



Resilience Training for High School Student-Athletes: A Pilot of the Life and Leadership through Sport Series

Samantha Bates

The Ohio State University, College of Social Work

Emily Nothnagle

The Ohio State University, College of Social Work

Kethan Mokadam

The Ohio State University, College of Social Work

High school student-athletes are reporting challenges following the pandemic and coping with the current landscape of school-based sport. With stressors and pressures surmounting, opportunities exist to develop and pilot school-based interventions to prevent mental health concerns and teach student-athletes how to “bounce back” in the face of adversity. This article details the development, implementation, and evaluation of the Life and Leadership Through Sport Series, a six-session resilience training piloted in Tier I and II formats. The study aimed to explore student-athlete and coach perceptions of the intervention and to examine whether student-athlete perceptions of knowledge, skills, coping, and help-seeking differed based on the delivery format. In total, 415 student-athletes and 26 coaches participated in the Tier I intervention, and 16 student-athletes participated in the Tier II intervention. Using a post-training evaluation measure, descriptive statistics indicated that student-athletes participating in the Tier II intervention reported more favorable perceptions of the intervention and efficacy regarding the learning outcomes than those participating in the Tier I intervention. Our pilot provides preliminary evidence regarding the potential for the Life and Leadership Through Sport Series to act as an evidence-based Tier II intervention for high school student-athletes participating in school-based sports.

Keywords: school-based intervention; high school; student-athletes; pilot; resilience skills

Every young person's path to adulthood, including reaching developmental and emotional milestones, learning life and social skills, and coping with stress, comprises different life successes and challenges. High school is often a pivotal time when young people learn skills to help them navigate the future, including coping with adversity. Coping with adversity is overcoming exposure to circumstances that deviate from the expected environment and require significant adaptations (McLaughlin, 2016). In other words, coping with adversity can include developing or utilizing skills and resources to adapt or grow after enduring events that have a meaningful impact on one's social, psychological, and developmental processes.

Notably, several adverse factors are affecting high school youth in the U.S. today, including the growing use of social media, increasing academic pressures, and forces associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, inflation, rising income inequality, and social injustices influencing families, schools, and communities (Abrams, 2023). The factors mentioned above coincide with an alarming uptick in child and adolescent mental health concerns witnessed in the last decade. From 2009 to 2019, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported a 40% increase in mental health symptomology among adolescents. Meanwhile, suicide rates increased by 57% among youth ages 10 to 24 from 2007 to 2018 (Curtin, 2020). Furthermore, since the COVID-19 pandemic, symptoms of depression and anxiety have doubled (Racine et al., 2021), and emergency department visits have skyrocketed among this population (Yard et al., 2021). Of concern, exposure to adversity can cause dysregulated stress responses, increasing adolescents' risks for anxiety, depression, and other maladaptive problems (Stroud et al., 2009). One might argue that now, more than ever, adolescents need support to develop the skills to adapt and grow, especially in response to the adversities linked to the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the United States, an estimated 7.8 million high school student-athletes participate in school-based sport programs each year (National Federation of State High School Associations [NFHS], 2023), and schools are the number one location where young people access sports (Project Play, 2023). School-based sport programs are defined as those that require student-athletes to maintain academic eligibility and to compete on behalf of their school and community during out-of-school time (e.g., often practices take place after school, competitions in the evening or on weekends). Within this context, scholars are beginning to uncover trends that mirror broader national concerns about the health and well-being of adolescents, hereafter referred to as student-athletes. For example, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly altered the environments of student-athletes (Graupensperger et al., 2020). Collins et al. (2020) found that student-athletes reported that canceling school and sport seasons contributed to emotional challenges and feelings of uneasiness, disappointment, and frustration.

Following the pandemic, trends point to persistent levels of stress and pressure reported by this population. Ward et al. (2023) found that 91% of student-athletes reported experiencing some stress associated with sport, and 58% reported experiencing moderate to extreme stress. This quantitative study was further contextualized when Bates et al. (2024) reported academic and sport pressures are perceived to be mounting for high school student-athletes. Unique stressors in the school-based sport environment affected student-athletes psychologically, socially, academically, and physically (Bates et al., 2024). Lastly, and most concerning, few studies distill whether heightened levels of stress and pressure or emergent mental health issues are contributing to risks for suicide among high school student-athletes (Kaishian & Kaishian,

2021). However, loss due to suicide was recently deemed the second leading cause of death among collegiate student-athletes (Whelan et al., 2024), pointing toward a need to intervene early and engage in prevention activities.

Overall, the trends mentioned above are concerning given mental health concerns among student-athletes are comparable to the general student population (Gulliver et al., 2015; Giovannetti et al., 2019; Kaishian & Kaishian, 2021; Wolanian et al., 2016), yet they are far less likely to seek professional help compared to nonathletes (Eisenberg, 2014). With such high participation rates and emergent issues affecting this population, opportunities exist to implement targeted, structured, and systematic programs that foster resilience and help-seeking within school-based sport contexts (Chow et al., 2021).

School-Based Resilience Interventions

Schools in the U.S. are environments suitable for delivering targeted and universal interventions that can facilitate resilience among young people. Resilience is a multi-faceted concept that relies on the absence or presence of knowledge, skills, or resources that help an individual effectively cope with adversity (Joyce et al., 2018). Knowledge, skills, and resources that support the development of resilience exist across systems, including at the individual level (e.g., successful responses to prior exposure to stressors or personal coping strategies) and environmental levels through family, school, community, or cultural supports (Joyce et al., 2018; Ronen, 2021; van Breda, 2018). Said another way, resilience trainings focus on empowerment by increasing knowledge, teaching coping skills, and increasing access to or awareness of resources that can help individuals “bounce back” and adapt after experiencing an adverse event (Joyce et al., 2018; Smith et al., 2008, p. 194).

In a systematic review of existing resilience interventions, Joyce and colleagues (2018) found resilience trainings often involve a combination of components such as psychoeducation, mindfulness, cognitive skills, self-compassion skills, gratitude practice, emotional regulation training, relaxation, and goal-setting. In schools, a majority of school-based interventions targeting stress management or well-being utilize problem-solving, social skills training, mindfulness, relaxation techniques, and time management approaches to help adolescents reduce stress and improve coping, academic, and social skills (Carsley et al., 2018; Feiss et al., 2019; O'Connor et al., 2018; van Loon et al., 2020; 2022). In the U.S., school-based interventions are often delivered within the multi-tiered system of support (MTSS) framework and implemented at the Tier I, Tier II, and Tier III levels (Bates et al., 2021). Tier I interventions are often described as universal, primary, or core interventions delivered to 80% to 90% of students. Tier I interventions are designed to prevent problems, support academic achievement, and promote school success. Tier II represents secondary interventions for 5% to 10% of students who need targeted group support (Bates et al., 2021).

