"What's Our Olympic Legacy?": A Case Study of One Community's Efforts to Optimize Youth Sport Programming Following a Mega-Sporting Event

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ABSTRACT: *The present research was designed to identify stakeholders' perceptions of the ways Park City, Utah, has leveraged its role as a host community during the 2002 Winter Olympics to optimize youth sport programming over the subsequent two decades. Through focus groups with athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators, the present study highlights multiple factors that have impacted the experiences and outcomes associated with organized youth sport participation in Park City. Findings shed light on the role of mega-sporting events as a catalyst to shape youth sport participation.*

KEYWORDS: Olympic legacy, youth sport, community case study, thematic analysis

Mega-sporting events have been defined as "must-see" events that have over 1 million participants (e.g., athletes, volunteers, spectators, television viewers) and cost over $500 million.[1] Mega-sporting events have a transformative effect on the host community. Because hosting such events involves substantial investment on the part of local, state, and federal agencies, there has been an increasing emphasis placed on

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the legacy associated with these efforts. Scholars have long studied the impacts of mega-sporting events, while organizing committees began explicitly mentioning the consideration of legacy during the Centennial Summer Olympic Games in Atlanta in 1996.[2] Although the term itself is multifaceted and contested, sport event legacies can be thought of as the short- and long-term outcomes associated with hosting an event.[3] Preuss suggests that sport event legacies can be understood as the "planned and unplanned, positive and negative, tangible and intangible structures created for and by a sport event that remain longer than the event itself."[4] In response to a lack of consensus on how earlier research has operationalized and examined sport event legacies,[5] Preuss acknowledges the critical importance of considering *what* constitutes a legacy, *who* is affected by it and why, *how* stakeholders are impacted (i.e., positively or negatively), and *how long* legacies last.[6]

The study of legacy is important in the context of hosting an Olympic Games, as a community's ability to seek and sustain long-term benefits has become central to the decision to host or bid.[7] In examining the many aspects of an Olympic legacy, it is vital to reconsider Preuss's conceptualization of the lifespan of a sport event legacy. While much of the research on past Olympics occurred during and immediately after the games, less is known about how legacies may manifest and evolve within communities over longer periods of time. This is important because it takes several years before legacies can be fully understood.[8] In a similar vein, research indicates that the transfer of life skills from sport to other domains can occur implicitly, and may not take place until later in life.[9] For this reason, it is prudent to retrospectively consider how past Olympics have allowed individuals to develop social capital, which Putnam describes as a measure of social cohesion and the connectedness and trust among individuals, families, and communities, which ultimately benefits the efficiency of communities and societies as a whole.[10] Putnam argues that social capital is best fostered through engagement in shared interdependent activities such as sport. Further, social capital can be understood in terms of its *bridging* function, which can foster community engagement and empowerment among individuals from diverse groups and backgrounds, and its *bonding* function among people of similar ethnic and social backgrounds, sometimes reinforcing in/out-group membership and social exclusion. The accumulation of both bridging and bonding social capital is possible through involvement in organized sport,[11] and participation in youth sport is associated with greater community involvement in adulthood.[12] As such, it is sensible to further explore how Olympic legacies influence the design and delivery of youth sport programs and, in turn, the accumulation of social capital.

Although past mega-sporting events have been the focus of considerable research, there is a clear need to better understand the legacies experienced by a wider range of host communities.[13] The present research was designed to identify stakeholders' perceptions of the ways Park City, Utah, leveraged its role as a host

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community during the 2002 Winter Olympics to optimize youth sport programming over the subsequent two decades. When evaluating a legacy, it is critical to consider how stakeholders are impacted. Moreover, sport administrators, coaches, parents, and athletes were viewed as the primary gatekeepers to knowledge regarding youth sport programming in Park City. In addition to looking back at the legacies of the 2002 Games, this project also served as an initial opportunity to look forward, as key organizations and individuals within the community (e.g., the Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation, the Park City Sport and Wellness Coalition, Park City Recreation) sought to chart a course for the next decade of youth sport delivery in Park City.

Literature Review

A recent review of the growing literature on sport event legacies identified the Olympics as the most commonly studied mega-sporting event.[14] The majority of research examining Olympic legacies has examined tangible outcomes such as economic and infrastructure-related changes.[15] Indeed, the most visible aspects of Olympic legacies include the development of new venues, increased tourism, and urban planning, all of which have the potential to directly or indirectly affect youth.[16] Moreover, Olympic organizations have been able to more easily quantify these tangible components, leading to a dearth of understanding regarding the potential intangible components of Olympic legacies (i.e., enhancing beliefs and involvement in organized sport).[17]

Consideration of intangible legacies has grown in consequence, and one such legacy pertains to how Summer and Winter Olympics influence the sport participation of host communities and countries more broadly. As knowledge of the myriad benefits of sport participation has become more widespread in recent decades, organizing committees have begun to consider how mega-sporting events could be leveraged to improve the physical activity levels of their populace, particularly among younger age groups. This can be understood as a trickle-down effect where individuals are inspired by viewing elite sport (i.e., the Olympics) and are thus motivated to participate in the activity themselves.[18] The 2012 Summer Olympic Games in London provide a great example of how this trickle-down effect is espoused by organizing committees. One of the promises used to secure public support for the London Games was that they could be used to inspire British youth, and the country as a whole, to be more physically active.[19] Indeed, one of the five main commitments of the Labour Government's *Legacy Action Plan* was "to inspire a new generation of young people to take part in local volunteering, cultural, and physical activity."[20] This perspective is consistent with the commonly held notion that youth sport should be designed in ways that empower positive personal development. According to Lyras and Welty Peachey, sport for development is the "use of sport to exert a

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positive influence on public health, the socialisation of children, youth, and adults, the social inclusion of the disadvantaged, the economic development of regions and states, and on fostering intercultural exchange and conflict resolution."[21] When delivered with these ends in mind, sport has the potential to allow its many stakeholders to accumulate social capital.[22] While this perspective has intuitive appeal, there remains little causal evidence supporting it.[23] It is well documented that participation in sport can facilitate psychosocial benefits such as improved self-esteem and decreased depressive symptoms.[24] However, this process is not automatic, and sport involvement has also been associated with negative outcomes such as increased aggression and substance abuse.[25]

