The Development of Interscholastic Sports at Seventh-day Adventist Academies and Colleges

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A letter to the editor published in the Adventist Gleaner (Burt, 1996) read, “It appears that the Trojan horse of the world’s secular false values and misplaced affections has again found a receptive haven. . .” (p. 3). This letter was written in response to a previous article (Robertson, 1996) reporting the state championship won by the Portland Adventist Academy boys’ basketball team. A struggle within the Seventh-day Adventist church is taking place over the presence and role of interscholastic competition in SDA schools.

Ellen G. White’s Concerns

The value of sporting competition has been debated since the inception of Adventist education at Battle Creek College in 1874. The debate started when students at Battle Creek College developed teams in baseball, football, basketball, and even participated in boxing matches (A. White, 1967). Ellen White (1827-1915), who was in Australia at the time, wrote a letter to the president of the college, William Prescott, stating:

. . .They [students] act as if the school were a place where they were to perfect themselves in sports, as if this was an important branch of their education. And they came armed and equipped for this kind of training. This is all wrong from beginning to end. . .
Amusement that serves as exercise and recreation is not to be discarded; nevertheless it must be kept strictly within bounds, else it leads to love of amusement for its own sake, and nourishes the desire for self gratification [italics added]. . . (qtd. in Vande Vere, 1972, p. 63)

White expressed concern about sports in SDA educational institutions on different occasions. In the book Education, Ellen White (1903) discussed the sports of her day in the following statement:

The games that occupy so much of (the student's) time are diverting the mind from study. They are not helping to prepare the youth for practical, earnest work in life. Their influence does not tend toward refinement, generosity, or real manliness.

Some of the most popular amusements such as football and boxing, have become schools of brutality. They are developing the same characteristics as did the games of ancient Rome. The love of domination, the pride in mere brute force, the reckless disregard of life, are exerting upon the youth a power to demoralize that is appalling.

Other athletic games, though not so brutalizing, are scarcely less objectionable because of the excess to which they are carried. They stimulate the love of pleasure and excitement, thus fostering a distaste of useful labor [italics added]. . . (p. 210-211)
In reading these statements by White, Adventists should ask the question, “What would she have said today about competitive sports in the education system?” White’s response, written in the 1890s, to a question similar to this one is printed in *The Adventist Home* (E. White, 1952). She gave the following answer to a nursing student at Battle Creek College who wrote her a letter expressing concern about sports at the college:

I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this even in its simplicity, may be overdone.

I shrink always from the almost sure result which follows in the wake of these amusements. It leads to an outlay of means that should be expended in bringing the light of truth to souls that are perishing out of Christ. . . .

The way that they have been conducted at the college does not bear the impress of heaven. It does not strengthen the intellect. It does not refine and purify the character. . . . The exercise in these games is filling their brains with thoughts that distract the mind from their studies [italics added]. . . . (p. 499-500)

White’s concerns in these statements have been highlighted in italics. Because of statements like these, opponents of interschool competition hold that developing such programs go directly against inspired counsel (Akers, 1988; General Conference, 1976; Scriven, 1972a). However, for this claim to be
upheld, opponents of interschool competition bear the burden of proof showing irrebutably that White’s teachings about education, sports, and the plan of physical activities in the curriculum never changed over time. We must understand that White’s writings should be carefully interpreted in the proper historical and social context. Thompson (1991) and Knight (1985) have both shown that White’s understanding of issues ranging from home education, phrenology, and diet, among others, changed over time depending upon the needs and conditions of Adventist education and progress in physiological and nutritional science. Knight (1985) has demonstrated that White adapted her counsel on childhood education, location of schools, and new school design based on different situations that arose during her lifetime. In particular and novel circumstances, White encouraged solving problems based sensibly on careful thought, prayer, and interpretation of scriptures. We must be willing to do the same if we want to remain worthy of upholding the basic principles of Adventism.

When examining White’s writings on education, one must look at the overall picture. Her emphasis on balance in education should serve as a guide for Adventist decisions in all educational endeavors:

True education means more than the pursual of a certain course of study. . . .It has to do with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the
harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. (E. White, 1903, p. 13)

**Development of Interscholastic Sports**

The debate over sports and counsel by White led to the elimination of interscholastic sports from SDA schools for the first half of the 21st century. The debate which resurfaced was reflected in a 1962 statement by the General Conference (see Table 1 for General Conference statements). In this statement, the General Conference took a careful look at Ellen White’s emphasis on useful labor as the best physical exercise and recognized the excess to which athletics can be carried. One particular concern was the time sports takes away from school. The statement gives recommendations to help "de-emphasize" competition in school activities.

Two years later, a statement by the General Conference Department of Education (1964) was issued recommending the following: “Seventh-day Adventist schools on all levels are counseled to promote personal and intramural athletic activities, but never interscholastic competition for the equitable development of the physical body and mental health” (p. 101). A leaflet in 1966 (General Conference) again emphasized that SDA schools should be “refraining from interscholastic competition” (p. 7).

In the midst of these statements, Takoma Academy began competing against other schools when they played a United States Marine base high school
team in boys' basketball in the early 1960s. According to the author's research, the program began under the influence of Principal John Paul Lawrence and Coach John Graham. The sports program at Takoma Academy continued to develop and today remains the longest standing interscholastic sports program in the SDA education system. This first sports program, and others that followed, have never been officially reprimanded or negatively sanctioned by the General Conference for their participation in interscholastic sports.

The next action by the General Conference came in 1976 when the Department of Education issued a statement titled “Guidelines for Activities with Elements of Competition.” The statement listed reasons Seventh-day Adventists oppose interschool athletics. Four years later a framework committee was organized to discuss competition. The committee stated that their purpose was not to advocate abolition of competitive sports or promote participation in organized athletics but to outline advantages and disadvantages of competition and make recommendations for wholesome competition (General Conference, 1980) against a background of growing competitive sports programs in SDA schools in America.

Over the years the interschool sports debate escalated. The General Conference actions and the writings of those opposed to interscholastic sports identified the following concerns for sport in SDA schools:
1. It is an attempt to be like the secular world (Akers, 1988).

2. Sports tend to be barbaric and gladiatorial (Akers, 1988; Howell, 1926; Scriven, 1972a, 1972b).


4. Cooperation, not competition, is a better method of teaching (Blake, 1987; Roy, 1988).

5. Sports programs require additional facilities, resources, and effort by personnel (General Conference, 1976; W. White, 1988).

6. The effort is focused on a few students (General Conference, 1976; W. White, 1988).

7. Emphasis on winning can become paramount (General Conference, 1976).


Against this backdrop of official pronouncements generally critical of competition, interscholastic sports programs were being developed locally on an ad hoc basis. According to the author’s study, Portland Adventist Academy began competing against other Christian schools in a league called Koinonia in 1977. Under the direction of Greg Davies, the school applied to join the Oregon State Athletic Association (OSAA) in 1986 and began competing in a league
against public school teams. Their program is the second longest running program that plays against non-SDA schools.

Other Adventist schools and colleges have played non-SDA schools for over a decade. One of the most notable, Columbia Union College began competing in basketball in 1984 as a club team under the direction of Rick Murray. In 1986, they joined the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) and then moved to the National Collegiate Athletics Association (NCAA) Division II in 1994. Atlantic Union College also belongs to the NAIA and has played non-SDA schools since 1986. Both schools offer athletic scholarships and operate on funds specifically allocated by each college for athletics.

Competitive activities at SDA schools has traditionally been limited to “friendship” games designed as informal, scaled down athletic contests to promote fellowship between SDA schools. Some concerns about these contests included travel, development of rivalry, and lack of standardized regulations for events.

The negative feelings about friendship games have prompted some SDA schools to begin competing against non-SDA schools because non-SDA schools offer well-developed competitive programs. One athletic director at an SDA academy indicated to the author that the best teams they play are the ones that are non-SDA because they know how to compete. Another athletic director
states, “Other schools are better winners and better losers because they have experience competing.”

Recent development of interscholastic sports programs has been increasing. A study conducted by Walter Hamerslough in 1986 found 53% of 47 SDA academies and 67% of 12 SDA colleges in the North American Division had sports teams that play other schools. However, in this study only 8% (2 academies and 3 colleges) of 59 schools that responded played public schools and 19% (6 academies and 5 colleges) played non-SDA Christian schools.

**General Conference Working Policy**

The century long discussion over the value of interscholastic sports reached an apex at the 1988 General Conference meeting in Nairobi, Kenya. The position statement that was adopted by the committee (General Conference, 1988) was voted in by the General Conference Executive Committee in 1989 and still remains the working policy: “The Seventh-day Adventist Church is opposed to interschool league play (commonly known as varsity athletics) in its educational system” (Working Policy, 1995, p. 241). This statement is followed by a rationale and conclusions (see Table 2).

The decision by the General Conference seemed to have little effect on the extent of interschool competition at SDA schools. In June of 1996, a study conducted by the author found 49 of 92 (53%) Seventh-day Adventist academies and colleges in the United States compete against non-SDA schools.
(see Table 3). These schools have been competing for an average of 7 years. This indicates that the General Conference action in 1989 had little effect on controlling interschool competition because over half of the interscholastic sports programs that now exist started after the policy was enacted.

How is the working policy of the General Conference being interpreted? Forty-seven percent of SDA schools in the United States are in total compliance because they do not compete at all against non-SDA schools. Of the schools responding to the questionnaire that do compete against non-SDA schools, 23 of 31 (74%) do not belong to a league. This would be considered in compliance under a literal interpretation of the working policy which opposes “league play.” However, this stance does not support the General Conference’s opposition to “varsity athletics” as indicated in parenthesis following the “league play” statement. The remaining 5 academies and 3 colleges (26%) that belong to a league are seemingly at variance with the General Conference policy toward interschool competition.

According to the author’s study, athletic directors of schools with interscholastic sports programs indicate church members’ views of competition are the biggest influencing factor on schools’ decisions to have interscholastic sports (see Table 4). General Conference statements were indicated as the least influential. On the other hand, athletic directors of schools with no interscholastic sports program indicated finances, local conference regulation,
and General Conference statements along with church members’ views of competition as contributing most toward their decision not to have interscholastic sports competition.

Who are the people supporting interscholastic sports programs? Athletic directors at all schools responding to this study indicate that the PE department personnel and students strongly approve of their current interschool sports program or would strongly approve of an interscholastic sports program at their school (see Table 5). Athletic directors indicated that their local conferences were the only group that seemed to disapprove of interscholastic sports programs in schools altogether. Schools with interscholastic sports had the approval of the faculty, school board, and principal while the schools with no interschool sports reported these groups’ disapproved of a sports program.

Value of Interscholastic Sports

The previous data provide an up-to-date description of sports in SDA academies and colleges in the United States. Sports programs seem to have developed consciously with General Conference statements in mind as evidenced by the careful selection of sports that avoid brutality. No SDA schools compete in rugged combative sports like rugby, football, boxing, or wrestling. Instead, Adventist schools promote more wholesome sports such as basketball, baseball, volleyball, golf, and cross country. As the debate over sports continues in the
Adventist church, a look at the results of existing sports programs can help determine the value of competitive sports.