Several studies demonstrate the efficacy of school-based interventions delivered within the MTSS framework in reducing depressive symptoms (Arora et al., 2019), reducing internalizing behaviors (Franklin et al., 2012), and addressing psychosocial outcomes such as sexual health, aggression, self-esteem, school attendance, and identity (Allen-Meares et al., 2013). Moreover, several programs have been developed and tested with student-athletes over 18

(Breslin et al., 2018). Examples include Scarlet and Grit, which draws upon components of cognitive behavioral therapy, mindfulness, and positive psychology to help student-athletes thrive despite experiencing adversity, stress, or trauma (Sullivan et al., 2023). Golby and Wood (2016) also implemented psychological skills training with student-athletes that improved mental toughness, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and positive affect. However, to our knowledge, no school-based Tier I or Tier II resilience interventions in the U.S. have been designed and piloted to support high school student-athletes. Opportunities exist to examine whether programs can facilitate the constructs underlying resilience (e.g., knowledge, skills, coping, resource awareness) and at what Tier programs would be most effective when implemented in schools.

This research study examines the implementation and associated learning outcomes of a pilot resilience intervention for high school student-athletes called the Life and Leadership Through Sport Series. Our research questions sought to examine constructs underlying resilience by asking (a) What were student-athlete and coach perceptions of the intervention at the Tier I and Tier II level (e.g., enjoyment, satisfaction, knowledge gained)? (b) How did the delivery format influence student-athlete perceptions of their skills, ability to cope with stress and pressure, and help-seeking behaviors?

Intervention Development and Implementation

Context, Design, and Delivery

This study was one element of an extensive community-based participatory research (CBPR) study and coach training and education program called Coach Beyond (see Bates et al., 2023; Wallerstein et al., 2020). This CBPR work primarily aimed to empower high school coaches to go “beyond the Xs and Os” by training them on topics such as mental health, leadership, life skill development, etc. These topics were those most pressing for coaches based on data from a state-wide needs assessment survey (see Bates et al., 2021) and data collected from focus groups with student-athletes across the state (Bates et al., 2024). Coaches, athletic directors (ADs), and school leaders on the state-wide advisory team leading this work (e.g., Coach Beyond State Team) also voiced a need for parallel programming for student-athletes to supplement coach trainings and respond to their needs following the pandemic. These broader state-wide CBPR methods led to the development, implementation, and evaluation of interventions for student-athletes.

Together, a team of university researchers, sport social work practitioners, and Coach Beyond State Team members met quarterly to brainstorm content and activities needed to train coaches on each priority topic effectively. Following the brainstorming sessions, leaders of Coach Beyond would develop a pilot training that was then tested at the next Coach Beyond State Team meeting, allowing coaches, A.D.s, and school leaders to provide feedback and help craft each training’s content, activities, and takeaways. Once each coach training was developed, it was piloted in high schools across the state with minor refinements made over time to improve quality and facilitation. Leaders of Coach Beyond then went a step further and gamified all the lessons to design a pilot program for student-athletes. Each session for student-athletes included a psychoeducation lesson, an interview with a member of the local athletic community, and a play-based application activity.

Next, the intervention was piloted in two formats. The Tier I intervention was implemented with all student-athletes and a subset of coaches in three high schools. The Tier II intervention was implemented with a targeted group of student-athletes from one high school. No coaches participated in the Tier II intervention. Six curricular sessions were offered at each school, approximately one per month, for one hour each. Sessions were optional, but A.D.s at each school encouraged participation and engagement throughout the year. A.D.s communicated with families about this program, allowing choice regarding participation. The program included a post-intervention evaluation to gather de-identified secondary data to assess learning outcomes and offer insights for future improvements.

Participants

Approximately 400 student-athletes from three high schools within one large school district, totaling an estimated 1,200 participants, were involved in the Tier I intervention. Additionally, an estimated 20 to 30 coaches from each school and the high school athletic directors attended the Tier I sessions. According to school report cards, 32% of students across the three high schools identified as Black, Indigenous youth of color, and 23% were experiencing the effects of poverty and its correlates (e.g., “Non-White” and “Economic Disadvantage” designations; Ohio School Report Cards, 2023). In total, 415 student-athletes (35% response rate) and 26 coaches (43% response rate) completed the optional evaluation survey of the Tier I intervention. At the Tier II level, 25 student-athletes from one high school were invited to participate in the intervention, and 16 (64% response rate) completed the evaluation survey. In this high school, 32% of students identified as Black, Indigenous youth of color, and 26% were experiencing the effects of poverty and its correlates (Ohio School Report Cards, 2023). Demographic characteristics of student-athletes and coaches who completed the evaluation measures are reported in Table 1, including their self-reported gender, grade, race, number of sessions attended, and sport(s) played or coached.

Life and Leadership Through Sport Series

Session 1: Supporting Student-Athlete Mental Health

The first session focused on the importance of mental health and wellness for student-athletes. The session began with an icebreaker activity where participants anonymously responded to the following prompts via Slido (e.g., online polling mechanism): (a) *It is challenging at times to balance school and sport*; (b) *If I were struggling, I would know who to go to for help in my school*; and (c) *I am interested in learning life and leadership skills*. The facilitator used the responses (% agreed or strongly agreed) to frame the session and supported the school-specific results with broader trends seen nationally (e.g., 91% of student-athletes report struggling to balance school and sport; Ward et al., 2023). In the Tier I session, guest speakers were invited to a stage to discuss their experiences with mental health and sports. In the Tier II session, student-athletes utilized a card deck to discuss stigma regarding mental health in the sport environment.

Next, the facilitators shared strategies to normalize wellness check-ins with teammates and those that coaches could utilize at the beginning of practice (examples [here](#)). Additionally,

facilitators had student-athletes practice several techniques (e.g., body scans and mindfulness activities) that could be easily implemented in warm-up routines. Finally, the session concluded with a discussion about linkage and referral methods specific to each school. High school counselors and social workers were asked to introduce themselves and share how student-athletes and coaches could contact them to gain support or resources. Student-athletes were tasked with three homework prompts: (1) How will your team normalize checking in with one another?; (2) What is one mental wellness strategy you can include in your warm-up or pre-game routine?; and (3) How can you/your coach contact someone if you/they need support?

