



When Kids Are Cut: Fostering Resilience in Team Selection Practices

OUR TEAM:

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Our Story



Study Overview

Study 1
Qualitative Study
• *Interviews*



Study 2
Quantitative Study
• *Online Survey*



Purpose of Study 1 and 2

Current Policies & Practices

Perceptions & Experiences

Impact

Recommended Practices

Study 1: Participants

Interviews (52)

5 Saskatchewan School Divisions (rural and urban)

Athlete (age 13-18)

Parents

Coaches

Athletic Directors

Administrators

School Board Trustee



Study 2: Participants

Online Survey

27 Saskatchewan School Divisions

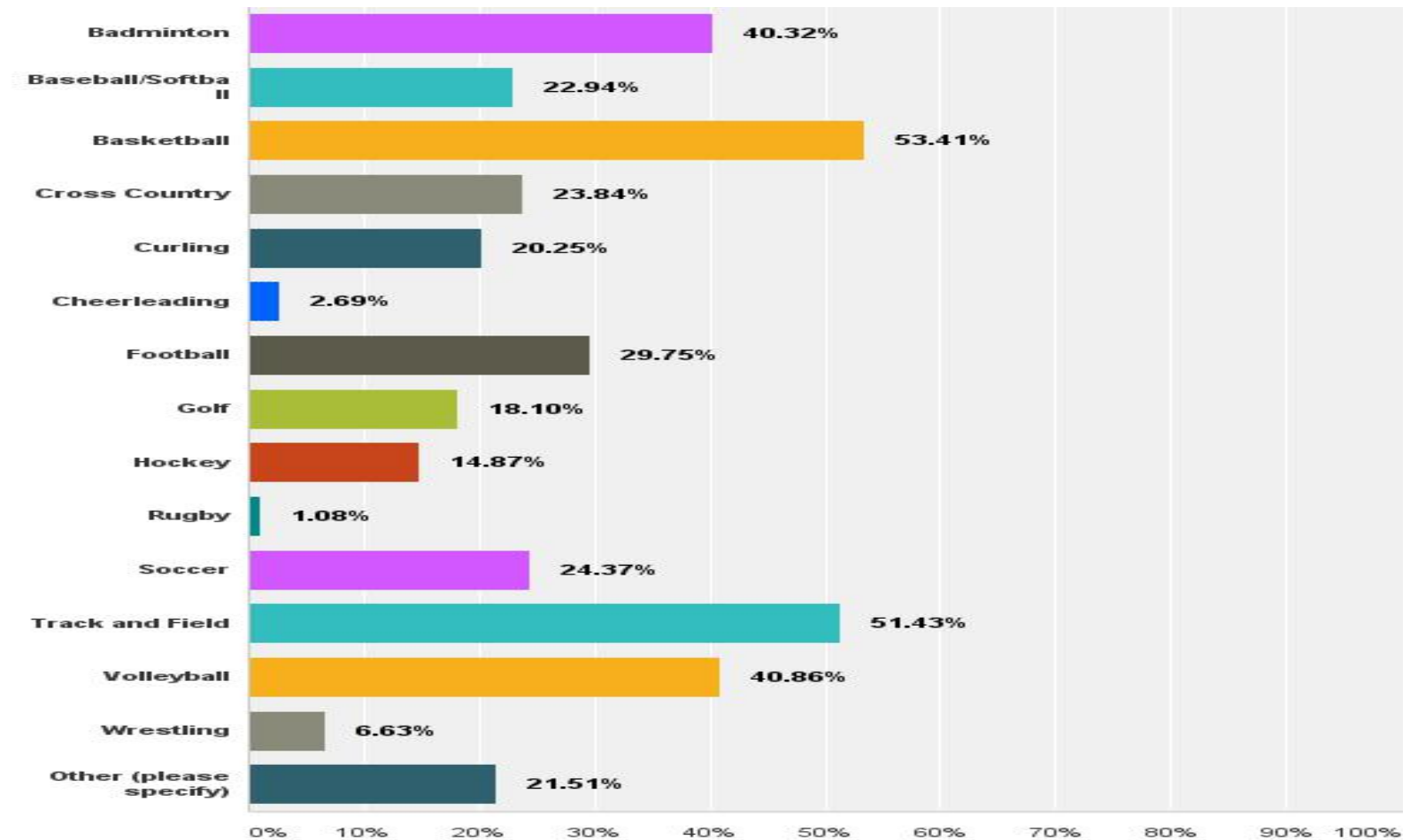
562 Coaches (F 246, M 310)

