

A Formula for Success

An Introduction to Opportunity Expanding Sports

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AN OVERVIEW

Most school and youth sports leaders have concluded that high levels of contentiousness interfere with sport's ability to realize its full potential. In addition, there is general agreement that athletes, coaches and parents are not properly equipped to get the most out of their investment in sports.

Unfortunately, the preponderance of evidence indicates that reducing contentiousness and expanding opportunities are not high priority items on the agendas of sports organizations. Few resources are being devoted to either moderating contentiousness or to expanding opportunities for athletes, coaches and parents. Clearly, the efforts of athletes, coaches and parents are directed almost exclusively to enhancing individual and team performance. Regrettably, it is necessary to conclude that there are very few sports parents who are taking action to reorder these priorities.

The majority of sports administrators and coaches have identified parents as a significant source of conflict, frustration and stress. Many coaches and administrators acknowledge that they make every effort to keep parents at arm's length rather than recruit them as partners in supporting their children's teams. Parents and coaches are inexperienced in working together to maximize the effectiveness of their teams. Therefore, strategies for making sport less contentious and more opportunity expanding by means of intimately involving parents in their children's team communities are not on the radar screens of most youth sports leaders or for that matter, of most parents. Many parents look forward to being free from having to assume responsibility for their children's sports education. Some view it as a cheap form of baby sitting, which of course is a source of resentment for their coaches.

Nearly all sports leaders have concluded that contentiousness revealed in the bleachers is evidence of a lack of emotional restraint. Most see failures of restraint as an indication of a character flaw, as evidence that parents, for any number of reasons, are incapable of controlling their emotions. In efforts to reduce disruptive incidents sports leaders very often issue codes of conduct that define what constitutes inappropriate parent conduct. Most often they enforce these codes by threatening punitive action. In some cases rather than issue codes of conduct sports leaders offer parents "guidelines" to help them remember what is expected of them.

It is reported that most initiatives taken by sports organizations have not been successful in significantly reducing contentiousness. This revelation was inspiration for adopting a team development approach to managing parent conduct. Team development strategies call for parents to join with athletes and coaches to find effective ways of working together to realize their shared goals.

To enhance relationships between athletes, coaches and parents strategies have been crafted to: 1) equip parents to meet their sports parenting challenges, 2) develop effective approaches to building mutually supportive team communities, ones that inspire, teach and support athletes, coaches and parents, 3) finding ways to moderate influences from the entertainment sports industry whose mission is significantly different from youth sports programs, and 4) expanding opportunities for athletes, coaches, parents, families, schools and communities to maximize benefits from participation in their team communities.

Tools for helping achieve team development goals have been crafted and tested in school and youth sports settings. Since it has been demonstrated that traditional prescriptive approaches, that focus exclusively upon modifying individual behavior, have had limited success, additional tools have been developed to achieve the desired outcomes. Other approaches have been developed that are directed at equipping athletes, coaches and parents for their respective roles in their team communities. In addition, efforts have been made to enrich the climate of team communities by opening up opportunities for athletes, coaches and parents through initiatives taken by parents. Approaches are under development that allow parents to work closely with athletes and coaches to create barriers to influences from an entertainment sports industry that promotes contentiousness to drive fans through the turnstiles. This industry has shown little interest in ensuring that school and youth sports are able to realize their full

potential of promoting the personal development of athletes, coaches and parents and the strengthening of school, family and community ties.

In short, the *Opportunity Expanding Sports* perspective has been crafted to promote the development of parent abilities to contribute to the creation of contentious-free and opportunity expanding team communities that are safe, sane, less stressful and more inclusive. This perspective has been developed with the understanding that opportunities for members of a team community to be inspired, empowered and supported are greatly enhanced when parents actively participate in shaping the team climate. An approach to sports enhancement has been developed to provide parents with guidance as they work with athletes and coaches to increase the payoff from their investment in their sports programs. Learning tools are being made available to help parents develop the values, attitudes, habits and skills needed to do their part in forming Enclaves of Opportunity, where everyone benefits from their investment in the team and in one another. Benefits can be maximized when parents develop the habits needed to successfully work with athletes, coaches and their fellow parents.

