Optimizing Strengths and Resources in a Memorial Cup Team: A Strengths and Hope Perspective

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Optimizing Strengths and Resources in a Memorial Cup Team: A Strengths and Hope Perspective

by

Dan Upham

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September 20, 2019
DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

I hereby certify that I am the sole author of this thesis and that no part of this thesis has been published or submitted for publication.

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I declare that this is a true copy of my thesis, including any final revisions, as approved by my thesis committee and the Graduate Studies office, and that this thesis has not been submitted for a higher degree to any other University or Institution.
ABSTRACT

In this case study, I explored the use of strengths and available resources linked to 'hope-in' a shared preferred future (Jacobs, 2005) within the Windsor Spitfires hockey club as they worked towards their participation as the host team of the 2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup tournament. I conducted two sets of semi-structured interviews throughout the Spitfires organization (set one was thirteen interviews and set two was twelve interviews). Interviews were conducted post-trade deadline and post-Memorial Cup. Participants were chosen from three categories: players and player support (7); staff (5); and management (2). Extending Snyder's (2002) research on high-hope individuals, I looked at ways the Windsor Spitfires produced a high-hope collective (Jacobs, 2005; Snyder, 2002) wherein they a) defined goals, b) created pathways to their goals, and c) believed in their ability to act along their chosen pathway to their goals. Participants reframed their collective goal to win the Memorial Cup tournament as the host team. The Spitfires used strengths such as hard work, adaptability, preparation, experience, leadership, and effective communication to buy into the team's shared preferred future, respond to adversity effectively and get around constraints, and show proactive behaviour towards reaching their collective goals. The coaching staff, trainers, players, billets, and family members all acted as interpersonal resources to one another, while drawing on external interpersonal resources such as colleagues, personnel with previous Memorial Cup experience, and a high performance psychology coach in order to further their existing strengths and build new strengths to help the team reach its collective goals.
DEDICATION

I dedicate my work to my family and friends who are with me here and in passing, all of whom I consider to be my family: Baba & Mima; Rob Mancini & Mama; Coy; Nicholas Upham; Keegan Dimitrijevic; my son Jake; Surrey; James Denholm; my very beautiful, full of life, already smarter than me, almost seven year old goddaughter Tenleigh Breen Denholm; Robert Denholm; Alexandra Connson; Fred & Louise Connson; Squee; Fievel; Stuuuuuuuu Williams & Karen Barr; Chef Danny Palanca; Randy Swift; Ryan & Tracey Hooey; Bernie & Gina Martorella; Jillian Harris; Charlie; Weezy the Fish; Jesse Meloche; Beth Doxtator; Chef Glenn van Blommestein; Diane Farquhar; Dave Aziz; Nick Dolanski; Jorge Madrid; Justin & Lam Harb; Alex Merryfield; Samr Shamoon; Anthony Maniscalco; Bianca Aversa; Jacob Berthiaume; Frank DeRose; Jesse Auffret; Dave Watson; Natasha Stewart; and Clayton & Clayton Jr. We are all in it together.
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<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AD</td>
<td>Athletic Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFL</td>
<td>Australian Football League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFLPA</td>
<td>Australian Football League Players Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AGM</td>
<td>Assistant/Associate General Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AHL</td>
<td>American Hockey League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>CHL</td>
<td>Canadian Hockey League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIS</td>
<td>Canadian Interuniversity Sport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECHL</td>
<td>East Coast Hockey League</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FINA</td>
<td>International Swimming Federation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GM</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HGHE</td>
<td>Highland Games Heavy Events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISS</td>
<td>International Scouting Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LFL</td>
<td>Legends Football League Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MMA</td>
<td>Mixed Martial Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MLB</td>
<td>Major League Baseball</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
NHL: National Hockey League

NHLPA: National Hockey League Players Association

OHA: Ontario Hockey Association

OHL: Ontario Hockey League

QMJHL: Quebec Major Junior Hockey League

QQDSP: Queen's Quay Disabled Sailing Program

REB: Research Ethics Board

SQ1: Sub-Question #1

SQ2: Sub-Question #2

SQ3: Sub-Question #3

WECDSB: Windsor-Essex County District School Board

WESPY: Windsor-Essex Sports Persons of the Year Award

WFCU: Windsor Family Credit Union

WHL: Western Hockey League

WWCFL: Western Women's Canadian Football League
CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Memorial Cup, originally known as the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) Cup, was donated by the OHA in March of 1919 to commemorate Canadian soldiers who gave their lives in the First World War. Initially, it was awarded to the junior hockey champions of Canada. In 1934, junior hockey grew, and was divided into 'A' and 'B' classes. The Cup was awarded to the champions of the 'A' class, which at that time was the competitive class. The 1971 season marked another significant change for the Memorial Cup. Class 'A' was again divided into major junior and Tier II junior A, with the Memorial Cup being awarded to the major junior champions of Canada (MasterCard Memorial Cup, 2016; Weber, 2016a). "In 1972, a round-robin tournament format replaced the old playdown system to determine the champions" (Weber, 2016a, p. 49).

Today, the Memorial Cup presented by Kia is an eight-game round robin tournament that includes the three Canadian Hockey League (CHL) champion teams and a host team (Hildebrand, 2016).

The Windsor Spitfires have "over 40 years of rich history in junior hockey" (MasterCard Memorial Cup, 2016, para. 2). The Spitfires previously hosted the Memorial Cup tournament at the Windsor Arena in 1981 (MasterCard Memorial Cup, 2016). In the 2009 and 2010 seasons, the Windsor Spitfires became the eighth team in CHL history to

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1 In this thesis, I will refer to the Memorial Cup tournament as the MasterCard Memorial Cup, as it was named in 2017.
2 The CHL is an umbrella organization divided into three geographic leagues – the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL), the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) and the Western Hockey League (WHL) (Allain, 2014; Hildebrand, 2016).
win back-to-back Memorial Cup championships (CBC News, 2016; Hildebrand, 2016; MasterCard Memorial Cup, 2016). In the 2011 and 2014 seasons, the Spitfires bid to host the Memorial Cup tournament. However, the tournament was awarded by the CHL to Mississauga and London respectively (Hildebrand, 2016; Parker, 2016b).

On April 18, 2016, the Windsor Spitfires submitted a formal bid to the OHL site selection committee with the intent to host the 2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup. Almost one month later, it was announced by the CHL that the Spitfires would host the tournament (Hildebrand, 2016; MasterCard Memorial Cup, 2016). Then Spitfires president Bob Boughner suggested that hosting the Memorial Cup tournament was a goal of his since purchasing the team in 2006 (MasterCard Memorial Cup, 2016). To achieve that goal, Boughner drew on his strength of preparation (CBC News, 2016). Boughner then identified the pathway he would have to take in order to achieve his goal. At the bid presentation, the Spitfires' host committee had to show the site selection committee how they would successfully fulfill the five pillars of the site selection committee. These pillars are having: a suitable arena facility; hotel space; a business plan; completed event logistics; and a strong team to compete (Parker, 2016a). Boughner also had a support system of interpersonal (human) resources (Ponic, 1995) that included Windsor Mayor Drew Dilkens (CBC News, 2016), former Windsor Sport Tourism Officer Samantha Magalas (CBC News, 2016), Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tourism Windsor, Essex and Pelee Island Gordon Orr (Hildebrand, 2016), and the Detroit Sports Commission (Hildebrand, 2016). These interpersonal resources contributed to Boughner's achievement of his goal of the Spitfires hosting the Memorial Cup tournament. After the Spitfires were awarded the Memorial Cup tournament, Boughner first identified the strengths of the
Spitfires' 1981 Memorial Cup tournament, then travelled to the 2016 Memorial Cup tournament in Red Deer, Alberta, to build upon his existing strength of preparation (Hildebrand, 2016; MasterCard Memorial Cup, 2016).

The purpose of this case study was to learn about the experiences of participants involved within the Windsor Spitfires organization during their 2016-2017 Memorial Cup season. Specifically, I explored the team's shared preferred future while I identified the strengths and available resources participants used to achieve their goals.

**Statement of the Research Question**

*How do individual members of a hockey organization draw on their strengths and available resources to achieve their individual and collective goals?*

In this study, I intended to explore and document the strengths and resources of individuals from the Windsor Spitfires organization as they worked towards participating in the 2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup. To do so, I examined each participant's individual and team strengths (sub-question #1 (SQ1)), what resources participants drew upon (sub-question #2 (SQ2)), and how participants saw themselves as a resource to others (sub-question #3 (SQ3)).

**Theoretical and Practical Justification**

**Theoretical Justification.** There is no known research that studies the strengths of individuals and resources available to them within a Memorial Cup hockey team. Further, there is also no known research that examines a sports team using the strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a). Research focusing on members within a hockey organization has at times been conducted from a deficit perspective (Briggsins, 2016; Eide, 2016a; Eide, 2016b; Pyette, 2016; Sager, 2016). Further, hockey teams that
host a major tournament such as the Memorial Cup face extreme stress and pressure to succeed. Host teams already know they have qualified for the event and must perform within the expectations set upon them by the CHL, their city, their fans, and themselves (Campbell, 2014; Cicerella, 2016). No research examines how members of a sports organization positively optimizes their personal strengths and resources while attempting to achieve their desired collective goals as a team. A case study of the 2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup host Windsor Spitfires, using the strengths and hope perspective\(^3\), sheds light on this gap in the literature. It also extends Paraschak's (2013a) research on the strengths and hope perspective.

**Practical Justification.** I believed that interviewing members of the Windsor Spitfires organization during their 2017 Memorial Cup season would benefit researchers, future Memorial Cup host teams across Canada, and sports organizations in understanding how to positively optimize strengths and resources within an organization during a highly stressful period. The practical purpose of my case study was to work with management of the Windsor Spitfires throughout my research by identifying the perceived strengths of members within their organization, the perceived resources available to them, then sharing that information with management as the season progressed.

**Theoretical Framework**

**Duality of Structure.** The concept of 'duality of structure,' which originates from Giddens' (1984) 'theory of structuration,' underpins Paraschak's strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a). Duality of structure assumes that the actions of

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\(^3\) The strengths and hope perspective is one of several theoretical frameworks that I could have used to explore my case study.
individuals create the social world around them (Giddens, 1984; Paraschak, 2013a; Ponic, 2001). In our socially constructed world, "structures are the patterned relationships that connect different parts of society to one another" (Crossman & Scherer, 2015, p. 14). Social structures create the boundaries that people live their lives within. Individuals are constantly being shaped by their social world while concurrently shaping that world (Giddens, 1984; Paraschak 2013a). These boundaries seem 'natural' to the actors\(^4\) that operate within them. When people act within these social structures, they give meaning to them. Giddens (1984) "suggests that structures not only facilitate and/or inhibit the actions of agents, but those agents act to transform and/or maintain structure" (Ponic, 2001, p. 54). As people interact within social structures (e.g., in relation to rules and/or the distribution of resources), they can reproduce and legitimize them, or they can challenge them to create new social structures (Crossman & Scherer, 2015; Paraschak, 1999).

"Social structures are often categorized as rules and resources" (Crossman & Scherer, 2015, p. 14). Ponic (1995) identifies two types of rules: internal and external.\(^5\) Internal (informal) rules consist of individuals' assumptions and/or ideologies that construct the way they think about and see their social life. For example, in the hockey world, many people assume that fourth-line hockey players do the dirty work\(^6\) of going to the hard areas\(^7\), block shots, check, and fight. External (formal) rules are documented rules that govern how agents are supposed to act within their social boundaries (Ponic, 2001).\(^8\)

\(^4\) i.e., people as they exercise their agency (Giddens, 1984).

\(^5\) Paraschak (2013b) and Paraschak (1997) identify rules as formal and/or informal. I will use and/or refer to these terms throughout this paper.

\(^6\) I will be using the terminology identified by my participants. This will include, but is not limited to, hockey slang and/or jargon.

\(^7\) Hard areas of the ice include: behind the net, the corners, and along the boards.
An example of an external rule would be the OHL rulebook.

Giddens (1984) defines resources as the "facilities or bases of power to which the agent has access" (Ponic, 2001, p. 54). According to Ponic (1995), there are three types of resources: material, personal, and interpersonal. First, material resources are tangible things that agents need to survive, such as money, food, water, and clothing. Second, "personal resources are comprised of the internal feelings, motivations, and physical state of individuals that affect the way that they act within their social lives" (Ponic, 1995, p. 20). The ability to handle stress or to choose how to act in certain ways are examples of personal resources. When linked to Paraschak's (2013a) strengths and hope perspective, an individual's strengths is also an example of a personal resource. Third, interpersonal resources are interactions with other individuals that affect an agent within his/her social life. Examples include exercising authority within an organization or workplace support from co-workers (Ponic, 1995). When linked to the strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a), interpersonal resources would include positive support in keeping with the preferred future of a teammate. This contributes towards a hope-enhancing environment for that individual (Paraschak, 2013a).

Giddens (1984) also discusses a concept known as 'practical consciousness.'

"Practical consciousness consists of all the things which actors know tacitly about how to

8 Crossman and Scherer (2015) refer to resources as financial (money), material (equipment, property, etc.), and human (other agents). I will use and/or refer to these terms throughout this paper.
9 A 'preferred future' refers to someone's individual goals, hopes, and/or aspirations. A 'shared preferred future' refers to a collective's goals, hopes, and/or aspirations.
10 The concept of a hope-enhancing environment is discussed under 'Practices of Hope' (p. 10). It refers to a context that individuals can create for each other in order to facilitate Snyder's (2002) three components of hope (hope theory). Jacobs (2005) also refers to the hope-enhancing environment that Snyder (2002) posits for an individual as 'hope-for' something - or an individual wanting and/or desiring something. Jacobs' (2005) 'hope-in' concept refers to a collective future/hope-enhancing environment (as opposed to an individual future/hope-enhancing environment (Snyder, 2002)).
'go on' in the contexts of social life without being able to give them direct discursive expression" (Giddens, 1984, p. xxiii). As stated previously, Giddens (1984) assumes that agents only act within the boundaries they can imagine (Giddens, 1984; Paraschak, 1997). There is no way for an individual to imagine something within his/her boundaries that he/she has not been exposed to previously. Once an actor's behaviour within their socially constructed environment becomes unquestioned and assumed as truth, it lies within their non-consciousness (Giddens, 1984); it has become a part of his/her practical consciousness.

To illustrate the concept of practical consciousness, consider fighting as a part of hockey. I do not question its place in the game because it has always been there, and as far as I know, it will continue to be in hockey. This assumption lies within the boundaries I can imagine, and because it is the only thing I can imagine, I see it as 'truth.' Fighting is a part of hockey. However, in the wake of recent tragedies due to concussions within the hockey world, members of the hockey sub-culture have started questioning the place of fighting in hockey within the media. There have been discussions within the media about banning fighting from hockey. When I first heard these discussions, I was in disbelief that they were taking place. My practical consciousness was being broken by the simple fact that there were people challenging fighting's place in the game of hockey. The possibility for my boundaries to be expanded were there, and I can now imagine hockey without fighting. As Paraschak (2000) suggested, there is a possibility for change to be considered within the way I now view hockey. However, individuals are more likely to align with the views of those who surround them. According to Paraschak (1997), if I am surrounded by other agents who are aligned with my initial practical consciousness, I
would most likely interpret this challenge to my boundaries as being illegitimate. The other agents around me who believe fighting has a place in hockey would reinforce my practical consciousness and I would carry on in life as if nothing happened (i.e., believing that fighting belongs in hockey). However, if other agents that surrounded me supported this challenge to my boundaries, I would then consider the change and possibly expand my boundaries (i.e., that maybe fighting does not belong in hockey after all).

"Giddens (1984) views agency as the ability of an actor to intervene, or refrain from intervening, in the world" (Ponic, 2001, p. 55). Every individual has the ability to act and their agency cannot be taken away from them. Unequal power relations could thus be understood as an individual or group of individuals having control over another as they exercise their agency. These powerful actors are able to operate even while facing opposition (Crossman & Scherer, 2015). The unequal distribution of resources aligned with formal and informal rules automatically benefits some individuals more so than others. Actors that align with those who have power11 can benefit from unequal power relations by having resources distributed to them in order to get what they want and/or to achieve their goals (Paraschak, 2000). However, some people do not accomplish this because they do not have the resources to do so. For example, people will need resources to achieve their preferred/shared preferred future(s). If they do not have the resources to achieve their goals, they must either change their pathway to their goals or change their goals completely (Snyder, 2002). Those who view this situation from a deficit perspective12 may believe that if they do not receive resources to reach their goals, they

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11 Paraschak (2015) refers to this process as 'assimilation.'
12 The deficit perspective is discussed under the 'Strengths Perspective' (p. 9). It focuses on the weaknesses/barriers people have and looks for ways to address their needs and/or problems through the use of 'experts.'
do not deserve to, or are unable to achieve their goals.

**Strengths Perspective.** The strengths perspective was originally rooted in the field of social work as an alternative to the deficit perspective (Paraschak, 2013a; Saleebey, 2013). The deficit perspective often victimizes people, especially those belonging to marginalized groups. These individuals are constantly hearing what is wrong with them, and thus they eventually lose their motivation to move forward and/or improve on their weaknesses. Experts within the field of social work are brought in to identify the problems or barriers their clients might experience while attempting to solve or find solutions to those problems. They 'work on' their clients, often avoiding risks that are associated with negative outcomes (Saleebey, 2013). However, instead of focusing on the barriers and problems people may face, the strengths perspective turns towards the possibilities and capabilities of what people can achieve (Paraschak & Thompson, 2014; Saleebey, 2013). This perspective does not focus on the absence of strengths (i.e., deficit perspective), but rather the strengths that are present (Saleebey, 2013). Even through difficult times, the strengths perspective sees the possibility for hope and transformation (Saleebey, 2013). "The formula is simple: Rally clients' interests, capacities, motivations, resources, and emotions in the work of reaching their hopes and dreams, help them find pathways to those goals, and the payoff may be an enhanced quality of daily life for them" (Saleebey, 2013, p. 2). The strengths perspective does not deny that barriers exist, but reframes problems that people or communities face to focus on the positives within the situation (Paraschak & Thompson, 2014).

The concept of "empowerment' indicates the intent to, and the processes of, assisting individuals, groups, families, and communities to discover and expend the
resources and tools within and around them" (Saleebey, 2013, p. 13). According to Paraschak (2013a), it is the responsibility of individuals who are able to exercise power to proactively inform others of the power they possess as well as ways those other people can use their power to benefit themselves and the community as a whole. The concept of 'suspension of disbelief' is also important within the strengths perspective. It is easy for a professional to disregard the accounts of a client for many reasons. Professionals might believe that they are more qualified than their clients to assess a situation, they might generalize a client's problem to fit it into an existing category, or they might simply want to avoid the embarrassment of being fooled by a client. Whatever the instance, the clients do know what they are talking about and they are the experts of their own lives (Saleebey, 2013). It is important to recognize that clients do know their own lives better than anyone else, including professional experts who may be there to help them.

Finally, Saleebey (2013) lists six key principles of the strengths perspective. They include:

(1) every individual or group under discussion has strengths, (2) their challenges have also been opportunities to generate strengths, (3) the upper level of their capacity to grow is unknown, (4) 'experts' help by collaborating with them (5) every environment is full of resources, and (6) all relationships must include caring, caretaking, and an appreciation of context (Paraschak, 2013a, p. 234).

Practices of Hope. "Practices of hope align with and could extend the strengths perspective" (Paraschak, 2013a, p. 232). Paraschak and Thompson (2014) drew on three principles of Saleebey's (2013) strengths perspective: (1) individuals must identify strengths, (2) individuals must identify and draw upon resources that can further enhance

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13 Paraschak (2013a) refers to this as 'complimentary power relations.'
their strengths, and (3) individuals must work with (not on) other individuals to enhance their strengths. Hope is the way Paraschak (2013a) approaches the third principle. Dr. Denise Larsen\textsuperscript{14}, a registered psychologist and leader in hope studies at the University of Alberta, defines hope as "the ability to envision a future in which we wish to participate" (Enright, 2014). This definition connects hope with the strengths perspective (Paraschak, 2013a; Saleebey, 2013). Having hope means envisioning a preferred future that recognizes and builds on the strengths of an individual along with a resource-rich environment (Paraschak, 2013a).

Psychologist C.R. Snyder (2002) created 'hope theory' as a way to explain the success of high-hope individuals. Snyder defined hope as "the perceived capability to derive pathways to desired goals, and motivate oneself via agency thinking to use those pathways" (Snyder, 2002, p. 249). Snyder (2002) suggested that high-hope individuals are much more successful than low-hope individuals in reaching their desired goals. These goals may be set in things such as academics, work, athletics, physical health, etc. Snyder (2002) listed three components needed for individuals to have higher hope. The first component listed was 'goals.' High-hope people must first have the ability to imagine a desired goal. The second component was 'pathways thinking.' High-hope people pursuing a specific goal create a plausible route to achieve their goal with confidence. If high-hope people are impeded by barriers, they are able to use their flexible thinking to generate alternative pathways (i.e., reframe their pathway), and/or generate alternative goals (i.e., reframe their goals) if their goals become unattainable. The third component listed was 'agency thinking.' Agency thought is the motivational tool in Snyder's (2002) hope theory. It is the confidence high-hope people show in their ability to act along their

\textsuperscript{14} On the CBC Sunday Edition podcast (February 9, 2014).
chosen pathway, sustaining their actions until their goal or a suitable alternative is reached (Snyder, 2002).

In explaining hope, Snyder (2002) used the concept of a 'hope-enhancing environment.' This concept referred to a context that individuals can create for each other to facilitate Snyder's (2002) three components of hope theory\(^\text{15}\) (Snyder, 2002). Jacobs (2005) refers to Snyder's (2002) hope-enhancing environment for an individual as 'hope-for' something - or an individual wanting and/or desiring something. In a hope-enhancing environment for an individual, they may use their strengths, or they may draw upon or become resources in an attempt to reach their preferred future. However, Jacobs (2005) said:

\[\text{[Hope is] social in nature, rather than individual, and is wrapped up in the web of social relations that each of us inhabits. Hope is decidedly not about individual aims, desires, or ambitions; it is not possible as an I but only as we - or, more properly, as the articulation or joining together of individuals into what Marcel refers to as a communion (p. 785).}\]

'Hope-in' refers to a collective future/hope-enhancing environment (as opposed to an individual future/hope-enhancing). Jacobs (2008) explained that hope "is at its core thoroughly intersubjective, a horizontal relationship of mutuality that looks toward a shared future" (p. 565). This means that in a hope-enhancing environment, individuals may use their strengths, or they may become or draw upon resources in an attempt to reach their shared preferred future as a community.

Jacobs' (2005) 'hope-in' a shared future could help create or recreate complimentary power relations. Paraschak (2013a) believed that this creation "is central

\(^{15}\) i.e., goals, pathways, and agency thinking (Snyder, 2002).
to the practices of hope" (p. 232). "This approach recognizes that (1) unequal power relations exist in all social relations and (2) the (re)production of rules that govern the unequal distribution of resources occurs through the actions (i.e., agency) of individuals" (Paraschak, 2013a, p. 232-233). To produce complimentary power relations, actors who shape the rules would need to reflect on and be aware of their actions and the potential consequences of their exercising of power. For example, an actor may want to act on their individual goals/wants. However, they must be aware of the consequences their actions may have on the broader community. The actor has a shared future with the community, and thus should make their decision for action based on that shared future (Paraschak, 2013a). When actors exercise their power, they should do so in a way "that does the least harm to their collective vision" (Paraschak, 2013a, p. 233).

"Jacobs (2008) discusses how to 'cultivate an attitude and process of hospitality...[in order] to move toward the kind of intersubjective relationships of mutuality that form the basis of hope' (p. 579)" (Paraschak, 2013a, p. 237). The two elements of availability and listening "are key to successfully achieving the type of collaborative effort sought after in the strengths perspective" (Paraschak, 2013a, p. 237). People must be available to each other in order to create links that will facilitate a hope-enhancing environment. They must accept others and treat them as they would their own friends. An individual also needs to really listen to the other person as they communicate, sharing back their perspective in a non-judgmental way in an open effort to co-transform (Jacobs, 2008). In an effort to create hope, listening means the focus of an individual must shift from themselves to the other person, as well as from persuasion to understanding (Paraschak, 2013a). Jacobs (2008) "recognizes availability and listening as essential elements of hospitality"
(Paraschak, 2013a, p. 237). Once hostility transforms into hospitality, the possibility of change exists for everyone (Paraschak, 2013a).

**Contributions to the Strengths and Hope Framework**

There have been significant contributions to the strengths and hope framework in recent years. In Anderson (2015), participants transformed through their interactions with each other and within the Queen's Quay Disabled Sailing Program (QQDSP). They developed new strengths and enhanced existing strengths by facing adversity and by drawing on resources and community support. Before the interview process, most participants only saw themselves as drawing on resources in order to reach their preferred future. However, during the interview process, those participants expressed that they were not just working towards their own goals, but contributing towards the hope-enhancing environment and goals of others. This occurred when some participants took on a leadership role by taking other participants out onto the water to show them how to sail. By reaching their own preferred future and by contributing to the hope-enhancing environment of others, participants were fulfilling the organizational mission of the QQDSP. As a result, participants were also contributing towards the hope-enhancing environment and shared preferred future of the QQDSP (Anderson, 2015). By using the strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a; Saleebey, 2013), Anderson (2015) demonstrated ways that disabled people were individuals with strengths who took an activist approach to their participation in sport.

Krawec (2014) explored how Canadian female football players were shaping football while being shaped by their participation within the sport. Krawec (2014) did a comparison of the Legends Football League Canada (LFL) and Western Women's
Canadian Football League (WWCFL). The LFL was a for-profit sport entertainment league using women as a means to make money. The establishment of this league provided women with professional opportunities to play football. However, the LFL had loose rules and unsafe equipment for its athletes. Because the LFL did not align with men's football in Canada, it was not seen as a legitimate league/sport (Krawec, 2014).

The WWCFL was a non-profit amateur sports league that also provided women with the opportunity to play football. This league was able to break stereotypes and challenge perceptions that football was a male dominated sport. Due to the fact that the WWCFL aligned with men's football in Canada, it was legitimized as a real league/sport and received the support and resources needed to succeed (Krawec, 2014). By using the strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a; Saleebey, 2013), Krawec (2014) demonstrated ways all these female football players were legitimate athletes with strengths.

Freeman-Gibb (2016) explored women's experiences as participants in Highland Games Heavy Events (HGHE). She examined the history of women's involvement in the sport within North America through interviews with the athletes and relevant administrators of the sport, documenting their strengths and the resources they accessed and/or provided, as well as newspaper coverage of female athletes in HGHE as compared to male athletes. Freeman-Gibb (2016) found there was an increase in women's divisions over the previous two decades. Female participants listed their strengths as both physical and psychological, with an emphasis on physical strengths. An emphasis on physical strengths for women in HGHE emphasized their athlete qualities over gendered differences with male HGHE competitors. Freeman-Gibb (2016) also found there was
unequal pay between male and female HGHE athletes, citing a need for pay equity between the genders in order for the women's divisions to grow properly. Further, there was almost equitable media coverage between male and female athletes, with male athletes receiving slightly more coverage.

Women's 'hope-in' a shared preferred future within HGHE suggested that women were looking to the future and believed that their sporting contributions should and would be legitimized/recognized by the majority of spectators, competitors, and athletic directors (ADs). By using the strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a; Saleebey, 2013), Freeman-Gibb (2016) assumed that these women athletes were people with strengths, and that they could take an activist role to get people to think differently about their sport. She did not focus on what women could do better, but rather on what they and HGHE administrators were doing at that time to work towards their goal of building bridges towards a shared preferred future.