154 Athletic Directors (42, 111)



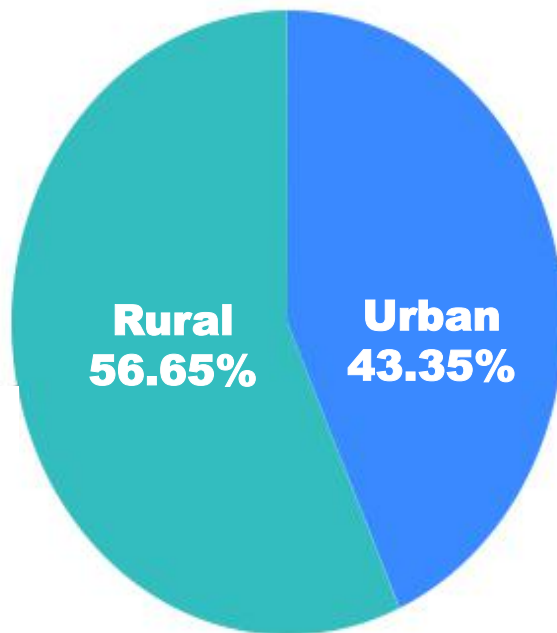
Study 2: Participant Demographics

Sports Coached

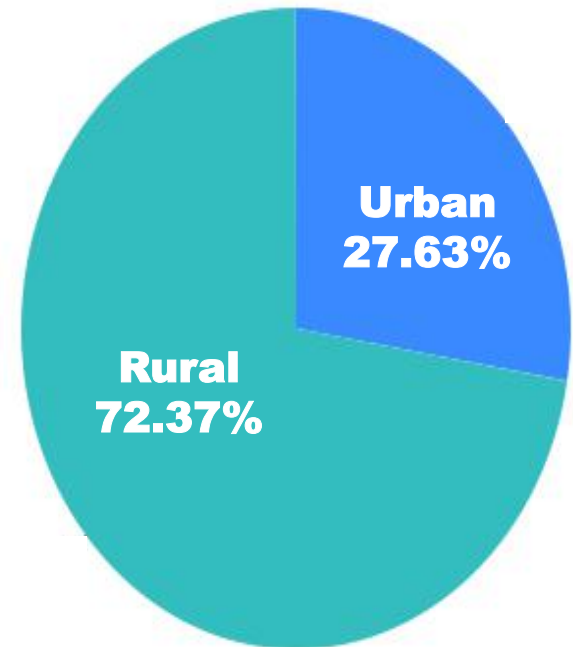


Study 2: Participant Demographics

Location



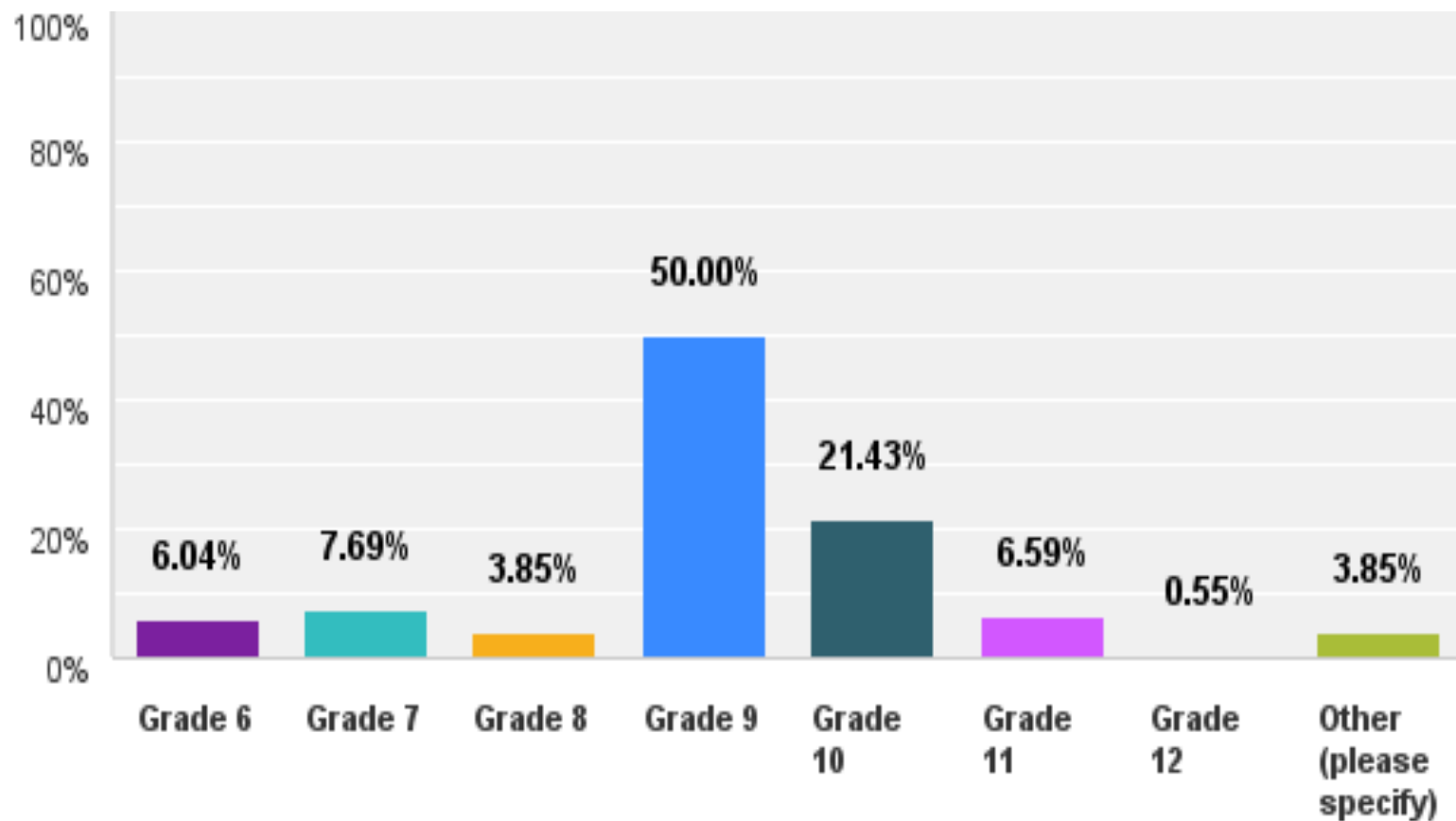
Coaches



**Athletic
Directors**

Grade Level

On average, at what grade level do you begin to cut athletes from sport teams?



Is there a need to Re- Imagine the Team Selection Process?



“There are issues in our school system. Lack of support from administration for coaches. No one wants to coach anymore, we are losing coaches, giving up their free time if they have families at home, coaching their own kids. You know it goes back to bargaining, people are not being paid, its volunteer. Its not whether we should have support we need support, we are losing coaches.”

- Athletic Director

“My experience of being cut from a team was handled well and I continued to play with outside teams. My children were cut from elementary teams and refused to participate in high school because the process was handled poorly. I believe school staff makes or breaks this process. Many coaches do not handle it well leading to parental conflict”.

- Parent

Coaches Experiences

Dreaded Aspect of Being a Coach



- Try-out anxiety
- Hid in Office
- Do not know what to say
- Dread the aftermath
- High School is different than Community – “He is in my math class

“I cut a kid last year and he was mad at me for probably 6 months. Every time I saw him in the hallway he couldn’t even look at me.”

- Coach

Does Getting Cut from a Team Impact Athlete Well-Being---and Resilience?