Athletic directors at schools that compete against non-SDA schools most frequently indicate that time out of school, raising funds, and spectator involvement are negative influences of their sports program (see Table 6). These disadvantages identified by athletic directors are similar to the concerns Ellen White expressed.

Although students are spending time out of school, their academics do not seem to suffer because of their sport involvement. At Gem State Academy, Davies tracks the grade point averages of his athletes through the year and finds during peak times of the season overall grade point averages tend to remain the same or even increase in relation to the grade point averages of students who are not involved in athletics. The Takoma Academy boys’ basketball team maintains a 3.2 grade point average and three athletes received full scholarships to the University of Maryland-Baltimore County for math and science. The Portland Adventist Academy boys’ basketball team grade point average consistently remains between 3.3 and 3.5. Time may be spent out of school but it does not seem to be affecting the athletes’ grades.

Raising funds presents a problem for athletic directors at SDA schools with interscholastic sports because most receive no monetary assistance from the
school for sports. Because of this, the athletic director is required to raise his or her own funds to support the program.

Many athletic directors stated spectator involvement was a disadvantage when fans inappropriately reacted to opponents’ actions and officials’ calls. According to athletic directors, SDA fans behave inappropriately because they are inexperienced in competition. One athletic director describes the situation by commenting, “SDA fans are illiterate as spectators.” Many express a need for Adventist athletes and spectators to be educated about how to compete.

Sports programs in SDA schools offer many advantages. The author found that school spirit was the most frequently cited advantage of sports programs at SDA schools (see Table 6). One of the strongest arguments for the adoption of interschool sports programs at SDA schools is its potential to enhance school spirit (Hamerslough, 1988a, 1988b). While opponents claim sports do not promote school spirit and unity (W. White, 1988), Robert Bewley, the athletic director at Escondido Adventist Academy, remarks that after one year of competition in the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) their school paper reported that students said the most positive aspect of their school is a sports program that has God at its center.

Opportunity for witness about SDA beliefs is the second most frequently cited advantage of interscholastic sports according to the author’s study (see Table 6). Adventist students and faculty are able to display Seventh-day Adventist
values and principles to neighboring schools. Other communities’ eyes are opened to the Seventh-day Adventist religion and misconceptions are cleared up.

For example, programs at Hawaiian Mission Academy, Mount Vernon Academy, and Southwestern Adventist College, among others, received positive public recognition for their religious beliefs. Eldridge Ezpeleta, athletic director at Glendale Adventist Academy, indicates that the awareness of SDA beliefs are getting more well known in CIF because of increased Adventist involvement in interscholastic competition in California.

In addition to these benefits, Seventh-day Adventist youth are given the opportunity to excel in sports with the comfort of knowing their beliefs, especially Sabbath observance, can be protected if insisted upon. The Oregon state basketball tournament was scheduled specifically to allow Portland Adventist Academy to keep the Sabbath and play for the championship in 1996. Collegedale Academy will now be able to compete in the regional finals because the association has made provisions for other schools to take their place in the state tournament which is on Sabbath.

Monroe Solomon at Burton Adventist Academy describes a situation in which he pulled a team from a championship game in a baseball tournament because it conflicted with the Sabbath. Instead of a negative response, the
participants respected their decision and the SDA students enjoyed the witness opportunity.

The study also reveals another advantage of interscholastic sports programs: SDA students are given the opportunity to develop their physical gifts in a special way (see Table 6). Seventh-day Adventist schools are known for their extracurricular activities such as music groups which give musically talented individuals an arena to develop and showcase their talents. Athletically talented students should be given the opportunity to develop their skills in a given area of athletics (Nelson, 1987) as long as the program supports SDA beliefs.

Ellen White’s emphasis on manual labor is not as applicable today as it was in her time. “Because of changing technology, economic conditions, and business realities, marketable skills have changed,” (Knight, 1985, p. 240) and so have increments of leisure time which abound in this society, especially for secondary school and college age youth. Interschool sports provides a wholesome outlet for the students by focusing their energy and time into uplifting physical activity (Hamerslough, 1988a, 1988b) (see Table 6). One reason sports are a valuable outlet is their potential to build character (Jarvis, 1975) (see Table 6).

Perhaps the advantages discussed above are the reason sports continue to develop in SDA academies and colleges in the United States. With society’s
increased enjoyment of sports for entertainment and recreation, SDA schools have naturally adapted to interests of society by also increasing participation in sports. The author’s study indicates it will continue to grow as 17% of the 24 schools with no interscholastic sports indicate some type of plans to develop a sports program in the future (see Table 3). The important consideration is that new sports programs develop in ways that are consistent with church doctrines and the writings of Ellen White.

**Recommendations**

Since Adventists seek to integrate their religious beliefs into every part of the curriculum, sports should also be offered in a religious setting (Hamerslough, 1988b). If schools are going to create their own sports programs, the advantages of the sports programs that already exist must be examined to determine if they outweigh the disadvantages. The decision about sports programs must be made with the objectives and mission of the school and church in mind.

If Adventist education is to flourish it must maintain its unique Christian emphasis (Harder, 1985). The primary purpose of Christian education is to lead students to God for redemption (Knight, 1985). In the 1988 General Conference meeting, the committee declared the purposes of all programs and activity should be to develop Christ-like character and effective witnessing. According to perceptions of athletic directors in the study, sports can be an educational tool
for witnessing, character building, and instilling an emphasis on maintaining a proper religious perspective even in sporting events (see Table 6).

In light of the advantages of interscholastic sports and the ambiguity of the current General Conference working policy identified in this article, the General Conference could revise the current policy to one that sanctions sports programs that develop proper Christian values in SDA education. Development of sound athletic policies can also be promoted locally by union conferences, local conferences, individual school boards, and constituents. Further research should be conducted that examines, in more detail, the advantages and disadvantages of existing sports programs in SDA schools. Under the current policy, interschool sports programs that do exist operate without support of the Seventh-day Adventist church. These schools are less effective than they ought to be at promoting the mission of SDA education through their sports programs because they operate independently with no direction from the SDA church.

Clinging to the traditional policies in education may not always be the best answer because change is an important element of education (Harder, 1985). Based on evidence from this study, the author is convinced that interscholastic sports programs are serving the mission of the SDA church. Wholesome physical activities are consistent with the doctrines of the SDA church and the writings of Ellen G. White. Thus, a collective effort by the Adventist educational system to
develop strong Christian sports programs would be more beneficial than the disjointed effort that now exists.

Sports programs at SDA schools need the support of the Adventist church. With the church’s support, standards and guidelines can be developed to provide proper direction to athletics in all schools who wish to participate. With this direction, each school has the opportunity to benefit from the advantages of an organized Christian athletic program.
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Working policy of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
Let us now consider the relationship of competition to our physical education and recreational programs. After studying the instruction that we have been given in the Spirit of Prophecy, there should be no doubt in any of our minds that useful labor in the out of doors is the best physical exercise that one can possibly receive. However, this does not mean that manual labor is to constitute our entire physical education program. It does not mean that we are not to provide any type of recreation for our youth, or to allow them to participate in any sports whatsoever. There is a need and a place for these, if used in moderation. . . .

While we have been warned about going to the extreme in providing recreation and sports for our youth, we have also been warned about going to the opposite extreme. . . .

Mrs. White has warned us of the dangers involved when our youth participate in sports. She did not say that we should refrain from ever participating in the games of softball, badminton, or volleyball, or that it was a sin to engage in such sports.
“I do not condemn the simple exercise of playing ball; but this, even in its simplicity, may be overdone” (E. White, 1952, p. 499).

Mrs. White does not condemn sports, but rather the way that they are so often conducted, and the results that so often follow them. In too many of our schools sports are over-emphasized and engaged in to the excess. They become as idols to the students, and occupy valuable time that should be spent in study, useful labor, or in doing missionary work. The youth allow themselves to become deeply excited over these games and a spirit of rivalry is fostered. The love of pleasure is so stimulated that the student finds work distasteful and spiritual things seem dull and uninteresting.

In the physical education program, we need to study how we can include some recreational activities and various sports along with a good manual labor program. We have many non-competitive activities that young people can engage in such as nature hikes, group games, individual activities, calisthenics, marches, gymnastics, and camping trips. These are all activities that should make up a strong portion of our physical education program.

In addition, there are many ways by which we can *de-emphasize* competition in the use of sports. Let us consider a few of these.

1. Before engaging in any sport, have the participants bow their heads as a prayer is offered asking the Lord to bless the activity,
to protect the players, and to help them to be Christlike in everything they do and say.

2. Always emphasize teamwork, and fair play. Help the students to see that the important thing is not the game but the exercise and association they are receiving.

3. Inter-class games should be discouraged. Almost without exception rivalry is fostered and hard feelings result from these games. Also, it is very questionable as to the value of having a ‘student all-star team’ compete against a team of visiting alumni. If you feel it is necessary to have a game, mix up the teams so that there are alumni and students on both sides.

4. Another practice that stimulates a competitive spirit is to post the standings of teams on the bulletin board, or list them in the school paper. In some of our school papers we not only read extensive reports of athletic contests, but in addition we see listed who the leading scorers were or who the top hitters were. This is the type of thing that causes some of our youth to go head over heels into sports, and lose all interest in things of eternal value.

5. We advise against staging athletic tournaments within the school and the presentation of trophies to the winners. “More harm than
good results from the practice of offering prizes and rewards” (E. White, 1913, p. 270).

6. Another questionable activity is having a “sports day” where the entire day is devoted to athletics. It would be more beneficial if the major portion of the day were spent in useful labor, and then possibly have a few games in the evening.

7. Many times we choose up teams and form leagues in our schools and a student may play on the same team for several months. It has been found that competition is greatly minimized if a student is never on the same team two days in a row. If new teams are selected each day, a student has a chance to learn to play as a team with many more students, and his circle of friends can be greatly broadened.

8. Do we have to keep score when we have a basketball or softball game? This only fosters the spirit of rivalry. Argument and bickering can be eliminated by omitting the keeping of scores--and the association and recreational benefits be made paramount.

9. We have been told that if we as teachers enter into sports and play with the students, we could check unkind feelings and actions that students might have (E. White, 1948, p. 205).
“In lines of recreation for the student, the best results will be attained through the personal co-operation of the teacher. The true teacher can impart to his pupils few gifts so valuable as the gift of his own companionship” (E. White, 1903, p. 212).

