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Mark William. Bruner

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE COGNITIVE, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MAJOR JUNIOR OHL HOCKEY PLAYERS

by

Mark William Bruner

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

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

2002

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AN INVESTIGATION OF THE COGNITIVE, SOCIAL, AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT OF MAJOR JUNIOR OHL HOCKEY PLAYERS

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ABSTRACT

Presently, there is a trend of increasingly younger athletes entering the Canadian junior hockey system. This new phenomenon, ‘fast tracking,’ has raised concerns about the players’ development (Canadian Hockey Association, 2001). The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate the cognitive, social, and emotional development of fast tracking and non-fast tracking Major Junior Ontario Hockey League (OHL) players. The study was multifaceted incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Phase I was quantitative in nature and utilized a Fast Tracking questionnaire which investigated an OHL player’s cognitive, social, and emotional issues such as academics, transitions, social support, and confidence. Participants included current male junior hockey players from the OHL ranging in age from 15-21 years. Of the 375 OHL participants surveyed, 238 successfully completed Phase I. Participants were then divided into two broad categories: fast trackers (n= 209) and non-fast trackers (n=29). An ANOVA and three MANOVAs were utilized to investigate the four dependent variables (cognitive, social, emotional, and satisfaction) in Phase I. In order to elaborate and confirm Phase I data, Phase II involved focus group interview sessions with rookie players (n=8) from two OHL teams. Results revealed no significant differences in cognitive, social, and emotional development as well as satisfaction between fast trackers and non-fast trackers. With a greater understanding of the challenges facing junior hockey players, specific recommendations and future research are suggested to ease the transition into all levels of junior hockey and encourage undecided or late developing minor hockey-aged athletes to remain in the minor hockey system.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family for their unconditional love and support. Mom, you are truly an angel watching over us, your sacrifice and giving does not go without notice; Dad, you have lead us to see the value of hard work and passion in sport; Steve, you have taught me the importance of balance, travel and value of lasting friendships; Marti, your unmistakable desire and determination have been reflected in my pursuit of challenging goals; and Oma, your vigor for life and the outdoors has brought a vibrant energy and appreciation for each new day.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A building is only as strong as the beams that support it. I have been fortunate to have had a tremendous group of people who have supported me along my journey in academia. This special group of people have enabled me to complete an investigative study on a topic I am extremely passionate about, hockey.

I want to begin by thanking my advisor, Dr. Krista Munroe, whose insight, patience and guidance made this project possible. Her energy and enthusiasm towards sport psychology fed my drive to embrace the challenges of this project. Dr. Munroe's passion, organization, and attention to detail mark her bright future in the field of sport psychology. I look forward to working with her in the future. I would also like to thank my committee members, Dr. Scott Martyn and Dr. Vern Stenlund for their assistance and advice over the course of this project. Dr. Martyn always shared a warm reminder of student life when I would arrive puzzled at his door. I do not think I will walk into a Tim Horton's without remembering the usual 'spot' Dr. Stenlund and I would often meet in the morning to discuss the project. Additionally, I would like to thank Robyn Nease, for all her statistical support and Silvia Jimenez for her technical software expertise. Whenever I had a statistical or software question, Robyn and Silvia were always available to trouble shoot any issue. Two other individuals deserving special recognition are Pat Amlin and Diane Dupuis whose personal care and exceptional work behind the scenes keep all the Human Kinetics grad students running smoothly. And to my roommate, Jason Dick and my classmates Arvin Kim, Jonathan Paul, Alison Moffat, Beckie Shaw, David Greig, and Karen Zuccala, thank you for the support throughout the year. Jason, I learned that in the midst of academic chaos, there is always time for
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creativity and imagination. I admire your wise business mind and value your heart in athletics and our friendship. Blair, you were a father figure to us in the house and provided a shining example that hard work and determination can lead you to reach any goal. Your long road to becoming a doctor is an inspiration to all of us. Adam, your laughter, laid back approach and enlightenment of the true outdoors are at its finest each summer when you provide us with a taste of real living at your beautiful wood cottage up north. Adrian, your charisma, and professionalism have taught me a valuable lesson in the importance of networking. Additionally, I would like to recognize Rob Mitchell, whose creativity in music and art are finally receiving the recognition he has long deserved. Your patience, persistence and appreciation for solitude encourage my desire to write.

This thesis would not be possible without the unwavering support of my family. I have been blessed with two amazing parents whom have sacrificed countless evenings, weekends, and social events to ensure that their children could participate in wide variety of activities. Whenever each one of us had a practice or a game, you could always look up into the crowd or behind the bench and see one of my parents there coaching us or cheering us on. My brother, Steve, and sister, Marti will attest to their tremendous dedication and commitment to raising us in an environment filled with opportunity. As a result, I have been fortunate to have a special bond not only with my parents, but also my siblings. This family support structure would not be complete without my Oma, Maria Hotz. She is always there to bring a timely warm hug, delicious meal or joke to each of us. I love you all.
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To everyone I have already mentioned and any special individuals I encounter in the future, thank you. Your support does not go without notice.

I have grown up in a warm loving environment where hockey was an important vehicle towards my development. In society, the value of hockey sometimes gets overshadowed with some of the negative incidents of athletes at the professional level. The hope of this thesis is that the core values of hockey including teamwork, discipline, fun, and skill development are not lost by coaches and parents. We need to make a concerted effort as members of society to ensure the well-being and development of the young athlete remains a top priority. The challenge for coaches lies in maintaining the delicate balance of winning and individual skill development. As a society, are we doing enough to affirm this commitment to the young athlete’s development at the amateur hockey level?
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CHAPTER I

Introduction

Each year, Major Junior A hockey scouts from around the country travel to arenas to finalize player ratings for their respective June junior hockey drafts. Each scout covers vast territories to rank thousands of young minor hockey-aged players (13-16 years). Some young athletes elect to remain in the Canadian Minor Hockey system, while a majority of the elite athletes choose to play some form of junior hockey (Jr. D, C, B, IIA) (See Appendix A). Those minor hockey-aged athletes opting to play junior hockey could potentially be playing against athletes as old as 21 years. Presently in Canada there is a trend of increasingly younger athletes entering the junior hockey system. This phenomenon recently termed, 'fast tracking,' has elicited questions in hockey circles about the players’ overall development (Molson Open Ice, 2001).

For the purpose of this study, fast tracking is operationally defined as any minor hockey-aged athlete who elects to play any level of junior hockey rather than remain in the minor hockey system and participate at the midget level.

Over the past 100 years, children in Western industrial nations have experienced an earlier maturation and a progressive growth rate (Brooks, Fahey, & White, 1996). Increases in an average child’s height, weight and muscle mass have been attributed to improvements in public health and better nutrition (Brooks et al., 1996). This change in growth pattern has been particularly evident in sports (Brooks et al., 1996). No longer is skill the sole measure of successful early identification in athletes. For many early prospects, size and raw potential are considered almost equivalent with skill. This increase in maturity and body size has prompted coaches at all levels of junior hockey to spot and select younger players (Molson Open Ice, 2001). Despite this current trend of fast tracking, there now appears to be a concern for the
physical and psychological development of the player entering into junior hockey at a young age (Molson Open Ice, 2001).

Members of two leading hockey organizations, the Ontario Hockey Federation (OHF) and the Canadian Hockey Association (CHA), have expressed their concerns regarding fast tracking. The OHF has publicly articulated fears that minor hockey-aged athletes playing junior hockey may restrict their skill development and risk ‘warming the bench’ on Junior (D, C, B or Tier IIA) teams (Rennie, 2001). The OHF believes that the players could benefit from more playing time on a bantam or midget minor hockey team. In an effort to support their belief, the OHF has recently put forth a proposal which would place restrictions on 15 and 16 year old athletes from leaving their minor hockey association for junior hockey teams other than the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) (Malone, 2001).

The CHA has also expressed trepidation with fast tracking. The spring of 2001 brought about large structural changes within the age categories of the minor hockey system (Canadian Hockey Association, 2001) (See Appendix B). This move can be partially attributed to the commitment of the CHA to address the fast tracking issue and increase the level of competition at the midget level. The CHA showed a further interest in this area when its Development Board selected fast tracking as a primary area of research for its 2001 Young Investigators Program.

The goal of the present research study is to investigate the effects of fast tracking on the cognitive, social and emotional development of Major Junior Ontario Hockey League (OHL) players. An examination of the literature regarding these psychological topics is necessary to gain a greater understanding of the developmental issues associated with young hockey players.
CHAPTER II

Literature Review

Adolescence

The adolescent stage of the life span is a pivotal period for an individual. Offer, Ostrov, and Howard (1989) viewed adolescence as a transitional period filled with conflict and rapid change. While Hall (1904) described this period as that of ‘storm and stress,’ Eccles et al. (1993) emphasized that this stage fosters a time of positive growth and a chance to choose a path toward a productive life. The present research study primarily focused on adolescence, specifically middle adolescent (15-17 year old) male development.

Kaczmarek and Riva (1996) reported there is no consensus on when adolescence starts or stops. Subsequently, adolescence is commonly divided into three substages: early, middle, and late. Early adolescences (ages 10-14 years) is often a time when biological maturation is the most prominent feature (Feldman & Elliott, 1990). The onset of puberty marks a rate of development which is more rapid than any other time of life except infancy (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1989). Feldman and Elliot (1990) characterized middle adolescence (ages 15-17 years) with issues of autonomy and identity. For most individuals, this substage may also be the endpoint of reproductive maturity and adult height (Brooks-Gunn & Petersen, 1984). Unlike early and middle adolescence, Feldman and Elliot (1990) believed that late adolescence (ages 18-mid-20 years) may continue past the teen years depending on an individual’s choices in education and a future career.

Adolescent development is considered multidimensional in nature (Rogoff, 1990). Wagner (1996) stated that adolescent development is reflected in six interacting domains: biological, cognitive, emotional, social, moral, and vocational. The researcher investigated three
of the domains: cognitive, social, and emotional. The impact of these three psychological domains on adolescent development are highlighted in a review of literature.

*Cognitive Development*

Jean Piaget is regarded as the most widely cited theorist in cognitive development (McMorris, 1999). He described early adolescence as the point at which a youngster’s thinking changes from a concrete to an abstract mode of operation (Wagner, 1996). During adolescence, an individual’s ability to acquire and utilize knowledge reaches a peak (Turner & Helms, 1991). Within Piaget’s model of cognitive development, this crystallization and integration of all previous cognitive stages is referred to as formal operations (Turner & Helms, 1991).

Research conducted by Neimark (1982) revealed a clear change in the quality and power of thought during the 11-15 year age range. However, an adolescent’s thinking was not found to suddenly and totally be transformed from a concrete to a formal thinker. One’s mental strategies become more rational and continue to develop throughout adulthood with each progressive problem solving opportunity (Turner & Helms, 1991). Similar to other stages in Piaget’s theory of development, age does not constitute entry into a particular stage. Keating and Clark (1980) noted that not all adolescents, or even all adults, will perform at a formal operational level. In response to these findings, Piaget delayed his timing of the formal operations period to ages 15 to 20 years when these abilities were developed (Wagner, 1996).

Piaget claimed that cognitive development occurred through a process he termed ‘adaptation.’ Adaptation is defined as an “intellectualization of the individual’s need to make adjustments with respect to their interaction with the environment” (McMorris, 1999, p. 152). Rookie junior hockey players (athletes as young as 14 years), choosing to leave the Canadian Minor Hockey system, may be faced with the daunting reality of adapting to a completely new
environment, often alone. This transition may include living with a new host family, interacting with new teammates and adjusting to a new school setting. McMorris (1999) argued that adaptation occurs through two primary processes: accommodation and assimilation. Accommodation occurs when the person (i.e., rookie player) adjusts to meet the specific demands of a new situation, while assimilation is the incorporation of new information into previously learned cognitive structures (McMorris, 1999). Put into challenging new environments, these young hockey players would utilize both accommodation and assimilation processes when adapting to their new junior hockey environments.

Although Piaget’s theory emphasized the interaction between the individual and the environment, researchers also noted the impact of sociocultural influences on an adolescent’s cognitive development (Keating, 1990). McMorris (1999) further expanded on Piaget’s theory and recognized that development is a consequence of an interaction between the individual and the environment. This interaction is limited not only by the environmental constraints but the biological and psychological development of the person (McMorris, 1999). As a result of this interaction and the environmental constraints that may impact a young athlete’s cognitive development, a junior hockey player’s motives and academic achievement need to be further examined.

Motivation

Research in motives for youth sport participation often includes having fun, skill development, affiliation, fitness, challenge, and success/status (Gould, Feltz, & Weiss, 1985). However, the motivation of a young athlete to leave the minor hockey system to pursue a junior hockey career goes beyond those points. There seems to be an apparent push to leave the minor
hockey system (e.g., fast tracking). Rennie (2001) cited the intrinsic motivation of goal
achievement and the extrinsic motivation of finances as the two main reasons for fast tracking.

For many young adolescent hockey players, their primary goal is to make the National
Hockey League (NHL). This goal may be perpetuated by the fact athletes are aware that over
50% of the players in the NHL have played Major Junior A Hockey in Canada (Desjardins,
1991). As a result, there appears to be an overriding drive to achieve the highest level of hockey
available at each age (e.g., Major Junior A Hockey) (Molson Open Ice, 2001).

Three theoretical models have been proven to be most useful when examining the goal
achievement motivation of young athletes: competence motivation model, achievement goal
orientation, and self-determination theory (c.f., Weinberg et al., 2000). The competence
motivation model would argue that the individual’s desire to demonstrate competence through
successful mastery of experiences would encourage the young athlete to remain highly motivated
and strive for advancement in hockey (Harter, 1981). Achievement goal orientation theory
would suggest young athletes may either be motivated by demonstrating skill mastery (task
orientation) or by demonstrating ability through social comparison with other individuals (ego
orientation) (Nicholls, 1984). A talented young hockey player may feel that by striving for junior
hockey, he will demonstrate superior ability amongst his peers. Finally, self-determination
theory, similar to competence motivation theory, views achievement and striving toward
competence as central to one’s motivation and interest in participation (Deci & Ryan, 1985).
However, within this theory there is a recognition that both intrinsic and extrinsic motives are
potentially operating when individuals make decisions about participating in an activity and their
involvement (Weinberg et al., 2000). Rarely, is internal motivation the only source of motivation
for the young athlete to participate in junior hockey. Weiss and Chaumeton (1992) noted that
more information concerning the impact of significant others or external motivators such as parents and peers on participation motives is necessary.

The three models of goal achievement have provided some insight on perceived internal or external (e.g., parent) motivation for a young athlete to fast track into junior hockey. However, there is concern this motive to fast tracking into junior hockey may impede a young athlete’s skill development. For young elite players, this often involves leaving the minor hockey system at an early age (Bantam or Midget) to enter junior hockey (Jr. II A, Jr. B, Jr. C, or Jr. D) (See Appendix A). Junior hockey typically presents an increased level of competition. This advancement in competition is partially attributed to a much broader age range of players. In comparison to the age-segmented minor hockey system, junior hockey encompasses top players from each age category. This experience may advance an athlete’s level of competition but it may also expose him to additional challenges (e.g., leaving home, making new friends, attending a new school) (Oliver, 1991).

While goal achievement is important for these young athletes, another factor to consider is financial resources (Rennie, 2001). A child playing representative or travel hockey can be costly to a family. A representative hockey team is usually selected for each age category (See Appendix B) for a city or town. Based on the representative team’s surrounding population and area, each team is rated. Ratings begin with ‘C’, ‘CC’, ‘B’, ‘BB’ for smaller communities and continues up to ‘A’, ‘AA’, and ‘AAA’ for larger centers. With each progressive step, the level of competition, the distance traveled to play an opponent and the young athlete’s playing costs are perceivably increased. Typically, the cost for an athlete playing ‘AAA’ bantam or midget hockey including registration fees, extra ice time, equipment and travel costs is $4000-$6000 (CDN) a year (Rennie, 2001). For some players, the cost to parents may be double or triple that figure if
other siblings are playing travel hockey as well. In addition, the ‘AAA’ bantam and midget leagues and tournament schedules have players participating all over the province, with the player’s parents paying the travel expenses (Rennie, 2001). Alternatively, the junior leagues such as the local Great Lakes Jr. C and Western Jr. B leagues cover costs associated with registration, ice time and often provide some hockey equipment for the young athletes (Rennie, 2001). Additional playing costs are also reduced in junior hockey because weekend tournaments are eliminated and overnight trips do not often occur until later in the playoffs.

Therefore, the lure of junior hockey for the young aspiring minor hockey-aged athlete and his parents is great. Junior hockey offers a talented young hockey player an opportunity for a perceived higher level of play. The parents also recognize their child’s opportunity for advancement and the additional financial savings associated with playing junior hockey. There are, however, a wide range of potentially negative issues ranging from a decline in academics to social adjustment in which parents and athletes should be conscious of before leaving the minor hockey system.

*Academic Achievement*

The academic achievement of junior hockey players has been a concern for over 30 years. In an early examination of Ontario Junior hockey players, King and Angi (1968) found that the players tended to remain in school longer, yet incurred a higher failure rate than non-players. McDowell (1969) investigated the high school drop-out rate of junior ‘A’ hockey players in Saskatchewan and found that hockey players did register a significantly higher withdrawal rate than the normal population (McDowell, 1969). Schutz (1977) concluded that participation in hockey at the junior level appeared to have a detrimental effect on academic achievement possibly due to the nature of the professional recruiting system and the fact that out-of-school
sports are not suited to educational commitments. Further findings from Schutz (1977) indicated that there was no difference between minor hockey players and non-players up until the senior grades (i.e., as hockey involvement increased). The trend of few major junior players completing their high school diploma continued into the 1980s (Baker & Schafer, 1988). Consequently, without a high school diploma and the necessary pre-requisites for entering any university in Canada, many players ran the risk of having little or no future after their athletic careers were over. With only 15% of the Major Junior A players moving on to professional hockey at some level, education must be a priority to ensure gainful employment for the remaining 85% of the players who retire from hockey at 20 years of age (Desjardins, 1991).

The mid-1980s marked the beginning of an ongoing commitment towards education by the Canadian Junior Leagues. The reshaping of the junior hockey mindset has been attributed to the influence of OHL Commissioner, David Branch, and his emphasis on education (Baker & Schafer, 1988). Research has statistically supported this improvement in which 87% of the players in the OHL attended high school, college or university while furthering their hockey careers (Baker & Schafer, 1988). Moreover, the OHL adjusted its game schedule with 86% of the games played between Thursday and Sunday to ensure the lowest number of school days lost due to travel (Baker & Schafer, 1988).

All Canadian Major Junior A leagues have responded to an improved commitment towards education. Each Major Junior A team now has an educator directly involved with the club as either a coach, manager or educational consultant to assist with each player’s schooling (Baker & Schafer, 1988). Presently, the Western Hockey League (WHL) has a fulltime educational consultant. Furthermore, junior teams are now awarding more guaranteed post secondary educational packages to its players (Parcels, 1999). An example of an educational
package may include the cost of tuition and books for an athlete’s post secondary education for each year of service with his junior team. Some junior teams, such as the OHL’s Guelph Storm, mandate that all of its players are entered in some form of education (S. Camp, personal communication, October 6, 2001). This is an improvement from a previous report by Camirand (1970) which found that only six players of the total number on the Trois-Rivères team in the Québec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJL) attended school. Other teams such as the WHL’s Kootenay Ice and the Prince Albert Raiders have created personal development courses at nearby colleges for players who have graduated high school. These courses focus on future planning of education, finance, goals, and careers (Donlevy, personal communication, November 9, 2001).