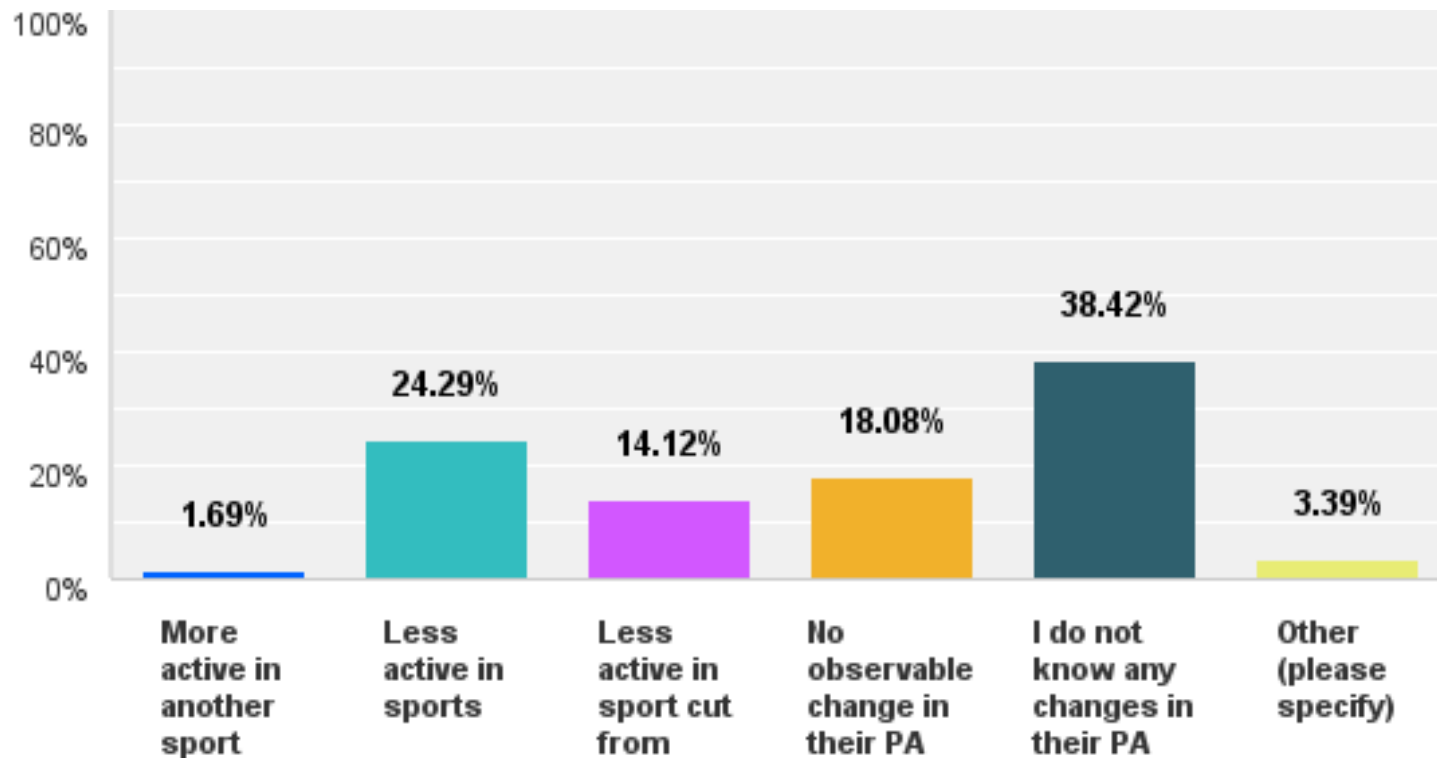
Physical Well-Being-- Participation

- Desire to play that sport diminished and their participation in that sport was minimal.
- Replaced the sport with another activity
- This was due to the following factors:
 - (a) perceived opportunities to play – what do I do now?
 - (b) feelings of resentment towards the sport
 - (c) low perceptions of their ability

“I didn’t really know what to do. I had a lot of time now, you know free time to do stuff. I did join a gym with a friend and now we work out.” – Athlete

Physical Well-Being

Among the athletes cut from sport teams, how would you describe their physical activity behaviour after they are cut?



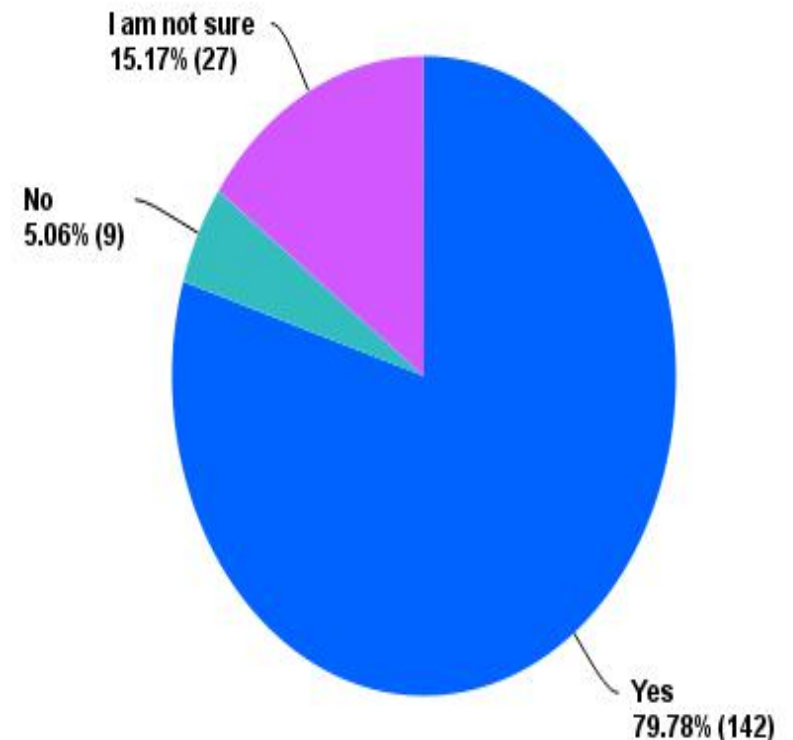
Emotional Well-Being

- ▶ Significant Time in Youth Lives
- ▶ Need Support

“She just laid around for a couple days, she was just really sad and genuinely heartbroken.” – Parent

“They just cut him. And that’s it. His life was turned upside down and I had to really support him through this.” – Parent

Do you believe being cut from a sports team impacts an individual’s emotional well-being?



Social Well-Being

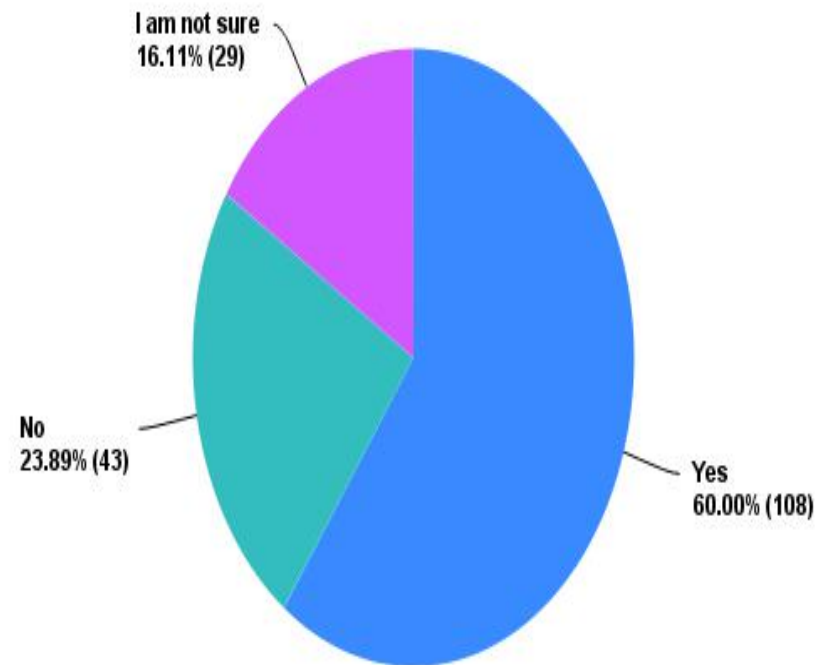
- Circle of Friends
- Identity

“I didn’t really want to hang out with them anymore, like when they all would hang out I wouldn’t really want to go because they are just all going to talk about basketball and that’s not cool, I’ll be left out.”

– Athlete

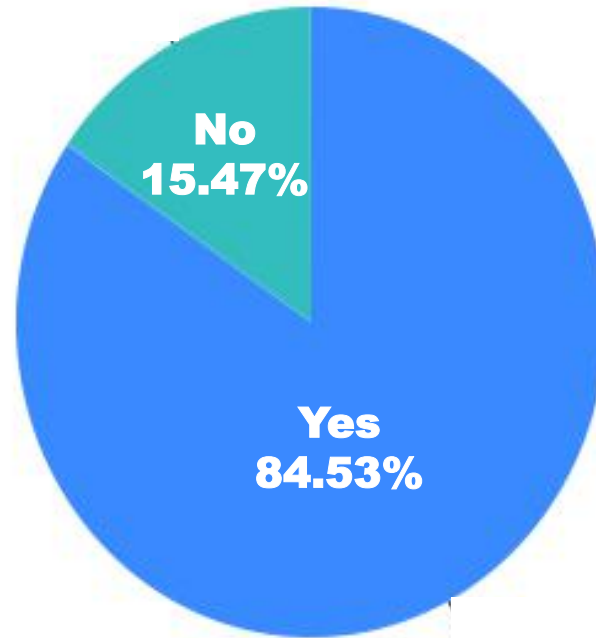
“She had made best friends with lots of girls, one of her best friends who they were joined at the hip, they just hit it off so well, she is friends with all those girls now she feels left out.” - Parent

Do you believe being cut from a sports team impacts an individuals’ social circle?



