

EVALUATING HIGH SCHOOL ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION ADMINISTRATORS'
PERCEPTIONS OF SPORTSMANSHIP

by

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ABSTRACT

With proper education, sport has the ability to build character, create teamwork, be a positive influence, and change lives. As high school athletic associations across the country expand in size and scope challenges related to sportsmanship have grown exponentially. A lack of educational funding for sportsmanship, shortage of training for officials and coaches and new sponsorship opportunities has high school sports in the United States at a crossroads. One critical question addressed is how sportsmanship is being perceived, developed, implemented and managed in high school athletic associations and the states they govern. Participants consisted of ($n = 50$) representing each state high school athletic association in the United States. Conclusion: at present, it is highly likely the current level of education, training, funding, and lack of unified sportsmanship policy is insufficient in creating opportunities for coaches and athletes to value and display sportsmanship at the high school level in the United States.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

With the proper education, training, funding and policy sport has the ability to build character, create teamwork, be a positive influence, and change lives. Yet, the traditional perception of sportsmanship within high school coaches and athletes is being challenged at all levels (Leavens, 2002). Sportsmanship is a behavioral concept worth exploration because of the seeming disconnect between the understanding of the concept and the implementation of its development in high school athletic associations. As high school athletic associations across the country expand in size and scope challenges to sportsmanship have grown exponentially. In many cases undefined values and policy have led to behavior problems by coaches, athletes, and fans. A lack of educational funding for sportsmanship, shortage of training for officials and coaches, new sponsorship opportunities, and no unified policy has high school sports in the United States at a crossroads.

Gentlemen's Sports

Undergirding the operations of sport in the schools is the idea that participating in sport will promote sportsmanship, a component of citizenship. Sportsmanship in this study is understood to be a behavior that is essential to positive school sports and a characteristic of sport that must be integral to the culture. Cultural knowledge encompasses the attitudes, beliefs, and values held by a community that individuals socially learn (Blanchard & Cheska, 1984). Cultural knowledge for sport in the context of sportsmanship is the attitude for how sportsmanship is displayed on the field, the belief

to which it is held true by the participants, and the value to which it given by all in the world of sport involved.

The context for the term values in the world of sport continues to become a topic for debate. The term of values leads to this debate as they are never true or false rather, values are always assigned (Leonard, 1996). For example, the term “values” has several different meanings. Values can be defined as the worth or value a person ascribes to a particular object, phenomenon, or behavior (Leonard, 1996). This aspect may be seen as they range from acceptance to commitment given the context of the perceived value. The basis for this belief stems from the internalization of a set of core values as a learner’s behavior becomes identifiable with the context (Bloom, Engelhart, Furst, Hill, & Krathwohl, 1956).

Concurrently, creating a set of values leads to systems of action that define outcomes in ideas, decisions, and are a prelude to acceptable behavior. Valuing is also sensitive towards individual and cultural differences and it proposes a plan to social improvement and follows through with commitment (Bloom et al., 1956). The concept of valuing is relevant to the concept of learning as it allows those who engage in acquiring new knowledge and skill sets to balance concepts, problem solving, and commitment. From an awareness of this aspect one is capable of achieving cultural knowledge, values, and morals to alter one’s personal and social worlds (Peirce, 1995).

Values manifest within organizations and people many different ways. To see the impact an organization and people must discover their call to purpose, what action needs to be taken, and the truth of self-identity. Once truth is found, then both individual and

organizations can create a value structure that will allow the organization to grow with purpose. Concurrently, creating a set of values leads to systems of action that define outcomes in ideas, decisions, and are a prelude to acceptable behavior.

Applied to this argument, high school athletic associations should seek to understand this process in order to create a set of values that ask members (coaches, teachers, parents, and athletes) to operate within. These values should be determined in order to develop a philosophy that provides a course of action for the organization. Conti (2007) found that it may be assumed there is a direct association between philosophical beliefs and professional practices. This has led to a shift from playing gentlemen's sports to a more modern approach of sport. This is especially true in the high school sport setting as personal beliefs collide with professional goals with each competition. Therefore, high school athletic associations as organizations should define their values, provide directions for their leaders, and create a call to action for its participants to their principle outcomes. Further understanding of sport behaviors and patterns will allow administrators to examine what they are teaching regarding sportsmanship and observe how their culture is evolving.

Modern Sports

The evolving culture of sport in high school athletic associations in the United States can be characterized by the components of "modern sport." Adelman (1986) described six characteristics that are commonplace for modern ideal sport types seen as:

1. Modern sport has led to organization and form structure at the local, regional, and national levels

2. Rules have become standardized, written, and pragmatically implemented
3. Competition has reached national, international, and local levels
4. Role differentiation has created distinctions between professionals and those that are spectators
5. Public information newspapers, internet, magazines
6. Statistics and record keeping measures of achievement.

Each one of Adelman's characteristics plays a role in the culture of high school sport becoming professional in nature. Widespread desire for sport within American culture has led sport to be commonly integrated with education leading high schools and collegiate institutions to organize and promote sport that is "modern." In other words, the tendencies to continually refine the organizations and rules that govern sport, is to "nationalize" it rather than keep it at the local level, to continually publicize it, make school based sports more and more "professional" in nature.

The problem, then, is that the implicit set of values that sport organizations purport to have their athletes live comes in conflict with the tendency of sports in our time to be "modern." That is, organizations hope to be national, have written rules, athletes who are highly specialized, competitions that are national, statistics and records that are ever improving, and ways of disseminating these experiences that tend to be entertaining. All of these characteristics can, but not necessarily will turn the sport experience into one that is professional in nature and which does not appreciate sportsmanship. If, for instance, winning becomes more important than building character, then it is possible, or even likely, that the organizations will choose winning.

The popularity of winning is where attitudes and beliefs for high school sports begin to mesh into the idea of becoming professional sports and this has resulted in a “collision of cultures.”

A Collision of Cultures

The term of “mediasport” has spurred the transformation of culture into youth athletics reaching professional sport standards (Blain, 2002). “Mediasport” suggests that a variety of relationships different sports have with media culture like television and the internet have created a complex and dynamic process that continue to further the perception of youth sports as “professional sports” (Blain, 2002). This type of attitude and belief system can be found in everyday and recent media coverage.

The commercialization of high school sport is perfectly illustrated by Yahoo! Sports news coverage of an eighth grader that won a high school dunk competition because of his talent of doing a 360-degree dunk (Smith, 2011). Similarly, in the race to become “professional sports,” Red Lion Christian Academy in Delaware made headlines when a 13-year-old student committed to play football at the University of Southern California in five years (Tresolini, 2010). The head coach at the time, Eric Day, formerly a coach at Delaware State University, claimed that he wanted to have a nationally recognized program within the next four years (Tresolini, 2010). This thought process illustrates how high school sport has transformed into a “win at all costs” model, and Adelman’s criteria of “modern” sport explain the cultural pressure to continually reform school sport to mirror its professional counterparts.

The “win at all costs” attitude prevalent in high schools, colleges, and professional sports affects youth athletes (Blankenship, 2011). Dr. Bruce B. Svare, the director the National Institute for Sports Reform, states that: “Leagues that try to teach parents ethics and good sportsmanship are wasting their time until they deal with the real problem, and that is dialing back on our win at all costs sports culture” (Garber, 2006). Similarly, sport psychologist Dr. Casey Cooper, believes that the “win at all cost mentality” has eroded the physical and social benefits of participating in sport (Cooper, 2008). This attitude is directed by coaches, administrators, and parents as Dr. Jeanine DeLay, a board member of The Academy for Sport Leadership, affirmed: “Kids need to have fun... But adults – coaches, league administrators, etc. – won’t let this happen because their own needs get in the way” (Garber, 2006).

The collision of cultures has led sportsmanship in high school athletics to become blurry. Today, the sportsmanship epidemic is not just about negative behaviors; rather a disconnect between what the organization (high school athletic associations) claims are values and the behavior of athletes, coaches, and spectators. Values for high school athletes shaped by lessons learned in sport affect behaviors in adult life (Blankenship, 2011). High school athletics has taken new identity by becoming a phenomenon of competing values where participants and spectators live through and perform in the context of sport.

Influencing the Collision of Cultures

In an effort to influence the collision of cultures positively the National Association for Sport and Physical Education Youth Sport Coalition has created a set of rights to

meant to apply to all sport and physical activity programs that involve youth athletes. These rights include: participate in sports, participate at a level for each child's ability, have adult leadership provided, play as a child and not an adult, share in the leadership, participate in safe and healthy environments, proper preparation for participation, be treated with dignity, and have fun in sports (Siedentop, 2009). These characteristics, as opposed to Adelman's reflect a different set of cultural norms: that sport can exist to build for "character" rather than have it reflect a set of modern characteristics.

It should also be noted, previous research has indicated that sport programs can have a positive impact on sportsmanship if planned appropriately (Chelladurai, 2009). Gano-Overway (1999) discovered that sportsmanship principles are learned through the composition of sport developed by the community, administrators, and coaches. Accordingly, values by these groups are entrenched into the subtext of behavior for sportsmanship in high school sports. The fostering of sportsmanship is a process that should be inherently communicative and endorsed through understanding as Kassing and Barber (1997) found that communication and sportsmanship is connected. Thus, a renewal of sportsmanship for all participants in athletic endeavors must be delivered through a communicative system to reestablish values to meet behavior that promote sportsmanship. This may be accomplished through the development of systematic sportsmanship report card.

Creating a Report Card to Provide Focus, Clarity, and Direction for Sportsmanship

One way to assess how well school districts teach for sportsmanship is to measure it through the use of report cards. A recent commissioner of the National Center for

Education Statistics noted that report cards may verify certain precedents over time that will allow for progress and regression to be evaluated (U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research, 1998). Comparative report cards among states also garner the interest and attention of both policymakers and the public as they establish benchmarks for performance (Gormley & Weimer, 1999). A report card that measures low levels of performance is likely to create extensive interest among policymakers (Gormley & Weimer, 1999). A key attribute to report cards is for their ability to call for both top-down and bottom-up accountability (The National Center for Public Policy and Higher Education, 2000). Further, the idea of a report card is familiar to those working in the schools, and will be more likely to cause change through their use than a simple assessment that is outside of the report card model.

This report card model aims to unify, facilitate, and educate states of their perceptions and levels of performance standards for sportsmanship concepts and behaviors. The model will exemplify principles, values, and beliefs that should be held accountable in all athletic activities. As time, energy, and resources continue to be depleted, for state high school athletic associations this could serve as the most efficient and effective way to articulate the values and behaviors of sportsmanship that define the meaning and purpose of sport. The following section will detail and discuss the implications of developing a systematic method, such as a report card, that will allow high school athletic administrators to evaluate sportsmanship performance standards.

Conceptual Framework of Report Card Model

In order to understand the usefulness of a report card model it is necessary to identify the process and context in which the report card is developed. The questionnaire within this study will serve as the baseline for the creation of the report card. The theoretical framework to the report card will aim to identify the conditions of the shared value of sportsmanship. Essentially, the shared value of sportsmanship is a central piece in defining athletic policy for high school athletic associations. However, it should be noted that not all states value sportsmanship in the same way. For example, many share the belief that sportsmanship is a central value taught athletics, but other administrators of sport may not share this belief. Athletic practices and beliefs by one administrator may not be the same as another administrator. Specifically, one head coach of a team may choose not to teach or allow his or her assistant coaches to teach sportsmanship while other head coaches may teach it themselves or require their assistants to teach the behavior. This study aims to assess the perceptions of sportsmanship by high school athletic association administrators.

If sportsmanship is to be a part of athletics programs as policy, then high school athletic associations must look to create an organizational structure that will fulfill this goal. An organizational structured system will provide ways to: identify best practices, diagnose problems, and bestow information on decisions regarding policymaking, assist sport managers with information to help them assess and improve results, and follow tendencies over a period of time. Without such systems, it is impossible to assess needs effectively, determine problems, understand changes needed, and evaluate reforms

(Venezia, Callan, Finney, Kirst, & Usdan, 2005). The basis for a networking system of this caliber is crucial to the development of the report card as contextually the term of sportsmanship is evolving in its role of legislature.

A report card model that evaluates sportsmanship will allow for a foundational basis to be determined and will provide a mechanism for policy leaders to improve policy standards. It can also be a diagnostic tool for state policy leaders as it enables them to identify the strength and weaknesses of sportsmanship standards and policies in their high school athletic association. As a precedent is set, it will answer the problems to sportsmanship in these key areas:

- Why is sportsmanship valued differently at state levels?
- What are the goals and objectives of current high school athletic associations in regards to sportsmanship at the state level?
- What are the organizational structures in place to support sportsmanship education at the state and national levels?
- What sportsmanship policies have been developed and implemented by high school athletic associations?
- Who is responsible for developing and implementing sportsmanship programs?

It should be noted, a key dilemma to sport managers is they are often challenged by a lack of conceptual and practical frameworks. The oversight and focus needed to create a dynamic framework for evaluating and describing the effectiveness of sportsmanship policies and procedures within a report card for sport managers on sportsmanship will place an increased emphasis on accountability. An effectively

communicated report card will supplement procedures and processes through the facilitation of information and allow strategic leaders in to make informed decisions (NCPPE, 2000). It will support the demand that policy leaders be held accountable for their performance in student-athlete sportsmanship amongst high school athletics.

A report card model that emphasizes objective comparisons of sportsmanship can provide high school athletic associations with information crucial to the creation of more effective policies. This will allow the report card to be a catalyst for constructive change for discussion and debate among state, regional, and national levels. Moreover, by reporting sportsmanship performance-based outcomes at regular intervals over several years, the report card will allow for precedence to be set and potential changes to be evaluated. The goal of the report card is to unify, facilitate, and educate while stimulating the creation of procedures and processes in regards to accountability of sportsmanship that enhances the overall experience and achievement for student-athletes, coaches, parents, fans, officials, and administrators.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was to examine the perceptions of high school athletic association administrators on sportsmanship. Further, this research looked at the phenomenon of sportsmanship to see how it is administered, valued, and displayed among state level high school athletic associations in the United States. The state administrator's depiction and knowledge of policies and procedures for high school athletic associations allow for a greater understanding of the sportsmanship phenomenon and allow for the creation of a set of sportsmanship characteristics that are generally

agreed upon by those surveyed. The basis of the report card model will allow a way to evaluate sportsmanship at the high school level in the United States.

Research Question

How is sportsmanship perceived by high school athletic association administrators and further how is it administered, valued, and displayed among state level high school athletic associations?

Hypothesis

The participants within this study will vary in their perceptions of sportsmanship as each high school athletic association administrator will administer, value, and displayed through different managed systems and practices among state level high school athletic associations.

Significance of the Study

This research hopes to contribute by showing the current perceptions of high school athletic association administrators on sportsmanship. Ideally, this research will serve as a tool in solving sportsmanship issues for state level high school athletic association. The potential usefulness of this study lends itself to developing a report card precedent set forth on sportsmanship to achieve accountability between the values of administrators and behaviors of their participants involved at the high school level of sport.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made by the researcher:

1. All participants have knowledge of the information requested.

2. All participants complete the report card model honestly.
3. Being a participant in this study will enhance the participants understanding and modeling of sportsmanship.

Limitations

Specific limitations of this study are listed below:

1. Data will be based solely on participant's response to survey.
2. Participants may evaluate and respond to each question differently based on knowledge of their high school sport policy and procedures.
3. Individual and personal student-athlete sportsmanship knowledge or behavior will not be evaluated.
4. Individual and personal coach sportsmanship knowledge or behavior will not be evaluated.
5. Individual and personal officiating knowledge or behavior will not be evaluated.
6. Data may be manipulated due to participants reporting data as representatives of their high school athletic association (reporting what they want people to think).

Delimitations

Specific delimitations of this study are listed below:

1. Participants of this study are employed individuals of who work for a state high school athletic association.
2. Response to the questionnaire is based upon interest of the participants and time to respond.

Definition of Terms

The following terms were used operationally for the purpose of this study:

Sportsmanship. Sportsmanship that is inclusive of fair play and character as it stands for the ethical principles to sport competition (Bredemeier & Shields, 1984.).

Report card. An organizational measure of data on two or more organizations to assess performance (Gormley & Weimer, 1999).

Student-athlete. Individuals that rely on a well-developed, self-concept resulting in high self-esteem, discipline, and time management skills that allows them to isolate from their peers both physically and socially (Ferrante, Etzel, & Lantz, 2002).

Coach. Individuals that oversee student-athletes that is responsible for developing expectations for positive behavior, supportive relationships, and creating an environment to positively influence personal responsibility (Bolter & Weiss, 2011).

Fan. A sport spectator who responds emotionally to sport and is often a knowledgeable and appreciative viewer of sport (Siedentop, 2009).

Official. An individual who supervises a sporting event and ensures that fairness is established by seeing that all contestants honor the rules of that event (Siedentop, 2009).

Sport management. The involvement of people, activities, businesses, and organizations involved in the promotion, facilitation, production, and organization that is related to sport, fitness, and recreation (Pitts & Stotlar, 2002).

High school athletic administrator. An individual that is responsible for the planning of high school athletic events, preparing the athletic program budget, fundraising, scheduling games, and many other pertinent duties (Green & Reese, 2006).

Delphi study technique. A systematic method of obtaining information through the collection of opinions through questionnaires and interviews as it relates to a specific topic (Delbecq, Van de Ven, & Gustafson, 1975).

CHAPTER II

Review of the Literature

The Meaning of Sportsmanship

Sportsmanship has been defined as, “the display of ethical standards when they conflict with strategic gain in a sporting event” (Shields & Bredemeier, 1995).

Sportsmanship rules were established so that participants could honor the spirit and letter of the rules of sport. Lumpkin, Stoll, and Beller (2003) stated that, “rules serve as a guide for all ethical behaviors of participants.” However, Berg (2001) noted that athletes, coaches, school personnel, parents, and fans are not in agreement on the definition of sportsmanship which has resulted in a challenge for high school athletic association administrators.

The Sportsmanship Challenge

“The essence of sport is seeing the thrill of victory in the courageous eyes of a youth while watching the losing participants graciously shake the hands of their opponents, knowing full-well they will be better the next time around. These intangibles are what make sports so nationally appealing and what make them an ideal learning environment for forging relationship, team dynamics, and self-motivation” (Robinson, 2009).

Stoll and Beller (1993) identified that athletes only believed sportsmanship was related to how they treat others on their team. Over eleven years ago, a study by Gehring (2001) gave evidence to the decline of sportsmanship by the analysis that coaches, parents, and players are pushing the boundaries of acceptable behavior. A study by Vandenberg (2004) furthered the sportsmanship decline as noting that people identify sportsmanship with the mindset of, “I know it when I see it.” Still yet, the sportsmanship

behavior dilemma continues to evolve over the period of twenty years due in part to no implemented measure to evaluate and create accountability regarding high school sportsmanship. Thinking in this way fosters an atmosphere of unsportsmanlike behaviors against other participants in high school sporting events. Part of this problem stems from the “win at all cost mentality” alluded to in the previous chapter. That attitude has diminished sportsmanship behavior and shifted the safety of youth athletes into uncertainty.

Beyond the moral imperative, sport managers should ensure that all athletic endeavors are conducted in a safe manner (Heinzmann, 2002). However, the “win at all costs” attitude has led high school sport coaches and athletes to participate in year round training leading to overuse and ill-advised injuries. Consequently, year round training is not conducive to a sport atmosphere capable of harboring sportsmanship. Research shows that athletes with overuse injuries have quadrupled and have been linked to burn out within sport (Brenner, 2007). These consequences have affected youth athletes as they fear their athletic identity is being perceived as failures (Cooper, 2008). Essentially, this places pressure on high school athletes to behave in whatever methods necessary that allows them to win within the game.

A Sportsmanship Solution

Currently, there are several ways to provide a solution to sportsmanship issues. Sportsmanship may be taught through a variety of educational resources and programs implemented by: and restructure with; private companies; national governing bodies; local sporting agencies; schools; community; and recreational sport programs. Equally

important is teaching the values and the social significance of sports while communicating these ideas through: mass media; school education; and the arts. Utilizing competitive events as publicity vehicles is significant to community involvement.

The American Sport Education Program (2008) along with the LTS Education Systems (2011) have provided education and training to more than one million players, coaches, officials, sport administrators, and parents. Abundant educational resources via video and through internet applications have been made available through both programs. Providing these services can help establish proper balance for values, behaviors, roles and responsibilities of support between athletes and administrators, coaches, and parents. As such, a cooperative atmosphere between athletes, coaches, officials and spectators is possible through proper training and education regarding the value of sportsmanship (Kampf, 2005).

Creating Systems That Monitor Sportsmanship Behaviors

Sport systems are intricate interrelationships among elements within an organization (Chelladurai, 2009). Sport systems may also be seen as an open system of a cooperative goal defining unit with participants forming a mutual relationship while working together to attain common goals (Keuning, 1998). Additionally, a systems based sport system is capable of achieving goals that are beyond the capacity of individual members and is permanent regardless of its origins (Chelladurai, 2009). In respect to this study, the report card is seen as a system to combine high school athletic administrators in their efforts to develop sportsmanship policy.

Every open system has subsystems that are functionally specialized units (Chelladurai, 2009). An example is a collegiate football team is a system comprised of coaches, players, and facilities while also being a subsystem of the athletic department (Chelladurai, 2009). This factor is especially critical in understanding as each high school athletic association is a subsystem of the encompassing high school athletic body. As the system and subsystem grows so too will access to resources for member organizations. Increased resources serve to: improve member performance; facilitate knowledge sharing; reduce variety and uncertainty within the organization; and reduce costs associated with gathering information (Chelladurai, 2009). The mutual goal seeking relationship of individual athletic associations will make up a system that creates a common identity for administrators, sport managers, and other participants.

Corresponding to this relationship is the effect of influences on external and internal environments on open systems. Values, norms, and expectations may constrain the organization to operate in specific ways as Certo (1992) found that social values play a key role on organizational systems. Again, the role of the “win at all costs” mentality plays a role. However, organizations may create specific programs that benefit attributes for a specific clientele or solve a problem for society in general (Chelladurai, 2009) and in this case it will cater to sportsmanship behavior. This precedent of value on sportsmanship behavior will allow the system to parlay itself within the community. Through the community the system identifies and builds upon the values, expectations, and relationships to create affinity with each participant. Conversely, sport managers

must decide on what values will be granted inclusiveness to their system to achieve this end result.

The need for an inclusive system to evaluate sportsmanship is augmented by the justification of the development of the system. In the creation of a sport system, Smolianov & Zakus (2008) found that managerial skills and sport specific competencies were instrumental to development. Sport managers should create a document to benefit all members of a systems based organization that specifies goals, ways to accomplish goals, initiatives of management, responsibilities of all members, values to be maintained, measures of performance, and the regulation to be employed at various levels to guarantee conformance to the plan (Chelladurai, 2009). This allows a managerial purpose in identifying, creating, and sharing knowledge to further the organizations capacity. Goals then become more specific and dynamic as information becomes readily available.

As the system matures each high school athletic association will have identified and unified goals to be consistent with the overall strategic plan. Goals will be set in terms to be socially responsible, responsive, and receptive to resources. Goal objectives are apparent in the visibility and prestige of positive local and national image for all involved. An example of a goal that brings this prestige is athletes will be required by their high school athletic association to sign a code of conduct regarding sportsmanship before they are eligible to compete. Rigorous quality control measures like codes of conduct will ensure the procurement of sufficiently high quality standards that will be held accountable to participants. Another goal may be the tracking of unsportsmanlike

conduct penalties and ejections with the installation of progressive discipline involving repeat offenders for schools, coaches, and athletes. The specification of goals determines the standards for performance and evaluation (Chelladurai, 2009).

Performance or goal evaluation consists of three separate categories: performances at the individual, unit, and organizational levels (Chelladurai, 2009). The need for evaluation and performance standards is that many organizations have independent review committees, boards or departments to evaluate (Chelladurai, 2009). A structured committee overseeing the development and evaluation of sportsmanship will inform managers on strengths and weaknesses, administer improvements necessary, and determine how to overcome barriers. System committees demand accountability, improve performance, establish safety for participants, and allow for accessibility of information (Chelladurai, 2009). Similarly, all sportsmanship evaluations should be determined in respect to: has sportsmanship been met in accordance with the guidelines, values, specifications and were the objectives achieved because of the program.

The creation of a networking system curtailed by a report card model would serve purpose to unify, facilitate, and educate all states on sportsmanship policy. The formation of high school athletic associations as a system based organization may influence society. This proposition is substantially important to the basis of a sportsmanship platform. It will allow systematic goals within high school athletic associations to be set forth that coincide with socially responsible and responsive values to sportsmanship behavior.

Parent and Fan Behavior: Defining Their Role in Sportsmanship

Unruly behavior and violent confrontations at sporting events have become increasingly frequent (LTS Education Systems, 2011). As such, sporting events have become venues for aggressive and volatile fans to expel their vehemence toward officials and players. This unruly behavior resulted in the eradication of carefully fostered relationships between coaches, officials, spectators, and parents (Singh, 2006). Some parents and coaches have adapted to the motto of “winning is everything” during sporting events (Goldstein, 2005); the direct result being increased negative parental, fan, and coach behavior.

Parent’s perceptions of their child’s sports endeavors have led to higher anger levels and increased aggression (Neighbors, Vietor, & Knee, 2002). Silverman (2010) notes that violent incidents in youth sport can be incendiary or they can be the result of held back resentment over a period of time. An unfortunate result of this parental behavior is the sports rage phenomenon. Sports rage is defined as an offensive manner with malicious harassment or verbal abuse which threatens violence or bodily harm (Heinzmann, 2002). This fraught with unruly behavior and violence indicative of the absence of moral conduct values, resulted in the following incidents at youth sporting events:

- 2011: A pee-wee football coach was arrested for felony battery after attacking the parent of an opposing team. Savaiinea punched the parent in one shoulder and kicked him in the stomach. The parent fell and hit his head on the concrete ground knocking the parent unconscious (Repard, 2011).

- 2011: An umpire for a 10-year-old girl softball game was injured after two coaches and two parents confronted and attacked him after the game as he was going to change. Lamont Martin, the umpire, said the coach from one of the teams was upset with him over a call he felt should have been made during the game.
- 2011: A teacher assistant and assistant football coach for a middle school was arrested on felony charges after choking a player, assaulting a parent and bringing a handgun in his truck onto school grounds (Perlmutter, 2011).
- 2010: An assistant coach of a hockey team got angry at another team's player when they fouled his son after the whistle. The 50-year-old coach entered the penalty box and threatened the fifteen-year old before punching him (Taylor, 2010).

A recurring theme for this continuing violent behavior is the fact that many sporting events are managed by volunteers that have little to no formal education training (Murphy, 1999). As a result, Dahlberg (2007) found that bad or missed calls in officiating can lead to attacks and near riots by spectators. A man was charged with felony assault, resulting in permanent ear damage, against an official at a recreational basketball game after the official missed a call when the score was two to zero (Topp, 2005). Another incident, involved twenty-six police units responding to a youth football game riot after an official made a call (Topp, 2005). A study conducted by Morrison (2005) showed that: “55% of parents witnessed other parents engaged in verbal abuse at youth sporting events; 22% would allow aggressive parents to remain in the stands; 21% witnessed a physical altercation between other parents at youth sporting events; 5% were

not sure what to do about parents who were prone to sport-induced tantrums.” Another research study concerning aggressive parents generated the following results:

- Aggressive behaviors were associated with feeling stress or pressure
- A parent’s increased perception of stress and pressure led to becoming more aggressive
- More than half the parents reported experiencing various levels of aggression
- More than half the parents reported anger or aggression while watching their children
- Referees, their own children, and their children’s team are spectators frequent targets of aggression
- Fan behavior may negatively impact a child’s perception of sportsmanship (Goldstein, 2005).

This collection of findings shows the seemingly large disconnect between values and precedent setting behavior. However, unruly behavior may potentially be curtailed at the youth and high school levels as Heinzmann (2002) identified six key objectives to improve parents’ and fans’ understanding of sports as follows: to become acquainted with the administration; education about the objectives of the program; understand and reinforce the coaching philosophy; inform participants about their sports obligations and commitments; establish an ease of communication for those involved; and help administration understand the concerns of all participants.

Funding Sportsmanship: Finding a Solution That Works

Planning processes must include an option that provides a funding solution to initiate sportsmanship training for high school athletes and coaches. Funding processes should also be implemented to justify development of sportsmanship values as defined and understood, setting goals to benefit high school athletic associations. Conversely, a sport organization or system can have more than one goal in the planning or funding process. Therefore, planners must hold a systematic view of the organization, accounting for the external environment as well as the internal network's belief system in setting goals for the organization (Chelladurai, 2009).

Smolianov and Zakus (2008) found that the funding and structures of mass and elite sport systems must be balanced and integrated for the development of the sport system. This is significant as it shows that state high school athletic associations must work together to unify a report card model for its development. Smolianov and Zakus (2008) also stated that significant investments into a sport system's development will allow for necessary skills, knowledge, and competencies to be created. The integration development for open system's funding, such as unified high school athletic association, can be aided and accomplished through multiple partnerships within the network system. This would lead to third party sportsmanship education. The development of these partnerships can be viewed as consultants created through tax based incentives to allow for the support of corporate sponsors for sport (Smolianov & Zakus, 2008). Partnerships may also be established from state to state and between high school athletic associations in an effort to grow the system network. Through these partnerships, public and private

funding can be received to further education and provide a budget line for sportsmanship. These measures and resources within a system's strategy can lead to student leadership conferences or sportsmanship summits. Conversely, this will lead to the growth and fostering of further education on sportsmanship values dedicated ideally to coaches, fans, officials, and players.

Funding is a crucial issue even as perceived constraints have stymied sportsmanship policy and education. Constraints may be placed on an organization by virtue of societal norms, government regulations, or competition from other organizations (Chelladurai, 2009). For instance, the planning process to improve a sportsmanship report card model is constrained by legal requirements in several states. However, Layzell and Caruthers (1996) state that there is significant interest in performance funding accountability for state level programs. The concept is that standard performance goals will be established to use as a basis for the allocation of available resources. This concept would allow for state high school athletic associations to benchmark their progress in sustainable goals and to recognize and evaluate their shortcomings.