THE DEFINITION

Opportunity Expanding Sports are activities in which athletes, coaches and parents are:

- **Deeply involved** in what they are doing
- **Closely connected** to one another
- In ways that **bring out the best** in everyone
- While **resisting limiting influences** from the mainstream culture of sport
- Making life **better for everyone involved** - on and off the playing field, on the sidelines and in the bleachers

Opportunity Expanding Sports: **1.** Sports that *renew the human spirit*, **2.** A system of beliefs and principles that celebrate and promote sports that *expand opportunities* for all participants: athletes, coaches and parents, **3.** Policies and practices that allow sport to *contribute to the development of all participants*. **4.** Policies and practices that allow sport to perform its magic of *inspiring, educating, and uniting*. **5.** Sports that are characterized by displays of *courage, care, conviviality, and consideration* by all participants.

Opportunity Expanding Sports provide athletes, coaches and parents with *endless possibilities, a nurturing spirit and a friendly atmosphere*

<u>Characteristic</u>	<u>Function</u>	<u>Injunction</u>
<i>Endless Possibilities</i>	Expansive	"Seek Opportunities"
<i>Nurturing Spirit</i>	Educative	"Be Ready to Learn"
<i>Friendly Atmosphere</i>	Connective	"Support One Another"

THE GOALS

The **Opportunity Expanding Sports** perspective was created:

- To guide **Parents, Athletes And Coaches** as they work together to form mutually supportive team communities (*Enclaves of Opportunity*).

Parents, athletes and coaches are transformed from a loose collection of individuals in pursuit of their personal sports dreams into a temporary community committed to helping one another pursue their own individual goals while assuming responsibilities for achieving common purposes.

- To guide **Team Communities** as they develop policies and practices that are *inspiring, empowering, and unifying*.

*Team communities are transformed from being focused exclusively upon their destination (winning) to focused upon enjoying the journey (the enlivenment, enrichment and efficacy). Parents, athletes and coaches join together to resist **limiting influences** from the mainstream culture of sport.*

- To guide **Schools** as the administrators, student body, faculty and parents assume ownership of the school's athletic teams as a means of promoting *school spirit*.

Schools are transformed from being dispensers of knowledge and services to being communities where administrators, students, faculty and parents assume responsibility for promoting the wellbeing of everyone associated with the school.

- To guide **Families** as they work with coaches and administrators to form *Enclaves of Opportunity*.

Families are transformed from being collections of individuals who are remotely connected to one another through sports to closely connected family members who assume responsibility for the enjoyment and wellbeing of one another so that they are able to get the most out their investment in sports.

- To guide **Communities** as they make use of their school and youth sports teams to promote civic responsibility and pride

Communities are transformed from being collections of remotely connected families to networks that are linked by their shared interest in their school and youth sports teams.

- To guide the **Culture of Sport** as members of the sports community, participants and fans alike, as they develop opportunity expanding perspectives on sports.

The culture of sport is transformed from being guided by divisive war metaphors to being guided by linking metaphors that promote a climate of sport that allows everyone to be deeply involved in what they are doing, and closely connected to one another in ways that bring out the best in everyone, (See the definition of Opportunity Expanding Sports for an elaboration of its meaning on page 4)

THE PRINCIPLES

Opportunity Expanding Sports are:

- **GENIAL:** By *controlling contentiousness* team members are better able to take advantage of opportunities to benefit from their sports experiences (rather than having to defend themselves from personal attacks).
- **CARING:** By learning how to *embrace their sports mate's dreams* (rather than focusing on their own wellbeing) team members are able to bring out the best in everyone.
- **INVOLVING:** By learning how to *protect one another* from physical and psychological intrusions team members are better able to become deeply involved in what they are doing so that they can enjoy the intrinsic satisfactions of sport (not simply the spoils of victory).
- **ENRICHING:** By using sports experiences to *learn problem solving habits and skills* team members are better equipped to meet the challenges both in and out of sports.
- **EXPANSIVE:** By discovering and adopting a range of different ways of *thinking about sports*, opportunities to enjoy and benefit from sports experiences are greatly expanded.
- **CONNECTIVE:** By *building a mutually supportive team community* all team members are better able to make the most of their sports experiences.
- **ADAPTIVE:** By *developing and pursuing a well thought out vision of opportunity expanding sports* team members are better able to exercise their civic duty by routinely working with their sports mates to modify sports policies and practices so that they are better adapted to the requirements of the times (not simply a reflection of the policies and practices inspired by the entertainment sports industry).