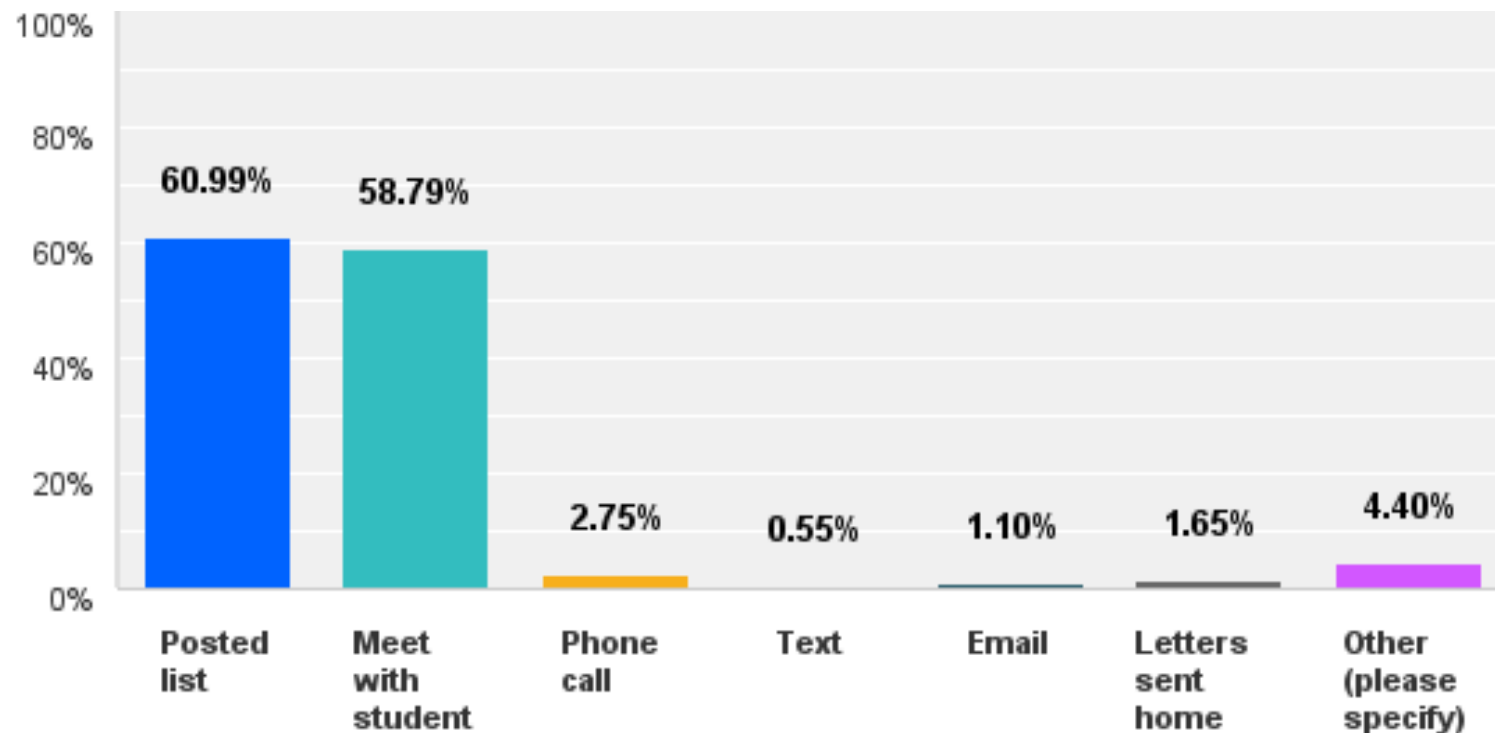
Athlete's Well-Being & METHOD of Cutting

Do you believe the method you choose to cut athletes has an impact on how athletes deal with being cut?



How are athletes 'cut'?

What method of cutting athletes from sport teams do you personally practice?



The Chosen Method of Cutting

What influences this decision?

Best for the Athlete

- Feedback
- Quick & Painless

Easiest for the Coach

- Time for Try-outs
- Number of Athletes
- Emotional Aspect

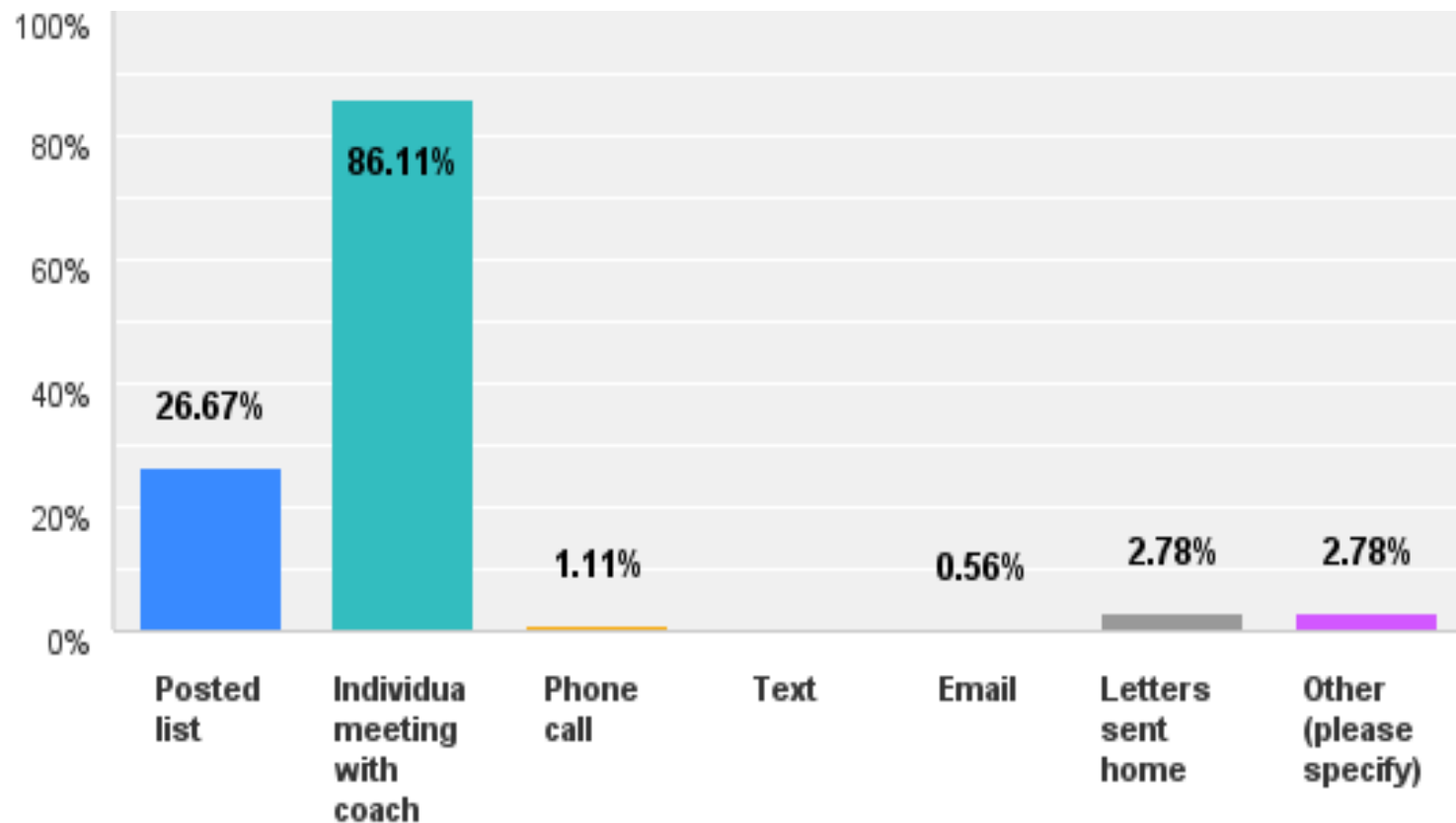
Parental Influence

- Feared Backlash
 - "Vocal"
 - "Involved"
 - "Influential"