Theories for Sportsmanship Behavior

Understanding theory is practical for problems as it provides a framework for analysis and facilitates development toward a solution (Wacker, 1998). Theory seeks to find increased importance by finding similarities across different domains (Wacker, 1998). Understanding types of theory for sportsmanship will allow insight into behavior

tendencies. Theory will be applied directly to sportsmanship in order to gain insight to understand the phenomenon of sportsmanship.

Social Learning Theory.

Bandura (1977) proposed in his social learning theory that aggressive behaviors are learned through either direct experience or by observation. This theory suggests that people are often reinforced for modeling the behavior of others (Bandura, 1977). The observer may be reinforced by the behavior, another individual, or the consequences of the behavior (Ormrod, 1999). A participant reinforced by the model may choose to conduct themselves in a non-sportsmanlike manner in accordance to receive approval by other athletes that choose to use poor sportsmanship. A third person effect and the behavior itself can occur if an athlete sees another athlete exhibiting poor sportsmanship behavior that goes unpunished that internally produces satisfying results thus reinforcing that behavior. Consequence of behavior is perhaps more perilous to sportsmanship than the others as Bandura (1977) showed that violent responses can be coerced through visualization without the need for direct reinforcement. Also, reinforced aggressive behaviors have allowed individuals to justify their retaliation as research by Tucker-Ladd (2005) showed that by individuals being aggressive they attained: the ability to stop aggression in others; receive status or praise; self-reinforcement; and reduction of tension.

Expectancy Value Theory.

The expectancy value theory has been used to examine individual behavior motivations. Researchers have sought to understand achievement motivation and its

impact on individual choice of achievement tasks and the performance of these tasks (Eccles, Wigfield & Schiefele, 1998). Thus, the expectancy value theory is predicated on analyzing motivational intention to predict when or if an individual will engage in a behavior (Cruz, 2005). This may be seen as an individual engaging in unsportsmanlike behavior.

A key dilemma for sport managers in regards to poor sportsmanship is that a study by (Wigfield & Eccles, 2000) found that behaviors respond in accordance to values and beliefs in their own ability to achieve an end result. When these values disconnect from behavior then there is a breakdown in motivational good sport behavior. A sportsmanship report card is essential in solving the ethical dilemma faced by sport managers as Palmgreen (1984) found that people will adjust themselves to the world according to their expectations and evaluations.

Phenomenology.

Phenomenology is study of the way people have consciousness, experience things in their life, and attempts to understand the way meanings are applied to those experiences (Smith, 2011). The study is comes from a first person point of view and addresses the meaningful significance applied to those experiences (Smith, 2011). Creswell (2007) describes a phenomenological study as the meaning of lived experiences of a concept or phenomenon for several individuals. Further, the purpose of phenomenology is to take individual experiences with a certain phenomenon and to create a detailed description of its essence (Creswell, 2007). In sport, this experience may be phenomena such as hitting a home run, scoring a touchdown, being ejected from

a game, officiating, missing the game winning shot, or understanding the concept of sportsmanship and what it means to the individual.

At present, the literature supports the increasing sportsmanship dilemmas for high school sport administrators. Idealistically, an emphasis on sportsmanship should be placed as highly as an emphasis on winning. For this study, the researcher seeks to generate data from persons who have knowledge of sportsmanship policies and procedures within their high school athletic association to understand how the phenomena of sportsmanship is being administered, managed, valued, displayed, and provide an evaluation for high school athletic association administrators.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

In this research, a questionnaire as basis for a report card model was administered in an effort to extend the knowledge base within high school athletic associations. Specifically, the purpose of this research was to examine the perceptions of high school athletic association administrators on sportsmanship. Further, this research looked at the phenomenon of sportsmanship to see how it is administered, valued, and displayed among state level high school athletic associations in the United States. This chapter presents the research methodology utilized during the investigation to assess how high school athletic associations administer sportsmanship as described by the detailing of the development of the questionnaire, participants, data collection procedures, interview and survey protocols for report card model, and data analysis.

Development of Questionnaire

The lack of prior instrumentation assessment tools or frameworks has led to the development of this theoretical model. The usefulness of this questionnaire provides generalizability to measure the sportsmanship concept within the culture of high school athletics. Serving as the basis of the report card model, the questionnaire was developed specifically for this study in efforts to accurately evaluate how sportsmanship is perceived by high school athletic administrators. Using a modified Delphi study technique, this study utilized high school athletic administrator's perceptions through feedback provided by the participants regarding core values and defining sportsmanship, creating systems that monitor sportsmanship behaviors, parent and fan behavior,

officiating, and finding and funding a sportsmanship solution. The 25-item questionnaire provides a basis to capture the different severity levels within sportsmanship in high school athletic associations.

Participants

The participants in this study were administrators of their state high school athletic associations. It was the researcher's assumption that these participants would have knowledge of their athletic associations' policies, procedures, and guidelines. Participants that completed the questionnaire were forty-two ($n = 42$) administrators for each state high school athletic association. The remaining eight ($n = 8$) participants chose not to answer the report card model and provided a handbook or website information. The participants in this study will be described by their state. IRB approval was obtained and each participant was given informed consent documentation.

Data Collection

Participant information was obtained through the use of the internet. Participants listed on their high school athletic website were then contacted by e-mail or telephone. A member of every state high school athletic association was contacted for this study. The primary point of contact for each state was an executive director or a director whose responsibilities included the management of their state high school athletic association. For states that did not respond to e-mail or by telephone, the primary researcher looked online at their state websites and was able to find a webpage detailing sportsmanship policies or a high school athletic association handbook with a section detailing sportsmanship. Data collection consisted of thirty-six e-mail questionnaire responses, six

telephone interviews, six handbook reviews, and two instances using state website information on sportsmanship from the month of January 2010 to November 2011. The questionnaire as the basis of the report card model may be found in Appendix A.

Interview and Survey Protocol for Report Card Model

Participants that responded via e-mail were given one month of time to answer the questionnaire. The participants that took part in a confidential interview lasted about twenty-five minutes on average. Participants were informed that they were to be asked twenty-five questions about sportsmanship for their high school athletic association and that the duration of the interview would be dependent on how much they had to say. The interview questions were centered on the report card model's five sections: core values and defining sportsmanship, creating systems that monitor sportsmanship behaviors, parent and fan behavior, officiating, and finding and funding a sportsmanship solution. These sections and the questions pertaining to each section may be found in Appendix A.

Data Analysis

The transcripts were analyzed by the primary researcher. Techniques such as bracketing allowed the primary researcher to set aside his beliefs, feelings, and perceptions to be more open or faithful to the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007). Eliciting more detailed statements from the interviews, such as asking participants if they felt more could be done for sportsmanship within their state, was utilized in order to see the effectiveness for the opportunity to organize and implement sportsmanship policies and procedures. As each transcript was read, notes were made to reflect the researcher's interpretations. These interpretations provided themes seen as: a lack of consistent core

values and definition of sportsmanship, sportsmanship behaviors neither monitored, encouraged or rewarded, no behavior monitoring for parents and fans, a lack of reporting measures on officials, and a lack of funding for sportsmanship education and no code of conduct requirement for student-athletes; within each section to examine sportsmanship in state high school athletic associations.

The use of this method was to present the essence of the phenomenon (Creswell, 2007) of sportsmanship. In the cases of Alabama, Maine, Minnesota, Nebraska, Pennsylvania, and Texas; a handbook provided by the participants was used to find answers to the sportsmanship report card model. Website information was used to determine responses for Arizona and Ohio.

CHAPTER IV

Results

This chapter presents the analysis of the results collected in this study. This chapter will detail qualitative themes associated with the perception of sportsmanship by high school athletic association administrators. The themes discovered within this research are: A lack of consistent core values and definition of sportsmanship, sportsmanship behaviors neither monitored, encouraged or rewarded, no behavior monitoring for parents and fans, a lack of reporting measures on officials, and a lack of funding for sportsmanship education and no code of conduct requirement for student-athletes.

Themes

A lack of consistent core values and definition of sportsmanship.

Participants reported on whether their high school athletic association had a set of core values, are these values visible, is one of the values sportsmanship, and does your high school athletic association define sportsmanship. Many states responded with “Yes” or “Yes, on the website and in the handbook” throughout this section. However, some states felt the need to clarify their response with more details.

Massachusetts stated:

“The MIAA promotes five core values through our Student Services Department – Sportsmanship, Wellness, Student Leadership, Community Service, and Coaches’ Education. These values and the related items can be found on our website.”

Utah and New Mexico both addressed having core values by talking about a code of ethics and what a core value may be. Utah explained, “A code of Ethics for coaches, athletes, and parents are outlined in our handbook.” Whereas, New Mexico stated that one of their core values is “Pursuing Victory with Honor.” When asked about the visibility of their high school athletic association core values many stated that “banners, signs, and posters were placed in gymnasiums.” New Mexico stated that they provide a “Website and DVD that coaches, parents, and athletes watch in the preseason.”

Utah on the other hand addressed it as:

“Each region posts a copy of the Code of Ethics and Expectations in highly visible areas, especially by the gyms. They are also included in their Region Handbooks and often their website. Every school will receive a banner as part of our new School Sportsmanship Award: “Raise the Bar, You’re the Star.” Each school can earn a star each year over the next five years and become a 5 Star Exemplary Program.”

Defining sportsmanship and having sportsmanship as a core value was not as equally defined as organizational core values. In fact, eight states chose not to define sportsmanship. Tennessee even went as far as to say they believed “it is impossible to define sportsmanship.” One state in the northeast region said: Although we do not have a definition of sportsmanship, it is consistently referred to throughout the handbook. This is furthered as a state in the west region said: Not specifically, though we discuss sportsmanship in our handbook as well as in our spectator handbook. Those that chose to

define sportsmanship showed the obvious disconnect between high school athletic associations and variance within their value systems.

Sportsmanship definitions are as follows:

- California – “Win with Honor.”
- Colorado – “Pursuing Victory with Honor.”
- Hawaii – “Let the players play, let the coach’s coach, let the official’s officiate, and cheer with aloha.”
- Maryland – “Respect the Game.”
- Mississippi - “Doing to others as you would have them do unto you.”
- South Dakota – “Sportsmanship is good citizenship in action.”

Sportsmanship behaviors neither monitored, encouraged, or rewarded.

Annual awards dedicated to sportsmanship could be vital in sustaining sportsmanship behavior through recognition for good deeds. The recounts below necessitate the need for improving and encouraging sportsmanship performance for coaches and athletes by developing awards. Thirty out of forty-three participants said their high school athletic associations do not offer individual sportsmanship awards for coaches and twenty-three do not offer individual sportsmanship awards for student-athletes. Many states choose to present sportsmanship awards to schools through banners, certificates, or awards at state tournaments. Colorado noted that they used to have awards, but did away with them because:

“They were not implemented correctly. The fans voted on it. Therefore it turned into a popularity contest. Now, they recognize individuals if someone voluntarily notifies them of their sportsmanship.”

However, some high school athletic associations do choose to give out individual sportsmanship awards. West Virginia said:

“We ask each school to submit 3 names of fans, coaches, and athletes who are recognized.”

Wyoming explained:

“We have sportsmanship certificates that are sent to the schools when any coach is turned in by a game official or administrator on our Good Sportsmanship form.”

Utah further stated:

“Our state awards what is called the “Spirit of Sport” Award, is also awarded at the sectional and national level.”

Another trend within this theme stemmed from the apparent lack of tracking for unsportsmanlike behaviors. In fact, twenty-five states said they choose not to track unsportsmanlike conduct penalties for technical fouls for coaches and athletes. Many states said they only track “ejections” or certain sport ejections. Further bringing this into question is many states said there is a progressive discipline process in place for players and coaches. However, the theme was that progressive discipline only seemed to occur if one was ejected from a contest. In the case of progressive discipline, insight into high

school athletic association policy showed various penalties. Below is a list to demonstrate the assorted sanctions:

- Virginia – “Schools that have total of four ejections (player and or coach) over the course of a school year must submit a written plan of how they intend to address sportsmanship.”
- Mississippi – “We have had schools terminate and discipline coaches for repeat offenses.”
- New Mexico – “Only on a case by case basis, but if the coach was ejected due to technical fouls, the coach must complete the Pursuing Victory with Honor 6 pillars of sportsmanship with a written essay before being allowed to coach the next game.”
- North Carolina – “Any coach or athlete disqualified or ejected, along with game(s) suspensions, must complete STAR Sportsmanship Program through “Learning Through Sports” online program before returning to competition.”
- Iowa – “We keep track of coaches who are ejected from all contests and their names are printed in our bulletin that is mailed to each school and all media outlets.”
- Massachusetts – “A student or coach ruled out of a contest (pre-season, scrimmage, jamboree/play-day, regular season or MIAA Tournament) twice in the same season shall be suspended from further participation in that sport and in all sports during that season for a year from the date of his/her second disqualification.”

- Montana – “Coaches with one ejection are required to miss one game. If they are ejected twice during a season, they are required to miss 4 games, and if they are ejected a third time, they are required to miss the rest of the season and would be required to miss an additional ninety days from the date of the championship game in that sport.”

When asked about whether their high school athletic association had a contract with a third party provider for sportsmanship education, fourteen claimed they had a provider for sportsmanship education while twenty-nine indicated they did not. Programs such as STAR Sportsmanship, Character Counts, Learning Through Sports, and Pursuing Victory with Honor were discussed. For example, Iowa believes:

“We as a state association go to schools, conferences, and school districts on our own and provide workshops, training, etc. We work with the Institute of Character Development at Drake University who also conducts independent workshops dealing with Pursuing Victory with Honor and the six pillars of character.”

The question containing whether coaches should be required to teach sportsmanship as part of their duties showed that nineteen of forty-three high school athletic associations did not require their coaches to teach sportsmanship. This is reflected by:

- Alaska – “It is not a requirement, but it is an expectation.”
- Arkansas – “We do not require it, but we do encourage it.”
- Delaware – “We suggest it, but do not require it.”

- Idaho – “We encourage, not require.”
- West Virginia – “It is not required, but we spend time at each rules clinic going over sportsmanship issues.”
- Wyoming – “It is not required, but it is emphasized through our initiative.”

However, not all states shared the same attitude. North Dakota felt, “This is an expectation of educationally based athletics and activities and is supported by our Constitution and By-Laws.” Utah explained their position as, “Under the new program: “TEAM-Up to Raise the Bar,” we include ways that coaches need to step up and be an educator first and a coach second. We are compiling a library of “Best Practices,” on how coaches can teach sportsmanship through parent/player meetings, orientation evening programs, etc.”

Further findings revealed that twelve high school athletic associations do not have a committee that focuses on sportsmanship issues. The other participants had committees that focus on policy, education, and sportsmanship comprised of either: coaches, athletic directors, principals or board of trustee members. Another discovery was that Nebraska had a sportsmanship report card that was designed for schools to implement themselves.

It asked participants to rate the following questions on a 1 to 10 basis:

- “The coach’s positive control of his/her emotions and behavior toward the team, opponents and officials
- The contestants’ positive control of their emotions and behavior
- The cheerleaders’ role in encouraging positive enthusiasm
- The general response and actions of the spectators

- The coach's handling of close/controversial situations or calls
- The sportsmanlike conduct/attitude of the team/fans at the conclusion of the contest
- The school administration's active role in promoting enthusiasm or crowd management.”

The last major finding within this theme is in regards to the requirement of student-athletes signing a code of conduct regarding sportsmanship before competing. Thirty-four high school athletic associations reported not having their student-athletes complete such a form. It was recommended, but not required by many institutions. The issue illustrates conflicting responses to who is responsible for establishing a code of conduct. Many states believe that it is up to the local school system to institute a policy, while others believe that it is up to the individual schools to create the policy.

No behavior monitoring for parents and fans.

Expected fan behavior is essential to sportsmanship as it fosters a safe environment for athletes, coaches, and spectators. Fan behavior may reflect a community in athletic events as Montana provides:

“Fan behavior, whether at home or away at athletic contests, reflects on the entire community. Hometown fans should treat out-of-town guests with respect.

Similarly, visiting fans should treat their hosts- both individuals and property- with proper appreciation.”

Similar policies are in effect in Iowa:

“The program ‘Conduct Counts’ is in effect at all state sponsored activities, including music, speech, and drama. Local school districts can adopt the same policies at conference and regular season events as well. Policies include the prohibition of artificial noisemakers, jumping on the bleachers, derogatory chants and language.”

However, unruly fan behavior does not seem to be tracked or taken seriously by the majority. In fact, twenty-four participants said their high school athletic association does not track unruly behavior. More disconcerting is that perhaps this may cultivate an atmosphere in the fan’s mindset that “I know I will not get in trouble.” The essence of the data reported suggested that resources will be provided by the governing organization, but only if the school requests special attention. As such, only seventeen participants had a policy in place that followed up with corrective action. Essentially, almost 40% of fan behavior had no corrective action based on previous unruly behavior. Again, this was highlighted by the expectation that it was the individual school’s responsibility to take appropriate action.

An area where numerous participants fell short was in the code of conduct regarding sportsmanship behaviors for parents or legal guardians. Thirty-nine participants said that they do not require the parents to sign a code a conduct. It was often stated that this was up to the individual school or school district. This lack of uniformed policy is reinforcing poor sportsmanship behaviors by fans and directly

affecting officials, athletes, and coaches. However, Nebraska attempted to monitor the role of the parent and gave expectations for each parent. They state in their handbook:

“Make sure that your children know that win or lose, scared or heroic, you love them, appreciate their efforts and are not disappointed in them. This will allow them to do their best without fear of failure... be the person in their life they can look to for constant positive reinforcement. Try not to relive your athletic life through your child in a way that creates pressure. If they are comfortable with you win or lose, then they are on their way to maximum enjoyment.”

A lack of accountability for officials.

The section of the report card enclosing ‘Officiating’ was the most troubling. Officials are responsible for protecting a structured environment in a safe manner for all participating in sport. However, many high school athletic associations choose not to view the concept of officiating in serious regard. Fifteen participants said that their high school athletic association does not grade their officials. Another three participants said that only the coaches grade the officials. This method allows coaches the ability positively or negatively rate officials, based on subjective calls, in which the coach or coaches may not have the best point of view resulting in the direct impact of an official’s performance rating. Seventeen high school athletic associations reported they conducted background checks on officials and Montana believed:

“Each perspective official is required to have a background check and then we conduct random background checks for all veteran officials.”

Twenty-five high school athletic associations reported not requesting a background check on their officials to learn of any individual's potential previous misconduct. Many employed the option that officials must disclose if they are a felon, but Colorado admitted:

“The official could lie and we would never know because we do not request a background check. If they say yes, the matter is referred to the district they would referee in. If they admit to a sexual crime, they are automatically denied.”

Twenty-five participants also stated that their high school athletic association does not require a certain number of years or experience before an official can call a high school game. Officials should be in charge of safety for all individuals at a sporting event within the field lines, on the sidelines, and to a certain degree within the stands. An unqualified official is not capable of achieving a safe environment for sport participants. Nebraska furthers this as they state in their handbook:

“Officials at an interscholastic athletic event are participants in the educational development of high school students. As such, they must exercise a high level of self-discipline, independence and responsibility.”

A lack of funding for sportsmanship education and no code of conduct requirement for student-athletes.

Twenty-one participants said that there is no budget line dedicated to sportsmanship. Participants noted that in the past limited funds have been set aside and they are actively looking for a corporate sponsor. A few states reported already having a corporate sponsor or using a fund partially supported by NFHS T-Mobile while thirty-one

participants said they do not receive private funding for sportsmanship education.

Tennessee and West Virginia employed a unique method to funding. They used all fines assessed by the high school athletic association office to be used for sportsmanship. Nine participants reported their high school athletic association did not sponsor student leadership conferences or sportsmanship summits. The states of North Dakota, Utah, and Iowa specifically reported using the NFHS National Student Leadership Conference in Indianapolis.

CHAPTER V

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to examine the perceptions of high school athletic association administrators on sportsmanship. Further, this research looked at the phenomenon of sportsmanship to see how it is administered, valued, and displayed among state level high school athletic associations in the United States. Themes discovered from this research include: A lack of consistent core values and definition of sportsmanship, sportsmanship behaviors neither monitored, encouraged or rewarded, no behavior monitoring for parents and fans a lack of reporting measures on officials, and a lack of funding for sportsmanship education and no code of conduct requirement for student-athletes. These themes confirmed the hypothesis as the perceptions of high school athletic association administrators varied in the way sportsmanship is administered, valued, and displayed through managed systems and practices among state level high school athletic associations.

This study chose to evaluate sportsmanship as sportsmanship is a behavioral concept worth exploration because of the disconnection between administrators understanding of what it is and should be versus what high school athletic associations determine it to be. Administrators need to understand that sport is interconnected with all the major social institutions found in society. It promotes both positive and negative behaviors due to competition being present in every game. Essentially, sport offers excitement and meaning to the life of most human beings. It sometimes helps ones identity be found and behavior to be built in proper manner (Delaney & Madigan, 2009).

Only through proper education and the teaching of sportsmanship behavior can provide an opportunity at a sportsmanship solution.

Sport should be led by sportsmanship to translate lessons learned in conduct for youth athletes to life. Sportsmanship should be placed on the same level as winning. Through enthusiastic participation, sportsmanship should counter negative influences for participants. Further, sportsmanship rules were created so that participants could honor the rules of the sport. A core value for any high school athletic association should be sportsmanship, yet as this study shows, there is disconnect between administrators and sportsmanship principles and application.

The increasing sportsmanship dilemmas for administrators suggest a need for the implementation of broad-based comprehensive strategies such as a report card model for high school athletic associations. This will promote collaboration within an organized network. A report card model in this manner will serve as an educational tool to show how sportsmanship is administered for high school athletic associations and allow for the necessary changes to sportsmanship to be developed, managed, and evaluated. The results of this study should force high school athletic associations to self-examine what they are doing to assess sportsmanship values and behavior. This research allows sport administrators to focus on a systematic evaluation of sportsmanship. Through the report card model developed in this study, a comparison and establishment of benchmarks and standards that have not always been clearly defined and measured have been created. This study should enable those governing and participating in sport to better understand sportsmanship concepts and behaviors.

Conclusion

Sportsmanship for some high school athletic associations is clearly not a priority. By state directors in charge of sportsmanship choosing not to participate within this study illustrates how administrators may not be willing to make the necessary changes to benefit student-athletes, coaches, fans, parents, and themselves. At present, it is highly likely that the current level of education, training, and funding of sportsmanship policy is insufficient in creating opportunities to value and display sportsmanship as there is a lack unified systematic policy and procedures for sportsmanship values and behavior.

This has resulted in and promoted boisterous behavior by students, coaches, parents and fans throughout many high school athletic associations. Delving further into the themes of this research show how many high school athletic associations in the United States have complex issues that need to be addressed such as: defining sportsmanship, aligning their core values with sportsmanship, codes of conduct for parents and student-athletes, monitoring unruly behavior, corrective action for unruly behavior, and background checks for officials.

Implications of the Study

This research can be used by future researchers in hoping to implement a report card model based on sportsmanship evaluation at the high school sport level. An evaluative report card itself can and should influence behaviors of participants. This is a significant attribute for sport practitioners as the “win at all cost” mindset has cultivated an atmosphere of unsportsmanlike behavior. Certainly, this prevalence in erratic behavior that has grown from professional sports and trickled downward may force high

school athletic association to this remedy. As high school athletic associations continue to grow in size and scope it is important for them to have strategic planning in mind for their programs. The significance in sportsmanship education is that it can be taught, respected, encouraged, and grown. This research shows the current perceptions of high school athletic association administrators while developing a report card precedent set forth on sportsmanship to achieve accountability between the values of administrators and behaviors of their participants involved at the high school level of sport.

Limitations of Evaluating how Sportsmanship is Administered, Valued, and Displayed

A limitation of this instrument is that prior to this study it has been conceptualized and therefore not used in research practices. The instrument itself is a questionnaire based on gauging the perceptions of high school athletic association administrators. This study is the first of its kind as multiple research studies or educational tools on sportsmanship have been used, but never in conjunction with a report card as checklists to measure this proposed instrument for evaluating how sportsmanship is administered, valued, and displayed among the state level for high school athletic associations.

Recommendations for Future Studies

For future research, the following recommendations can be made based on the results of this study:

1. One important future area to study would be to see the correlation between high school athletic associations using the core value of sportsmanship measured against the statistical numbers of unsportsmanlike penalties and ejections for both student-athlete and coach.

2. The examination of which states have explored the capabilities of inaugurating a partnership with third party sportsmanship education programs if they had no previous relationship.
3. A follow-up study on the evaluation of how sportsmanship is administered, valued, and displayed at the high school level.
4. Conduct an analysis that focuses on the different socioeconomic backgrounds for each state in relation to sportsmanship evaluation.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

Core Values and Defining Sportsmanship

1. Does your HSAA have a set of core values that they ask members (coaches, teachers, athletes, parents) to operate from? If so, where can I find these?
(Website, Handbook)
2. Does your HSAA create visibility of those core values? In other words, are they easy to find? Where can I find them?
3. Is one of those core values sportsmanship? If so, where can I find that? (Website, Handbook)
4. Does your HSAA define sportsmanship? If so, where can I find that? (Website, Handbook)

Creating Systems that Monitor Sportsmanship Behaviors

5. Does your HSAA have an annual award dedicated to sportsmanship for coaches?
6. Does your HSAA have an annual award dedicated to sportsmanship for athletes?
7. Does your HSAA track unsportsmanlike conduct penalties for technical fouls for coaches?
8. Does your HSAA track unsportsmanlike conduct penalties for technical fouls for athletes?
9. Does your HSAA follow up with corrective action based upon tracking incidents?
10. For repeat offenders is there some sort of progressive discipline process in place players?

11. For repeat offenders is there some sort of progressive discipline process in place coaches?
12. Does your state HSAA currently contract with a third party provider for sportsmanship education?
13. Does your HSAA require that coaches teach sportsmanship as part of the duties of being a coach?
14. Does your HSAA have a committee at the level that focuses on sportsmanship issues?

Parent and Fan Behavior

15. Does your state have a policy regarding expected fan behavior while in attendance at high school athletic contests?
16. Does your HSAA track unruly behavior by fans?
17. Does your HSAA follow up with some sort of corrective action?
18. Are parents or legal guardians, required to sign a code of conduct regarding sportsmanship behaviors before athletes can compete at a state high school association member school?

Officiating

19. Does your HSAA grade its officials?
20. Does your HSAA request background check on officials?
21. Does your HSAA require a certain number of years of experience or games before an official can call a high school game?

Finding and Funding a Sportsmanship Solution

22. Is there a budget line item that is dedicated to sportsmanship education for coaches, fans, officials, players?
23. Does your HSAA sponsor student leadership conference or sportsmanship summit as a resource that educates students, Coaches, Parents, Officials?
24. Does your HSAA receive private funding for sportsmanship education?
25. Are students required by the HSAA to sign a code of conduct regarding sportsmanship before they are eligible to compete?

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT

Dear Participant,

You are being asked to participate in this study because you are a representative of your state high school athletic associations. You should have received an e-mail or phone call, discussing your participation in answering the questionnaire, which is a major component of this study.

To begin and answer the questionnaire in e-mail, you need to click within the e-mail and respond with your answers to the corresponding questions on the same line as the question. Upon completion of the questionnaire, please send your answers to the corresponding email.

To those taking part in the interview, the confidential questionnaire will take approximately 25 minutes to complete. You are encouraged to complete the research instrument in one sitting via either method.

Additional information:

1. There are no expected costs associated with your participation in this study.
2. Discomforts, inconveniences, and/or risks that can be reasonably expected are no greater than those encountered in everyday life.
3. There are no unforeseeable risks associated with this study.
4. There is no compensation for your participation in this study.
5. If you should choose to withdraw from this study, you are free to do so without any penalty or consequence.

If you have any questions about this research study, please contact Dr. Colby Jubenville at (615) 898-2909.

This survey has been approved by the MTSU Institutional Review Board. The research protocol has been reviewed and it has been determined that the study poses minimal risk to subjects and qualifies for expedited review under 45 CFR.110 and 21 CFR 56.110. Thank you for your participation.

Because we know your time is valuable, three (3) TARGET gift cards valued at \$100 each will be issued at random. Please provide your email address and indicate that you would like to be included in the drawing for the gift card.

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL

April 13, 2009

Colby Jubenville, Jean Martinez
Exploring Sportsmanship Values among NCAA Athletes
Protocol Number: 09-246

Dear Investigators,

The MTSU Institutional Review Board, or a representative of the IRB, has reviewed the research proposal identified above and has determined that the study poses minimal risk to participants and qualifies for an exempt review under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). This is based on the fact that the research is involving survey procedures, information will be recorded in such a way that participants cannot possibly be identified, and disclosure of participants responses could not possibly place them at risk.

Approval is granted for three (3) years following the date of this letter.

The only approved researchers on the project are the investigators identified on this letter. No other individuals should be involved with data collection or analysis without prior written approval.

According to MTSU Policy, a researcher is defined as anyone who works with data or has contact with participants. Anyone meeting this definition needs to be listed on the protocol and needs to provide a certificate of training to the Office of Compliance. If you add researchers to an approved project, please forward an updated list of researchers and their certificates of training to the Office of Compliance before they begin to work on the project. Any change to the protocol must be submitted to the IRB before implementing this change.

You will need to submit an end-of-project report to the Office of Compliance upon completion of your research. Complete research means that you have finished collecting and analyzing data. Should you not finish your research within the three (3) year period, you must submit a Progress Report and request a continuation prior to the expiration date. Please allow time for review and requested revisions. Your study will expire on April 13, 2012.

All research materials should be retained by the faculty researcher and stored securely in his office on campus for three (3) years following the completion of the project.

Please note that any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918.

Sincerely,

Lisa M. Pritchett, Graduate Assistant to
Tara M. Prairie, Compliance Officer
MTSU Institutional Review Board