With few exceptions,[26] there is limited empirical evidence to suggest that the Olympic Games are successful in inspiring youth across the globe to take part in greater amounts of organized sport or physical activity beyond the years immediately following the Games. For example, findings scrutinizing the London and Vancouver Games fail to consistently link the hosting of mega-sporting events to increased levels of subsequent sport participation among youth.[27] Researchers who have critically examined the legacy of the Olympic Games highlight considerable heterogeneity in their impact on youth. For instance, some data on the London Games do support an increase in registration in nontraditional English sports such as Judo in the years leading up to and immediately following the Games.[28] This short-term increase in sport participation in the years immediately preceding and following the Olympic Games has also been observed in Lillehammer,[29] Athens,[30] and Vancouver.[31] However, research also highlights a relationship between viewing Olympic events and future intentions to *watch* sport, but not an intention to actually *participate* in sport,[32] indicating the inherent complexity in investigating this trickle-down effect and the need for future research driven by sound behavior change theory.[33]

The presence or extent of any youth sport participation legacy also appears to be influenced by several sociodemographic factors. Wicker and Sotiriadou found that ethnic minorities, females, and young people were more likely to take up a new sport following a mega-sporting event in Australia.[34] In their study on the participation legacy of the Vancouver Olympics, Potwarka and Leatherdale identified increases in sport participation among female youth who lived in close proximity to Olympic facilities.[35] Data collected just before the 2012 Summer Olympics from schools inside London revealed a wide range of positive and negative attitudes related to the Games, and sport more broadly.[36] Similarly, Mackintosh and colleagues explored the impact of the 2012 Games on families outside London and found that support for the Games and their legacy were mixed.[37] The authors noted that families' attitudes regarding London's Olympic youth sport participation legacy were shaped less by the Games themselves and more by parents' prior experiences of sport socialization.

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Overall, the literature to date suggests that hosting a Summer or Winter Olympics does not automatically facilitate a trickle-down effect of motivating new individuals to take up sport. However, when properly leveraged, the Olympics can indeed be used to increase the frequency of sport participation among physically active individuals over a relatively short period of time.[38] In light of this, there remains a specific need to identify the dynamic and context-specific mechanisms that may initiate a long-term participation legacy in Olympic host cities and communities.

Method

Research Design

The present study utilized a community case study design,[39] whereby stakeholders' perceptions of youth sport in Park City were examined. Community case studies place the community at the center of the study as the primary unit of analysis and are most appropriate for examining social phenomena in context, "especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident."[40] In line with current recommendations, qualitative methods were used to develop a rich, nuanced portrayal of the youth sport participation legacy left behind by the 2002 Winter Olympics.[41] The study was interpretive in nature, in that we sought to examine how Park City's youth athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators made sense of their experiences, and how those experiences shape and direct their present thoughts and behaviors (i.e., legacy) in Park City.

Research Setting

The present research was commissioned jointly by the Utah Olympic Park, the Park City Sport and Wellness Coalition, and Park City Recreation. These organizations sought an empirical understanding of youth sport in Park City that could guide a collective mission to optimize organized youth sport programming in the community. Park City served as a unique case for two primary reasons. First, the 2002 host community is relatively small compared to other cities and communities that have hosted mega-sporting events. The population of Park City in July 2018 was 8,504, many orders of magnitude smaller than past summer (e.g., London, population 8,982,000) and winter (e.g., Vancouver, population 675,218) Olympic host cities in which legacies have been examined. Park City played a key role as a host community in 2002, as the municipality and its neighboring communities hosted eleven of the sixteen winter sport disciplines. Second, Salt Lake City is being considered by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) as a potential host city of the 2030 or 2034 Winter Olympics.[42] Should Salt Lake City be awarded a second Games, the

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Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation expects Park City to have a similar (or expanded) role from the 2002 Winter Olympics. As a result, key stakeholders in Park City are actively considering the legacy of the 2002 Winter Olympics while actively pursuing best practice strategies toward the creation of an optimal context for the next generation of athletes in the community.

Stakeholders

In the present study, eleven athletes, ten parents, thirteen coaches, and nine administrators were recruited from recreational, competitive, and elite sport contexts in Park City. We refer to these individuals as "stakeholders" because each had a vested interest in optimizing youth sport in Park City. Stakeholders were recruited via email or phone by the third author, a sport administrator at Utah Olympic Park and an active youth sport coach in the community. Utilizing this administrator as the primary recruiter of study participants created buy-in to the purpose of the research, as this individual is well known in the Park City youth and elite sport communities. Purposeful recruitment strategies were utilized in an effort to recruit a relatively equal proportion of males (n = 21) and females (n = 22), representing the social, racial, and economic strata of the community. We also sought to recruit proportionally from recreational, competitive, and elite sport contexts across a range of sports and disciplines. Table 1 highlights the descriptive characteristics of participating stakeholders.

Data Collection

Nine focus groups were conducted in May (n = 3), July (n = 3), and November (n = 3) 2018, which were organized according to stakeholder role (i.e., athlete, parent, coach, administrator), and competitive context (i.e., recreational, competitive, and elite). A methodology utilizing focus groups was chosen to allow participating stakeholders to stimulate conversation, build upon others' experiences and anecdotes, and respectfully question each other's ideas through discussion.[43] This methodological approach was also more practical as the first and second researchers had to travel to Park City to interact with stakeholders in person.