By adhering to these principles parents, athletes and coaches are better able to generate the levels of **collective energy** required to realize the goals of Opportunity Expanding Sports, that is, to build effective team communities (Enclaves of Opportunity).

THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework that serves as the foundation for Opportunity Expanding Sports is based on the belief that “there is nothing more practical than a good theory.” It has been demonstrated that it is both useful and practical to have a well-crafted framework that helps identify initiatives that have the greatest prospects of yielding the desired outcomes.

The development of the conceptual tools of Opportunity Expanding Sports began by identifying those habits that equip parents to contribute to the enrichment of their children’s lives in sports. The *Habits of the Savvy Sports Parent*, range from being able to show emotional restraint to becoming equipped to be an activist for change in sports policies and practices. This model has proven useful in helping parents focus on those actions they can take to support their children’s live in sports. When each habit is developed it adds to the richness of the experience for parents as well as to the development of the child.

Using the principles upon which the seven habits model was based a comprehensive conceptual framework was crafted to provide a more nuanced understanding of how parents can contribute to the enrichment of sport. The Opportunity Expanding Sports framework is helpful in giving direction to actions parents can take to enhance the experiences of their family.

Uses:

- The framework is designed to be used to achieve a better understanding of relationships among parents, athletes and coaches in team communities; to suggest strategies for reducing contentiousness and promoting opportunities in school and youth sports; and to generate hypotheses that can be tested by systematic inquires into the determinants and consequences of various types of parent-athlete-coach relationships in team communities.
- It provides conceptual tools that can help, a) define parent and team development goals, b) identify targets of change in school and youth sports, c) develop strategies for change in relationships among parents, athletes and coaches, d) determine how to resist toxic influences from the entertainment sports industry, e) identify and overcome barriers to making changes in the culture of team communities, and f) develop tools to help parents, athletes and coaches reach opportunity expanding goals (for example, learning life skills and/or strengthening family ties).
- It also provides conceptual tools for achieving a better understanding of, a) what is wrong with today’s school and youth sports, b) what values, roles, habits, skills, mindsets, and inner scripts parents need in order to be good citizens in a highly effective team community, c) the kinds of agreements parents, athletes and coaches need to reach in order to create a contentious-free and opportunity expanding team climate, and d) what steps need to be taken to make changes in the mainstream culture of sport that is in desperate need of a makeover.

Distinguishing Features:

- The framework is designed to promote team development, making generous use of social psychological insights about how to achieve group effectiveness in educational settings.
- It includes provisions for discovering ways team communities can strengthen family ties.
- It promotes the discovery of ways school and youth sports programs can be used to help heal social fractures caused by the realities of life in today’s fragmented world, their effects on team communities, schools, families and host communities.
- It includes provisions for scaling change initiatives to the level of development of parents, athletes and coaches, recognizing that until they develop skills for mastering basic tasks, (such as, developing the ability to show emotional restraint), it is unlikely that they will be

able to master higher-level developmental tasks (such as, the ability to leave an enduring mark on their sports programs).

Assumptions:

- The most effective way to create sports that expand opportunities for the enjoyment and development of parents, athletes, and coaches is to structure team communities in ways that involve parents in truly meaningful roles where they can help create a mutually supportive team climate, (not simply assume responsibility for fund raising, working in the snack bar and lining the playing field).
- Team communities are most likely to become contentious-free and opportunity expanding when parents, athletes and coaches reach agreements as to how they are going to support one another,
- Provisions need to be made for parents to learn how to become consummate citizens in team communities.

