended to have a higher percentage of ethnic and racial minority residents. These findings are interesting in themselves, though they probably say more about the social and demographic characteristics of cities inclined to experiment with an unproven and unlikely program such as midnight basketball than about the effectiveness of such initiatives.

Of course, our real interest in generating these plots was not adoption but the effect on crime rates—and here is where things got really interesting. In a nutshell, our statistical analyses and tests showed that the crime rates in cities that adopted midnight basketball appeared to decline somewhat faster than in cities without the programs (i.e., the gap between the two groups of cities appears to narrow over the crucial 3-year period) and that these results were statistically significant (which is to say that the relationships hold even when controlling for key factors that might otherwise explain these results). We were able to confirm that cities that adopted midnight basketball programs experienced greater declines in crime rates than those cities that lacked midnight basketball leagues.

These results held for both violent crime rates and property crime rates, and the magnitude of these effects was striking. Using econometric statistical techniques, we estimated that cities that were early adopters of midnight basketball programs saw a drop of approximately 90 offenses per 100,000 population compared to non-midnight basketball counterparts for violent crime rates. The results for property crime rates were even more impressive. We calculated that midnight basketball cities saw a drop of approximately 390 offenses per 100,000. Effects of this scope cannot be attributed to individual-level mechanisms that are the emphasis of the theoretical literature on sports-based social interventions and most effectiveness evaluation. Even adding in the possibility of "spillover" effects

to friends and acquaintances not actually in the programs, basketball leagues in the early 1990s were simply too limited in size, scope, and population served to account for the magnitude of the effects reported here.

Given the nature of the statistical methods employed in this analysis, it is important not to overstate the direct, causal claims about the effects of midnight basketball on community crime rates. To wit: we cannot say that midnight basketball was directly responsible for the relatively steeper declines in crime in cities that were early adopters of midnight basketball. Nevertheless, there does appear to be some kind of association or correlation there, a relationship that holds even after standard social and demographic factors known to affect community crime rates are included and accounted for. Moreover—and this is the key point—there are mechanisms that can account for these community-level relationships and associations, mechanisms that suggest the broader import and influence of sports-based crime prevention.

One factor that can help explain these patterns has to do with the packaging or bundling of crime prevention initiatives—more specifically, that midnight basketball programs were usually not the only crime prevention initiatives undertaken in these communities, but rather were part of an entire package of community-based risk reduction and crime prevention programs of which midnight basketball was one high-profile component. The effects we observed were not the result of midnight basketball alone but rather of a whole package of crime prevention programs initiated in these communities. Cities that adopted midnight basketball programs tended to have not only distinct demographic profiles, but also unique city-level spending levels and priorities. This interpretation is supported by early adopter cities tending to be Black, having high police expenditures per capita, and having populations with low home ownership. These characteristics are not surprising considering that midnight basketball programs were frequently adopted in cities that were examining low-cost alternatives to policing and championed as ways to increase social capital stocks in cities with indicators suggesting communities were less connected because of expected mobility (i.e., low shares of homeownership). This explanation minimizes the direct effect of midnight basketball, but raises interesting questions about the configuration of such prevention policy packages in general and the role sports-based initiatives might play in such a policy climate.

A second factor contributing to these results involved media and communication mechanisms—what might be called "publicity effects" (Johnson & Bowers, 2003)—especially because they operate at the local, neighborhood level. The public attention devoted to high-profile prevention programs such as midnight basketball can influence community crime rates in one of two ways. On the deterrence side, public attention to midnight basketball programs might send a message to potential criminals of a new emphasis on crime prevention and the extent to which law enforcement and other public officials are willing to go in

the fight against crime, thus creating a rational deterrent for would-be criminals. On the more proactive side, the creation of popular, high-profile programs such as midnight basketball can send a positive message to community members of a new emphasis on community outreach and empowerment, one that builds trust and commitment to the community.

The former explanation is, of course, the more typical in the field currently and frequently the subject of highly publicized debate. On the other hand, the latter, less-developed proactive explanation has implications and consequences that are far less understood but important to think through. The creation of popular, community-based programs such as midnight basketball might incline all community members (not just those in the program) to be less likely to commit crimes, not for fear of being caught, but because they feel more directly connected to their communities and more positively served by law enforcement and social services. Indeed, what we found regarding the particularly significant effect on property crime rates seems consistent with this explanation because midnight basketball may serve to help generate a wide and diffuse sense of community solidarity and trust that serves as a buffer against the individualistic and antisocial sentiments and behaviors that otherwise contribute to crimes against property and the community at large.

The explanations I have offered here are only speculative; a good deal more research must be conducted before we can firmly establish the magnitude of these effects and the mechanisms that account for them. Nevertheless, what is most important here is that we are provided with some evidence that, against a great deal of public and scholarly skepticism, midnight basketball appears to be associated with decreased city-level property crime rates. Perhaps we should not be so quick to dismiss community-level effects of sports-based crime prevention programs such as midnight basketball that might appear, on the face of it, to be rather limited in scope and design. Moreover, these findings suggest that analysts would do well to focus on the intangible, indirect ways in which these results may be achieved. More specifically, these programs need to be implemented in combination with other risk reduction initiatives and be attentive to the intangible, community-building effects that might come with the positive collective sentiments that they may help to generate and sustain. Certainly in a climate of limited resources requiring innovative, cost-effective solutions, these possibilities deserve serious consideration from funders, policy makers, service providers, and program evaluators alike.