In each focus group, stakeholders responded to questions regarding community characteristics, accessibility features, design and delivery patterns, relationship factors, and barriers to participation that may impact the optimization of organized youth sport in Park City. Further, stakeholders were asked to discuss if and how their involvement in organized youth sport led to the formation of social relationships and networks among groups of peers from similar and diverse socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds (i.e., bonding and bridging social capital). Through these focus groups, we sought to better understand individual perceptions of the youth sport participation legacy of the 2002 Winter Olympics in Park City. Importantly, focus

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TABLE 1. Descriptive Characteristics of Participating Stakeholders

Recreational (n = 15)					
Role	Sex	Age	Race	Primary Sport	Income
Athlete	Male	11	White	Baseball	——
Athlete	Male	13	White	Football	——
Athlete	Female	10	White	Volleyball	——
Athlete	Female	10	White	Soccer	——
Parent	Male	38	White	Baseball	$75,000–$99,999
Parent	Female	29	Hispanic	Running	$10,000–$24,999
Parent	Male	40	White	Alpine Skiing	$50,000–$74,999
Parent	Female	32	Hispanic	Soccer	$10,000–$24,999
Coach	Male	40	White	Soccer	——
Coach	Female	38	White	Swimming	$10,000–$24,999
Coach	Male	38	White	Snowboarding	$100,000–$149,999
Coach	Female	57	White	Ice Hockey	$150,000+
Administrator	Male	26	White	Softball	$50,000–$74,999
Administrator	Female	28	White	Soccer	$75,000–$99,999
Administrator	Female	36	White	Adaptive Skiing	$50,000–$74,999
Competitive (n = 15)					
Role	Sex	Age	Race	Primary Sport	Income
Athlete	Male	14	White	Soccer	——
Athlete	Female	13	White	Figure Skating	——
Athlete	Female	15	White	Alpine Skiing	——
Parent	Female	42	White	Alpine Skiing	$150,000+
Parent	Male	51	White	Gymnastics	$100,000–$149,999
Parent	Female	48	White	Football	$150,000+
Coach	Male	52	White	Alpine Skiing	$150,000+
Coach	Female	43	White	——	$150,000+
Coach	Male	40	White	Basketball	$100,000–$149,999
Coach	Female	68	Asian	Karate	$10,000–$24,999
Coach	Male	41	White	Basketball	——
Administrator	Male	54	White	Rowing	$50,000–$74,999
Administrator	Female	46	White	Baseball	$150,000+
Administrator	Male	47	White	HS Athletic Director	$100,000–$149,999
Administrator	Female	54	White	Soccer	$100,000–$149,999

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Elite (n = 13)					
Role	Sex	Age	Race	Primary Sport	Income
Athlete	Male	17	White	Speed Skating	——
Athlete	Male	16	White	Slopestyle Skiing	——
Athlete	Female	24	White	Adaptive Skiing	——
Athlete	Female	17	White	Alpine Skiing	——
Parent	Male	62	White	——	$25,000–$49,999
Parent	Female	48	——	Nordic Ski Jumping	$150,000+
Parent	Male	56	White	Freestyle Snowboarding	$100,000–$149,999
Coach	Male	57	White	Track and Field	$75,000–$99,999
Coach	Female	33	White	Arial Skiing	$100,000–$149,999
Coach	Male	69	White	Karate	$150,000+
Coach	Female	59	White	Karate	$100,000–$149,999
Administrator	Male	55	White	Freestyle Skiing	$75,000–$99,999
Administrator	Female	49	White	Luge	$150,000+

group questions were developed in close collaboration with the third, fourth, and fifth authors, who are key community stakeholders affiliated with the Utah Olympic Park, the Park City Sport and Wellness Coalition, and Park City Recreation. This strategy was employed in order to ensure the contextual relevance of our guiding questions to those in the Park City community.

The nine focus groups were conducted at a public recreation center in the community, lasted between sixty-three and ninety-seven minutes (M = 83.5), and were jointly conducted in English by the first and second authors. While researchers bring inherent biases to all forms of data collection and analysis, we sought to mitigate the impact of these biases in the present study. Specifically, we attempted to maximize the rigor of this research by using our participants' understandings, rather than our own, to create a robust understanding of the case (i.e., the Park City community) under investigation.[44] In addition to the prescripted questions in the focus group guide (available from the authors upon request), the first and second authors used probing questions as needed to gather additional depth of responses from stakeholders. At the end of each focus group, stakeholders were offered an opportunity to disclose (on a sheet of paper) anything they wished to share privately rather than in the focus group setting. No stakeholders took advantage of this opportunity.

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The third and fifth authors both participated (separately) in one of the nine focus groups. Given their roles in the commissioning and conceptualization of the study, and in light of their contributions to both the Olympic movement and youth sport in Park City, we viewed them as key informants. To avoid a conflict of interest, these authors did not participate in the analysis or interpretation of study data.

Data Analysis

Focus groups were audio recorded, transcribed verbatim, and cross-checked for accuracy by two trained undergraduate research assistants. Transcripts were then analyzed by the first and second author using thematic analysis.[45] An inductive analytic approach was undertaken to interpret focus group data. Specifically, raw data were interpreted based on the meanings, values, and explanations we inferred from stakeholder experiences. This interpretative process yielded the creation of descriptive themes that assisted in the grouping of stakeholder quotes.

We then organized themes within three legacies (i.e., culture, infrastructure, and accessibility) which were deemed representative of stakeholder experiences. The interpretation of raw data segments, themes, and legacies occurred by hand and all data files were managed in a shared online folder. The interpretation of data was an iterative process, whereby the first and second author engaged in a systematic and recursive process of data collection and analysis over the duration of the project. Several criteria were adopted to maximize the quality of the study, including methodological coherence, credibility (e.g., stakeholders reflected on researcher interpretations of the data), and transparency (i.e., a critical friend scrutinized the collection and analysis of the data).[46]

Results

Three broad legacies (community culture, athletic infrastructure, and accessibility to sport) were described by stakeholders as influencing youth sport in Park City since the 2002 Winter Olympics. These legacies subsume twenty-seven specific themes and are displayed in figure 1. Because considerable overlap existed across the themes (i.e., many of them informed two or more legacies), the figure depicts a Venn-type diagram showcasing the intersection of themes and legacies. In the subsequent sections, we outline the themes, situate them within and across the three overarching legacies, and share direct quotations from stakeholders to further illustrate the essence of each theme.