Perceptions of Best Method

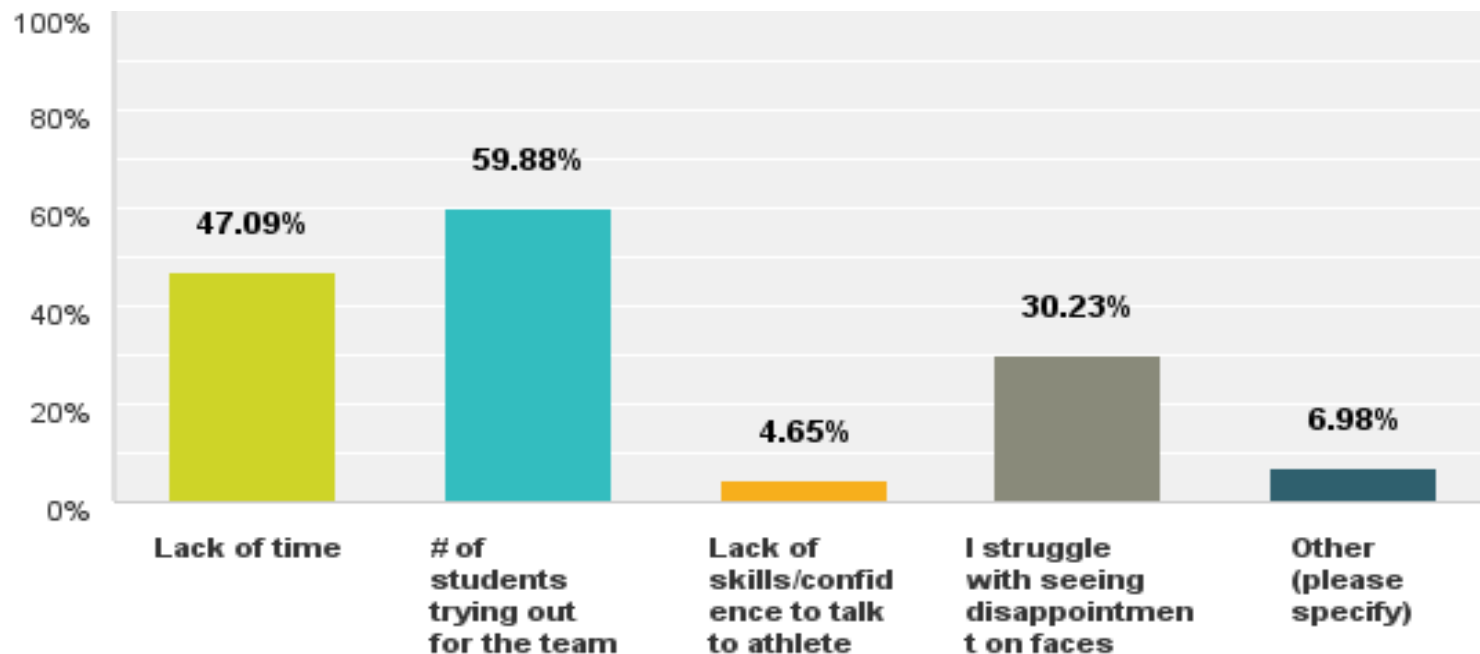
Coaches

In your opinion, what would you consider 'best practice' for cutting athletes from sport teams?



Challenges to 'Best Practice'

What challenges do you face in using the 'best practice' method you previously identified when cutting athletes from your sport teams?



Perceptions of Best Method

Coaches, Administrators, Athletic Directors

Face to Face is Best

- Specific Individual Feedback
- More Personal
- Logistics

“I think it is heartless to do it on a piece of paper.” - Coach

List with Optional Conversation

- Allows athlete to cool down
- Up to the athlete if they want to talk

“This allows some dialogue so that when I sit down and talk to them they have a chance to ask me questions, get clarification, they have a chance to reflect.”

- Athletic Director

Athletes & Parents

Perceptions of Best Method

Face to Face is Best

- I want to know why
- Felt more closure
- Private
- Do not want to find out from peers

“For me, I want to know what I can do to improve and I want to know why they cut me, for sure.”

- Athlete

Perceptions of Other Cutting Methods

Students

Post a List

“I couldn’t even see the list there was so many people around.”

“The coach posted a list but I found out on text.”

Email

“...I remember sitting on the computer refreshing the page, hoping the email would come. There was a lot of anxiety...”

Letter Sent Home

“I got to be in the privacy of my own home.”

“My friends were texting me, it was on Facebook, everyone knew.”

Recommendations

Face to Face

Athletes provided several recommendations to improve **face-to-face conversations**:

The Specifics Were Important:

1. **Perceived the generic impersonal feedback as uncaring**
Avoid: “we had a lot of great players in your position”
2. **Tell them at the beginning**
Start with: “I am sorry you did not make the team”
3. **Written feedback**
Standardized template
Help address parent concerns—something to take home
4. **Something they could improve upon**
Avoid: “you are not tall enough”

Face to Face

“I remember they said stuff like ‘no one could stop you’, ‘you had a great try-out’ and ‘you’ve gotten so much stronger.’ I know they were just trying to make me feel better but it was almost hard to hear that because I really wanted to know why I didn’t make it and then go improve on that.” - **Athlete**

Recommended Practice:
Athletes and Parents
reported four factors to
best cutting practices

Immediacy, Privacy, Feedback, Encouragement

- (1) **IMMEDIACY:** inform the athlete as close to final tryout as possible (e.g., talk after practice; send an email that evening; post a list the next morning)
- (2) **PRIVACY:** inform the athlete in a private setting away from other athletes
- (3) **FEEDBACK:** provide the athlete with clear specific feedback to help athletes understand why they were cut and provide aspects of their sport they can improve upon
- (4) **ENCOURAGEMENT:** give the athlete direction so they can move past the disappointment – suggest other avenues to continue participating in sport (e.g., community organizations)

Possible Actions

How can we better support coaches and athletes in the team selection process?