Why the concern for education in junior hockey? Previous research has documented a lack of emphasis towards educating junior hockey players (McDowell, 1969). In a 1968 widely publicized MacLean’s article written by Alan Eagleson, then Executive Director of the National Hockey League’s Player’s Association (NHLPA), entitled “Big, Fast and Dumb”, Eagleson revealed that approximately 15% percent of the players in the NHL had achieved high school graduation (Eagleson, 1968). Fortunately, for the players noted in Eagleson’s article, they did make the NHL, for they are not the norm. Parcells (1999), in an investigation of the 30,000 athletes born in 1975 whom enrolled in Ontario Minor Hockey, found that only 17 of them made the NHL. Mathematically, the odds are a 0.0057 % chance that parents of a child born in 1975 enrolled in Ontario Minor Hockey would watch their child play in the NHL (Parcells, 1999). The likelihood of playing in the NHL may reflect the importance of investigating the educational outcomes of the other hockey players who participated in junior hockey but did not make the NHL.
Education must remain a high priority in junior hockey as research has recorded its importance in adult occupational success (Mau, 1995). In addition, research by Rumberger (1987) on high school drop-outs noted that failing to acquire a high school diploma has been found to limit an individual’s economic and social fulfillment in adulthood. Unfortunately, limited attention has been devoted to cognitive development during adolescence (Keating, 1990). Subsequently, very little research has been conducted on the cognitive development of young hockey players. Thus, further investigation targeting a junior hockey athlete’s academic performance is necessary.

Although cognitive development, such as motivation and academic achievement, is important when examining the issue of fast tracking, so too is the social development of the junior hockey player.

*Social Development*

Adolescence is regarded as a period when an individual’s social realm expands beyond the family to relationships with the peer group wherein, the individuals with whom an adolescent is primarily engaged in activity often reflects the nature of their influence (Wagner, 1996). For a rookie junior hockey player, this new peer group is most often his teammates. An important progression from these peer relationships is the development of friendships. Wagner (1996) believed that adolescent friendship offers mutual support and intimacy between people. Ainsworth (1989) described various types of friends, including acquaintances, companions, and intimates. A rookie player may list veterans as acquaintances, other rookies as companions, and one specific rookie as an intimate whose opinions and support are valued. Regardless of classification, friendships in adolescence are integral. Buhrmester (1990) reported the benefits of friendship in his study with students. He found that elementary and junior high school students
with more intimate friendships were likely to be described as better adjusted and more socially competent (Buhrmester, 1990). The present investigation on a junior hockey player’s social development explores the topics of transition, homesickness, friendsickness, social coping and social support.

**Transition**

The move from minor hockey to junior hockey is a big adjustment, athletically, academically, and personally (Davidsport, 2001). This transition is multifaceted and may encompass moving away from home and enrolling in a new school. Schlossberg (1981) argued that “a transition can be said to occur if an event or nonevent results in a change in assumptions about oneself and the world and thus requires a corresponding change in one’s behaviour and relationships” (p. 5). Petipas, Brewer, and Van Raalte (1996) believed Schlossberg’s (1981) definition was particularly useful in examining the transitions of student-athletes because it included the importance of cognitive appraisal and nonevents. A rookie player’s ability to interpret the transition into junior hockey (event) may affect his emotional responses to the situation.

When athletes anticipate changes that do not occur, Petipas and colleagues (1996) classified them as nonevents. While rookie junior hockey players must cope with transitional events, such as the team selection process and injury, they must also deal with nonevents such as failing to get more playing time (Danish, Petitpas, & Hale, 1993). Players may experience difficulty and engage in conflict with coaches and teammates if the coaching staff favours other athletes.

Much of the research on athletic transition assumes that everyone experiences the same set of stages when enduring a major transition (Petitpas et al., 1996). This assumption has been
highly criticized for failing to take into account individual, environment, and social differences (Taylor & Ogilvie, 1994). Schlossberg’s (1981) Adaptation to Transitions model overcomes this limitation by taking into account the diversity of the individual and the environmental factors present.

Schlossberg’s (1981) model theorized that three major sets of factors influence an individual’s adaptation to transition: (1) the characteristics of the particular transition (2) the characteristics of the pre- and post-transition environments, and (3) the characteristics of the individual experiencing the transition (See Appendix C). Schlossberg (1981) postulated that these three factors interact to produce the outcome of either adaptation or failure to adapt to transition.

Characteristics of the individual include: psychosocial competence, sex, age, state of health, race/ethnicity, socioeconomic status, value orientation, and previous experience with a transition of a similar nature. Characteristics of the environment include: internal support systems (e.g., network of friends), institutional supports, and physical setting. Both the individual and environment can have facilitating or debilitating effects on the individual transition (Schlossberg, 1984).

Pearson and Petitpas (1990) expanded on Schlossberg’s (1981) model of transition. They characterized six identifiable traits in which athletes may experience difficulty in transition. The following six traits encompass individuals whom:

(1) Have most strongly and exclusively based their identity on athletic performance; (2) Have the greatest gap between level of aspiration and level of ability; (3) Have had the least prior experience with the same or similar transitions; (4) Are limited in their general ability to adapt to change because of emotional and/or behavioural deficits; (5) Are
limited in their ability to form and maintain supportive relationships; and (6) Must deal with the transition in a context (social and/or physical) lacking material and emotional resources that can be helpful. (Pearson & Petitpas, 1990, p. 9)

Although Schlossberg’s (1981) model has provided an excellent framework for understanding the student-athlete’s experience when adapting to transition, few systematic investigations on transition in a student-athlete’s life have been examined. A longitudinal research study conducted by Adler and Adler (1991) examined the changes in commitment of Division 1 men’s college basketball players towards educational goals. They found that in a short period of time after entering university, the players experienced a great deal of role conflict. Due to the difficulties associated with trying to maintain a balance between athletics and academics, a player’s athletic role was found to progressively overtake a player’s identity at the expense of the academic role (Brustad & Ritter-Taylor, 1997). As their intercollegiate careers progressed, the athletic role dominated the identity of the players. The academic identity of those athletes was diminished and their academic performance was well below their capabilities (Adler & Adler, 1991). Similar concerns for the potential diminishment of a young junior hockey player’s academic role are evident.

Much of the research on student-athlete transitions has focused primarily on retiring or leaving intercollegiate sport (Baillie, 1992). Due to this lack of research on student-athletes’ transitions into elite sport, it may be useful to examine the research regarding a first year college student’s experience. The young elite athlete, like the first year college student, often leaves home for the first time to pursue higher goals.
Student's Transition Into College

The transition for many late adolescents from a child's home to college is critical (Paul & Brier, 2001). Giddan (1988) argued that the first year of college is the most difficult period of adjustment a student faces. Unlike those students leaving home for college at 18 or 19 years of age, many rookie junior hockey players leave home at 16 years of age (Buczkowski, 2000). This experience is described in Oliver's (1991) nonfiction book, The Making of Champions, where he profiles six 16 year old rookie junior hockey players. The rookies are cast as strangers in a new domain of physical and emotional risk (Oliver, 1991). Similar to college freshmen (Lafrenier, Ledgerwood, & Docherty, 1997), junior rookies are often relocated to a new community where they have few or no friends. They are often forced to deal with new sources of stress (e.g., new house rules) and new responsibilities such as budgeting their own money and setting their own limits on social activities (Lafrenier et al., 1997). Moreover, these new sources of strain may be magnified by the fact that the people to whom they usually turn for support are now many miles away (Lafrenier et al., 1997).

Early research by Holmes and Rahe (1967) indicated that any event that causes a person to make a substantial amount of adjustment in his or her life is likely to be stressful. Smith (1986) suggested that stress is a significant part of a student-athlete's life. While stress may be a part of a student-athlete's life, moving away from home and entering into the junior hockey environment can be classified as a life event. A life event is defined as a major change in one's life such as in personal relationships, health, or employment (Sarafino & Ewing, 1999). Although these periods may create valuable opportunities for growth and change, they may also heighten self-doubt and disappointment and even encourage self-defeating habits (Paul & Brier, 2001).
Similar to Paul and Brier’s (2001) description of a college freshmen’s plight, a primary source of motivation for this research is to “untangle and understand the complex web of social and intellectual challenges” facing new rookie players (p. 77). Stemming from this understanding, the development of prevention and intervention strategies can be utilized to produce a smooth and productive transition into junior hockey. To begin this process, homesickness, friendsickness, social coping and an athlete’s social support network need to be addressed.

**Homesickness**

While entering junior hockey is usually seen as a positive event, it represents a transition that is likely to be stressful. Players have little control over the choice of their Major Junior team and many are forced to leave home to play on a team because they were not drafted by their local junior team, or there is no team within close proximity to the athletes’ homes. Many times, leaving home for the first time evokes homesickness (Fisher, 1989). Homesickness is defined as “a complex cognitive-motivational-emotional state concerned with grieving for, yearning for and being preoccupied with thoughts of home” (Fisher & Hood, 1987, p. 426) and has been found to be associated with poor academic performance, depression, and anxiety. Although the majority of homesickness studies have been on boarding school students (Fisher, Frazer, & Murray, 1986) and European university students (Archer, Ireland, Amos, Broad, & Currid, 1998), junior hockey players may experience many of the same emotions upon leaving their homes to play junior hockey.

**Friendsickness**

Just as separation from one’s parents and home can be painful, moving away from close friendships can also be difficult (Staik & Dickman, 1988). When a rookie Major Junior A player
is drafted to a new city, his previous friendships may be difficult to maintain. The athlete must begin forming new friendships with adolescents, which can be a very difficult task.

Paul and Brier (2001) acknowledged that although many definitions of homesickness often include missing one's friends, homesickness research has not addressed the impact of separating from one's friends as a distinct component. Paul and Brier (2001) defined friendsickness as "a pressing relational challenge for new college students that is induced by moving away from an established network of friends" (p. 77). Similar to grieving the loss of precollege friends, junior rookies may experience concerns associated with losing their established network of hometown friends when embarking on a junior career. With a busy travel schedule and limited finances, rookie players may not be able to return home to their established friends as often as desired.

**Social Coping**

Competitive sports often demand athletes to train in intensely physical, psychological, and emotional stressful environments (Yoo, 2000). Furthermore, Hardy, Jones and Gould (1996) noted that competitive athletes are required to cope with various stressors in sport situations, such as physical injury, performance slumps, time management, interpersonal conflict, expectations, and fear of failure. Lazarus (1974) defined coping as "problem solving efforts made by an individual when the demands s/he faces are highly relevant to his/her welfare (that is a situation of considerable jeopardy or promise) and when these demands tax his/her adaptive resources" (p. 250). It is important athletes develop appropriate coping skills to deal with their stressors (Hardy et al., 1996). Yoo (2000) argued that when athletes do not have the appropriate coping skills, they are likely to experience tension, helplessness, and lowered self-efficacy. This can negatively affect their well-being and performance. Lazarus and Folkman (1984) expanded
on Lazarus's (1974) definition of coping as a process of using "cognitive and behavioural efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person" (p. 41). Two major functions of coping are suggested; emotion-focused coping and problem-focused coping (Folkman & Lazarus, 1985). Emotion-focused coping involves the regulation of emotional arousal whereas problem-focused coping involves an individual’s cognitive and behavioural efforts to change a stressful situation (Crocker, Alderman, & Smith, 1988). Many of the stress problems occur because the individual does not have or does not use, the necessary coping skills to manage the stress problems (Meichenbaum, 1985). Smith (1986) advocated the implementation of coping skills training programs to provide individuals with the necessary coping skills to reduce or eliminate stress problems. Within the realm of junior hockey, it is important to understand a junior player’s support network in dealing with potentially stressful situations (e.g., player being traded, being benched).

**Social Support**

From a general perspective, social support refers to an individual’s network of personal ties (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984). Researchers believe that social support provides an opportunity for an individual to vent feelings, receive reassurance, and improve communication skills (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984). This exchange also serves to reduce uncertainty during times of stress, provides companionship, and support in mental and physical recovery (Albrecht & Adelman, 1984).

Empirical evidence for the beneficial effects of social support in sport have been relatively scarce (Rees & Hardy, 2000). Social support has, however, been linked to performance, leadership styles, group cohesion, vulnerability to injury, recovery from injury and coping with competitive stress (Rees & Hardy, 2000). Previous research conducted by Barone,
Aguirre-Deandreis and Trickett (1991) examined the role social support plays in late adolescent development and adjustment to stressful events. Barone et al. (1991) reported high levels of social support (from friends and family) were related to greater satisfaction at school, less school-related anxiety and fewer difficulties adjusting to new tasks.

Pines, Aronson, and Kafry (1981) (cited in Rosenfeld, Richman, & Hardy, 1989) suggest that individuals need six distinguishable forms of social support.

These six forms include: 1) Listening – others who actively listen without giving advice or making judgments, with whom the joys of success as well as the frustrations of failure may be shared; 2) Emotional support - others who support an individual during an emotional but difficult time without necessarily taking her or his side; 3) Emotional challenge – others who can challenge an individual to do her or his best to overcome obstacles and fulfill goals; 4) Shared social reality ‘touchstones,’ through whom perception of the social context can be verified; 5) Technical appreciation - others who acknowledge when a good piece of work or performance is accomplished; and 6) Technical challenge - others who can challenge, stretch, and encourage the athlete to achieve more, to be more creative and excited about her or his work. (p. 24)

Research that examined the social support networks among male and female National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) athletes and found coaches, friends, teammates, and parents to be the biggest support providers (Rosenfeld et al., 1989).

Coaches. Rosenfeld and colleagues (1989) documented that coaches were the most clearly identified, providing most of the athletes’ technical challenge support and more of their technical appreciation support than any other providers. Interviews with coaches, however, indicated that they tended to avoid listening, emotional and shared social reality support. The
coaches attributed this to two main reasons; first, to maintain the emotional distance necessary to sustain their role as authoritarian; and, second, to avoid affecting morale by singling out particular athletes with whom they share a more personal or supportive relationship (Rosenfeld et al., 1989).

**Teammates.** Researchers found that teammates provided technical challenge support almost exclusively, although they also provided some shared social reality support. Teammates did not provide either emotional support or emotional challenge. The researchers felt this reflected the competition between athletes for the limited number of places and positions on any team (Rosenfeld et al, 1989).

**Friends.** Rosenfeld et al. (1989) observed that friends provided the widest range of support and remained least identifiable. They provided most of the athlete’s shared social reality support, listening support, and emotional support. They also provided some technical appreciation, although other providers offered more. However, friends did not provide technical challenge support, reflecting their lack of expertise.

Other researchers have documented the importance of establishing new friendships in the college adjustment process (Hays & Oxley, 1986; Hirsch, 1980). Hirsch (1980) characterized peer relations as being critical for support, confirmation of one’s identity, opportunities for socializations and other dimensions of college adjustment. When considering that teammates do not often offer emotional support or emotional challenge to each other, it appears rookie junior players may face transitional challenges similar to a first year university student when establishing new friends. As a result, a rookie player’s support may be similar to findings by Pierce, Sarason, and Sarason (1991) that lack of college friends’ support was the most consistent predictor of self-reported loneliness.
Parents. Rosenfeld and colleagues (1989) concluded that parents, similar to friends, also provided a wide range of types of support. Unlike friends, however, parents did not provide the greatest amount of any single form of support. Parents were second to coaches in providing listening support, emotional support, and emotional challenge. Parents provided neither technical challenge nor shared social reality support. Rosenfeld et al. (1989) attributed the absence of technical challenge to the parents lack of expertise and the absence of shared social reality support to their lack of contact with the daily life of their son and daughter athletes. Parents' interactional and reinforcement patterns were also found to directly influence the child’s formation of attitudes about self-worth, personal competency, and the value of intrinsically motivated behaviour (Harter, 1978).

The above provider/support relationship findings can be compared to a junior hockey player. Both athletes are living away from home and competing at an elite level. Specifically, the Rosenfeld et al.'s (1989) study examined males with a mean sample age of 19 years. Though the mean sample age of the present study is slightly lower, the provider/support relationship findings from previous research can be applied to this study. Along with the investigation of a young athlete’s social support network, a junior hockey player’s emotional development should also be considered when examining this issue of fast tracking.

Emotional Development

Adolescence is an important period in the evolution of young people’s social-emotional functioning (Lerner, Ostrom, & Freel, 1997). Wagner (1996) has contended that upon reaching the age of 18 years, adolescents will feel secure, self-confident, be emotionally aware, and optimistic about the future. Within the emotional development process, adolescents should possess the resilience required to overcome adversities. There is, however, a lack of empirical
research on normal emotional development in adolescence (Wagner, 1996). Much of the
previous adolescent emotional research studies has focused on severe emotional problems
warranting clinical intervention. Offer and colleagues (1981) have argued that this deficiency in
research may arise from mental health professional’s belief that emotional turmoil is
developmentally normal in teenagers. For the present study, an examination of a junior hockey
player’s emotional development focused on an athlete’s self-confidence.

Self-Confidence

Self-confidence is widely recognized in research as the most critical psychological
characteristic influencing sport performance (Vealey, Hayashi, Garner-Holman, & Giacobbi,
1998). The direct correlation between self-confidence and success is the most consistent finding
in peak performance literature (Zinsser, Bunker, & Williams, 2001). Athletes who have high
self-confidence are conscious that the mind is not automatically one’s ally and must be trained to
think effectively (Zinsser et al., 2001). Dagrou, Gauvin, and Halliwell (1992) established a link
between thought, feelings, and behaviour. Positive thinking usually leads to enabling positive
feelings and good performance, while misguided thinking usually leads to negative feelings and
poor performance (Kendall, Hrycaiko, Martin, & Kendall, 1990).

Two approaches have been adopted by sport psychologists studying self-confidence in
sport (Vealey, 1986). The most research has been conducted within the parameters of Bandura’s
(1977, 1986) self-efficacy theory. Bandura asserted that there are four sources of self-efficacy:
performance accomplishments (e.g., mastering a skill), vicarious experiences (e.g., observing a
role model perform a skill), verbal persuasion (e.g., positive feedback from a friend), and
physiological states (e.g., racing heartbeat). Experimental research in various motor and sport
performance situations has revealed that performance accomplishments have been shown to have
the strongest self-efficacy and performance of the four sources (McAuley, 1985). Feltz and Riessinger’s (1990) research findings supported Bandura’s (1977, 1986) four sources of self-efficacy in their study which found that college students ranked performance accomplishments (86%) as the most significant source of self-efficacy, followed by physiological states (9%), verbal persuasion (8%), and vicarious experiences (2%). Concerned that Bandura’s performance accomplishments could potentially mean many things, Vealey more closely identified sources of self-confidence in athletes within the sport-confidence framework (Vealey, 1986, 1988). Vealey’s (1986) conceptual framework predicts that organizational culture and athlete characteristics influence sources and levels of sport-confidence. Organizational culture is described as the shared values and assumptions that guide behaviour in an organization (Sigler & Pearson, 2000). In addition, the model predicts that sources of sport-confidence influence subsequent levels of sport-confidence. This, in turn, directly impacts an athlete’s affect (e.g., enjoyment, satisfaction), behaviour (e.g., performance, effort), and cognitions (e.g., cognitive state anxiety) which are subsequently fed back to influence the intrapersonal characteristics of the athlete (Vealey et al., 1998). Bandura (1978) described these feedback loops as reciprocal determinism because they emphasize the multidirectionality of culture/situations, cognitions, and behaviour.