With a little imagination, the teacher can think of many methods by which he can de-emphasize or even entirely eliminate the spirit of competition that so often accompanies participation in sports. We have received specific instruction that herein lies one of the great dangers connected with sports. We do not need to eliminate entirely games and sports from our physical education program. **BUT, IT IS EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THAT WE HAVE A PROPER BALANCE BETWEEN THESE AND OUR MANUAL LABOR PROGRAM.** There is a real danger in our students' going overboard on sports and engaging in them to excess. It is when this happens that sports become an idol, and things of a spiritual nature no longer hold any interest to our youth. It is our duty as teachers to use common sense and moderation in our choice of recreational activities for our students, and to see that a proper balance is maintained. (General Conference, 1962, p. 135-140)

1964 - Department of Education Statement of Denominational Attitude Toward Sports

...The SDA church believes in a harmonious development of the physical, mental, spiritual, and social powers. In the physical realm, physical
fitness, bodily development, and healthful living are strongly encouraged.

Where selected sports give physical exercise to the extent of temperate activities, they are recommended. This department holds that strenuous or excessive activities must be governed by the physical constitution and developed capacity of the players or participants.

Promotion of and participation in commercialized sports are not recommended for Seventh-day Adventist church members. In some cases, members in good and regular standing may be found in attendance or watching on television professional baseball or football games.

Seventh-day Adventist schools on all levels are counseled to promote personal and intramural athletic activities, but never interscholastic competition for the equitable development of the physical body and mental health. (General Conference, 1964, p. 101)

1966 - Upholding Church Standards

The primary aim of each Seventh-day Adventist educational institutions is to reflect accurately and to uphold the principles of the SDA church. . . .We recommend. . .

4. That the school administrators with their entire staffs devote their energies and interest to accomplish in the lives of Adventist youth the following objectives: . . .
n. Recreation--To engage as far as possible in activities of a physical and outdoor nature to restore and maintain strength, refresh the spirit, and renew physical and mental health.

o. Amusements--To avoid patronizing and participating in and fraternizing with worldly associates in commercialized amusements.

p. Sports--To avoid an obsession in sports; the institution refraining from interscholastic competition, promoting instead wholesome on-campus, rotating participation in intramural activities, with emphasis on the development of individual physical fitness. . . . (General Conference, 1962, p. 3-7)

1976 - Guidelines of Activities with Elements of Competition

The Seventh-day Adventist Church and its various organizations, in their concern about competition and rivalries in their many activities, wish to clarify their position and to recommend certain guidelines for activities which may involve competition. These proposals are intended to give direction and guidance to individual members, churches, conferences, and institutions of the church from the perspective of the Bible and the Spirit of Prophecy. . . .

Among the reasons Seventh-day Adventists oppose an organized program of interschool athletics for their schools (or inter-organizational sports of other Adventist institutions or churches) are the following:

1. Additional concentration of effort and attention may be necessary by the personnel directing the activities of the institution.
2. Personnel directing inter-organizational activities must concentrate their effort and attention on a few, generally the ones who need activity the least.

3. Facilities of the school are monopolized by few.

4. Educational outcomes may become secondary to the emphasis on winning and the tendency to use the activities as public entertainment and for publicity.

5. Seventh-day Adventist objectives can be achieved more effectively through other approaches.

6. The inherent hazards of competitive rivalry, against which Inspiration has cautioned, are exaggerated in inter-organizational events. (General Conference, 1976, p. 4, 21-22)


The attitude of the Seventh-day Adventist K-12 system toward competition is a subject that has generated much deliberation. There are those who believe in the abolition of all competitive sport and game situations, and those on the opposite end of the spectrum who advocate participation in organized interscholastic athletics. This framework committee advocates neither of these positions.
It is recognized that the American way of life at present is based on competitive attitudes, e.g., people compete for jobs, academic standing, professional school entrance, and in recreational pursuits. However, the objective of the Seventh-day Adventist educational system is to train students to be Christlike. Thus there must be a different kind of emphasis regarding competition from that of the rest of society.

The framework committee recognizes that there are advantages and disadvantages to competition. Some advantages are that:

1. Competition increases the amount of work done in an activity,
2. Competition motivates some students to greater effort, and
3. Competition tends to strengthen the attributes of perseverance and fortitude.

Among the disadvantages of competition are:

1. Fostering a spirit of rivalry,
2. Increasing aggressiveness toward other players, and
3. Domination of one person over another.

It is the opinion of this framework committee that cooperation rather than competition should be stressed in the curriculum of our schools. As many activities as possible should be placed in a setting where the participant competes against a target score or previous personal effort.
One of the most important factors in competition is the leadership of those in charge of the competitive activities. A consistent, cooperative, Christlike attitude, best shown by example of the leaders and teachers, is the key to controlling the competitive spirit.

The General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists has developed, as a part of the North American Division K-12 Education Code (No. 5300), “Guidelines for Activities with Elements of Competition.” A thoughtful reading of this document by every administrator and educator is strongly recommended. The use of these guidelines, together with the proper attitudes on the part of the leadership, can lead to the wise use of competition within the philosophy of the Seventh-day Adventist educational system. (General Conference, 1980, p. 116-117)
FE 85 05 Rationale--The Seventh-day Adventist Church is opposed to interschool league play (commonly known as varsity athletics) in its educational system. The major rationale for this is:

1. The inherent hazards of competitive rivalry have the potential to be exaggerated in interorganizational events.

2. The commitments of time, personnel, and finances are usually disproportionate to the number of individuals able to participate.

FE 85 10 Conclusions--1. Christians should function with the highest of motives in their quest for athletic excellence.

2. Occasional friendship games or matches involving institutions at joint social gatherings are not classified as intermural or interschool athletics.

3. All people have talents--some more, some less. God expects faithfulness in service regardless of talents or pay (Matt 20:1-16). Even though talents are distributed differently, God expects individuals to develop what they have to the best of their ability: and they will be given responsibility according to their faithfulness. The scriptures remind us,

   “Whatever you are doing, put your whole heart into it, as if you were doing it for the Lord and not for men, knowing that there is a Master who will give you your heritage as a reward for your service” (Col 3:23).
Table 3

General Survey Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Schools contacted</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academies</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools returning questionnaire</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>59.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academies</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>56.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>83.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compete against non-SDA schools</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>53.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academies</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>52.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>58.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to association</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>61.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academies</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>52.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Belong to league</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>25.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academies</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>20.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Colleges</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Schools with future plans to play non-SDA</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Years schools have competed</td>
<td>1-30</td>
<td>6.65</td>
<td>6.12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4

**Contributing Factors to Interscholastic Sports Decision**

Response by athletic directors at schools with interscholastic sports programs to the following question: "On a scale of 1-5 indicate the degree to which each of the following has contributed toward the decision to have interscholastic sports competition at your school?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ellen G. White writings</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td>1.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church members' view of competition</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>2.63</td>
<td>1.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference statements</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>1.24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath observance</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local conference regulation</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. 1=Contributed little, 5=Contributed much*

Response by athletic directors at schools with no interscholastic sports program to the following question: “On a scale of 1-5 indicate the degree to which each of the following has contributed toward the decision not to have interscholastic sports competition?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ellen G. White writings</td>
<td>3.05</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church members’ view of competition</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Conference statements</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>1.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sabbath observance</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td>1.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local conference regulation</td>
<td>3.48</td>
<td>1.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. 1=Contributed little, 5=Contributed much*
Table 5

**Group Approval of Interschool Sports**

Response by athletic directors at schools with interscholastic sports programs to the following question: "Please indicate to what degree you feel each group or person approves of your interscholastic sports program?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School board</td>
<td>1.94</td>
<td>.93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE Department</td>
<td>1.48</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>1.03</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local church members</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local conference</td>
<td>2.65</td>
<td>1.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** 1=Strongly Approves, 2=Approves, 3=Neutral, 4=Disapproves, 5=Strongly Disapproves

Response by athletic directors at schools with no interscholastic sports program to the following question: "Please indicate to what degree you feel each group or person would approve of an interscholastic sports program at your school?"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Std Dev</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School board</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PE Department</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>1.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local church members</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local conference</td>
<td>3.46</td>
<td>1.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2.80</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** 1=Strongly Approves, 2=Approves, 3=Neutral, 4=Disapproves, 5=Strongly Disapproves
Table 6

Influences of Sports Program at Schools with Interscholastic Sports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Positive Influences</th>
<th>Tally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School spirit</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Witness opportunity</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for students to develop physical gifts</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community rally point</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sets a higher standard to work for</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesome outlet for student participation</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develops sportsmanship</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaches work ethic and discipline</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benefits student enrollment</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emphasizes proper religious perspective</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic motivation</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character building</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social experience</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parental involvement</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved unity and teamwork of athletes</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence, self-worth</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Negative Influences</th>
<th>Tally</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time out of school</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Raising funds and cost</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spectator involvement</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Little support</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bad publicity and misconceptions</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less talented left out</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proper perspective of sports and reality lost</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts with other school programs and work</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Athlete’s attitudes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time consuming for personnel</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immaturity of SDA athletics</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polarizes community</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Competition with other SDA schools</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inability to find good competition</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cancellations</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contention over college recruiting boundaries</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Athletic directors at schools with interscholastic sports were asked to list the three most positive and three most negative influences that their sports program had on their school. The answers were categorized and frequencies tallied for the above results. n=27.
Chapter 1
Introduction

Seventh-day Adventists (SDA) have traditionally opposed interscholastic sports competition in their schools based largely on counsels by the prophetess Ellen G. White. Recently, a shift of attitudes toward competitive sports has been promoted by church members and school personnel who interpret White’s writings in a different context. Because of the uniqueness of SDA philosophy, the development of interschool competition within the organization may not have progressed as rapidly as in non-SDA schools.

Factors such as religious principles and limited income are examples of other criteria that have affected the SDA schools’ development in competitive sports. Identifying and then charting the specific causes of the slower development would help Adventist schools examine their past efforts in order to better plan for future developments in athletic competition.

In the past decade, a number of Seventh-day Adventist schools adopted sports programs that included competition against other schools. Some Seventh-day Adventist schools began scheduling games with public schools and even joined athletic leagues. Previously, SDA schools competed only against other SDA schools, church teams, or alumni teams. The emergence of interscholastic sports competition at some Adventist schools and not others
has led to the existence of a variety of different sports programs in the SDA education system.

Past studies (Herlinger, 1985; Nelson, 1987; Sheffel, 1977) have examined SDA attitudes and philosophies toward competitive sports, but no work exists that charts the development of SDA interscholastic sports in relation to these philosophies.

Athletic programs have developed rapidly at Adventist schools despite differing philosophies about competitive sports in the church. Yet, there has been no recent attempt to examine the extent and history of interschool competition at SDA schools in the United States. This lack of a written account creates an unclear picture in the minds of church members and school personnel regarding the position of the SDA education system with regard to competitive sports in general and competition against non-SDA schools in particular.

Because little documentation exists, SDA schools developing new programs have limited information to assist them in creating new programs. Further, other SDA schools with existing programs have little statistical or anecdotal information with which to compare the quality and effectiveness of their athletic programs or to argue for their viability. The effort to establish a legitimate athletic program seems to be a separate challenge for each school.
The historical resistance of Adventists to competitive athletics is changing increasingly to approval as contemporary church members have interpreted and practiced sports in ways consistent with church doctrines.