Assumptions

1. I assumed that all members within the Windsor Spitfires organization had strengths and that the resources and challenges within the Spitfires organization enabled participants (sometimes with the help of each other) to enhance and use their strengths.
2. I assumed that selecting participants who were scattered throughout the Spitfires organization (via quota selection) would provide a better understanding of the team's collective strengths and available resources. Each individual had different roles and responsibilities within the organization. This provided me with a wider perspective on the participants and their goals as individuals and as a team.
3. I assumed that the participants within the Windsor Spitfires hockey club were shaping
and being shaped by their experiences. I recognized that this was an on-going process that occurred over an extended period of time.

4. I assumed that when high-hope participants reached their preferred and shared preferred futures both on and off of the ice, their overall ‘wholistic well-being”16 would improve. ‘Wholistic' well-being off the ice contributed towards 'wholistic' well-being on the ice.

5. I assumed that the strengths and hope framework was the proper framework to explore my case study. The framework was not being tested. Saleebey (2013) suggested that individuals are the experts of their own lives, and people need to ask those experts about their strengths. This was why I chose to use the strengths and hope framework.

6. I assumed that examining the Windsor Spitfires hockey club from a strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a) would have a positive impact on the participants and on the Windsor Spitfires as an organization. Collecting and sharing information from a strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a) facilitated the possibility that all members within the Spitfires organization could work together in a reflective process that potentially further empowered all participants.

16 In Paraschak and Thompson (2014), "Lavallée and Lévesque, 'Two-Eyed Seeing,' argue for the use of the term 'wholistic' versus 'holistic,' since the former spelling 'emphasize[s] the concept of wholeness when the four areas of health - physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual - are in balance' (208)" (p. 1058). In keeping with the strengths perspective, I will spell it the same way.
CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

Allain (2008) suggested that when scholars examine hockey, they tend to overlook the CHL. Other than her own work (Allain, 2008; 2014), she cited only two authors (Robinson, 1998 and Vaz, 1982) who have completed full studies on junior hockey. The studies cited by Allain (2008) do include, but are not specific to, the CHL. The lack of literature on Canadian major junior hockey may in part be shaped by the idea that the CHL is a closed community. Members are suspicious of outsiders. Those that the junior hockey subculture do let in are mostly let in with restricted access (Allain, 2014). Fortunately, additional literature was found and used to answer the following sub-questions:

Sub-Question #1

What strengths do you possess as a member of the Spitfires organization aiming to play in the Memorial Cup?

The strengths perspective turns towards the possibilities and capabilities of what people can achieve (Paraschak & Thompson, 2014; Saleebey, 2013). Even through tough times, the strengths perspective sees the possibility for hope and transformation (Saleebey, 2013). Organizational members of sports teams work towards the possibilities and capabilities of what they can achieve by setting goals. Personal strengths are contextual; they relate to the particular goals (e.g., individual (personal) and/or collective (team)) being sought by an individual. According to Allain (2008), most junior hockey players set an individual goal of playing in the National Hockey League (NHL). This is their preferred future (Paraschak, 2013a). Most of a player's time spent in major junior
hockey is done with the hope that he will one day become a professional and make a
career out of the game he loves. Collective team goals are also relevant for hockey teams.
The 2016 Memorial Cup host team, the Red Deer Rebels, identified several team goals.
Those team goals included having organizational members do well in school, zero
alcohol or drug abuse among organizational members, and creating a healthy and positive
mindset within the organization (Mendonsa, 2016; Weber, 2016c).

In an interview with Edmonton Oilers Assistant General Manager (AGM) Scott
Howson, Devine and Foster (2006) identified that many NHL organizations operate their
teams within a strengths framework. Howson believed that people were able to maintain
as well as further their strengths. The Edmonton Oilers organization was split into hockey
operations and business operations. Howson claimed that the business people were good
at selling tickets, marketing, etc., while the hockey people were good at scouting,
drafting, and running a hockey team. Howson suggested that members within a specific
operation have strengths. For example, within hockey operations, each General Manager
(GM) had a specific strength that aligned with the organizational goals of their team.
Howson used the example of a patient GM who was able to run an organization that was
in a rebuilding process. That NHL GM was able to both maintain and further his
strengths by operating the team while drawing on his strength of patience (Devine &
Foster, 2006).

A study by Carron, Bray, and Eys (2002) found that there was a strong, positive
relationship between team cohesion and success. This relationship was strong among
sports teams (Carron et al., 2002). If a sports team were to set a team goal of cohesion,
you would be more likely to be successful in achieving their shared preferred future. The
concept of 'team cohesion' was developed in 'Practices of Hope (p. 10).' Individuals who work towards the same team goal are working towards a shared preferred future (Jacobs, 2005). To do this, members of an organization work with each other, not on each other, to create a hope-enhancing environment (Jacobs, 2005). This interaction between organizational members could create a close, united bond that would empower members as they interact and work together to achieve their individual and collective goals (Paraschak, 2013a; Saleebey, 2013). By working with one another to achieve individual and collective goals, individuals would be drawing on each other’s strengths to reach those goals. This could lead people to build upon their existing strengths, or to identify new strengths. Further, resources within their environment will be identified and utilized as a way to achieve the individual and collective goals. The process is unique in the possibilities it may bring to the hope-enhancing environment of both individuals and the team. This could build trust and interpersonal support systems within an organization (Carron et al., 2002; Ponic, 1995).

**SQ1 Directional Proposition.** I believed that members of the Spitfires organization would set individual goals in order to achieve a preferred future as well as team goals that would work towards a shared preferred future. I mostly expected organizational members to set individual goals of wanting to advance to the next stages in their careers. Those next steps may include moving on to professional leagues such as the East Coast Hockey League (ECHL), American Hockey League (AHL), or NHL, where there is more opportunity to make money in a career. However, some members might choose to pursue education instead of moving on in their hockey careers. This aspiration could be held by players, staff, and management. It is also possible that members of the
Spitfires organization might set individual goals of playing in or winning the Memorial Cup. This goal could align with the team's potential shared preferred future. Other individual goals may include remaining healthy, achieving a certain amount of points, creating new strengths, furthering existing strengths, or playing a certain amount of time.

I expected most participants to identify winning the Memorial Cup as the team's shared preferred future. However, other possibilities may arise. For example, the team may want to reach the Memorial Cup tournament physically healthy so everyone has the chance to participate. Further, the team may set a goal of just going there to have fun and enjoy the experience, or they may just want to do their best. However, as I stated previously, I expected the goal of winning the Memorial Cup to be the most identified team goal.

**Sub-Question #2**

*What resources do you draw upon to work towards your individual goals and team goals?*

Rees and Hardy (2000) suggested analyzing social support as a series or set of specific transactions. Social support is provided by and is likely to occur between coaches, teammates, psychologists, trainers, friends, parents, and family members (Rees & Hardy, 2000; Rosenfeld, Richman, & Hardy, 1989). Rees and Hardy (2000) found that different types of support were used by athletes for different types of problems and stressors.

Student-athletes experienced high rates of psychosocial risks (Moore, 2016). However, student-athletes' perceptions of the availability of support systems were extremely low. In Moore's (2016) study, both ADs and students "believed psychosocial

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17 When social support occurs between people, it is called a transaction (Rees & Hardy, 2000).
services [were] not as readily available on their campus as athletic and academic services, especially knowing that mental health is the largest problem facing the student-athlete population” (Moore, 2016, p. 63). Knowing that resources are available is important for organizational members, especially for those who need it. In keeping with the strengths perspective, individuals should inform other organizational members when resources become available\(^{18}\) (Paraschak, 2013a; Saleebey, 2013).

Nicholson, Hoye, and Gallant (2011) suggested that having interpersonal support systems in place for players would contribute to their overall well-being. In their article, the Australian Football League (AFL) and its club teams invested in athlete support structures to make the league more professional and commercialized. These athlete support structures included interpersonal resources such as player agents, coaches, player welfare and development managers and officers, dieticians, trainers, doctors, dieticians, physiotherapists, masseurs, exercise and injury rehabilitation specialists, psychologists, and chaplains. These support structures were implemented for two reasons. First, they contributed to the overall performance by the athletes and their teams. Second, they contributed to the personal development and well-being of players during their playing careers, during their transition into retirement, and during their post-playing lives (Nicholson et al., 2011).

The number of Indigenous athletes that are playing in the AFL has grown significantly over time. The AFL instituted a racial and vilification policy and process that enhanced the experience of football for Indigenous players as well as encouraged their participation. The AFL and its clubs also invested money into junior development

\(^{18}\) This concept is known as ‘empowerment’ and is discussed under ‘Strengths Perspective’ (p. 9) (Paraschak, 2013a; Saleebey, 2013).
programs in remote areas of Australia with high Indigenous populations that has produced talented football players for recruiters and scouts. However, elite Australian Indigenous athletes faced unique and significant challenges in becoming elite performers. These challenges included coping with intentional and unintentional racism, disconnect from family and community, a lack of resources, moving away from home at a young age, establishing professional playing careers away from family support networks, and adapting to new lifestyles and incomes far removed from their community upbringing (Nicholson et al., 2011).

As Nicholson et al. (2011) explored the perceptions held by elite Indigenous athletes playing in the AFL, they found that Indigenous athletes felt more comfortable interacting with other Indigenous athletes. These athletes shared experiences and cultural connections with one another. When listing support providers, Indigenous participants said teammates, coaches, staff, player welfare officers, psychologists, and dieticians at the club level were sufficient support for everyday events, but Indigenous teammates and staff were important for cultural understandings. Although Indigenous participants said Indigenous staff would make adapting easier, few AFL teams had Indigenous staff available. At the league level, the Indigenous manager of the Australian Football League Players Association (AFLPA) as well as Indigenous athletes from other clubs were significant sources of social support. Externally, family, community elders, and mentors provided support to AFL Indigenous participants (Nicholson et al., 2011).

When Indigenous participants spoke about improving support, they believed "providers of social support were an essential coping mechanism in terms of dealing with the pressures of being elite athletes generally and the pressures of being elite Indigenous
athletes more specifically” (Nicholson et al., 2011, p. 138). Indigenous participants believed a range of social support sources made them happier with themselves, which in turn kept them motivated and committed to playing football and to their careers as elite athletes. Most participants also believed that social support reduced stress and anxiety. Further, most Indigenous participants thought there was a strong connection between social support and their ability to perform as an elite athlete (Nicholson et al., 2011). Having no worries off of the playing field meant they had no worries while on the playing field, which lead to better performance. This is supported by research that showed a positive correlation between social support and mental/physical health and general well-being (Cohen & Willis, 1985; Uchino, Cacioppo, & Kiecolt-Glaser, 1996).

Some suggestions to significantly improve support to Indigenous athletes in the AFL that were put forth by Indigenous participants included, but were not limited to: employing Indigenous personnel in key social support positions; employing Indigenous staff members; extending the use of Indigenous mentors; and having Indigenous people in the club football department with a specific role in player development/welfare (Nicholson et al., 2011).

A 'wholistic' approach could apply to every member within a team or organization. For example, Red Deer Rebels equipment manager and trainer Dave 'Radar' Horning was at the rink or on the road contributing to the hope-enhancing environment of other organizational individuals (to be discussed in SQ3). While at the rink or on the road, 'Radar' was being empowered and supported by his wife and children from home. 'Radar' was able to draw upon his family as interpersonal resources in order to help him work towards his individual goal of being on the road with a 'wholistic' well-being.

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19 This is supported by Rees and Hardy (2004).
'Radar' worked towards the Rebels' collective goals via his individual goal. 'Radar's' family contributed towards his hope-enhancing environment, which helped him become the best equipment manager and trainer he possibly could. In turn, 'Radar' was able to contribute to the Rebels' hope-enhancing environment and work towards the team's shared preferred future (Jacobs, 2005; Snyder, 2002) of winning the 2016 MasterCard Memorial Cup championship.

Until he was traded to the Red Deer Rebels during their Memorial Cup season, Nelson Nogier played hockey in Saskatchewan his entire life. Playing in Saskatchewan afforded Nelson the opportunity to remain close to home. Nelson's father also played in the WHL, so he knew what Nelson needed in order to be successful while playing junior hockey. Nelson's father had contributed to Nelson's hope-enhancing environment throughout his hockey career by acting as an interpersonal resource. Nelson stated that his father used to build him outdoor rinks and had been there for him during very stressful times (Fawcett, 2016b). However, when Nelson moved away from home, he drew on new interpersonal resources. Nelson used his billet family to transition from living in Saskatchewan to Red Deer, Alberta. Nelson also engaged his new teammates to pick him up emotionally and spiritually when he was feeling down on himself (Fawcett, 2016b).

Before the 2018-2019 season, free agent NHL goaltender Robin Lehner was looking to sign with a NHL team when he came forward about his mental health issues. Lehner received help from the NHL/National Hockey League Players Association (NHLPA) Substance Abuse and Behavioural Help Program. Although Lehner came forward with his struggles, those struggles scared some teams off. Lehner was given a
chance by New York Islanders GM Lou Lamoriello, signing a one year 'prove it' contract. Lehner drew on his family, friends, teammates, management, and coaches for on-ice and off-ice support throughout the season. As a result, Lehner had a career year with the Islanders, and was a big part of their success and return to the playoffs. Lehner set a career high in wins, goals-against average, and save percentage. Combined with his goaltending partner Thomas Greiss, both goaltenders brought the Islanders from the worst goals-against average in 2017-2018 to the best in 2018-2019 (Whyno, 2019). Islanders head coach Barry Trotz said, "Robin has got his life together. When your life is in order, your career is in order. It's amazing how it sort of goes hand-in-hand" (Whyno, 2019, para. 19). Lehner said he revealed his struggles to educate the public and influence others who are dealing with similar issues (Whyno, 2019). Lehner wanted to help others, contributing to their hope-enhancing environment.

Mendonsa (2016) suggested that junior hockey players should draw on resources to succeed in school. Included in those resources is the OHL has a post-secondary educational package available to players who have sufficient marks to qualify for admission into post-secondary programs. Realistically, only a handful of junior hockey players make the professional ranks. This means that at some point, some players may be forced to shift/re-frame their goal from being a professional player to something else. This also means players may have to change or re-frame their pathways (Snyder, 2002). Players with the strengths of flexibility and/or adaptability may be able to recognize their situation and use their academic advisors in school as interpersonal resources to create a new pathway for their new goal. Setting new goals (i.e., education instead of professional hockey) and creating new pathways to reach these goals (i.e., using academic advisors as
interpersonal resources) is another way for individuals to achieve their preferred future. That preferred future could assist players in contributing towards a collective goal as well, just as 'Radar' did.

**SQ2 Directional Proposition.** I believed participants would need to draw mostly on interpersonal resources to help them achieve their individual and collective goals. Although the literature reviewed suggests that participants draw on interpersonal resources to achieve 'wholistic' well-being, I believed participants would mostly identify resources that would help them reach their goals within the context of hockey, not in their personal lives outside of hockey. For example, the head coach may draw on material resources such as books or videos on coaching to improve techniques he may be using. However, he may not identify books that relax him at home, thus making him a more effective coach once he/she gets to the rink. Further, participants may link the obtaining of their individual goals to the success of the team's collective goals. The example of 'Radar' drawing on his family as an interpersonal resource best illustrates this link. By drawing on his family as a resource, 'Radar' was able to be the best equipment manager and trainer he could possibly be in order to help the Rebels work towards their shared preferred future. Using individual goals to achieve collective goals may be the easiest way for the participants to answer SQ2. 'Radar' contributing to players' hope-enhancing environment by helping them improve on their already strong agility, thus becoming better players, could have moved the Red Deer Rebels closer towards their collective goal of winning the Memorial Cup. In this situation, player's improve skills or strengths that would help them achieve their individual goals, which in turn also helps the team achieve its collective goals.
Sub-Question #3

In which ways are you a resource to others?

As mentioned throughout the literature review, individuals have been interpersonal (human) resources (Ponic, 1995) to others in multiple ways. In doing so, those individuals are contributing towards individual and collective hope-enhancing environments. Robidoux (2001) observed Reds veteran goalie Paul Proux offer advice to rookie backup goalie John Dent in practice. In this instance, Proux offered himself as an interpersonal resource to Dent in order to help him improve on his technique. Proux's tips contributed to Dent's hope-enhancing environment that assisted Dent in achieving his preferred future (i.e., job security within a professional hockey league) (Jacobs, 2005; Robidoux, 2001).

In Red Deer, the Rondeau family are billets to players within the Rebels organization. Although this does help the Rebels work towards their overall collective goals, it mostly assists the players within the organization. Some players that come to the community of Red Deer, Alberta, might board with the Rondeau family. The Rondeau family became a second family to the players they hosted (Fawcett, 2016a). Billets became interpersonal resources to players such as Nelson Nogier (Fawcett, 2016b) by providing the players with a hope-enhancing environment similar to one they may receive at home. This assisted the players in their transition to Red Deer and helped them work towards their individual goals (Jacobs, 2005).

Individuals may also contribute to a hope-enhancing environment that helps the team work towards their collective goals. This contribution was illustrated previously within the example of Dave 'Radar' Horning. As the equipment manager, 'Radar' made
sure that all of his players had the proper equipment to perform at an optimal level. This included proper sizing, repairs, having specialty equipment on hand, and making sure the database was up to date just in case prospects ended up playing. Also, as the Rebels trainer, it was 'Radar's' duty to make sure the players were in the best shape possible to ensure peak performance (Weber, 2016b). 'Radar' was acting as an interpersonal resource (Ponic, 1995) by contributing to the team's hope-enhancing environment in order for the team to achieve its collective goals and shared preferred future.

Veteran player Luke Philp was acquired by the Red Deer Rebels during their Memorial Cup season to act as an interpersonal resource to the team and help contribute towards the Rebels' hope-enhancing environment. The Rebels were on a five-game losing streak during a critical point of their season. As the Memorial Cup host team, they were in danger of failing to make the playoffs (Cormier, 2016). This would have been embarrassing for a Memorial Cup host team that was expected to be able to compete with the best teams in the CHL (Campbell, 2014; Cicerella, 2016). Philp was brought to Red Deer to use his strengths of leadership and two-way play to shape others and help the Rebels turn their season around. His leadership style aligned with that of the coaching staff. Philp was eventually made team captain (Cormier, 2016).

Similar to Philp, Rebels team psychologist Dr. Derek Robinson was also used as an interpersonal resource that contributed to the team's goals. Dr. Robinson considered himself to be a mental development coach. He assisted all members within the Rebels organization (i.e., players, staff, and management) in understanding the team's collective goals and shared preferred future. Dr. Robinson framed his work throughout the Rebels Memorial Cup season in accordance with the team vision (Weber, 2016c). As an
interpersonal resource, Dr. Robinson contributed to the team's hope-enhancing environment by legitimizing the team vision throughout the entire season, which in turn contributed towards and encouraged others to work towards the collective goals and shared preferred future.

In 2016, the St. Louis Blues lost the Western Conference Finals to the San Jose Sharks four games to two. Blues captain David Backes had played his last game for the team. During his emotional post-game interview, Backes told a story about game five. Before game five took place, Backes was not feeling well and was going to miss the game. Taking his place in the lineup would have been veteran forward Steve Ott. Instead, Ott brought Backes items to help him to feel better so he could play in game five, knowing that it was he (Ott) that would not be playing if Backes was able to. Ott offered himself as a proactive interpersonal resource to Backes, making sure Backes was healthy enough to play (Clinton, 2016). Ott unselfishly forwent any of his individual goals and contributed to the Blues' hope-enhancing environment/shared preferred future, knowing the team had a better chance to reach its collective goals if Backes was in the lineup.

Former professional hockey player, Brian McGrattan, was an enforcer at the professional level. During his playing career, he struggled with drug and alcohol abuse. With the help of his mother, he was able to get sober and remain that way for ten years and counting (Rutherford, 2019; Sportsnet, 2019). One of his former teams, the Calgary Flames, hired McGrattan to be their director of player assistance. In this role, McGrattan was not a doctor or a therapist, but considered himself to be a big brother and/or friend. McGrattan built important and trusting relationships with Flames players and prospects, talking with them in confidence about a range of topics such as fishing, marital issues,
family trouble, anxiety, and addiction. Although McGrattan talked to, visited, or went for coffee or meals with his mentees outside of the rink, he liked to remain visible by integrating himself into the Flames' day-to-day operations at the rink as well (Rutherford, 2019; Sportsnet, 2019).

McGrattan believed that other NHL teams were not doing enough to support players who were struggling with personal issues. He suggested that it is no coincidence that Calgary was at the top of the NHL's Western Conference during their 2018-2019 season, citing that Calgary also had a mental performance coach named Dr. Matt Brown (Rutherford, 2019; Sportsnet, 2019). Flames GM Brad Treliving said players need someone that they can relate to. Players were clear on McGrattan's role, and could approach him as a resource and draw on his experiences when needed (Rutherford, 2019). McGrattan listed his strengths as listening, previous experience as a player, and knowing when to approach people. McGrattan said that the point of using his strengths was to prevent any potential problems or situations before they occurred. McGrattan also pointed out that hockey players were careful about who they let into their lives, so the trust he built with people could help them before it was too late and they were past their point of need. McGrattan used his experience to know when to approach people and when to wait and observe until the time was right to intervene (Rutherford, 2019).

In his role as director of player assistance, McGrattan was able to help current and former Flames players with alcohol abuse and depression. McGrattan was also able to help Flames prospect Dillon Dubé adjust to his first professional season in Stockton. Dubé had trouble transitioning from junior hockey to professional hockey. Dubé claimed that at his young age, he went from having no money to having a professional salary, had
to move to a new city, and did not know how to live or act like a professional hockey player. Dubé turned to McGrattan for help, and was mentored and shaped by McGrattan's years of experience as a former player (Rutherford, 2019). McGrattan believed that a team was a family and that family would be there for you no matter what (Sportsnet, 2019).

As a player, McGrattan was also able to assist others who were not part of his team. After McGrattan became sober, he told his story to the media so others could hear it. Richard Clune, another professional hockey player, struggled with substance abuse. Clune played in the AHL at the same time as McGrattan. Clune wanted to get sober, but struggled to do so. After heard McGrattan's story on television, Clune contacted and eventually met with McGrattan after a game in which they played against one other. After the game, Clune sat down with McGrattan and talked with him. Clune claimed that McGrattan was someone who understood his situation, and McGrattan was someone Clune related to. Richard Clune was able to get sober and remain that way due to his ability to contact McGrattan and McGrattan being available to Clune by acting as an interpersonal resource to him. Since their talk, they have remained friends (Rutherford, 2019). McGrattan believed that off-ice success translated to on-ice success. He said, "Hockey is second. Everything else falls into place - family, career, hockey, all that stuff - if you take care of yourself" (Rutherford, 2019, para. 65).

In 2015, Toronto Maple Leafs head coach Mike Babcock, an advocate for mental health issues, encouraged the Maple Leafs to acquire Richard Clune. Babcock saw the potential for Clune to be a positive role model for the Leafs' farmhands at the AHL level. In 2018, Clune won the AHL's Calder Cup with the Marlies, and Marlies head coach
Sheldon Keefe and Maple Leafs GM Kyle Dubas expressed interest in re-signing Clune. They believed that Clune's work ethic and experience was exactly what the Marlies needed. The Marlies re-signed Richard Clune, but in a different capacity. Clune knew he was not going to play as much as the team's prospects, but was retained for his leadership qualities off of the ice (Hornby, 2018). McGrattan shaped Clune and contributed to his hope-enhancing environment, and Clune's new role was to do the same for the Marlies' young prospects. Clune believed his role was to have his teammates surpass him as a player. Clune suggested that he had a very good work ethic in the gym that led him to have great conditioning and a healthy lifestyle. Clune also claimed that he shared stories with his teammates about his past experiences. He believed that his leadership style of leading by example off of the ice would contribute to the hope-enhancing environment of his teammates, making them better professionals through hard work, sleep, diet, lifestyle choices, and training. Clune said that a big part of his sobriety was his ability to be an interpersonal resource to others. He said that he would like to remain with the team in order to pass down the knowledge that shaped him (shaping) while continuing to learn (being shaped) (Hornby, 2018).

Similar to Brian McGrattan's role as director of player assistance for the Calgary Flames (Rutherford, 2019; Sportsnet, 2019), the Toronto Maple Leafs hired Dr. Meg Popovic as director of athlete well-being and performance. Where McGrattan is a former player that is being used as an interpersonal resource to current players (Rutherford, 2019; Sportsnet, 2019), Dr. Popovic is an interpersonal resource with an academic background. She was a university professor, professional speaker, and certified life coach. However, Dr. Popovic does have a background in hockey that contributed to her
understanding of the hockey subculture. Her brother, Mark Popovic, was a former player with the NHL’s Anaheim Ducks and Atlanta Thrashers. Further, Dr. Popovic has partnered with several former professional hockey players to co-create workshops for parents, players, coaches, teams, and organizations on mindset, resiliency, and communication to help her develop leadership and emotional health in participants (Taylor, 2018). In her role with the Maple Leafs, Dr. Popovic used her knowledge and experience for issues of health outside of physical medical problems. Similar to Brian McGrattan (Rutherford, 2019; Sportsnet, 2019), these potential issues Dr. Popovic was responsible for included mental health and addictions. Further, the help Dr. Popovic provided members of the Maple Leafs organization was confidential. Unlike Brian McGrattan, Dr. Popovic was not around the Maple Leafs on a daily basis, but was readily available for contact if and when a situation arose or someone needed her assistance (Rutherford, 2019).

**SQ3 Directional Proposition.** I believed that participants in my study would act as interpersonal resources for other individuals in two ways. First, they would assist others in achieving their individual goals. I expected participants to assist other individuals in goals that directly related to the other individuals' performance within the organization. This assistance might include one teammate helping another teammate build new strengths in skating, or scouts informing the GM about a player before a big trade. Additionally, I expected to see participants being a resource to others in matters off the ice. An example of this would be a participant being available to a player when they experience a break up with their significant other. I also expected participants to be very involved with contributing towards the collective goals. This could transpire through
the team captain being tasked with creating a team vision for the season, or something as small as a participant bringing snacks to the rink once a week for other members of the organization.
CHAPTER 3

Research Design and Methods

"Case studies are a design of inquiry found in many fields, especially evaluation, in which the researcher develops an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals" (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). I proposed a case study that explored the Windsor Spitfires hockey club as they prepared to host the 2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup. "Cases are bounded by time and activity, and researchers collect detailed information using a variety of data collection procedures over a sustained period of time" (Creswell, 2014, p. 14). I carried out my research with the Spitfires throughout the duration of the 2016-2017 season. During that time, I conducted two sets of semi-structured face-to-face and telephone interviews. The details of my case study are explained in the sampling methods, methodology, data analysis, and delimitations and limitations sections that follow.

Sampling Methods

Case Selection. My unit of analysis for this case study was the Windsor Spitfires. I used a pre-experimental design that allowed me to study a single group and use a collaborative approach by providing the organization with my results soon after the first set of interviews so the information could have been used by the organization throughout the season. There were two factors that influenced the Windsor Spitfires as the selection for my case study. First, the Windsor Spitfires were chosen by the CHL selection committee to host the 2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup tournament. Second, the Spitfires were located in the city wherein I grew up and studied. I had familiarity with and access to the organization, which led to convenience (sampling) for me as a researcher (Markula
& Silk, 2011). The magnitude and importance of the MasterCard Memorial Cup tournament, combined with my familiarity with and proximity to the team led me to choose the 2016-2017 Windsor Spitfires hockey club as the focus of my case study.

**Participant Selection.** My case study included participants selected through a non-random selection process. Because I chose a naturally formed group/organization, I used a non-probability convenience sample within the Windsor Spitfires organization (Creswell, 2014). I targeted participants from multiple areas within the Spitfires organization to capture the team as a community working together towards their shared preferred future. Miles and Huberman (1994) refer to this as 'quota selection,' where researchers identify major sub-groups, then take an arbitrary number of potential participants from each sub-group. The participants of my case study were taken from three sub-groups/categories within the Spitfires organization.