Vealey and colleague’s (1998) research generated nine sources of sport-confidence within three broad domains in which athletes gain confidence: achievement, self-regulation, and a positive and achievement-nurturing climate. They concluded that athletes gain self-confidence when they “achieve their goals, engage in effective self-regulation of cognitions and behaviour, and train and compete in a competitive climate that is supportive, challenging, comfortable, and motivating.”
Rookie Self-Confidence In Junior Hockey

Based on previous self-confidence research, it can be assumed that a rookie junior hockey player will gain self-confidence from playing junior hockey. This has been supported in previous research with junior hockey players (Karp, 2000). It was found that athletes who competed at higher levels (e.g., junior hockey) displayed a higher self-confidence. Perhaps, the young rookie junior players view their new opponents, many times older and stronger than previous opponents as a greater challenge (Rennie, 2001). This elevation in competition may signify an increase in confidence based on Vealey et al.'s (1998) sport-confidence domain of achievement. The demonstration of mastery and ability within this domain may provide an initial increase in the sport-confidence. The emotional end result of the rookie junior player’s self-confidence, however, requires further investigation. For the often unpredictable nature of self-confidence and the dramatic influence that loss of self-confidence has on performance are well documented in research (Vealey et al., 1998). While the emotional, cognitive, and social development of the junior hockey player is of concern, his satisfaction with his junior performance is also an area of research that requires further investigation.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction, specific to one’s job, has been the subject of a great volume of studies across a wide variety of disciplines (Reimer & Chelladurai, 1998). Previous work satisfaction research proposed that an individual’s level of satisfaction is associated with four elements: (1) the amount of effort that will be put into a task, (2) the duration of stay within the organization, (3) the level of cooperation with others in the immediate environment, and (4) overall happiness (Saal & Knight, 1988).
The domain of athletics has also prompted research in satisfaction. Many coaches believe there is an intuitive link between satisfaction and performance (Reimer & Chelladurai, 1998). It is suggested that since sport participation is largely voluntary in nature, athlete satisfaction is regarded as a prerequisite to an athlete performing at a peak level (Reimer & Chelladurai, 1998). Moreover, some researchers view an athlete's satisfaction as an important measure of the athletic organization's effectiveness to meet the needs of the athlete (Blau & Scott, 1962). Lastly, Chelladurai and Reimer (1997) considered intercollegiate athletes as entertainers. The whole athletic entity is built around their athletic involvement. Subsequently, an athlete's satisfaction is crucial for the athletic entity's success.

Athlete satisfaction is defined as "a positive affective state resulting from a complex evaluation of the structures, processes and outcomes associated with the athletic experience" (Chelladurai & Reimer, 1997, p. 135). Satisfaction may result from an evaluation of need satisfaction or the differences between a person's expectations and the perception of what an individual has received (Reimer & Chelladurai, 1998). The value of satisfaction in athletics is an integral indicator of an athlete's evaluation of an organization's effectiveness. A young junior hockey player may provide some important insight towards his satisfaction with his performance, the coaching staff, and his current junior team. The present research study investigated the overall satisfaction of junior hockey players.
Summary

Foundational research has been conducted in various fields of adolescents’ psychological development. However, research investigating the effects of fast tracking on the cognitive, social, and emotional development of minor-aged athletes participating in junior hockey is non-existent. The scarcity of research into the athlete’s psychological development in hockey in general, and specifically the overall lack of research in cognitive, social, and emotional development, therefore highlights the necessity of investigating the impact of participating in junior hockey at a young age. With a greater understanding of the pertinent issues facing junior hockey players, more specific interventions can be developed in order to ease the transition into all levels of junior hockey.

Statement of the Problem

In August 1999, an Open Ice Summit consisting of NHL players, coaches, CHA executive, and minor hockey parents gathered for a highly publicized open forum about the game of hockey in Canada. The Summit’s purpose was to develop concrete recommendations to enhance player development at the grassroots level.

Canada was once considered dominant in the game of hockey (Molson Open Ice, 2001). However, a 49 year gold medal Olympic drought generated a visible public concern for player development in Canada. This considerable gap in dominance was only recently eclipsed with a double gold performance in men’s and women’s ice hockey at the 2002 Salt Lake City, Winter Olympics. The pride generated from the double gold performances has reaffirmed the country’s commitment to player development.

The Open Ice Summit sparked several key initiatives and recommendations. First, the CHA proactively began a mentor coaching program, whereby highly trained coaches would be
paid to act as supervising mentors to 20 other Canadian coaches in their respective area. Second, a commitment to the increment of practice to game ratios was implemented. Third, an examination of the increase in draft age for the Canadian Junior Hockey Leagues (CHL) and the NHL was discussed.

Presently, the draft age for the three Major Junior Hockey leagues is not uniform, with the WHL drafting at age 13 years, the OHL drafting at 16 years, and the QMJHL drafting at 17 years. The issue arises with the present NHL draft age being set at 18 years. In response to the NHL’s draft age, each Major Junior league (WHL, OHL, QMJHL) cannot justify the increment in its respective junior draft age. Overall, this impacts the CHA’s minor hockey system. Viewing the present Canadian hockey system as a stepping stone to the NHL, players are advancing through the system as quickly as possible to reach Major Junior hockey and have a greater opportunity to be drafted at 18 years of age by the NHL. This process led to the current investigation of the effects of fast tracking on a young hockey player’s development.
Purpose

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the effects of fast tracking on the cognitive, social, and emotional development of Major Junior OHL hockey players. In order to investigate this development, fast tracking and non-fast tracking rookie and veteran junior hockey players participating at the highest junior level, the CHL, were examined.
Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1:

\( H_{01} \): There is no difference in the cognitive development between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players.

\( H_{a1} \): There is a difference in the cognitive development between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players.

Hypothesis 2:

\( H_{02} \): There is no difference in the social development between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players.

\( H_{a2} \): There is a difference in the social development between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players.

Hypothesis 3:

\( H_{03} \): There is no difference in the emotional development between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players.

\( H_{a3} \): There is a difference in the emotional development between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players.

Hypothesis 4:

\( H_{04} \): There is no difference in the satisfaction between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players.

\( H_{a4} \): There is a difference in the satisfaction between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players.
CHAPTER III
Methodology

The methodology utilized to investigate the fast tracking effects on the cognitive, social and emotional development of minor hockey aged athletes in Canadian Junior Hockey is multifaceted. The exploratory study consisted of two phases and encompassed the use of both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Phase I of the study used a comprehensive questionnaire, comprised of participating OHL players. Phase II of the study involved rookie OHL players from two OHL teams in a focus group setting to gain a greater understanding of fast tracking by confirming and elaborating on the results from Phase I.

Phase I: Fast Tracking Questionnaire

Participants

The study sample included current male OHL junior hockey players ranging in age from 15-21 years (N=238). The sample divided into two broad categories: fast trackers (n=209) and non-fast trackers (n=29). A fast tracker was defined as any OHL player who elected to forgo playing midget hockey within the minor hockey system to play any level of junior hockey. A non-fast tracker was defined as any player who participated in midget hockey prior to playing any level of junior hockey. Each broad category was further subdivided into OHL rookies and OHL veterans. An OHL rookie was defined as any first year OHL player. An OHL veteran was defined as any player other than an OHL Rookie (e.g., 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year OHL player). Phase I of the study included all four subcategories (OHL fast track rookies, OHL fast track veterans, OHL non-fast track rookies, and OHL non-fast track veterans.)
**OHL rookie classifications.** The OHL fast track and non-fast track rookie subjects were further subdivided into four classifications:

1. 2001a: A 16 year old draftee eligible to play in OHL 2001-2002 OHL season. The first 2 selections by an OHL team in the 2001 OHL draft are eligible to play in the 2001-2002 OHL season as 16 year olds. The remaining selections by a team must wait a year before they are eligible to play in the OHL.

2. 2000a: A 17 year old draftee eligible for both the 2000-2001 and 2001-2002 seasons. This category includes a top two selection by an OHL team in the 2000 OHL draft who was eligible the 2000-2001 season as a 16 year old but voluntarily or involuntarily elected not to play in the OHL the 2000-2001 season. However, the 17 year old rookie player has elected to play the 2001-2002 season.

3. 2000b: A 17 year old draftee eligible for the 2001-2002 OHL season. This includes players drafted later than the top 2 selections by an OHL team in the 2000 OHL draft.

4. Other: A rookie OHL player who has made the team through a walk-on tryout, or a trade, or is a European Import player or a free agent.

**OHL veteran classifications.** The OHL fast track and non-fast track veterans were further subdivided into three classifications:

1. A veteran OHL player who has been drafted by an NHL team and is presently under an NHL contract.

2. A veteran OHL player who has been drafted by an NHL team, but has not signed an NHL contract.

3. A veteran OHL player who has not been drafted by an NHL team.

OHL rookie and OHL veteran players presented two opposing views to the research on
fast tracking. An OHL rookie offered a present perspective while the OHL veteran contributed a retrospective perspective towards the investigation of fast tracking.

**Procedure**

There were five objectives for Phase I of the study. First, preliminary sources of the psychological (cognitive, social and emotional) development of the OHL players were identified. Second, items and format for the questionnaire which measured sources of cognitive, social and emotional development as well as satisfaction were developed. Third, a pilot data collection was conducted to ensure adequate clarity and appropriateness of the Fast Tracking Questionnaire. Fourth, a team contact was established with each OHL team through letter and phone to educate each team about the upcoming study. Fifth, questionnaires were distributed to all participating OHL teams.

*Preliminary identification of sources of mental development.* Phase 1 began with a review of relevant literature to understand the cognitive, social, and emotional development as well as satisfaction of the OHL players. Following this overview, an interview was conducted with a local OHL rookie player to generate additional insight into the research topic. These two processes established a starting point for the study.

*Development of items and format for the Fast Tracking Questionnaire.* Working closely with researchers, an OHL assistant coach, and the CHA YIP board of directors, an in-depth Fast Tracking Questionnaire was developed. The questionnaire consisted of both closed and open-ended questions aimed at exploring some of the issues an OHL rookie player may face. The closed-ended questions asked the player to evaluate a topic (e.g., anxiety during first months of season) and provide a score on a Likert scale. The open-ended questions provided an opportunity for veterans and rookies to comment on their rookie OHL experiences. Specific portions of the
initial questionnaire were subdivided to suit the experiences of each of the two sample groups. This entailed specific questions geared towards rookies (present perspective) and veterans (retrospective perspective).

*Pilot study.* The topic of fast tracking is a new phenomenon with minimal research. Thus, when developing the Fast Tracking Questionnaire, a pilot study was conducted to assess the content validity and appropriateness of the questionnaire. The pilot sample consisted of six current and former junior hockey players (1 present OHL rookie, 1 present Junior B player, 2 former OHL players of which 1 is presently an OHL assistant coach, 1 former Tier II Jr. A All-star, and 1 former Junior B All-star, presently a Jr. C coach). Participants were administered the questionnaire and then asked to evaluate whether the questionnaire instructions and items were clear, understandable, and relevant to the study. Subjects were also asked to generate additional suggestions regarding the questionnaire.

After considering the feedback from the pilot study participants, two Fast Tracking Questionnaires were developed: one for rookies and one for veterans (See Appendices D & E). The two questionnaires essentially contained the same content, however, the veteran questionnaire asked veterans to recall their rookie experiences while the rookie questionnaire posed the questions in the present tense. Furthermore, the instructions on several of the questions were modified to make them more clear and understandable.

*Establishment of team contact.* In September 2001, contact letters were sent to all 20 OHL head coaches detailing the purpose of the study (See Appendix F). Accompanying the contact letter was a letter of support from the CHA (See Appendix G). October 1st, 2001 marked the beginning of the follow-up calls to the OHL head coaches to ensure the coach received the letter and to establish a team contact for the study. The phone call offered each head coach an
opportunity to verbally agree to participate in the study and potentially designate a member of his staff to act as a team contact for the study.

Establishing team contacts proved to be a difficult task. Team contacts were established with 15 of the 20 OHL teams (Belleville Bulls, Brampton Battalion, Erie Otters, Guelph Storm, Kingston Frontenacs, Kitchener Rangers, London Knights, North Bay Centennials, Oshawa Generals, Owen Sound Attack, Peterborough Petes, Sarnia Sting, Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds, Sudbury Wolves, and the Toronto St. Michael's Majors). The remaining 5 teams elected not to participate.

Distribution of Fast Tracking Questionnaire. Upon receiving consent to participate in the study, team contacts were sent a colour coded questionnaire package by mail. Package contents included: table of contents, administrative instructions, rookie questionnaires, veteran questionnaires, letters of information for each player, ballots for a Team Canada jersey, a return checklist and a self addressed, prepaid envelope (See Appendix H). As an incentive for completing the Fast Tracking Questionnaire, each player could complete a ballot to enter into a draw for an authentic Team Canada jersey. The return deadline for the questionnaire package was set for November 7, 2001.

Data analyses. Reliability is an essential criteria for assessing the quality of all measurement devices and procedures (Gravetter & Wallnau, 1992). To evaluate the reliability of items on the Fast Tracking Questionnaire, items were grouped together based on the selected topics and broken down into ten subscales under 4 dependent variables: I) Cognitive: A) Academic Goals: degree to which a series of academic goals are representative of the player's future academic objectives; II) Social: B) Duration of Transition: a player's difficulty with transition during training camp, preseason, and first month of the season; C) Selected
Components of Transition: a player’s difficulty moving away from home, settling in with a new host family, demands of more travel, making new teammates and friends; D) Individuals Involved In Transition: influence of OHL coaches, host family, family, veteran teammates, other rookies, new friends, and hometown friends on the player’s transition into the OHL; III) Emotional: E) Conflict: extent to which the player has engaged or envisioned engaging in conflict with coaches, teammates, or host family; F) Confidence: extent to which lack of playing time, criticism of coaches, self imposed pressure to succeed, or parental pressure impact a player’s confidence; G) Emotions: degree to which player experienced a wide range of listed emotions; IV) Satisfaction: H) Team Preparation: amount of support the player received from the OHL team to deal with different situations (e.g., being benched, enduring physical hardships such as injury or losing a close teammate through trade); I) Mental Skills Training: degree to which the OHL team introduced and used a series of mental skills training strategies to effectively deal with mental challenges; J) Satisfaction With Performance: a player’s level of satisfaction with his OHL performance and OHL experience. The internal consistency of each subscale was subsequently tested using alpha, a common coefficient statistic which estimates the error variance resulting from content sampling and content heterogeneity (Janda, 1998).

The questionnaire data were entered into the SPSS for Windows data management system. SPSS is a comprehensive and flexible statistical analysis and data management system (Norusis, 1993). Descriptive statistics, including frequencies, were taken for each demographic variable. Means and standard deviations were calculated for each subscale. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) (cognitive) and three multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) (social, emotional, satisfaction) were calculated for each of the dependent variables.
Phase II: Focus Group Interview Sessions

Participants

Phase II of the study involved two focus groups. Three OHL teams initially agreed to participate in the interview sessions but one team unexpectedly withdrew for unspecified reasons. Four OHL rookie players from one OHL team comprised the first focus group and four from a second OHL team encompassed the second focus group. A smaller focus group would provide participating rookies more opportunity to express themselves fully and offer more in-depth insight into fast tracking and their OHL experience (Morgan, 1998). A list of rookie names were provided by the team contacts. From that list, eight players agreed to participate including five fast trackers (2-Jr. A, 2-Jr. B, 1-Bantam), and three non-fast trackers (3-midget level). The sample consisted of five forwards and three defensemen. Six of the rookie players were from Ontario while the remaining two were from the United States. The age of the participants ranged from 16 to 17 years of age. Only one of the eight rookie players was still living at home with the other seven living with host families.

Procedure

Emerging from the data received from the Fast Tracking Questionnaire, two focus group interview sessions were conducted. The focus group interviews provided an efficient technique to gather information on the fast tracking impact on the psychological development of young players. In comparison to individual player interviews, focus group interviews permitted quality data collection opportunities in a small group setting (Thomas & Nelson, 1996). Focus group interview sessions are often more enjoyable for the participants and there may be less fear of the interviewer evaluating the individual because of the group setting (Thomas & Nelson, 1996). This research method offered the participants an opportunity to hear what other rookie teammates
had to say, which may have stimulated the players to share their own views. Alternatively, the researcher was cautious of potential focus group limitations such as certain group dynamics (i.e., power struggles and a reluctance to state views publicly in front of their teammates) (Thomas & Nelson, 1996). The researcher conducted each focus group interview in a private room at their respective arena away from non-participating teammates and coaches. In addition, the players were reminded of the confidentiality of their responses and encouraged to refer to each other using the provided participant name tags (e.g., Participant 1, Participant 2, etc.).

Thomas and Nelson (1996) stated that the objective of the focus group interview is not to try to persuade the group into reaching a consensus, rather to provide valuable insight to supplement the information gathered in the questionnaire. Each of the two focus group interviews adhered to this important protocol and isolated a different OHL team. The focus group consisted of the investigator following an interview guide and posing questions to the small group of rookies on each of the two OHL teams (See Appendix J). Questions probed such challenges and experiences as: adjustment of making the team, playing time, living with a new host family, developing new relationships with coaches, teammates, and peers, settling into a new education institution, coping with the rigors of a busy Major Junior schedule, missing home, family, and friends. The focus group interview sessions were audio taped and lasted 40 minutes and 65 minutes, respectively.

Data analyses. The computer program, QSR NUDIST (Non-numerical, Unstructured Data, Indexing, Searching and Theorizing) was used in the analysis. The program was designed to store, code, retrieve, and analyze text (Weitzman & Miles, 1995). The investigator conducted an interpretational analysis (a form of inductive analysis in which meaning units and core categories emerge from the data) after following the procedures outlined by Côté, Salmela, Baria,
and Russell (1993). Each focus group interview was transcribed verbatim. Once transcribed, they were imported into the NUDIST program and divided into meaning units, which were the responses to each question. The meaning units, which can be a word, sentence, or phrase containing one idea, were then indexed or coded. The coding scheme was then placed in a hierarchical tree structure. Thus, the codes, which are referred to as nodes, represented the branches of the tree (Weitzman & Miles, 1995). The root of the tree symbolized the most general level with the branches being the higher order nodes. When the tree structure was being built, the nodes remained flexible. By doing so, this allowed for the modification and refinement of the nodes (Tesch, 1990). Theoretical saturation was reached when the categorization of new data or text units fit adequately into the pre-existing framework or hierarchical tree (Miles & Huberman, 1990).
CHAPTER IV

Phase I Results

Thirteen out of the 15 OHL teams who were surveyed, completed and returned their questionnaire packages and were subsequently included in the analyses. A total of 375 Fast Tracking Questionnaires were distributed. Two hundred and thirty-eight participants successfully completed the Fast Tracking Questionnaire, for a return rate of 63%. Ten OHL teams: Brampton Battalion (n=22), Guelph Storm (n=19), Kitchener Rangers (n=21), London Knights (n=19), North Bay Centennials (n=20), Oshawa Generals (n=19), Owen Sound Attack (n=24), Peterborough Petes (n=17), Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds (n=24), and the Toronto St. Mike’s Majors (n=21) successfully completed a majority of the assigned 25 questionnaires and filled out the Team Canada Jersey Ballots. Three teams, the Belleville Bulls (n=11), Sarnia Sting (n=9) and the Sudbury Wolves (n=12) returned less than half of their team’s assigned questionnaires.

Upon reception of their Phase I Questionnaire package, a thank you letter was generated to the respective team (see Appendix I). The letter served two purposes; first to acknowledge the team’s commitment to the Phase I research and second to invite the OHL team to participate in Phase II of the study.

Phase I Participant Characteristics

The Phase I results were divided into the frequencies of the demographic questions on the Fast Tracking Questionnaire; and the descriptives of the subscale dependent variables and subsequent univariate (ANOVA) and multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA). The frequencies for the Fast Track Questionnaire player demographic data are summarized and displayed in four tables: Phase I Participant Demographic Information (see Table 1), Phase I
Table 1

Phase I Participant Demographic Information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Selections</th>
<th># of Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Player Status</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rookie</td>
<td>85</td>
<td></td>
<td>35.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran</td>
<td>153</td>
<td></td>
<td>64.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age (Years)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>25</td>
<td></td>
<td>10.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>63</td>
<td></td>
<td>26.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>19</td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>28</td>
<td></td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date of Birth</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1981</td>
<td>30</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1982</td>
<td>55</td>
<td></td>
<td>23.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>67</td>
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<td>1984</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
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<td>Hometown</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ontario</td>
<td>208</td>
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<td>87.4</td>
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<td>Other provinces</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3.4</td>
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<tr>
<td>United States</td>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
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<td>54</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>43</td>
<td></td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>24</td>
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<td>3.9</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
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<td>1.3</td>
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<td></td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Missing data resulted from participants electing not to answer specific survey questions.
Player Development (see Table 2), Phase I Cognitive Development (see Table 3), and Phase I Social Development (see Table 4).