Legacy 1: Community Culture

Six descriptive themes illustrated stakeholders' perceptions of the ways community culture was a legacy of the 2002 Winter Olympics in Park City: (1) an Olympic

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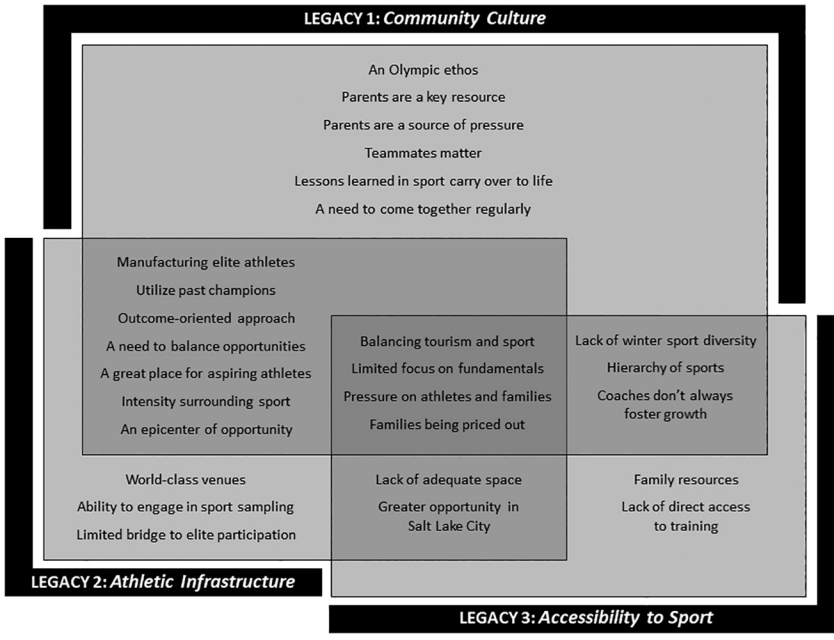
FIGURE 1. Primary youth sport participation legacies in the Park City community since the 2002 Olympics.



Ethos, (2) parents are a key resource, (3) parents are a source of pressure, (4) teammates matter, (5) sport lessons carry over to life, and (6) a need to come together regularly.

An Olympic ethos. Stakeholders described Park City's ethos as having been largely shaped by its role as a host community for the 2002 Winter Olympics. This was communicated as a primary component of the dynamic legacy left by the 2002 Games. In line with this belief, stakeholders recounted a number of ways Park City has capitalized on its role as a host community and offered others they hoped it would focus on in the future. A female elite sport athlete said, "[The Olympics] are the spirit of who Park City is at this point. It's kind of woven in the fabric of this town because it did happen here, and so many of us came here to try and capture that again."

Parents are a key resource. Athletes, coaches, and administrators all described parents as a key resource in Park City's youth sport community. In line with the community's stated goal to foster more developmentally appropriate parent involvement, a number of strategies were offered by stakeholders that could foster stronger parent-child relationships in sport. The consensus among stakeholders was that parent expectations should be managed and their goals brought into alignment with the athletes who are participating, as well as the teams and organizations that facilitate

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participation. As recalled by a female competitive sport athlete, "My mom's always at the rink when I'm training. . . . I feel like it's kind of hard sometimes. But, she's really supportive of me, and she pays for all of it. She knows what I'm capable of, and she holds me accountable."

Parents are a source of pressure. Athletes, coaches, and administrators also described Park City's sport parents as a tangible source of pressure on the youth who participate. In some cases, this was linked to the fact that many parents in Park City are relatively affluent, type-A individuals who are goal-driven high achievers. Although context specific, this may also be true of many other host cities and communities. Parents' achievement-oriented behavior was described as influencing not just their own children, but also the coaches and administrators who design and deliver youth sport in the community. A male recreational sport parent said, "Park City's an affluent community, so [parents] want their kids to excel early . . . [and] as the kids progress higher, there's the expectation that they need to be the best *now*. Parents need their kid to be the best. It's all about 'the win.'"

Teammates matter. One of the most meaningful relationships described by stakeholders was that of athletes and their peers. In fact, athletes suggested that their teammates often serve a buffering role when they are having a bad day or struggling in training or competition. Importantly, administrators and coaches sought to facilitate relationship building among the youth with whom they work, acknowledging that positive peer relationships are a primary catalyst of athletes' motivation to return in subsequent seasons. A male recreational sport administrator said, "I have one kid that just wants to show up because it's finally somewhere where she feels like she has friends. I want her on the team as much as I want somebody that that wants to go to the Olympics. I want the kids to find a home and have sport for life."

Sport lessons carry over to life. Athletes in Park City, especially those at the elite level, described the role of sport in preparing them for life. Specifically, they highlighted the many lessons they learned in sport that inform their identities as students, employees, friends, role models, and adults. In this light, youth sport in Park City was viewed by most stakeholders as a platform for children and adolescents to become better people, not just better athletes. As stated by a male elite sport athlete, "After you're done with your sport . . . the self-discipline carries over. You can discipline yourself with your eating, working out later in life. Also, just learning to how to break through that one last step of pushing yourself and not giving up. It's such a hard thing to learn, and sports just force you and push you to get there."

A need to come together regularly. One of the most salient issues discussed by stakeholders was the necessity of bringing coaches and administrators together on an annual basis. It was suggested that more communication is needed as administrators and coaches in Park City strive to develop and project a common voice. Ultimately, it is hoped that coming together on a regular basis would unite stakeholders

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across Park City's recreational, competitive, and elite sport programs. A male competitive sport coach suggested, "I think the important thing to do is try and maintain communication and keep the meetings happening. Keep people coming together. We are a small enough community that we should be able to continue on an annual basis of getting all of the people together. We really need to get everyone in the same room and have a conversation."

Legacy 2: Athletic Infrastructure

Three descriptive themes illustrated stakeholders' perceptions of the ways Park City's athletic infrastructure has become a legacy of the 2002 Winter Olympics: (1) world-class venues, (2) ability to engage in sport sampling, and (3) limited bridge to elite participation.