Session 2: Developing Leaders

The second session was designed to teach student-athletes about different leadership styles. Student-athletes were exposed to five sport-specific leadership domains: Game Day Leaders, Locker Room Leaders, Engagement Leaders, Social Leaders, and Brave Leaders. In the Tier I sessions, guest speakers who were former student-athletes shared their perspectives on leadership through sport. In the Tier II sessions, student-athletes completed the [Coach Beyond Leadership Inventory](#). They discussed domains where they scored high, indicating they emulated strong leadership abilities, and areas where they scored low, indicating they had room for improvement. After a brief psychoeducation session describing the characteristics of the five leadership domains, student-athletes engaged in a game of Leadership Family Feud in which they responded to scenarios related to each domain.

In these real-life scenarios gathered via focus groups with student-athletes from across the state (see Bates et al., 2024), student-athletes were challenged to show up and emulate leadership, whether as a “Game Day Leader” or a “Brave Leader.” The game aimed to have groups of student-athletes problem-solve and identify leadership roles and responsibilities across the five domains. After the session, student-athletes were given the following homework assignments: (1) complete or keep the [Coach Beyond Leadership Inventory](#) and discuss the results with a teammate or coach, and (2) submit pictures and descriptions of your team or teammates acting as Game Day, Locker Room, Social, Engagement, or Brave Leaders that could be shared in this next session.

Session 3: Mental Strategies for Improving Athletic Performance

Session three focused on teaching mental strategies to improve athletic performance and help student-athletes cope with adversity. Specifically, student-athletes learned four specific mental strategies: mindfulness, reframing thoughts and actions, positive self-talk, and routines and rituals. The facilitator presented a brief psychoeducation component defining and providing examples of these mental strategies before shifting to a play-based activity. Then, student-athletes engaged in a game of Mental Strategies Jeopardy. The four categories of questions corresponded with one of the mental strategies discussed in the session: mindfulness, reframing thoughts and actions, positive self-talk, and routines and rituals. Playing Mental Strategies Jeopardy reinforced the topics introduced in the lecture component and allowed the student-athletes to apply the material to real-life examples (e.g., reframe this unhelpful thought after not scoring). At the end of the session, the student-athletes were tasked with homework to implement at least one mental strategy on their own, with their team, or at practice.

Session 4: Building a Community of Support

Session four concentrated on different strategies that student-athletes could use to set boundaries and build a community of support with peers, family members, coaches, and members of their communities. The component included information from the schools' respective athletic departments' handbooks, outlining specific expectations for and consequences of negative student-athlete, parent/caregiver, or fan behavior. Then, student-athletes learned how to identify and express their emotions and strategies to communicate their needs and establish boundaries. Specifically, student-athletes learned about naming their emotions before reacting to them ("name it to tame it") and using "I" statements to share their feelings with others. They also were given strategies to set boundaries with parents/caregivers, such as the "24-hour rule." The "24-hour rule" included asking a parent/caregiver to allow 24 hours after a game or competition before discussing their performance.

To communicate needs and establish boundaries, student-athletes were also taught how to communicate using the Situation, Background, Assessment, and Recommendation (SBAR) approach. This approach includes describing the situation and relevant background information, assessing the situation, and recommending improvements (Haig et al., 2006). After the psychoeducation portion, student-athletes competed in a bracket-style "World Cup: Sport for Support" game where they were asked to respond to scenarios using communication strategies from the lesson. An example is "You are unhappy with your playing time. How can you communicate your feelings with your coach using an "I" statement?" The session concluded with the following homework prompts: (1) have a conversation with your parents/caregivers or a fan to talk about the expectations of your athletic program and discuss how they can support you while playing sports; (2) review the athletic handbook as a team; and (3) thank members of their fanbase when they engage in positive fan behaviors.

Session 5: Fostering a Positive Team Environment

Session five focused on cultivating awareness of activities and behaviors that help foster a positive team environment. The psychoeducation component focused on establishing trust, building relationships, and creating an inclusive team culture (acronym "T.R.I."). Trust was taught through the acronym BRAVING: boundaries, reliability, accountability, vault, integrity, non-judgment, generosity (Brown, 2018). Facilitators shared strategies underlying strong relationships, including spending time with each other and utilizing effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Additionally, facilitators showed student-athletes and coaches how to utilize a relationship-mapping tool to assess weak and strong ties on a team. Student-athletes also learned how inclusive team cultures have shared values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors. After the component, the student-athletes played "The Game of TRI-ing." Using a gamified design, student-athletes would compete and answer scenarios requiring them to identify ways to build trust, establish stronger relationships, or cultivate an inclusive culture. An example scenario from the game read, "There are five new players on your team. What is one thing you do to help your teammates feel included and learn your team norms?" After the session, student-athletes were asked to play "The Game of TRI-ing" as a team, plan an out-of-sport activity with their team, and identify one area of BRAVING they would like to improve upon before the next session.

Session 6: Managing Stress and Pressure as Student-Athletes

The final session focused on teaching student-athletes and coaches physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual strategies that help to manage stress and pressure. The psychoeducation component discussed sources of stress experienced by coaches and athletes (United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee, 2020) and the relationship between cyclical stress and burnout. Then, student-athletes engaged in an activity. In the Tier I intervention, student-athletes who participated in a “Stress Walk” were given an “athlete profile” comprised of a mixture of helpful and unhelpful coping behaviors. In the activity, the facilitator read a broad domain, such as sleep, and then student-athletes would take a step forward if their profile indicated they got enough sleep or take a step backward if they did not. After all the prompts were read, the student-athletes with profiles using more helpful coping behaviors were toward the front, and those with profiles using unhelpful coping behaviors were toward the back. We then gave those toward the front several advantages in a play-based activity (e.g., hula hooping) and those in the back more disadvantages to simulate how stress management and coping influence performance.

In the Tier II intervention, student-athletes played our “Knockout Burnout” card game. Student-athletes were divided into groups and given a custom deck of cards. Cards were designed to represent four categories of coping across each suite (e.g., hearts, spades, etc.): physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. Cards with the lowest number had unhelpful coping behaviors, while cards with higher numbers had helpful coping behaviors. For example, the Jack of Spades card read, “Finds ways to give back to the community.” Student-athletes used the card deck to play a game of “spoons.” When a player was “knocked out,” they had to debrief and discuss whether each of the cards in their hands were helpful or unhelpful coping behaviors. After debriefing the activity, the facilitators transitioned to the evaluation survey. Because this was the final session, there was no homework assignment; participants were asked to participate in the evaluation survey.