*Phase I Participant Demographic Information*

Eighty-five rookies and 153 veterans comprised the sample. The age of the participants ranged from 15 to 20 years (mean age = 17.79). Over 90% (n= 216) of the players were born in Canada with 87% (n=208) from a hometown in Ontario. Only a small number of players were from the United States (n=13) and Europe (n=8). Over 50% (n= 146) of the surveyed players had less than two years experience. The first five rounds of the OHL draft accounted for almost 70% (n=160) of the participating players with the first round accounting for 23% (n=54) of the subjects (see Table 1).

*Phase I Player Development*

Eighty-eight percent (n=209) of the participants were classified as fast trackers. The remaining 12% (n=29) of the participants were identified as non-fast trackers. Almost 70% (n=166) of the subjects participated in a level of junior hockey prior to playing in the OHL. Alternatively, 28.6% (n=68) of the subjects participated in minor hockey prior to playing in the OHL. Sixteen percent (n= 38) played bantam and approximately 12% (n=29) played midget hockey. Over 40% (n=98) of the players who played junior hockey participated in Tier II Jr. A prior to playing in the OHL. The number of participants who played Tier II Jr. A is more than three times the number whom played midget prior to playing in the OHL. The lower junior leagues, (Jr. B, Jr. C., Jr. D., European Jr.) most predominantly Junior B (21.8%), accounted for the remaining 25% (n=60) of the players’ backgrounds. In addition, over 80% (n=192) of the participating players reported having a sport agent (see Table 2).
Table 2

*Phase I Player Development*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Selections</th>
<th># of Participants</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fast Track</td>
<td>Fast Tracker</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>87.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-Fast Tracker</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT Rookie</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>35.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FT Veteran</td>
<td>135</td>
<td>64.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-FT Rookie</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>37.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-FT Veteran</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>62.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Played Minor Hockey Prior To 1st OHL Season</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>28.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>166</td>
<td>69.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Yes, Level of Minor Hockey</td>
<td>Bantam</td>
<td>38</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Midget</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If No, Level of Jr. Hockey</td>
<td>Tier II – A</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>41.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jr. B</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>21.8</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Jr. C</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Jr. D</td>
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<td></td>
<td>European Jr.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other Major Junior</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>e.g. QMJL, WHL</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Sport Agent</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>192</td>
<td>80.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>18.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* FT = Fast Tracker.
Missing data resulted from participants electing not to answer specific survey questions.
Table 3

**Phase I Cognitive Development**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Selections</th>
<th>FT (%)</th>
<th>Non-FT (%)</th>
<th>Total No. (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Institution Presently Attending</td>
<td>Secondary School</td>
<td>141 (67.5)</td>
<td>17 (58.6)</td>
<td>158 (66.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>College</td>
<td>24 (11.5)</td>
<td>5 (17.2)</td>
<td>29 (12.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>University</td>
<td>30 (14.4)</td>
<td>6 (20.7)</td>
<td>36 (15.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Not Attending</td>
<td>12 (5.7)</td>
<td>1 (3.4)</td>
<td>13 (5.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earned High School Diploma</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>94 (45.4)</td>
<td>14 (48.3)</td>
<td>108 (45.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>111 (53.6)</td>
<td>15 (51.7)</td>
<td>126 (52.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Academic Progress</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades Declining Since Beginning OHL</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>99 (47.4)</td>
<td>17 (58.6)</td>
<td>116 (48.7)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>103 (49.3)</td>
<td>11 (37.6)</td>
<td>114 (47.9)</td>
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<tr>
<td>If Yes, Perceived Reasons:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Poorer Attendance</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>44 (21.1)</td>
<td>9 (31)</td>
<td>53 (22.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>68 (32.5)</td>
<td>9 (31)</td>
<td>77 (32.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Decrease In Time Available To Study</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>75 (35.9)</td>
<td>11 (37.9)</td>
<td>86 (36.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>35 (16.7)</td>
<td>7 (24.1)</td>
<td>42 (17.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Lack Of Tutoring</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>25 (12.0)</td>
<td>5 (17.2)</td>
<td>30 (12.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>84 (40.2)</td>
<td>13 (44.8)</td>
<td>97 (40.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Lack Of Guidance Counseling</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>14 (6.7)</td>
<td>4 (13.8)</td>
<td>18 (7.6)</td>
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<td>No</td>
<td>94 (45.0)</td>
<td>14 (48.3)</td>
<td>108 (45.4)</td>
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<td>Lack of Motivation</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>74 (35.4)</td>
<td>15 (51.7)</td>
<td>89 (37.4)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>37 (17.7)</td>
<td>3 (10.3)</td>
<td>40 (16.8)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lack Of Effective Time Management</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>83 (39.7)</td>
<td>14 (48.3)</td>
<td>97 (40.8)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td>28 (13.4)</td>
<td>4 (13.8)</td>
<td>32 (13.4)</td>
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<td><strong>Academic Opportunities</strong></td>
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<td>Time Education Package Offered</td>
<td>When Drafted</td>
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<td>10 (34.5)</td>
<td>123 (51.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>When Made OHL Team</td>
<td>87 (41.6)</td>
<td>18 (62.1)</td>
<td>105 (44.1)</td>
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<td>Education Package Contents</td>
<td>Tuition</td>
<td>42 (20.1)</td>
<td>8 (27.6)</td>
<td>50 (21.0)</td>
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<td>Books</td>
<td>5 (2.4)</td>
<td>0 (0)</td>
<td>5 (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16 (7.7)</td>
<td>3 (10.3)</td>
<td>19 (8.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuition + Books</td>
<td>92 (44.0)</td>
<td>12 (41.4)</td>
<td>104 (43.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Tuition + Books + Other</td>
<td>38 (18.2)</td>
<td>3 (10.3)</td>
<td>41 (17.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offered US Scholarship</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>89 (42.6)</td>
<td>10 (34.5)</td>
<td>99 (42.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At Time Of OHL Draft</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>113 (54.1)</td>
<td>19 (65.5)</td>
<td>132 (55.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Yes, Difficult To Turn Down US Scholarship</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69 (33.0)</td>
<td>8 (27.6)</td>
<td>77 (32.4)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>40 (19.1)</td>
<td>4 (13.8)</td>
<td>44 (18.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If Yes, Experience Anxiety In Scholarship Decision</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>36 (17.2)</td>
<td>6 (20.7)</td>
<td>42 (17.6)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>60 (28.7)</td>
<td>6 (20.7)</td>
<td>66 (27.7)</td>
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</table>

**Note.** Missing data resulted from participants electing not to answer specific survey questions.
Table 4

*Phase 1 Social Development*

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<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Selections</th>
<th>FT (%)</th>
<th>Non-FT (%)</th>
<th>Total (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of Junior Teams</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>31 (14.8)</td>
<td>14 (48.3)</td>
<td>45 (18.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>103 (49.3)</td>
<td>12 (41.4)</td>
<td>115 (48.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>49 (23.4)</td>
<td>3 (10.3)</td>
<td>52 (22.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18 (8.6)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>18 (7.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3 (1.4)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>3 (1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3 (1.4)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>3 (1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Junior Experience</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3 (1.4)</td>
<td>2 (6.9)</td>
<td>5 (2.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>19 (9.1)</td>
<td>8 (27.6)</td>
<td>27 (11.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>52 (24.9)</td>
<td>10 (34.5)</td>
<td>62 (26.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>3</td>
<td>54 (25.8)</td>
<td>4 (13.8)</td>
<td>58 (24.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>4</td>
<td>48 (23.0)</td>
<td>3 (10.3)</td>
<td>51 (21.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24 (11.5)</td>
<td>2 (6.9)</td>
<td>26 (10.9)</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>8 (3.8)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>8 (3.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of Years Away From Home</td>
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<td>10 (4.8)</td>
<td>6 (20.7)</td>
<td>16 (6.8)</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1</td>
<td>58 (27.8)</td>
<td>7 (24.1)</td>
<td>64 (27.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>52 (24.9)</td>
<td>8 (27.6)</td>
<td>60 (25.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43 (20.6)</td>
<td>2 (6.9)</td>
<td>45 (18.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>34 (16.3)</td>
<td>5 (17.2)</td>
<td>39 (16.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>5</td>
<td>10 (4.8)</td>
<td>1 (3.4)</td>
<td>11 (4.6)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>1 (0.5)</td>
<td>0 (0.0)</td>
<td>1 (0.4)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Missing data resulted from participants electing not to answer specific survey questions.
Phase I Cognitive Development

Phase I results revealed that 94% (n=223) of the players were attending an educational institution. Approximately 66% (n=158) of the participants were attending secondary school, 15% (n=36) of the participants were attending university, 12% (n=29) of the participants were attending college, and 6% (n=13) reported not attending an institution. Forty-five percent (n=158) of the participants reported having already earned a high school diploma. In terms of academic progress, 46% (n=116) of the players reported experiencing a decline in their grades since beginning an OHL career. Perceived decrease in time available to study (36.1%), lack of motivation (37.4%), and lack of effective time management (40.8%) were cited most often as reasons for this decline. Poorer attendance (22.3%), perceived lack of tutoring (12.6%), and perceived lack of guidance counseling (7.6%) were also identified as reasons for any decline in a participant’s grades. In the area of academic opportunities, over 50% (n=123) of the participants were offered post secondary education packages by their respective team upon being drafted. Another 44% (n=105) of the participants received a post secondary education package upon making their respective OHL team. Over 60% (n= 145) of the players reported having their tuition and books paid for as a part of their post-secondary package. The remaining players (n=74) will have tuition (21.0%), books (2.1%) or other arrangement (8.0%) included in their package.

United States (U.S.) scholarships were reported to be offered to over 40% of the players (n= 99) at the time of the OHL draft. Thirty-two percent (n=77) of the participants indicated the decision to decline the U.S. scholarship offer as difficult. An additional 18% (n=42), reported anxiety when making the decision to decline the U.S. scholarship.
Comparison of fast trackers and non-fast trackers. A comparison of fast tracking and non-fast tracking participants’ cognitive development revealed several findings. The percentage of players attending post-secondary institutions (% college, % university) was slightly higher for non-fast trackers (17.2%, 20.7%) in comparison to fast trackers (11.5%, 14.4%). Moreover, fast trackers (45.4%) and non-fast trackers (48.3%) reported similar statistics of having already earned a high school diploma.

Academic opportunities including player post secondary education packages and U.S. scholarship opportunities favoured fast trackers. Fifty-four percent of fast trackers were offered post secondary education packages when drafted in comparison to 34% of non-fast trackers. Sixty-two percent of the non-fast trackers reported receiving a post-secondary education package upon making the team. Alternatively, 41% of the fast-trackers were awarded education packages upon making the team. With respect to U.S. scholarships, 42% of the fast trackers reported receiving a U.S. scholarship offer at the time of the OHL draft. In comparison, 34% of the non-fast trackers noted receiving a U.S. scholarship offer at the time of the OHL draft (see Table 3).

Phase I Social Development

Phase I results revealed that almost 30% (n=70) of the OHL participants had been traded at some level of junior hockey. Eighty percent (n=62) of the players reported being traded at the Major Junior OHL level. Despite the concern for OHL player movement, the players reported a relatively stable home environment. The participants’ average junior experience was approximately three (2.98) years while the number of years away from home was 2.27 years. In addition, more than 68% (n=160) of the participants had played for two or fewer junior teams and only 10% (n= 24) had played for three or more junior teams.
Comparison of fast trackers and non-fast trackers. When comparing fast trackers and non-fast tracker in terms of social development, several noteworthy results emerged. The stability of fast tracking and non-fast tracking players was rather similar. Twenty-nine percent of fast trackers and 31% of non-fast trackers reported having been traded. Fifteen percent of fast trackers and 17% non-fast trackers indicated having been traded more than once.

Fast trackers reported more junior experience than non-fast trackers. Forty-eight percent of non-fast trackers reported their present junior team as their first junior team. In comparison, 15% of fast trackers reported their present team as their first junior team. In addition, 11% of fast trackers noted possessing one year or less of junior hockey experience while 35% of non-fast trackers recorded having one year or less of junior experience. Aside from OHL players living at home, fast trackers and non-fast trackers shared a similar number of years away from home. Fifty-three percent of fast trackers and 52% of non-fast trackers reported living away from home for one or two years (see Table 4).

Instrument Properties

The internal consistencies were determined for each of the ten Fast Track Questionnaire subscales (Academic Goals, Duration of Transition, Selected Components of Transition, Individuals Involved in Transition, Conflicts, Confidence, Emotions, Team Evaluation, Team Preparation, Mental Skills Training, and Satisfaction with Performance) using alpha scale reliabilities on SPSS. The FT Questionnaire subscales demonstrated adequate internal consistencies ($\alpha = .71$ to .88), except the academic goals subscale, in which the deletion of one item (Question #58) was necessary to obtain an adequate internal consistency ($\alpha = .62$) (see Table 5).
Table 5

Subscale Reliabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subscale</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
<th>Alpha if item deleted</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cognitive</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Goals</td>
<td>.5440</td>
<td>.6225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(Question #58)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration of Transition</td>
<td>.7980</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selected Components Of Transition</td>
<td>.7247</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individuals Involved In Transition</td>
<td>.7395</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emotional</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conflicts</td>
<td>.7152</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>.7417</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emotions</td>
<td>.7758</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Satisfaction</strong></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Team Evaluation</td>
<td>.8441</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Mental Skills Training</td>
<td>.8785</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction of Performance</td>
<td>.7307</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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</table>
Descriptives of Phase I Fast Tracking Questionnaire Subscales

Descriptives were also generated on the ten subscales for six independent variables (fast tracker, non-fast tracker, fast track rookie, non-fast rookie, fast track veteran and non-fast track veteran) (see Table 6).

Examining the means, the fast track and non-fast track players scored similarly on each subscale. In order to further investigate the relationship between fast trackers and non-fast trackers and the four dependent variables (cognitive, social, emotional, satisfaction) derived from the ten subscales, an ANOVA and three MANOVAs were conducted. Results for the ANOVA indicated no significant effect between fast trackers and non-fast trackers ($F=3.498$, $p=0.063$) on cognitive development. The three MANOVAs also yielded no significant effects between fast trackers and non-fast trackers on the dependent variables of social development ($F=.815$, $p=.487$), emotional development ($F=.940$, $p=.422$), and satisfaction ($F=1.155$, $p=.328$).

Analyses of Study Hypothesis

Hypothesis 1. It was hypothesized that there would be no difference in the cognitive development between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players. To examine this hypothesis, descriptives were generated and an ANOVA was conducted comparing fast trackers' and non-fast trackers' academic goals and academic opportunities. An examination of the Phase I cognitive data indicated minor differences between the two independent samples, although not significant. A higher percentage of non-fast trackers were presently enrolled in a post secondary institution while a higher percentage of fast trackers received guaranteed post secondary education packages and U.S. scholarship offers at the time of their OHL draft. However, the null
Table 6

Descriptives of Phase I Fast Tracking Questionnaire Subscales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dependent Variable</th>
<th>Fast Tracker</th>
<th>Non-Fast Tracker</th>
<th>FT Rookie</th>
<th>Non-FT Rookie</th>
<th>FT Veteran</th>
<th>Non-FT Veteran</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>** Academic Goals</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>3.96</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>3.98</td>
<td>4.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.60</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>.29</td>
</tr>
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<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Duration of Tran.</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>4.36</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>3.83</td>
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<tr>
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<td>1.03</td>
<td>1.21</td>
<td>1.10</td>
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<td>1.01</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Selected Components Of Tran.</td>
<td>3.21</td>
<td>3.07</td>
<td>3.30</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.16</td>
<td>3.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>1.12</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>1.19</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Individuals Involved In Tran.</td>
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<td>4.65</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>4.37</td>
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<td>1.07</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>.95</td>
<td>1.04</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Conflicts</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>2.30</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>2.77</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>1.27</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td>.72</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>1.35</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Confidence</td>
<td>3.24</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>2.91</td>
<td>2.92</td>
<td>3.42</td>
<td>3.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>1.10</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>1.30</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Emotions</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.69</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.70</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>1.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>.85</td>
<td>.53</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* Team Preparation</td>
<td>3.10</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>3.63</td>
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<td>3.28</td>
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<td>1.08</td>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Mental Skills Training</td>
<td>3.68</td>
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<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.76</td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>3.43</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>.97</td>
<td>.79</td>
<td>.77</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.86</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>** Satisfaction With Perform.</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>3.89</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>3.97</td>
<td>3.75</td>
<td>3.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>.48</td>
<td>.44</td>
<td>.52</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.47</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard Deviation</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Tran. = transition; ψ 7 pt. Likert Scale; * 6 pt. Likert Scale; ** 5 pt. Likert Scale.
hypothesis was supported as the ANOVA revealed no significant differences between fast tracking and non-fast tracking players’ cognitive development ($F= 3.498, p=0.063$).

Hypothesis 2. An examination of fast tracking and non-fast tracking social development data found fast trackers to have more junior experience but share a similar level of stability (measured in trades, and years away from home) as non-fast tracking players. A MANOVA comparing a fast trackers and non-fast trackers transitional experience including social adjustment with new teammates, new peers, and host family produced no significant findings ($F=.815, p=.487$). Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the social development between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players was supported.

Hypothesis 3. A MANOVA was used to investigate the conflicts, confidence, and emotions experienced by fast tracking and non-fast tracking players. Prior to the MANOVA, an examination of the subscale descriptives revealed similar levels between the two sample groups. The MANOVA evaluating emotional development confirmed the descriptive analysis and found no significant differences between fast tracking and non-fast tracking players’ conflicts, confidence, and emotions ($F=.940, p=.422$). Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in the emotional development between OHL players who fast track and those who do not was supported.

Hypothesis 4. In order to investigate an OHL player’s level of satisfaction, descriptives were generated evaluating fast trackers’ and non-fast trackers’ satisfaction with their OHL team’s player preparation, incorporation of mental skills training and their overall OHL performance (including OHL experience with their coaches, teammates and host family). The MANOVA revealed no significant differences between fast trackers’ and non-fast trackers’ level of
satisfaction. Thus, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in satisfaction between fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players was supported.
CHAPTER V

Phase I Discussion

Fast tracking was found to be the predominant route to the OHL with nearly 88% of the study participants being classified in this category. Tier II Junior A and Junior B appeared to be the most frequent 'stepping stones' to reach the OHL as approximately 70% of the subjects had participated in some level of junior hockey prior to playing in the OHL. This finding supported previous concerns expressed at the Canadian Open Ice Summit that elite minor hockey-aged athletes were leaving the minor hockey system early to enter junior hockey. Prior questions regarding the caliber of competition in midget held true as only 12% of the sample had participated at the midget level in the minor hockey system prior to playing in the OHL.

Phase I also revealed several important findings regarding cognitive, social, and emotional development of the minor hockey-aged player. Academically, 94% of the participants were attending an educational institution. This is an 8% improvement from an earlier study by Baker and Schafer (1988). Improvements in a Major Junior player’s education were also evident in the number of participating players with post secondary education packages. Over 96% of the participants had secured post secondary education packages for participating on their OHL team. With a highly competitive environment for talented bantam-aged players, CHL teams have raised their educational offerings to match the lucrative U.S. college scholarship offers often targeting the same bantam players (Baker & Schafer, 1988). A more balanced student-athlete approach should help parents feel more confident that their son will not run the risk of having little or no future after their playing years are over (Desjardins, 1991). In the past, this concern had been supported by research from Brustad and Ritter-Taylor (1997) on student-athletes in which they reported difficulties with elite athletes balancing the roles of academics and athletics. The
present research findings would indicate that the OHL players are attempting to maintain the proper balance between their academic and athletic roles (Brustad & Ritter-Taylor, 1997).

A comparison of the cognitive development between fast trackers and non-fast trackers yielded several findings. Thirty-eight percent of non-fast trackers reported attending a post secondary institution in comparison to 26% of fast trackers. Based on this finding, some may conclude that non-fast trackers have higher academic goals and are more likely to enroll in a post secondary institution. However, the percentage of non-fast tracking to fast tracking athletes enrolled in a post secondary institution is somewhat misleading. A closer look at the data revealed that the larger proportion of fast trackers (68%) to non-fast trackers (59%) attending secondary school accounted for the majority of the post secondary percentage difference. With similar percentages of fast tracking (45%) and non-fast tracking (48%) participants having already earned their high school diploma, an argument can be put forth that the same percentage of fast trackers will attend college or university once they complete secondary school. A more equal sample may have yielded a similar proportion of participants in secondary and post secondary institutions.