Statement of Problem

The purpose of this study is to advocate the inclusion of interscholastic sports at SDA schools recognizing that wholesome physical activities are consistent with doctrines of the SDA church and the writings of Ellen G. White.

Limitations

Much of the descriptive information will be gathered through personal interviews and questionnaires.

Delimitations

Only SDA schools in the United States will be studied. Other institutions from outside the United States will be excluded from the study. Therefore, the historical data will give an incomplete description of interscholastic programs for the entire SDA church. The researcher will collect information from sports programs in SDA academies and colleges. Sports programs in junior academies and elementary schools will not be studied.

Definitions of Terms

**Academy** - Name given to a secondary school in the Seventh-day Adventist education system.
Adventist - Seventh-day Adventist.

Adventist Review - The official periodical of the SDA church. Formerly known as the Review and Herald.

General Conference - The organization in charge of the worldwide work of the Seventh-day Adventist church. Highest governing body of the SDA church that includes all conferences in the church.

Interscholastic sports program - A structured plan of athletic activities of a school that entails competition in sporting events against non-SDA schools.

Intramural sports - Competitive sports in which participants are from the same school.

Junior academy - SDA elementary school that includes grades 9 and 10.

Layman - Member of the church holding no ecclesiastical administrative position.

Local conference - Organizational unit of the SDA church that governs a state or portion of a state. The next smallest organization after the union conference.

North American Division - Organizational unit of the SDA church that governs the United States and Canada.
Pastors - Ordained leaders of the church. A pastor generally presides over a single congregation of believers that meet at a local church. Also called ministers.

SDA - Seventh-day Adventist.

Seventh-day Adventist - Protestant religion that accepts the Bible as its only creed and believes in the imminent second coming of Jesus Christ. The church beliefs have been supplemented by insights drawn from prophecies and visions of Ellen G. White.

Union conference - Organizational unit of the SDA church that consists of local conferences grouped according to geographic area.

Varsity - Organized sports team generally consisting of the best athletes in the school for a particular sport requiring try-outs to qualify.
Chapter 2
Review of Literature

Seventh-day Adventist Church

History

The Seventh-day Adventist church began in the 1840s following "The Great Disappointment." A large group of Christians believed Christ's second coming (advent) would occur October 22, 1844, based on calculations by William Miller. When Christ did not come, the disappointed believers reevaluated their religious beliefs, and as a result of these deliberations several new religious groups were formed. One of the groups that arose adopted the name Seventh-day Adventist (Mead, 1995).

Organization

The governmental structure of the church is highly representative. Authority is delegated through a system of conference organizations beginning with local churches which form local conferences. Local conferences combine to form regional conferences, national conferences, and a general conference. The general conference and its executive committee are the highest administrative bodies (Melton, 1978).

Beliefs

Seventh-day Adventism is a protestant religion that accepts the Bible as its only creed and believes in the imminent second coming of Jesus Christ. The
church beliefs have been supplemented by insights drawn from prophecies and visions of the prophetess Ellen G. White. Prominent among them includes the observance of the seventh day (Saturday) as the sabbath as enjoined by the fourth commandment: "Six days you shall labor and do all your work. But the seventh day is a sabbath to the Lord your God. . ." (Exodus 20:9-10; The Holy Bible). White further confirmed the church’s correctness in observing the sabbath as a result of a vision she had of Jesus and the tables of stone with the fourth commandment surrounded by light (White, 1945).

Seventh-day Adventists observe sabbath from sundown Friday night to sundown Saturday night. According to Adventist belief, God expects humans to rest on the sabbath because it signifies the seventh day of creation when God rested after He created the world. God set the sabbath apart from the other days of the week to be holy. Hence, Adventists should avoid anything that tends to diminish the sacred atmosphere. Church members cease from secular work and avoid all work done to earn a living on the Sabbath (Seventh-day, 1988). This includes avoiding sporting competition on the sabbath.

Seventh-day Adventists consider the body of man to be the temple of the Holy Spirit. They believe this temple should be cared for by rigidly abstaining from the use of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, and promiscuous drugs (Mead, 1995). Likewise, Adventists advocate healthful living through diet and exercise.
"Seventh-day Adventists believe [they] are called to be godly people who think, feel, and act in harmony with the principles of heaven" (Seventh-day, 1988, p. 278).

Ellen White’s Counsel on Sports

Struggles in the SDA church over the value of competitive sports have centered around interpretations of the counsels by Ellen White pertaining to sport. In her book Education, White (1903) devotes an entire chapter to recreation. She writes the following in discussing the value of recreation and sport:

The games that occupy so much of (the student's) time are diverting the mind from study. They are not helping to prepare the youth for practical, earnest work in life. Their influence does not tend toward refinement, generosity, or real manliness.

Some of the most popular amusements such as football and boxing, have become schools of brutality. They are developing the same characteristics as did the games of ancient Rome. The love of domination, the pride in mere brute force, the reckless disregard of life, are exerting upon the youth a power to demoralize that is appalling.

Other athletic games, though not so brutalizing, are scarcely less objectionable because of the excess to which they are carried. They stimulate the love of pleasure and excitement, thus fostering a distaste of
useful labor, a disposition to shun practical duties and responsibilities. They tend to destroy a relish for life’s sober realities and tranquil enjoyments. Thus the door is open to dissipation and lawlessness with their terrible results. (p. 210-211)

In this passage, White particularly targets brutality and the excess to which sports are taken. She writes strongly against football and boxing because of their brutal nature. In other sports, she warns against the excess to which they can be taken.

In 1874, White responded to an incident at the first Seventh-day Adventist school, Battle Creek College. The students began developing football, baseball, and basketball teams. White, who was in Australia at the time, received a school paper with an article reporting an intramural football game between an American and British team. White wrote a letter to the president of the college, William Prescott:

. . .They [students] act as if the school were a place where they were to perfect themselves in sports, as if this was an important branch of their education. And they came armed and equipped for this kind of training. This is all wrong from beginning to end. . .

Amusement that serves as exercise and recreation is not to be discarded; nevertheless it must be kept strictly within bounds, else it leads
to love of amusement for its own sake, and nourishes the desire for self
gratification. . . (Vande Vere, 1972, p. 63)

This letter halted the development of competitive sports at Battle Creek
College. Two decades later, White (1923) wrote of the incident at Battle Creek in
a different light in the book *Fundamentals of Christian Education*:

In plunging into amusements, match games, pugilistic performances, they
declared to the world that Christ was not their leader in any of these
things. All this called forth the warning from God. Now that which
burdens me is the danger of going into extremes on the other side. . .
(p. 378)

White contended that the administration and students were not using the
Bible as their guide and that it called for a response to the college president
chastising the sporting events. As she wrote the passage in *Fundamentals of
Christian Education* a number of years later, she worried about the extreme in
the other direction—insufficient amusement and recreation for the students.

Throughout White’s writing she emphasizes a balance, particularly in
education. This is demonstrated in the following:

Physical culture is an essential part of all right methods of education. The
young need to be taught how to develop their physical powers, how to
preserve these powers in the best condition, and how to make them useful
in the practical duties of life. Many think that these things are no part of school work, but this is a mistake. The lessons necessary to fit one for practical usefulness should be taught to every child in the home and to every student in school. (1923, p. 425-426)

White (1903) emphasizes development of the whole person in education in the following popular statement:

True education means more than the pursuit of a certain course of study.

. . .It has to do with the whole period of existence possible to man. It is the harmonious development of the physical, the mental, and the spiritual powers. (p. 13)

White’s writings about competitive sports and recreation were usually written in response to a specific situation or conditions of the day. For this reason, Ron Graybill (1974) a research assistant at the White Estate summarizes the following principles of White’s concern for sports:

1. Expense involved: Temptation to increase expenditure.
2. Concern for the way games are conducted: Studying is the first priority for students and sports are not preparing them for the practical duties of life.
3. Many games are brutalizing and tend to develop unchristlike characteristics.
4. Less brutalizing games are often carried to excess: Love and pleasure of games leads to exclusion of useful labor. (p. 6-7)

Church Statements About Competition

General Conference Statement, 1976

The Department of Education of the General Conference issued a statement about competitive sports in 1976. The statement stated the following about inter-organizational sports:

Among the reasons Seventh-day Adventists oppose an organized program of interschool athletics for their schools (or inter-organizational sports for other Adventist institutions or churches) are the following:

1. Additional concentration of effort and attention may be necessary by the personnel directing the activities of the institution.

2. Personnel directing inter-organizational activities must concentrate their effort and attention on a few, generally the ones who need activity the least.

3. Facilities of the school are monopolized by few.

4. Educational outcomes may become secondary to the emphasis on winning and the tendency to use the activities as public entertainment and for publicity.
5. Seventh-day Adventist objectives can be achieved more effectively through other approaches.

6. The inherent hazards of competitive rivalry, against which inspiration (E. G. White) has cautioned, are exaggerated in inter-organizational events. (p. 21-22)

General Conference Statement, 1980

A guide titled “A framework for physical education, health, and safety, K-12” was issued by the Department of Education in January of 1980. The section titled “Competition” contains the following:

The attitude of the Seventh-day Adventist K-12 system toward competition is a subject that has generated much deliberation. There are those who believe in the abolition of all competitive sports and game situations, and those on the opposite end of the spectrum who advocate participation in organized interscholastic athletics. This framework committee advocates neither of these positions. (p. 116)

The statement proceeds to identify advantages and disadvantages of competition. The committee suggests the use of cooperation rather than competition to achieve educational objectives, and emphasizes the importance of strong leadership. The framework committee calls for a “thoughtful” reading of the 1976 statement by the department of education:
A thoughtful reading of this document by every administrator and educator is strongly recommended. The use of these guidelines, together with the proper attitudes on the part of the leadership, can lead to the wise use of competition within the philosophy of the SDA educational system. (p. 117)

Studies About SDA Sports and Competition

Interschool Sports Competition in the 1980s

In February of 1986 Walter Hamerslough sent an interschool sports questionnaire to all SDA academies, colleges, and universities in North America that included a physical educator as part of their faculty. The purpose of the questionnaire was to determine the extent of interschool competition at SDA schools. Hamerslough presented the findings from this survey (Appendix A-1) to the Seventh-day Adventist Health, Physical Education, and Recreation Association (SDA-HPERA) at their national convention in Kettering, Ohio.

The results of the study showed that 53% of academies and 67% of colleges had some form of interschool sports program. However, most competition by academies was against other SDA schools and alumni teams. Only two academies and three colleges competed against public schools. These results showed that SDA schools had athletic teams that competed but few played non-SDA schools.
A different study, conducted by Nelson, described the extent of interschool competition in SDA schools. In 1987, Nelson presented a dissertation in which he listed the athletic activities of SDA schools with interscholastic sports programs (Appendix A-2). The information presented by Hamerslough and Nelson showed the limited extent of interscholastic competition in SDA schools as recently as the mid 1980s.