World-class venues. The most tangible aspect of Park City's youth sport infrastructure are the multiple venues that were created in the lead-up to the 2002 Games. One of the things that separates Park City from most other past host communities is the way that its venues have been maintained and enhanced in the almost two decades since the 2002 Games. A key player in this effort has been the Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation through its support of the Utah Olympic Park. As referenced by a male elite sport administrator, "Certainly, our legacy is in our facilities . . . in the facilities not just being built (initially) but continuing to be utilized. I think that is a huge piece of a legacy, you know. I think, um, the (Utah Olympic Legacy) foundation is the epitome of what should happen in Olympic towns. I think a lot of kids from winter sports come here because the Olympics were here and now we are producing kids that are going to that level."

Ability to engage in sport sampling. Despite the ongoing national trend toward early sport specialization, a number of stakeholders in Park City suggested that the community's infrastructure is uniquely designed for youth to sample a range of (especially winter) sports. These opportunities are bolstered by a dynamic sentiment among the community's administrators and coaches that fundamental athletic skills gained in one sport can be applied to another and last a lifetime. Stakeholders suggested that they wanted athletes to play and compete in different sport settings, for different coaches, and with different teammates. A male recreational sport administrator shared, "You're not necessarily teaching them how to hit a forehand or how to hit a backhand. You are teaching them how to have the confidence to move their body in a way, you know, that develops them for the long term. For a healthy lifestyle. I think it's easy to forget, especially as a coach or parent or administrator, you know."

Limited bridge to elite participation. Stakeholders described Park City's recreational sport opportunities for young children as top-notch. Similarly, they highlighted the obvious world-class opportunities that exist in and around Park City for

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elite athletes. The disconnect, according to stakeholders, lies in how the community fails to provide a "bridge" from recreational to elite participation. While a number of equity-based programs exist to subsidize this transition for underserved athletes, stakeholders in the community suggested that there really are not opportunities for kids to continue sampling or participating at an intermediate level as they age up. A male elite sport parent shared, "I think access is unbelievable for the *little* kids. It is just unbelievable. I mean, nothing costs anything. You can try every sport you want, it is so cool. But, it gets more expensive . . . and that is where it is hard to do for a lot of families [when the kids get older]."

Legacy 3: Accessibility to Sport

Two descriptive themes illustrated stakeholders' perceptions of the ways accessibility to sport has been shaped by Park City serving as a host community for the 2002 Winter Olympics: (1) family resources and (2) lack of direct access to training.

Family resources. Despite the opportunity to sample a broad range of sports in Park City, stakeholders were quick to note that the community's bimodal distribution of wealth and high cost of living do not allow everyone in the community to do so. Although this may be a context-specific characteristic of Park City, the pervasive caricature of local families is one with the means to spend vast amounts of time and money pursuing their children's sport interests. In reality, many families are simply trying to fit their children's youth sports into an already tight household schedule and budget. As a female elite sport parent suggested, "Accessibility is location, time, and money. The location is good here. But, not everyone has the time and money."

Lack of direct access to training. Ironically, with everything Park City has to offer, stakeholders shared a number of stories about a lack of direct access to training for aspiring athletes in the community. In many cases, this was due to a lack of available venues and the decisions clubs and organizations are forced to make to prioritize access for more elite or more well-connected teams or athletes. In this sense, access to training and venues was viewed by some members of the community as a form of social capital. As one female elite sport administrator said, "Park City has crazy resources, but it's super frustrating 'cause a couple years ago [Park City Mountain Resort] split from US Paralympics, so we can't go there anymore . . . they were like 'we have no control over them, we can't tell them to let you in.' So, yeah, it's frustrating."

Community culture + Athletic infrastructure

Seven descriptive themes illustrated stakeholders' perceptions of the ways the community culture *and* athletic infrastructure have combined to shape the optimization of youth sport in Park City since the 2002 Winter Olympics: (1) manufacturing elite athletes, (2) utilize past champions, (3) outcome-oriented approach, (4) a need to

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balance opportunities, (5) a great place for aspiring athletes, (6) intensity surrounding sport, and (7) an epicenter of opportunity.

Manufacturing elite athletes. At the recreational and competitive levels, stakeholders describe a desire to develop better all-around athletes, rather than elite, single-sport superstars. However, they also warned that this ideal is often thwarted by coaches' and or families' goals to manufacture elite performers at early ages. As noted by a male competitive sport coach, "No matter what level we're at, the philosophy always should be 'athlete first, soccer player second,' or 'athlete first, basketball player second.' We are missing the boat when we are putting younger kids into (elite) sports and not letting them experience that full gamut of movement skills."

Utilize past champions. Stakeholders were nearly unanimous in the belief that Park City could be more dynamic in the way it utilizes its past champions (i.e., collegiate athletes, Olympians, professional athletes) to serve as ambassadors for youth sport. While acknowledging the many requests of these athletes for their time and expertise, stakeholders also recognized the role they could play in bringing along the next generation of young athletes in the community. As noted by a female elite sport administrator, "It's about the accessibility to the elite athletes. I think we could utilize them more than we are as resources, mentors, and role models to our (young) athletes. We need to use them as motivation, 'How hard did they have to work? What did they do? How did they get to their dreams?'"

Outcome-oriented approach. Stakeholders described the design and delivery of youth sport in Park City as being driven by adults' outcome-oriented approach. This, in turn, has led to a tracking of athletes into sports for which they show early promise. A number of coaches and administrators shared unmitigated angst about this, suggesting that the athletes, and therefore the broader community, would be better off if adults were able to let go of its win-now environment, allowing youth more room for sport sampling, skill development, and exploration. As noted by a female recreational sport administrator, "The all-or-none mentality gets old. [Kids] don't wanna sign up for three months' worth of swimming 'cause they're not sure. 'Bring 'em *one* day. We'll play a game and we'll have a good time. We'll teach 'em a couple things. If they like it, they'll sign up on their way out.' Having a trial period would be good for a lot of kids before making that huge financial commitment."

A need to balance opportunities. Park City was described as a community with a lot to offer in terms of youth sport. In fact, many stakeholders shared knowledge of families who had moved to Park City specifically to enhance their children's athletic opportunities. In most cases, these families had children pursuing elite status in winter sports, but other adults suggested that families also come to Park City to partake in the community's overall *sporty* and *outdoorsy* vibe. This competition for opportunity and resources has left some children and families on the outside looking in. As one male elite sport administrator noted, "We're a place that people want

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to be, and if they're moving here, usually they've got some pretty high expectations. And we need to try to balance that with kids coming up through the community."

A great place for aspiring athletes. Park City was described as a friendly and encouraging place to be an aspiring athlete. This feeling included both the general population of residents, as well as the parents, coaches, and administrators that are actively engaged in youth sport at the community level. Of specific note were feelings among athletes (across all levels) of compassion and understanding, as well as the kind and accommodating engagement of parents, coaches, and administrators in the community. As one male elite sport athlete shared, "The actual organization for my sport isn't as strong as it could be. But the *people* who are in the organization I give so much credit to for getting me to where I am today. We have some of the best coaches . . . 'cause they've they all had the experience and they all know what to do to like get us prepared for like World Cups and . . . for the next four years."

Intensity surrounding sport. At its core, Park City was described as a competitive community that prides itself on excellence and high achievement. This philosophy trickles down to youth sport, as many children feel pressure to achieve elite status early in their development. Administrators and coaches who value their athletes' overall development seemed to struggle with this but described being tugged by the inertia of a dynamic high-performance sporting community. As a competitive female sport administrator reflected, "There is an overall level of intensity in this community in terms of athletics. You know, we are generating Olympic medalists out of this community that rival *countries*. . . . And that just elevates expectations for everyone."

An epicenter of opportunity. In many ways, Park City is most unique at the intersection of its culture and infrastructure. Indeed, the community is an epicenter of sport opportunity, especially for aspiring winter sport athletes in the United States. The range of athletic options provides opportunities for youth to explore various sports and activities and ultimately settle on a passion in ways other communities could not afford. A male elite sport athlete put it this way: "In Park City, you grow up doing it, and you find that love for it. . . . It just begins so early. I've done a lot of other sports. I played soccer, and I ski jumped for a little bit, and I finally got into a program that allowed me to skate and I just fell in love with the sport. I believe in this community we have that ability to, like, find like what we want to do. We have tons of options. And I believe just finding what you love is really just like exploring your options when you're younger." Although this speaks to context specificity, this theme likely exists in other areas that have been host cities or host communities for past Winter Olympics.

Athletic infrastructure + Accessibility to sport

Two descriptive themes illustrated stakeholders' perceptions of the ways athletic infrastructure *and* accessibility to sport have combined to shape youth sport in Park

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City since the 2002 Winter Olympics: (1) lack of adequate space and (2) greater opportunity in Salt Lake City.

Lack of adequate space. Despite the community's world-class infrastructure, it is still a small town with limited space and resources to accommodate its growing needs. Stakeholders struggled with this dialectic and hoped to see more venues, resources, and opportunities added without the population growth that might necessitate such additions. Specifically, administrators at the competitive level felt "squeezed" as they attempted to balance equitable access with the performance of higher-level teams and athletes. Coaches, parents, and athletes also felt the pinch, with many wondering how the community would ever be able to offer youth the time and space to be competitive at a local, regional, or national level. As noted by a female recreational sport administrator, "We have everything in this town, just not enough of it. I want another pool, there's somebody who wants another ice rink, there's people who want more baseball fields, more soccer fields, more ski runs. That's the hot topic here in Park City, the infrastructure. We're always fighting over facilities."

Greater opportunity in Salt Lake City. Youth sport stakeholders in Park City also described the lure of Salt Lake City (a larger metropolitan center twenty-five miles away, and host city of the 2002 games) as impacting the community's youth sport culture. Largely, this was driven by sport administrators, who described how some Park City families see greater opportunity for training or competition (depending on the sport) in Salt Lake City. The effect of this trend has been less community cohesiveness, something that has impacted Park City primarily at the recreational and competitive levels. As noted by a female competitive sport administrator: "The top-level kids are lured by clubs in Salt Lake, and they don't have that synergy of having grown up in the same system by the time they get to high school (in Park City). And we see the difference in our results."

Accessibility to sport + Community culture

Three descriptive themes illustrated stakeholders' perceptions of the ways accessibility to sport *and* community culture have combined to shape youth sport in Park City since the 2002 Winter Olympics: (1) lack of winter sport diversity, (2) hierarchy of sports, and (3) coaches do not always foster growth.

Lack of winter sport diversity. Stakeholders were keenly aware that winter sports in Park City lack diversity. Although many community initiatives are in place to introduce young people of disparate racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds to sports like skiing and snowboarding, there appears to be a lack of follow-through as athletes' abilities increase. We interpreted this as largely due to the financial and time constraints experienced by many families in Park City as well as potential language barriers among non-English-speaking families. A male recreational sport parent joked "It's all Gringos in skiing and snowboarding," a claim that

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was supported by a female recreational sport administrator, who shared, "It's like the *whitest* sports here." Although stakeholders were driven by a goal of social equity in the Park City youth sport community, it became evident that there is a long way to go to achieve this aim. Although a number of programs and initiatives are in place to advance opportunities for underserved families and youth, city leaders, sport administrators, and coaches seem to struggle translating this into sport initiation and continuation among minority populations.

Hierarchy of sports. Stakeholders were somewhat self-effacing regarding the hierarchy of sports that exists in Park City. In many respects, it is hard-wired into the genetic code of Park City to focus on, and value, winter sports above all else. At the same time, however, coaches and administrators see the potential for making Park City a year-round center of recreational, competitive, and elite sport for a wide range of athletes. As suggested by a male elite sport coach, "We really haven't gone after some of the summer athletes to get them up here. We need to try to use the aura of the Olympics to try to continue with that growth of being a well-rounded sports community. You've gotta try to build the *whole* place. We have to use the ski industry as, you know, the base."

Coaches do not always foster growth. Athletes, parents, and administrators were collectively pleased with the level of technical coaching youth receive in Park City. However, despite coaches' technical knowledge, many athletes suggested that the methods adopted by coaches were not always conducive to mental and emotional development. As noted by a male competitive sport athlete, "Coaches need to be positive. Helping you, like, build you up, and helping you, like, gain more confidence. Or even tell you, like, what you need to work on, and help you with that. Positive things could come out of advice or just even words of positivity."

Community culture + Athletic infrastructure + Accessibility to sport

Four descriptive themes illustrated stakeholders' perceptions of the ways community culture, athletic infrastructure, and accessibility to sport all combined to shape youth sport in Park City since the 2002 Winter Olympics: (1) balancing tourism and sport, (2) limited focus on fundamentals, (3) pressure on athletes and families, and (4) families being priced out.

Balancing tourism and sport. Coaches and administrators described Park City's Olympic legacy as having two masters: tourism and sport. Indeed, it is sport (more specifically the 2002 Winter Olympics) that brings tourists to Park City; however, it is also the tourism revenue that supports the maintenance and upgrades of the community's athletic infrastructure. Key stakeholders in the community recognize this dynamic reciprocity but also struggle with how best to balance the needs of tourists with those of the athletes who are training with an eye toward future Olympic cycles. As shared by a male elite sport administrator, "The Utah Olympic Park and its

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legacy are dedicated to providing training opportunities not only for Olympic-bound athletes but local youngsters. Keeping these activities affordable and maintaining the facilities is a balancing act. Tourism and the dollars generated at the [Utah Olympic] Park are an integral part of keeping these facilities open and updated. Many times, staff have to look at how to maximize the use of the facilities for visitors and athletes, but we always keep the athlete experience first. The staff work hand in hand with coaches to ensure all levels of athletes have the training opportunities needed."

Limited focus on fundamentals. Blinded by a race to the top, stakeholders suggested that youth are missing opportunities to learn fundamental skills that provide the foundation for future athletic successes. Administrators and coaches acknowledged the importance of foundational athletic skills but also suggested that outcome-related pressures and time and space constraints keep them from implementing more fundamental skill learning into their training schedules. As a male elite sport administrator shared, "Kids need fundamentals. I mean [the US Ski and Snowboard Association] constantly talks about it and they look at our skiers they're like, 'jeez, there's no fundamentals.' Fundamentals are very important at those younger ages—they've gotta learn those [basic] motor skills younger, and we need to continue to do fundamentals all the way through."

Pressures on athletes and families. Tied to a number of concerns in the community, parents, coaches, and administrators all acknowledged the many pressures on athletes and families to pursue an elite developmental pathway. In some ways, key stakeholders in the community have thrown their hands up and accepted this as "the way it is" in Park City; however, many also continue to offer resistance via their own engagement as administrators, coaches, or parents. As noted by a female competitive sport parent, "Kids are starting to specialize younger and younger and younger. There's a push to be good at something super young so you have that chance to be an Olympian or go to college. It's just becoming more and more competitive, so they're just not *playing*."

Families being priced out. Although many families are able to afford sport sampling opportunities when their children are young, those same families described being priced out as their children aged up into more competitive levels of participation. This creates a burden on most families in the community and in some cases forces families to have their children choose just one or two sports in which to participate. A male recreational sport parent suggested: "The financial burden is huge. We see kids who would be awesome moving from rec into comp, and the finances are too much [for the family]. I think finance is a key element of what is stopping some people from continuing on." A male recreational sport parent concurred, "We only have two kids and we can't even afford to put our daughter into any more programs, let alone the commitment of time. . . . It's such a heavy burden financially for families. It's really, really challenging."

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Discussion

The present research was designed to identify stakeholders' perceptions of the ways Park City has leveraged its role as a host community during the 2002 Winter Olympics to optimize youth sport programming over the subsequent two decades. These included community characteristics, accessibility features, design and delivery patterns, relationship factors, and barriers to participation. In addition to looking back at these potential dynamic and context-specific legacies of the 2002 Games, this project also served as an initial opportunity to look forward, as key organizations and individuals within the community sought to chart a course for the next decade of youth sport design and delivery in Park City.

Our research extends present knowledge of the long-term youth sport participation legacies associated with hosting an Olympic Games. First, by adopting a community case study design, we have developed an in-depth understanding of how the Olympics have impacted a generation of young athletes in one small, winter-sport-dominated context. To date, most previous studies have been designed to investigate Olympic (mostly tangible) legacies in large cities in the years immediately following the Olympics.[47] Inspired by Ritchie, our research provides dynamic evidence of how specific youth sport participation legacies of the 2002 Games have evolved in Park City across a sixteen-year period of time.[48] This elapsed time has allowed a generation of young athletes to become integrated into a dynamic system of youth sport that, in part, is a result of an Olympics for which many of them were not alive. The longer-term focus of the present study also helps to address previous questions raised regarding the lifespan of Olympic legacies.[49] Specifically, it is apparent that the legacy of the 2002 Olympics in Park City will far exceed the sixteen-year period that was examined in this study. It also extends our understanding of sport event legacies by highlighting how legacies can sometimes be multigenerational, as the Utah Olympic Legacy Foundation hopes to use this study to better understand the legacy of the 2002 Games as it considers future Olympic bids and the potential legacies of hosting a Winter Olympics in the future. This can be considered an example of what Preuss considers a "latent legacy" in that the legacy of the 2002 Games has created advantageous opportunities that can be seized by the organizing committee in bidding to host future Winter Olympics (and legacy planning).[50]

Second, by examining the ways the 2002 Olympics impacted youth in Park City, we shed further light on the oft-espoused belief that mega-sporting events can be used as a catalyst to increase levels of participation in sport and physical activity.[51] By drawing upon empirical data derived from focus groups with current athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators, we constructed a nuanced portrayal of how serving as a host community for the 2002 Winter Olympic Games impacted the way youth sport is presently enacted in Park City.

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Past research suggests that legacies should be intentionally planned and worked toward before, during, and after an Olympics, and that host cities need to make a more concerted effort in that regard.[52] Moreover, in recent public statements, the IOC has urged applicant cities to consider the short- and long-term implications of their bids.[53] In line with this sentiment, a sharper understanding of the long-term legacy of the 2002 Games on youth has the potential to foster reflection and a template for those charged with drafting Salt Lake City's bid to become the host city for the 2030 or 2034 Games. As such, our research has not only contributed to the academic knowledge base but may also prove useful for these and other future stakeholders interested in optimizing Olympic legacies. Quite simply, a deeper understanding of the youth sport participation legacy of the 2002 Games should enable future bid committees to position themselves in a way to maximize the long-term benefits and legacies of future Olympics as they pertain to youth, families, and communities. This is a valuable contribution in light of McIntosh's position that the Olympic bid process should serve as the foundation for purposeful legacy development.[54]

The present study highlights that the tangible youth sport-related legacies of these Games have led to other unexpected intangible legacies in terms of social capital. Specifically, the sporting venues that were built for the 2002 Winter Olympics have led to the accumulation of bridging social capital, thus galvanizing the community's identity around high-performance sport. However, this has also led to increased bonding social capital marked by changes in the community's socioeconomic structure and higher levels of social exclusion in certain youth sports. In other words, the legacy of the Games served as a catalyst for the accumulation of social capital among a large proportion of the community, serving to increase social cohesion and support among local athletes. However, this reinforcement of the community's high-performance, pay-to-play sport mentality has also brought to light the "dark side of social capital," in that it has seemingly increased social inequality and made sport participation (and by extension, the accumulation of social capital) less accessible for a portion of the population.[55] These findings echo past research conducted in rural Australia, which found that while competitive sport generally served to build social capital in the local community, there was also evidence of this so-called dark side in terms of social exclusion based on class, ethnicity, and gender.[56] In spite of these potential dark sides, it is important to recall Putnam's view that social capital should ultimately be viewed as a positive individual and collective resource. To that end, sport stakeholders should intentionally consider how both bridging and bonding social capital is created such that entire communities are able to enjoy the social benefits of organized sport. Altogether, this study highlights the often complex, positive and negative nature of mega-sporting event legacies, which are characterized by intangible factors that are highly valued by local communities.[57]

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In light of the belief among the vast majority of stakeholders that sport should be made accessible to all, it is important that key stakeholders prioritize the development of physical literacy and life skills and embrace multi-sport participation. Despite this, Park City's high-performance culture, growing population, and limited venues often lead sport organizations to adopt a pay-to-play mentality and encourage early sport specialization. While some of these factors may be specific to Park City, they mirror a broader shift in the United States toward the professionalization of youth sport and early sport specialization.[58] Nevertheless, this apparent conflict between idealized perspectives about youth sport and the reality of implementing and sustaining sport programming underscores the importance of considering how youth development through sport actually occurs in Park City. Importantly, this study draws attention to the need for stakeholders to come together and develop and enact a coherent community mission statement and strategy for youth sport programming.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite the contributions made by this community case study, certain limitations should be acknowledged and addressed by continued research. First, stakeholders in the present study were drawn from a sample of athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators who were known to a single sport administrator in Park City. Despite an effort to recruit a representative sample, this individual encountered difficulty in recruiting stakeholders from the local Hispanic community. Therefore, our data may over-represent the perspectives of "like-minded" individuals who already interact somewhat regularly across a number of youth sport settings. Because individuals have the potential to possess a wide range of perspectives on factors that may shape organized youth sport programming in the community, researchers should design studies to sample individuals across a range of sectors. In addition to seeking the perspectives of minority stakeholders, future research could also include former Olympians, members of host cities' or host countries' Olympic committees, current or former politicians, historians, and past or present members of the media. These perspectives could further triangulate understanding of a range of Olympic legacies in past host cities and communities.

Second, although data from the present research aligns in many ways with past research on Olympic legacies,[59] more work is needed to situate the Park City community in the broader context of the Olympic movement. For example, it is plausible that community characteristics, accessibility features, design and delivery patterns, relationship factors, and barriers to participation that may impact organized youth sport in Park City are not the same as those that affect larger or more culturally diverse host cities such as London or Vancouver. Moreover, there may be something unique

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about hosting a winter (as opposed to summer) Games. To address these factors, a multiple case study design[60] could be employed, whereby the legacies of a number of Olympic Games would be concurrently examined to develop a rich, nuanced portrayal of the youth sport participation legacies left behind in each host city. To bolster this work, relevant media, policy, contractual, and historical documents from online archives and physical collections could be examined in sharpen present understanding of what constitutes an Olympic legacy, to determine how youth are affected by a Games and why, and to better document how long legacies last.[61]

A final limitation has to do with the ambiguous way "legacy" has been defined and understood in the mega-sporting event literature. What constitutes a legacy can be understood in many ways, but has traditionally been conceptualized as the *positive* outcomes that result from serving as a host city/community.[62] Negative outcomes can also result from the hosting of mega-sporting events, including debt linked to construction costs and the production of the event, the maintenance of infrastructure during and after the event, and the strain on local resources such as transportation, housing, and service.[63] Future research should examine these and other issues in the context of hosting a Winter Olympics. This work should also investigate different aspects of legacy, including the cultural, economic, environmental, political, and social implications of hosting a mega-sporting event. Importantly, these legacies are distinct, but not mutually exclusive.[64]

Conclusion

The Olympics have been identified as a mega-sporting event with the power to mobilize and motivate youth to take part in sport and physical activity. However, research has yet to identify the dynamic and context-specific mechanisms that may foster a participation legacy for youth in small Winter Olympic host communities. In light of this, the present research was designed to identify stakeholders' perceptions of the ways Park City has leveraged its role as a host community during the 2002 Winter Olympics to optimize youth sport programming over the subsequent two decades. Overall, findings support the belief that mega sporting events shape how sport, physical activity, and recreation are experienced in a small, winter-sport-focused community. Our research also offers clues as to the potential mechanisms that have initiated a youth sport participation legacy in Park City. Results suggest that a purposeful approach to community development, an emphasis on accessibility, strengthening the design and delivery of sport, building strong relationships among athletes, parents, coaches, and administrators, and overcoming barriers to youth's participation has the potential to maximize the positive legacy of mega sporting events such as the Olympic Games.

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