Although the ANOVA found no significant differences in academic goals between fast trackers and non-fast trackers, academic opportunities including time of post secondary educational package offering and U.S. scholarship opportunities favoured fast trackers. Fifty-four percent of the fast trackers reported being offered post secondary education packages at the time of being drafted in comparison to 34% of the non-fast trackers. One plausible explanation for this discrepancy may stem from draft selection. Non-fast trackers were drafted, on average, one round later (5th round) than fast trackers (4th round). The fact that the non-fast tracking athletes were often selected in later rounds may indicate why many of them only received their
post secondary education package upon making the OHL team. In comparison, the fast trackers selected in earlier rounds, were offered post secondary education packages sooner and attracted more U.S. scholarship offers than non-fast trackers. This information would support Deci and Ryan’s (1985) self-determination (intrinsic/extrinsic) theory of participation motivation. The players appear to be selecting the fast tracking route to obtain the greatest challenge in competition (intrinsic motivation) and amount of exposure (extrinsic motivation) to Major Junior hockey teams and U.S. colleges. The large percentage (70%) of the OHL players who participated at the junior level prior to the playing in the OHL would also confirm Deci and Ryan’s (1985) research that both intrinsic (higher competition) and extrinsic (enhanced exposure to Major Junior and U.S. colleges scouts) motivators contribute to the decision to fast track to junior hockey.

In terms of social development, the subjects’ total junior experience was almost three years, while their number of years away from home was just over two years. This discrepancy may stem from many of the fast tracking participants electing to remain at home while playing a lower level of junior hockey before entering in the OHL. As a result, the average number of years away from home is not as high as the average number of years playing junior hockey. This data should dispel perceptions that the majority of fast trackers move away from home to pursue junior hockey. Remaining at home would alleviate any of the young athlete’s symptoms of homesickness and friendsickness to permit the athlete a smoother transition into junior hockey.

Stability appeared to be the greatest area of social concern with 29% of the subjects reported being traded at some level of junior hockey. Although the fast trackers had more junior experience than the non-fast trackers, their stability and years away from home were found to be similar. Twenty-nine percent of fast trackers and 31% of non-fast trackers noted being traded.
The present analysis evaluating the players' social adjustment supported these results finding no significant differences between fast trackers and non-fast trackers in social transition. Utilizing Schlossberg's (1981) Model of Adaptation to Transition, one could attest that both the fast tracking and non-fast tracking cohorts successfully adjusted to the transition of moving away from home, attending a new school, playing on a new team, and living with a host family. Rather than respond negatively to the significant changes and challenges associated with entering Major Junior hockey, the two sample groups appeared to have viewed the transition as an opportunity for positive growth and development (Eccles et al., 1993). While this is an encouraging finding, the overall stability of the junior hockey player through trades and its impact on confidence requires a more thorough investigation.

Adolescence has been viewed as a transitional period shaped with conflict and turmoil, characterized with issues of identity and biological change (Feldman & Elliot, 1990; Ofer et al., 1989). The often unstable and unpredictable nature of a young athlete's self-confidence can impact every facet of the OHL athlete's life including school, relationships with teammates and most notably, performance (Vealey et al., 1998). The present sample of fast trackers had a higher mean score, albeit not significant, than non-fast trackers in the area of confidence. This finding is consistent with previous research indicating that increased sports performance and achievement are correlated with greater levels of self-confidence (Karp, 2000). The fast trackers' success at each step of hockey, whether it is minor hockey or junior hockey, may have improved their confidence in their pursuit of reaching the ultimate goal in hockey, the NHL. This momentum to accelerate through the ranks of hockey may have provided them with slightly higher confidence than non-fast trackers. An individual with high levels of self-confidence is characterized as being tough-minded and emotionally stable (Karp, 2000). Perhaps this higher
level of confidence and tough-mindedness would account for the fast trackers engaging in more conflict and openly expressing more emotions than non-fast trackers. However, this is only true for veteran fast trackers. Fast tracking rookies did display higher levels of conflict. Moreover, non-fast trackers exuded slightly more negative emotions and shared similar levels of confidence. Perhaps the midget experience had provided the non-fast tracker with the necessary confidence to compete at the OHL level. Thus, the overall developmental route of the young athlete was found to have no significant difference on the emotional development, specifically the confidence of the athlete.

The adolescent period has also been identified as the crucial ‘turning point’ in psychosocial development (Roeser, van der Wolf, & Strobel, 2001). Recent research has found that problems during the adolescent period can leave an elite athlete psychologically strained and vulnerable to curtailed education attainments and economic earning in the future (Gould, 1996; Kessler, Foster, Saunders, & Stang, 1995). Therefore, the developmental route a young athlete chooses should be treated on an individual basis to minimize the adolescent athlete’s physical and emotional stressors (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2000).

Although Phase I revealed no significant differences in satisfaction of OHL performance, both fast trackers and non-fast trackers expressed high levels of satisfaction with respect to team preparation, Mental Skills Training and OHL performance. Marked improvements in an OHL organization’s host family recruitment and a more democratic, feedback oriented coaching style may offer reasons as to why fast trackers and non-fast trackers shared high levels of satisfaction (Weiss & Friedrichs, 1986). Major Junior coaches may be exhibiting more open communication with their players regarding expectations and role clarity. This improvement in coaching style may have been spurred by recent sport research documenting the increased importance of
effective interpersonal communication between a coach and player with respect to obtaining peak performance (Butler & Hardy, 1992; Doyle & Parfitt, 1996). Additional research has also found that a more feedback oriented coaching style is associated with greater athlete satisfaction (Allen & Howe, 1998). During the pilot study, several former OHL players reported the noticeable improvements of the OHL teams towards education, host families, and player-coach communication (B. Blain, personal communication, July 4, 2001; T. Bacik, personal communication, July 8, 2001). It would be interesting to note, if former players would share this consensus about their OHL experience.

The composition of the Phase I participants is also noteworthy. Over 35% of the sample was comprised of rookie players. The high percentage of rookie players conforms to the high turnover in elite sport as documented by Bourner and Weese (1995). Future research should track the reasons a player does not return to a team the following season (e.g., graduation, injury). This departing population may provide valuable information on the topic of player development. The reason(s) a player does not return may be strictly performance related (e.g., skill) or linked to cognitive (e.g., academic problems), social (e.g., homesickness), emotional (e.g., conflict) or satisfaction issues (e.g., playing time). Through this effort, the OHL rookie’s complex web of social and intellectual challenges can be further untangled (Paul & Brier, 2001).

Limitations

Phase I of the study possessed several limitations such as the sample, the Fast Tracking Questionnaire, accessibility and transference.

Sample

The Phase I sample consisted of Major Junior A Ontario Hockey League (OHL) players from 16 to 21 years, representing a sample of geographical convenience. Ideally, Major Junior A
hockey players from both the Western Hockey League (WHL), and the Quebec Major Junior League (QMJHL) would have been included in the study.

Overall, the exploratory study unveiled a relatively small number of non-fast trackers (12%) in the OHL sample. Future research should examine players from all junior leagues (Jr. D., Jr. C., Jr. B., Tier II, Jr. A) as well as bantam and midget-aged athletes in the Canadian Minor Hockey System. A larger cross-section of minor hockey-aged athletes who have not achieved Major Junior hockey’s elite level may provide further evidence on the impact of fast tracking on a young athlete’s psychological development.

*Fast Tracking Questionnaire*

While the fast tracking questionnaire produced valuable demographic information regarding the OHL players, several limitations exist with its format. The primary limitation lies with the lack of consistency of the subscales. Five of the subscales are on a 7 pt. Likert scale, four are on a 5 pt. Likert scale, and one is on a 6 pt. Likert scale. This variability in Likert scale values posed a problem in attempting to directly compare data from different subscales. In addition, more specific questions regarding the participants’ motivation to fast track and their adjustment with host family, and academic institution could be insightful to future player development.

Additional limitations exist with the participant responses and the data collection procedure. The Fast Tracking Questionnaire was distributed by an OHL team contact often the OHL assistant or head coach. Despite reassurances of confidentiality in the letter of information provided with the questionnaire, players may have altered their responses for fear of coach reprisal. Having the researcher administer the questionnaire may help alleviate this concern.
Accessibility

In Major Junior A hockey, the competition for talented, elite young athletes is so fierce with U.S. colleges that several coaches were reluctant to participate in the research for fear of exposing a weakness in their organization or the OHL. Despite a thorough contact process involving the support of Canadian hockey's highest governing body, the CHA, only 10 of the 20 OHL teams elected to fully participate. Three teams partially participated while seven others declined. Until the image of research in hockey is widely viewed as a proactive, innovative process, the 'old school' intrusive stigma of research may hinder improvements to Canada's game. In the future, it is the endeavour of projects such as this to be viewed by teams as an opportunity for advancement rather than a disruption.

Transference

Whenever a sport specific study is published, there is a temptation to generalize the findings to all levels and groups within the sport. The fast tracking information derived from the study is limited to Major Junior OHL players. These findings should not be generalized to other Major Junior Leagues or levels of junior or minor hockey. However, the study should serve as a benchmark for further research in the area of psychological player development within each of the area specific hockey cohorts. Through the acknowledgement of the limitations of sample, accessibility, and transference, the study is attempting to establish areas of improvement for future research.
CHAPTER VI
Phase II Results And Discussion

Phase II results provide confirmation and elaboration to the Phase I results on the psychological development (cognitive, social, emotional), player development, and satisfaction of fast tracking and non-fast tracking players. The results were derived from the participant responses emerging from the focus groups. Figure 1 and Figure 2 presents a fast tracker and non-fast tracker's development, respectively (Level 1 of Figures 1 & 2). Both Figures 1 and 2 consist of five categories: cognitive development, social development, emotional development, satisfaction, and player development (Level 2). Specific components of each of the five categories represent Level 3. Level 4 represents further elaborations on the previous level. The data in Figure 1 and Figure 2 are presented from left to right, while the reader is reminded that the actual analyses progressed from right to left.

The number of responses (meaning units) elicited by the players on the previously specified five categories are illustrated in both figures. Overall, fast trackers reported more meaning units on development (166) than non-fast trackers (94). Fast trackers' most frequently reported categories were player development (49) followed by social development (40), cognitive development (32), emotional development (26), and satisfaction (19). Conversely, non-fast trackers' most frequently reported categories were social development (26) followed by player development (25), cognitive development (20), emotional development (14), and satisfaction (9).
Figure 1
Fast Tracker Development

Cognitive Development (32)
  - Sport Goals (14)
    - Academic Goals (6)
    - Educational Package (9)
      - U.S. Scholarship (3)
  - Decisional Support (9)
    - Former OHL Player (1)
      - Family (2)
      - Former Coach (3)
      - Scout (1)
      - Agent (2)
    - Transitional Support (10)
      - Transition Experience (13)
      - Trades (8)
    - Emotions Experienced (6)
      - Off Ice (1)
      - Lack of Playing Time (3)
    - Player Challenges (4)
      - Coach (2)
      - Host Family (3)
      - Teammates (2)
  - Social Development (40)
    - Confidence Level (9)
    - Conflict with Others (7)
  - Emotional Development (26)
    - OHL Performance (5)
      - OHL Decision (8)
      - Season Expectations (8)
      - Fast Tracking Route (29)
        - Physical (8)
        - Mental (3)
        - Preparation (3)
        - Future Rookie Development (6)
      - Previous Player Level (5)
        - Reason Fast Track (8)
        - Fast Track Experience (18)
    - Conflict with Others (7)
  - Satisfaction (19)
    - Unspecified (5)
    - Present (5)
    - Future (4)
  - Future Use (2)
    - Former OHL Player (1)
      - Family (2)
      - Former Coach (3)
      - Scout (1)
      - Agent (2)
Figure 2
Non-Fast Tracker Development

Cognitive Development (20)
  - Sport Goals (6)
  - Academic Goals (4)
  - Educational Package (9)
  - U.S. Scholarship (1)
  - Past (3)
  - Present (2)
  - Future (1)
  - Knowledge (5)
  - Content (1)
  - Future Use (3)
  - Family (4)
  - Former Coach (1)
  - Scout (1)

Social Development (26)
  - Decisional Support (6)
  - Transitional Support (8)
  - Transition Experience (9)
  - Trades (5)

Emotional Development (14)
  - Emotions Experienced (3)
  - Player Challenges (2)
  - Confidence Level (4)
  - Conflict with Others (5)
  - Role of Teammates (1)
  - Lack of Playing Time (1)
  - Coach (4)
  - Teammates (1)

Satisfaction (9)
  - OHL Performance (3)
  - OHL Decision (4)
  - Season Expectations (2)
  - Previous Player Level (3)
  - Reason Non-Fast Track (4)
  - Non-Fast Track Experience (6)

Player Development (25)
  - Non-Fast Tracking Route (13)
  - Physical (5)
  - Preparation (3)
  - Mental (3)

Level 1  Level 2  Level 3  Level 4

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Cognitive Development

The cognitive development category involved a player’s sport specific goals, academic goals, education package, and contemplation of a U.S. scholarship. Sport specific goals comprised of past, present, and future sport goals (Level 4 of Figures 1 & 2). Academic goals included a player’s assessment of his academic goals and achievement. Education package contained a player’s knowledge of his education package, the education package contents, and his future use of the education package. U.S. scholarship examined a player’s deliberation of any U.S. scholarship offers prior to electing to play in the OHL.

Fast Trackers

Fast trackers reported more sport goals (14) than academic goals (6). The most frequently cited goals for sport were past goals (5) and present goals (5). An example of a fast tracker’s past goal is exemplified in the following quotation, “I pretty much wanted to prove that I belonged here and could play in this league. So many people told me...I was too small to play in this league [OHL]...so basically my main goal was to prove them wrong.” The following quotation illustrates a present goal of a fast tracker, “My goal for the rest of this year is to keep improving, getting better with our final eight games and hopefully the playoffs.”

Within academic goals, fast tracking players reported their academic goals had not changed and in some instances increased with the greater level of educational support at the OHL level. This is illustrated by the following quotation, “My goals have probably been higher since I made it [to the OHL] because they watch you more carefully...now we have a guidance counselor.” In subsequent discussions of a player’s education package and U.S. scholarship opportunities, a player’s knowledge of his education package was most frequently cited. Some players had a firm understanding of his post secondary education package while others appeared
unsure of its content. The following citation presents a player’s solid understanding of what post secondary education he should receive from his OHL team in the future. “For each year you play, you get a certain amount of university paid for…if we are here for 4 years, it would pay off a full stay at university. It’s definitely something we [OHL rookies] will use in the future, regardless if hockey works out or not.”

Non-Fast Trackers

Alternatively, non-fast tracking athletes reported their education package (9) more in discussions than sport goals (6), academic goals (4), and U.S. scholarship opportunities (1). Similar to the fast trackers, a large variability in knowledge of the player’s education package existed. The following citation illustrates a player’s comprehensive understanding of his education package, “The biggest thing for me [in terms of playing in the OHL] was the education package.” In comparison, a peer contended, “There was not much talk about mine. It was just, I came into training camp not knowing if I could make it or not. Just making it was a bit of an accomplishment for me. Any package is just fine for me.” The second statement typified the Phase I result that non-fast trackers often had to make the OHL team before being assured of a post secondary education package. The topic of U.S. scholarship opportunities also followed the Phase I non-fast tracker trend as only a few of the participants had considered going the U.S. college route. This is characterized in the following quotation from a young rookie player, “Before I decided to come to the OHL, I was really heavily into trying to get a really high scholarship into an IVY league school.”

Social Development

The social development category entails decisional support and transition/stability. Decisional support refers to the influence of others on the player’s decision to play in the OHL.
This category can be further divided into family, former coach, agent, scout, and former player (Level 4 of Figures 1 & 2). Transition/stability involves an evaluation of a player’s transition into the OHL. For the fast tracker, this entails the transition from bantam or junior hockey into the OHL. In contrast, the non-fast tracker comments on the move from midget hockey to the OHL. Transition/stability can be further subdivided into transitional support, transition experience, and trades (Level 4 of Figures 1 & 2). Transitional support observes the role of others in the player’s transition into the OHL. Transitional experience elaborates on the player’s adjustment to the OHL. Trades offer the players an opportunity to provide insight into player movement in junior hockey.

*Fast Trackers*

During the focus group interviews, fast trackers reported most frequently on issues surrounding transition/stability (31) than decisional support (9). Under transition and stability, transitional experience (13) was most often cited. Analyzing transitional experience further, schools and host families were the main reoccurring themes. An example is as follows, “At home my parents were always on me for my school work. When I came here, they [host family] weren’t really on me so I didn’t do my schoolwork that much.” American rookie players (n=2) separately reported the most struggle with the transition in academics. This is evident in the following citations, “The school has been a lot different. Been tougher. American and Canadian schools are a lot different. I felt the school adjustment to be the toughest” and “The whole school thing is a big, big difference…it is a cultural change…and none of us [OHL rookies] are really used to that kind of thing.”

Unlike previous research on an athlete’s social support, fast trackers contended that present coaches (5) and veterans (3) offered the greatest amount of transitional support.
(Rosenfeld et al., 1998). Rosenfeld and colleagues found that coaches and other teammates offered technical challenge and shared social reality, respectively, but did not provide emotional support to teammates. An example of the coach and teammate support is as follows, “There are definitely some good veteran guys on this team that I think everyone would agree helped out to a certain extent and I think the coaching staff was helpful too.” In comparison, former coaches (3) were reported to be the most frequently cited source of decisional support for the players. For example one player stated, “Probably my coaches in bantam ‘AAA’ they pushed me to enter the draft.” Moreover, family (2) was the second most frequently cited source of decisional support for the players. One player reported the role of family in making the decision to play in the OHL. “My parents definitely helped me out a lot. Throughout the whole last year my mom wanted me to attempt a scholarship while my dad wanted me to come here [OHL]. So basically there was mixed feelings, so we had to talk it over.”

**Non-Fast Trackers**

Similar to fast trackers, non-fast trackers cited transition/stability (20) more than decisional support (6). Within transition/stability, transitional experience (9) again proved to be the most frequent topic of discussion. The players’ host families and living away from home proved to be the two main foci. The following two quotations exemplify these two themes, “You are certainly thrust into a situation…you grow up in a hurry” and “Living away from home, at the beginning of the year, the billets are complete strangers to you.”

Unlike fast trackers, non-fast trackers cited their families (4) as the most frequent sources of decisional support to play in the OHL. This is apparent in the following quotation, “Over the summer, I was kind of teetering over the edge of getting a scholarship or going to the ‘O’ [OHL],
and at the end of the summer my parents and I decided to go to the OHL camp and if you make it. Just take it. 'One bird in the hand, is worth two in the bush.'"

*Emotional Development*

The emotional development category evaluates a player’s emotional development during the OHL season. It can be further broken down into emotions experienced, player challenges, confidence levels, and conflicts with others (Level 3 of Figures 1 & 2). A player’s description of his emotions are described under the category of emotions experienced. A player’s challenges documents the issues a player has frequently struggled with over the course of his rookie OHL season. The category of confidence levels identifies participating player’s comments on the impact of participating in the OHL on their confidence. Conflicts with others refers to individuals (e.g., host family, teammates, coaches) with whom a player has engaged in a confrontation.

*Fast Trackers*

The player’s level of confidence (9) was the most frequently cited area of emotional development for fast trackers. A player’s confidence was often linked to his perceptions of his performance. The rookies noted several performance related decreases in their confidence, but overall they felt their confidence has increased from participating in the OHL. This is exemplified in the following two quotations, “I think for me right now, it has increased my confidence because even with the times where things have been going hard when not getting points or having a couple of bad games in a row. For the most part, I have seen myself play well...I’d definitely say it was positive” and “Been pretty confident. However my ‘goose egg’ in goals is really hurting my confidence. I can improve on that.”
Conflicts with others (7), specifically with host family, were commonly noted in the interviews (Level 4 Figures 1 & 2). The following comment characterizes the daily trials of one player in a difficult living environment, "With my first billets, it was a difficult situation because the parents were split up, and the dad was still living in the basement. So there was so much tension in the house." Emotions experienced (6) from the fast tracking players ranged from happiness and excitement, to shock and frustration. A player’s emotions appeared to be tightly intertwined with a player’s challenges, specifically lack of playing time (Level 4, Figures 1 & 2). For example, one player reported, "It's been pretty tough, I guess. From the amount the [past] rookies had played last year, I expected to play a little more."