**Philosophical Studies**

More than just the extent of SDA competition has been studied. Theses and dissertations by Seventh-day Adventist physical educators have carefully examined philosophical positions and statements by the SDA church about competitive sports. These include thorough reviews of literature and presentations of prophetic writings. Based on SDA church principles, some authors have taken positions both supporting benefits or pointing out the disadvantages of competitive sports programs (Herlinger, 1985; Jarvis, 1968; Nelson, 1987).

For example, Nelson (1987) presented a fundamental rationale for a program of interschool athletics in SDA colleges in his dissertation in the following statement:

> . . .If sport is to function within the SDA educational system and maintain an educational and developmental dimension, a model of human movement must be developed. . . .All human locomotion, including
interschool athletics does not become an end in itself, but rather a means of witnessing to the love of God in creation and redemption of man. (p. vii)

In a 1985 dissertation at Brigham Young University, Herlinger examined the philosophy of Christian participation in athletic competition. He based his study on the beliefs of four Christian churches: Roman Catholic, Methodist, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and Seventh-day Adventist. In his summary, Herlinger states the following:

The Christian not only may but should act in full freedom that neither seeks nor needs human approval. The choice to compete in athletics is both theirs by right and serious on consequence. Moreover, Christians have the responsibility to actively promote their ethics which are based on love. . . .By knowingly placing himself in an ethically difficult situation, particularly in sports such as football where the love principle may be difficult to exhibit, the Christian athlete gives glory to his God through loving acts. (p. 99)

In 1968, Jarvis published a thesis about philosophy and objectives of physical education activities in Seventh-day Adventist schools. He addresses the whole scope of physical education including all forms of physical activity and competition. The importance of physical education in Adventist schools has
always been in question by constituents and faculty. Jarvis identified the problems facing the development of physical education in SDA schools:

1. Statements by White concerning dangers of and excessive emphasis on physical education.

2. Statements by White concerning the value of manual training providing not only physical activity and character training but vocational preparation as well.

3. Attitude by Seventh-day Adventist members wherein physical education is regarded as play. They believe play is not essential.

4. Misconceptions about the purpose of competitive athletics and practices (i.e., recognition, extrinsic rewards). (p. 47)

Jarvis takes a stand on several philosophical issues in SDA physical education. He claims that SDA physical education should oppose an organized program of interschool athletics for the following reasons:

1. Concentration of effort is on a few students who generally need the activity the least.

2. Monopolizing of facilities by a few athletes when facilities could be used by more students.

3. Hazard that education outcomes may become secondary to emphasis on winning and public entertainment.
4. Values to be gained can be gained just as well through other methods of competition. (p. 89-90)

**SDA Attitudes Toward Competitive Sports**

These previous studies by Jarvis (1967), Herlinger (1985), and Nelson (1987) examined Christian philosophies and developed a rationale based on these philosophies to support their position statements about competitive sports. In a 1977 dissertation, Sheffel presents a more scientific study of the attitudes of Seventh-day Adventist subgroups toward sports competition. Questionnaires were sent to subgroups of academy teachers, ministers, church leaders, educational leaders, laymen, and physical education teachers. The questionnaires presented sports situations for the subjects to answer on a Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The results showed differing opinions among the groups. Significant differences were evident in attitudes toward (a) competitive sport, (b) various types of sport competition, and (c) sport competition in various settings.

Analysis of data in the study indicated that ministers, educational leaders, church leaders, and academy faculty were less approving of competitive sports than laymen, PE teachers, and students. As one would expect, those participating in sports showed more favorable attitudes toward competition. Students, who are the group most involved in athletics, differed significantly from all other subgroups in their support of competitive sports.
Competition in the intramural and PE class settings received approval from all Seventh-day Adventist groups in the study. However, invitational interschool events and sports settings for competition received unfavorable ratings by the majority of constituents of SDA academies.

Summary

These studies explored philosophies and the history of SDA physical education and sports competition. The studies cover attitudes and events that characterize the development of interscholastic sports up to the mid 1980s. The researchers have implemented their philosophies about competitive sports in the schools where they have worked and for committees on which they have served. Their accomplishments have made them pioneers in interscholastic sports development in Seventh-day Adventist schools.
Chapter 3

Methods

The purpose of this study is to advocate the inclusion of interscholastic sports at SDA schools recognizing that wholesome physical activities are consistent with doctrines of the SDA church and the writings of Ellen G. White.

Subjects

All SDA academies and colleges in the United States will be asked to participate in the study. The researcher will collect information primarily from the athletic director at each school. Subjects will be identified by compiling a list of addresses of each SDA academy and college in the United States from the *Seventh-day Adventist Yearbook* (1995).

The athletic director from each of these institutions will be the preferred contact. In the absence of an athletic director, the initial information will be gathered from the principal or other administrator. Additional information may be gathered from other school personnel such as administrators, students, assistant coaches, or former coaches.

Researching SDA Philosophy and Statements

The researcher will find library sources using *Byline* and periodical index searches on the computers in the Brigham Young University library. He will identify sources relating to Seventh-day Adventists and competitive sports. Bibliographies from these sources will be used to locate additional sources.
The review of literature in the prospectus identifies theses and dissertations that have extensive reviews of literature about Adventist philosophy on competitive sports and prophetic writings. The bibliographies in these reviews will be used to locate information for the discussion of SDA philosophy in the article for publication.

The researcher will contact the Archives Department and the Department of Education of the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists to obtain copies of official statement issued by the SDA church about competitive sports.

Questionnaires

A cover letter (Appendix A-3) and two questionnaires (Appendices A-4, A-5) will be sent to each of the subjects in the study. The purpose of the questionnaires is to collect data for analysis and to gather basic information to guide further inquiries.

Information from the questionnaires will be consistent because each school receives the same questionnaire to be filled out by the athletic director. The questionnaire is an acceptable way to gather information from a variety of subjects because people of the same position will be answering the same questions.

A pilot study will be conducted by sending the questionnaires to 10 geographically selected schools (1 college and 9 academies). These will contain a slightly different cover letter (Appendix A-6) to encourage response to
questions and to the design of the questionnaire. Based on the information
returned from the pilot, changes will be made to clarify answers or eliminate
meaningless questions. Information collected from the pilot study will be used as
data in the final study. If there are any additions to the pilot questionnaire, the
subjects in the pilot study will be called by phone to collect the needed
information.

When the pilot questionnaires are returned and changes made, the new
questionnaires will be sent to the remaining subjects. After three weeks a
follow-up letter will be sent (Appendix A-7) to those who have not returned their
questionnaire.

Each school that does not return the questionnaire will be contacted by
phone to determine if they have an interscholastic sports program. By doing this,
the researcher plans to have information from every subject in the study to give
an accurate representation of each SDA school in the United States that has a
sports program.

Phone Interviews

After the questionnaire information is obtained the researcher will conduct
semi-structured phone interviews (Appendix A-8) to gather specific information to
explain the development of each school's interscholastic program and the effects
the program has had on the school.
The semi-structured format of the interview will have initial questions to guide the interviewer but not restrict the interviewer. The interviewer will be free to ask other questions to explore information in order to provide the most accurate account of the school’s sports history.

The initial phone interview will target the primary informer who filled out the questionnaire. During the interview, the interviewer will find other sources to contact for further information. Similar interviews will be conducted with these other sources that focus on the person's involvement in the sports program.

Notes from the phone interview will be written on the questionnaire sheet for phone interviews (Appendix A-8). To assure that accurate notes are taken, the interviewer will repeat key information at the end of the interview for the subject to confirm its correctness. Immediately following the interview, the notes will be reviewed and rewritten if needed.

Based on the information from phone interviews and questionnaire data, the historical information will be compiled for each school. From this information, the historical sketch of each school with an interscholastic sports program will be written.

Analysis of Questionnaire Data

The percent of schools with interscholastic sports programs will be calculated based on the number of blue and yellow questionnaires returned.
The blue and yellow questionnaires contain similar questions which will be used to statistically compare the results of schools with and without interscholastic sports. Each of the questionnaires contains several questions which use a Likert scale to measure the degree to which different SDA groups approve of interscholastic sports. A mean score will be calculated for each of the 7 SDA groups from the ratings given by the athletic directors of each school to compare differences between schools with and without interscholastic sports.

A second common section between questionnaires contains a 5-point scale to measure factors that contribute to the schools’ decision for sponsoring or not sponsoring interscholastic sports. A mean score will be calculated for each of these 6 factors. Based on the mean score for each factor, the researcher will evaluate the effect each factor has on the schools’ decisions to participate or not participate in interscholastic sports.

For those schools which have interscholastic sports programs, the following information will be gathered from the data:

1. Mean and range of years schools have competed.
2. Percent of academies and colleges in an association.
3. Percent of SDA schools in an association.
4. Number of academies and colleges in a league.
5. Percentage of SDA schools in a league.
From the questionnaires returned from schools with no sports program, the number of academies and colleges that have plans to start interschool competition will be calculated.

Data from the phone interview questions will also be analyzed. The three most positive influences indicated by athletic directors will be tallied to determine the most frequent responses. The same procedures will be used to analyze the three most negative impacts of the sports program.

The researcher will analyze the data using *The SAS System* for MacIntosh (Release 6.1) at the Brigham Young University physical education computer lab.

Presentation of Information

The procedures to be used in gathering the information are important; perhaps of equal importance in a descriptive study is how the information is presented. An outline of the thesis follows:

**Article for Publication**

Ellen G. White’s Concerns

Development of Interscholastic Sports

General Conference Working Policy

Value of Interscholastic Sports

Recommendations

**Appendix A: Prospectus**
Appendix B: Histories of Schools with Interscholastic Sports

A separate historical sketch will be presented in Appendix B for each school that has participated in interscholastic sports competition. This information serves as a written history that is available for anyone to examine or use in future descriptions of the progress of SDA interschool competition.
References


Appendix A-1

Hamerslough Survey, 1986
Hamerslough Survey, 1986

Subjects: Of the 76 academies and 13 colleges polled, 47 academies (62%) and 12 colleges (92%) responded.

Schools with interschool sports programs: 25 academies (53%) and 8 colleges (67%) have some form of interschool sports program. 17 academies (36%) and 3 colleges (25%) have no program. 5 academies (11%) and 1 college (8%) play a limited number of other SDA schools or alumni but responded that they have no program.

Schools that have sports programs participated in these sports:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sports</th>
<th>Academies</th>
<th>Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Men</td>
<td>Women</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag football</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor hockey</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross country</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Programs are organized as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Programs</th>
<th>Academies</th>
<th>Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Varsity</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extramural</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fellowship of Christian Athletes</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools competed against:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Schools</th>
<th>Academies</th>
<th>Colleges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SDA schools</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other church schools</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public schools</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (city teams, prisons)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schools played the following number of games:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sport</th>
<th>Academies Range</th>
<th>Academies Median</th>
<th>Colleges Range</th>
<th>Colleges Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Basketball</td>
<td>2-35</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>8-25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volleyball</td>
<td>2-28</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8-10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Softball</td>
<td>2-21</td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flag football</td>
<td>2-16</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4-20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Soccer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>10-12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baseball</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Floor hockey</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cross country</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools have participated in an interschool sports program for the following number of years:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Academies Range</th>
<th>Academies Median</th>
<th>Colleges Range</th>
<th>Colleges Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1-26</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1-6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8 academies have been playing for fewer than 4 years.
2 colleges have been playing for fewer than 3 years.