The three categories my participants were drawn from included players and player support, staff, and management. 'Players' only included players within the Spitfires organization. Player parents and billets were also included into this category as 'player support.' Parents and billets potentially provided the players with support that they might not have received from staff or management. Although billets were employed by the organization, they were the guardians (in some cases legal guardians) to players while the players were away from home. Billets were part of the Spitfires organization due to the responsibilities they took on and resulting relationships they formed with their 'billet kids'²⁰. Because of this, I categorized billets as 'player support.'

Employees throughout sport organizations include scouts, coaches, assistant

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²⁰ I will use single quotes to identify concepts expressed to me in interviews specifically by my participants.
coaches, player development executives, operations assistants, and various other members of the front office staff (Wong & Deubert, 2010). These positions may also include medical and training staff such as team doctors, athletic therapists, and equipment managers, as well as volunteers who may work for or within the organization. For the purpose of this study, I considered these employees as 'staff.' These organizational members were not part of the management category, nor were they players.

Finally, the third category I used in my study was 'management.' Wong and Deubert (2010) suggested that a GM was part of a sport organization's 'executive team,' which also includes positions such as scouting director and AGM. The GM has the power to make the ultimate decisions while assembling a team. "Sometimes, the onus falls on the GM to make the final decision on many (if not all) issues facing the club..." (Wong & Deubert, 2010, p. 5). However, the GM did not always have the final decision on team issues. A GM sometimes had to present his/her decisions to the team president or ownership group (Farris, 2011). It was evident that there was an executive team and an ownership group within sport organizations. For the purpose of this study, I referred to these positions (ownership, governor, president, and GM) as management.

Before I defended my proposal, I met with and spoke to then Windsor Spitfires GM Warren Rychel about my proposed case study. Warren Rychel approved my case study and agreed to have the Spitfires organization participate. With a letter of approval from GM Warren Rychel, I applied for clearance from the Research Ethics Board (REB). After I defended my proposal and received clearance from the REB, I asked Warren Rychel if he could forward my study information to selected participants via methods including e-mail, telephone, or a face-to-face meeting (Appendix A). Once a targeted
participant was willing to participate in my case study, I provided them with further
details of my case study (including the participant criteria I outline below). Two targeted
participants refused to participate in my case study, so I searched for and found two other
participants that best fit the criteria I set forth in my proposal. I sought out their
permission for participation and received it.

Markula and Silk (2011) suggested that consideration of the number of
participants in a study was important when trying to answer a research question. While
the number of participants may vary, approximately ten participants is appropriate for a
master's-level thesis (Markula & Silk, 2011). I conducted one set of thirteen semi-
structured interviews with fourteen participants and one set of twelve semi-structured
interviews with thirteen participants from the Windsor Spitfires hockey organization. In
both sets of interviews, the billet participants were interviewed together. Seven
participants were interviewed from the 'players and player support' category, five
participants were interviewed from the 'staff' category, and two participants were
interviewed from the 'management' category (Appendix B).

When selecting participants from the 'players and player support' category, I tried
to cover as many player roles as I could with the limited spots I had available. Since all
players fell into the same category, I did research into specific roles players might fill on
a team. With four spots for player interviewees, I interviewed players that fit within one
or more of the following criteria: a veteran player, a younger player, a leader, a role
player, a player new to the team, a player with professional potential, a player that lived
with a billet, but had access to both his home and parents (not too far away in distance),
and a player that lived with a billet and was far from home (in distance). All four player
interviewees covered as much criteria as possible. However, there was criteria that some player interviewees did not cover. For example, young players were not veteran players. I chose those roles and positions for the players because I believed they would shed light on how the participants viewed their strengths and available resources based on the roles or the positions they held on the team. For example, a young player had different strengths than a veteran player.

Additionally, I targeted billets who were housing a player that lived far from home, thus having difficulty accessing his parents as interpersonal resources the way a player may have with his parents closer in proximity. I also targeted one parent of a player who has a home not too far away from Windsor, Ontario (up to four hours away). A broad range of unique experiences and perspectives from players and player support were covered through these categories.

To represent as much of the Spitfires ‘staff’ as possible, I targeted the head coach, the associate coach, the athletic therapist, the team psychologist, and a scout. I believed these five positions were an accurate representation of a hockey operations staff. Most of these positions were occupied by single potential participants, meaning there was only one category they fit within. Therefore, if any of my potential interviewees did not want to participate, I could have targeted other potential participants with similar roles and/or positions within the Spitfires organization. For example, if the associate coach did not participate in my study, I could have targeted the assistant coach. However, I also chose multiple potential participants with similar roles and/or positions within the Spitfires organization. For example, if one scout did not want to participate in my case study, I could have targeted another scout on the scouting staff.
Staff within a hockey organization is not usually the focus of a team study, but I assumed they would contribute towards 'hope-in' a shared preferred future. Staff members illustrated how their strengths were used while they drew upon and were used as resources within the Spitfires organization. Each targeted staff position interacted with the other staff positions, players and player support, and management on a daily basis.

Finally, I interviewed two members of the Spitfires 'management' team. Sequentially, the first interviewee I targeted was the GM. The GM interacted with all of the members within the Spitfires organization, including all of the targeted participants for my study. Second, I targeted one of the team's owners who had a close working relationship with the team. Members of management made an important contribution to the team's shared preferred future.

**Methodology**

**Interviews.** I conducted two sets of interviews. The first interview set consisted of thirteen semi-structured face-to-face interviews with players and player support (n=7), staff (n=5), and management (n=2). The second interview set consisted of twelve semi-structured face-to-face (n=9) and telephone interviews\(^{21}\) (n=3) with players and player support (n=6), staff (n=5), and management (n=2).

As suggested by Kirby, Greaves, and Reid (2010) and Kirby and McKenna (1989), I pilot tested my interview guide with three individuals who fit the organizational categories I intended to use. This gave me practice with the interview process and allowed me to test my interview questions to ensure that I was communicating my questions clearly. I pilot interviewed former University of Windsor Lancer men's hockey player Blake Blondeel (player and player support category), University of Windsor

\(^{21}\) Telephone interviews were recorded using Algo Client Call Recorder V.2.3 software.
athletic therapist Dave Stoute (staff category), and University of Windsor AD Mike Havey (management category). These pilot interviews were not used in my study. Once the pilot interviews were completed, I made a few changes to my interview guides. During the interviewee recruitment process, I informed any potential participants that I could not guarantee that the information from the interviews would remain confidential. I offered each participant the opportunity to use a pseudonym in an attempt to conceal their identities. However, all participants allowed me to use their real names throughout my case study.

Throughout my interviews, I followed the set of questions from my interview guide with the option for variance in the order and formatting of my questions. Each of the two interview sets followed a different interview guide. Each interview set was conducted at different points within the season. I chose to do this because as the season progressed, my participants might have had different thoughts about and/or experiences with their strengths and/or resources. The first interview set was conducted post-OHL trade deadline. It focused on the background of the participants and the identification of individual and team goals as participants prepared for the Memorial Cup season. The second interview set was conducted post-Memorial Cup. It focused on the latter half of the season and whether or not the individual and team goals were met. I used probes that were appropriate for each question to connect the thoughts of my participants with ideas found in my review of literature (Kirby et al., 2010). Semi-structured interviews are ideal when "the research requires repeated interviews with the same participants over a period of time" (Kirby et al., 2010, p. 134). Kirby and McKenna (1989) suggested that when interviews occurred between the same people over a period of time, it was crucial that
rapport and mutual support was established. I believed this was important for my case study as I interviewed members of the Spitfires organization two times during their 2016-2017 Memorial Cup season.

The interviews were scheduled at a date, time, and location that best suited my participants. Interviews were held in private locations that were quiet and free from distractions. I used an Olympus WS-500M digital voice recorder. The audio files from the interviews were transferred to my password protected laptop computer and deleted from the audio recording devices. I did not take handwritten notes during the interviews. I did not want to take away from the flow of the interview, nor did I want to cause the interviewee any discomfort or awkwardness. Instead, immediately after each interview was completed, I compiled notes based off of the reflections of the interview. While paying close attention to the answers of my participants, I was able to effectively probe deeper into their answers. Further, in order to create a hope-enhancing environment and follow practices of hope (Paraschak, 2013a), I was available to the interviewees during the interview process. I also asked follow-up and/or probing questions that showed the interviewee that I was listening to their answers. Whatever was said between myself and my interviewee at any time was kept confidential.

I understood that it might have been difficult for some participants to reflect on and identify their strengths and to operationalize hope. As a result, I sent my interview guide to my participants one week prior to our interview. This ensured that the interviewees had time to think about and prepare their answers. One interview guide for each set of interviews was used for all participants (Appendix C). Before I began each interview, I asked the participants if they reviewed and understood the consent form
(Appendix D) and if they had any questions about the study. I then asked the participants for their verbal consent to participate in the interview and for permission to start recording. When they agreed, I informed them that I started the recording. After both interview sets, I sent each participant a copy of their transcript and a summary of the results to review. I believed these techniques helped me build rapport and trust with my participants and other members of the Windsor Spitfires organization I may have been around or come into contact with.

**Data Analysis**

**Interviews.** I used Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps for thematic analysis. I: (1) familiarized myself with the data, (2) generated initial codes, (3) searched for themes, (4) reviewed the themes, (5) defined and named the themes, and (6) produced my report. To familiarize myself with the data, I transcribed the audio recordings into Microsoft Word without any voice recognition software. I did not feel it was necessary to record pauses, repetition (e.g., "I... I went to the gym"), and/or speech disfluency (e.g., "ummmmm") (Kirby et al., 2010). I generated and used a one-page preliminary coding list (Appendix E) to assist me in coding the transcripts into meaningful groups (e.g., strengths, resources, hope, etc.) based off of my sub-questions and literature review (Miles & Huberman, 1994). I also refined my preliminary coding list after reviewing the transcripts. I then organized my codes into potential themes and gathered the data that was relevant to those themes and sub-themes using open and axial coding techniques (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). As I continuously analyzed my themes, I refined them, creating clearer definitions. As I created separate coding lists for each theme, I also created a master skeleton list to outline my findings as well as coding lists where I inserted any quotes from the transcripts that fit
under its relevant theme/sub-theme. By doing this, it kept me organized and enabled me to select examples that illustrated my findings through rich, thick descriptors without having to look through my transcripts multiple times. I knew where all of my information was in my coded theme lists, I had a master list to organize my findings/themes, and I knew what quotes I would use to illustrate my findings and where to locate them.

**Trustworthiness.** Validity and reliability are ways in which qualitative researchers check for the accuracy and credibility of their findings (Creswell, 2014). However, I used the naturalistic approach of 'trustworthiness.' Instead of using conventionalist terms such as 'internal validity,' 'external validity,' 'reliability,' and 'objectivity,' naturalists use equivalent terms such as 'credibility,' 'transferability,' 'dependability,' and 'confirmability' to build 'trustworthiness' in the data as well as the process used to collect it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) provided multiple ways in which to operationalize 'trustworthiness.'

**Credibility.** Credibility refers to the need for truthfulness in findings/data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) listed five major techniques that researchers could use to check the credibility of their data. I used two of their five major techniques. They included: (1) "activities that make it more likely that credible findings and interpretations will be produced" (p. 301) (prolonged engagement), and (5) "an activity providing for the direct test of findings and interpretations with the human sources from which they come - the constructors of the multiple realities being studied (member checking)" (p. 301).

'Prolonged engagement' refers to "the investment of sufficient time to achieve certain purposes..." (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 301). Spending a full season observing the
Windsor Spitfires during their journey towards the Memorial Cup tournament provided me with the chance to better understand their team culture. Although it was only two sets of interviews with fourteen participants, the interview process and its preparation spanned across the majority of the season. This prolonged engagement assisted me during interviews with my participants by giving me background knowledge to more effectively probe their answers. As mentioned previously, I believe I built trust and rapport with the organizational members. I believe the trust I gained among the interviewees led to more open and honest answers from them. Finally, by better understanding the team culture and working to gain the trust of my participants, I was able to identify distortions in myself and further probe, when necessary, the answers of my participants. I also believe I minimized their perception of me as an 'outsider.' To accomplish this perception, I did my best to explore their cultural practices with an open mind, putting any pre-conceived notions aside. The trust and rapport I built with my interviewees over the course of the season allowed me to detect any answers they gave that did not seem to align with my understanding of their situation, prompting me to probe further until I understood their point.

According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the most important method of establishing credibility is 'member checking.' "We must be able to say that what we describe is recognized by the research participants" (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 36). After each interview set, I provided a copy of the transcripts to each participant to ensure that they were accurate. This process gave participants the opportunity to check on the intent of their answers, to clarify what they said, to correct errors, and to add any information they felt was missing (Creswell, 2014; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). By having
my participants know that their answers were recorded accurately, they had confidence in my research and trust in me as a researcher. Due to time constraints of my case study, I gave each participant one week to respond with their feedback. If they did not respond after one week, I assumed they agreed with my transcription of their interview.

Transferability. While minimum elements are needed, the researcher must include the widest range of information possible that could be used in a thick description (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). "It is his or her [the researcher's] responsibility to provide the data base that makes transferability judgments possible on the part of potential appliers" (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 316). Since my research is a case study, I used rich, thick descriptors in my findings so that future researchers can decide what to transfer into their studies. These descriptors included quotations from my interviews that best described or illustrated the points I was making (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

As mentioned previously, I read through my transcriptions and eventually refined my preliminary coding list. Refining my coding list helped me avoid a drift in the definitions of codes and provided me with a high internal consistency. I also checked the interview transcripts to ensure there were no errors during the transcription process (Creswell, 2014). These strategies allowed for accurate and reliable transferability if researchers want to use my case study in the future.

Dependability. Dependability exists when the procedures of a study can be duplicated over time by different researchers and produce similar results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Lincoln and Guba (1985) list four techniques for creating dependability in research. I focused on the fourth technique known as 'the inquiry audit.' An auditor is used to authenticate the research. This auditor is tasked with two things. First, they must
examine the process of the research to ensure my work is legitimate and there are not any fabrications. Second, they must examine the product for accuracy. This can be done by justifying and corroborating certain aspects of the research (e.g., results) by checking the resources, reviewing interview transcripts, etc. I used my graduate advisor, Dr. Vicky Paraschak, as my auditor throughout my entire research process. Her experience as a graduate advisor helped me remain consistent throughout my work. Dr. Paraschak examined my work and provided insightful and thoughtful feedback that added to the credibility and dependability of my research. This included examining my research for both legitimacy and accuracy.

**Confirmability.** "The naturalist prefers this concept to that of objectivity..." (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 300). Using 'confirmability' over 'objectivity' takes the focus away from the characteristics of the researcher and places it on the characteristics of the data. Confirmability is achieved when the findings of a study are shaped by the participants, not the bias, motivations, and/or interests of researchers (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985), I kept reflexive notes that documented my thoughts/biases as well as various information on the 'self' and 'method.' The 'self' is data on the human instrument (myself as a researcher), while the 'method' tracked the methodological decisions I made and why I made them (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Further, I have included my conceptual baggage (Appendix F). "Conceptual baggage is the record of the experience and reflections of the researcher that relate to the focus of the research... Since all research is done by someone, it is essential that 'someone' is identified in some way and accounted for in the research" (Kirby & McKenna, 1989, p. 49). As I moved through the research process, I recorded the research I was doing and the reflections I had
on it (Kirby and McKenna, 1989).

**Researcher Positionality**

Researcher positionality refers to a researcher's location within their research context. The researcher's experiences, assumptions, and relationships with the research participants creates an impact on the research process. The position of a researcher within their research is identified through a reflexive and critical thinking process. Qualitative researchers use this process to identify the impacts of their positionality on those who are involved within their research. The location of a researcher within the social hierarchy could potentially limit or broaden their understanding of others (Kirby et al., 2010).

I am a Caucasian male born in Canada. I am able-bodied and I have post-secondary education. I also participated in organized sport while growing up. This information aligns me with the dominant group within Canada. As a result, I should be able to relate to the majority of my research participants. While this is true for the most part, I am not a member of my participants' group (i.e., hockey players, staff, and/or management). I was raised by my immigrant grandparents. Raising two grandchildren caused financial hardship on them. As a result, I played baseball because it was not as expensive to play as hockey was/is. Although I was not able to play organized hockey, I was able to watch the Windsor Spitfires on a regular basis over the last 23 years as a season ticket holder (see Appendix F: Conceptual Baggage). I also have several friends who have been involved in organized hockey. Even though I am not a member of the hockey player group as Kirby et al., (2010) suggests, my social determinants (except for

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22 These reflections consist of intellectual thinking and emotional comments.
23 “... the rules of mainstream or "whitestream" sport have been primarily shaped by individuals of White, European heritage, in ways that privilege their traditions, practices, meanings, and sport structures” (Paraschak, 2003, p. 125).
class) and my familiarity and knowledge of hockey helped me better relate to my participant group. While I cannot relate to the subjective behaviour of my research participants (Kirby et al., 2010), I can keep an open-mind and be ready to listen (Paraschak, 2013a).

**Delimitations and Limitations**

My research was delimited to a single case study within the OHL. I studied the Windsor Spitfires of the OHL throughout their 2016-2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup season. My choice to focus on a single case study created two limitations. First, Yin (2009) referred to case studies as experiments that are not representative of a sample. It is important to recognize that my case study did not represent other major-junior hockey teams within the CHL that have either hosted or will host the Memorial Cup tournament. Each Memorial Cup team is unique in its own way. Major-junior hockey organizations each have their own culture, they do things differently, and they have different experiences. My thesis results are not generalizable to other Memorial Cup hosts or teams. Instead, through a strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a), it contributed to an understanding of how major-junior hockey teams optimized strengths and resources on their road to the Memorial Cup.

Another possible limitation arising from delimiting my research to a single case study was my inability to guarantee the confidentiality of my participants, which may have shaped the responses given in my interviews. It is easy to identify which team hosted the 2017 Memorial Cup tournament, and the positions these participants held within the organization. Further, participants could have been identified through various websites that listed members of the Spitfires organization. Participants had the option to
use a pseudonym to conceal their identities, but they did not choose to do so.

I chose to delimit the semi-structured interviews to certain members within the Spitfires organization via quota selection (Miles & Huberman, 1994). My rationale for this decision was an attempt to capture the perspectives and experiences of the variety of roles of members within the Spitfires organization as a collective working together towards a shared preferred future. These members included family, players, staff, and management.

A resulting limitation of interviewing certain members within the Spitfires organization was that not all of the perspectives of members within the organization were fully represented. However, I did recognize that the experiences of the members within the Spitfires organization who were not chosen to be interviewed were equally as important as the members who were chosen to be interviewed. Further, although spectators did not participate in my case study, I expected spectators to emerge as human (interpersonal) resources that members of the Spitfires organization drew upon for social support.

There was a lack of academic articles pertaining to the CHL within the literature. However, I did use articles from Allain (2008; 2014). I delimited my research by expanding the literature on the CHL to include other media sources such as magazine articles, newspapers, online articles, and websites. A resulting limitation of expanding my literature was not having sufficient academic articles pertaining to the CHL. Instead of peer-reviewed articles, this case study used 'one-off' articles by journalists to make up for the gap in the literature.

Originally, my case study was delimited to three sets of interviews. Interviews
were supposed to take place at the beginning of the season, in the middle of the season (post-OHL trade deadline), and post-Memorial Cup tournament. However, time constraints and adversity within the Spitfires organization further delimited my interviews from three sets to two (post-OHL trade deadline and post-Memorial Cup) to fit within the time parameters I had as well as to reduce disruption and/or unneeded stress on the Spitfires organization. A resulting limitation was that beginning of the Spitfires' season may not have been fully captured, even though I asked questions that were intended to capture it in the first interview I held with participants.

Originally, I delimited each of my two interview sets to fourteen participants in thirteen separate interviews. However, one of my participants had to drop out of my case study due to two reasons. First, he had to deal with a trade from the professional team he was ready to try out for, to a different professional team. Second, he made the roster of his new professional team, making his availability extremely difficult due to his scheduling. To further delimit my research, my second interview set thus had thirteen participants in twelve interviews. I included the participant's first interview because it still provided my case study with valuable information. A resulting limitation was I could not use that participant's second interview set in my results because I did not conduct a second interview. I recognized that this participant's second interview could have provided different views than his first interview and potentially differing results from the second interview of my other participants.

Originally, I delimited both of my interview sets to thirteen face-to-face interviews. However, after the Memorial Cup tournament, my participants quickly dispersed for the summer. Therefore, I had to further delimit my second interview set to
nine face-to-face interviews and three telephone interviews. As a result, unlike the first set of interviews, I was unable to read the body language of the participants that I interviewed in the three telephone interviews during the second set of interviews.

My second set of interviews was supposed to take place shortly after the Memorial Cup tournament. However, as mentioned previously, my participants left for the summer not long after the Memorial Cup tournament. This limited the access I had to my participants for their second interview set. I had to delimit my second set of interviews to whenever my participants were available to participate in them. My final interview was conducted at the end of October, five months after the Memorial Cup tournament had concluded. A resulting limitation of conducting the second set of interviews at the availability of my participants meant the longer length in between interviews could have had an effect on the answers given by participants in the interviews that were conducted furthest away from the completion of the Memorial Cup tournament (i.e., October).

In keeping with an assumption of complimentary power relations (Paraschak, 2013a), whereby all members of an organization exercise their power in a manner that contributes to the overall collective goal, I delimited my research by analyzing their interview data together to document how they collectively contributed as members of the Spitfires organization towards a shared preferred future. A resulting limitation of analyzing my participant categories together is there may have been distinctive differences by category that I did not draw out.

Finally, I delimited my research by combining players and player support into one participant category. I assumed these two categories were connected through a shared
relationship outside the context of playing hockey. Player supporters thus had a relationship with the Spitfires organization through their relationship with the players. A resulting limitation of combining players and player support together into one participant category is I may have conflated the perspectives of participants within the player and player support categories.
CHAPTER 4

Results

The results of this data analysis are framed within the strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a). This results section is laid out through my case study's three sub-questions. SQ1 outlines the strengths participants possessed and used to help reach their goals, SQ2 outlines the resources participants drew upon to work towards their goals, and SQ3 outlines how participants acted as interpersonal resources to assist others in reaching their goals.

In SQ1, I used Saleebey's (2013) strengths perspective to illustrate how participants' strengths contributed towards their goals. SQ1 is broken down into three sections. The first section highlights strengths the Windsor Spitfires hockey club used to commit to and/or buy into the team's shared preferred future of winning the 2017 Memorial Cup championship. The second section of SQ1 highlights strengths the Spitfires used to respond to adversity effectively and to get around constraints. The third section of SQ1 highlights the strengths that the Spitfires used to show proactive behaviour towards reaching their collective goals.

Each of SQ2 and SQ3 are broken down into four similar resource-based themes explaining how participants used resources to achieve their goals. In SQ2, participants first drew on the Windsor Spitfires as a 'first-class and professional' organization. Second, participants drew on multiple interpretations of 'family.' Third, participants were clear on the roles of others within the Spitfires organization so they could effectively draw on those individuals as interpersonal resources. Finally, in SQ2, participants drew upon their colleagues within and outside of the Spitfires organization as interpersonal resources.
In SQ3, participants acted as resources for others within the Windsor Spitfires organization in order to contribute towards the 'first-class and professional' culture. Second, participants created a family atmosphere that would act as a resource for others. Third, participants were clear on their roles within the Spitfires organization so they could proactively act as resources for others. Finally, in SQ3, participants acted as interpersonal resources for their colleagues within and outside of the Spitfires organization.

I conducted two sets of interviews from three different categories of participants within the Spitfires organization. The first interview set was completed post-OHL trade deadline (late January 2017) while the second interview set was completed post-Memorial Cup tournament (June 2017 to October 2017). The length of interviews ranged between 20 minutes and one hour. Participants from the players and player support category included players Cristiano DiGiacinto, Cole Purboo, Mikhail Sergachev, and Michael DiPietro, as well as billets Michelle and Brian Reid and player-parent Vic DiPietro. Participants from the staff category included then head coach Rocky Thompson, then associate coach and current Spitfires head coach Trevor Letowski, then athletic therapist/strength and conditioning coach Joey Garland, team psychologist Dr. Jay McGrory, and scout Chris Henry. Participants from the management category included co-owner John Savage and then co-owner/GM Warren Rychel.

The timeline of participants' experiences occurred during the Windsor Spitfires' 2016-2017 season. The Spitfires' 2016-2017 season spanned from the beginning of training camp in August of 2016 to the completion of the Memorial Cup tournament at the end of May 2017.
SQ1: Strengths

What strengths do you possess as a member of the Spitfires team aiming to play in the Memorial Cup?

Buy-In. This first section of SQ1 highlights the strengths the Windsor Spitfires hockey club used to commit to and/or 'buy into' the team's shared preferred future of winning the 2017 Memorial Cup championship. 'Buy-in' is thematically defined as the commitment to a shared preferred future.

Goals. At the beginning of the season, the Windsor Spitfires hockey club set a long-term collective goal of winning the Memorial Cup tournament as OHL league champions. In his first interview, GM Warren Rychel said, "We want to win the OHL championship. I know we are hosting it [Memorial Cup tournament], but we want to win the league championship, go in as champions, and win the Memorial Cup." Every participant identified this goal in their first interview. This was their shared preferred future. After the Spitfires were defeated in seven games by the London Knights in the first round of the playoffs, they re-framed their goal. In the second set of interviews, every participant identified the new collective goal as winning the Memorial Cup championship as the host team. In his second interview, co-owner John Savage said, "The goal changed when we lost out in the first round." Head coach Rocky Thompson also explained in his second interview, "After we lost in the playoffs, we still had the Memorial Cup to get to. We just had to re-focus." The Windsor Spitfires hockey club achieved their shared preferred future of winning the 2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup.

Every participant within the Windsor Spitfires organization also set goals that
were related to their roles within the organization (see Table 1). Further, almost every individual goal participants set for themselves aligned with the team's collective goals.

Athletic therapist Joey Garland illustrated this in his first interview:

**Whether it's a team of sixteen year olds that we are building to win a championship in three years, or if it's a team of eighteen to nineteen year olds that we are building to win a championship this year, my goal is to keep injuries down**
and performance up. Regardless of what the coaches want to do, that's what my goal is.

In both instances, the goals the participants set contributed towards the team's shared preferred future.

Pathways. Although the Spitfires had a long-term collective goal of winning the Memorial Cup tournament, the coaching staff\(^\text{24}\) wanted the team to focus on the short-term goal of getting better every day. By doing so, the coaching staff felt like their plan would prepare the team to achieve their shared preferred future. In his first interview, head coach Rocky Thompson explained:

> It's very simple. The team goal for me was for us to get better every single day. That's what I looked towards. I didn't look towards the end of the season. I don't look towards anything else. I look towards what is directly in front of me and that is to help prepare our team today to be better than we were yesterday. To improve upon our game. And it changes. Whatever areas of our game that need to grow is stuff that we address. But, at the same time, bringing the team together as a whole is something that is consistent on a daily basis. I don't say, "Oh, we want to be first place in the league this year" or "we want to win the Memorial Cup." Well, everybody has those goals. I don't look to those goals. I look to what we are going to do today that will build towards us being better so that we are prepared when the time comes to be successful and to win.