Data Collection and Measures

Student-athletes and coaches who attended at least one session were asked to complete a voluntary post-intervention evaluation survey distributed by a QR code in the last session. Data were de-identified when shared with researchers; thus, analysis was deemed exempt by the author’s Institutional Review Board. The evaluation consisted of demographic indicators (see Table 1), perceptions of the overall program, and items assessing enjoyment, satisfaction, knowledge, skills, coping, and help-seeking behaviors.

Enjoyment, satisfaction, and knowledge. Student-athletes and coaches were asked three questions measured on a five-point Likert-style scale about their perceived enjoyment, satisfaction, and knowledge gained from the intervention: (a) “I enjoyed attending the Life and Leadership sessions” (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 5 = *Strongly agree*); (b) “How satisfied are you with the Life and Leadership Series?” (1 = *Extremely dissatisfied*; 5 = *Extremely satisfied*).; (c) “I gained knowledge from the Life and Leadership sessions” (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 5 = *Strongly agree*).

Skills. Student-athletes were asked eight questions that aligned with the learning objectives guiding each session to explore their perceptions of their skills. Items were measured using a five-point Likert-style scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 5 = *Strongly agree*). The question's stem read, "As a result of attending the Life & Leadership series, I feel confident in my ability to...". The questions related to the learning objectives established for each session (e.g., "contribute to a positive team culture," "employ a mental strategy to regulate my emotions," and "be a leader on my team").

Coping and help-seeking. Student-athletes also completed the Brief Resilient Coping Scale (Sinclair & Wallston, 2004) comprised of four items measured on a 5-point Likert Scale (1 = *Does not describe me*; 5 = *Describes me very well*). Items asked respondents to reflect on their ability to adapt and grow when faced with adversity. An example item reads, "I believe I can grow in positive ways by dealing with difficult situations." Lastly, student-athletes completed an adapted 3-item version of Wyman et al.'s (2008) Help-Seeking Acceptability at School Scale (1 = *Strongly disagree*; 4 = *Strongly agree*). The measure was adapted to include two additional indicators of help-seeking behaviors related to their coaches compared to others in their schools (e.g., counselors and other adults). On this measure, respondents rate their agreement in response to the stem, "If I was really upset and needed help..."

Analytic Approach

De-identified data were screened, cleaned, and analyzed in SPSS (IBM SPSS Statistics for Windows, Version 28.0. Armonk, NY: I.B.M. Corp) and checked for normality and outliers. Given the two sample sizes varied significantly, our analytic approach involved examining descriptive statistics, including the frequencies, means, and standard deviations on each item, and comparing mean scores across the two intervention delivery formats. Valid percentages and mean scores on questions with missing data were reported. Items assessing perceptions of enjoyment, satisfaction, and knowledge completed by coaches and student-athletes were examined first, followed by a comparison of student-athlete perceptions of skills, coping, and help-seeking behaviors.

Results

Enjoyment, Satisfaction, and Knowledge

Perceptions of the resilience skills intervention differed based on the design and delivery of the intervention. At the Tier I level, student-athletes reported low levels of enjoyment (39% reported enjoying the sessions) and moderate levels of satisfaction (53% were satisfied) and knowledge gained (63% gained knowledge). Alternatively, coaches attending the Tier I intervention reported high levels of enjoyment (77%), satisfaction (69%), and knowledge gained (72%). At the Tier II level, student-athletes reported high levels of enjoyment (100%), satisfaction (94%), and knowledge gained (100%). Means scores indicated coaches participating in the Tier I intervention, followed by student-athletes participating in the Tier II intervention, reported more positive perceptions regarding enjoyment, satisfaction, and knowledge gained compared to student-athletes attending the Tier I intervention, respectively (see Table 2).

Skills, Coping, and Help-Seeking

Student-athletes participating in the Tier I intervention reported the highest perceptions on items assessing their ability to contribute to a positive team culture (75%) and build trust with their teammates (70%). In contrast, student-athletes participating in the Tier I intervention reported lower levels of efficacy regarding skills and concepts tied to expressing their emotions (48%) and employing mental strategies (55%). Student-athletes participating in the Tier II intervention reported high levels of efficacy regarding learning their ability to establish boundaries (94%), be a leader on their teams (94%), build trust with their teammates (94%), and employ a mental strategy to regulate their emotions (94%). Notably, student-athletes participating in the Tier II intervention reported higher mean scores on all items, demonstrating greater efficacy in utilizing a skill taught through the intervention than student-athletes participating in the Tier I intervention (see Table 3).

Comparably, student-athletes participating in the Tier II intervention reported higher mean scores on items assessing coping than those who participated in the Tier I intervention. Help-seeking behaviors were also higher for those participating in the Tier II intervention. Notably, participants reported being more likely to talk to a coach when they were upset in both schools participating in the intervention compared to prompts related to talking to counselors or other adults in their schools (71% Tier I, 88% Tier II) at the end of the intervention.

Discussion

This study is one of the first to pilot a resilience intervention explicitly designed for U.S. high school student-athletes participating in school-based sports. Integral to the development and efficacy of school-based interventions is determining how best to support training implementation within the MTSS model in schools. As such, the aims of this study were twofold. First, this study sought to explore student-athlete and coach perceptions of the intervention and examine whether the intervention differed based on the delivery format (e.g., Tier I vs. Tier II). Second, descriptive statistics were examined to determine whether the delivery format influenced student-athlete perceptions of skills, coping, and help-seeking. Findings indicated coaches had positive perceptions of the Tier I intervention. Meanwhile, student-athletes participating in the Tier II intervention reported higher levels of enjoyment, satisfaction, and knowledge gained than student-athletes participating in the Tier I intervention. In addition, student-athletes participating in the Tier II intervention reported higher efficacy levels than those participating in the Tier I format related to coping and help-seeking, especially with coaches.