**Non-Fast Trackers**

Unlike fast trackers, non-fast trackers cited conflict with others (5), specifically the coaches (4), most frequently (Level 4, Figures 1 & 2). The conflict content focused on the rookie players learning to accept constructive criticism. One player recalled his perception of the coach’s constructive criticism, “When they are criticizing you, you feel like they hate you. I suck out there. But they say they are doing it to make you a better player. It is hard to see at that time.” Perhaps the non-fast trackers had not been subjected to such honesty from their coaches. With each step of junior hockey, the expectations to win and perform optimally are increased. No longer are coaches often parents working with the athletes. Major junior hockey is a business, and the players are evaluated on a consistent basis. This junior coaching mentality may generate conflict for the non-fast tracker who may be encountering this criticism for the first time.

A player’s confidence level (4) was also cited. The following two quotations illustrate the initial impact of moving from the minor hockey system (midget) to the OHL on a young
athlete's confidence, "It is very tough at the start to get some confidence, but now almost being a year in the league, now you know what it takes," and "This is my first year playing with older guys two or three years older. It is pretty hard on my confidence. In minor hockey, I was always the captain of the team. Here I'm seventh defenseman."

**Satisfaction**

The satisfaction category involves a player's discussion of his satisfaction regarding his OHL performance thus far (OHL Performance), decision to play in the OHL (OHL Decision), and expectations coming into the OHL season (Season Expectations) (Level 3, Figures 1 & 2).

**Fast Trackers**

In this category, a fast tracker's satisfaction with his decision to play in the OHL was most frequently cited (8). The Phase II results supported the Phase I findings as fast tracking players reported being satisfied with their decisions to play in the OHL recognizing the increased level of play, exposure to the NHL, and a variety of options that the OHL experience can lead to. The discussion prompted a player to comment, "At the start of the year, I was kind of in the fog as to where this career was going to take me. Now, I realized that there are so many options that this can give you. You can go to school from this, pretty much anyway you go."

The OHL experience was reported to match the expectations the players had going into the OHL season. The following quotation exemplifies this point, "I talked to them [coaches] in the summer and they told me what to expect when I came here. And how to train and everything. So when I came here it was not much of a shock for me." Moreover, the players were mixed on their level of satisfaction with their performance. Several of the players linked their dissatisfaction to their lack of point production. This is apparent in the following citation, "I guess I would agree...about not being too satisfied as far as point production would go."
Non-Fast Trackers

Non-fast tracker’s satisfaction with their decision to play in the OHL was most often reported (4). Similar to Phase I and fast trackers, the non-fast tracking players were satisfied with their decision to participate in the OHL. One player characterized this satisfaction, “Yeah by far [I’m satisfied]. I’ve talked to a couple of friends back home and they are not into it [hockey] as much as they were before.”

Unlike fast trackers, satisfaction of OHL performance (3) was the second most documented subcategory over season expectations (2). Again, the players were satisfied with the OHL experience but dissatisfied with their on-ice performance. For example, a player offered, “I’m not very satisfied with my on-ice performance. I’m having a good time with the guys and the situation, like practice. But game days are not fun.” The non-fast tracking players’ dissatisfaction of performance were reported to be linked to their preseason expectations for performance. A player supported this comment with the following quotation, “In the summer, I thought I was playing really well…so coming in I thought I would be playing really well…being 4th or 5th defenseman or something like that…and believing what other people were telling me…It has all changed.”

Player Development

The player development category differs for the fast tracker and the non-fast tracker (Figures 1 & 2). The fast tracker player development category entails fast tracking route, physical (development), mental (development), preparation, and future rookie development (Level 3, Figures 1 & 2). The fast tracking route category can be further subdivided into previous player level, reason for fast tracking and fast tracking experience (Level 4, Figures 1 & 2). Previous player level examines the player’s level of competition the season prior to
participating in the OHL. Reasons for fast tracking provide a player an opportunity to discuss several of his motives for participating in previous player level. Fast tracking experience observes the player’s perception of the fast tracking experience, any challenges last season, recommendations regarding past route, and noticeable differences from last season.

In comparison, the non-fast tracker player development category has Level 2 subcategories of non-fast tracking route, physical (development), preparation, and future rookie development. The noticeable difference is the subcategory of non-fast tracking route rather than fast tracking route. The infrastructure of the non-fast tracking route category is essentially the same as the fast tracking route subcategories, however, the non-fast trackers are reflecting on their experience of playing midget hockey rather than bantam or junior hockey prior to playing in the OHL.

Fast Trackers

During the course of the focus group interviews, player development (49) was the most frequently cited category. Specifically, the subcategory of fast tracking route (29) was most often discussed by fast tracking players, with a player’s reflection of his fast tracking experience (18) comprising the majority of the citations. This is apparent in the following player’s quotation regarding the player’s perception of fast tracking, “I don’t think I raced at all [through the minor hockey system]. My parents didn’t care [whether or not I skipped midget and played junior hockey]... I could have played whatever league I wanted to play.”

While the perceptions of fast tracking appeared to be absent from the fast trackers players, several valid reasons for the move to junior hockey were presented. Several players noted the increased speed, and the overall increased level of competition as key reasons for fast tracking. The following citations offer two players’ rationales for bypassing midget, “The level
was just faster from bantam to junior. It prepared you more and was similar to the OHL with workouts and practices” and “It really depends on where you play minor hockey. Where I played minor hockey, it was not really that competitive of a league. So, I had to step up another level so it would be competitive.” The latter player’s rationale added location to the equation of determining a player’s suitable level of competition to foster development. Subsequently, a talented young player may move to junior hockey to seek a higher level of competition not offered locally within the minor hockey system.

Despite noticeable strength differences from more experienced veterans and teammates in junior hockey, a positive consensus on participating in junior hockey over midget was formed amongst the fast trackers. Several of the fast trackers contended that the move to junior hockey was much smoother due to the fact that they could remain at home while entering into the junior hockey environment. This supported the Phase I finding that many of the fast trackers remained at home while playing for their first junior team. The discussion prompted one player to emphasize this point, “For me, I would definitely recommend the situation I was in (playing Tier II A). I was on a first place team playing at home. Great hockey city. Everything was ideal.” Another player also strongly recommended playing a year of junior hockey before embarking on an OHL career, “this is the best way to increase your skill in one year.”

Physically, the fast trackers noted a difference from the previous season. This is apparent in the following citation, ”Yeah, physically, the speed of the game. It is a lot faster. Guys are a lot stronger even though for the most part they are all the same age.” The players also noticed a difference mentally. For example one player commented, “For the most part, we are all more mentally mature. Just because of the whole moving away from home thing...your parents are not there to bail you out.” Under the subcategory of preparation, the mental aspect was also a
common topic emphasized. An example illustrating its importance is evident in the following quotation, "You have got to be mentally tough because you are going to go through scoring droughts. Some people like us [rookies] who sit out a couple of games...you have to be ready to handle that throughout the 68 game season and playoffs."

Recommendations for future rookie development focused on being dedicated to working hard at school, in the gym and at the rink on a consistent basis. The following quotation confirms this point, "You have to work hard regardless of how much you are playing or what role you have on the team your first year because coaches recognize players that work hard everyday. And that is all you can ask as a coach." Alongside the physical preparatory steps for the OHL, another player commented on the importance of maintaining his confidence, "Keep your confidence up. Because even if you are having a tough year, you still got a couple of years after that in the OHL...the next couple of years will be your turn to score."

Non-Fast Trackers

Although non-fast trackers remained in the minor hockey system an extra season, player development (25) was cited second only to social development (26) in discussion. A non-fast tracking player’s experience (6) was the predominant area of discussion within the category of player development. Recommendations regarding the benefit of midget hockey for future players were varied. Several non-fast trackers noted that midget hockey provided an excellent opportunity for skill development and extra ice time. This is apparent in the following quotation, "I think playing midget gave me more of a chance to develop my skills more. Being one of the better players on the team, I was on the ice in key situations which helped me develop as a player. Whereas if I played Junior A, the local team, I would have played fourth line or not even dressed every game." Midget hockey was also reported to favour a late ‘bloomer’ or a later
physically developing athlete, "I think midget was good for me because I didn't develop
physically as quick as a lot of people. Like those that are strong enough or big enough to play
Junior A. Staying in midget helped me. Then over the summer, I put on some weight and got
ready for junior." Despite its apparent benefit, midget hockey may not be suited for all elite
players, "Midget was not a good stepping stone it was almost a joke. I was one of the oldest
kids. It was treated as a joke. Nobody really, all the good players were in Tier II or Junior B."

In terms of physical development, the non-fast trackers conceded that skating everyday and
working out was making them stronger, faster and physically more mature. For example one
player commented, "Just skating everyday and being around the older guys. Living an older life,
being more mature. I am more mature than they [his friends] are. And also more physically
mature."

Goal setting appears to be the main source of mental preparation for the non-fast trackers.
For example, the players on one team regularly goal set as a team and individually, "We split our
68 game schedule down to 6 segments...Before each segment we write down three personal
goals and three team goals. And then at the end of the segment, coach meets with everyone
individually and see if you have reached your goals and if the team has."

Similar to the fast trackers, non-fast trackers recognized the value of hard work on the ice
and off ice in the classroom. For example, one player offered, "You definitely have to work hard
at everything or otherwise you will slip somewhere else. If you don't work hard at school, you
are going to pay for it." Often times non-fast trackers were cited as encouraging future rookie
players to maintain their confidence throughout the first season. One non-fast tracker
commented, "The rookies coming in, keep your head up. Don't get discouraged you're probably
going to be a third or fourth line guy. So just give it everything you got and it will be your turn when the 2\textsuperscript{nd} or 3\textsuperscript{rd} year comes around you’ll be the ‘go to guy’ on the team.”
CHAPTER VII

Conclusion

The purpose of this study (Phase I and Phase II) was to investigate the cognitive, social, and emotional development of Major Junior OHL hockey players. To achieve this goal, a multifaceted research design incorporating quantitative (questionnaire) and qualitative (focus group interview sessions) methods was utilized. An overview of the two research strategies' findings is necessary to develop recommendations for future research and player development.

Two leading hockey organizations have contended that fast tracking through the minor hockey system to junior hockey may affect a player’s psychological development. Thus, if fast tracking does negatively impact a player’s development, more players may opt to remain in the minor hockey system longer and participate at the midget level. Because the topic of fast tracking is in its infancy, no previous research or data were available for comparison.

Evidence from the present study, revealed no significant differences between the cognitive, social, and emotional development of fast tracking and non-fast tracking OHL players. The research did, however, find that fast tracking is apparent and thus the norm at the Major Junior OHL level. Only a small percentage of the players sampled (12%) elected to remain in the minor hockey system and participate at the midget level. Eighty-eight percent of the remaining participants fast tracked with the majority (70%) of the participants having played some level of junior hockey prior to playing in the OHL. Phase II focus group participants cited parents and former coaches as the most influential individuals on their decision to fast track. Moreover, the player’s teammates and present coaches were also recognized as playing as a significant role in helping them make their transition into junior hockey. An increased level of competition, more
exposure to college and professional scouts, and a better source of preparation for the OHL were provided as the main reasons for fast tracking into junior hockey.

The present research offered further support for the elite athlete to fast track and play a year of junior hockey while living at home. The study revealed a discrepancy between years of junior experience (3 years) and number of years away from home (2.3 years). This trend indicated that many of the fast trackers remained at home while competing at the junior level. In this ‘ideal’ situation, the player could continue his studies at the same high school and maintain his established network of friends, therefore creating a more stable environment. Phase I also found that almost 30% of the participants reported being traded at some level of junior hockey. Such a high statistic should generate some attention towards the young athlete’s stability once he reaches the junior level. With 80% of the trades taking place at the Major Junior level, OHL executives should encourage General Managers to be more conscientious of player movement. Presently, the OHL has some restrictions on trading players. Perhaps adopting a similar strategy as the QMJHL where players can only be traded during more specific time periods may restrict the amount of player movement. Creating such a league wide policy would not only increase the OHL’s commitment towards protecting the development of its players, it would also improve its reputation as an athlete-centered league (Baker & Schafer, 1988).

Midget hockey appears to favour a later developing player who can utilize midget as an opportunity to receive guaranteed ice time and improve his self-confidence. Although, junior hockey may present some improvements in speed, strength and level of competition, concerns for the amount of ice time a minor hockey-aged athlete receives and its impact on the player’s confidence are concerns. Evidence to justify investigating this impact arose from the Phase II focus group discussions in which rookie players described their confidence challenges during
their first OHL season. In an attempt to gain a greater understanding of the pertinent issues facing elite minor hockey-aged players, future research should investigate the impact on self-confidence of the social transition into junior hockey. With solid evidence concerning its impact, firm recommendations could be generated regarding junior hockey’s role in a minor hockey-aged athlete’s player development.

The study also introduced location as an important consideration when discussing the rationale for participating in junior hockey. Often encompassed within the desire to compete at a higher level, a player from a small rural area may elect to compete for a nearby junior team rather than for their ‘CC’ rated hometown midget team. Any future junior restrictions, such as increasing the junior age to 17 years outside the OHL, could be detrimental to the development of the elite rural player. Foreseeably, the only progressive step in level of competition for the talented elite player is junior hockey rather than remaining in the minor system and playing a low caliber of midget hockey. The OHF should be conscious of and knowledgeable on the number of talented, rural athletes who may be affected by a blanket age restriction on junior hockey. A thorough investigation exploring the developmental needs of both the young rural and urban hockey players requires further examination prior to any major age restriction decisions.

Piaget emphasized the interaction between the individual and the environment was a key to a person’s adaptation and cognitive development (McMorris, 1999). Marked improvements by the OHL towards education have produced encouraging results in the young athletes’ academic progress and achievement. The OHL’s emphasis towards educating the athletes and successfully combining education and Major Junior hockey is signified by the noticeable improvements of OHL players attending educational institutions (94%), receiving guaranteed post secondary educational packages (95.8%) and having completed high school (45%). Both
fast trackers and non-fast trackers equally shared high standards of academic achievement and academic goals. Fast trackers did, however, receive more guaranteed post secondary educational package offers and U.S. scholarship offers. Advocates of the non-fast tracking route should not overlook the impact of exposure (to junior and college scouts) in the eyes of parents and adolescent athletes when deciding to play junior hockey or remain in the minor system and compete at the midget level.

Although there were only two American players in the focus groups, there were indications that they experienced difficulty in adjusting from the American to Canadian school system. It appears that the differences in the American and Canadian school systems may compound the already arduous task of adjusting to a new living environment. This issue could have an impact on improving future U.S. OHL player’s transitions. Particular attention should now be afforded to any American player’s academic adjustment to the Canadian school system. Each OHL team’s educational consultant should carefully outline a strategy to prepare the young athlete, his family and host family with the necessary steps to ensure a smooth transition into the Canadian school system.

Phase II also documented large variability in the rookie player’s host family experiences. Having a positive and achievement-nurturing environment should not be undervalued in its impact on a young rookie player’s confidence and development on the ice, in the classroom and most importantly as a person (Veale, 1998). A thorough emphasis needs to be placed on the host family selection process. To ensure that each player receives the highest consistent family environment, criteria should be developed to screen prospective host families. A negative experience with a host family could be detrimental to a young athlete’s development as a player.
and as a person. Establishing strict host family selection guidelines may help to minimize or abolish this concern.

Despite no significant differences being detected between fast trackers and non-fast trackers in the areas of emotional development, several additional findings emerged. Both fast tracking and non-fast tracking participants expressed similar levels of emotion in the areas of conflict, confidence and emotion. Participants rarely engaged in conflict with coaches, teammates, and host family and reported their confidence being impacted very little from external and internal sources of pressure. In addition, OHL players rarely reported any negative emotions (e.g., anxiety, loneliness) associated with their first OHL season. The emotion findings would support a cohesive sense of family established within the sampled OHL teams. Phase II found that the rookie players were not feeling isolated and often relied on other teammates for emotional support during difficult times.

Interviewed rookie players also revealed an important finding about evaluating the satisfaction of their performance. OHL rookie players consistently measured their satisfaction of performance by how many goals, assists, or points they had earned. If a rookie athlete’s only evaluation of performance is outcome driven, the rookie player may become discouraged thereby leading to a lower self-confidence (Burton, Weinberg, Yukelson, & Weigand, 1998). Coaches need to emphasize to the players that process goals such as improvements in strength, speed, and agility are equally as important as outcome goals. This is especially important while the young athlete is attempting to set goals and expectations for his first OHL season.

Overall, the OHL players expressed high levels of satisfaction with their performance and the OHL experience. Improvements in communication between OHL coaching staffs and players in the areas of team preparation and mental skills training were noted in Phase I and supported in
the Phase II focus group interviews. This evidence should support the efforts of the participating OHL teams and organizations for reaching and exceeding the developmental needs of the players and maintaining a high degree of professionalism.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of this study, the investigator proposes that an in-depth investigation should include present midget players and first year junior level players in leagues lower than the OHL (e.g., Tier II A, Jr. B). For the majority of fast tracking participants, their development was on target. They had progressed through the minor and junior ranks to reach the top Major Junior level. Perhaps the examination of first year junior players and midget players would portray a more accurate picture of the impact of fast tracking and non-fast tracking on the psychological development of the minor hockey-aged athlete. With only 12% of the participants being classified as non-fast trackers, future research with a larger non-fast track sample size could more accurately support or refute the present findings.

Emerging from the focus groups, the current researcher documented several additional recommendations on player development. A late maturing player, physically and mentally, should be strongly encouraged to remain in the minor hockey system and participate at the midget level. Despite the perceptions of increased competition, an aspiring young player should be aware of the uncertainty of ice time and player development at the junior level. When discussing the options available to a talented minor hockey-aged athlete, coaches and parents should emphasize the opportunity for physical and psychological growth at the midget level. Hopefully, this process will lead an undecided or later developing minor hockey-aged athlete, to recognize and strongly consider the benefits of remaining in the minor hockey system rather than facing the possibility of being relegated to the fourth line or having to sit out games at the junior
level. If a talented young athlete wishes to enter the realm of junior hockey, a strong argument should be put forth for the athlete to remain at home and play for a local junior team. This decision should aid in his adjustment of leaving the minor hockey system and playing junior hockey. Remaining in the same school and maintaining the same network of close friends are seen as two key secondary benefits of this decision.

For the elite minor hockey-aged Canadian player, Major Junior hockey appears to be the most viable option. The difficulty appears to be in determining which minor hockey players can be classified as elite and ready both physically and mentally to fast track into junior hockey in preparation for Major Junior hockey. It would be interesting to note any differences in effects of Major Junior league (WHL, QMJHL) on a player’s cognitive, social, and emotional development. Would the difference in draft ages amongst the different Major Junior leagues impact the player’s decision to remain in the minor hockey system? Would the higher QMJHL draft age allow more players to stay in the minor hockey system longer? Could this difference impact a player’s psychological development? These are pertinent questions that require further investigation.

Several additional recommendations emerged for hockey executives and OHL administrators. OHL executives should strongly consider the creation of league policies to promote the increased quality of stability for the young athlete through devising and implementing a host family selection criteria process and additional player movement policies to limit untimely trades for the young athlete. In addition, OHL teams should ensure a U.S. academic enrollment procedure is in place to enable the smooth transition of any U.S. born OHL players into the Canadian education system. Having a proactive academic system in place will generate a level of comfort for the athlete and the athlete’s family. A final suggestion, would
involve the encouragement of OHL coaches to emphasize the importance of setting process goals as well as outcome goals (Weinberg & Gould, 1999). This effort would promote an athlete to have a more balanced view of his rookie season’s progress and performance. Addressing this issue at the start of the season should improve a rookie player’s satisfaction as well as confidence.