Foundation:

- The framework is based upon universal human values; values embraced by all of the world's great religions, and upon principles of participatory democracy.
- It is based upon a progressive rather than a reactionary or conservative approach to sports reform where the emphasis is upon taking sport to a higher level by providing opportunities for parents, athletes, coaches, schools, families and communities to benefit from school and youth sports while at the same time opposing influences from the entertainment sports industry so that the magic of sport can be restored.
- The framework is also based upon a "nurturant parent worldview" (See George Lakoff's *Moral Politics*) that requires parents and coaches to learn to become controlled, supportive, relaxed, nurturing, expansive, collaborative, and visionary, characteristics they want athletes to emulate.

Evaluation:

- This theoretical framework can be evaluated on many different dimensions, for example on its validity, elegance, scope, consistency etc. In developing a sports reform framework the most important evaluation criterion needs to be its utility. The essential question is "Does the framework help achieve a better understanding of the challenges reformers face so that those initiating change are better equipped to achieve their ends?" This framework has proven useful in generating strategies for educating parents for their roles in helping build team communities that are energizing, empowering, and mutually supportive.

Outcomes Sought

Opportunity Expanding Sports nurture the development of:

- **Parents, Athletes and Coaches** as they work together to form highly effective team communities (referred to as *Dream Teams* or *Enclaves of Opportunity*). They are transformed from loose collections of individuals in pursuit of their personal dreams to communities of kindred spirits who are committed to helping their sports mates pursue their own personal goals and to joining with them in pursuing the goal of becoming the best possible team in every respect.

- **Team Communities** are transformed from being focused exclusively upon the destination (winning) to being focused on the journey (on creating the conditions that produce *experiences* of enlivenment, enchantment, ecstasy, enrichment, empowerment, efficacy and encouragement). And parents, athletes and coaches join together to resist toxic influences from the entertainment sports industry.
- **Schools** so that the student body, faculty and parents assume ownership, not only of the school's athletic teams, but also of everything for which the school stands. Schools are transformed from being dispensers of services to being extended networks of families that assume responsibility for the wellbeing, growth and development of their fellow citizens of the school community.
- **Families** as they work with the coaches and administrators to form Enclaves of Opportunity. Families are transformed from being collections of individuals who are remotely connected to one another to genuine kindred spirits who assume responsibility for the enjoyment and wellbeing of one another so that they are able to get the most out their investment in sports.
- **Communities** that are unified by school and youth sports teams that represent them. Communities are transformed from collections of remotely connected families to communities that are linked by their investment in their school and youth sports teams.
- **The Culture of Sport** that is being transformed from being guided by a dominator model to a partnership model so that it can better serve future generations of sports parents, athletes and coaches by adapting to the requirements of the times

Summary

A sports enhancement framework has been crafted that focuses upon the parents' role in expanding their children's experiences in their team communities. This framework makes generous use of social psychological theories and findings to advance strategies for enhancing team effectiveness and promoting, through sports, the development of athletes, coaches, parents, schools, families and communities.

THE INTELLECTUAL ROOTS

The **Opportunity Expanding Sports** conceptual framework has been inspired by:

Riane Eisler (feminist scholar, futurist and activist). Eisler contrasts two models of society, the *dominator* and *partnership* models. She asserts that if our civilization is to prosper a transformation from being guided by dominator values to partnership values needs to occur. She carefully documents her case for following a realistic scenario toward a partnership future (which she terms a “pragmatopia”). The sports policies and practices advanced by Opportunity Expanding Sports are directed at transforming school and youth sports from being guided by dominator principles that justify the use of physical and emotional violence in the pursuit of victory to being informed by partnership principles that lead to forming mutually supportive team communities in which inspiration, nurture and communion prevail. The rise of the women’s sports movement that has, in the main, been guided by partnership values has offered an alternative to traditional male-defined dominator values. The tension between the values promoted through men’s and women’s sports has inspired a reexamine of traditional assumptions upon which youth sports have been based. Opportunity Expanding Sports has been constructed with the goal of moving the culture of youth sports toward being guided by the partnership values advanced by Eisler.