Our findings are important to compare to other interventions designed to increase awareness or promote resilience among student-athletes and coaches. Based on prior research, studies indicate the size of the intervention group may need to be considered when examining intervention effectiveness. Breslin et al.'s (2017) systematic review of interventions to increase awareness of mental health and well-being found that large-scale interventions with coaches can facilitate knowledge gains and improve mental health literacy. Indeed, many studies demonstrated participation led to reduced stigma and increased efficacy to support someone who may be struggling (Breslin et al., 2017). Perhaps coaches enjoyed the co-learning and sharing on behalf of former student-athletes, coaches, and sport leaders more so than the student-athletes in

attendance. The U.S. National Coach Survey data indicates that 47% of coaches feel confident teaching life skills through sport, and only 29% feel confident developing their athletes into leaders (Anderson-Butcher & Bates, 2022). In this regard, the Tier I delivery format may have served as a form of professional development for coaches, providing them with tools, language, and strategies to utilize that could help them coach “beyond the Xs and Os.”

For student-athletes, the Life and Leadership Through Sport Series was received best in the Tier II delivery format. In comparison, Sullivan et al. (2023) delivered the Scarlet and Grit resilience training to 79 collegiate student-athletes, and Golby and Wood (2016) delivered their psychological skills training to 16 student-athletes. In both studies, researchers identified significant and positive outcomes regarding using adaptive coping strategies, seeking social support, and improving perceptions of mental toughness, self-efficacy, self-esteem, and positive affect (Golby & Wood, 2016; Sullivan et al., 2023). Although our study did not compare scores over time, results indicate the intervention delivery in smaller group-based formats may be most enjoyable and protective of greater learning and transfer of skills post-intervention. In the Tier II format, student-athletes had more time to discuss and apply the skills taught and engage in the experiential gamified components of the lessons compared to student-athletes participating in the Tier I format. Experiential learning approaches and play-based activities likely allowed for more observation and reflection, helping the learners construct knowledge, develop skills, and learn from the discussions and peer interactions (Newman et al., 2017).

As high school student-athletes increasingly report elevated mental health concerns (Racine et al., 2021) and heightened stressors associated with sport (Bates et al., 2024; Ward et al., 2023), there is a need for interventions to equip student-athletes with resilience, coping, and help-seeking knowledge and skills. In high school sport contexts, coaches reported feeling confident teaching the “X’s and O’s” but less confident teaching life skills through sport (Bates & Anderson-Butcher, 2022), meaning student-athletes may not have integrated opportunities through sport to counteract risks for poor mental health outcomes by learning life and leadership skills that promote resilience. Several sessions of the Life and Leadership Through Sport Series were specifically designed to address the growing concerns about student-athlete mental health and stress (i.e., Session 1: Supporting Student-Athlete Mental Health; Session 3: Mental Strategies for Improving Athletic Performance; Session 6: Managing Stress and Pressure as Student-Athletes) and designed to focus on their holistic health and well-being. Promisingly, student-athletes participating in the Life and Leadership Through Sport Series at the Tier II level reported positive perceptions of learning new knowledge skills such as acknowledging or managing stress as a result of participation. Coupled with stronger coping skills and help-seeking behaviors, it appears that the Life and Leadership Through Sport Series at the Tier II level might be one effective way to help high school student-athletes navigate the pressures of contemporary high school sport and learn skills that extend beyond the court, field, mat, or pitch.

The development, implementation, and evaluation of the Life and Leadership Through Sport Series has the potential to inform wellness interventions in high school athletic programs and support the nearly eight million U.S. high school students participating in school-based sports annually (NFHS, 2023). Findings have important implications for practitioners working at the intersection of education and sport. School and sport social workers are often integral parts of education systems and involved in Tier II programming yet may be unprepared to mitigate the

unique challenges student-athletes face. This curriculum provides sport social workers with gamified and relevant tools to promote resilience among this population that can be implemented in collaboration with coaches and A.D.s. This intervention could be taught to coaches, educators, social workers, and sports leaders to implement in their school environments or to empower student-athletes to deliver psychoeducation lessons and prevention activities with their teammates. Implementing these gamified lessons and play-based learning activities can reach a vulnerable population experiencing stigma around mental health symptomology and help-seeking (Kaier et al., 2015) and support life and leadership skill development post-COVID (Yamada et al., 2023).

Limitations. This study is not without limitations. First, this intervention was only offered in four suburban high schools. As such, the groups were not highly diverse. Furthermore, there was not perfect attendance at all of the sessions. This lack of attendance may have impacted the satisfaction of the intervention and outcomes. Additionally, student-athlete participants opted to participate in the intervention and were not randomly assigned, contributing to the potential for selection bias or social desirability bias in the evaluation responses. Also, the evaluation design did not include pre-and post-test data; instead, de-identified secondary data were analyzed post-intervention. The lack of pre-test comparison data might lead to inaccuracies in assessing the change in participants' competencies developed due to the intervention. Future iterations and assessments of the intervention should include pre-and post-test measures for more accurate data collection. Finally, this intervention does not address all of the forces and factors influencing the context of school-based sports and adversities experienced by student-athletes (e.g., parents/caregivers, time, coaches, lack of accountability, abuse, policy oversight, etc.). However, it is one strategy with the potential to facilitate learning and empowerment among student-athletes at a critical developmental time and in partnership with coaches and A.D.s.

Implications for Practice, Research, and Policy

Findings from this pilot study are being used to inform the implementation of the Life and Leadership through Sport Series program in several ways. Based on findings from this study, future programming will primarily operate at the Tier II level to maximize student-athlete enjoyment, satisfaction, self-efficacy, and knowledge. Notably, coaches reported high levels of enjoyment and knowledge gained and moderate satisfaction in the Tier I intervention; however, no coaches participated in the Tier II intervention as a comparison. Because coaches enjoyed learning alongside their student-athletes, the Coach Beyond State Team and school district partners have recommended future sessions invite coaches to participate in a smaller, Tier II setting. Lastly, coaches and A.D.s have requested this intervention be piloted for large student-athlete leadership conferences where breakout groups can mirror the learning and activities at the Tier II level. Bringing different student-athletes together to discuss these topics and learn from and with one another can extend learning beyond one school and empower student-athletes to take the lessons back to their peers, teams, schools, districts, and leagues.

Our findings provide a preliminary examination of the Life and Leadership through Sport Series, providing a foundation for future research studies. In the future, opportunities exist to explore outcomes associated with the intervention using more rigorous research designs and different contexts. Researchers can utilize pre- and post-training evaluations to examine changes

in perceptions over time, qualitative approaches such as focus groups, or randomly assign student-athletes to intervention and control groups. In addition, gathering attendance (e.g., dosage) will be critical to determine whether the totality of the six sessions has a positive effect on student-athletes. One element not studied here was whether the student-athletes completed the homework activities and whether those participating in the Tier II intervention engaged their teammates and teams in the homework assignments. Scholars can conduct observational studies in the future to determine whether homework activities translated to teams or sport-based activities (e.g., daily check-ins at practice). Finally, researchers can study the effects of coaches receiving parallel training on topics similar to those of student-athletes (Bates et al., 2023).