Future research may require further investigation of the fast tracking issue and player development in countries other than Canada. Similar to adapting to the European emphasis on practice, perhaps an investigation of top European nations, such as Sweden’s minor and junior hockey structure, may provide valuable knowledge in the area of player development. Additional insight on issues such as athlete development, may be gained from such research. Sometimes such investigations abroad produce new ideas in business and sport thereby expanding the present knowledge on an important topic such as fast tracking.

The present exploratory study has revealed several key findings regarding an OHL player’s development. This research serves as a stepping stone for future research in the area of elite athlete player development. The study’s results should benefit both the OHL players of today and the future. Several recommendations have been put forth to the OHL and minor hockey executives to ensure the players’ individual developmental needs are met. It has been the goal of this research to generate an awareness of player development in Canadian hockey and examine many of the questions widely debated in hockey circles. While fast tracking remains the most viable option for an elite, young athlete, it may not be the answer for every talented bantam player. Each child should have the freedom to decide if fast tracking is the most beneficial route for his development. The future of Canadian Junior hockey will continue to reside with the elite, minor hockey-aged fast tracker.
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APPENDIX A

HOCKEY PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FLOWCHART
HOCKEY PLAYER DEVELOPMENT FLOWCHART

National Hockey League (NHL)

C.I.A.U.- University
C.C.C.A. - College

Major Junior A
  e.g., OHL, WHL, QMJL

Minor Professional
  Level I- AHL
  Level II- ECHL
  Level III- UHL, CHL, WPL

U.S. College Hockey
  e.g., CCHA

Tier II Junior A

Junior B

Junior C

Junior D

Minor Hockey System

Midget

Bantam

Junior Hockey
APPENDIX B

CANADIAN HOCKEY ASSOCIATION AGE CATEGORY CHANGES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Age Groupings</th>
<th>New Age Groupings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- will expire end of 2002 season</td>
<td>- effective start of 2002-03 season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Midget</td>
<td>16 and 17 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bantam</td>
<td>14 and 15 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PeeWee</td>
<td>12 and 13 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atom</td>
<td>10 and 11 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novice</td>
<td>8 and 9 years old</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-Novice</td>
<td>6 and 7 years old</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX C

N. SCHLOSSBERG’S (1981) MODEL FOR ANALYZING HUMAN ADAPTATION TO TRANSITION
N. Schlossberg's (1981) Model for Analyzing Human Adaptation to Transition

Transition
Event or nonevent resulting in change or assumption
Change of social networks
Resulting in growth or deterioration

Perception of the Particular Transition
Role Change: gain or loss
Affect: positive or negative
Source: internal or external
Timing: on-time or off-time
Onset: gradual or sudden
Duration: permanent, temporary, or uncertain
Degree of Stress

Characteristics of Pretransition and Posttransition Environments
Internal Support Systems:
   Intimate relationships
   Family unit
   Network of friends
Institutional Supports
Physical Setting

Characteristics of the Individual
Psychosocial Competence
Sex (and Sex-Role Identification)
Age (and Life Stage)
State of Health
Race/Ethnicity
Socioeconomic Status
Value Orientation
Previous Experience with a transition of a similar nature

Adaptation
Movement through phases following transition: pervasiveness through reorganization
Depends on:
Balance of individual's resources and deficits.
Differences in pre- and post-transition environments:
   re perception, supports, and individual

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APPENDIX D

PHASE I: ROOKIE PLAYER QUESTIONNAIRE
Measuring The Effects of Fast Tracking On Minor Hockey Aged Athletes

Phase I: Rookie Player Questionnaire

OHL Team: ________________________________

Instructions:

The information obtained from the questionnaire is completely confidential and voluntary. The Canadian Hockey Association research stemming from the questionnaire will serve towards the enhancement of the game. If you volunteer to participate in this study, please complete the following questionnaire as honestly as possible regarding your hockey background and the experiences you have encountered playing hockey. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.
SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Instructions: Please complete the following section.

A) Background Information

1. Present Team: __________________________
2. Age: _________________________________
3. Date of Birth: _________________________
4. Hometown: ___________________________
5. Position: ______________________________
6. Shoot: L or R
7. Years Experience in the OHL (i.e. Rookie-1): ____
8. Years Experience with Current OHL Team: ____
9. OHL Round Drafted: ____________________________
10. OHL Team Drafted: __________________________
11. Number of Teams Played for in the OHL: __________
12. Number of Years Played Junior Hockey Total (i.e. Jr. C, Jr. B, Tier IIA, OHL): ____
13. Number of Junior Teams played for (including present OHL team): ______
14. Number of Years Lived Away From Home (including present season): __________

B) 2000-01 Regular Season Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team (s)</th>
<th>Games</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Assists</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>PIM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>_________________________</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>____</td>
<td>____</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C) Academic Information

21. Level of Education Presently Attending:

[ ] Secondary School  [ ] College  [ ] University  [ ] Not Attending

22. Present Grade/Year __________

23. Do you have a High School Diploma?

[ ] Yes  [ ] No

24. Level of Education Completed:

[ ] Secondary School  [ ] College  [ ] University  [ ] Other: _______

D) Professional Consultation

25. Do you have a sports agent?

[ ] Yes  [ ] No

25a. If Yes, for many years have you had a sports agent? _______________
**SECTION II: TRANSITION PERIOD**

Note: For the purpose of the Fast Tracking Study, the term 'Transition Period' will refer to the time period when an OHL rookie player gains comfort adjusting to his new environment away from home. The following questions attempt to gain insight into this particular period.

**Instructions for Section II A & B:** Using the Scale below, rate your level of transition into the OHL. Please circle the level most appropriate for each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All Difficult</th>
<th>Moderately Difficult</th>
<th>Extremely Difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**A) Duration of Transition**

26. Training Camp
27. Training Camp and Preseason Exhibition
28. First Month of the Season (September)

**B) Selected Components of Transition**

29. Moving away from home
30. Settling in with a new host family
31. The demands of more travelling
32. Making new teammates
33. Settling into a new school
34. Making new friends
35. Being a less experienced player on an OHL team

**C) Individuals Involved In Transition**

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which each of the following people were influential in your transition into Major Junior A Hockey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All Influential</th>
<th>Moderately Influential</th>
<th>Extremely Influential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36. OHL Coaches
37. Host Family
38. Family
39. Veteran Teammates
40. Other Rookies
41. New Friends
42. Old Hometown Friends
43. Other (i.e. former coach/mentor): _______________________

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SECTION II: TRANSITION PERIOD (CONTINUED)

D) Conflicts

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you have experienced or you foresee experiencing conflicts as a rookie player with the following selected individuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Constant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44. Coaches- Main Conflict Issue: ___________________________ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
45. Teammates- Main Conflict Issue:_________________________ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
46. Host Family- Main Conflict Issue:_______________________ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

E) Confidence

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which your confidence has been impacted as a result of the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Greatly Affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. Lack of playing time 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
48. Criticism of coaches 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
49. Self imposed pressure to succeed 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
50. Pressure from parents 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
51. Bullying from other teammates 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
52. Coping with an adverse situation (i.e. injury) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

F) Stability

53. Have you ever been traded at any level of junior hockey? Yes [ ] No [ ]

53a. If Yes, how many times have you been traded? _______
53b. If Yes, at which junior level(s) have you been traded? ____________________

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SECTION III: ACADEMICS

A) Academic Progress

54. Have you experienced or do you foresee your grades declining since beginning your OHL career?

[ ] Yes       [ ] No

If Yes, please determine if any of the following factors have potentially contributed to this decline?

54a. Poorer Attendance        [ ] Yes       [ ] No
54b. Perceived decrease in time available to study [ ] Yes       [ ] No
54c. Perceived lack of tutoring   [ ] Yes       [ ] No
54d. Perceived lack of guidance counseling [ ] Yes       [ ] No
54e. Lack of motivation        [ ] Yes       [ ] No
54f. Lack of effective time management [ ] Yes       [ ] No

B) Academic Goals

Instructions: Please indicate the degree to which the statements below are characteristic or true of you. Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All (1)</th>
<th>Slightly (2)</th>
<th>Moderately (3)</th>
<th>Very (4)</th>
<th>Extremely (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55. Academics and setting future academic goals are important to me.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56. My academic goals include completing my high school diploma.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57. My academic goals include obtaining a college/university degree.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58. I feel overwhelmed while completing my academic studies.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59. I am falling behind on my studies.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60. I consider dropping out of school.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C) Academic Opportunities

61. At what time was an education package offered by your first OHL Team?

[ ] When Drafted       [ ] When Made OHL Team

62. What does your education package include?:

[ ] Tuition            [ ] Books           [ ] Other Specify: ____________________________

63. Were you offered American Scholarships at the time of the OHL Draft?

[ ] Yes       [ ] No

63a. If Yes: Was it a difficult decision to turn down an American Scholarship to pursue an OHL Career?

[ ] Yes       [ ] No

63b. If Yes: Did you experience any anxiety when turning down an American Scholarship?

[ ] Yes       [ ] No
SECTION IV: ROOKIE PLAYERS PERSPECTIVE ON SELECTED TOPICS

Instructions: Please check appropriate box

A) **Specific Rookie Player Category**

64a. [ ] 2001 a: 16 yr. draftee eligible OHL 2001-02 season (Top 2 Selections-'01 draft)

64b. [ ] 2000 a: 17 yr. draftee eligible OHL 2000-01 & 2001-02 seasons (Top 2 Selections-'00 draft)

64c. [ ] 2000 b: 17 yr. draft eligible OHL 2001-02 season (Later than Top 2 Selections- '00 draft)

64d. [ ] Other Specify (ie. previous draft selection, walk-on) __________________________

B) **Minor Hockey Background**

65. Did you play Minor Hockey the season prior to playing in the OHL (last season)? [ ] Yes [ ] No

   65a. If Yes, which level of Minor Hockey did you primarily play? [ ] Bantam [ ] Midget

   65b. If No, which level of Junior Hockey did you primarily play? [ ] Tier II-A [ ] Junior B

   [ ] Junior C [ ] Junior D

C) **Fast Tracking**

Instructions: Please indicate the degree to which the statements below are characteristic or true of you. Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All (1)</th>
<th>Sometimes (2)</th>
<th>Moderately (3)</th>
<th>Often (4)</th>
<th>Very Often (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66. I have experienced regrets about embarking on an OHL career.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67. I would still like to be playing minor hockey with my hometown teammates.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68. I have considered returning home to play minor hockey.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69. I have experienced anxiety during the first months of the season.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70. I have experienced depression during the first months of the season.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71. I have experienced loneliness during the first months of the season.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72. I have experienced anger during the first months of the season.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73. I have experienced guilt during the first months of the season.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>74. I have experienced irritability during the first months of the season.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75. I have experienced a loss of appetite during the first months of the season.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>76. I have experienced irregular sleep patterns.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>77. I have experienced fear of being cut from the team.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>78. I have experienced fear of not being played.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4 5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION IV (CONTINUED): ROOKIE PLAYER’S PERSPECTIVE ON SELECTED TOPICS

D) Team Evaluation

A key to minimizing many common emotional and mental strains associated during an OHL rookie’s time of transition is to have a well structured team support network in place.

Instructions: Using the provided scale, please indicate the degree to which your current OHL team prepared you or supported you in dealing with the following issues.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at All (1)</th>
<th>Slightly (2)</th>
<th>Moderately (3)</th>
<th>Well (4)</th>
<th>Extremely Well (5)</th>
<th>Not Applicable (6)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>79. Effectively dealing with the mental strain of the media</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80. Increased time on the road away from school and home</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>81. Balancing academics with your playing schedule</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82. Being subjected to trade rumours</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83. Losing close teammates through trades</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84. Being benched</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85. Enduring personal hardships (i.e. breaking up with a significant other)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86. Enduring physical hardships (i.e. injury, rehabilitation)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

E) Mental Skills Training

As well as having a structured support network, mental skills training can be effective when dealing with the mental challenges of the game.

Instructions: Using the scale provided, please indicate the degree to which your current OHL team has introduced and used the following selected individual mental skills training strategies to effectively deal with some of the mental challenges of the game.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at All (1)</th>
<th>Slightly (2)</th>
<th>Moderately (3)</th>
<th>Well (4)</th>
<th>Extremely Well (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>87. The team has openly discussed the importance of team goal setting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88. The team has encouraged one on one individual goal setting.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89. The team has discussed the importance of imagery (visualization).</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90. The team has discussed the importance of pre-game routines.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91. Mental training has become an important part of training.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92. The team has worked with a Sport Psychologist.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93. The team has discussed techniques for increasing self-confidence.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SECTION IV (CONTINUED): ROOKIE PLAYER'S PERSPECTIVE ON SELECTED TOPICS

F) Satisfaction of Performance

Instructions: Please indicate the degree to which the questions below are characteristic or true of you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

94. How physically prepared are you to play in the OHL?  1 2 3 4 5
95. How mentally prepared are you to play in the OHL?  1 2 3 4 5
96. How satisfied are you with your OHL performance thus far?  1 2 3 4 5
97. How satisfied are you with your present OHL team?  1 2 3 4 5
98. How satisfied are you with your coaches?  1 2 3 4 5
99. How satisfied are you with your teammates?  1 2 3 4 5
100. How satisfied are you with your host family?  1 2 3 4 5

G) Areas of Improvement

101. I would make the following changes to enhance the OHL experience for future rookies:

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

102. I would make the following recommendations to a newly drafted Minor Hockey aged player considering an OHL career?

_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________

Rookies thank you for your time. The good of the game will benefit from your efforts.
APPENDIX E

PHASE I: VETERAN PLAYER QUESTIONNAIRE
Measuring The Effects of Fast Tracking On Minor Hockey Aged Athletes

Phase I: Veteran Player Questionnaire

OHL Team: ________________________________

Instructions:

The information obtained from the questionnaire is completely confidential and voluntary. The Canadian Hockey Association research stemming from the questionnaire will serve towards the enhancement of the game. If you volunteer to participate in this study, please complete the following questionnaire as honestly as possible regarding your hockey background and the experiences you have encountered playing hockey. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.
SECTION I: DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Instructions: Please complete the following section.

A) Background Information

1. Present Team: __________________________
2. Age: __________________________
3. Date of Birth: __________________________
4. Hometown: __________________________
5. Position: __________________________
6. Shoot: L or R
7. Years Experience in the OHL (i.e. Rookie-1): _____
8. Years Experience with Current OHL Team: _____
9. OHL Round Drafted: __________________________
10. OHL Team Drafted: __________________________
11. Number of Teams Played for in the OHL: __________________________
12. Number of Years Played Junior Hockey Total (i.e. Jr. C, Jr. B, Tier IIA, OHL): _____
13. Number of Junior Teams played for (including present OHL team): _____
14. Number of Years Lived Away From Home (including present season): ________________

B) 2000-01 Regular Season Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Team(s)</th>
<th>Games</th>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Assists</th>
<th>Points</th>
<th>PIM</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>16.</td>
<td>17.</td>
<td>18.</td>
<td>19.</td>
<td>20.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

C) Academic Information

21. Level of Education Presently Attending:
    [ ] Secondary School  [ ] College  [ ] University  [ ] Not Attending
22. Present Grade/Year ________________
23. Do you have a High School Diploma?
    [ ] Yes  [ ] No
24. Level of Education Completed:
    [ ] Secondary School  [ ] College  [ ] University  [ ] Other: ________________

D) Professional Consultation

25. Do you have a sports agent?
    [ ] Yes  [ ] No
25a. If Yes, for many years have you had a sports agent? ________________
SECTION II: TRANSITION PERIOD

Note: For the purpose of the Fast Tracking Study, the term ‘Transition Period’ will refer to the time period when an OHL rookie player gains comfort adjusting to his new environment away from home. The following questions attempt to gain insight into this particular period.

Instructions for Section II A & B: Using the Scale below, rate your level of transition into the OHL. Please circle the level most appropriate for each question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All Difficult</th>
<th>Moderately Difficult</th>
<th>Extremely Difficult</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A) Duration of Transition

26. Training Camp 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. Training Camp and Preseason Exhibition 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. First Month of the Season (September) 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

B) Selected Components of Transition

29. Moving away from home 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. Settling in with a new host family 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
31. The demands of more traveling 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
32. Making new teammates 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
33. Settling into a new school 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
34. Making new friends 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
35. Being a less experienced player on an OHL team 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

C) Individuals Involved In Transition

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which each of the following people were influential in your transition into Major Junior A Hockey.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All Influential</th>
<th>Moderately Influential</th>
<th>Extremely Influential</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(7)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

36. OHL Coaches 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
37. Host Family 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
38. Family 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
39. Veteran Teammates 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
40. Other Rookies 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
41. New Friends 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
42. Old Hometown Friends 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
43. Other (i.e. former coach/mentor): ____________________________ 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
SECTION II: TRANSITION PERIOD (CONTINUED)

D) Conflicts

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which you have experienced or you foresee experiencing conflicts as a rookie player with the following selected individuals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Moderate</th>
<th>Constant</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

44. Coaches- Main Conflict Issue: 

45. Teammates- Main Conflict Issue: 

46. Host Family- Main Conflict Issue: 

E) Confidence

Instructions: Please indicate the extent to which your confidence has been impacted as a result of the following.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Greatly Affected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

47. Lack of playing time
48. Criticism of coaches
49. Self imposed pressure to succeed
50. Pressure from parents
51. Bullying from other teammates
52. Coping with an adverse situation (i.e. injury)

F) Stability

53. Have you ever been traded at any level of junior hockey? Yes [ ] No [ ]

53a. If Yes, how many times have you been traded? _____

53b. If Yes, at which junior level(s) have you been traded? ____________________
SECTION III: ACADEMICS

A) Academic Progress

54. Have you experienced or do you foresee your grades declining since beginning your OHL career?
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No
   If Yes, please determine if any of the following factors have potentially contributed to this decline?
   54a. Poorer Attendance  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
   54b. Perceived decrease in time available to study  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
   54c. Perceived lack of tutoring  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
   54d. Perceived lack of guidance counseling  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
   54e. Lack of motivation  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
   54f. Lack of effective time management  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

B) Academic Goals

Instructions: Please indicate the degree to which the statements below are characteristic or true of you. Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Slightly</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Very</th>
<th>Extremely</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

55. Academics and setting future academic goals are important to me. 1 2 3 4 5
56. My academic goals include completing my high school diploma. 1 2 3 4 5
57. My academic goals include obtaining a college/ university degree. 1 2 3 4 5
58. I feel overwhelmed while completing my academic studies. 1 2 3 4 5
59. I am falling behind on my studies. 1 2 3 4 5
60. I consider dropping out of school. 1 2 3 4 5

C) Academic Opportunities

61. At what time was an education package offered by your first OHL Team?
   [ ] When Drafted  [ ] When Made OHL Team

62. What does your education package include?
   [ ] Tuition  [ ] Books  [ ] Other Specify: __________________________

63. Were you offered American Scholarships at the time of the OHL Draft?
   [ ] Yes  [ ] No
63a. If Yes: Was it a difficult decision to turn down an American Scholarship to pursue an OHL Career?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No
63b. If Yes: Did you experience any anxiety when turning down an American Scholarship?  [ ] Yes  [ ] No

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SECTION IV: VETERAN PLAYERS PERSPECTIVE ON SELECTED TOPICS

Instructions: Please check appropriate box

A) Specific Veteran Player Category

64a. [ ] Veteran OHL Player, Drafted by an NHL team, presently under an NHL Contract

64b. [ ] Veteran OHL Player, Drafted by an NHL team, have not signed an NHL Contract

64c. [ ] Veteran OHL Player, Not drafted by an NHL team

B) Minor Hockey Background

65. Did you play Minor Hockey the season prior to playing in the OHL? [ ] Yes [ ] No
   65a. If Yes, which level of Minor Hockey did you primarily play? [ ] Bantam  [ ] Midget
   65b. If No, which level of Junior Hockey did you primarily play? [ ] Tier II-A  [ ] Jr. B
          [ ] Jr. C  [ ] Jr. D

C) Fast Tracking

Instructions: Please indicate the degree to which the statements below are characteristic or true of your emotions and experiences during your rookie season. Please circle the number that corresponds to your answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Moderately</th>
<th>Often</th>
<th>Very Often</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(5)</td>
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66. I have experienced regrets about embarking on an OHL career. 1 2 3 4 5
67. I would still like to be playing minor hockey with my hometown teammates. 1 2 3 4 5
68. I have considered returning home to play minor hockey. 1 2 3 4 5
69. I have experienced anxiety during the first months of the season. 1 2 3 4 5
70. I have experienced depression during the first months of the season. 1 2 3 4 5
71. I have experienced loneliness during the first months of the season. 1 2 3 4 5
72. I have experienced anger during the first months of the season. 1 2 3 4 5
73. I have experienced guilt during the first months of the season. 1 2 3 4 5
74. I have experienced irritability during the first months of the season. 1 2 3 4 5
75. I have experienced a loss of appetite during the first months of the season. 1 2 3 4 5
76. I have experienced irregular sleep patterns. 1 2 3 4 5
77. I have experienced fear of being cut from the team. 1 2 3 4 5
78. I have experienced fear of not being played. 1 2 3 4 5
SECTION IV (CONTINUED): VETERAN PLAYER'S PERSPECTIVE ON SELECTED TOPICS

D) Team Evaluation

A key to minimizing many common emotional and mental strains associated during an OHL rookie’s time of transition is to have a well structured team support network in place.