Sam Keen (psychologist) Keen has offered a carefully crafted critique of today’s outdated conception of masculinity. He has concluded that we need to challenge the assumptions upon which the traditional view of manhood has been based. This warrior mentality is clearly reflected in the male-driven culture of sport. Sadly, it is even beginning to make itself felt in women’s sports policies and practices. Keen makes a persuasive case for reexamining the basic assumptions upon which males have historically approached their lives in sports. Their customary conflict-laden means of establishing and maintaining their masculinity contributes to the ugly contentiousness found all too often among and between athletes, coaches and parents in youth sports. Keen also makes a strong case for using sports as a means of strengthening the family. He asserts that as long as the prime loyalty of parents is to the family they cannot easily be dominated by the state or any other social institution, including sports governing bodies. Challenging the outdated conception of masculinity that is currently blindly embraced by the majority of athletes, coaches and parents can moderate the effects of a crippling warrior mentality that is giving legitimacy to the high levels of contentiousness we are experiencing in youth sports. Amplifying the role of the family in sports by placing emphasis upon constructive parent involvement in their children’s team communities will limit the power of sports leaders to shape their family’s sports experiences and hence could very well diminish hyper-masculine conduct on the playing field, the sidelines and in the bleachers.

Martin Buber (theologian) Opportunity Expanding Sports is rooted in an ethics of interpersonal responsibility inspired by the “I-Thou” perspective of Martin Buber. His perspective applied to sport encourages dialogue among athletes, coaches and parents during which caring connections are established as they work together to form a mutually supportive team community. The basic principle used to guide the conduct of parents in team communities is to treat everyone as *subjects* who possess the ability to work cooperatively toward expanding opportunities for everyone involved. This approach is in sharp contrast to mainstream sports practices that lead to treating athletes, coaches and parents as *objects* to be manipulated to achieve the ends of winning and recognition.

George Lakoff (linguist) Opportunity Expanding Sports has its roots in a political worldview guided by what George Lakoff describes as the “nurturant parent” morality (in contrast to a “strict father” morality) The conflict between these two moralities is the basis of the tension

within the world of sport between those embracing views on sports policies and practices that affect the climate of team communities. A “nurturant parent” approach is reflected in Opportunity Expanding Sports policies and practices. The “strict father” approach is reflected in mainstream adult-centered policies and practices. Since the tension between these competing worldviews is so evident in contemporary discourse about social, political and childrearing policies and practices it can be expected that when one or the other view is being advocated as a solution to a youth sports problem, controversy will ensue.

Ivan Illich (Radical Catholic priest) Opportunity Expanding Sports has its roots in an ethics of social change inspired by Ivan Illich. Through his activism and radical writing Illich sought to equip disenfranchised groups (of which athletes and parents are members in today’s school and youth sports) with opportunities to define their own problems and seek solutions that make sense to them without having “experts” either define their problems or impose their “solutions.” This perspective has influenced Opportunity Expanding Sports strategies for sports enhancement. Sports parenting experts are urged to make themselves available to members of team communities to help them clarify the issues they feel need to be addressed. This is in contrast to approaches where sports parenting experts identify the issues and advance their solutions. Instead experts are invited to develop an appreciation for the collective wisdom of members of team communities and to help them identify and secure the resources they need to create mutually supportive team communities.

Amiti Etzioni (sociologist) Opportunity Expanding Sports has its roots in the communitarian perspective of Amiti Etzioni. He observes that many of the problems we face today reside in our failure to assume responsibility for the wellbeing of one another, that our American individualistic way of life leads to the failure of our social institutions. His perspective guides strategies designed to promote social responsibility in team communities. An emphasis upon promoting responsibility to ones sports mates provides inspiration for strengthening the bonds among athletes, coaches and parents as they reach agreements about the actions they want to take to achieve their team goals.

Phillip Zimbardo (social psychologist) Opportunity Expanding Sports has its roots in the work of Philip Zimbardo, who identified systemic and situational roots of inhumane (evil) actions by otherwise good people. His perspective has inspired the search for the causes and remedies for harmful emotional and physical violence in the norms and traditions of the culture of sport rather than exclusively in the personalities and character of athletes, coaches and parents. This perspective inspires the development of strategies for sports reform directed at transforming the norms, mores, organizational structures and sports policies that guide parent behavior, as well as strategies for changing the conduct of individual parents.