At the policy level, studies such as this one are needed with larger samples in diverse schools and districts to examine whether this type of intervention can act as a form of prevention for broader crises like suicide and also empower coaches to focus on more than sport skills and tactics and help young people prepare for life after sport. Many high schools have boundaries on time allocated for practice and physical training. Yet one wonders whether changes in practice mandates might adapt to include an emphasis on resilience training to counteract some of the pressures and stressors inherent in sport. Perhaps by providing coaches and student-athletes with knowledge, skills, and activities designed to foster resilience, high school sport can holistically contribute to positive youth development and prevention activities to mitigate broader health and social disparities. Training social workers, coaches, or A.D.s to deliver these sessions could also be a sustainable way to continue this work in schools, embedding resilience trainings in athletic departments to support student-athletes.

Conclusion

Student-athletes face numerous academic, social, and sport-related stressors that can negatively impact their health and well-being. Resilience training programs can equip student-athletes with the necessary skills to effectively “bounce back” in the face of adversity and support the development of skills that go beyond the court, field, mat, and pitch and into life. Findings from this pilot study indicate that the Life and Leadership Through Sport Series was well-received by coaches at the Tier I level and most effectively implemented in a Tier II format for high school student-athletes. Our results have important implications for developing evidence-based programs to integrate into the MTSS framework and sharing interventions that sports social workers can implement in schools.

References

- Abrams, Z. (2023, January 1). Kids’ mental health is in crisis. Here’s what psychologists are doing to help. *Monitor on Psychology*, 54(1).
- Allen-Meares, P., Montgomery, K. L., & Kim, J. S. (2013). School-based social work interventions: A cross-national systematic review. *Social Work*, 58(3), 253–262. <https://doi.org/10.1093/sw/swt022>

- Anderson-Butcher, D., & Bates, S. (2022). *National coach survey final report*. The Ohio State University LiFEsports Initiative, Columbus, OH. [national-coach-survey-report-preliminary-analysis.pdf](https://www.aspeninstitute.org/report-preliminary-analysis.pdf) (aspeninstitute.org)
- Arora, P. G., Collins, T. A., Dart, E. H., Hernández, S., Fetterman, H., & Doll, B. (2019). Multi tiered systems of support for school-based mental health: A systematic review of depression interventions. *School Mental Health, 11*(2), 240–264. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12310-019-093144>
- Bates, S., Anderson-Butcher, D. (2022). *State-wide survey of Ohio sport coaches: Summary report*. LiFEsports at The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH.
- Bates, S., Anderson-Butcher, D., Ute, D., McVey, D., Mack, S., Nothnagle, E., Wade Mdivanian, R., Davis, J., DeVoll, J., Vassaloti, J., Hix, J., Pata, K., Bobek, N., Ludban, C., Myers, K., Porter, K., Quackenbush, J., Roberts, J., Hajjar, N., Durbin, P., Wolfe, T., & Magistrale, N. (2023). Mental health training for high school coaches and athletic directors: Community-based participatory research to Coach Beyond. *International Journal of Sport Science & Coaching, 19*(2), 539-550.
- Bates, S., Mack, S., & Nothnagle, E. (2024). Beyond the scoreboard: School-based sport experiences and high school student-athlete well-being. *Sport, Education, and Society, 1-17*. [Doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2024.2338402](https://doi.org/10.1080/13573322.2024.2338402)
- Bates, S., Linnen, L., Columbia, S., & Anderson-Butcher, D. (2021). Multi-tiered systems of supports, response to intervention, and positive behavioral interventions and supports. In S.T., Cox, T. Fitzgerald, & M. Alvarez, *The Art of Becoming Indispensable* (pp. 107–117). Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780197585160.003.0011>
- Breslin, G., Shannon, S., Haughey, T., Donnelly, P., & Leavey, G. (2017). A systematic review of interventions to increase awareness of mental health and well-being in athletes, coaches and officials. *Systematic Reviews, 6*, 1-15.
- Brown, B. (2018). *Dare to lead: Brave work, tough conversations, whole hearts*. Vermilion.
- Carsley, D., Khoury, B., & Heath, N. L. (2018). Effectiveness of mindfulness interventions for mental health in schools: A comprehensive meta-analysis. *Mindfulness, 9*(3), 693–707. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-017-0839-2>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2020). Youth risk behavior surveillance data summary & trends report: 2009-2019. https://www.cdc.gov/nchhstp/dear_colleague/2020/dcl-102320-YRBS-2009-2019-report.html

- Chow, G. M., Bird, M. D., Gabana, N. T., Cooper, B. T., & Swanbrow Becker, M. A. (2021). A program to reduce stigma toward mental illness and promote mental health literacy and help seeking in National Collegiate Athletic Association Division I student-athletes. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 15*(3), 185–205. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jcsp.2019-0104>
- Collins, D. P., Jagim, A. R., Sowders, J. P., Blessman, J. D., McLachlan, M. L., Miller, N. E., Garrison, E. G., Kuisle, M., Asplund, C. A., & Garrison, G. M. (2022). Athletic disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic negatively affect high school student-athletes social emotional well-being. *Medicine, 101*(51), e31890. <https://doi.org/10.1097/MD.00000000000031890>
- Curtin, S. C. (2020). State suicide rates among adolescents and young adults aged 10–24: United States, 2000–2018. *National Vital Statistics Reports, 69*(11), 1-10. Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics.
- Eisenberg, D. (2014). Developing and evaluating a model program for supporting the mental health of student athletes. <http://athletesconnected.umich.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2017/02/2014-NCAA-Final-Report-mainnarrative.pdf>
- Feiss, R., Dolinger, S. B., Merritt, M., Reiche, E., Martin, K., Yanes, J. A., Thomas, C. M., & Pangelinan, M. (2019). A systematic review and meta-analysis of school-based stress, anxiety, and depression prevention programs for adolescents. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 48*(9), 1668–1685. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-019-01085-0>
- Franklin, C. G. S., Kim, J. S., Ryan, T. N., Kelly, M. S., & Montgomery, K. L. (2012). Teacher involvement in school mental health interventions: A systematic review. *Children and Youth Services Review, 34*(5), 973–982. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chilyouth.2012.01.027>
- Giovannetti, S. L., Robertson, J. R. G., Colquhoun, H. L., & Malachowski, C. K. (2019). Mental health services for Canadian university student-athletes: An exploratory survey. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology, 13*(3), 469–485. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jcsp.2018-0048>
- Golby, J., & Wood, P. (2016). The effects of psychological skills training on mental toughness and psychological well-being of student-athletes. *Psychology, 07*(06), 901–913. <https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2016.76092>
- Grapensperger, S., Benson, A. J., Kilmer, J. R., & Evans, M. B. (2020). Social (un)distancing: Teammate interactions, athletic identity, and mental health of student-athletes during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Adolescent Health, 67*(5), 662–670. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jadohealth.2020.08.001>
- Gulliver, A., Griffiths, K. M., & Christensen, H. (2012). Barriers and facilitators to mental health help-seeking for young elite athletes: A qualitative study. *BMC Psychiatry, 12*(1), 157. <https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-244X-12-157>