To achieve their short-term goal of 'getting better every day,' the Spitfires' coaching staff created a regular season plan of 'not having a set plan.' Instead, the

\(^{24}\) The coaching staff refers to participants Rocky Thompson (then head coach) and Trevor Letowski (then associate coach and current Spitfires head coach), as well as non-participant Jerrod Smith (then assistant coach and current Spitfires associate coach).
Spitfires took things as they came, using their team strength of 'adaptability' to adjust to rigors of the regular season as it progressed. To reach the team's short and long-term goals, participants had to adhere to the plan throughout the season. In the first interview set, CD, CP, MDP, MS, BR, MR, VDP, JG, RT, and TL\textsuperscript{25} believed that sticking to the plan of not having a plan would contribute to the team reaching their shared preferred future. This was referred to as 'trusting in and/or following the process.' In his second interview, head coach Rocky Thompson said:

> Of course we wanted to win the Memorial Cup, but that was never our focus point within the locker room. It was always, "what are we going to do today that will make us better tomorrow? What am I going to do today in the gym that's going to help me be better tomorrow?" Then the same thing the next day when the game comes, "What am I going to do today that's going to allow me to be better tomorrow?" If you continue to take that approach every single day, you end up winning championships. You end up playing at higher levels. You end up really achieving those long-term goals. But, you never focus on the long-term goal, you focus on the day-to-day that will get you to those goals.

Re-framing their goal after their first round playoff loss also meant the Spitfires had to re-frame their pathway to that goal. The Spitfires had 44-days to prepare themselves for the start of the Memorial Cup tournament. CP and JG believed that having a clear pathway to their re-framed goal made it easy to 'trust in and buy into' the 44-day layoff process. In his second interview, athletic therapist Joey Garland said:

> Whether we had a good weekend or a bad weekend, we always had a plan and there was always another option. The plan was always to do all the right things,

\textsuperscript{25}When referring to multiple participants, I will use their initials (initials located in Table 1 on p. 58).
win the OHL championship, and go to the Memorial Cup through the front door and win. Every day, from the end of August all the way through May, was about the process, about getting better, and about using our strengths to help the team. But, at the end of the day, I think we knew there was a 'Plan B' if 'Plan A' didn't work. Once we got eliminated and we focused solely on one goal - the Memorial Cup - there was no 'Plan B.' It was easier to focus on what that plan was because there was no other option.

The Spitfires treated their 44-day layoff process like a mini-training camp. They had a lot of time to prepare to peak for the short-term tournament. The planning process for the 44-day layoff began immediately after the Spitfires lost their first round playoff series. Head coach Rocky Thompson said the three-phased plan would be used to condition the players, implement a structure to optimize the team's style of play, and ready the team for in-game action. Spitfires athletic therapist Joey Garland outlined the three-phased plan:

*Forty-four days of work was a daunting task, so we broke it up. We gave them a little bit of a break... We gave them about a week off and then we wanted them to build and accumulate work. Phase one was five days on, one day off. We did that for two cycles. It would be a workout in the morning, usually in the gym. It'd be a workout or something like a spin class, a hill run, a stair workout, or something along those lines. Then, we'd have a two hour practice approximately, or some made up games/scrimmages with local players or the Windsor Lancers. The goal was to accumulate work. To get their bodies adapted to a lot of work so we could speed up work and it wouldn't have the same impact. But, if you kept that up for 44-days, you'd be more tired. You wouldn't have the speed and power, but you*
would be able to go for a long time... Then, from my end, I wanted them [the players] to rest more. In the second phase, we went three days on, one day off. The on days were very similar to the first phase, but the rest days came quicker. We did that for three cycles... In the third phase, we had three cycles of two days on, one day off. That's where the work days got filtered out a little bit. Less workload, but more explosive work. Practice was a little bit shorter in length, but faster in pace. We were still mixing in games and encouraging speed and tempo. The rest days were coming much faster so they [the players] could really recover for the next cycle of two on, one off because it's more intense. That's where I feel we got a lot of our speed once we started... Then the fourth stage, if you want to call it that, was the Monday of the Memorial Cup, where we got into a regular week of practice. Practice Monday through Thursday with our first game on Friday.

Trust in/follow the process. An operational definition of 'trusting in/following the process' was put together from the responses of the participants. 'Trusting in/following the process' is action for or execution of a set plan to achieve a goal. It is finding what works best and sticking to it throughout the course of the plan. In the first set of interviews, forward Cristiano DiGiacinto explained:

When it comes to something like business, you see what you see, or what McDonald's does. They do the same things. They become successful and they open up another McDonald's. You already know before it's even open that it's going to be successful if they follow the same plans.

Being able to stick to the process was a gruelling task for the Spitfires. It took focus,
dedication, hard work, and a professional hockey mentality.

*Hard work/work ethic.* CD, CP, MDP, MS, BR, MR, VDP, CH, RT, TL, and WR referred to 'hard work/work ethic' as a strength that was needed for members of the Spitfires organization to be able to reach their goals. In some instances, 'hard work' was listed as a goal. In his first interview, head coach Rocky Thompson said, "We want to be the hardest working staff so we, at the end of the day, can say nobody has outworked us. That might be an individual goal right there - not to be outworked by anybody else." It was also listed by some participants as the best strength they possessed.\(^\text{26}\) In his first interview, scout Chris Henry said:

> I would think as a scout, and almost everything in my life, my greatest strength is my work ethic. I believe my work ethic is one of the major reasons why I am here with Windsor today. As a player that never had that professional hockey player record, I had to rely on my work ethic to get me by. So, I want to go to more games than the next guy. I want to see more players. I want to have more notes. I want to be more sure than the next guy when it comes to players. I would say my greatest strength is my work ethic for sure.

*Doing things the right way.* Both on and off of the ice, the Spitfires coaching staff conveyed to the players what they thought was 'the right way' to do things. A goal of the coaching staff was to have the players work hard as a collective to get better on a daily basis while being as prepared as they could be throughout the season in order to work towards the team's goals. In his first interview, defenceman Mikhail Sergachev said, "We have to bring the right attitude, compete, and work hard every game." The Spitfires believed that by doing things the right way, the team would successfully achieve their

\(^{26}\) 'Hard work' was identified as a goal, a strength, and a resource by the participants.
collective goals. In his first interview, forward Cristiano DiGiacinto explained, "We need to be hard working, step up when we need to step up, and we need to play the right way. If we do that, we know we can win any game. We know we can be a championship team. It's work hard, do the right things, and we'll be successful."

Players and player support, staff, and management listed things they did on-ice and off-ice that they believed were the right way of doing things:

- Both on-ice and off-ice: paying attention to details/little things, working hard, being patient, trusting in the process, building strengths, treating people with respect, and having a positive attitude.
- On-ice: skating hard, short shifts, shooting the puck, hard work in the defensive zone, doing reps in practice, and playing smart.
- Off-ice: eating properly, warming up before practice, and doing reps in training.

Forward Cristiano DiGiacinto described what he thought the rights things were in his first interview. DiGiacinto said:

It's the hard work aspect that wins games, especially in playoffs. The team that works the hardest is the team that's going to win a seven game series. That doesn't mean working hard by hitting or being physical. It's by doing the right things. It's by skating hard. It's by short shifts. It's by shooting every chance you get. It's by being on the right side defensively.

Agency thinking. All participants believed that they could/would achieve their shared preferred future. They also believed that they had to buy into the team's goals, especially as they faced adversity throughout the season. In his first interview, associate coach Trevor Letowski explained, "There are challenging times and situations that need
to be worked through. In those times, everyone needs to buy-in to what the team is doing to get through those challenges." Success was defined not just by the product on the ice, but in hosting the tournament as well.

Motivation to succeed. All members of the Spitfires organization were motivated throughout the season to get to the Memorial Cup through 'the front door.' In his first interview, defenceman Mikhail Sergachev said, "We don't want to play in the Memorial Cup as the host team. We want to win the OHL championship and go in as winners." Every participant identified this intention in the first set of interviews. Although they were hosting the tournament and were guaranteed a spot within it, the Spitfires wanted to enter the tournament as OHL champions to prove to their critics and disbelievers that they deserved to be there. Once the Spitfires were eliminated from the playoffs in the first round, people within the hockey community questioned whether the Spitfires deserved to be in the Memorial Cup tournament. CD, CP, MDP, and CH used these doubts to motivate themselves. In his second interview, goaltender Michael DiPietro said:

I think losing to London was the biggest blow. It's like, once we lost to London, things kind of started to pick up. I know it sounds weird, but we can stand back and everyone's just pissed off. I haven't seen our guys that pissed off all season until that point. I think that just kind of lit a fire and that was our biggest thing.

Associate coach Trevor Letowski said getting motivated for the Memorial Cup tournament after their first round playoff exit was easier to do for some players more than others. However, remaining motivated throughout the 44-day layoff process was not an easy task. The coaching staff had to keep the team motivated throughout the difficult
layoff process in preparation for the Memorial Cup tournament. In his second interview, Letowski explained:

As far as the time off, we had a plan of course, but it was very challenging to keep the team motivated. It's a long time with these young players. To me, we had a lot of signed players - legitimate NHL prospects. We had probably seven of them. To me, those are the easiest guys to deal with because they're pros and they have motivation. They're going to play in the future and they're going to make money in the game. There's also a big chunk of players that aren't, especially if they were older and guys that were just going to go to school next year. We were pushing them on day 20. They're not playing for three and a half to four weeks. It was hard. There was some pushback from them. I think that the relationships that we had, especially me and [assistant coach] Jerrod [Smith]... It wasn't all roses. It wasn't always just, "this is great, we're going to work hard, hard, hard, hard to get better." They didn't love it at times. It's just human nature. We had a plan, but I think we had to continuously make adjustments accordingly to make sure that the group stayed motivated or else there's some fear about losing them... I thought [head coach] Rocky [Thompson] and the whole staff, we did a good job at finding a way to get the guys through that. It wasn't easy. We didn't sit there after we lost the game in London. We got that many days and we said, "Okay, this is the plan for 44-days," and everything just went great. That wasn't it. It was a constant grind.

Some participants within the Spitfires organization were also motivated to succeed due to the lack of confidence others had in them. For example, in his first
interview, goaltender Michael DiPietro expressed that he was driven to accomplish his individual and team goals because of what he thought was his unfair draft ranking by the scouting community. DiPietro said:

*In the draft, I know I am not projected as high as other people solely based on my size because an NHL goaltender has to be 6'2" or over. But a lot of people fail to realize that Antti Niemi has a Stanley Cup, Jonathan Quick has a Cup, and Tuukka Rask was close to having a Cup. Tim Thomas has a Cup... I use it as motivation. To be honest, it really pissed me off when I see all of these rankings. It really does upset me because I know what I can do. I know what my coaches think I can do and accomplish. I am really stubborn. Frankly, I am stubborn. I really hate hearing the words I can't do something... I am motivated - my work ethic. I hate to be outworked. You can pick or hire someone over me because they are taller or something. But, I will refuse to be outworked on the ice or in the gym. I may not be the strongest guy, but I’ll give you all I have and at the end of the day, I am happy with that. When June comes around, you are going to hear my name called. I know all that hard work has paid off.*

DiPietro spoke of his motivation to prove the scouting community wrong, and planned on doing so through his work ethic.

*Positive attitude.* Players and coaches believed that keeping a positive attitude was part of the buy-in process. They kept a positive mindset on a daily basis to help them get through the difficult process of getting better each day throughout the season. In his first interview, forward Cole Purboo said, "I definitely think you always have doubts. But, you just have to shut them out and stay positive because the doubts are the reason why
you are not going to make it. You have to be 100% for something if you want it." Some participants even used a positive mindset to bounce back from an individual or team obstacle. They knew that things would eventually get better and did not dwell on the bad days. In his first interview, goaltender Michael DiPietro said:

I think there are obstacles. Every day there are obstacles. I guess the rut you go through in a year. Goal scorers or point producers go through a scoring drought... Whether the team is on a losing streak, you're in a rut, or you're not feeling well... I'll just remember that I'm playing the sport that I love and just enjoy being around the guys. Personally, I may go through a rut. I could let in three or four goals maybe, or get shelled one night. It's just knowing that it's ok. It’s ok. You are going to bounce back and the sun's going to go up tomorrow.

Accepting roles. All participants acknowledged that there was adversity within the line-up at some point throughout the season. Players were missing from the line-up due to various reasons such as injuries. Because of this, players had to accept and/or adapt to new and/or unfamiliar roles until their teammates were able to return to the line-up. In his first interview, goaltender Michael DiPietro explained how rookie forward Cole Purboo performed many roles for the team throughout the season. DiPietro said:

As we started the season, guys were at NHL camps. Gabe [Vilardi] was still injured from the summer. There were a lot of obstacles that were unexpected. Obviously, we kind of knew guys would be away at camps and everything, but we didn't really realize that many guys were going to be away at camp. We creeped into the fact that Gabe was hurt and we kind of had a "what do we do?" moment and Purb's [Cole Purboo] stepped up. He started off the season really, really
strong, and then adapted to a new position - a new role on the team. It was going along with the knowing your roles that I was talking about. Cole had a really strong offensive start. And now he finds himself 55 games later in a defensive role, fourth line guy, maybe not play a lot, but when you are out there, I need you to do the right things. And Cole, in the fourth line, doesn’t really have much margin for error. You have to go do your job and get off... The way I think he's adapted is something important because now he knows what he has to do for the Windsor Spitfires to be successful. And everybody on our team realizes what they have to do for the Windsor Spitfires to be successful.

Staff, management, and player support also changed roles throughout the season. CD, CP, MDP, CH, TL, and JS referred to themselves as individuals that were contributing to a team. Scout Chris Henry said in his first interview, "In the end, I am just an employee of the Windsor Spitfires. I am just a key in the cog." CD, CP, MDP, MS, CH, JM, RT, TL, WR, and JS also said that everyone had a role on the team, and all roles had to be fulfilled for the Spitfires to be successful. All participants wanted to contribute to the team's success, no matter what role they had. They believed if everyone completed their role, the team would have success. In his first interview, billet Brian Reid said:

All the young players too stepped it up at the beginning. Purboo, all of the young kids. They did it because a lot of players got hurt. They really stepped it up, and that's what they needed. They need the hot shots, the all-stars... They need the medium guys. But, they still need the young kids. Without those young kids, they [the team] weren't going to go too far.

Team first mentality. CD, CP, MDP, MS, CH, JM, RT, TL, JS, and WR put the
team's interests and goals before their own interests and goals. They expressed that individual goals are set to contribute towards team success. Scout Chris Henry said in his second interview, "You're playing for the logo on the front, not the name on the back. So no, I will never put my individual goals ahead of the team's goals and success. It will never happen." In his second interview, Dr. Jay McGrory said:

   I think the reason why the Spitfires won the Memorial Cup is because they did buy into the process. One of the things that I heard from the players, and I think if I were defining the buy-in process, it was putting team goals above individual goals. I think if you look at any sports, at any level, the teams that win championships don't necessarily have the star-studded rosters. Just team.

CD, CP, VDP, CH, RT, and WR said if the team had success in reaching its goals, individuals would have success in reaching their goals as well. In his second interview, GM Warren Rychel said:

   They [individual and team goals] go hand-in-hand. In hockey, there is an old saying, "The better your team does, the better your individual goals are achieved." So a lot of these guys, the team did better - Jalen Chatfield signed [as a free agent with the Vancouver Canucks]. It goes hand-and-hand. It's not like an individual sport, like a sprinter, boxer, or mixed martial arts (MMA) guy. The better you do as a team, the better you do as an individual. Rocky [Thompson] got the best out of them [the players]. They [the team] were all pointed towards one goal.

In his first interview, forward Cole Purboo said, "I set my individual goals to help the team collectively because if the team does well, then individually everyone does well."
When talking about his son (Spitfires goaltender Michael DiPietro) in his second interview, Vic DiPietro said, "If he's achieving his goals, the team is also. If the team is achieving their goals, that means his are being achieved as well."

**Responding Effectively.** This second section of SQ1 outlines the strengths the Spitfires used to react to adversity effectively and/or to get around constraints.

*Adaptability.* Associate coach Trevor Letowski referred to the team having a regular season plan of not having a set plan. In his first interview, Letowski explained:

*With hockey you can’t draw up a master plan for a season. You have 200 days planned and think ok, this is what we are going to do and day 130 comes and this is what was planned, this is what we are going to do. It’s a constant kind of adjustment. We’re grinding, trying to get better. It’s easier said than done. And all that comes from Rocky [Thompson], he’s our head coach and he sets our day. We do have a plan in place, but things are always changing. Depending on how the weekend went and depending on where our team's at with things like injuries. There are always little changes here and there, but at the end of the day, the foundation of what we set out to do at the beginning of the year hasn't really changed. That’s part of the goal, just adjusting what we are doing. That’s part of being in hockey. If you are ever going to be successful, that is just part of the process.*

Allowing for 'adaptability' and 'flexibility' throughout the season allowed the Spitfires organization to react to any situations as they came up. Adaptability allowed the team to change their systems and the way they played throughout the season as players frequently entered and exited the line-up. After their first round playoff exit, the Spitfires were able
to change their systems for the Memorial Cup tournament. In his first interview, head coach Rocky Thompson said:

*It's just trying to find another way. You lose your top line center and your top defenceman and you have to find another way. So what does that mean? Does that mean we have to change the way we play a little bit? Systematically, etc. We have to. This is what has allowed us to continue to push forward and evolve, and maybe even get better.*

CD, CP, VDP, JM, and WR were able to adapt their roles within the organization as situations arose throughout the season. In his first interview, forward Cole Purboo explained how his role on the team changed throughout the season as players moved in and out of the line-up. Purboo said:

*We had a lot of guys at NHL camps. Obviously I'm young, so I wasn't at one of those camps. I knew that while they were gone I had to step up for the team, and it was really good for me. I had a blast playing on the top lines and it was just really fun. When they came back, I knew that I was going to eventually move down. It’s just the way it is, and try to find a way to contribute.*

*Responding to adversity.* Participants CD, MDP, MS, VDP, CH, TL, and WR said that learning how to respond to adversity was an individual strength of theirs. In his first interview, goaltender Michael DiPietro explained, "*I faced a lot of adversity in my life. Whether it be my mom passing away or something else, I feel like everyone faces adversity in life. Things just happen, and it's how you respond to it. The way that my dad and I responded to it helped me become the person that I am today.*"

Collectively, the Windsor Spitfires hockey club faced an immense amount of
adversity throughout their Memorial Cup season. As a result, it was difficult for the players to come together and 'gel' as a cohesive unit. A depleted line-up throughout the season and into the playoffs had the Spitfires build a new strength of responding to adversity. Participants listed the following as the most crucial adversities the team endured throughout their 2016-2017 Memorial Cup season:

- Injuries;
- Suspensions;
- Players away at NHL camps at the beginning of the season;
- Players away at tournaments and showcase games throughout the season;
- Players not coming back from the NHL;
- Trading the team captain and other members of the team throughout the season;
- American prospects not joining the team throughout the season;
- Five weeks straight on the road in November/December due to the International Swimming Federation (FINA) Swimming Championships at the Windsor Family Credit Union (WFCU) Centre;
- A very competitive OHL Western Conference; and
- First round playoff loss to the London Knights.

Through dealing with adversity for the entire 2017 Memorial Cup season, the Spitfires were able to respond to their adversity in a positive manner. When describing the Spitfires' first round playoff loss to the London Knights in his second interview, GM Warren Rychel described how his team was able to positively respond to that adversity. This statement was reflective of how the Spitfires were able to overcome adversity all season long. Warren Rychel said:
It was disappointing, but you had to bounce back from it. It does go hand-in-hand. Life is full of disappointments. But, it’s what you do about it when it happens - whether it’s a personal thing, or a death in the family, or sports. It’s how you bounce back and what you do about it.

Without adversity, the team may have not found or looked for ways to improve and get better throughout the season. Man games lost\(^{27}\) through injuries, suspensions, and players away at camps and tournaments built depth, character, and confidence within the team. It strengthened the Spitfires and their ability to approach things while adjusting their systems. Lost man games also gave other players the opportunity to grow and develop their skills while succeeding in their new roles. In his second interview, head coach Rocky Thompson said, "You always look at the positives and what it is that they can create. For example, we lost a number of players. The positive is somebody that we didn't think was going to play that much this year has been forced to play. We have been using it as a great opportunity to teach and develop." The adversity that the team faced throughout the season forced players to not just rely on select players to bring success, but to come together and rely on each other. The trade of former team captain Patrick Sanvido allowed other players on the team the opportunity to step up and take on a leadership role on the team. In his first interview, forward Cristiano DiGiacinto said, "We lost our captain to a trade and it's just stepping up. I feel like that's a role I am willing to take and a role I've wanted to take. That's kind of more of an off-ice thing."

Due to the City of Windsor hosting the FINA Swimming Championships, five weeks on the road in November/December brought the team closer early in the season.

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\(^{27}\) Man games lost refers to the total number of games missed by all players on the team throughout the season.
and gave the Spitfires more home games as the season got closer to the playoffs. The organization used the time off in between their playoff loss and the beginning of the Memorial Cup tournament to rest, re-focus, get into better shape, and get healthy. The first round playoff exit to London taught the Spitfires how to lose as well as learn from their experiences. In his second interview, associate coach Trevor Letowski said, "That London series was a great series that could've went either way. We came up short. I think our team learned a lot from that though, like how it hurt a lot to lose. It did. It was devastating actually." This helped motivate the team when they were looking to redeem themselves during the Memorial Cup tournament. The 44-day layoff gave them the chance to get into a positive mindset before the Memorial Cup tournament started. In his second interview, when talking about the London series, head coach Rocky Thompson said:

*We had them down three games to one, but they were able to rebound and win the series. The same approach had to be taken in that long layoff before the Memorial Cup. We had to stay positive. It was just the things that we had talked about that we had to learn. Staying positive, creating a game plan, having structure throughout that, and having good organization between the staff and the players in order to achieve a goal of having success even though we had a huge mountain that we had to climb.*

By getting into a positive mindset, the Spitfires were able to effectively devise and follow a plan that would lead them to their shared preferred future. The Spitfires also bonded as a team. Players and staff thought that the team came together as a cohesive unit during their weekend with high-performance psychology coach Brian O'Reilly in the second
phase of the 44-day layoff. In his second interview, athletic therapist Joey Garland said:

*We brought in Brian O'Reilly. He had an interesting take on things and he helped us gel as a team - a bit more of a cohesive unit. He came in and looked at our culture and some of the things we did. He tried to help correct some of the things that we weren't doing optimally or to our best ability considering the high performance hockey that we were playing.*

*Creativity.* In previous seasons, the Windsor Spitfires were hit with league sanctions that cost them several seasons worth of high draft picks. In order to build the team for their Memorial Cup season, GM Warren Rychel and his scouting staff had to get creative in accumulating and developing players in the preceding years. When assembling the team for the 2017 Memorial Cup tournament, GM Warren Rychel used a slow process that spanned several seasons. The Spitfires drafted and developed key players in previous seasons while slowly adding components to the team over the span of their Memorial Cup season. In his first interview, Warren Rychel said:

*I think the management team has done a pretty good job doing that [building the team] because we didn't have that many assets. We had limited draft picks because of the sanctions and we traded all of our picks for this year. The biggest thing was to get creative... I think in assembling the team, we made probably one big trade a month since last July [2016]. It's been a slow cook crock pot, not a rammed trade deadline. We got a couple of guys at the deadline. We've slowly kind of cooked this team like it's a stew. It's going to bode well.*

The adversity the team faced throughout the season forced the coaching staff to get creative in their process of finding ways to 'get better' on a daily basis. In his first
interview, head coach Rocky Thompson explained:

*I believe that with the way we practice has really evolved from the start of the
year to where we are right now. That has helped us to strengthen our game. And
that is just from coming together as a staff and being creative with one another on
developing better ways of doing things. I believe that has definitely been a
strength of ours from the start of the year to where we're at right now.*

**Proactive Behaviour.** This third section of SQ1 highlights the strengths that the
Spitfires used to show proactive behaviour towards reaching their collective goals.

*Effective communication.* The coaching staff and management clearly
communicated their expectations with members of the Spitfires organization regarding
their roles. For example, in his first interview, scout Chris Henry said management was
clear in their expectations. "*Warren Rychel, Bob Boughner, and Brian Teakle all played
an integral role at helping me achieve my goals. They set out the guidelines on what kind
of players they wanted, their expectations for me, and I went out and I executed them.*"
With his expectations clear, Henry was able to effectively carry out his responsibilities in
his role as a scout.

CD, BR, MR, CH, JG, JM, RT, TL, JS, and WR also knew when and how to
effectively communicate with others within the organization. They were able to
communicate with others within the organization based off of their roles, strengths,
expertise, and experiences they had within the organization. For example, when
communicating with the coaching staff, athletic therapist Joey Garland drew on the team
strength of adaptability as well as his strength and conditioning knowledge. In his first
interview, Garland explained:
Every day I touch base with the coaching staff. Should it be a hard practice? A light practice? Should we work on conditioning? Should we lay off? Should it be more of a recovery? Should we have an extra day of rest? Should a specific person, or a group of people, have the day off? Those are ongoing discussions that happen pretty much every day to reach that overall team goal.

Further, players, billets, parents, staff, and management were able to communicate with others within the organization informed by their recognition of other's strengths and roles within the organization. For example, in his first interview, team psychologist Dr. Jay McGrory stated that he used the medical team to help him identify members within the Spitfires organization that may have been struggling with issues. Dr. McGrory said:

*I talk a lot with both Roy Diklich - the team Doc, and Joey Garland - the team trainer, who are around the team way more than I am, just about those kind of issues. It's an ongoing conversation. They'll say, "Hey, so-and-so is struggling." As a trainer, I think Joey [Garland] has those basics.*

Spitfires management communicated the team's goals and pathways to those goals for the 2016-2017 season to the rest of the Spitfires organization (including players, parents, billets, and staff) at the very beginning of the season. The team's goals and pathways were also communicated to everyone as the season progressed. In his first interview, GM Warren Rychel said:

*Right from the opening training camp we had an organizational meeting that was explained or conveyed to them [members of the organization] that this was our...*

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28 The medical team refers to participants Joey Garland (then athletic therapist/strength and conditioning coach) and Dr. Jay McGrory (team psychologist), as well as non-participants such as Dr. Roy Diklich (team doctor), Kris Goodyear (then performance team assistant), Kathy Harvie (osteopath), and the team's dentist, physiotherapist, massage therapist, and chiropractor.
goal and there was no looking back here and we'd have to make some hard 
decisions about ice time, trades, and other stuff.

Confidence/belief: CD, CP, MDP, MS, CH, JG, JM, RT, TL, JS, and WR had 
confidence and/or belief in themselves related to their roles within the organization. For 
example, in his first interview, scout Chris Henry said he had to trust himself and his own 
opinion to be successful as a scout. Henry explained:

I am confident in my ability. Obviously when you go out every year, there are 
going to be a lot of players that you like and a lot of players you would like to 
have to be part of the Spitfires organization. But, you aren't able to get every 
player. You can't doubt yourself in this business because as soon as you start 
doubting yourself, the sooner you get passed over by the next guy. You need to 
have self-confidence in this industry. You need to trust your own opinion because 
if you are someone that can get swayed by others, then you are not someone that 
can be trusted. So no, I don't have any doubts... Everyone is trying to persuade 
you. Other team's scouts may want to tip you off on a player to hide the player 
that they like and think you may be interested in. They may come and say that 
player is not a good person, or not a good teammate, etc. Stuff like that to scare 
you off. You have to trust your gut and you have to trust your own opinion.

Some participants expressed having confidence and/or belief in others and their 
ability to act within their roles. For example, in his first interview, athletic therapist Joey 
Garland expressed confidence in his medical team. Garland explained:

I created a medical team. There is myself and the few assistants I have. We have 
our two team doctors, chiropractors, and physiotherapists. We use a whole
collaboration of people that get together. If there are things that are out of my hands, I pass them off to someone who is better equipped.

Management also had confidence in their staff. For example, in his first interview, co-owner John Savage also had trust in and relied on the Spitfires' director of business development Steve Horne, who Savage put in place to assist in the organization of the Memorial Cup tournament. John Savage explained:

We could have been in a position to say, "I don't think he [Steve Horne] is the right guy. I am going to bring in one of our guys from our operation [Cypher Systems Group]." But, the confidence that we have, he [Steve Horne] is the guy that was put into the position and he has done a tremendous job!