- Provide education and guidance to coaches on face-to-face cutting practices – *Immediacy, Privacy, Feedback, Encouragement*
- Identify current guidelines (if any) or create new guidelines for team selection and establish clear understandings of these policies for coaches, parents, and youth

Letter sent home prior to try-outs

- **“The Forgotten Ones”** - The extra effort and time taken to provide feedback, support, and direction to the youth who were not selected may make the difference in their future sport participation
- **Provide a contact for future sport involvement** to encourage continuation in the sport (e.g., community basketball organization)
- **Follow-up** – talk to parents, check-in a month after, continue open-line of communication

Conclusions

- Cutting athletes from sport teams is **often necessary . . .**
- Understanding and implementing best practices when cutting youth from sport teams may be **influential in the continuation of sport engagement** among youth

THANK YOU



Overview

1

Study Overview

2

Current Practices

3

Perceptions & Impact

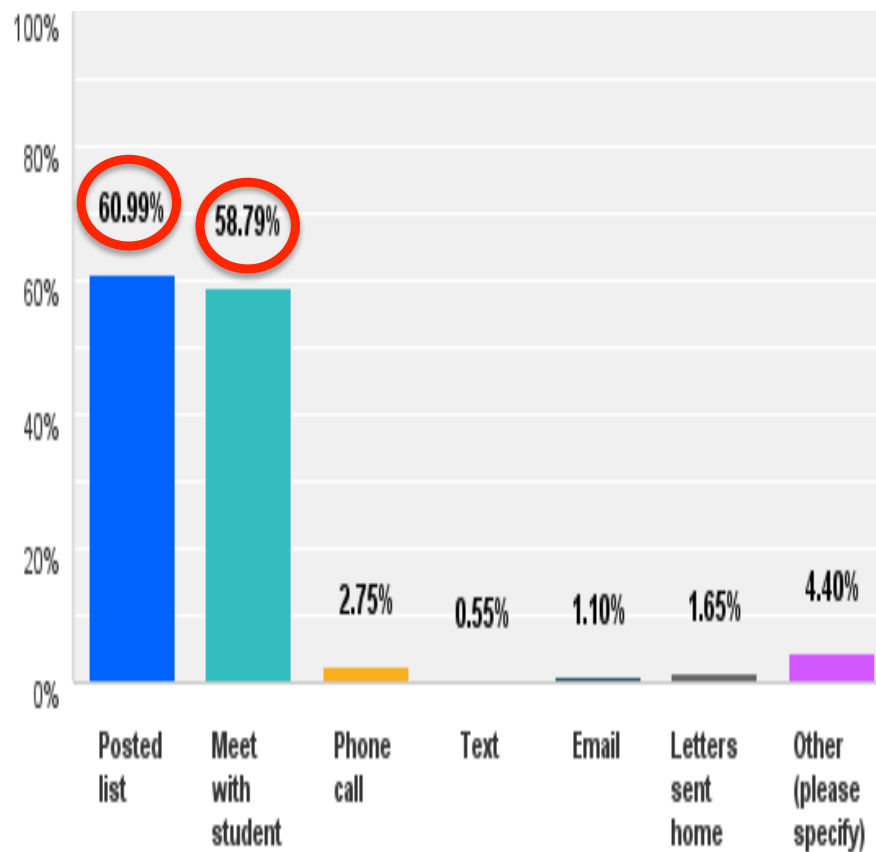
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Potential Actions