- Haig, K. M., Sutton, S., & Whittington, J. (2006). SBAR: a shared mental model for improving communication between clinicians. *The Joint Commission Journal on Quality and Patient Safety*, 32(3), 167–175. [https://doi.org/10.1016/S1553-7250\(06\)32022-3](https://doi.org/10.1016/S1553-7250(06)32022-3)
- Joyce, S., Shand, F., Tighe, J., Laurent, S. J., Bryant, R. A., & Harvey, S. B. (2018). Road to resilience: A systematic review and meta-analysis of resilience training programmes and interventions. *BMJ Open*, 8(6), e017858. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmjopen-2017-017858>
- Kaier, E., Cromer, L. D., Johnson, M. D., Strunk, K., & Davis, J. L. (2015). Perceptions of Mental Illness Stigma: Comparisons of Athletes to Nonathlete Peers. *Journal of College Student Development*, 56(7), 735–739. <https://doi.org/10.1353/csd.2015.0079>
- Kaishian, J. E., & Kaishian, R. M. (2021). The prevalence of mental health conditions among high school and collegiate student-athletes: A systematic review. *Journal of Clinical Sport Psychology*, 16(3), 254–275. <https://doi.org/10.1123/jcsp.2020-0066>
- McLaughlin, K. A. (2016). Future Directions in Childhood Adversity and Youth Psychopathology. *Journal of Clinical Child & Adolescent Psychology*, 45(3), 361–382. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15374416.2015.1110823>
- National Federation of High School Associations. (2023). High school sports participation continues to rebound toward pre-pandemic levels. [nfhs.org/articles/high-schoolsports-participation-continues-rebound-toward-pre-pandemic-levels/](https://www.nfhs.org/articles/high-schoolsports-participation-continues-rebound-toward-pre-pandemic-levels/)
- Newman, T. J., Alvarez, M. A. G., & Kim, M. (2017). An experiential approach to sport for youth development. *Journal of Experiential Education*, 40(3), 308–322.
- O'Connor, C. A., Dyson, J., Cowdell, F., & Watson, R. (2018). Do universal school-based mental health promotion programmes improve the mental health and emotional well-being of young people? A literature review. *Journal of Clinical Nursing*, 27(3–4), e412–e426. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jocn.14078>
- Ohio School Report Cards. (2023). Schools blinded for privacy purposes: School details. www.reportcard.education.ohio.gov/download
- Project Play. (2023). *School sports playbook. The solution*. School Sports Playbook: The Solution - Project Play
- Racine, N., McArthur, B. A., Cooke, J. E., Eirich, R., Zhu, J., & Madigan, S. (2021). Global prevalence of depressive and anxiety symptoms in children and adolescents during COVID 19: A meta-analysis. *JAMA Pediatrics*, 175(11), 1142. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jamapediatrics.2021.2482>
- Ronen, T. (2021). The role of coping skills for developing resilience among children and adolescents. In *The Palgrave Handbook of Positive Education* (pp. 345–368). Cham: Springer International Publishing.

- Sinclair, V. G., & Wallston, K. A. (2004). The development and psychometric evaluation of the Brief Resilient Coping Scale. *Assessment, 11*(1), 94–101. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1073191103258144>
- Smith, B. W., Dalen, J., Wiggins, K., Tooley, E., Christopher, P., & Bernard, J. (2008). The Brief resilience scale: Assessing the ability to bounce back. *International Journal of Behavioral Medicine, 15*(3), 194–200. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10705500802222972>
- Stroud, L. R., Foster, E., Papandonatos, G. D., Handwerger, K., Granger, D. A., Kivlighan, K. T., & Niaura, R. (2009). Stress response and the adolescent transition: Performance versus Peer rejection stressors. *Development and Psychopathology, 21*(1), 47–68. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0954579409000042>
- Sullivan, L., Carter, J. E., Houle, J., Ding, K., Hautmann, A., & Yang, J. (2023). Evaluation of a resilience training program for college student-athletes: A pilot study. *Journal of American College Health, 71*(1), 310–317. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07448481.2021.1891083>
- United States Olympic & Paralympic Committee. (2020). *Quality Coaching Framework*. Human Kinetics. Champaign, Illinois, U.S.A.
- van Breda, A. (2018). A critical review of resilience theory and its relevance for social work. *Social Work, 54*(1). <https://doi.org/10.15270/54-1-611>
- van Loon, A. W. G., Creemers, H. E., Beumer, W. Y., Okorn, A., Vogelaar, S., Saab, N., Miers, A.C., Westenberg, P. M., & Asscher, J. J. (2020). Can schools reduce adolescent Psychological stress? A multilevel meta-analysis of the effectiveness of school-based intervention programs. *Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 49*(6), 1127–1145. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10964-02001201-5>
- van Loon, A. W. G., Creemers, H. E., Okorn, A., Vogelaar, S., Miers, A. C., Saab, N., Westenberg, P. M., & Asscher, J. J. (2022). The effects of school-based interventions on physiological stress in adolescents: A meta-analysis. *Stress and Health, 38*(2), 187–209. <https://doi.org/10.1002/smi.3081>
- Wallerstein, N., Oetzel, J. G., Sanchez-Youngman, S., Boursaw, B., Dickson, E., Kastelic, S., Koegel, P., Lucero, J. E., Magarati, M., Ortiz, K., Parker, M., Peña, J., Richmond, A., & Duran, B. (2020). Engage for equity: A long-term study of community-based participatory research and community-engaged research practices and outcomes. *Health Education & Behavior, 47*(3), 380–390. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1090198119897075>
- Ward, T., Stead, T., Mangal, R., & Ganti, L. (2023). Prevalence of stress amongst high school athletes (v2). *Health Psychology Research, 11*, 1-6. <https://doi.org/10.52965/001c.70167>