All participants believed that their team was capable of winning the Memorial Cup championship after their first round playoff loss. In his first interview, forward Cristiano DiGiacinto said:

I don't think any of us doubted our capabilities. I think we knew just by watching the other teams and their videos... seeing their line-ups, we knew how good we were and how we could come into this tournament and dominate. I feel like that was our biggest success and our biggest strength. Our mindset was that we knew we were going to win and we had the team to do it.

Preparation. Participants prepared themselves in order to contribute towards the team's collective goals. For example, in his first interview, head coach Rocky Thompson attributed the success of the Windsor Spitfires to pre-game planning. He explained:

I believe a team is successful when a coaching staff puts all the resources that are available to them into good use so that you can better build a team and better
develop individuals to come together as a team... To be watching video pre-
scouts, individual video with players, practice planning, practice execution,
proper rest, etc.

Throughout the season, the coaching staff explained that they used 'preparation' to
'get better on a day-by-day basis' while 'building on the previous day.' Participants also
prepared others through their role within the organization to achieve the team's collective
goals. For example, in her first interview, billet Michelle Reid said, "I make sure the kids
have everything they need. I get them to the ice if they have to go, but everything is
usually taken care of there... You can't really make them play better. You just have to
make sure that everything is comfortable and easy for them so they can concentrate on
what they need to do."

After the Spitfires' first round playoff loss, the team had time to draw up a new
plan to prepare them for the Memorial Cup tournament. The Spitfires conducted a mini-
training camp to prepare themselves both physically and mentally. A three-phased plan
was designed by head coach Rocky Thompson and athletic therapist Joey Garland. Head
coach Rocky Thompson stated that the three-phased plan intended to condition the team,
prepare them from a game-ready standpoint, build team cohesion, and instill the belief
that they could win the tournament. The Spitfires coaching staff and athletic therapist
Joey Garland drew upon the experiences of people from other leagues who were in
situations comparable to the Spitfires, people familiar with Hockey Canada that
specialized in planning and short-term periodized programs, performance coaches, local
hockey teams, professional players and coaches, and Spitfire alumni in order to prepare
the organization through their three-phased plan during the 44-day layoff. In his second
interview, forward Cole Purboo said, "Our staff had done a lot of research and they basically laid out the three-phased plan for us to maximize our time and get ready at the top performance for the Memorial Cup... Everyone did their research the best way to get maximum preparation for the tournament."

Maturity. As an operational definition, maturity refers to players over-performing relative to expectations of their age group in junior hockey. Players technically and psychologically matured as the season progressed. Athlete participants developed mature mindsets throughout the Memorial Cup season as well. For example, in the first interview set, ownership believed that Spitfires goaltender Michael DiPietro was technically and psychologically mature for his age. Co-owner John Savage said, "Mikey DiPietro, as a goalie, is one of the top goalies in the league. He was just coming into his own as an eighteen year old. He's still a little young. Despite that, his maturity and his ability to play... He is at the top of the stick there." GM Warren Rychel said, "Even though they [Gabriel Vilardi and Michael DiPietro] are younger players (second year in the league), they are pretty darn good and pretty mature for their age." Throughout the season, players were able to mature in their skill set on the ice as well. For example, in his first interview, defenceman Mikhail Sergachev explained how he developed a strategy that helped him produce more offence. Sergachev said, "I talked to [head coach] Rocky Thompson. He told me to shoot the puck low and try to get it through the blocks. I did that once and I scored my first goal of the season. It helped a lot."

Players also developed the strengths of mental fortitude, perseverance, and the ability to rebound from personal adversity. The Spitfires were able to grow as a team due to the obstacles and adversity they faced throughout their season. Man games lost this
season gave some players the opportunity to develop their skills and mature while succeeding in their new roles. In his first interview, head coach Rocky Thompson said:

I think our team has really grown from the start of the year until where we are now... We have faced a lot of adversity this year - a lot of injuries. There have been suspensions and man-games lost in general. That has been very challenging. But, at the same time, it has created a development opportunity for other players on our team. Development has been so important to us as a staff. When another player has gone down, another player was able to step in, fill that role, and actually prosper in it... Players are playing greater roles than they were going to but are still being able to excel at them.

Team psychologist Dr. Jay McGrory noted that he did not have to deal with a lot of mental health issues throughout the season. In his first interview, Dr. McGrory explained:

This year is unique in terms of the Memorial Cup drive. It's unique from the past few years with the Spitfires in that it's a much older team. A much more mature team... From my perspective, there were not a lot of mental health concerns this year. I guess in some regards, that's a success... For the most part, it was a very mature team. There were a lot of older guys, mostly nineteen and 20 year olds. Usually, you find with older teammates/players that they don't always have as many of the stress-related issues because they've acclimated to the league. So, from a performance standpoint, they do better.

Leadership. 'Lead by example' was a consistent understanding expressed in both interview sets about how participants viewed leadership. When describing 'leadership' as
a strength, CD, CP, MDP, MS, VDP, RT, and TL said they led by example. They used their experience to shape others in ways that contributed to the success of the team and their goals. For example, in his first interview, veteran forward Cristiano DiGiacinto said that he 'led by example' and shaped younger players in a professional manner. DiGiacinto explained:

Being that leader to help the younger guys come in was one of my goals at the beginning of the season. Keep pushing. Work hard every day and be in the gym. Do the right things on the ice and off the ice. Play it a bit simpler - not trying too much. Trying to show the younger guys what it’s like to be simple and follow the systems. That way, we have a chance to be a winning team, a championship team... I work hard and I hope that has been helping the rest of the guys. Lead by example... It’s more like a silent thing, what you see is what you do.

Goaltender Michael DiPietro explained that he led not just as an athlete, but by trying being a good person in life. In his first interview, DiPietro said:

I faced a lot of adversity in my life. Whether it be my mom passing away or something... I feel like everyone faces adversity in life. Things just happen, and it is how you respond to it. The way that my dad and I responded to it [his mother's passing] helped me become the person I am today. I feel like my story as Michael DiPietro the goaltender or as Michael DiPietro the person would be a leadership style role model for a younger person. Maybe not even look up to me because of my hockey accomplishments, but just look up to me as a person... Be humble and want to help out other people not for your benefit, but for theirs. Just be positive and always try to do things that you don’t feel like doing. I think that is important.
Management stated they led from a distance by letting others work independently. If assistance was needed, they would intervene if necessary. In his first interview, Spitfires co-owner John Savage explained:

You let the people do their work and that’s how you achieve your goals... Allowing others to utilize their talents allows you to achieve your own goals... My individual goals, it’s my leadership style, and I suppose my goal with that leadership style is that we have the right people in place, and I think we have the right people in place. The goal is not really having to be too involved because if you have the right people involved, that leadership style lends itself to just being an oversight. It doesn't create a lot of stress. You have to make sure you have the right people in place, which we do. So my individual goal was to not have to be involved in trying to correct problems and issues. You do that by putting the right people in place who can make those decisions, and make the right decisions.

Previous experience. Some participants said they were able to use their past experiences to proactively overcome any current or possible future obstacles that they feel may arise. For example, in his first interview, associate coach Trevor Letowski drew upon his professional playing and coaching experiences to build relationships with the players, to proactively help the players mature, to teach the players how to overcome adversity, and to not allow adversity to stall them. Letowski explained:

I think the experience of coaching at this level for quite a few years and then being a player at the highest level, it goes a long way. I think that’s what these guys [players] want - to really share experiences. It goes a long way with relationships... The goal of making every player better, it’s a challenging thing
because they are young players. They are all different and they all respond to adversity differently... One of the biggest things I’ve learned from being a player for so long is that it’s really hard to get through adversity in this game.

**Conclusion.** Participants from the Windsor Spitfires hockey club used their strengths in three important ways in order to reach their goals throughout the 2016-2017 Memorial Cup season. First, all participants used their strengths to 'buy into' the team's long-term goal of winning the 2017 Memorial Cup tournament as OHL champions. This was identified in their first interview set. To do this, some athlete and coaching participants drew on their individual and collective strengths of 'trusting/following the process,' 'hard work ethic,' and 'doing things the right way.' The coaching staff expressed that the team had a regular season plan of not having a plan. Instead, athlete participants and coaches adapted to each day as it came with the short-term goal of improving on a daily basis. After the Spitfires lost their first round playoff series, all participants re-framed their goal to win the Memorial Cup tournament as the host team. This was identified in their second interview set. They applied their strengths to a new three-phased plan that would take place over the 44-days following their elimination from the OHL playoffs. In the first interview set, some athlete participants were motivated to prove to themselves and others that they belonged within the Memorial Cup tournament as the host team. In the second interview set, players, staff, and management said they remained motivated, but wanted to prove to all of their doubters and naysayers that they could still win the Memorial Cup tournament. In order to buy into the team's belief that they could reach their re-framed goal, most participants said they drew on their individual and team strengths of being 'motivated to succeed,' keeping a 'positive attitude,'
'accepting roles,' and adopting a 'team first mentality.'

Second, most participants from the Spitfires used their strengths to respond to adversity effectively and/or get around constraints. The strengths of 'adaptability,' 'responding to adversity,' and 'creativity' allowed most participants to effectively navigate the adversity that they faced throughout the 2016-2017 season in a positive manner. Constraints the team faced included man games lost, a long road schedule, a competitive OHL Western Conference, and a controversial first round playoff loss to their rivals.

Finally, individual and team strengths such as 'effective communication,' 'confidence/belief' in oneself and others, 'preparation,' technical and psychological 'maturity,' 'leading by example,' and 'previous experiences' were used by most participants as proactive behaviour that assisted them in reaching their collective goals.

**SQ2: Resources Drawn Upon**

*What resources do you draw upon to work towards your individual goals and team goals?*

**First-Class Organization.** Participants referred to the Windsor Spitfires hockey club as a 'first-class and professional' organization. Players and staff were able to draw upon attractive apparel/uniforms, hotels, and good food/nutrition in order to be successful in reaching their individual and collective goals throughout the season. In his first interview, head coach Rocky Thompson stated his belief that giving the team access to good food and nice hotels on the road made the Windsor Spitfires a 'first-class organization.' Thompson said, "Feeding our team quality food and consistently staying in nice hotels when we're on the road - those are things at our disposal that make the Windsor Spitfires a first-class organization. Anything that we need has always been
Spitfires ownership also provided their staff with team apparel/uniforms as well as situated the team in nice hotels and fed them well while they were on the road for team business. In his first interview, scout Chris Henry stated, "When you are wearing good things with the Windsor Spitfires logo on it, you are proud to be a part of the Windsor Spitfire organization... When you go to a tournament and you stay at a nice hotel, you feel good about yourself."

In addition to material resources such as apparel/uniforms, nice hotels, and good food, players and staff were also able to access other material resources such as technology and the facilities within the WFCU Centre itself. In his first interview, defenceman Mikhail Sergachev said:

*We stay at the best hotels when we go on the road and we have good food. I have everything so I can just play hockey. They also did a great job eight years ago building the arena and I feel like we have the best locker room. It looks like a NHL locker room. We have everything and it’s just easy to play hockey here.*

The coaching staff was able to access financial resources for team building exercises. For example, throughout the season and during the Spitfires' 44-day layoff in preparation for the Memorial Cup tournament, head coach Rocky Thompson was able to tap into the team's financial resources to put together a variety of team building exercises. In his second interview, Thompson explained:

*If we needed team building scenarios, there were resources for that from our financial department... I use the financial resources of our club to bring in individuals for team building exercises. We were educating our players. Also, all those things that I told you that we had access to beforehand, we continued to tap*
into them. Everything mentioned was everything that we continued to draw on in order to help ourselves during that time.

The Spitfires also had several experienced personnel within their staff and management who offered their professional experience as a resource to the rest of the organization. Those human resources contributed to the team’s success. In his first interview, forward Cole Purboo said, "We have a bunch of guys that have been affiliated with the NHL, like our coaches. They are really smart guys and they know what they are doing."

**Family.** Participants had multiple interpretations of what they considered family to be. First, the players on the Spitfires considered themselves to be a family. Whether it was life inside or outside of the rink, the players turned to one other unconditionally. In his first interview, forward Cristiano DiGiacinto said, "We’re like a family. We’re all brothers. It’s not just talking about hockey, it’s about whatever we need... If I need something, I know I always have someone to go to."

Second, the Spitfires’ coaching staff considered themselves to be a family as well. They found a way to work together in order to help one another build the team. In his first interview, head coach Rocky Thompson said, "My coaching staff is outstanding. Trevor Letowski and Jerrod Smith are two of the best support staff that I could ever have the opportunity and pleasure to work with. Our environment as a staff away from our players is without a doubt like a family. It's extremely important."

Finally, players identified the fans as a part of the Spitfires family. Accordingly, the organization set up multiple family events where the players were able to interact with the fans and draw on them for support. In his first interview, forward Cristiano
DiGiacinto explained:

_We have big family day events here where we have so many people come out. It's a blast. I hope they [the fans] have fun. It's cool to skate around with them, take pictures with them, and see how much they support us. It really makes a lot of the guys [players] happy, and I hope it made a lot of the fans happy as well._

A majority of players live far from home. However, they still used their family as a support system. In his first interview, defenceman Mikhail Sergachev explained that although his parents lived in Russia, he kept in contact with them on a regular basis. Sergachev said, "I talk to my parents all the time. We Facetime every day. They support me. My dad actually comes to Windsor to visit me once in a while. That helps me a lot. The Windsor Spitfires organization, they do everything for us." In his first interview, goaltender Michael DiPietro said:

_I have my parents that I can vent to. We have conversations. They are just there to be your parents. You never lose that parent-child connection. They are always there to be leaned upon if I need them. I lean on them a lot during the season... My dad is there to talk to. He's the person I vent to. Nine times out of ten, we're feeling the exact same way after a game. As I am, he feels the same way, whether it be good or bad - a crappy bounce, a crappy turn over, or a crappy goal I let in. He is always there to talk to. He can get me through that stuff._

Players also leaned on their billet families for support. Defenceman Mikhail Sergachev's family lived in Russia. Due to the long distance, Sergachev said he relied on his billet family for mostly everything he needed. In his first interview, Sergachev said:

_They [billets Michelle and Brian Reid] are like my second family. They are good_
to me and they support me. It’s just great... They were the only people that spoke to me. I couldn't really talk to my teammates because I couldn't understand them. They talked to me using translators and other things.

Although goaltender Michael DiPietro's family lived close to Windsor, he still identified relying on his billet family for support. In his first interview, DiPietro explained:

I lean on my billets a lot throughout the season. I think having them as a support system is really, really important, even when your parents are there. They are like my second set of parents, which is really something special... I eat good at home, but when I am not at home throughout the season, my billets always buy me fresh fruits and veggies. They get me whatever I want really, and that has contributed to the success I've had for sure.

CD, CP, MDP, MS, BR, MR, VDP, CH, RT, TL, JS, and WR drew on their families at home for support. Associate coach Trevor Letowski stated he used his wife and children at home to turn his brain off from hockey and get away from the rink. This helped Letowski balance work and life so he was recharged when he got back to the rink the next day. In his first interview, Letowski said:

Family is the ultimate support, I don't reach out to them as far as educating me with hockey. However, they make me forget about the game, which is very beneficial in my opinion. The game can be very consuming. I think it’s very important to get away from it and that’s why when I get home, my work for the most part is done. I have a young family - two young girls, a seven year old and a one year old, and my wife who has been with me now, well this was our tenth year anniversary, so she was with me while I was playing. It’s great! I look forward to
getting home and shutting things off. It’s a great balance because you are able to do that and then come back recharged for the next day and go again.

The coaching staff and management also drew on their families for support at the rink. For example, John Savage, Spitfires co-owner and chair of the host committee, had assistance from his wife and son in organizing the Memorial Cup tournament. In his second interview, John Savage explained:

*My wife was the co-chair with me on the committee. She worked diligently. She would go to the meetings with me and she would help directly. Very similar to the role I played. She was the one responsible for the opening banquet. I didn't have anything to do with that. She just went ahead and organized it. She became part of the committee in one of the areas, but she would be the person I would bounce things off of. She and I would talk. She's been that way throughout my career. One of my sons was also involved on the committee as well. He was like a secretary - taking notes. We had a project management piece of technology that was being used and he was involved in supporting that as well.*

**Clarity of Roles.** A few participants expressed being clear on the roles of others within the Spitfires organization. They knew what the roles of others were within the Spitfires organization so they could effectively draw on those individuals as interpersonal resources. For example, billet parents Michelle and Brian Reid were clear on the roles of others. This was exemplified when they went to athletic therapist Joey Garland for advice in preparation for Mikhail Sergachev's training and nutrition for the NHL Draft Combine. Because the Reid family knew Garland's role within the organization, they were able to approach him for help. In her first interview, Michelle Reid explained:
Someone that helps is [athletic therapist] Joey Garland. I have used him as a resource. A good example was this summer. Misha [Mikhail Sergachev] was here training for the [NHL Draft] Combine, so it was very heavy training with Joey. I went to Joey and I asked, "What do we need to do? What do we need to change for this?" The NHL Draft Combine is a different program than going to the rink every day. So, what does he [Sergachev] need to eat? We go the extra step to find out how to help him. I like to use Joey.

Further, goaltender Michael DiPietro was able to approach head coach Rocky Thompson before the Memorial Cup tournament for clarity in what the team wanted to accomplish as well as Thompson's expectations of the team. DiPietro was able to do this because he was clear on head coach Rocky Thompson's role within the organization and knew coach Thompson was the right person to approach. In his second interview, DiPietro explained:

I had a talk with Rocky [Thompson] right before the tournament about everything. Not only about the draft, my stock, and teams and stuff, but the tournament in general and what we really want to accomplish each and every game and what's to be expected when you get thrown into an atmosphere like that. For myself, I think all those added pressures when losing out... Now looking back on it, I think having that talk with Rock [head coach Rocky Thompson] before the tournament definitely cleared my mind going into it. You've got to play.

**Using Colleagues as Interpersonal Resources.** Participants drew on others within the Spitfires organization as interpersonal resources in ways that were to be expected between organizational members in their roles. For example, athlete participants drew on the coaching staff, the medical staff, their billets, and their parents throughout
the season in order to achieve their individual and team goals. However, participants also
drew upon their colleagues as interpersonal resources. This led to an interaction between
participants and other people within and outside of the Spitfires organization. For
example, throughout the season, associate coach Trevor Letowski used assistant coach
Jerrod Smith in a variety of roles that assisted Letowski in working towards the team's
goals. In his first interview, Letowski stated:

*Jerrod Smith is our assistant coach. He gets lost in the shuffle a lot. He's a good, strong coach as well. Jerrod watches a lot of video and does a lot of prep work for us as far as our pre-scouts of our opposition. He [Jerrod Smith] saves a lot of time for Rocky [Thompson] and myself...*

After the Spitfires were eliminated from the playoffs, athletic therapist Joey
Garland drew on the experiences of several of his colleagues from outside of the Spitfires
organization who were familiar with preparing for short-term tournaments such as the
Memorial Cup tournament. In his second interview, Garland explained:

*I spoke to the former Shawinigan athletic therapist because they lost in the second round and went on to win as the Memorial Cup as the host team in 2012. His name is Michael Morin. I also talked to the Saskatoon Blades AGM Steve Hildebrand. They lost in their first round too. I think they won a game in the round robin, but they lost the tie breaker. We discussed what they did, what worked, and what didn't work - things like that to help us build our schedule. Adam Douglas was a strength and conditioning coach with Hockey Canada. He works with women's high-performance. His specialty is building plans for short-term events. He has several months to prepare his athletes for a ten day*
tournament. I used him as a resource once we got into our plan and as medical conditions came up.

Similarly, Spitfires head coach Rocky Thompson drew on the experience of former Shawinigan Cataractes head coach Eric Veilleux. Shawinigan was in a similar situation as the Spitfires were after losing early in the playoffs as the host team of the 2012 Memorial Cup tournament. In his second interview, Thompson said:

I reached out to Eric Veilleux, the former coach of Shawinigan. They had been through a similar thing five years ago. They had been out for 30 days. He gave me the idea of the three phases and what their objectives were during those phases. It was a great benefit to us because like I said, I have never been through that. He had never been through that up until that point, but he had been through something similar. I asked for help from other people as well. It was something that was an area for myself that I felt I could have grown at and I did grow at that time. It did strengthen me moving forward.

Participants drew on the strengths of others. For example, during the 44-day layoff, athletic therapist Joey Garland used the strengths of several people from his medical team to assist him in keeping the players healthy while they prepared for the Memorial Cup tournament. In his second interview, Garland said:

I tapped into Doc [Dr. Roy Diklich] because of the amount of work that we were accumulating and the effects that it had. The performance team assistant [Kris Goodyear] was very valuable to help the players recover - same with osteopath Kathy Harvie. As the tournament grew closer, we had a few people show signs of anxiety. So, our team psychologist, Dr. Jay McGrory, was huge in those cases.
CP, MDP, RT, and TL used others in a mentorship role/position when they needed advice or any questions answered. Rookie forward Cole Purboo spoke about drawing on his teammates for mentorship in order to help him develop his skills on and off of the ice. In his first interview, Purboo explained:

*Everyone is always helping me out and giving me whatever I need really...*

*Players too. We all support each other and help each other out with everything. Every day in practice they're helping me out. If there is something wrong, they can give me tips on something. If I'm doing a drill wrong, they teach me how to do it. In game, they can help by saying, "You did this but you can also do that or try to do this instead."*

While preparing for the Memorial Cup tournament, head coach Rocky Thompson mentioned using former Windsor Spitfires head coach Bob Boughner as a sounding board for his ideas. In his second interview, Thompson stated, *"Bob Boughner is coaching in the NHL. So, I spoke with Bob and got advice from him. He has won Memorial Cups here in the past as the head coach of the Windsor Spitfires. So, I've drawn on his experiences and used him as a sounding board."*

**Conclusion.** Participants within the Windsor Spitfires organization used a variety of human, financial, and material resources to work towards their individual and team goals. First, participants drew on the Spitfires as a 'first-class organization.' Players and staff were given access to team apparel/uniforms, nice hotels, and good food/nutrition while on the road. The coaching staff was given up-to-date technology and access to financial resources to help them improve the team on a daily basis. Athlete participants also had access to an arena that had professional facilities such as a NHL style locker
room and gym, as well as access to experienced personnel with professional experience.

Second, participants within the Spitfires organization drew on what they described as 'family' as interpersonal resources. Players drew on their teammates, billet families, parents, and fans at home and at the rink in order to reach their individual and collective goals. The coaching staff drew upon each other at the rink and outside of the rink for support as well. Further, both the coaching staff and management relied on their families at home as a means to leave hockey behind at the rink. However, in some instances, a few coaching and management participants said they used their families as a support system at the rink as well in order to help them reach their collective goals.

Third, most participants explained that they were clear on the roles of others so they could approach those individuals and draw on them as interpersonal resources.

Finally, some participants said they used their colleagues from both inside and outside of the Spitfires organization as interpersonal resources. Some athlete and coaching participants drew on the strengths and experiences of others to help them achieve their collective goals, while select coaching and medical staff used their colleagues in a mentorship role and/or drew on their expertise directly.

SQ3: Being an Interpersonal Resource for Others

In which ways are you a resource to others?

First-Class Organization. Windsor Spitfires ownership and management did their best to provide members of their organization with a 'first-class and professional' experience on the ice. The professional personnel that ownership brought into their organization were resources to others within the organization. Spitfires co-owner and GM Warren Rychel explained how the Spitfires had a great staff that contributed to the team's
success. According to Rychel, it was important to invest financial resources into bringing in good people. In his first interview, Warren Rychel said:

_The management, coaching staff, and trainers are good. Our athletic therapist is experienced. He has two Memorial Cups. We have good medical staff - dental, psychiatrists, and psychologists - the people you don't see that contribute to the team's success... Our staff is very well put together and are probably amongst the highest paid in the league. That’s an investment too. You have to._

Athletic therapist Joey Garland explained how the medical staff was a strength of the Spitfires organization. In Garland's first interview, he stated, _"We have one of the better and most elaborate medical teams for this level of hockey."_

Associate coach Trevor Letowski explained how he used his professional experiences to try to help his players reach their goals. In his first interview, Letowski explained:

_Now to be able to come back as a coach and be able to work in a great environment, in a great culture, and try to help players reach their goals - whatever that might be. Most of our guys want to play in the National Hockey League, but it’s hard to get there. There's only five-percent or less that become NHL regulars. But, some guys do get there. That’s exciting as a coach. It’s also exciting to get the best out of them and try to make them better. To wherever their best may be, whether that’s playing Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS), playing in the AHL, or playing in Europe. There’s always another level they [the players] can get to._

Off the ice, Spitfires ownership was also able to provide a 'first-class experience'
for members within their organization. While the team was able to use their meals as a bonding experience, the Spitfires organization also used meal time to provide the team with excellent nutrition to fuel them throughout the Memorial Cup tournament. In his second interview, associate coach Trevor Letowski described how well the team ate throughout the Memorial Cup tournament. Letowski said, "It was nice that we treated our players to good meals. During the tournament in particular, we went to La Rucola Italian restaurant for every meal. No expense was spared. We had steaks and really good meals. It was a small piece of the pie."

Billets Michelle and Brian Reid explained how Spitfires co-owner and GM Warren Rychel took their family to the Windsor-Essex Sports Persons of the Year Award (WESPY) awards banquet in a show of appreciation for their hard work throughout the season. In her first interview, Michelle Reid said, "They [Spitfires ownership] are top notch. For example, tomorrow we are going to the WESPY's with Misha [Mikhail Sergachev]. Warren Rychel is taking us and sitting at the table with us, It’s just like a pat on the back for saying thanks for what we have done."

Family. A family atmosphere was created in several ways within the Spitfires organization. Although the coaches and players did spend time apart, the coaches worked to create a family atmosphere with the players within the dressing room. In his first interview, head coach Rocky Thompson said:

"We [the coaching staff] don't see the players until one or two o'clock in the afternoon, so we [the coaching staff] are together. There is a separation between coach and player without a doubt. But, as a whole, when the players come in, it's still a family type atmosphere and environment that we want to create within our
Further, billets Michelle and Brian Reid created a family atmosphere for the athletes they billeted. The Reid family took on a parental role for their billet players. They said they performed any role a parent would do for their children. This included cooking, cleaning, laundry, going to appointments, and even teaching Mikhail Sergachev to speak English.

In her first interview, billet Michelle Reid explained:

*They [billet kids] wouldn't excel if they didn't have good billets. To have the proper food, to have a nice bedroom, and clean laundry. Everything is taken care of. You just enjoy what you do, focus on what you need to do, and have fun in the house. We have a ball with Misha [Mikhail Sergachev]... I take Misha to the doctor when he is sick. It's a big role to take on, but we take it on as a parental role. They [billet kids] are part of our family... I was off of work last year, so I spent every day with him [Mikhail Sergachev]. It was a part of why his English is so good. I was here with him every day.*

Participants in parental roles provided relaxing spaces for the players if needed. Throughout the season, player-parent Vic DiPietro said he offered his home as a safe place for players to use if they wanted to get out of the City of Windsor for any reason. In his second interview, DiPietro said:

*As far as the open door policy, I communicated to Michael many times. If the guys need to get away, because sometimes you just need to breathe and get away from Windsor kind of thing, and come down to Amherstburg and just sit on the deck... That was our way of reaching out to them. And again, no pressure of course. It's there. Show up. You don't have to be announced. Even if I showed up from work*
and they were there, great.

Similarly, during the Memorial Cup tournament the Reid family opened up their home to anyone who wanted to use their space.