Number of schools that have a membership in state or national sport organization such as CIF, NCAA, NAIA:

2 academies
4 colleges

If the school doesn't have a sports program, would the coach like one?

Academies: 4 - yes, 6 - no.
Colleges: 3 - no.

How many administrators approve of an interschool sports program?

Academies: 16 - yes, 8 - no.
Colleges: 6 - yes, 4 - no.
Appendix A-2

Nelson Study, 1987
Atlantic Union College: The college is currently playing basketball with NCAA Division III college teams. The faculty voted to support the program and the board of trustees of the college voted (10-6) to keep home games off campus.

Loma Linda University--La Sierra Campus: The University provides a location for a community swim team that participates in the Riverside County Swim Conference. The team is usually half non-SDA. They have competed for approximately 15 years. The program is supported by the community. The university sponsors horse shows at their equestrian center for local communities. The student affairs committee has recently voted to allow the old unofficial flag football and basketball games between Adventist colleges to be held on campus for the 1984-85 school year.

Pacific Union College: Allows flag football, basketball, and soccer teams to exist.

Walla Walla College: A Fellowship of Christian Athletes organization plays games with other select schools.

Southern College: Sponsors an extensive softball league run by Adventists that involves both men and women and also supports a baseball league.

Takoma Park Academy: Supports the longest standing varsity program in boys’ and girls’ basketball in SDA schools. They compete in a Christian league in the Washington, D. C. area. Their board voted to continue this program two years ago. During this last school year (1984) the Middle States Accreditation Committee recommended that more sports be added to the varsity program. This visiting committee had a balance of public and denominational educators.

Portland Adventist Academy: The school fielded a basketball team in the local city league in 1970. They joined the local Christian league in 1974 with boys’ and girls’ varsity flag football, volleyball, soccer, and basketball.

Highland View Academy: Participated in home basketball games with Shenandoah Valley Academy and Blue Mountain Academy for the last 4 years.
Shenandoah Valley Academy: The school runs varsity boys’ soccer and basketball programs and a varsity girls’ basketball team that compete with other local Christian high schools. This program is supported by their board. Two years ago they played in a regular league with a team from the Review and Herald Publishing Association.

Loma Linda Academy: Sponsors a varsity program that includes boys’ flag football, soccer, floor hockey, basketball, and softball. The girls’ varsity competes in flag football and softball. Their teams play former alumni teams, community teams, Loma Linda University teams, city league teams, and local academy teams from La Sierra and Orangewood.

La Sierra Academy: The academy has maintained a varsity program for the past 15 years. They used to compete in the Loma Linda University intramural program in flag football and basketball. For the past seven years they have played against former alumni teams in flag football, soccer, basketball, and baseball for the boys’ varsity. Girls have competed in the volleyball, basketball, soccer, and softball under the same format. The school board recently voted unanimously to grant the request to free lance in Christian league only in the sports of boys’ cross-country, basketball and baseball; and girls’ cross-country, volleyball, basketball, and softball.

Fresno Academy: Fields a boys’ varsity team that plays basketball and baseball in the local city leagues.

Modesto Academy: Sponsors a boys’ varsity team in the city league for flag football. They also compete with their gymnastic team in local competitions.

Mountain View Academy: This academy fields a boys’ varsity team competing in a city league basketball tournament.

Orangewood Academy: This past school year (1983-84) they sponsored boys’ varsity basketball team that played two games with Loma Linda Academy.
Appendix A-3

Cover Letter
April 12, 1996

To the Director of Athletics:

I am a Seventh-day Adventist student working toward a master’s degree in physical education at Brigham Young University. For my thesis, I am studying the development of interscholastic athletic competition in Seventh-day Adventist schools. In order to make this a complete and accurate description of SDA interscholastic sports, every school's input is important to the study. I have chosen your school because the study includes all SDA academies and colleges in the United States. The information presented in the study will provide a current description of SDA sports programs to aid Adventists in planning the future of competitive sport in the education system.

Please fill out one of the two enclosed questionnaires completely and return it in the envelope I have provided. If your school has an interscholastic sports program that competes against non-SDA schools fill out the blue sheet. If your school does not meet this stipulation, please fill out the yellow sheet. Based on information in the questionnaire, I will be contacting schools by phone to gather information to explain the development and effects of sports at SDA schools.

The information you provide is very important, so please take your time and fill out the questionnaire accurately. Thank you for your time and I look forward to your prompt response.

Sincerely,

Brian A. Sather

enclosure
Appendix A-4

Blue Sheet
School with an interscholastic sports program*

*A school with an interscholastic sports program is defined as having an athletic team that competes against at least one non-SDA school. If your school meets this requirement please fill out this questionnaire.

The information should be filled out by the director of athletics. If there is no director of athletics, the principal or other administrator may fill out the questionnaire. It is important that the respondent fill out all the information requested in this questionnaire.

Name ________________________________________

Title ________________________________________

School ____________________________________________

Years at present school ______

Phone (____) ____________________________ Email ____________________________

Did you compete in interscholastic sports in secondary school or college? YES NO

How many years has your school been competing against non-SDA schools? ________________

Is your school a member of an association? __________ Which one? __________________________

Is your school a member of a league or conference? __________ Which one? __________________________

Please indicate to what degree you feel each group or person approves of your interscholastic sports program?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>SA=Strongly Approves</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School board</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>A=Approves</td>
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<tr>
<td>Principal</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>N=Neutral</td>
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<tr>
<td>PE department</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>D=Disapproves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>SD=Strongly Disapproves</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local church members</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Local conference</td>
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On a scale of 1-5 indicate the degree to which each of the following has contributed toward the decision to have interscholastic sports competition at your school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Information</th>
<th>contributed little</th>
<th>contributed much</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ellen G. White writings</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church members’ view of</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>competition</td>
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<tr>
<td>Finances</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>General conference statements</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sabbath observance</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local conference regulation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| Other                         | 1 2 3 4 5          | (Please fill out information on back.)
List current athletic teams that play games against other schools. Write the team’s record for all games played under each year indicated. If a team has more games to be played this year write the number of remaining games in parenthesis after the win-loss record. Indicate projected number of games to be played next year under 1996-97.

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Appendix A-5

Yellow Sheet
School with no interscholastic sports program*

*A school that does not have at least one sports team that competes against non-SDA schools is defined as having no interscholastic sports program. If your school does not compete against non-SDA schools, please fill out this questionnaire.

The information should be filled out by the director of athletics. If there is no director of athletics, the principal or other administrator may fill out the questionnaire. It is important that the respondent fill out all the information requested in this questionnaire.

Name ___________________________________________ Title _______________________________________

School ____________________________________________ Years at present school __________

Phone (_____) ___________________________ Email ______________________________________

Did you compete in interscholastic sports in secondary school or college?  YES  NO

Please indicate to what degree you feel each group or person would approve of an interscholastic sports program at your school?

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<th>Group</th>
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<td>Local church members</td>
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<td>Local conference</td>
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On a scale of 1-5 indicate the degree to which each of the following has contributed toward the decision not to have interscholastic sports competition?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>contributed little</th>
<th>contributed much</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ellen G. White writings</td>
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<td>Church members’ view of competition</td>
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<td>Finances</td>
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<td>General conference statements</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sabbath observance</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local conference regulation</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please explain future plans your school has to start a sports program that competes against non-SDA schools?
1130 E. 450 N. Apt. 303  
Provo, UT 84606  
March 26, 1996

To the Director of Athletics:

I am a Seventh-day Adventist student working toward a master's degree in physical education at Brigham Young University. For my thesis, I am studying the development of interscholastic sports in SDA schools. I have chosen your school for a pilot questionnaire. It is important that I receive information from you to help me design an effective questionnaire to send to all the SDA academies and colleges in the United States. The information presented in the study will provide a current description of SDA sports programs to aid Adventists in planning the future of competitive sport in the education system.

Please fill out one of the two enclosed questionnaires completely and return it in the envelope I have provided. If your school has an interscholastic sports program that competes against non-SDA schools fill out the blue sheet. If your school does not meet this stipulation, please fill out the yellow sheet. Based on information in the questionnaire, I will be contacting schools by phone to gather information to explain the development and effects of sports at SDA schools.

If there are any unclear questions or instructions please indicate so by placing a question mark beside them or rewriting the question. At the end of the questionnaire, please make suggestions or generate additional questions that might be helpful.

I have enclosed a self-addressed stamped envelope. Please return the questionnaire in this envelope within a week to keep the study on schedule. Thank you for your time and I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Brian A. Sather

enclosure
Appendix A-7

Follow-up Letter
1130 E. 450 N. Apt. 303  
Provo, UT 84606  

May 10, 1996  

To the Director of Athletics:  

About three weeks ago you should have received a questionnaire I sent to gather information for my study on Seventh-day Adventist interscholastic sports. I have not received a response from you. The information you can provide is important to the study and I would appreciate your response so the study can stay on schedule.  

If you did not receive the questionnaire I sent, please contact me through mail or by phone at (801) 370-3143. If you have sent the information and I have not received it please contact me so I can send you another questionnaire.  

Thank you.  

Sincerely,  

Brian A. Sather
Appendix A-8

Phone Interview Question Sheet
Phone Interview Question Sheet

School ______________________________________________________ Date _____________

Information collected from __________________________ Position ______________________

Please give a brief outline of the history and key figures in the development of your school's sports program?

Who was the athletic director or coach who started the program?

Name ____________________________
Phone ____________________________

List all athletic directors by year?

Have you ever formally evaluated the effects of your sports program? What were findings?

List three of the most positive influences your sports program has had on your school?

1.

2.

3.
List three of the most negative influences your sports program has had on your school?

1.

2.

3.

Name two struggles to keep the program going?

1.

2.

What is the current trend or future goals of your program?

How do non-SDA schools feel about the sabbath observance of your sports teams?

Additional notes:
Appendix B

Histories of Schools with Interscholastic Sports
**Atlanta Adventist Academy**

In 1986, the teachers at Atlanta Adventist Academy organized and adopted an interschool sports program. The school belonged to the Metro Atlantic Christian Conference when Enrico Marcellino became athletic director in 1992. He pushed the move for the school to become independent and they have maintained that status since.

The school currently competes against Christian schools in boys’ and girls’ basketball and volleyball and boys’ golf. In the future soccer, tennis, girls’ volleyball, and boys’ baseball may be added. Marcellino raises most of the money to support his sports program with a golf tournament each year that raises $5,000-10,000 for the sports teams.

Approximately 65% of the student body at AAA participates in the sports program. There are no intramural activities because many of the students commute from long distances.

**Atlantic Union College**

Stacy Nelson influenced AUC’s decision to begin competing against non-SDA schools because of his specific research about interscholastic sports. In 1986, AUC played exhibition games which proved to be a positive experience and led to their joining the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA). The program currently plays in the Mayflower League in basketball and
women's volleyball. Nelson has resigned from the director of athletics position at AUC and will be replaced by Robert Thomas.

**Auburn Adventist Academy**

Bob Kilgore has been athletic director at Auburn for 12 years. In 1993, he assisted the effort to join the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA) to more evenly match the competition level to that of the students. Due to the limited ability to schedule games as an independent, Auburn has joined the Nisqually League for the 1996-1997 year. Before joining the league, Auburn was concerned about potential rivalry but Kilgore concluded that rivalry is based on what you allow to happen. Auburn may add soccer and girls’ volleyball in the future.

**Bakersfield Adventist Academy**

Athletics at Bakersfield are run primarily by a booster group. The school plays other SDA schools but includes a few Christian schools in their schedule. Dr. Robert Hill is the current athletic director who indicates Bakersfield may possibly join the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) as an independent. Approximately 70% of the students at Bakersfield participate in the athletics.

**Burton Adventist Academy**

In February of 1995, Burton Adventist Academy established an athletic committee headed by athletic director Monroe Solomon. The committee investigated sports programs at several SDA schools and public schools for
advice in starting interscholastic competition. Key figures in the development of the program were board chair Connie Perryman, principal John Hopps, and Dr. Bill Perryman.

The following school year Burton joined the Texas Association of Private and Parochial Schools (TAPPS) as an independent member in boys’ basketball and girls’ volleyball. The boys’ basketball team got the opportunity to play a game in Reunion Arena, home of the Dallas Mavericks. Later that year, Burton was assigned to the district for boys’ baseball and girls’ softball. Future plans include developing athletic facilities and expanding the athletic program so more students can participate.

Solomon emphasizes the positive response the league has given to Burton Academy for sportsmanship and administration of their program. The baseball team forfeited a tournament championship game because it was scheduled for Friday night. The response for this action was positive from the students and other teams and served as a witness opportunity for the SDA religion.

Campion Academy

Troy Beans attributes his success for the last 6 years of interscholastic competition to the following explicit goals: (a) reaching heaven, (b) excellence in the classroom, and (c) playing to the best of their abilities. Beans has coached
girls’ and boys’ basketball and volleyball since 1990 with the help of assistant coach Nadia Issa. In 1995, Campion added boys’ and girls’ soccer. Campion mostly plays local Christian schools and a few public schools. They are considering joining the association for the State of Colorado to schedule more evenly matched competition. Beans indicates the sportsmanship playing Christian schools has been superb but also notes incidents playing SDA schools and some public schools have not been so positive.

College View Academy

The State of Nebraska offers a unique situation in high school athletics that benefits College View Academy’s participation in interschool competition. All schools operate as independents making their own schedules. This gives College View the freedom to schedule games that are not on Friday nights or Saturdays.

Three factors contributed to College View’s decision to compete against non-SDA schools. Ryan Rienke’s influences as an exceptional basketball player and his involvement as a student leader was one factor. Second, a survey by the school indicated that constituents desired a sports program. The combination of these two factors and an athletic director, Larry Aldred, who saw a need for this program led to its inception in 1991.

The first sports were cross country followed by boys’ basketball in the fall. In the second year girls’ volleyball was added followed by tennis in 1996. In the
1995-96 year one student played football at a local high school as a cooperative agreement between the two schools.

College View has competed in post season play in most sports. The first year David Wade qualified for state in cross country. Sheree Schwartz went to state in tennis in 1996. Their success in basketball has also led to media coverage.

Future plans include adoption of golf and forming a conference with four other schools. Joining a conference would allow them to participate in tournament play and give athletes a better opportunity to excel.

**Collegedale Academy**

Collegedale chose to join the Tennessee Secondary School Athletic Association (TSSAA) in 1995 because students were interested in running and golf. In the past, some students chose to attend public schools because Collegedale did not offer competitive programs in these areas. Collegedale chose to join the association in only two sports, cross country and boys’ golf, because they felt these sports avoided the competitive nature of team sports. Because of this philosophy, the program has no plans for expansion to more traditional sports.

Ron Reading, the athletic director, indicates a positive experience came from the Collegedale’s withdrawal from the regional cross country meet. If Collegedale’s athletes qualified for state they would have to forfeit because the
state meet was on Saturday. Instead of taking the opportunity qualify for state, Collegedale decided to allow other teams to go to state. This action brought recognition from the league for standing up for their beliefs and the league has now implemented action to change the provisions of the regional meet to allow Collegedale to compete.

**Columbia Adventist Academy**

In 1994, CAA joined the Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association (WIAA) as an independent member. Previously they competed in a local Koinonia league comprised of small Christian schools. Athletic Director Lance Judd and Principal Kelly Bok pushed to join WIAA in order to play teams on their competitive level and add structure to the program.

For their first year in WIAA, Columbia participated in boys’ and girls’ basketball. The following year boys’ golf was added. They have also maintained involvement in the annual Portland Adventist Academy Friendship Tournament. Judd sees possible additions of boys’ soccer, girls’ golf, and cross country teams to round out the program so it includes a boys’ and girls’ sport for each season.

**Columbia Union College**

Rick Murray started as dean of men at CUC and ran the men’s basketball team. He eventually moved to full time director of athletics for a school that is currently entering into the full National Collegiate Athletic Association
(NCAA) Division II status and offers scholarships in 6 men’s and 6 women’s sports.

The program first started with basketball as a club status in 1984 when they played 10 other colleges. According to Murray, CUC’s attempt to join the National Christian Collegiate Athletic Association (NCCAA) in 1985 was denied because the league thought Seventh-day Adventists were a cult. In 1986, CUC joined the National Association for Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) Division II.

In their first year (1991-1992) of NAIA Division I play the men’s basketball team won the district championship and was given the opportunity to compete in the NAIA national tournament consisting of the top 32 teams.

In 1994 CUC moved to NCAA Division II but still included NAIA teams on their schedule. CUC competes in basketball, volleyball, cross country, track, men’s baseball, men’s soccer, and women’s softball. The program at CUC is the most developed interscholastic program in SDA colleges.

**Enterprise Academy**

In the 1995-1996 season Enterprise played a Christian school in Wichita, Kansas in boys’ and girls’ basketball but mainly competes against Adventist schools in friendship tournaments in the midwest. Athletic Director Tim Bragaw says Enterprise is currently interested in joining the Kansas State High School Activities Association to play other high schools.
Escondido Adventist Academy

Principal Jerry Gilkeson lead the movement at Escondido to join the California Interscholastic Federation (CIF) because local SDA schools they previously played were rapidly joining the league. Robert Bewley was appointed athletic director of the new sports program which was overwhelmingly accepted by the school board. A steering committee was formed to lead the transition into competitive sports that included coaches, athletes, administrators, and one outside member.

Boys’ and girls’ volleyball and basketball completed winning season in their first year of competition. Girls’ fastpitch softball was also included in the sports program. The school competed as an independent during their first year of competition but has been approved to join the league for the 1996-1997 school year. The league has offered to change the playoff schedule to meet Sabbath observance.

Recently a school paper reported what students felt was positive about their school. The overriding theme was the sports program that has God at its center.

Fresno Adventist Academy

After 2 years of league competition in CIF, Fresno has moved to associate membership based on policy enacted by the Central California Conference against league participation. Keith Perrin laid the groundwork for developing the
interscholastic program. Rico Balugo took over in 1994 for the first year of CIF competition. Hugh Winn was the principal involved in developing the athletic program.

Gem State Academy

Traditionally Gem State competed against other SDA schools and alumni teams. The experience was not positive because the limited amount of games increased the intensity of each game and the distance to other SDA schools increased travel expenses.

Because of these factors, Greg Davies presented a proposal to the Idaho High School Activities Association (IHSAA) to be admitted as associate members in girls’ and boys’ basketball. They joined the association to play during the 1994-1995 season. Gem State has applied for full membership for the 1996-1997 year. This move will allow other schools to realize that Gem State is a fully accredited school whereas before, others perceived they were not because of their associate status.

Davies evaluates his program regularly with student questionnaires, parent surveys, and open forum meetings as well as charting grade point averages of his athletes compared to the other students. From the evaluation he generally finds that sports increase spirit, relieve stress, increases the drive for improvement, and have little effect on grades during the time students participate in sports. In fact, the grades tend to increase during the season.
One struggle to keep the program going, indicates Davies, is the bad publicity that sometimes occurs when situations are blown out of proportion. Seventh-day Adventists tend to jump to conclusions without all the facts and opt to eliminate the whole program rather than deal with the issues.

**Glendale Adventist Academy**

Matt Stanfield was the athletic director who started interscholastic competition at Glendale 7 years ago. Glendale belongs to CIF in volleyball, basketball, and club soccer. Volleyball has been their strongest sport. Current athletic director Eldridge Ezpeleta states, “Awareness of SDA beliefs is getting more and more well known in CIF.”

**Greater Boston Academy**

Greater Boston has been competing in girls’ and boys’ basketball since 1991. In 1996 they will join the New England Preparatory School Athletic Conference and belong the Massachusetts Bay Independent League. Bryant Worth is the director of athletics.

**Hawaiian Mission Academy**

Hawaiian Mission is reluctant to participate in interscholastic sports for the fear of going against General Conference and Pacific Union Conference policy. Because of this stance Hawaiian Mission is the only school in the state that does not participate in interscholastic competition. In October 1995, the board of directors approved a measure that allowed the school to play 8 basketball
scrimmages against Division II teams in the Interscholastic League of Honolulu (ILH).

In December, the board denied a proposal for Hawaiian Mission to join ILH. The board has allowed the school to continue the scrimmage games. Coach John D. Rudometkin indicates that the scrimmage games have been successful in many ways but the school is sticking to SDA conference policy.

Indiana Academy

During the 1995-1996 school year Indiana Academy played a few games against small schools in boys’ and girls’ basketball.

La Sierra University

After examining sports programs at other SDA school who had adopted interscholastic competition, La Sierra University decided about eight years ago to break from their traditional stance of no interscholastic sports. For the first few years of the program’s existence, Walt Hamerslough ran the program which competed against small Christian colleges. Vernon Scheffel followed Hamerslough as director of athletics and Jeremy Jordan is the current athletic director.

At one point, LSU belonged to the California Coastal Conference and the National Christian College Athletic Association (NCCAA). They will join NAIA for the 1996-1997 year and may eventually move to NCAA Division III.
LSU competes in men’s basketball and soccer and women's basketball and volleyball. They give special financial aid to athletes but no athletic scholarships.

Mile High Adventist Academy

Mile High does not belong to a league or association but competes against local schools in boys’ and girls’ basketball. In 1996 they will start girls’ volleyball and have future plans for boys’ and girls’ soccer. They currently have a competitive sports acrobatics team that has won national awards.

Milo Adventist Academy

Milo first competed against public schools in 1990 with a game versus Days Creek High School. Under the leadership of principal Loren Fardulis and coach Roger Morse, Milo joined the Big Fir League completing a full season in boys’ and girls’ basketball, and girls’ volleyball.

