Parkland's International Soccer Players and the Value of Teamwork

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Recommended Citation

http://spark.parkland.edu/epsil/23

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Overview
What does teamwork mean in different cultures?
Although the concept of “teamwork” shares many of the same aspects in different countries and cultures, it also varies in significant ways.
The aim of this project was to see how ideas and values of teamwork vary cross-culturally.

Protocol
The data was gathered from interviews with international athletes from Parkland’s soccer team.
The international student athletes who were interviewed are from Brazil, Portugal, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela.

Questions in the Interview
- Where are you from, and how did you come to like soccer?
- How do you become a student athlete at Parkland?
- How do you define being part of a team?
- For you, how does being part of a team differ here than where you are from?
- Does your coach treat other members of the team differently?
- Have you had any problems adjusting to the local culture? Has the team helped you to adjust?
- Are the majority of your friends here other athletes/international students?
- What do you do in your personal time?
- Apart from athletics what do you like about Champaign?
- What benefits you going abroad compared to staying in your country?

Discovery
When the students were asked about the value of teamwork and how they defined it, their own definitions were inherently different.

Teamwork differs in their own opinion by what they deem is personal and what their friends should know. Being part of the team is not just in practice or on the field, it extends off the field and into their social circle.

Parkland College does its own recruiting its international student athletes. It makes immersion into the local Champaign culture easy by the coach helping the international students find housing, and other personal accommodations that they may need.

Being part of the team helps instantly with seeking out friends, majority of the team’s players are friends with one another, and other student athletes from different sports.

Soccer to the team members that come here see soccer as an incredibly competitive and worthwhile game, while they believe Americans see soccer more as a fun game.

Highlights from the Interview
“...In the personal time we try to help somebody.”

“Here in the states soccer seems to be something seen that is more fun. But in Brazil it is very competitive. Everyone plays it.”

“First coming here was tough, but not because of the people but because of the language. It was challenging. But after a few months the team helps us to adapt to the culture here in Champaign.”

“Most of the players on the team are foreign people, we have like four American players, and they help us a lot.”

Conclusion
The concept of teamwork differs in cultures throughout the world based on what it can incorporate and exclude, by what is seen as a matter for the team versus a private issue of a player. Teamwork does not only affect what happens on the field, but moves off the field and into various relationships that extend beyond the game. It can be affected by cultural ties and personal interests. Teamwork does not only define the team, it defines the very game being played.

Acknowledgements
I would like to thank the talented members of the Parkland soccer team. Being a student athlete is very time-consuming and I appreciate their generosity in letting me take a few minutes of their time to ask them questions.