BR, MR, and VDP even offered to assist the parents of the athletes with anything they may have needed throughout the season to ensure that their children were cared for while playing in Windsor. In his first interview, player-parent Vic DiPietro said:

*Michael's friends that are here may not have the luxury of having their parents 35 minutes away in Amherstburg while they're playing in Windsor. We put it out there that we are not their parents and we are not their billets, but we have a perfect understanding of what they are going through. Our house can be a place for them to come over, hang out, and talk about anything they could possibly need. We put ourselves out to the parents because we are so close. If they need to get something to their kid, we would be happy to help out and give them that comfort. If that would help them and alleviate some of their pressures... That's what we would like to believe we are anyways... We are so close in proximity. Logistically, if they needed anything, we try to be there for them.*

**Clarity of Roles.** Participants expressed being clear on their roles within the Spitfires organization. They knew what their roles within the organization were so they could proactively perform them for others. This was illustrated by Spitfires forward Cristiano DiGiacinto in his second interview:

*Those strengths that I mentioned in our first interview is what really helped me develop as a player over these past four years. I know what my role is. Going from junior to pro hockey is knowing your strengths, understanding them, and*
knowing what you need to do as a person and a player to help your team be successful.

Participants listed the roles they had throughout the 2016-2017 season. Those roles are listed in Table 1 (p. 58).

**Being an Interpersonal Resource for Colleagues.** Participants were resources to others because of the positions and/or roles they held within the Spitfires organization. For example, the coaching staff, medical staff, billets, and parents acted as interpersonal resources for the players throughout the season. Participants also acted as interpersonal resources for their colleagues. This led to interactions between people within and outside of the Spitfires organization.

The roles some participants filled put them in position to be an interpersonal resource for their colleagues. For example, in his second interview, athletic therapist Joey Garland said that he acted as a liaison between the players and team psychologist Dr. Jay McGrory. Garland said:

*If I see anything, I make sure to bring it up to Jay [McGrory]. In a lot of cases, the players are warriors. They are macho. If I see something, I can't just go up to them and say, "Hey, you should talk to the psychologist." They would be more anxious if I said that. It's about massaging it in. Jay gave me a couple of ideas of how to try and get them to want to see him, or how I could say things to help the guys calm down.*

Participants also acted as interpersonal resources to others in several ways. First, participants listened, made themselves available, and communicated with others. In his first interview, veteran forward Cristiano DiGiacinto said he was vocal as a leader to his
teammates. He relayed game plans, messages, and was available to his teammates for anything they needed, both at the rink or away from the rink. DiGiacinto said:

*I'm Italian, so I'm very vocal. I talk a lot. Sometimes I annoy some of the guys with how much I talk, but at the same time, I'd rather annoy them and have them know that they can always come talk to me then not say a thing at all. I can confidently say that the guys know they can always come talk to me... Whether it be relaying a message from the coach, or reminding the guys in the room of our game plan. As much as it can get tedious, and saying it over and over, I feel like it does help and makes sure our team is on the right page."

Further, billet Michelle Reid explained how the billet moms started communicating with one another in an effort to support each other. Michelle Reid also said she acted as resource to other billet moms by sharing advice and tips with them. She said, "*If chicken goes on sale at Zehrs, the texts start flying!*

Second, participants shared their experiences. In his first interview, rookie forward Cole Purboo spoke about being a resource to fellow rookie players by sharing his experiences from training camp from the previous season. Purboo said:

*I was a rookie last year in Lakeshore playing junior. So this is my second time being a rookie. I know how it is and I know it’s tough sometimes. So, just being a resource for the other rookies - it’s their first year of actually being a rookie for any junior team. Picking them up whenever they have to do something and just teaching them the way things are and that they just have to push through it... I'm always driving all the rookies everywhere. I think they picked up on a lot of stuff I was doing. I tell them tips and tricks that I hear here and there - things that*
happen on the ice, off the ice, and in the dressing room.

Similarly, athletic therapist Joey Garland had gone through two trips to the Memorial Cup tournament with the Spitfires in previous seasons. In his second interview, Garland said he used his previous tournament experience to prepare members of the organization for what was to be expected. Garland explained:

*We've been there before, so I had an idea of what to expect. I knew the distractions that could come into play. I can't think of any specific examples of what I said or did, but I know I had the conversation with several people about when to expect media, when to expect to do things, what to expect of pre-game ceremonies, etc.... Even little things like that are going to affect the kids' schedules and throw them off. So knowing in advance, they [those receiving advice] could alter their plans and be prepared.*

Third, participants passed down learned knowledge. When billet parents Michelle and Brian Reid were new billets, they explained that they used experienced billet families to help them get acclimated to the billet lifestyle. In her first interview, Michelle Reid said:

*Newer billets will sometimes come and ask us questions such as, "What do you do for this? What's your normal pre-game ritual? How does your kid eat?" We did that three or four years ago too. Now, we are able to help other families with their kids. If they have any issues, we try to work together.*

In a similar fashion, Michelle and Brian Reid were then able to pass their knowledge on to newer billet families during the 2016-2017 season.

Fourth, participants were role models to others. Veteran forward Cristiano
DiGiacinto spoke about how he acted as a role model to teammates through leading by example. In his second interview, DiGiacinto explained, "I feel like I was really trying to keep myself focused and pushed myself to get better. I thought that's what I had to do in order to get the younger guys and the guys around me to be better."

Finally, some participants expressed acting as interpersonal resources to others by 'paying it forward/giving back.' For example, the Spitfires coaching staff assisted other coaches that approached them for advice. In his first interview, head coach Rocky Thompson said:

_If there is a coaching staff that wants to ask a question, even in minor hockey, it's not just myself, but Trevor Letowski and Jarrod Smith are always willing to help because that is what happened to us along the way. What we try to do is educate and encourage other people from the experiences that we have had._

Similarly, scout Chris Henry reaches out to new interns that get accepted into the International Scouting Services (ISS) Internship Program on an annual basis. In his second interview, Henry said:

_I started off in the internship program with ISS. Every year, they have new applicants or new employees in the internship program. I always reach out to the new people that have been accepted into the program and offer any advice that they may need. I offer scouting tips, tips on what arenas to go to, what leagues to watch, players to watch, and so forth. I feel like I'm there for the people that are trying to break into the game because when I was in their position, there were people doing the same for me. I'm kind of paying it forward so to speak._
Conclusion. Participants within the Windsor Spitfires organization acted as interpersonal resources for others in order to help them achieve their individual and team goals. First, management and staff contributed towards the Spitfires being a 'first-class organization.' Some participants in management said that they invested financial resources to hire professional and experienced coaches and medical staff to be interpersonal resources to the rest of the organization. Off the ice, some athlete and player support participants said that management treated their staff, players, and player support in the best ways possible.

Second, management, the coaching staff, and player support within the Spitfires organization worked hard to create a family atmosphere that contributed to the success of the players. The coaching staff worked hard throughout the season to create a family atmosphere inside of the dressing room with the players, while billets did the same for players outside of the rink. Further, parents and billets created relaxing and safe spaces at their homes for the players.

Third, most participants explained that they were clear on their own roles so they could proactively perform them as an interpersonal resource for others. Finally, some participants in management, the coaching staff, and the medical staff said they were interpersonal resources for their colleagues. The roles some of those participants performed put them into a position to be a resource for others. In those roles, they made themselves available to others while communicating with them. Some participants in management, as well as the coaching and medical staff shared their experiences, passed down learned knowledge, and acted as role models for their colleagues in order to help them achieve their individual and collective goals.
CHAPTER 5

Discussion

In this chapter, I use a strengths and hope framework (Paraschak, 2013a; Saleebey, 2013) underpinned by Giddens' (1984) concept of duality of structure to examine my findings. I answered my research questions by discussing how strengths and available resources were used by participants from the 2016-2017 Windsor Spitfires hockey club to reach their shared preferred future. First, I identify the goals that the Spitfires set as they prepared to host the 2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup tournament. Second, I discuss strengths identified by participants and how participants used those strengths in order to work towards their goals. Third, I explore the resources participants had available to them and how they used those resources to further existing strengths as well as build new strengths in order to reach their goals. Throughout this chapter, I will also outline how my research supports, extends, and/or challenges existing literature.

Goals

Although the framework I used is called strengths and hope (Paraschak 2013a), I will reverse the order and first discuss the goals the Windsor Spitfires hockey club set for their 2016-2017 Memorial Cup season. It is important to identify their goals first so we can better understand how strengths and available resources were used to help the team reach its shared preferred future. In my 'SQ1 Directional Propositions,' I suggested it was possible that my participants could list winning the Memorial Cup tournament as both their individual goal and their collective goal. I was correct in that proposition. Participants from the 2016-2017 Windsor Spitfires said winning the Memorial Cup tournament as OHL champions was their shared preferred future.
Throughout my case study, I found that most participants' individual goals aligned with and/or contributed towards the team's collective goals. Almost every participant listed individual goals that were related to their roles within the Spitfires organization and that aligned and contributed towards the team's hope-enhancing environment/shared preferred future. Some participants said their individual goals just happened to align with the team's goals while other participants said their individual goals were the team's goals. Rookie forward Cole Purboo said he changed his individual goals to reflect whatever the team needed of him. Purboo listed keeping everyone positive, providing the team with energy, being a support player for the team, and adapting to any role the team needed of him as his individual goals/roles. As Purboo carried out his roles, he achieved his preferred future. However, by reaching his individual goals/preferred future, Purboo was also contributing towards the team's goals/shared preferred future. Instead of setting statistical individual goals expected of a rookie player, Purboo shaped his individual goals to the needs of the team.

Some participants believed that the success of the Spitfires organization would dictate the success of the individual. This was outlined by GM Warren Rychel and echoed by other participants. Achieving the team's goals would help participants achieve their individual goals. Veteran forward Cristiano DiGiacinto believed that winning the Memorial Cup tournament would give him more exposure to professional teams as he looked to sign a professional contract while goaltender Michael DiPietro believed winning the Memorial Cup championship would raise his ranking in the 2017 NHL Entry Draft. Both DiGiacinto and DiPietro played hard throughout the season in order to help the team reach its collective goals so they in turn could reach their individual goals. As a
result, when player participants played well and contributed to the team's shared preferred future, they also contributed to their individual success as well. Similar to Allain (2008), in my 'SQ1 Directional Propositions,' I proposed that my participants could set individual goals that would see them advance to the next stages of their careers. I was correct in my proposition. Veteran forward Cristiano DiGiacinto set an individual goal of signing a professional contract. This information aligns with Allain (2008). However, I did not expect DiGiacinto to strive for this goal via reaching the team's shared preferred future. Instead, I thought he would try to earn his professional contract by inflating his on-ice statistics, which he did not do.

Throughout the Spitfires' 2016-2017 Memorial Cup season, participants put the team's collective goals ahead of before their own individual goals. Aligning with Giddens (1984), all participants in my study had it within their practical consciousness to operate as a collective. Participants worked together as a collective within the boundaries they could imagine to reach the team's collective goals. Participants did not question whether or not they should operate as a collective; they just assumed working together as a community/team was their norm. Operating as a collective rested within the non-consciousness of my participants. Extending Snyder's (2002) hope-enhancing environment for an individual ('hope-for') and aligning with Jacobs' (2005) view that hope is social in nature, my participants operated as a collective, having 'hope-in' a collective future. This meant that in a hope-enhancing environment, my participants collectively used their strengths and may have become or drawn upon available resources to reach their shared preferred future. Throughout my case study, my participants operated as a collective/team, rather than a group of individuals, working towards their
shared preferred future.

**Strengths**

Most participants said that the Windsor Spitfires hockey club possessed strengths that led them to become a 'high-hope collective' and a 'first-class organization.'

As an organization, the Windsor Spitfires hockey club was a 'high-hope collective.' Extending Snyder's (2002) 'hope theory' and aligning with/keeping with Jacobs' (2005) view that hope is social in nature, I combined the two ideas to create a concept known as 'high-hope collective.' A high-hope collective builds on as Snyder’s (2002) hope theory, but connects to a collective community and/or team rather than an individual. After a season full of challenges and obstacles, the Windsor Spitfires were able to reach their shared preferred future.

Spitfires ownership and management imagined the team's desired collective goal at the beginning of the 2016-2017 season as winning the Memorial Cup tournament as OHL champions. To reach their long-term collective goal, the coaching staff set a plan of 'not having a set plan.' Instead, the coaching staff set a short-term goal that followed a 'process' to 'get better every day' as individuals and as a collective. The team built off of the previous day and did things 'the right way' through hard work. The Spitfires pursued their goal with a plausible route that allowed them to remain flexible, adapting to and overcoming any obstacles and/or challenges they faced throughout the season. The Spitfires were motivated and confident that they would achieve their shared preferred future. Most participants wanted to prove to themselves and to others that they were good enough as a team to be in the Memorial Cup tournament. They wanted to push themselves to be their very best and enter the Memorial Cup tournament as OHL
champions, not as the host team.

However, after their 'controversial' first round playoff exit, the Windsor Spitfires re-framed their desired goal because reaching the Memorial Cup tournament as OHL champions was no longer attainable. Their new collective goal was to win the 2017 Memorial Cup tournament as the host team. The Spitfires were impeded by the barrier of their first round playoff loss, but were able to use their flexible thinking to generate an alternative goal and an alternative pathway to that goal.29 There was a 44-day layoff between their playoff exit and the start of the Memorial Cup tournament. At the beginning of their layoff, the Spitfires' coaching staff and athletic therapist created a three-phased plan that prepared the team for success at the 2017 Memorial Cup tournament. With a re-framed goal and an alternative pathway to that new goal, the Spitfires had new motivation and confidence to succeed. Some participants thought their team deserved a better fate in the playoffs and knew they could compete with the best teams. The Spitfires also used the doubts of the hockey world and the City of Windsor towards their team as motivation to reach their shared preferred future. The Windsor Spitfires hockey club had the motivation and confidence in their ability to act along their chosen pathway.

The Windsor Spitfires were successful in reaching their shared preferred future, despite the challenges and obstacles they faced throughout the 2016-2017 season, because they were a high-hope collective. They possessed the capability to derive pathways to their desired goals and the motivation via agency thinking to use those pathways. When faced with obstacles, the Spitfires were able to use their flexible

29 Re-framing goals and/or pathways is an ongoing process, not a binary process where goals always decrease in satisfaction for individuals as they are altered.
thinking to generate an alternative goal and an alternative pathway to that goal, thus reaching their shared preferred future of winning the 2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup championship. Recognizing that the success of the Spitfires organization was partially due to the fact that they operated as a collective reinforces Jacobs' (2005) idea that hope is social in nature; contributing towards 'hope-in' a shared preferred future was an ideal way for the team to reach its goals.

Participants also said that the Windsor Spitfires were a 'first-class organization.' During the 2016-2017 season, participants explained how the Spitfires organization provided its organizational members with first-class experiences and resources. Staff and players were able to draw upon the material, financial, and human resources needed to work towards and reach their shared preferred future. GM Warren Rychel invested financial resources into hiring personnel with professional experience, as well as providing first-class experiences to his organizational members. The strength of a 'first-class organization' will be explored more in the 'Resources' section of this chapter (p. 123).

Although participants identified team strengths of the Windsor Spitfires organization, they also identified individual strengths they possessed that coalesced into team strengths. This derived from the Spitfires organizational members having a practical consciousness of operating as a collective to work towards their shared preferred future. This approach contributes towards building on existing strengths and/or building new strengths. With the mentality of operating as one, the Spitfires organization became one. Each participant's strengths were integrated into the organizational collective. When this integration happened, it shaped the identity of the collective. When the majority of
participants being integrated all had the same individual strengths, those strengths became stronger within the collective. For example, a lot of participants within the Spitfires organization possessed a 'strong work ethic.' This meant 'work ethic' was reflected strongly within their collective. Therefore, as an organization, the Spitfires possessed a strong work ethic. The participants with a 'strong work ethic' shaped the collective, and in turn, the collective shaped others to develop/enhance that strength. When participants within the collective already possessed a 'strong work ethic,' they either acted as an interpersonal resource to help someone build on that strength and/or drew on financial, material, and/or human (interpersonal) resources from the collective to build on their already existing strength (their 'work ethic'), or they did both. When a participant did not possess a 'strong work ethic,' they drew on financial, material, and/or human (interpersonal) resources within the collective to build the new strength of a 'strong work ethic.' The strength(s) that the Spitfires organization possessed (i.e., a 'strong work ethic') was then used to work towards their shared preferred future. Many individual strengths that my participants possessed coalesced into team strengths. These strengths will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

The way in which the 2016-2017 Windsor Spitfires hockey club used their strengths to work towards their shared preferred future was shaped by how the season unfolded. The Spitfires used their strengths to: 'buy into' the team's shared preferred future, 'respond to adversity' effectively and/or get around constraints, and show proactive behaviour working towards their shared preferred future.

**Buy-In.** The Windsor Spitfires hockey club set two different goals at two different times throughout their 2016-2017 season. Their first goal was to win the
Memorial Cup tournament as OHL champions. This goal was set before their season started, after the organization was awarded the Memorial Cup tournament. The pathway to reach that goal was to have a 'plan of not having a set plan.' Instead, the team worked hard to get better every day and remained adaptable to what the season brought. Their second goal was set after their elimination from the playoffs, where they re-framed their goal to win the Memorial Cup tournament as the host team. The team reached that goal by conducting a three-phased mini-camp in the 44-days they had leading up to the start of the Memorial Cup tournament. The focus of their new plan was to condition the players, implement a structure to optimize the team's style of play, and ready the team for in-game action. According to my participants, in both instances, everyone in the Spitfires organization accepted those goals and bought into the pathways to reach those goals. Therefore, as I discuss how participants used strengths to buy into the Spitfires' shared preferred future, I will be referring to both their original goals/plans during the regular season and their re-framed goals/plans after their elimination from the OHL playoffs.

The first strength the Windsor Spitfires hockey club used to commit to and/or 'buy into' the team's shared preferred future was 'trusting in/following the process.' By doing so, participants believed that following and executing the set plan of 'not having a plan' would lead them to their shared preferred future of winning the MasterCard Memorial Cup. 'Hard work/strong work ethic' was listed by all participants as a team strength. They believed that hard work was needed to work towards and accomplish their collective goals. In some instances, participants said 'work ethic' was their best strength, while other participants listed having a strong 'work ethic' as an individual goal of theirs. 'Doing things the right way' built off of 'trusting in/following the process' and 'hard work.' The
coaching staff identified what the 'right way of doing things' was, and the players bought into their vision and reproduced it. In this instance, the coaching staff shaped the players. Players executing the team's pathway 'the right way' helped them reach their collective goals.

Participants explained that having a 'positive attitude' allowed for organizational members to 'buy into' what the Spitfires organization was trying to accomplish. By having a 'positive attitude,' participants were able to remain open minded about what needed to be accomplished in order for the team to succeed. Rookie forward Cole Purboo said he needed to shut out all doubts, remain positive, and be 100% for his goals in order to be successful. Having a 'positive attitude' led some participants, like Purboo, into 'accepting roles' with which they were not familiar. As players went in and out of the Spitfires' lineup, participants were open to the idea of taking on new roles. Although these new roles might not have benefitted the players in reaching a certain amount of points or playing time, they accepted their new roles. This was exemplified by veteran forward Cristiano DiGiacinto when he accepted his new role as a role-player on the team. DiGiacinto listed some of his strengths as 'hard work,' 'leadership,' defensive play, and physical play. His new role as a role-player for the team was reflective of the strengths he outlined. This aligns with Devine and Foster (2006), wherein then Edmonton Oilers AGM Scott Howson believed that certain strengths in people lead them to take on certain roles. My participants believed that all roles in the team's plans had to be filled and the completion of those roles led to the success of the team reaching its shared preferred future. Participants had a 'team first mentality,' putting the team's interests before their own.
Buying into the Spitfires' shared preferred future while trusting, believing, and showing confidence in the pathways the team set forth in order to reach their collective goals acted as a motivational tool for some participants throughout their Memorial Cup season. As the team faced adversity throughout the season, most participants took solace in knowing that staying on the chosen pathway and not deviating from the team's plan would lead them to their shared preferred future. The comfort of knowing that staying the course would lead to success kept participants believing in and buying into the team's shared preferred future.

**Responding Effectively.** The Windsor Spitfires hockey club used their strengths to react to adversity effectively and/or get around constraints. As previously discussed, participants used strengths such as 'positive attitude,' 'accepting roles,' and 'team first mentality' to 'buy into' the team's shared preferred future and help the Spitfires bounce back from adversity throughout their Memorial Cup season. 'Adaptability' was used by the team during the regular season as part of the team's plan to have no set plan. Remaining adaptable allowed participants to navigate obstacles and challenges such as being on the road for five weeks straight, lost man games, trades, and a competitive OHL Western Conference, all while improving on a daily basis. Head coach Rocky Thompson said being adaptable made the team push forward and evolve.

A few of my participants said that 'responding to adversity' was a strength of theirs. However, they acknowledged that in the context of hockey, they never saw any team go through the volume of adversity in once season that the 2016-2017 Windsor Spitfires did. Although responding to adversity was not new to some participants, it was to others. 'Responding to adversity' was an individual strength of a few participants that
coalesced into a team strength throughout the Spitfires' Memorial Cup season. As a collective, the Windsor Spitfires organization built the new strength of 'responding to adversity.' In turn, the team was able to use that strength to shape other members within the organization who did not have it, creating a new strength for them as well.

Building off of their strength of a 'positive attitude,' the Spitfires organization positively responded to the adversity they faced throughout their season. Head coach Rocky Thompson and associate coach Trevor Letowski said that if the team had not faced the adversity it did, they may have not been forced to look for more efficient or creative methods to improve the team or get better on a daily basis. The adversity the Spitfires faced built depth, character, and confidence within the team. Lost man games gave rookie forward Cole Purboo the opportunity to succeed in a new role, growing and developing his skills. Participants working together as a collective relied on one another throughout the adversity. Being able to respond to adversity kept the team from becoming stagnant, allowing the collective to move forward in working towards their shared preferred future.

Throughout the regular season, while striving to win the Memorial Cup as OHL champions, participants identified the difficulty the team had 'gelling' as a unit. Before Christmas, the Spitfires were on the road for five weeks straight due to the FINA Swimming Championships being held at the WFCU Centre. Some participants said that time away together gave the team a chance to bond. However, having multiple players in and out of the Spitfires' lineup every night while other players took on different/multiple roles made it difficult for the team to get used to one another and work as a cohesive unit.

It was not until the Spitfires were eliminated from the playoffs that the team came together. Most participants said the three-phased plan in the 44-day layoff bonded the
team into a cohesive unit. The organization went through a very difficult time together, preparing for the Memorial Cup tournament. As a result, the team trained together, was motivated together, learned from their mistakes together, prepared together, created a positive mindset together, and supported each other in getting through their gruelling layoff process that in itself many participants considered to be an adversity. The coaching staff also brought in high-performance psychology coach Brian O'Reilly during their 44-day layoff to work on cultural aspects within the team. Most participants identified their time with Brian O'Reilly as the turning point of their season, where the team came together and truly recognized their potential. Further, the time off in between the playoffs and the Memorial Cup tournament was the first time post-trade deadline that the team was fully healthy and together. The team bonded together while everyone was available, contributing to their cohesion which in turn contributed towards the team's shared preferred future. The team cohesion of the Spitfires aligns with Carron et al. (2002), who suggested that among sports teams, there was a strong, positive correlation between team cohesion and success.

Facing adversity throughout the season had some participants responding to it in creative ways. As mentioned already, the coaching staff had to creatively find ways to get better on a daily basis. Head coach Rocky Thompson said the coaching staff found better and more efficient ways to practice throughout the season. Further, GM Warren Rychel was hampered by league sanctions against his team from previous seasons, meaning he got creative in building his Memorial Cup team. Warren Rychel said he started by drafting a good core of young players in the previous seasons leading up to the Spitfires' Memorial Cup season, then added players one-by-one throughout the Memorial Cup
season instead of acquiring a lot of players all at once at the trade deadline. GM Warren Rychel slow cooked the team like stew, integrating players slowly so they would be shaped by the team, then in turn shape others as they came. Participants found creative ways to get around challenges/constraints throughout their Memorial Cup season. This showed they would not be held back by those challenges/constraints and creatively worked towards their shared preferred future.

**Proactive Behaviour.** The Windsor Spitfires hockey club also used their strengths to exercise proactive behaviour towards reaching their shared preferred future. Participants said that the Spitfires organization displayed 'effective communication.' At the beginning of the season, management clearly and effectively informed all members within the organization of the shared preferred future and how the organization was going to go about reaching their collective goals. Effective communication of team goals aligns with Weber (2016c), where Red Deer Rebels team psychologist and mental performance coach Dr. Derek Robinson clearly and effectively communicated the Rebels' team goals to organizational members. Dr. Robinson also framed his work throughout the Rebels' Memorial Cup season in accordance with the team's vision/shared preferred future.

Participants were able to communicate to others via their strengths, roles, experiences, and expertise. They were clear on their roles within the Spitfires organization so they could proactively act as an interpersonal resource to others. For example, athletic therapist Joey Garland was clear on his strengths and roles within the organization. Using that knowledge, he was able to approach the coaching staff at any given time to make suggestions on how he believed the team could practice and train. Because the coaching staff recognized Garland's strengths and knowledge as an athletic
therapist, they were able to effectively draw on him as an interpersonal resource and considered his suggestions. 'Clarity of roles' will be explored more in the 'Resources' section of this chapter (p. 123). Being able to effectively communicate with one another helped participants work together towards their collective goals. There was no miscommunication about what the team's shared preferred future was. Further, participants knew how to offer themselves as resources to others and who to seek out if they needed to draw on someone/something as a resource.

Participants also used their strength of 'preparation' to work towards their shared preferred future. Head coach Rocky Thompson said the coaching staff used all of their available resources to ensure the team was prepared to be their best on a daily basis. They pre-scouted other teams, watched videos with players, planned practices, practiced execution, and planned proper rest and recovery for their players throughout the season. The Spitfires' entire regular season focused on preparation in order for the team to be at its best by the time the Memorial Cup tournament arrived. During their 44-day layoff process after their season ended, the Spitfires also relentlessly prepared for the Memorial Cup tournament through their three-phased mini-camp. Being prepared showed that the Windsor Spitfires hockey club worked towards their collective goals throughout the season in order to reach their shared preferred future.

Billet Michelle Reid said that her and her husband, Brian Reid, did everything they could for their billet kids throughout the Spitfires' Memorial Cup season. The Reids were aware that they could not directly help their billet kids improve their skills on the ice, but they could ensure that their billet kids were well prepared and taken care of off of the ice. Care outside of the rink aligns with Nicholson et al. (2011), where elite
Indigenous athletes suggested that interpersonal support systems off of the AFL field would lead to a better overall well-being. That 'wholistic' approach (Paraschak & Thompson, 2014) would contribute to the improved performance of elite Indigenous AFL athletes and their club teams (Nicholson et al., 2011). The Reids believed that if their billet kids were comfortable and had nothing to worry about off-ice, their billet kids would be able to concentrate on what they had to do on-ice to succeed in reaching their shared preferred future. Nicholson et al. (2011) said support structures were put in place for two reasons. First, they contribute to the improved performance of the individual and the team. Second, they contribute to the personal development and well-being of players during their playing careers, during their transition into retirement, and during their post-playing days. Both of these reasons align with the actions and consequences of the Reid family supporting their billet kids off of the ice.

Throughout my case study, members of the Windsor Spitfires organization matured in three ways. First, going through adversity throughout their Memorial Cup season developed the new strength of 'maturity' within the Spitfires organization. Members within the organization grew with one another due to the obstacles and challenges they faced throughout the season, developing 'mental fortitude' and 'perseverance.' Head coach Rocky Thompson said that not only were players able to fill the roles the team needed, they were able to prosper in those roles. Succeeding in unfamiliar roles for the team helped participants work towards their shared preferred future. Second, through my operational definition of maturity, younger players Cole Purboo and Michael DiPietro both over performed relative to the expectations of their age group. As the season progressed, management also identified some players as

30 Junior hockey players over performing relative to the expectations of their age group.
maturing technically and psychologically. One of those players was player participant Michael DiPietro. As goaltender Michael DiPietro played better, the Spitfires won more games and moved closer towards their collective goals. Finally, team psychologist Dr. Jay McGrory said that having an older team meant having a more mature team. Dr. McGrory explained that having a more mature team led to less mental health issues than he was used to dealing with in a season. In all three instances, the maturity of the Spitfires players contributed towards their shared preferred future by having them perform at or above expectations.

Player participants expressed a consistent understanding of how they viewed 'leadership.' Players said they 'led by example.' They used their experience to shape others in ways that contributed to the success of the team. Veteran forward Cristiano DiGiacinto led by example in order to shape the younger players like professional athletes both on and off of the ice. Veteran players taught younger players how to conduct themselves like professionals and how to 'do things the right way' while adding to the 'positive attitude' and 'team first mentality' of the team. Goaltender Michael DiPietro led by example by dealing with adversity, being humble, staying positive, and helping anyone that needed it. DiPietro shaped the character of his teammates while he contributed to the team's hope-enhancing environment by reproducing team strengths in an attempt to create new strengths within his teammates. Having leaders shape other organizational members in how to properly reach goals helped the Spitfires hockey club work towards their shared preferred future.

Some participants used their 'previous experience' to overcome any immediate or future obstacles. Associate coach Trevor Letowski used his previous playing and
coaching experience to build relationships with his players. As a former player, Letowski was able to relate to the experiences of his players. He acted as a proactive interpersonal resource to the players, and in the process, contributed to the team's hope-enhancing environment by shaping the players with team strengths such as 'responding to adversity' and maturing as people/athletes. This also aligns with Rutherford (2019) and Sportsnet (2019). Although former player Brian McGrattan was not hired by the Calgary Flames as a coach, he was hired as the director of player assistance. McGrattan used and shared his previous experiences as a former player with current Flames players to help mentor and shape them.

Having confidence in the abilities and roles of oneself and others within the Windsor Spitfires hockey club contributed to some participants' abilities to buy into the team's goals. Scout Chris Henry was confident in his abilities as a scout. Henry did not question any decisions he made because he trusted the 'hard work' and 'preparation' he put into his work and trusted his 'gut.' Athletic therapist Joey Garland was confident in the strengths of his medical team. If there was any situation where a member of his medical team was better equipped to handle it, Garland did not hesitate to allow that member to take over. The 'confidence and belief' most participants had in themselves and in others motivated them to 'buy into' the team's shared preferred future.

Resources

In this section, I will discuss the material, financial, and human resources participants had available to them and how they used those resources to facilitate their strengths in order to reach their goals. Although it specifically pertains to the use of interpersonal (human) resources, I will first explore the concept that I created called 'ice
proximity.' I will be referring to interpersonal resources throughout this chapter.

**Ice Proximity.** Proximity relates to the nearness of one of three aspects: space, time, and/or relationships. In developing the concept of 'ice proximity,' I explored proximity in relation to space and relationships. When focusing on space proximity, I referred to space and the distribution/use of resources in location to the ice. I referred to this as 'space (location) proximity.' When focusing on relationship proximity, I referred to the closeness and frequency of interpersonal relationships to the players. I referred to this as 'relationship proximity.'

When referring to 'space (location) proximity' in Figure 1 (p. 125), there was a 'resource funnel effect.' Resources funnelled from the top (of the organization) down. Ownership and management at the top provided other participants within the Spitfires organization with material, financial, and human resources in order to work towards their shared preferred future. Participants who were closer to the ice in proximity drew upon higher volumes of those resources than participants who were further away from the ice. For example, players drew upon the most varieties of material, financial, and human (interpersonal) resources (i.e., good food, healthy nutrition, attractive apparel/uniforms, billets, parents, teammates, coaches, training staff, medical staff, friends, significant others, etc.) while ownership drew upon the least amount of resources (i.e., immediate family and some staff). Both the coaching staff and training staff drew upon material and financial resources provided by ownership and management and used those resources to assist themselves in providing resources to the players.

When referring to 'relationship proximity' in Figure 1 (p. 125), participants who were closer to the players acted as interpersonal resources in more ways than
participants who were further from the players. As the range of an interpersonal resource got smaller, the frequency of drawing upon/using interpersonal resources increased. Players acted as interpersonal resources to other players with the highest frequency. Family/billets were close to the Spitfires organization, but mostly due to their relationships with the players. Family/billets were interpersonal resources to the players off of the ice, contributing to their 'wholistic' well-being. Next, the training staff spent the most time with the players at the rink. Spitfires athletic therapist/strength and conditioning coach Joey Garland was almost always interacting with the players and
contributing towards the team's hope-enhancing environment by supporting the players as well as the coaching staff. Garland's office was located within the Spitfires dressing room. The coaching staff interacted with the players on a daily basis, but with less frequency than family/billets and the training team. Management had limited contact with the players, and ownership had even less.

The frequency and/or use of interpersonal resources created a 'foundational support effect' that built itself from the bottom (players) up. Participants closer to the players (i.e., other players, family, and billets) acted as interpersonal resources towards one another more frequently. Participants further from the ice had a broader range as to who they could act as an interpersonal resource to, but with less frequency. For example, the fans were able to act as interpersonal resources to the entire Spitfires organization. They had the broadest range as an interpersonal resource, but the lowest frequency in doing so.

'Ice proximity' aligns with Rees and Hardy (2000) and Rosenfeld et al. (1989), who both suggested that social support is a specific transaction between members of a sports organization (i.e., coaches, teammates, trainers, friends, and family). In the concept of 'ice proximity,' any number of those transactions could occur between any number of participants at any time.

**Material Resources.** Participants within the Windsor Spitfires organization drew upon several material resources during their Memorial Cup season in order to further their existing strengths and/or create new strengths in order to reach their shared preferred future. Participants said they drew on material resources such as technology packages, attractive apparel/uniforms, nice hotels, good food and nutrition, the WFCU
Centre, the training facilities within the WFCU Centre, and the NHL style dressing room within the WFCU Centre. However, to truly understand the significance of how these material resources contributed to the team's shared preferred future, I will link them to financial resources.

**Financial Resources.**

*First-class organization.* Most participants said the combination of material and financial resources made the Windsor Spitfires a 'first-class organization.' Throughout the season, while on the road, participants drew upon material resources from the Spitfires organization such as attractive apparel/uniforms, nice hotels, and good food and nutrition. Most participants said they were proud to be a part of the Windsor Spitfires organization. Scout Chris Henry said he looked good and felt confident in himself while on the road because the team provided him with a nice uniform and hotel. Head coach Rocky Thompson said that staying in nice hotels and eating good food on the road made things easier for the team. Additionally, defenceman Mikhail Sergachev said that drawing on first-class material resources such as the facilities at the WFCU Centre made playing hockey in Windsor easy.

During the Spitfires' 44-day layoff, the coaching staff drew on the team's financial department to help facilitate their three-phased plan. Head coach Rocky Thompson used financial resources from the Spitfires organization to conduct team building exercises. These team building exercises included bringing in interpersonal resources such as former Windsor Spitfires alumni with Memorial Cup experience, current professional head coaches, and high-performance psychology coach Brian O'Reilly to educate the players. These interpersonal resources shaped the team by contributing to its hope-
enhancing environment through motivation, sharing experiences, and building on technical, physical, and psychological strengths. Associate coach Trevor Letowski said the coach staff also drew on financial resources during the 44-day layoff to eat meals at a local Italian restaurant. The purpose of the meals was to provide nutritional benefits for the players as well as creating a bonding experience that would help participants work towards their collective goals.

In addition to using their financial resources to provide a first-class experience for the players and staff, GM Warren Rychel used the team's financial resources to create a first-class experience for Michelle and Brian Reid as well. When the Reid's billet son, defenceman Mikhail Sergachev, was nominated for a WESPY award during the Spitfires' Memorial Cup season, GM Warren Rychel made sure that the Reid family received star treatment for their night out at the awards. The Reids said they felt very appreciated and honoured to be a part of Sergachev's special night. Mr. Rychel's gesture left both Michelle and Brian Reid feeling motivated to continue their excellent care of their 'billet kids,' contributing towards the hope-enhancing environment of both the Reid family and Sergachev, as well as Sergachev's shared preferred future. It was in the practical consciousness of the Spitfires' management to act as a first-class organization.

*Investing in interpersonal resources.* In keeping with the team's strength of being a 'first-class organization,' Spitfires management invested in several human resources with professional/elite experience in order to prepare the organization for their 2016-2017 Memorial Cup season. GM Warren Rychel said it was important to invest financial resources into coaches, training staff, and medical staff. Nicholson et al. (2011) supported Warren Rychel's claim, explaining how the AFL invested in athlete and player support.
structures (i.e., coaches, trainers, and medical staff) at the club level to create a professionalized atmosphere. Spitfires management brought in those interpersonal resources to use their experiences as a way to shape members within the organization while they worked collectively to contribute to the team's hope-enhancing environment. Both head coach Rocky Thompson and associate coach Trevor Letowski were former professional hockey players with coaching experience at the professional and elite levels. They used their playing and coaching experiences to contribute to the hope-enhancing environment of the players and the team.

As former players, both Thompson and Letowski had a connection with the hockey sub-culture/community. They shared similar experiences with their players and used those connections to interact with their players on a deeper level. These shared experiences align with Nicholson et al. (2011), whereby cultural connections between elite Indigenous athletes and other Indigenous people made it easier for the elite Indigenous athletes to transition into the league. The elite Indigenous athletes also had better communication with those they shared a connection with. That cultural connection, in combination with the clarity of roles participants had concerning the Spitfires' organizational members, made for an easier and more comfortable interaction between the coaching staff and players due to their familiarity with one another.

At the beginning of the Spitfires Memorial Cup season, defenceman Mikhail Sergachev was in a scoring slump. Sergachev approached head coach Rocky Thompson for advice in how to get out of his slump, knowing that coach Thompson had a lot of professional experience in his repertoire. Coach Thompson instructed Sergachev to keep his shots low in an attempt to avoid having them blocked. Head coach Rocky Thompson's
advice worked for Segachev. Coach Thompson's experience contributed to Sergachev's shared preferred future. As a result, Sergachev was able to improve his offensive game and contribute towards the team's success.

Further, before the Memorial Cup tournament started, goaltender Michael DiPietro approached head coach Rocky Thompson for clarity in what the Spitfires wanted to accomplish as well as coach Thompson's expectations of the team. DiPietro was clear on coach Thompson's role within the organization and knew that coach Thompson was the right person to approach. Nicholson et al. (2011) said that shared or relatable experiences through a cultural connection created bonds that led to better communication. When DiPietro left his conversation with coach Thompson, they had spoken about more than just hockey. DiPietro said that his talk with coach Thompson cleared his head and contributed towards his strong performance in the Memorial Cup tournament.

**Interpersonal (Human) Resources.**

*Clarity of roles.* As mentioned previously, participants said they were clear on the roles of others within the Spitfires organization, and thus were able to effectively draw on others as interpersonal resources. As defenceman Mikhail Sergachev prepared for the NHL Draft Combine, his billet parents, Michelle and Brian Reid, drew on athletic therapist and strength and conditioning coach Joey Garland as an interpersonal resource. The Reids knew Garland's role within the organization and knew that they could approach him for training and nutritional tips. In this instance, Garland contributed to the hope-enhancing environment and preferred future of Sergachev via the Reids. Further, participants also felt clear on their roles within the Spitfires organization when they
wanted to proactively act as an interpersonal resource for others.

*Family.* Participants within the Windsor Spitfires hockey club had multiple interpretations of what they considered family to be. First, the players within the organization considered themselves to be brothers. Veteran forward Cristiano DiGiacinto said the players drew upon and became resources for one another both inside and outside of hockey. This aligns with Anderson (2015), where the participants within the QQDSP drew upon each other as interpersonal resources, working towards their individual goals while contributing towards the hope-enhancing environment of others as well as the QQDSP. Second, the coaching staff considered themselves family when they were away from the players. Head coach Rocky Thompson said it was important to foster when working together with his coaching staff to build a team. Third, some participants claimed the fans were part of the Spitfires family. Cristiano DiGiacinto said the players used family and fan events to draw on their fans for support. In all three examples, each of the sub-groups worked together to contribute towards each 'family's' hope-enhancing environment by being resources to one another. When the 'family' sub-groups succeeded in reaching their preferred and/or shared preferred future as a sub-group, their success also contributed to the team's shared preferred future.

Most participants drew on their own families for social support. Player participants drew on their parents. Although Mikhail Sergachev's parents lived across the world in Russia, Sergachev explained that he kept in regular contact with them. He spoke with his parents daily via Facetime. Sergachev also said that the Spitfires organization brought his father from Russia to Windsor to visit him on a few occasions. He stated that keeping a connection with his family while he played in Windsor was very important to
him. That family connection aligns with Nicholson et al. (2011), where elite Indigenous athletes travelled far from home to play in the AFL. Those athletes said that a challenge they faced in their transition into the AFL was the disconnect they had with their families and communities after they moved away. Family and community connections formed essential networks of social support that provided elite Indigenous athletes with a foundation for success (Nicholson et al., 2011). In Sergachev's case, he did not experience severe disconnect, which in turn enhanced his 'wholistic' well-being and contributed towards his shared preferred future.

As previously stated, player participant Mikhail Sergachev's family lived across the world in Russia. Due to long distance, Sergachev drew on his billet family for everything he needed while he played hockey in Windsor. Sergachev said that Michelle and Brian Reid were his second family. Goaltender Michael DiPietro's family lived 35 minutes away from him. Nevertheless, DiPietro described the importance of having a billet family that he could draw upon as interpersonal resources. DiPietro drew on his billets as a support system even though his parents lived close by. He said his billets were his second family. DiPietro did not live at home with his parents during the season, so he relied on his billets for support outside of the rink.

The situations of both Sergachev and DiPietro aligns with Fawcett (2016b). Nelson Nogier played hockey at home in Saskatchewan his entire life. Nogier drew on the support of his father throughout his hockey career. Eventually, Nogier was traded to Red Deer, Alberta, to join the Rebels during their 2015-2016 Memorial Cup season. Nelson drew on his billet family as interpersonal resources to help him in his transition from Saskatchewan to Red Deer, Alberta. Fawcett (2016a) also aligns with billet families
acting as interpersonal resources for players. The Rondeau family was a billet family that boarded players during Red Deer's 2015-2016 Memorial Cup season. They acted as interpersonal resources to the players they billeted.

Other research participants also received support from their families at home. Associate coach Trevor Letowski said he used his wife and children at home as a way to escape hockey. By doing so, coach Letowski was able to go back to the rink the next morning recharged and ready to contribute towards the team's hope-enhancing environment/shared preferred future. Spitfires co-owner John Savage drew on his family from home as interpersonal resources at the rink. John Savage's wife was his co-chair on the host committee while his son kept notes. Drawing on his family as an interpersonal resource helped John Savage reach his individual and collective goals. Receiving support from home aligns with Weber (2016b). Red Deer Rebels equipment manager and trainer, Dave 'Radar' Horning, drew on his family for social support and 'empowerment' while he was on the road with the Rebels during their 2015-2016 Memorial Cup season. 'Radar's' family contributed to his preferred future of having 'wholistic' well-being. By doing so, 'Radar' was able to perform his duties as equipment manager and trainer to the best of his abilities, contributing to the hope-enhancing environment of his team.

Participants created family atmospheres for other members of the Spitfires organization. Due to scheduling, players and coaches did not see each other at the rink until the afternoon. As a result, the coaching staff drew on their shared experiences as former players and created a family-type atmosphere in the dressing room. This kept the coaching staff and players bonded, which made it even easier for them to communicate with and work together in achieving their collective goals.
Billets Michelle and Brian Reid created a family atmosphere for the player-athletes they billeted, similar to the ones player-athletes could receive at home. The Reids performed every role a parent would for their child, becoming interpersonal resources to the players that live with them. Michelle and Brian Reid helped teach Mikhail Sergachev how to speak English and took him to doctor's appointments when he was sick. Michelle also performed household duties, making sure that everything at home was taken care of so her billet kids would only have to focus on their shared preferred future at the rink. The Reids said that their 'billet kids' were a part of their family. That included Mikhail Sergachev.

Parent and billet parents Vic DiPietro and Michelle and Brian Reid created an extended family atmosphere for members of the Spitfires organization and family. Vic DiPietro opened up his house to players, leaving his door open for anyone that wanted to get away from Windsor and hang-out/relax. If needed, Vic offered himself to anyone that needed someone to talk to. Vic also became a resource to the parents of Spitfire players, offering himself as a liaison between parents and players. During the Spitfires' 44-day layoff process, the Reid family opened their doors to anyone who needed a space to rest and relax after training. By creating an extended family environment for members of the Spitfires organization, Vic DiPietro and the Reid family were facilitating an enhanced well-being for people off of the ice. Serving as an interpersonal resource to people, Vic DiPietro and the Reids were contributing to the hope-enhancing environment of others.

Colleagues. Participants drew upon their colleagues as interpersonal resources. That led to interactions between participants and other people from within and outside of the Spitfires organization. Then associate coach and current Spitfires head coach Trevor
Letowski drew on then assistant coach Jerrod Smith as an interpersonal resource. Coach Smith watched video, did prep-work, and pre-scouted the opposition for then head coach Rocky Thompson and associate coach Trevor Letowski. Coach Letowski said that coach Smith saved them a lot of time and thus they were able to allocate that time towards other things which contributed to the team's hope-enhancing environment.

When the Spitfires were eliminated from the playoffs, athletic therapist Joey Garland and head coach Rocky Thompson drew on the expertise and experiences of several of their colleagues from outside the Spitfires organization who were able to help them in designing the three-phased, 44-days layoff process. Garland drew on former Shawinigan Cataractes athletic therapist Michael Morin, Saskatoon Blades AGM Steve Hildebrand, and Hockey Canada strength and conditioning coach Adam Douglas. All three interpersonal resources had previous experience in preparing for short-term tournaments, including the Memorial Cup tournament. Head coach Rocky Thompson drew on former Shawinigan Cataractes head coach Eric Veilleux, who also had experience with the Memorial Cup tournament. In all cases, the interpersonal resources that Garland and coach Thompson drew upon shaped them. When Garland and coach Thompson created their three-phased plan, they in turn passed down the knowledge they gained from their interpersonal resources to the Windsor Spitfires organization. This process directly contributed towards reaching the team's shared preferred future.

Athletic therapist Joey Garland also tapped into the strengths of his medical team in order to keep everyone healthy as they prepared for the Memorial Cup tournament during the Spitfires 44-day layoff process. Garland drew upon the team doctor, Dr. Roy Diklich, then performance team assistant Kris Goodyear, osteopath Kathie Harvie, and
team psychologist Dr. Jay McGrory. These interpersonal resources all possessed strengths that Garland did not. When a certain situation arose, Garland turned to the individual who had the proper strengths to deal with the issue. By doing this, Garland ensured that everyone working towards the team's shared preferred future was able to do so in a healthy manner. This in itself was a contribution to the team's hope-enhancing environment.

Rookie forward Cole Purboo drew on his teammates as interpersonal resources for mentorship in order to help him develop his skills both on and off of the ice. Purboo's teammates helped him in practice with instruction and tips on how to do things correctly, better, and/or more efficiently. Purboo was shaped by his teammates each time he drew on them as an interpersonal resource. By learning how things were done and improving on or creating new strengths in practice, Purboo was able to use his teammates to help him work towards the team's shared preferred future.

Participants acted as interpersonal resources for their colleagues. That led to interactions between people within and outside of the Spitfires organization. Spitfires athletic therapist Joey Garland acted as a liaison between the players and Dr. Jay McGrory. Since Dr. McGrory could not be at the rink every day, Garland kept an eye on things for Dr. McGrory. Garland used techniques that Dr. McGrory taught him in order to identify any potential issues and/or individuals who might want to see Dr. McGrory. Garland was not only acting as an interpersonal resource and contributing to the hope-enhancing environment of Dr. McGrory, Garland was also helping players get help with potential issues. He was contributing to the hope-enhancing environment of those players. If Dr. McGrory was able to help players, and players were able to get help if they
needed it, they would both have a better opportunity to work towards their collective goals.

Dr. Jay McGrory's role within the Spitfires organization aligns with the role of Dr. Meg Popovic of the Toronto Maple Leafs (Rutherford, 2019; Sportsnet, 2019). Dr. Popovic was hired by the Toronto Maple Leafs as their director of athlete well-being and performance. Although her title was not the same as Dr. McGrory's, her roles were similar. Dr. Popovic used her strengths as an interpersonal resource to confidentially help members within the Maple Leafs' organization with non-physical medical problems. Those problems included mental health issues and addictions.

Billets Michelle and Brian Reid acted as interpersonal resources to other inexperienced billets. The Reid family said they were new billets once and thus had looked to other billets for guidance and mentorship. The Reids passed down that knowledge to newer billet families. Scout Chris Henry acted as an interpersonal resource to new applicants and employees of the ISS Internship Program. Henry explained that he was once new to the program as well and received advice, tips, and help from others when he needed it. Henry did the same for others. In both situations, the Reid family and Chris Henry were shaped, then used their experience and knowledge to shape others. The Reid family and Chris Henry contributed to the hope-enhancing environment of those they shaped.

Veteran forward Cristiano DiGiacinto was an interpersonal resource for all of his teammates. DiGiacinto acted as a role model by 'leading by example.' He said that he kept himself focused and pushed himself to get better on a daily basis. When DiGiacinto used his strength of 'leadership,' he shaped other players by showing them how to act
professional and improve themselves on a daily basis. When DiGiacinto shaped others, he helped contribute to their hope-enhancing environment and helped them work towards their shared preferred future. DiGiacinto's leadership aligns with that of Luke Philp (Cormier, 2016) during Red Deer's 2015-2016 Memorial Cup season. Philp used his leadership qualities and two-way play to shape the Rebels and turn their season around. DiGiacinto's leadership qualities also aligns with Hornby (2018). The Toronto Marlies re-signed veteran forward Richard Clune for his off-ice leadership abilities. Clune was used as an interpersonal resource for the team's young prospects, shaping them with his hard work ethic, healthy lifestyle, strength and conditioning, and previous experiences as a player.

Rookie forward Cole Purboo was a proactive interpersonal resource to the other rookie players within the Spitfires organization. Purboo used his past experiences as a rookie at training camp to shape the other rookies and show them the ropes, making their transitions into the OHL an easier experience. Purboo directly contributed towards the rookie players' hope-enhancing environment and preferred future, as well as the team's shared preferred future.

In my 'SQ3 Directional Propositions,' I proposed that participants: would help others in reaching their individual goals/preferred future, be a resource to others off of the ice, and contribute towards the collective goals/shared preferred future. As seen throughout this chapter, I was correct in all three of my propositions.
CHAPTER 6
Conclusion

Summary

Throughout this case study, I used the strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a) underpinned by Giddens' (1984) concept of duality of structure to explore the use of strengths and available resources linked to 'hope-in' a shared preferred future (Jacobs, 2005) within the Windsor Spitfires hockey club as they worked towards their participation as the host team of the 2017 MasterCard Memorial Cup tournament. The purpose of this case study was to learn about the experiences of participants involved within the Windsor Spitfires organization during their 2016-2017 Memorial Cup season. Specifically, I wanted to learn about the participants' individual and team goals while identifying the strengths and available resources they used to achieve those goals. My research question asked, "How do individual members of a hockey organization draw on their strengths and available resources to achieve their individual and collective goals?" I also examined individual and team strengths (SQ1), what resources participants drew upon (SQ2), and how participants saw themselves as a resource to others (SQ3).

In this case study, I conducted two sets of semi-structured interviews with members of the Windsor Spitfires organization. The first set of interviews consisted of thirteen face-to-face interviews. The second set of interviews consisted of nine face-to-face interviews and three telephone interviews. Interviews were conducted post-OHL trade deadline and post-Memorial Cup. Participants were chosen from three categories: players and player support (7); staff (5); and management (2). I analyzed the data using Braun and Clarke's (2006) six steps for thematic analysis and Strauss and Corbin's (1990)
open and axial coding techniques.

Conclusions

After being awarded the honour of hosting the 2017 Memorial Cup tournament, Spitfires ownership and management realized there was a good chance they could win the prestigious championship. Since the team's participation in the Memorial Cup was guaranteed, instead of settling for participation as the tournament hosts, ownership and management set the goal of winning the Memorial Cup tournament as OHL champions. This was the team's shared preferred future.

Ownership and management then analyzed the situation they were in. The team had a collective goal of winning the Memorial Cup championship as OHL champions, but questions still remained. Was there a feasible way to go about winning the Memorial Cup tournament? How would the Spitfires organization use their strengths to work towards the shared preferred future? And, what resources did the Spitfires organization have available to them to help facilitate their strengths?

The structure of the Windsor Spitfires organization dictated what roles participants would play in attempting to reach the team's shared preferred future. Ownership and management set the team goal and provided the organization with financial, material, and human resources. The GM put the pieces in place in order for the team to succeed. The coaching staff created the plan and executed it with the players. The support staff ensured the coaches and players had everything they needed at the rink to succeed in executing the plan. And finally, player support made sure that everything was okay away from the rink so the players were able to focus on what they had to do at the rink to achieve the team's shared preferred future.
The Spitfires had their collective goal/shared preferred future of wanting to win the Memorial Cup tournament as OHL champions. But, how would they do it? The coaching staff created a regular season plan of 'not having a set plan.' Instead, they would remain adaptable and take things as they came throughout the season with the focus of improving and getting better as a collective on a daily basis. The practical consciousness generated within the Spitfires was to operate as a collective. They would work towards their goals as a team. The Spitfires were also very motivated in wanting to reach their team goals. They fed off of the doubters and believed that they were good enough to make the Memorial Cup tournament without the host status. With a clear goal and a clear pathway to that goal, combined with their motivation to succeed, the 2016-2017 Windsor Spitfires were considered a high-hope collective, and proceeded with their plan to achieve the team's shared preferred future.

Participants used their individual and team strengths to work towards the shared preferred future in three ways. First, they used strengths such as 'trust in/follow the process,' 'work ethic,' 'doing things the right way,' 'motivation to succeed,' 'positive attitude,' 'accepting roles,' and 'team first mentality' to 'buy into' the team's shared preferred future.

Second, participants used strengths such as 'adaptability,' the ability to 'respond to adversity,' and 'creativity' to respond to the adversity they faced throughout their Memorial Cup season. The Spitfires overcame obstacles and constraints such as lost man games, a long five week road trip before Christmas, a very competitive OHL Western Conference, and a first round playoff loss to their rivals. When the Spitfires were eliminated from the OHL playoffs, they used their flexible thinking to re-frame their
collective goal and their pathway to that goal. Instead of winning the Memorial Cup tournament as OHL champions, the Spitfires' new shared preferred future was to win the Memorial Cup as the host team. To do so, the coaching staff and athletic therapist/strength and conditioning coach collaborated together to create a three-phased plan that would prepare them for the Memorial Cup tournament during their 44-day layoff.

Third, participants used their strengths of 'effective communication,' 'confidence/belief' in oneself and others, 'preparation,' 'maturity,' 'leadership,' and 'previous experience' to proactively work towards the shared preferred future throughout their Memorial Cup season. Participants went into their Memorial Cup season knowing what strengths they would use in order to work towards their collective goals. However, they did not know what new or existing strengths they would develop throughout the season/process.

Participants drew upon several material, financial and interpersonal (human) resources and became interpersonal resources in order to facilitate their strengths and reach the shared preferred future. Participants used those resources to help each other get better (contributed to each others' hope-enhancing environment) and work towards individual (preferred future) and team (shared preferred future) goals (contributing to the hope-enhancing environment of the team).

Material resources such as updated technology, modern/professional facilities, nutritious food, nice hotels, and good equipment/uniforms were things participants used to further their strengths in an attempt to reach their collective goals.

Ownership and management knew that the unique season the Spitfires faced
would require using more financial resources in different ways than they would do normally. The Spitfires organization invested in the material resources listed above, as well as internal and external interpersonal resources that would help facilitate and develop the strengths participants used in order to work towards their team goals. The Spitfires organization operated assuming they were a 'first-class organization.' They spared no expense in providing the material and/or interpersonal resources participants needed in order to reach the shared preferred future. Operating as a 'first-class organization' made participants feel like they were valued and respected. Participants wanted to be a part of the Windsor Spitfires hockey club, and were very happy and motivated to work towards the shared preferred future.

Participants drew upon internal and external interpersonal (human) resources and acted as internal interpersonal resources to other members of the Spitfires organization as they worked towards their collective goals. Although participants had roles within the organization, they operated drawing upon one of the oldest social support groups in existence - a family. The Spitfires organization saw themselves as a 'family,' and within their family were smaller sub-groupings of family. Participants shaped one another with strengths such as 'previous experience,' 'preparation,' 'leadership,' and 'work ethic' as they worked towards their collective vision. Further, players, player support, the support staff, and the coaching staff drew upon and acted as interpersonal resources to their colleagues, who were working towards the same shared preferred future.

**Recommendations**

I provide theoretical recommendations for future research directions and practical recommendations for improving the experiences of members of a hockey team.
**Theoretical Recommendations.** Future researchers could use the framework in this case study and apply it to any group, collective, or team that is attempting to obtain a goal. The strengths and hope framework seems effective in providing important information on groups who are trying to reach a collective goal.

As a researcher, I focused on strengths and hope as it pertained to strengths and resources. However, it would be interesting to see how practices of hope, specifically the concepts of 'complimentary power relations' and 'co-transformation' (through availability and listening) (Paraschak, 2012a), could be explored within a team/organization.

I would like to increase the sample size of my case study to include a participant from every part of the a sports organization to see if the same themes emerge or if others would develop. Although my case study focused on the hockey operations side of a sports organization, I think it would be worthwhile to include fans and members of business operations as potential future participants to see if their goals, strengths, and available resources would align.

I recommend that future researchers use the strengths and hope perspective (Paraschak, 2013a) to examine sports teams/organizations from the past. Exploring and analyzing the successes and achievements of the past could provide valuable insights for the future as well as the reasons why success was not achieved.

I recommend that future researchers explore analyzing the data within their organization by participant categories (i.e., player/player support, staff, and management) as well as in its entirety, to point out similarities and differences between categories. Further, separating the player/player support participant category could allow future researchers to explore the similarities and differences between these two categories.
Future research could contribute to and/or build upon my concept of ‘ice proximity.’ To further explore the concept, future researchers could analyze by participant category the resources participants draw upon and provide to substantiate and/or challenge my concept.

**Practical Recommendations.** Sport organizations and/or groups could use this case study to examine and follow the process of becoming a high-hope collective. Although Snyder (2002) applied it to individuals, this case study assumed that high-hope organizations were more likely to reach their goals than organizations with low-hope. Further, sport organizations/groups could also use this case study as a guide in using strengths and resources to work towards individual and collective goals.

This case study was unique in the fact that it examined a junior hockey team over the course of a full season in which their participation in the Memorial Cup tournament was guaranteed. Practitioners could refer to this case study to see how a junior hockey team prepared for the Memorial Cup tournament throughout the length of a season.

The 2016-2017 Windsor Spitfires had a significant amount of time between the end of their post-season and the start of the Memorial Cup tournament. Practitioners could examine this case study to see how the Spitfires used their time in an effective manner to prepare for the Memorial Cup tournament. Further, practitioners could also refer to this work when looking to prepare for any short-term tournament.

Finally, when sports teams face a slump or adversity of any kind, they could refer to certain aspects of this work and apply those aspects to their practice. This case study included ways in which organizations created pathways and used strengths and resources to overcome adversity and/or constraints.
REFERENCES


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Good Afternoon, NAME

My name is Dan Upham. I am a graduate student from the Faculty of Human Kinetics at the University of Windsor. I am conducting a case study on the strengths and resources of a Memorial Cup team. I have chosen you as a potential participant for my study.

The purpose of the study is to learn about the experiences of participants involved within the Windsor Spitfires organization during their Memorial Cup season. Specifically, I would like to learn about participants’ individual goals, as well as the collective team goals. I would also like to identify the strengths and resources you may use to achieve those goals.

I would like to set up three interviews (early October, late January, and late May) with you throughout your Memorial Cup season to discuss your individual and team goals. I would also like to discuss any strengths and resources you may identify that would help you achieve both sets of goals. Each interview will take place in person at your convenience, and should last no more than forty minutes.

Please take the time to read the attached letter of information. It will contain specific details regarding my research project.

Please let me know if you wish to participate in my study. You can contact me anytime via telephone or e-mail. Your participation would be greatly appreciated.

I hope you will find that participating in this project will be useful during your quest for the Memorial Cup.

Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing back from you.

Sincerely,

Dan Upham

xxxxx@uwindsor.ca

(XXX) XXX-XXXX
Appendix B: Organizational Categories and Potential Participants

Windsor Spitfires

Management

Ownership
John Savage

General Manager
Warren Rychel

Staff

Head Coach
Rocky Thompson

Associate Coach
Trevor Letowski

Athletic Therapist
Joey Garland

Team Psychologist
Dr. Jay McGrory

Scout
Chris Henry

Player/Player Support

Player
Cristiano DiGicinto

Player
Cristiano DiGicinto

Player
Mikhail Sergachev

Player
Michael DiPietro

Billets
Michelle & Brian Reid

Parent
Vic DiPietro
Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study about optimizing strengths and resources in a Memorial Cup team.

Just a reminder, as we previously discussed in our correspondence, I cannot guarantee you confidentiality due to the fact that the names of that members of the Spitfires organization are available on the Internet for the public to search.

I will be recording our interview with your permission. The recording of our interview will ensure that I have an accurate record of the information that you share with me. If at any point you would like me to stop the recording, please just let me know.

If you have questions at any point during the interview, I encourage you to ask them.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Questions

Background

1. How did you get involved with the Spitfires organization? Please explain.

[Used to provide context for answers to come.]
Individual Goals

2. At the beginning of the season, what were your goals as a member of the Spitfires organization for this upcoming Memorial Cup season? (SQ1) (If participant started season with the Spitfires).

At the beginning of the season, what were your goals as a member of the [insert team] organization for this upcoming season? (SQ1) (If participant did not start the season with the Spitfires).

a. Why were these goals important to you? (SQ1)

b. Did anyone else play a role in helping you create those goals? If so, how? (SQ2)

3. At this point in the season, how has your progress been in achieving the individual goals you set out for yourself at the beginning of the season? (SQ1)

a. Have any of your individual goals changed? If so, how/why? (SQ1) (If participant started the season with the Spitfires).

Have any of your individual goals changed since you joined the Spitfires organization? If so, how/why? (SQ1) (If participant did not start the season with the Spitfires).

[Just to restate, your individual goals are ____________________?]

[If I'm doing this to clarify which goals I will be using going forward in the interview.]

b. Did you alter any of your plans to reach your goals? (SQ1)

4. At the beginning of the season, what personal strengths did you possess that would help you achieve your individual goals? (SQ1)
a. At this point of the season, do you feel that those strengths are still there to help you reach your goals? (SQ1)

b. At this point in the season, have you created any new strengths to help you work towards your individual goals? Can you give me an example of how or where you used those strengths to work towards your goals? (SQ1)

5. What resources (i.e., human, financial, material) have you used so far or will you use in order to be successful in achieving your individual goals? (SQ2)

6. Have you had any problems so far in trying to reach any of your individual goals? Please provide examples. (SQ1)
   a. Were you able to get around or solve those problems? If so, how? (SQ3)
   b. Have you had any doubts in regards to reaching any of your goals? Can you explain the situation further?
      i. If so, how have you been dealing with them (i.e., strengths (SQ1), human resources (SQ2), etc.)?

7. Do you see yourself being a positive resource for other individuals working towards their goals? If so, can you give me an example? (SQ3)

Team (Collective) Goals

8. What do you think were the collective team goals of the Spitfires organization at the beginning of the Memorial Cup season? (SQ1) *(If participant started season with the Spitfires).*

Are you aware of any collective team goals of the Spitfires organization for this Memorial Cup season? (SQ1) *(If participant did not start season with the*
a. How did you see yourself contributing to those team goals? (SQ3) *(If participant started season with the Spitfires).*

How do you see yourself contributing to those team goals? (SQ3) *(If participant did not start season with the Spitfires).*

b. Did you discuss collective team goals with anyone else? Explain. (SQ2)

9. At this point in the season, how has the team been progressing in working towards the collective team goals? (SQ1) *(If participant started season with the Spitfires).*

a. Have any of those goals changed? If so, why? (SQ1) *(If participant started season with the Spitfires).*

[Just to restate, your collective team goals are ____________________?]

[I'm doing this to clarify which goals I will be using going forward in the interview.]

b. At this point in the season, will you have to alter any of your individual goals in order to help the team reach their collective goals? (SQ1)

10. At the beginning of the season, what strengths did you possess that helped you contribute towards the collective team goals? (SQ1)

a. At this point in the season, have you created any new strengths that you have used to help you work towards the team goals? (SQ1) *(If participant started season with the Spitfires).*
b. What strengths do you bring to the Spitfires organization that will work towards the collective team goals? (SQ1) (If participant did not start season with the Spitfires).

11. What resources (i.e., human, financial, material) have you used so far or might you need in order to be successful in achieving the collective team goals? (SQ2)

   a. Have you helped others while they were trying to achieve the team goals? Please give an example. (SQ3)

12. Have you had any problems in trying to reach any of your team goals? Please give an example. (SQ1)

   a. Were you able to get around or solve those problems? If so, how? (SQ3)

   b. Have you had any doubt in regards to reaching any of those goals? Can you explain the situation further? (SQ1)

*Interaction of Individual and Team Goals*

13. Have you been able to work towards your individual and collective team goals at the same time? (SQ3)

   a. Do your individual and team goals reinforce one another? Please explain. (SQ1)

   b. Have your individual and team goals conflicted with one another? Please explain. (SQ1)

   c. Were you ever forced to choose between an individual goal and a team
goal? Please provide examples. (SQ1)

Closing Statement

Thank you for your time. Is there anything that you would like to clarify or add?

If you think of anything later, feel free to contact me. I will send you a copy of your interview transcript in the next few weeks. You will also get a draft of my initial results. You will have one week be able to review the transcript and let me know if you agree with it or if you would like to clarify anything and/or make any changes. If I do not hear from you, I will assume that the transcript is fine as is.
Second Interview Guide (Late May/Early June)

Introduction

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my study about optimizing strengths and resources in a Memorial Cup team.

Just a reminder, as we previously discussed in our correspondence, I cannot guarantee you confidentiality due to fact that the names of that members of the Spitfires organization are available on the Internet for the public to search.

I will be recording our interview with your permission. The recording of our interview will ensure that I have an accurate record of the information that you share with me. If at any point you would like me to stop the recording, please just let me know.

If you have questions at any point during the interview, I encourage you to ask them.

Do you have any questions before we start?

Questions

Individual Goals

1. Now that the Memorial Cup is over, do you feel like you met the individual goals that you set for yourself the beginning of the season? (SQ1)

   a. Did any of your goals change since our first interview in [insert month]? If so, why? (SQ1)
[Just to restate, your individual goals were _____________________?

[J'm doing this to clarify which goals I will be using going forward in the interview.]

b. Did you alter any of your plans to reach your goals since our last interview? (SQ1)

2. In the second half of the season, what personal strengths have you used that have helped you work towards achieving your individual goals? (SQ1)
   a. Have you created any new strengths to help you work towards your individual goals? (SQ1)

3. Since our first interview, what resources have you used to help you achieve your individual goals? (SQ2)
   a. How have you been a resource to others while they were trying to achieve their individual goals? (SQ3)

4. Have you had any problems in trying to reach any of your individual goals? Please provide examples. (SQ1)
   a. Were you able to get around or solve those problems? If so, how?
   b. Did you have any doubts in regards to reaching any of your goals? Can you explain the situation further? (SQ1)
      i. If so, how have you been dealing with them (i.e., strengths (SQ1), human resources (SQ2), etc.)?

*Team (Collective) Goals*

5. Since our first interview, how did the Spitfires progress in working towards their
collective team goals? (SQ1)

b. Did any of those goals change? If so, why? (SQ1)

c. Did you alter any of your plans to reach your team goals? (SQ1)

6. Since our first interview, what personal strengths have you used that have helped contribute towards achieving the collective team goals? (SQ3)

a. Have you created any new strengths that you have used to help achieve the team goals? (SQ1)

7. Since our last interview, what resources have you used in order to help achieve the collective team goals? Can you give an example? (SQ2)

a. Did you help others while they were trying to achieve the team goals? Please give an example. (SQ3)

8. Did you have any problems in trying to reach any of your team goals? Please give an example. (SQ1)

a. Were you able to get around or solve those problems? If so, how? (SQ3)

b. Did you have any doubt in regards to reaching any of those goals? Can you explain the situation further? (SQ1)

*Interaction of Individual and Team Goals*

9. Since our first interview, have you been able to work towards your individual and collective team goals at the same time? (SQ3)

a. Did your individual and team goals reinforce one another? Please explain. (SQ1)

b. Did your individual and team goals conflict with one another? Please explain. (SQ1)
c. Were you ever forced to choose between an individual goal and a team goal? Please provide examples. (SQ1)

Closing Statement

Thank you for your time. Is there anything that you would like to clarify or add?

If you think of anything later, feel free to contact me. I will send you a copy of your interview transcript in the next few weeks. You will also get a draft of my initial results. You will have one week be able to review the transcript and let me know if you agree with it or if you would like to clarify anything and/or make any changes. If I do not hear from you, I will assume that the transcript is fine as is.
Appendix D: Consent Form

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

Title of Study: OPTIMIZING STRENGTHS AND RESOURCES IN A MEMORIAL CUP TEAM: A STRENGTHS AND HOPE PERSPECTIVE

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by me, Dan Upham, from the Department of Kinesiology at the University of Windsor. Results from the research study will contribute to my Master's Thesis.

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel to contact me (xxxxx@uwindsor.ca or xxx-xxxx-xxxx) or my advisor, Dr. Victoria Paraschak (xxxxxx@uwindsor.ca, xxx-xxx-xxxx ext. xxxx).

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of the study is to learn about the experiences of participants involved within the Windsor Spitfires organization during their Memorial Cup season. Specifically, I would like to learn about participants’ individual goals, as well as their collective team goals. I would also like to identify the strengths and resources they may use to achieve those goals, and their contribution to these goals.

PROCEDURES

If you volunteer to participate in this study, I will ask to interview you in person on two separate occasions. Each of these interviews will last for approximately 40 minutes. All interviews will be audio recorded.

POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS

There is minimal risk and discomfort associated with this study. You should not experience risk any greater than the risks you encounter in your everyday interactions with others. Your participation with the Windsor Spitfires will not be adversely affected. You will discuss doubts and challenges, but the risk will be minimized by connecting those experiences to their strengths.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO PARTICIPANTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY

The interview process and study results will give participants the opportunity to identify individual goals as well as Spitfires team goals during their Memorial Cup season.

The interview process and study results will give participants the opportunity to identify their strengths and potential resources that could guide them towards their individual and team goals. Participants could potentially recognize pathways needed in order to achieve their individual and team goals.

Exploring team cohesion from a strengths and hope perspective could potentially contribute towards ‘wholistic’ well-being for participants, which in turn could enhance their on-ice performance.

This research addresses a gap in junior hockey research in regards to hosting the Memorial Cup.

This research addresses a gap in sports research in relation to exploring sport organizations through the strengths and hope framework.
Building off of and expanding the strengths and hope perspective will further legitimize the perspective in academia as I challenge the dominant deficit perspective of society.

COMPENSATION FOR PARTICIPATION

No compensation will be provided for participating in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Due to the interview process, anonymity cannot be provided. Limited personal data about participants will be collected. The identities of the organizational members are available publically over the Internet. Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. Participants have the option to use a pseudonym or their true name when the results are reported.

All written records will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the Human Kinetics Building at the University of Windsor to which only my advisor, Dr. Victoria Paraschak and I will have access. All electronic records will be password protected and only the researcher will have access to them. Audio recordings will be deleted from the recording devices as soon as the files are transferred to a password-protected computer. Participants will be permitted to review their audio recording upon request. All written and electronic records will be retained for six months, after which they will be shredded and deleted.

PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL

Participants have the option to choose if they would like to participate in the study. Participants may withdraw from the study at any time, without consequence. Their participation within the Windsor Spitfires organization will not be adversely affected. I will ask the permission of the participant to continue to use his/her recorded data if they withdraw from the study on or before the withdrawal date of March 1, 2017. If participants withdraw after March 1, 2017, their data will be used and included in the study. At any time, participants may refuse to answer any questions they do not wish to answer. I may withdraw participants from this research study if circumstances warrant doing so.

FEEDBACK OF THE RESULTS OF THIS STUDY TO THE PARTICIPANTS

A copy of your transcripts and a brief summary will be provided to each participant after each set of interviews. Further, a copy of your transcripts and a brief summary of the results will be available to the participants before the second and third set of interviews. A completed copy of the research findings will be available to participants once the research project is completed.

Web address: http://www1.uwindsor.ca/reb/study-results
Date when results are available: July 31, 2017

SUBSEQUENT USE OF DATA

The data may be used in subsequent studies, in publications, and in presentations.

RIGHTS OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

If you have questions regarding your rights as a research participant, contact: Research Ethics Coordinator, University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario N9B 3P4; Telephone: 519-253-3000, ext. 3948; e-mail: ethics@uwindsor.ca.

SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANT/LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE

I understand the information provided for the study: OPTIMIZING STRENGTHS AND RESOURCES IN A MEMORIAL CUP TEAM: A STRENGTHS AND HOPE PERSPECTIVE as described herein. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.
These are the terms under which I will conduct research.

Signature of Participant ___________________________ Date ____________

SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

Signature of Investigator ___________________________ Date ____________
Appendix E: Preliminary Coding List

Duality of Structure (Giddens, 1984)
- Participants being shaped by structures or interactions with others
- Participants shaping structures or others through interactions
- Rules and/or resources that shape structures
- Unequal power relations

Strengths Perspective (Paraschak 2013a; Saleebey, 2013)
- Identification of existing strengths
- Development of strengths through challenges
- Development of strengths through access to resources
- Development of strengths through interactions with others
- Opportunity to utilize strengths
- Complimentary power relations

Hope/Practices of Hope (Jacobs, 2005; Jacobs, 2008; Paraschak 2013a; Snyder, 2002)
- Identification of individual goals
- Identification of team goals
- Development of goals through interactions with others
- Creating a hope-enhancing environment
- Identifying a preferred future
- Identifying a shared preferred future
- Ability to co-transform
- Envisioning multiple pathways
- Overcoming challenges
- Agency/motivation to work towards goals
- Identify resources that can help achieve goals
- Identify resources to help others achieve goals
Appendix F: Conceptual Baggage

My Place in Hockey

My earliest memory about hockey was collecting hockey cards as a kid. After school, I used to go to the card store across the street from my elementary school to spend whatever change I was supposed to be saving in my piggy bank. I used to think collecting cards was a better investment. Unbeknownst to me, the early 1990's was an era of sports card mass production. The cards were, and still are to this day, worthless. However, it started what is now a large encyclopedia of personal knowledge and data about hockey. My earliest memory of actually seeing the game of hockey, or at least remembering I saw the game, was at eight years of age. My uncle had my brother and I watch games on television. The Vancouver Canucks had just defeated the Toronto Maple Leafs in the 1994 Western Conference final to reach the Stanley Cup final against the New York Rangers. At that time, I had no idea how the Stanley Cup playoff format worked. I just knew that I was cheering with my uncle and brother for Vancouver to win. My uncle explained to me that each playoff series was played in a best-of-seven series. Whoever won four games first won the series. He had told me that New York was the better team, but even though it was a long-shot, we had to cheer for the Canadian team because we were Canadian. The series was emotional. I was immediately right into it. At school, I would even bet hockey cards with my friend Hussein on each game of the series. Vancouver fell behind three games to one, but roared back to force a game seven! Unfortunately, the Canucks lost and their Cinderella season was over. However, I have been hooked on hockey ever since.

As I knew it, hockey was known as Canada's game. If you were Canadian, you
were supposed to have played hockey. These were the boundaries I operated within. Although I have played hockey countless times, I have only played it once on ice skates. As a kid, my family was unable to put me in organized hockey due to cost. However, I did play organized and competitive baseball. It was cheaper, and I have family bloodlines that have reached Major League Baseball (MLB). Throughout elementary school, I played road hockey and mini-sticks with my friends. Sometimes, while they played pond hockey, I would join them - running around and sliding out there with my shoes on. It wasn't as hard as I thought it would be.

The Windsor-Essex County District School Board (WECDSB) had a floor hockey league that included several schools across the city. It was known as the Outlaw Floor Hockey League. Even though my school was considered to be an inner-city school, we had the coolest jerseys (actual jerseys) and a team that included several players who played organized hockey. Fortunately for me, I was able to make the team with my brother as one of the few players who did not play organized hockey. However, all of our friends played, and we fit in just fine. In fact, our team, the Benson Stingers, was considered the rebel team of the Outlaw league. Our team had a reputation for playing hard and a little rough for elementary school standards. My brother and I were the first defensive pairing, and we reproduced that team identity very well. In my first year on the team (grade five), we won the Oakwood tournament and lost the league championship to our rivals, the Forest Glade Sharks, in two heartbreaking overtime games (best-of-three series). In my second year playing, we came in third place at the Oakwood tournament and lost in the third game of the semi-final series of the playoffs to the Glenwood Gryphons. I still have the medals and plaques to this very day. The success and failures of
my first hockey team experience added to and helped build a side of me I didn't know existed. Hockey makes me emotional. Good or bad, I love it.

In high school, there was an intramural floor hockey league that started when I was in grade eleven. That year, I captained a team that lost in the league finals. We were known as 'The Ponchos.' We were the only team in league history (that I knew of) that had beaten the teacher's team during the regular season. In grade twelve, my best friend James and I merged our two teams together and we won the league championship! Our team name was 'The Tighty-Whitey's.' It was also the first year we had an all-star game. The student all-stars lost 5-3 against the teachers. I scored all three of our goals. I understand that to some people, memories of high school floor hockey may not be important, but to me, it is extremely important. High school was very memorable to me.

Even though I am continuously growing as a person, it is high school that shaped me most into who I am today. That includes intramural floor hockey and my very first hockey pool. I was also able to realize something for the very first time. While reflecting on my floor hockey success, I realized that I was a very good floor hockey player. It made me question whether or not I had lost an opportunity to become a very good ice hockey player just because I couldn't afford it. Further, I questioned if it was normal for a Canadian kid to not have the chance to play ice hockey. How did I fall in love with a sport that literally brings tears to my eyes while not having played it in an organized manner on ice? Was I a normal Canadian kid? Could I even consider myself a Canadian? My practical consciousness was broken and my boundaries were expanding.

Throughout my childhood, I did not attend many live hockey games. I attended one Windsor Spitfires game when I was young. My mom had taken me and my
elementary school best friend to see a game. It was not until I was ten years old, when the Windsor Spitfires came to my elementary school, that I started attending games regularly. The Spitfires gave away free tickets to the students and I attended several games that year. It became a regular part of my life. Before I knew it, I had season tickets every year.

The Spitfires’ games did a lot for me in my life. First, they added information to my personal encyclopedia. I was able to watch all of today’s NHL stars before they made it big. Every game I attended, I was able to see the skills, character, and hard work it took to become a professional hockey player. Further, I was able to learn a lot about the hockey subculture. Second, and most importantly, attending Spitfires games helped me create relationships that I still have today. I met one of my very best friends at the games. I can say I have known Stu for two-thirds of my life.

Hockey was also a very big part of the relationship I had with my grandfather. It was a way we bonded. He would join me at the games when teams such as Plymouth, Kitchener, London, and Erie came to Windsor. They were good teams, and we enjoyed the great hockey. We were not Spitfires fans however. We cheered for the Plymouth Whalers. They were a league powerhouse for as long as I could remember. My grandfather and I would drive to Michigan to see them play. I would always get excited to go. In the 1999-2000 season, we even went to Plymouth to see game seven of the league finals vs. the Barrie Colts. Plymouth lost that game and we were heartbroken. However, I considered hockey as a means to an end. What I really wanted was to be with my grandfather while he told me stories. We would take the scenic routes and stop off at nice parks on the way, then eventually end up in the parking lot of the Compuware Sports Arena eating Taco Bell.
The time I spent with my grandfather will likely be the best memories hockey will provide me. To this day we still talk about OHL hockey. He pretends he does not care anymore because we have both grown older. Twenty-three years later, I still attend Windsor Spitfires games on a regular basis, and my grandfather's constant questions about the games proves to me that he still cares. When the Plymouth Whalers relocated to Flint, MI, I felt like I lost a part of myself. However, I still have a Whalers pennant on my bedroom wall that will always remind me of our experiences together, and I now cheer for the Windsor Spitfires. My grandpa, Stu, and I had the opportunity to watch the Windsor Spitfires win the Memorial Cup championship on home ice in 2017. It was a very special moment that I will never forget.

My time with the Windsor Spitfires during their Memorial Cup season in 2016-2017 was also an important and unforgettable experience that I will always carry with me. In Allain (2014), she suggested that the hockey subculture is closed, and members only allow outsiders in with restricted access. My experiences with the Windsor Spitfires challenged this. Although I did find it true that the Spitfires allowed most people in with restricted access, I was not treated that way. The entire organization treated me with the utmost respect. I was given access to anything I needed. The Spitfires organization treated me like one of their own that season, and still do today. I was shaped by my experiences with them, learning how to work within their structured schedules, being succinct and to the point in my communication, and keeping anything I heard or saw to myself. I believe I built rapport and trust with members of the organization I came into contact with throughout the season. I also believe my treatment was due to the fact that athletic therapist Joey Garland put his word on the line for me, and members of the
organization quickly recognized me as an 'insider' due to my strengths and knowledge of hockey. I truly think that not just anyone could have conducted the research I completed. Those that lacked the strengths or knowledge I possessed most likely would have been met with the restricted access, if any, that Allain (2014) suggested. Although I did build lasting relationships with many members in the Spitfires organization, I was always cognizant of the fact that I was a researcher first.

Today, I am a lot older and I have a lot more money than I did growing up. I can and do go to any games I want now. Recently, I've attended games that include the World Cup of Hockey, the Calder Cup Finals, the World Junior Championships, and various professional and junior level games. Hockey is also providing me new experiences. I travel to the Memorial Cup and OHL Cup tournaments on an annual basis. I use these opportunities to scout players, meet people in the hockey world, and add to my database of hockey knowledge. The game is constantly changing and evolving, and I am evolving with it. I've had the opportunity over the past several years to meet and learn from greats such as Bobby Hull, Ted Lindsay, and even party with the Stanley Cup at Steve Ott's house.

I am completing my thesis in hopes of one day working for an NHL team. I attend tournaments and conferences across Canada as a pathway to my preferred future. However, I must be honest, I also attend because I am a fan. Every day, my boundaries expand, and I am continuously being shaped by the game of hockey. One day, I hope to add to that process and shape others the same way that I have been shaped.
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