The following year (1991-1992), Milo moved to independent status and found scheduling harder. Since then they have maintained independent status under the athletic directorship of Steve Adams in 1993-94 and Gregg Faulk in 1995-1996. For the 1996-1997 season, Judy Sloan will take over as director of athletics. She has coached women’s basketball since 1991. In this season they will rejoin the league for scheduling purposes but will not be listed in standings or included in postseason play.
Because Milo does not offer football, 2 students have been allowed to play at Days Creek High School. Students are allowed to also play baseball for the local high school.

Mount Ellis Academy

Although MEA has never joined a league or association they do play Christian and public schools in basketball, girls' volleyball, and track and field. The school first competed against non-SDA schools under Athletic Director Scott Schafer in 1991 when they played a Bozeman Christian school. The program has continued to develop under the direction of Stacy Hunter.

Mount Vernon Academy

In 1987, Mount Vernon began competing mostly against local Christian schools in tennis, basketball, and volleyball because parents pushed adoption of an interscholastic sports program and Principal Jack Mentges was open to the idea. The school chooses not to play in tournaments to avoid sabbath conflicts. Local papers have printed SDA beliefs because of the school's athletic program and the 18-1 volleyball team's declining an invitation for postseason tournament. Physical education teacher Bruce Bellchambers indicates the program has no future plans for expansion.

Mountain View Academy

The situation at MVA shows the influence a board and conference have over interscholastic sports at SDA academies. The school decided to join the

During their second year of competition MVA elevated to full league status in the Christian Private School Athletic League. The girls’ basketball team made league playoffs and lost in the second round and the boys lost in the first round. In 1995-1996 season the boys’ basketball team made league playoffs but lost in the first round.

In the 1995-1996 school year a number of circumstances led to the school board’s decision to drop interscholastic sports competition for the next school year. The Central California Conference, under their new president Jerry Page, decided that no school would maintain league status in CIF. The school board at MVA, under a new chair, decided to take it one step further and not compete against public schools.

The whole school is in a state of transition with the resignation of Carey Bell and 6 other of the 10 full time faculty members leaving. Bell indicates that the students are, “Upset with the whole concept that sports is detrimental to their salvation. They are being penalized and they don’t know what they did wrong.”
Portland Adventist Academy

Portland Adventist Academy has arguably reached a monumental milestone that may serve as a breakthrough in SDA participation in interscholastic sports. The boys’ Cougar basketball team has came off a 27-0 season by winning the Oregon State 2A Tournament. (2A leagues in Oregon match schools with enrollment between 175-250.) What makes this unique is that the tournament schedule was changed to allow PAA to compete in the semifinals on Friday afternoon and the championship game on Saturday night. The Cougar’s achievement has shown that Adventists can succeed in athletics while maintaining standards that the Adventist church has emphasized in education.

PAA first organized a varsity team in 1970 under Bill Judd competing in an adult men’s league. In 1978, they joined a Christian school league called Koinonia. The following year, Greg Davies became athletic director and PAA continued competition in Koinonia until it began to break up in 1986.

Under Davies, PAA applied to join a league in the Oregon State Athletic Association (OSAA). Under this provision, their win/loss record would count in league standings but they would drop out before the postseason tournament. In 1995, under Athletic Director Norm Ballou, PAA applied to participate in the state tournament and not compete on Sabbath. By applying for this change, PAA was
gambling that they would win. If they had lost they would have to forfeit their consolation game and possibly lose the respect of the league.

In the state tournament, senior Damian McCarthy was named most valuable player and was listed on the tournament’s all-star first team. Named to the all-star second team were Alan Bingham, Damien Sempio, and Abby Olive. At the regional level, PAA was given the sportsmanship award and Ballou received coach of the year honors.

PAA currently has boys’ soccer and basketball and women’s basketball. They plan to add girls’ soccer next year and possible baseball in the future.

Portland Adventist Academy sponsors a friendship tournament held every year for SDA schools. It has grown to be a well-recognized event in which SDA schools from across the country come to participate.

**San Pasqual Academy**

San Pasqual competes against non-SDA Christian schools but still plays other California SDA schools in basketball and volleyball for a majority of their games. Principal Berit Von Pohle, Vice-Principal Frank Jones, III, and Athletic Director Lucio Camacho, Jr. came to the school in 1991 and were influential in starting up interscholastic sports. San Pasqual is looking into joining CIF because of the increasing number of SDA schools in southern California who are members.
South Lancaster Academy

The boys varsity competed in the Massachusetts district tournament in 1994-1995 making it to the semifinals and reaching the quarter finals in 1995-1996. Athletic Director Edward Folger indicates Sabbath participation presents conflict issues for South Lancaster. Because they are an independent school and belong to the state association they are qualified for tournament participation. For the most part, this allows them to schedule games that do not conflict or distract from Sabbath observance.

Southwestern Adventist College

Southwestern has belonged to the NAIA Division II since 1994 and is now undergoing a transition from independent membership to joining the Big State Conference which is NAIA Division I. The program offers scholarships to athletes and runs from a budget designated by the college specifically for athletics.

Tom Bunch was the athletic director who started the program in 1986 with the full support of the college president Dr. Marvin Anderson. The first year SAC played men’s basketball. Two years later women’s volleyball started followed by men’s baseball, and women’s basketball. Brent Baldwin is the current director of athletics.
Spring Valley Academy

Athletic director Tim Bair has served as girls’ basketball coach at Spring Valley for 8 years. He became athletic director when his colleague and school chaplin Brennon Francois vacated the athletic director position. Francois, in conjunction with principal John Wheaton, began interschool competition in the 1980s.

Rick Schwarz is the current PE teacher who specializes in acrosports. Spring Valley won a national championship in the early 1990s in this sport. The acro program has faded but SVA supports teams in boys’ and girls’ basketball, boys’ volleyball, and boys’ tennis. In 1996-1997 SVA plans to add girls’ junior varsity volleyball and boys’ soccer. SVA does not belong to a state association but may join in the future.

A situation exists at SVA where grades K-12 operate in the same building. Bair indicates that varsity athletics has produced a more willing attitude in younger students to learn in PE class because they have a reason to use the skills.

Takoma Academy

Former coach at Takoma Academy Bob Paulson states, “John Graham and John Paul Lawrence were the fathers of interscholastic athletics in the Seventh-day Adventist church.” Because of the work by Graham and Lawrence, Takoma Academy has the longest standing sports program that competes
against non-SDA schools beginning in the early 1960s when they played basketball against a Marine base high school.

Principal Lawrence and Athletic Director John Graham developed teams in men's and women's basketball who played primarily Catholic and private schools. Their philosophy was to not compete against SDA schools to avoid rivalry and maintain a positive competitive experience.

Following Graham, Jerry Knickerson became director of athletics. Richard Osborne followed Lawrence as principal and continued the tradition with help form Athletic Director Laura Benn and boys' basketball coach Paulson. Bradley L. Durby is the current director of athletics. The coaching staff includes 30 volunteer coaches.

Takoma Academy has maintained independent status with the exception of league play from 1983-1986. They currently play in basketball, soccer, track and field, cross country, and tennis. Takoma also sponsors a cheerleading team.

Paulson began the John Graham Tournament at TA in which many Washington, D.C. area private and public schools participated. The tournament has evolved into an SDA school invitational in the East.

Although their independent status does not facilitate postseason play, Takoma Academy has competed in other tournaments. During Paulson's stint
he played in the St. Anslem’s Tournament, which is the longest running school basketball tournament, and is comprised mostly of Catholic schools.

From 1983 to 1986, TA competed in a league with the basketball team going to the championship game in playoffs. Osborne, who was principal at the time, indicates they dropped their league status because rivalry became too intense.

The boys’ varsity basketball team maintains a 3.16 grade point average. Three athletes received full ride scholarships to the University of Maryland-Baltimore County for math and science.

Union College

Union plays in men’s and women’s basketball in an association of Christian colleges. Ric Spaulding is the director of athletics.

Union Springs Academy

In the early 1980s, Union Springs competed against local churches under the direction of Clyde Newmeyer. The school appointed John Foote as athletic director in 1988. The following year, Union Springs first competed against non-SDA schools.

The school now plays for Friends and Family Conference as an independent member. Their schedule includes games in boys’ and girls’ basketball versus other SDA academies, Baptist schools, and two public schools.
They also participate in the John Graham Tournament at Takoma Academy.

Foote indicates the program has no future plans of expansion.

Union Springs carefully selects coaches who emphasize the importance of how the game is played over the importance of winning. Games have been eliminated from the schedule when attitudes seemed to get out of control.

**Walla Walla College**

When Tim Windemuth came to WWC in 1983 the school had an Athletes in Action program that played city league teams. Windemuth adopted a Fellowship of Christian Athletes program in flag football and basketball. The following year women’s basketball, flag football, and track and field were added. Currently WWC competes against a variety of opponents in eight sports.

In 1994, WWC joined the Pacific Northwest Christian Conference in men’s basketball. In 1996, the school plans to add women’s volleyball to the league. Before joining the league the college organized an athletic council and a booster club to guide the move. The goal of the program is to promote a Christian image in all aspects of the athletic experience.

**Walla Walla Valley Academy**

Scott Schafer took over at WWVA for their first year of belonging to the Washington Interscholastic Athletic Association. The ground work for joining was laid by girls’ basketball coach Mike Cook.
WWVA competed in golf in the Yakima Valley League sending 3 players to state: Aaron Vixie, Brian Hamburgh, and Doug Botimer. The schools plays other schools as an independent in basketball, girls' volleyball, and track.
The Development of Interscholastic Sports at Seventh-day Adventist Academies and Colleges

Brian A. Sather
Department of Physical Education
M. S. Degree, August 1996

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to study the inclusion of interscholastic sports in Seventh-day Adventist (SDA) schools. Since the inception of Adventist education in 1874 the debate over the place of interschool sports has escalated. The current stance of the governing body of the SDA church toward interschool competition states it is opposed to interschool league play commonly known as varsity athletics.

The study by the researcher found 49 of 92 (53%) Seventh-day Adventist academies and colleges in the United States compete against non-SDA schools. Athletic directors at schools with interscholastic sports most frequently cited school spirit, witness opportunity, and opportunity for students to develop physical gifts as advantages of sports at their school. The author concluded that wholesome physical activities are consistent with doctrines of the SDA church and the writings of the prophetess Ellen G. White. Because of the advantages of interscholastic sports and the ambiguity of the current church statement, the SDA church should revise the current policy to one that sanctions sports programs that develop proper Christian values in SDA education. With the church’s support of the schools, standards and guidelines can be developed to provide proper direction to all SDA schools who wish to participate in organized athletics.

COMMITTEE APPROVAL:

Barbara D. Lockhart, Committee Chair
Ruell Barker, Committee Member
Steven Epperson, Committee Member
Carol Wilkinson, Committee Member
Earlene Durrant, Department Chair