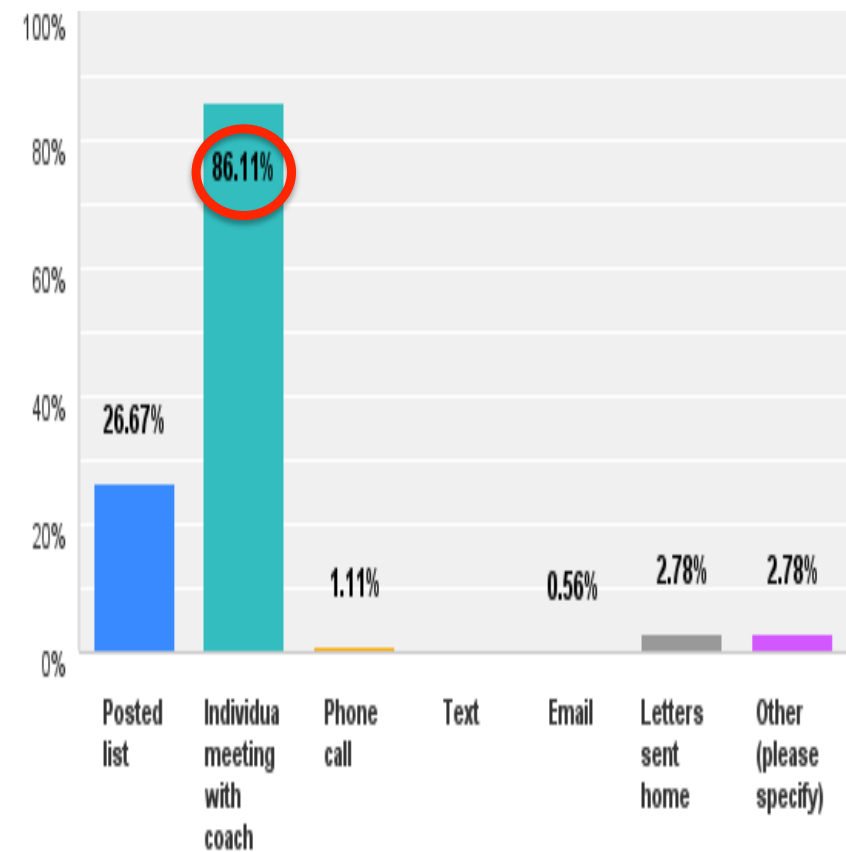


Most Used vs. Best Practice

Most Used

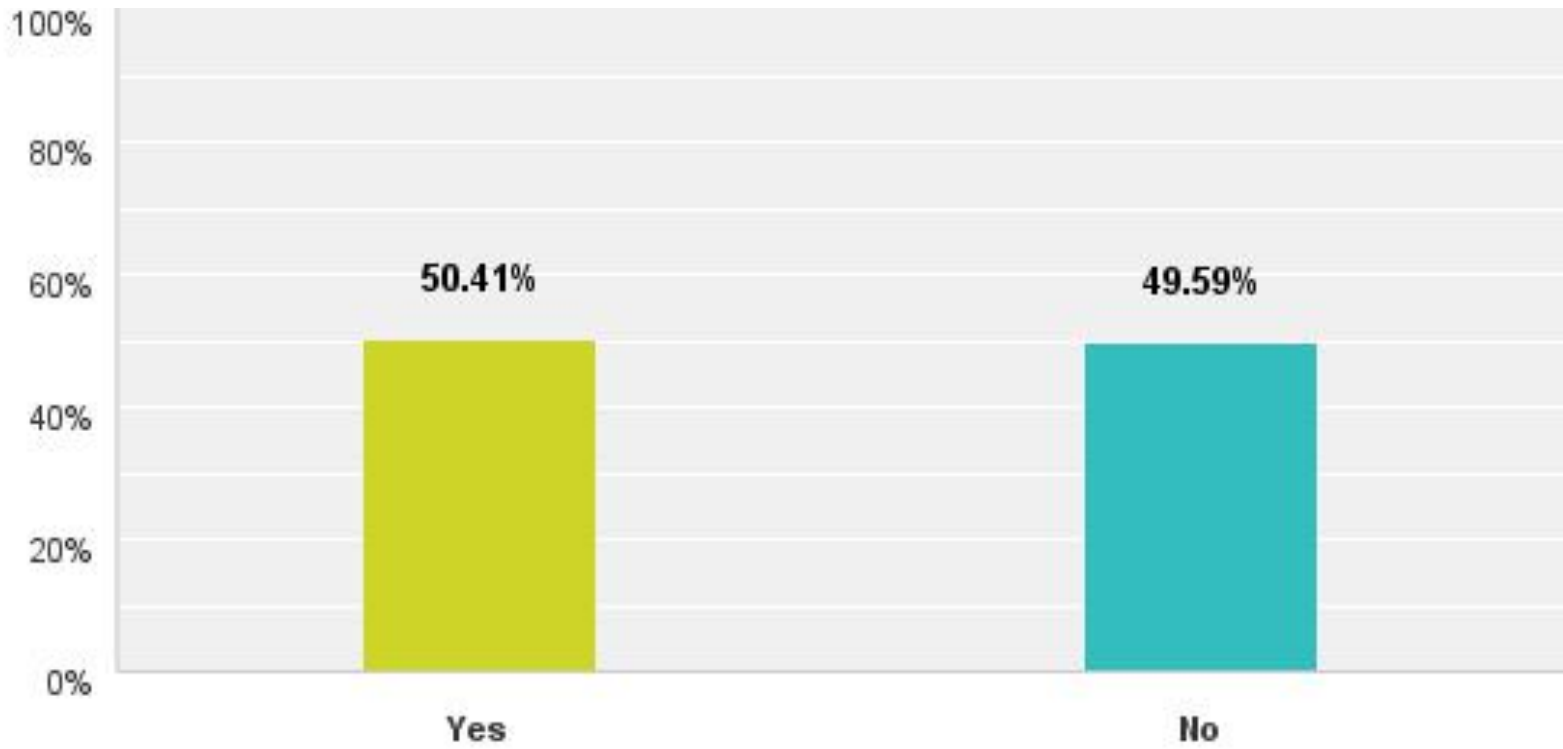


'Best Practice'



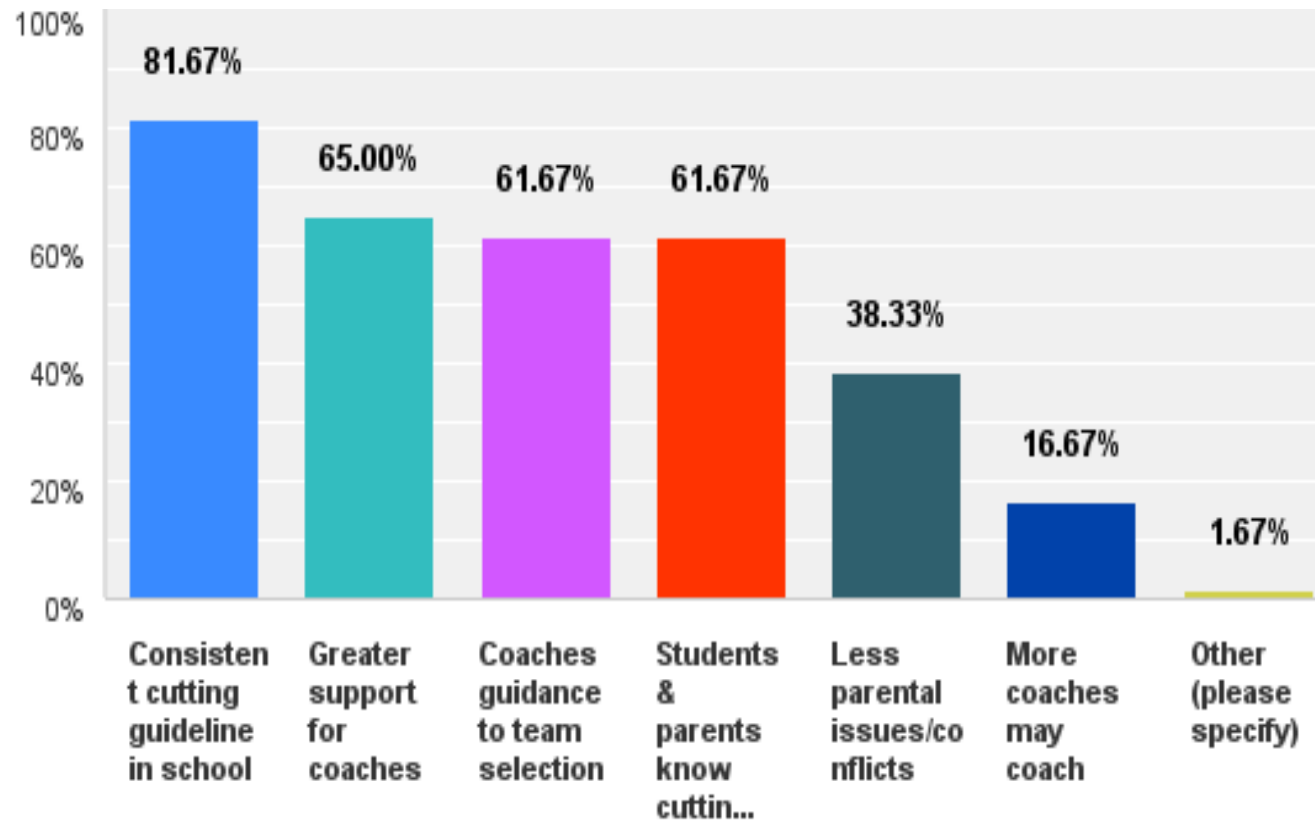
Support for Coaches

Do you think it would be beneficial to have guidelines in place at your cutting athletes from sport teams?