Instructions: Using the provided scale, please indicate the degree to which your rookie OHL team prepared you or supported you in dealing with the following issues.

Not at All Slightly Moderately Well Extremely Well Not Applicable
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5) (6)

79. Effectively dealing with the mental strain of the media 1 2 3 4 5 6
80. Increased time on the road away from school and home 1 2 3 4 5 6
81. Balancing academics with your playing schedule 1 2 3 4 5 6
82. Being subjected to trade rumours 1 2 3 4 5 6
83. Losing close teammates through trades 1 2 3 4 5 6
84. Being benched 1 2 3 4 5 6
85. Enduring personal hardships (i.e. breaking up with a significant other) 1 2 3 4 5 6
86. Enduring physical hardships (i.e. injury, rehabilitation) 1 2 3 4 5 6

E) Mental Skills Training

As well as having a structured support network, mental skills training can be effective when dealing with the mental challenges of the game.

Instructions: Using the scale provided, please indicate the degree to which your rookie OHL team has introduced and used the following selected individual mental skills training strategies to effectively deal with some of the mental challenges of the game.

Not at All Slightly Moderately Well Extremely Well
(1) (2) (3) (4) (5)

87. The team has openly discussed the importance of team goal setting. 1 2 3 4 5
88. The team has encouraged one on one individual goal setting. 1 2 3 4 5
89. The team has discussed the importance of imagery (visualization). 1 2 3 4 5
90. The team has discussed the importance of pre-game routines. 1 2 3 4 5
91. Mental training has become an important part of training. 1 2 3 4 5
92. The team has worked with a Sport Psychologist. 1 2 3 4 5
93. The team has discussed techniques for increasing self-confidence. 1 2 3 4 5
SECTION IV (CONTINUED): VETERAN PLAYER'S PERSPECTIVE ON SELECTED TOPICS

E) Satisfaction of Performance

Instructions: Please indicate the degree to which the questions below are characteristic or true of you.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Not at All (1)</th>
<th>Slightly (2)</th>
<th>Moderately (3)</th>
<th>Very (4)</th>
<th>Extremely (5)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

94. How physically prepared were you as a rookie to play in the OHL? 1 2 3 4 5
95. How mentally prepared were you as a rookie to play in the OHL? 1 2 3 4 5
96. How satisfied are you with your OHL rookie performance? 1 2 3 4 5
97. How satisfied are you with your OHL performance thus far? 1 2 3 4 5
98. How satisfied are you with your present OHL team? 1 2 3 4 5
99. How satisfied are you with your coaches? 1 2 3 4 5
100. How satisfied are you with your teammates? 1 2 3 4 5
101. How satisfied are you with your host family? 1 2 3 4 5

G) Areas of Improvement

102. I would make the following changes to enhance the OHL experience for future rookies:


103. I would make the following recommendations to a newly drafted Minor Hockey aged player considering an OHL career:


Veterans thank you for your time. The game of hockey will benefit from your efforts.

CANADA

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APPENDIX F

PHASE I: OHL COACH CONTACT LETTER
GUELPH STORM  
55 Wyndham Street North  
Guelph, Ontario  
N1H 7T8  
Attn: Jeff Jackson, Head Coach

Mark Bruner  
Faculty of Human Kinetics  
University of Windsor  
401 Sunset Avenue  
Windsor, Ontario  
N9B 3P4

September 17, 2001

Dear Mr. Jackson,

I am contacting you regarding an upcoming research project involving Ontario Hockey League (OHL) players. This project has been funded by the Canadian Hockey Association’s (CHA) Young Investigators Program (YIP). I am a Master’s student in the Faculty of Human Kinetics at the University of Windsor. I will be the primary investigator for this research study entitled ‘Measuring The Effects of Fast Tracking on Minor Hockey Aged Athletes’. Following, is a brief summary outlining the study’s purpose, method, and timeline. Please take this opportunity to read over this information as your role as an OHL head coach is important. Your assistance in this project is greatly appreciated by the CHA.

Research Background

At an increasingly younger age, players are entering junior hockey. This research project targets the effects of ‘Fast Tracking’ on young athletes. Phase I of this study utilises a comprehensive questionnaire to explore the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of rookie, veteran and former OHL players. Phase II (to be completed at a later date) will examine rookie players’ perspectives on selected ‘Fast Tracking’ topics in a focus group setting.

Phase I Timeline: The proposed timeline for the questionnaire distribution for each OHL team is October, 2001.

Questionnaire Package will include:

A) An instruction page
B) The questionnaires (rookie questionnaire, and veteran questionnaire)
C) A self-addressed return envelope
APPENDIX G

PHASE I: CHA LETTER OF SUPPORT
GUELPH STORM
55 Wyndham Street North
Guelph, Ontario
N1H 7T8
Attn: Jeff Jackson, Head Coach

September 17, 2001

Dear Mr. Jackson,

I am contacting you regarding the support of a present research project sponsored by the Canadian Hockey Association (CHA) Young Investigators Program (YIP). Each year our CHA research committee proposes a thesis topic to be investigated. This year’s topic is “Measuring The Effects Of Fast Tracking In Minor Hockey Aged Athletes”. From a pool of research proposals, the research committee has selected and funded the ‘Fast Tracking’ Study presented by University of Windsor Masters of Human Kinetics student, Mark Bruner.

This YIP incorporates 2 phases. Phase I of the study, a comprehensive questionnaire, involves all OHL players. Phase II of the study will involve selected rookie players in a focus group setting. The support of OHL coaches towards the research is crucial to ensuring a successful sample. It is the hope that through a strong coordinating effort between the CHA and OHL coaches, the researcher will meet and exceed the expectations for this exciting study. Research obtained from this YIP research study will ultimately enhance the game of hockey.

The CHA would greatly appreciate your support.

Thank you,

Johnny Misley, MHK
Director of Development
Canadian Hockey Association
(403) 777-4586
jmisley@canadianhockey.ca
APPENDIX H

PHASE I: TEAM PACKAGE CONTENTS
Measuring The Effects of Fast Tracking On Minor Hockey Aged Athletes

Phase I: Player Questionnaire

Package Contents

▸ I. Administrative Instructions
▸ II. Letters of Information
▸ III. Rookie Player Questionnaires
▸ IV. Veteran Player Questionnaires
▸ V. Ballots For Team Canada Jersey
▸ VI. Return Checklist
▸ VII. Return Self Addressed Envelope
ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS

Dear OHL Team Contact,

You have been selected by your head coach to act as a team contact for the exciting research study entitled ‘Measuring The Effects of Fast Tracking on Minor Hockey Aged Athletes’. The following is a brief background about the research study.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

At an increasingly younger age, players are entering junior hockey. This research project targets the effects of ‘Fast Tracking’; on young athletes. Phase I of this study utilizes a comprehensive questionnaire to explore the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of rookie, veteran and former OHL players. Phase II (to be completed at a later date) will examine rookie players’ perspectives on selected ‘Fast Tracking’ topics in a focus group setting.

As a Team Contact you have three important duties:

1) Questionnaire administration
2) Ensuring questionnaire completion and collection
3) Mailing the completed questionnaires in a self addressed envelope back to the researcher.

NOW LET’S GET STARTED!

Q1) WHERE AND WHEN DO I ADMINISTER THE QUESTIONNAIRE?

STEP 1: Select a Time and Location for Questionnaire Administration
➢ Timing and Location of Administration: After conferring with several current and former OHL coaches, several administrative recommendations have been proposed. The most preferred time noted seemed to be on the bus while travelling. The often long road trips provide an opportunity to administer the questionnaire. A fixed period of 45 minutes should be allocated to ensure completion. Other suggestions included administrating the questionnaires prior to a practice, after a dryland practice or a team meeting.

Q11) WHAT PACKAGE ITEMS DO I ADMINISTER TO WHOM?

STEP 2: Distribute Letters of Information (ORANGE Sheets) to all OHL team members
➢ Present all participating OHL players with a letter of information regarding the study.

STEP 3: Distribute Questionnaires to Team Members Based on Player Category
➢ Present All Rookies (1st Year Players) with Rookie Players Questionnaires (GREEN Booklets)
➢ Present All Veteran Players with Veteran Player Questionnaires (BLUE Booklets)
➢ Encourage all participants to complete the questionnaire as honestly and thoroughly as possible. The goal of the research is to enhance the game of hockey and improve the OHL experience for future rookies.
STEP 4: Distribute a Team Canada Jersey Ballot to Each Player Upon Completion of Their Questionnaire

➤ After players have properly filled out their questionnaires, present players with a Team Canada Jersey ballot. There is a 1 in 500 chance they may win the jersey.

QIII) WHAT DO I DO WITH THE QUESTIONNAIRES AND BALLOTS WHEN THEY ARE COMPLETED?

STEP 5: Collect All Completed Questionnaires and Ballots and Place Them in the Provided Self-Addressed Envelope to Researcher

➤ After all players have completed their questionnaire and ballots, place the questionnaires in the provided envelope addressed to the researcher.

STEP 6: Complete Provided Return Checklist (PURPLE Sheet)

➤ Check off the items contained in the self addressed return envelope. Items will include: Completed Rookie and Veteran player questionnaires, and completed Team Canada Jersey Ballots. Sign and date the bottom of the form signifying the date the questionnaire was administered.

STEP 8: Seal the Contents of the Envelope and Drop the Envelope in the Mail

QIV) WHEN IS THE COMPLETED QUESTIONNAIRE PACKAGE DUE?


The goal of this research is designed to improve the game of hockey more specifically, the OHL experience for future rookies. Your support is essential towards the completion of this CHA research study. If you have any questions regarding the study, please feel free to contact the researcher.

Thank you for your time and effort,

Mark Bruner, MHK Student
Faculty of Human Kinetics
University of Windsor
(519) 258-5594
bruner6@uwindsor.ca
Measuring The Effects of Fast Tracking On Minor Hockey Aged Athletes-Phase I

LETTER OF INFORMATION

I would like to take this time to introduce myself and explain the research that is being conducted. My name is Mark Bruner and I am a Master’s student in the Faculty of Human Kinetics at the University of Windsor. As partial fulfillment of my degree requirements I am expected to complete a research study. I have chosen to focus my research on the area pertaining to sport psychology, in the field of Sport Management. Working in collaboration with the Canadian Hockey Association (CHA) and the OHL, I am investigating the effects of Fast Tracking on the mental (cognitive and social-emotional) development of minor hockey aged athletes playing junior hockey.

Players are entering junior hockey of all levels out of minor hockey at an increasingly younger age. This questionnaire targets the ‘Fast Tracking’ emphasis on young athletes. As a current or former OHL player, your thoughts, emotions, and experiences while enduring this ‘Fast Tracking’ phenomenon are invaluable. The research is designed to improve the game of hockey and the OHL experience for future rookies. To this end, the completion of this study is very important, but by no means a requirement.

You will be asked to complete a questionnaire booklet consisting of approximately 100 questions. This should take 30-40 minutes to complete.

Participation is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate, refuse to answer any question(s), or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty. The questionnaire is only for the use of the investigator. All results are completely confidential. You are not required to provide your name however, several of the questions being asked could possibly identify players. Your responses to the questions will be kept in strict confidentiality and only the primary investigator and faculty supervisor will have access to this information.

Reflection on previous or current experiences may evoke several negative emotions (i.e., anxiety, depression, anger) while filling out the questionnaire. If any possible risks are experienced during or after the completion of the task, you may contact your team counselor.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the researcher prior to, during, or following the research study. If you agree to participate in this study, please complete the attached questionnaire and return it to the researcher or respective administering OHL coach.

Thank you,

Mark Bruner, MHK Student
Faculty of Human Kinetics
University of Windsor
(519) 352-0782
bruner6@uwindsor.ca

Krista Munroe, PhD
Faculty of Human Kinetics
University of Windsor
(519) 253-3000 ext. 2446
kmunroe@uwindsor.ca
CHA Study Phase I: Return Package Checklist

Please Check Off Return Package Contents

[ ] 1. Completed Rookie Player Questionnaires (GREEN Booklets)

[ ] 2. Completed Veteran Player Questionnaires (BLUE Booklets)

[ ] 3. Completed Ballots For Team Canada Jersey

[ ] 4. Completed Return Checklist (PURPLE Sheet)

OHL TEAM: ____________________________

Date Questionnaire Administered: ________________
OHL Team Contact (Please Print): ________________

Signature: _______________________  Date: __________

Reminder: Questionnaire package return deadline is:
APPENDIX I

PHASE I: THANK YOU LETTER
BELLEVILLE BULLS
265 Cannifton Road
Belleville, Ontario
K8N 4V8
Attn: Jim Hulton,  Head Coach
      James Boyd, Ast. Coach

November 23, 2001

Dear Mr. Hulton/ Mr. Boyd,

On behalf of the Canadian Hockey Association (CHA) and the CHA’s Young Investigator Program, I would like to thank you for supporting Phase I of the Fast Tracking Study. Your efforts towards ensuring the completion and return of the player questionnaires reinforce your commitment to the CHA and the enhancement of the game of hockey.

The primary focus of the research is to provide valuable information from a player’s perspective regarding Fast Tracking. The questions for the upcoming Phase II focus group interview sessions with selected rookie players will be derived from the Phase I findings. Perhaps, you will consider participating in Phase II of the study.

Thank you again for your co-operation,

Mark Bruner, MHK Student
University of Windsor
(519) 258-5594
bruner6@uwindsor.ca
APPENDIX J

PHASE II: INTERVIEW GUIDE
An Investigation of the Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Development of Major Junior OHL Hockey Players

Phase II

Focus Group Interview Guide

Mark Bruner, MHK Grad Student
Canadian Hockey Association Young Investigator Program
An Investigation of the Cognitive, Social, and Emotional Development of Major Junior OHL Hockey Players – Phase II

Focus Group Interview Guide

Introductory Comments

➢ Rationale of the study – CHA YIP Topic, Phase II of study
➢ Use of Data – make recommendations to CHA regarding status of minor hockey aged athletes in junior hockey and suggest any improvements for young athletes
➢ Issues of Confidentiality
➢ Reasons for Taping
➢ Issues and Topics to be Pursued
➢ Informed Consent Obtained
➢ Focus Group Interview Format

Introductory Questions

How would you describe the term “fast tracking” in relation to hockey?
What are some other terms that people might use in place of “fast tracking” in hockey?
Refine respondents’ definitions of fast tracking.

Demographic Questions

What was the highest level of minor hockey you played?
At what age did you begin playing junior hockey?
What level of hockey did you play last season before playing in the OHL?

Probe:
*What are some reasons that you believe that the level of hockey you played last season was or was not a good ‘stepping stone’ for playing in the OHL?
What experiences last season enabled you to gain confidence?
What physical or mental challenges did you experience?
*Would you recommend the route you took to the other players wanting to play in the OHL? And provide reasons why? Or why not?

Player Development Questions

What are the major differences you have noticed between last season’s level of hockey and the OHL?

Probes:
*What are some of the physical differences? (e.g. speed, size, strength)
*What are some of the mental differences? (e.g. increased consistency of player performance, more mentally tough, more ready to compete on a nightly basis, more professional in approach, coaching)
Cognitive Development

Goal Setting
What were your goals coming into your rookie OHL season?
Probe:
*What has affected the achievement of your goals? (e.g. performance, improved work ethic, more time spent on ice, off ice training)

Academics
How have your academic goals changed since making the OHL? If at all?
Probe:
*Are you aware of your education package?
*Do you plan on taking advantage of your education package through post-secondary studies?

Social Development

Social Support Network
Who has been influential in your decision to pursue an OHL career? (e.g. family, OHL coaches, friends, past coaches)
Probe:
*How have they impacted you?
*How did any former or current players impact your decision?
*What advice if any changed your decision to play in the OHL?

Transition Into OHL
Who has been helpful in your transition or adjustment into junior hockey? And Why? (e.g. family, coaches, hometown friends, host family, rookie teammates)
Probe:
*What have they done to ease or impede the transition?

Describe your experiences living away from home?
Probe:
*How many years have you lived away from home?
*What age did you leave home to pursue junior hockey?
*Do you feel you were ready to leave home and your friends?

What aspects of playing major junior hockey do you find most challenging? (e.g. moving away from home, host family, demands of travel, new teammates, new school, new friends, increased pressure to perform) Why?

Emotional Development

What emotions have you experienced since making the team? (e.g. homesickness, excitement, nervousness, anxiety)
Probe:
*Were feelings of homesickness most prevalent during the first couple of months or after the winter break?
Confidence
How has playing junior hockey impacted your confidence?

Probe:
*What factors have increased your confidence? (e.g. prestige of being an OHL player, playing well)
*What factors may have decreased your confidence? (e.g. lack of playing time)
*What strategies have you found to be effective in increasing your confidence?
*Overall, would you say they have increased or decreased your confidence?

Challenges
Describe any challenges you have experienced since beginning your OHL career?
(e.g. coaches, teammates, host family)

Probe:
How did you deal with them?

Stability
Comment on your junior experience prior to playing in the OHL?

Probe:
*Number of junior teams played for including current OHL team?
*Have you or a close teammate been traded at any level of junior hockey?
*Describe the experience. Did you find it to be quite challenging?

Satisfaction With OHL Performance
How satisfied are you with your OHL performance thus far?

Probe:
*Are you satisfied with your decision to play in the OHL?
*How is it different from what you expected?
*If you could do it again how would it be different?

What indications do you have that you are developing as a player both physically and mentally?

Probe:
*What differences do you think an extra year of minor hockey would have made on your development as a player?

Describe why you chose to play in the OHL?

Probe:
*What role did U.S. scholarships have in your decision to play in the OHL?

Team Evaluations
What steps has the team taken to prepare you for the rigors of an OHL season?
(e.g. mental skills training, physical preparedness, seminars)

What suggestions would you make for future rookies?
VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Mark William Bruner

PLACE OF BIRTH: Chatham, Ontario, Canada

YEAR OF BIRTH: 1975

EDUCATION:
- University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario 2001 – 2002 M.H.K.
- Griffith University, Gold Coast, Australia 1999 – 2000 M. Prim. Teach, B. Ed.

AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS:
- Postgraduate Tuition Scholarship – Academic Excellence University of Windsor, April 2002
- Human Kinetics Graduate Alumni Award University of Windsor, April 2002
- CHA Young Investigator Scholarship Canadian Hockey Association, July 2001
- Golden Key Honours Society – Academic Excellence Griffith University, 2000
- Maurader Scholar – Excellence in Academics & Athletics McMaster University, 1998
- Dean’s List – Academic Excellence McMaster University, 1998

CONFERENCE PROCEEDINGS: