Significance of the Topic to Sport Management
Although successful brand extensions can have a positive influence on its parent brand, failure of brand extensions can also harm the parent brand’s image and reputation, (Carter & Curry, 2013). According to Tait (2001), the failure rate of brand extensions can be as high as 84 percent as evidenced by Nike’s recent announcement of ceasing its Golf line. This news contrasts to a common belief that Nike has potential to succeed in brand extensions because of Nike’s strong brand equity and positive attributes (e.g., Lee et al., 2015; Walsh et al., 2014). Relatively, examining brand extension evaluation from consumer perspectives is crucial for brand managers to maximize the success rate and to minimize the failure rate of brand extensions. In this case study, two competing extension brands (i.e., Nike Golf and TaylorMade Golf) will be conceptually (empirically when data collection is complete in the Spring of 2017) examined to the extent how perceived quality (PQ) of a parent brand, perceived fit (PF), and brand authenticity (BA) have influence on consumer evaluation on brand extensions.

To justify needs for the study, I have reviewed the majority of recent (post 1990) sport management journals on brand extension and evaluation and realized that brand extension research in sport manufacture brand is extremely scarce. Substantial research in non-sport context has constantly offered views on antecedents and consequences of parent brand evaluation and its subsequent effect on extension brand evaluations.

Review of Relevant Literature
Brand extension refers to the use of a well-established parent brand name to introduce a new product (Aaker, 1996). Researchers often claim that successful brand extensions can generate a favorable evaluation for their parent brands (Chun et al., 2015). In addition, because cost to launch a new brand in a marketplace is estimated at around $150 million (Tauber, 1988), many firms utilize brand extension as a key marketing strategy that can decrease the initial cost for distribution and promotion of extension products (Aaker & Keller, 1990).

The existing literature indicated that both PQ of (parent) brand and PF between the parent brand and an extension brand/product play a pivotal role in consumer evaluation on extended brands/products (Bottomley & Holden, 2001; Park et al., 1991). PQ is defined by Zeithaml (1988) as an overall assessment of consumers’ judgment as to the superiority or excellence of a product. Previous brand extension literature has shown that brand extension is more positively evaluated by consumers when the PQ of the parent brand is positive (Bottomley & Holden, 2001). The PF is defined as the extent to which “the image and associations linked to the parent brand and the extension product are similar and go well with the extension product” (Chun et al., 2015, p. 578). These studies suggest that consumers evaluate brand extensions more favorably when the fit between a parent brand and an extension brand/product is favorable (Walsh et al., 2014). Poor of PF, in contrast, often influence consumers to recognize the extension product unfavorably even if parent brands are perceived as high quality (Dens & Pelsmacker, 2016).

Further, more recent marketing literature have paid ample attention to the role of BA. Beverland (2005) among others indicated that BA is key to consumer perception on brand status and reputation for firms. Eggers et al. (2012), for example, found that BA has a significant influence on brand trust, which was a major antecedent to brand extension evaluation. Therefore, examining the role of BA in brand extension evaluation can warrant more effective branding tactics for practitioners.

Theoretical Framework and Purpose of the Study
The conceptual foundation for this case study uses categorization theory indicating that consumers classify new extension products into different cognitive categories (Aaker & Keller, 1990). This theory implies that if consumers
cognitively classify an extension product and the parent brand into the same (or similar) category in their mind, the extended product is more likely to be positively evaluated by the consumers (Boush & Loken, 1991).

Thus, this case study proposes a conceptual framework that consists of PQ (of parent brand), PF (between the parent brand and its extension brand/product), and BA of extended brand/product, and their subsequent impact on consumer evaluation of extension brand/product. Upon data collection in the spring of 2017, this proposed model will be empirically examined using confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) and structural equation modeling (SEM).

Methodology and Data Analysis
Nike and Adidas were chosen as two testing brands for two reasons. First, they are real industry brands with varying levels of success. Second, both brands have launched extension brands: Nike (parent brand) and Nike Golf (extension brand), Adidas (parent brand) and TaylorMade Golf (extension brand). To test hypothesized relationships in the model, four aspects will be assessed using existing scales: (1) perceived quality of parent brand (Nike vs. Adidas); (2) perceived fit (Nike and Nike Golf vs. Adidas and TaylorMade Golf); (3) brand extension authenticity (i.e., brand standard/style; brand heritage; brand essence; and brand exploitation); and (4) extended brand evaluation (Nike Golf vs. TaylorMade Golf). To minimize the effect of brand/product knowledge on question items, a brief statement (e.g., brand ownerships) will be placed at the very beginning of each survey. Upon IRB approval, we aim to survey 400-500 recreation golfers from five to six local golf courses throughout the Houston area. The target population consists of recreation golfers who are 18 years of age or older. The questionnaire will consist of items adopted from previous studies (i.e., Bridges et al., 2000; Buil et al., 2009; Hem et al., 2013; Martinez & Pina, 2010; Spiggle et al., 2010; Volckner & Sattler, 2006).

Discussion/Contribution to the Body of Knowledge
This case study proposes a framework for consumer evaluation on extension brands using real industry brands. Our model illustrates structural relationships among perceived quality, perceived fit, brand authenticity, and consumer evaluation on (parent and extended) brand. Empirical examination of this model will further provide evidence for these hypothesized relationships that the current literature is surprisingly lacking. This type of research findings can provide practical suggestions to brand managers. Pertaining to branding research in the sport context, many studies have extended the concept of branding to team brand context. However, to our knowledge, no empirical research has been offered that examine consumer brand evaluation using real industry sport brands. This case study will thus add more insights to the literature. Additionally, findings in this case study can provide brand managers with valuable information that can increase the success rate while minimizing brand extension failures. It is worth noting that findings in this case study may broaden our view on consumer evaluation of brand extensions if we find results that is different than a conventional wisdom of better chance for success in brand extensions when parent brands are highly reputable.