CONCLUSIONS AND CAUTIONS

As popular and pervasive as sport-based crime preventions programs such as midnight basketball have become in recent years, the vast majority of these well-intended initiatives have lacked a coherent conceptual foundation, not to mention basic empirical evidence of their effectiveness. As a result, such programs far too often simply provide an excuse for athletic administrators to secure funding for otherwise limited sports facilities

or programs, or are used as a community relations ploy by public officials trying to make it look like they are taking steps to deal with the problems of urban crime, violence, and public safety without actually committing new resources, energy, or attention to the relevant communities. Such shortsighted and even cynical visions not only compromise the immediate influence and effectiveness of the interventionist aspects of these initiatives, they leave such efforts vulnerable to public criticism and cutbacks (such as the attacks on midnight basketball in the context of debates over the federal crime bill in 1994).

In this chapter I have tried to use some of what I have learned working in and around midnight basketball initiatives to counter these problematic tendencies and trends, or put somewhat more positively, to lay out some of the basic principles and understandings on which all sport-based risk reduction initiatives should be founded. I have highlighted three points in particular. One is that sport is a powerful tool for outreach, recruitment, and retention of individual program participants. Another point had to do with the public visibility and symbolic value of sport-based crime prevention at the community level. I suggested that sport-based programming can be an important part of a whole package of community-based approaches to crime prevention and can play a significant role building broad-based trust and support for such initiatives. A final point, the second discussed above, is a bit more conceptual and complicated, involving the kinds of individual-level interventions that are likely to be successful and who is most likely to benefit from them.

Although sport can be a powerful social force, its effects are not (counter to traditional idealistic beliefs) automatically or inevitably positive when it comes to individual-level risk reduction and crime prevention. Indeed, sport is best understood as a tool for development and social intervention whose influence depends upon the ends toward which it is directed, how it is implemented, and the context in which it is deployed. This conceptualization has obvious and concrete implications for program design, implementation, and operation. The success of any sport-based intervention program is largely determined by the strength of its non-sport components and what it does with young people once they are brought into the program through sport. That said, I don't want to suggest that the sport-based components of such programs can be ignored, taken for granted, or minimized. To do so would be to risk losing the very hook that brings young people into the program and inspires their ongoing and energetic participation. Rather, I insist that there needs to be a balance between the sport-based and the non-sport-based aspects of a program, where sport is just one part of a whole package of resources and social supports requiring a level of investment and intensive, day-to-day involvement far beyond that of most sport-based intervention programs. Rather than having it easier than other youth workers, sport-based program organizers have a unique double burden requiring that they must be proficient at both sport and social intervention.

With all of these challenges and complexities in mind, it is important to stress one final point: whatever sport-based social intervention programs may have to contribute to improving the lives of urban youth, we must be careful not to expect too much from them, not to treat them as a magic bullet or miracle elixir. Crime prevention and social intervention are complex and challenging enterprises even under the best of circumstances, with abundant resources, and the most comprehensive and advanced programming. Given their typically limited resources and scheduling, sport-based programs by themselves, even when brilliantly conceived and properly implemented, will not always succeed. They will fail more often than not. To believe anything else not only overestimates the social force of sport, it underestimates the difficulties of meaningful social intervention and change. A failure to understand these realities and limitations has implications far beyond sport. Indeed, unrealistic expectations for sport-based interventions can actually serve to reinforce and exacerbate the problems faced by at-risk urban youth by deflecting public attention away from deeper social sources of their problems. "If we are not cautious," as Jay Coakley (2002) has put it, such programs

> ...may unwittingly reaffirm ideological positions that identify young people, especially young people of color as 'problems' and then forget that the real problems are deindustrialization, unemployment, underemployment, poverty, racism and at least twenty years of defunding social programs that have traditionally been used to foster community development in ways that positively impact the lives of young people. (p. 23)

REFERENCES

Baldwin, C. K. (2000). Theory, program, and outcomes: Assessing the challenges of evaluating at-risk youth recreation programs. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 18,* 19-33.

Cameron, M., & MacDougall, C. (2000). Crime prevention through sport and physical activity. *Trends and Issues in Crime and Criminal Justice,* No. 165. Canberra: Australian Institute of Criminology.

Cavallo, D. (1981). *Muscles and morals: Organized playgrounds and urban reform, 1880-1920.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Coakley, J. (2002). Using sports to control deviance and violence among youths: Let's be critical and cautious. In M. Gatz, M. A. Messner, & S. J. Ball-Rokeach (Eds.), *Paradoxes of youth and sport* (pp. 13-30). Albany, NY: SUNY Press.

Coalter, F. (2009). Sport-in-development: Accountability or development? In R. Levermore, & A. Beacom (Eds.), *Sport and international development* (pp. 55-75). Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cole, C. L. (1996). American Jordan: P.L.A.Y., consensus and punishment. *Sociology of Sport Journal, 13,* 366-397.