Kurt Lewin and Ron Lippitt (social psychologists) Opportunity Expanding Sports has its roots in the perspective on interpersonal relations and social change formulated by Lewin and Lippitt and their colleague. This perspective, which served as the basis for the Sensitivity Training movement, provides guidance for changing behavior in the context of a team community. It also suggests strategies for enhancing team unity and effectiveness by engaging in client-centered dialogue. It is grounded in a commitment to applying democratic principles to all of our social institutions, including sport. This approach serves as a model for developing team unity through candid discussions among athletes, coaches and parents.

Thomas Moore (former Catholic monk and professor of religion and psychology) Opportunity Expanding Sports has its roots in the concept of *enchantment* as developed by Thomas Moore. This concept inspired the creation of the definition of Opportunity Expanding Sports as occurring *“when everyone is deeply involved in what they are doing, and closely connected to one another in ways that bring out the best in everyone, while expanding opportunities, resisting toxic influences from the mainstream culture, and making life in and out of sports a better place*

for fellow citizens.” This definition has stimulated the development of strategies that parents can employ to: 1) avoid interrupting the flow of competition, 2) appreciate the importance of building strong bonds with their sports mates, 3) take full advantage of the opportunities sports offer, 4) ward off toxic influences from the mainstream culture, and 5) transform the culture of sport so that it better serves the all participants.

Mihaly Csikzentmihalyi (psychologist) Opportunity Expanding Sports is rooted in Csikzentmihalyi’s concept of “flow” where participants in all manner of activities pursue them for their own sake, not to achieve a particular end, such as being able to mount the victory stand at the end of a competition. He identified those factors that contribute to the enjoyment of an activity and determined that when activities are pursued for their own sake they produce happiness in contrast to when they are pursued to achieve a particular end. Therefore, in activities like sports conditions need to be created so that emphasis is upon becoming deeply involved (as in Moore’s concept of enchantment). This work has led to the development of strategies parents can employ that establish the conditions for their children to be able to “keep their heads in the game” so as to ensure that they are gaining satisfaction from their sports experiences.

Stephen Covey (leadership strategist) Opportunity Expanding Sports has its roots in the personal change perspective of Steven Covey. His approach to personal development provided inspiration for identifying the *Habits of the Savvy Sports Parent* and for recommending strategies for the development of these habits. Covey’s personal effectiveness model provoked the search for features of a team community that support or hinder the development of these habits.

Aaron Beck (psychiatrist) Opportunity Expanding Sports has its roots in Beck’s cognitive therapeutic approach that is used by psychotherapist to modify dysfunctional thinking, emotion and behavior. His theory and research findings provide a useful way of thinking about how the *mindset* of sports parents can be modified to allow them to be less contentious in their children’s team communities and less limited in their understanding of the opportunities offered by sports. This cognitive approach to transforming the mindset of parents has guided the development of strategies for helping parents become less intrusive and more expansive in their approach to sports. The Opportunity Expanding Sports cognitive strategy focuses upon expanding the *values* parents use to guide their behavior, their *angle of vision* of the sports scene, the *motives* that drive responses to their experiences on the sports scene and the *frame of orientation* (the metaphors, images, myths, stories, symbols, heroes, and language) parents employ to organize their thinking about their sports experiences.

Virginia King (therapist) Opportunity Expanding Sports has its roots in the “inner theater” metaphor developed by Virginia King. This unique approach to exploring inner forces that impact life decisions inspired the development of a way of describing and understanding the *script* that guides the inner life of sports parents. This script makes use of the various “actors” who voice their competing views as parents face universal sports parenting challenges. This is a valuable tool for parents to use to discover the range of possible reactions to the barriers and opportunities they face as they support their children in sports.

Summary

Inspiration has been drawn from a variety of students of human behavior in constructing a framework for enhancing opportunities through sports. These scholars have provided conceptual tools for developing strategies parents can use to 1) preserve sport’s magical ability to uplift the spirits of athletes, coaches and parents, 2) build mutually supportive team communities, 3) take advantage of the full range of opportunities sports offer, 4) ward off contentious and limiting influences from the mainstream culture, and 5) transform the culture of sport so that school and youth programs better serve families, schools and communities.