- Whelan, B. M., Kliethermes, S. A., Schloredt, K. A., Rao, A., Harmon, K. G., & Petek, B. J. (2024). Suicide in National Collegiate Athletic Association athletes: A 20-year analysis. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 58(10), 531. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bjsports-2023-107509>
- Wolanin, A., Hong, E., Marks, D., Panchoo, K., & Gross, M. (2016). Prevalence of clinically elevated depressive symptoms in college athletes and differences by gender and sport. *British Journal of Sports Medicine*, 50(3), 167–171.
- Wyman, P. A., Brown, C. H., Inman, J., Cross, W., Schmeelk-Cone, K., Guo, J., & Pena, J. B. (2008). Randomized trial of a gatekeeper program for suicide prevention: 1-year impact on secondary school staff. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 76(1), 104–115. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-006X.76.1.104>
- Yamada, Y., Tsuchiya, H., Yamaguchi, K., & Katagami, E. (2023). Moderating role of life skills for stress responses and COVID-19-related perceived stressors among high school student athletes. *Asian Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 3(3), 147–153. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ajsep.2022.12.002>
- Yard, E., Radhakrishnan, L., Ballesteros, M. F., Sheppard, M., Gates, A., Stein, Z., Hartnett, K., Kite-Powell, A., Rodgers, L., Adjemian, J., Ehlman, D. C., Holland, K., Idaikkadar, N., Ivey Stephenson, A., Martinez, P., Law, R., & Stone, D. M. (2021). Emergency department visits for suspected suicide attempts among persons aged 12–25 years before and during the COVID-19 pandemic—United States, January 2019–May 2021. *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 70(24), 888–894. <https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7024e1>

Table 1.*Demographic Characteristics of Student-Athletes and Coaches*

Demographic Characteristics	Tier I				Tier II	
	Student-Athletes (N=415)		Coaches (N=26)		Student-Athletes (N=16)	
	n	%	n	%	n	%
<i>Gender</i>						
Male	139	39	13	68	7	44
Female	218	60	6	32	9	56
Self-describe/Prefer not to answer	5	1	--	--	--	--
<i>Grade</i>						
9 th Grade	146	35	--	--	--	--
10 th Grade	111	27	--	--	--	--
11 th Grade	109	26	--	--	7	47
12 th Grade	49	12	--	--	8	44
<i>Race</i>						
African American/Black	29	8	1	3	--	--
Hispanic/Latino	16	4	1	3	--	--
Asian/Pacific Islander	27	8	--	--	--	--
Native American or American Indian	3	<1	--	--	--	--
White	260	72	17	50	15	94
Multiple Races	18	5	--	--	1	6
Self-describe: Prefer not to answer	8	2	--	--	--	--
<i>Sport(s) Played or Coached</i>						

Baseball	23	5	1	3	2	11
Basketball	30	7	4	12	3	17
Bowling	7	2	--	--	--	--
Cheer	27	6	2	6	--	--
Cross Country	27	6	2	6	1	6
Dance	3	<1	--	--	--	--
Field Hockey	--	--	--	--	2	11
Football	34	7	2	6	4	22
Golf	12	3	2	6	1	6
Gymnastics	4	1	--	--	1	6
Ice Hockey	7	2	--	--	2	11
Lacrosse	33	7	2	6	7	39
Soccer	34	8	4	12	1	6
Softball	47	10	3	9	2	11
Swimming and Diving	12	2	--	--	1	6
Tennis	47	10	3	9	3	17
Track & Field	140	31	3	9	1	6
Volleyball	41	9	2	6	--	--
Wrestling	17	4	--	--	--	--

Note. Total percentage of sport(s) played or coached exceeds 100% due to reports of playing or coaching multiple sports. Percentages represent valid percentages of those who chose to answer the demographic questions.

Table 2.
Student-Athlete and Coach Perceptions of the Design and Delivery

Evaluation Item	Tier I						Tier II		
	Student-Athletes			Coaches			Student-Athletes		
	n	Mean (SD)	% Agree or Strongly Agree	n	Mean (SD)	% Agree or Strongly Agree	n	Mean (SD)	% Agree or Strongly Agree
I enjoyed attending the Life & Leadership sessions.	403	2.82 (1.05)	39	26	3.96 (.92)	77	16	4.75 (0.48)	100
*How satisfied are you with the Life & Leadership series?	309	3.44 (.92)	53	19	3.68 (1.00)	69	16	4.13 (.50)	94
I gained knowledge from the Life & Leadership series.	309	3.60 (1.03)	63	18	3.89 (1.02)	72	16	4.44 (0.51)	100

*Note. The Likert scale on the satisfaction item ranged from 1 = *Extremely dissatisfied* to 5 = *Extremely satisfied*. The range for all items was 1 to 5.

Table 3.
Student-Athlete Perceptions of the Learning Objectives

As a result of attending the Life & Leadership series...	Tier I			Tier II		
	n	Mean (SD)	% Agree or Strongly Agree	n	Mean (SD)	% Agree or Strongly Agree
I feel confident in my ability to establish boundaries for myself.	376	3.52 (1.05)	60	16	4.25 (1.00)	94
I feel confident in my ability to express my emotions to others.	366	3.31 (1.07)	48	16	3.88 (1.26)	63
I feel confident in my ability to be a leader on my team.	368	3.73 (1.08)	66	16	4.44 (1.03)	94
I am confident in my ability to build trust with my teammates.	369	3.73 (1.08)	70	16	4.38 (1.03)	94
I am confident in my ability to contribute to a positive team culture.	368	3.79 (1.02)	75	16	4.56 (1.09)	88
I know how to act as a leader in a variety of different settings.	345	3.89 (1.01)	63	16	4.31 (1.08)	88
I am able to employ a mental strategy to regulate my emotions.	342	3.64 (.99)	55	16	4.19 (0.98)	94
I am able to employ a mental strategy to prepare for a big test or competition.	339	3.48 (1.05)	54	16	4.25 (1.13)	81
I am able to acknowledge when I am stressed.	337	3.39 (1.05)	63	16	4.31 (1.20)	88
My team has a culture that values wellness.	334	3.62 (1.08)	68	16	4.19 (1.05)	88

Note. The range for all items was 1 to 5.