Coleman, J. S. (1961). *The adolescent society: The social life of the teenager and its impact on education.* New York: Free Press.

Correira, M. (1997). Boot camps, exercise and delinquency: An analytical critique of the use of physical exercise to facilitate decreases in delinquent behavior. *Journal of Contemporary Criminal Justice, 13,* 94-113.

Crompton, J. L. (1998). Forces underlying the emergence of privatization in parks and recreation. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 16*(2), 88-101.

Crompton, J. L., & McGregor, B. (1994). Trends in the financing and staffing of local government park and recreation services. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 12*(3), 19-37.

Goldberg, D. T. (2008). *The threat of race: Reflections on racial neoliberalism.* New York: Wiley-Blackwell.

Hartmann, D. (2001). Notes on midnight basketball and the cultural politics of race and at-risk urban youth. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 25,* 339-371.

Hartmann, D. (2003). Theorizing sport as social intervention: A view from the grassroots. *Quest, 55,* 118-140.

Hartmann, D., & Depro, B. (2006). Rethinking sports-based community crime prevention: A preliminary analysis of the relationship between midnight basketball and urban crime rates. *Journal of Sport and Social Issues, 30,* 180-196.

Hartmann, D., & Wheelock, D. (2002). Sport as prevention? Minneapolis' experiment with late-night basketball. *CURA Reporter, 32*(3), 13-17.

Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Holt, N. L. (Ed.). (2008). *Positive youth development through sport.* London: Routledge.

Howell, J. C. (Ed.). (1995). *Guide for implementing the comprehensive strategy for serious, violent, and chronic juvenile offenders.* Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention.

Johnson, S. D., & Bowers, K. J. (2003). Opportunity is in the eye of the beholder: The role of publicity in crime prevention. *Criminology and Criminal Policy, 2*(3), 201-228.

Levermore, R. (2009). Sport-in-international development: Theoretical frameworks. In R. Levermore, & A, Beacom (Eds.), *Sport and international development* (pp. 26-54). Hampshire, England: Macmillan.

Levermore, R., & Beacom, A. (2009). Sport and development: Mapping the field. In R. Levermore & A. Beacom (Eds.), *Sport and international development* (pp. 1-25). Hampshire, England: Palgrave Macmillan.

MacAloon, J. (1995). Interval training. In S. L. Foster (Ed.), *Choreographing history,* (pp. 32-53). Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press.

Martinek, T. J., & Hellison, D. R. (1997). Fostering resilience in underserved youth through physical activity. *Quest, 49,* 34-49.

Nichols, G. (1997). A consideration of why active participant in sport and leisure might reduce criminal behaviour. *Sport, Education and Society, 2,* 181-190.

Nichols, G. (2004). Crime and punishment and sports development. *Leisure Studies, 23,* 177-194.

Nichols, G. (2007). *Sport and crime reduction: The role of sports in tackling youth crime.* London: Routledge.

Nichols, G., & Crow, I. (2004). Measuring the impact of crime reduction interventions involving sports activities for young people. *Howard Journal, 43*(3), 227-236.

Pitter, R., & Andrews, D. L. (1997). Serving America's underserved youth: Reflections on sport and recreation in an emerging social problems industry. *Quest, 49,* 85-99.

Schultz, L. E., Crompton, J. L., & Witt, P. A. (1995). A national profile of the status of public recreation services for at-risk children and youth. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 13*(3), 1-25.

Sherman, L. W., Gottfredson, D. C., MacKenzie, D. L., Eck, J., Reuter, P., & Bushway, S. D. (July, 1998). *Preventing crime: What works, what doesn't, what's promising. Research in brief.* Washington, DC: National Institute of Justice.

Sotiriardous, K., Shilburg, D., & Quick, S. P. (2008). The attraction, retention/transition, and nurturing process of sport development: Some Australian evidence. *Journal of Sport Managements, 22,* 247-272.

Utting, D. (1996). *Reducing criminality among young people: A sample of relevant programmes in the United Kingdom.* London: Home Office Research and Statistics Directorate.

Wacquant, L. (2009). *Punishing the poor: The neo-liberal government of social inequality.* Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Wheelock, D. & Hartmann, D. (2007). Midnight basketball and the 1994 crime bill debates: The operation of a racial code. *The Sociological Quarterly, 48,* 315-342.

Witt, P. A., & Crompton, J. L. (1996). *Recreation programs that work for at-risk youth.* Philadelphia, PA: Venture.

Witt, P. A., & Crompton, J. L. (1997). The protective factors framework: A key to programming for benefits and evaluating results. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration, 15*(3), 1-18.

Witt, P. A., & Crompton, J. L. (2003). Positive youth development practices in recreational settings in the United States. *World Leisure Journal, 45,* 4-11.

Zarrett, N., Lerner, R. M., Carrano, J., Fay, K., Peltz, J. S., & Li, Y. (2008). Variations in adolescent engagement in sports and its influence on positive youth development. In N. L. Holt (Ed.), *Positive youth development through sport,* (pp. 9-23). London: Routledge.