THE RESOURCES

What are Opportunity Expanding Sports Resources?

Opportunity Expanding Sports Resources include a collection of books, booklets, CD's, DVD's, self-assessment instruments, a sports parenting board game, a coupon book for parents to give to their children with coupons redeemable for promised actions by parents, team and individual exercises and other learning tools that can be used by parents to become highly effective members of their children's team communities. Each tool in the collection addresses issues related to the challenges of creating opportunity expanding team communities. These tools are aimed at accomplishing three objectives:

- To inspire parents to **reflect on** whether their current way of playing their sports parenting role is having the desired results.
- To provoke **discussion** between parents, athletes, and coaches about how they can work together to create an opportunity expanding team community.
- To challenge parents to consider taking **actions** that will lead to the payoffs they seek from their investment in their children's life in sports.

Most parents have not yet considered the full range of benefits to their children and their families from their sports programs. They have not been challenged to expand their consciousness, values, attitudes and skills so that they can become savvy sports parents. In the main, parents have not been inspired to:

- Engage in self-assessment to discover the level of development of their ability to manage the inevitable frustration and anger that arises in the normal course of athletic competition.
- Explore alternative solutions to common challenges in their team community that take attention off individual performance and place it instead upon achieving benefits for everyone - parents, athletes and coaches
- Complete an analysis of those factors that interfere with their own ability to become deeply involved in what they are doing in their team community,
- Develop a plan of action for facilitating the dreams of their sports mates - the parents, athletes and coaches on their children's team.
- Develop a design for a team community that can open up opportunities for parents, athletes and coaches to be inspired, empowered and unified through their relationships with one another and by commonly overlooked growth-enhancing features of the sports scene.
- Develop a plan for promoting mutual support among parents, athletes and coaches in their team community.
- Identify those features of today's team communities that need "fixing" and take actions to repair the "defects."

It is necessary for those with a vision of **contentious-free and opportunity expanding** sports to discover strategies that inspire parents to invest in equipping themselves to become involved citizens in their team communities. These outcomes will only occur when the consciousness of parents is awakened about what they need to do to prepare themselves to become savvy sports parents.

See **Sports Parenting Resources: Lessons to Learn**
on the **PGS Homepage** - An outline of the opportunity expanding perspective on sports is
found in Volume 1, in the **Sports Possibilities** section under the title:
Realizing Sports Possibilities: How to View Sports Through an Opportunity Expanding Prism

THE ARCHITECT OF OPPORTUNITY EXPANDING SPORTS



David Canning Epperson

Education: Stanford University (B.A.), Sacramento State University (M.S.), and Michigan (Ph.D.) all in psychology (specialization in the social psychology of education)

Academic Experience: Assistant Professor of Education and Assistant Dean, University of California at Santa Barbara; Associate Professor, Head, Department of Higher Education and Associate Provost (for the university system) University of Illinois, Urbana; Professor and Dean of the College of Education, University of Illinois, Chicago; Professor of Education and Urban Affairs and Master of the College of Community Studies, Northwestern University.

Publications: Numerous books, articles and curriculum material on the social psychology of education, higher education, women in sports and sports parenting.

Sports Experience: Stanford University and military basketball and track athlete; school and military basketball and track coaching; Co-founder of *The Volleyball Festival* - founded in 1984 (the world's largest annual sporting event); Co-Founder of *Parents for Good Sports* - founded in 1999 (A non-profit organization for enriching the lives of young athletes and their families through parent-driven, community-based educational programs). Served on the board of directors of USA Volleyball.

Other Experience: Military officer (Korea); business executive (family automobile dealership and real estate businesses); junior high school teacher.

Recognition: Inducted into hometown Hall of Fame (as an athlete); the International Volleyball Hall of Fame (as a youth sports administrator); and the American Volleyball Coach's Association Hall of Fame (as a youth sports administrator) and Distinguished Service Awards from USA Volleyball and the AVCA.