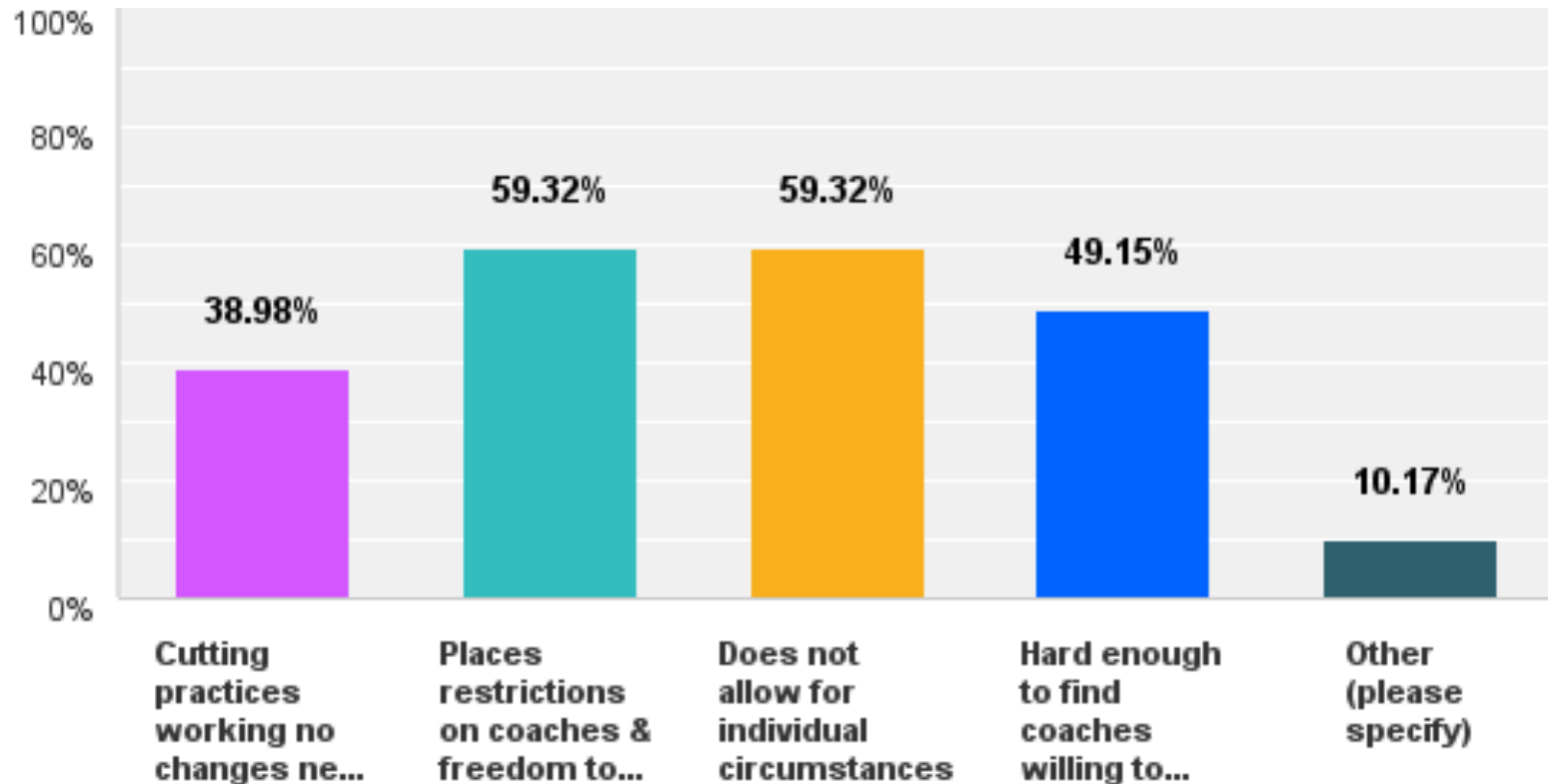
Support for Coaches

Why do you think it would be beneficial for guidelines to be put in place for cutting athletes from sport teams?



Support for Coaches

**Why do you think it would NOT be beneficial to have guidelines in your around cutting athletes from sport teams?
Select all that apply.**



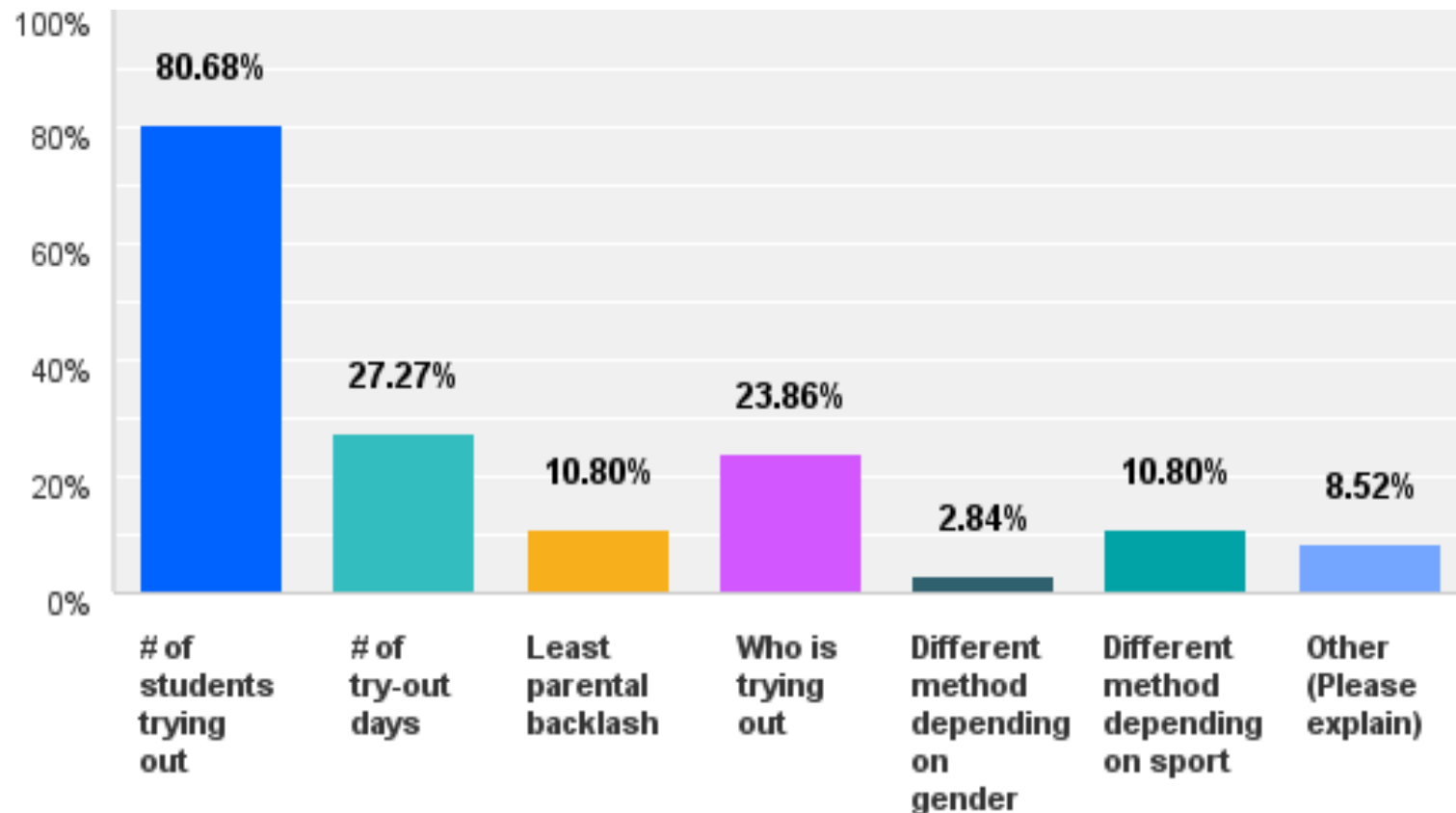
Possible Actions

What can we do to address the challenges we face in using 'best practice' cutting methods?

- Extend Try-Out Period
- Ask for Help During Try-Out Period
- Provide Written Feedback
- Who are we having face-to-face discussions with?



What influences the method in which you cut athletes from sport teams?



Support for Coaches

Desire for Support, Direction, and Flexibility

- More direction and support to ease the anxiety they felt during team try-outs
- Need for set policies and practices that are consistent across their association, known by athletes and parents, and supported by directors



Conclusions

- By implementing cutting practices that are viewed by athletes as **respectful, fair, and helpful** we can create an experience for youth that encourages future sport engagement, rather than sport discontinuation.
- **Establishing clear, consistent, and flexible policies** for cutting youth may help alleviate the stress felt by coaches and provide expectation for parents.

Recommendations

