



**DEVELOPING  
RESPONSIBLE  
CONTRIBUTORS**

**Human Dignity Issues in the  
Sports Business Industry**

**Matt Garrett**

Developing Responsible Contributors:  
Human Dignity Issues in the Sport Business Industry

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## **INTRODUCTION: AND A CHILD SHALL LEAD THEM**

It was a balmy and cloudy Saturday afternoon, typical for the entire month of April in Dubuque after a record-setting warm March. There were many different sport and recreation offerings for tri-state area residents. What transpired in the Key City on April 14 were two profound examples of how the sport business industry transcends the greater society and offers each of us opportunities to make responsible contributions toward it.

The Loras College and Coe College baseball teams were playing an Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (IIAC) doubleheader at Dubuque's Petrakis Park. Under the leadership of Loras pitching coach Dan Wellik, the two programs exceeded their fundraising goal by more than \$4,000 for the St. Baldrick's Foundation. This "volunteer-driven charity committed to funding the most promising research to find cures for childhood cancers and give survivors long and healthy lives" (<http://www.stbaldricks.org/about-us/>, 2012) was now set to receive more than \$11,000.

Players from both teams solicited donations to have their heads shaved after the games to show solidarity to those with cancer. Stylists representing sponsor Capri College were on hand with the shears. Leading off to have her head shaved after the last out was Rita Jones, a local eight-year-old girl who raised the most money. She had taken on this cause as a personal challenge, not because of any known connection involving a family member or friend with cancer, but solely from her desire to help people.

Slightly built and with glasses, Rita had long flowing blonde hair. She had a nervous smile on her face as she sat in a steel folding chair behind home plate turned to face the bleachers. She

demonstrated great courage in front of her family and friends as her stylist began cutting and shearing to the crowd's cheers. She was still smiling minutes later upon the job's completion, but quickly put on a hat to cover her bald scalp as if just slightly embarrassed.

Her dad sat in the chair next to her where he waited to have his own head shaved as a sign of support. He appeared a bit uncomfortable in the public eye, and he visibly choked back tears as he watched his daughter display her bravery while her beautiful hair was shorn. It was an emotional scene. A father showing love for his daughter, who was herself showing love to people she didn't even know.

My nine-year-old son Michael and I left before the players had their heads shaved. We were en route to watch a United States Specialty Sports Association (USSSA) baseball tournament at the Dubuque Sports Complex. However, I wanted to play catch with Michael and so we stopped at Jackson Park at the corner of Main and 17<sup>th</sup>. I picked this park because it has a spacious area to play catch and because it wasn't far out of our way. But I also stopped there because it is located in a neighborhood that is racially and socioeconomically diverse, thus exposing him to persons vastly different from our mostly white, middle-class neighborhood and social circles.

We parked on Main St. and walked past the picnic tables and playground set. It was quickly apparent my goal of exposing Michael to different persons would be met. The park's patrons represented the stereotypes of those considered a bit rough around the edges: shirtless men with torsos adorned with faded tattoos, obese older women barking crass orders to their families, and toothless smiles with cigarettes sticking out of them.

Jackson Park has a nice playground area, and kids were running along the equipment's outskirts with toy guns. Michael and I began playing catch approximately 75 feet apart and to the left of the play structures. After approximately 20 throws, a boy

approached me, introduced himself, and asked if he could play. The boy, who I will call Todd, had sandy blond hair, average build, and his shorts were well down past his hips. He told me he was 10 years old and loved baseball.

I caught the balls from Michael, but let Todd throw the returns. He had average velocity for kids his age, despite faulty mechanics suggesting no one had worked with him. I asked him who his favorite team was, and with a sincere smile he pointed to the black and gold hornet stitched to my yellow and white trucker's hat and said "that team." He then said he wanted to play baseball and have his own glove when he got older. My heart sank at this statement. At age 10 he was already several years behind his peers in the development of skills and acquisition of the requisite knowledge. This would not be insurmountable with the proper tutelage, but a youth sports industry that identifies and starts grooming talent at young ages can be unforgiving to a latecomer.

Soon Todd's 12-year-old brother joined us. He was followed by three junior-high-aged girls wanting to play, though their interest seemed to be sparked by boredom. And then a real little guy who maybe was three years old joined us with a shy smile. His mother sat on the bench behind us, seemingly oblivious to everything. She had the appearance of someone worn out from life kicking her to the curb, and she didn't even flinch when Michael threw a ball over my head that almost hit her.

I had to give Michael a high target because we were using a real baseball and none of the kids had gloves. One of them asked to borrow mine and eventually they took turns, priceless grins on their faces as they treasured the opportunity to wear a \$40 Wilson glove. Todd's brother took charge of the rotation, making sure everyone only received a few throws, as if the mitt lost value each time the ball hit the leather. Michael and I soon left after the glove made its way back to me. Todd thanked us

for letting him play, and his parting smile glowed as if he had enjoyed the best twenty minutes of his life.

These two events involving children offer a powerful reminder of how sport perpetuates our society. They also demonstrate the opportunities sport provides us to make a difference in the lives of others, to affirm their basic dignity as human beings. This book will look at multiple facets of sport and the sport business industry through the lens of upholding the human dignity of all participants involved. The book takes Catholic social teachings on human dignity as its starting point, but its concepts are meant to be applicable to persons of any faith tradition, including none at all. The book will draw on my own personal failures and successes while also incorporating relevant research and current events to reflect on the correlations between the sport business industry and human dignity in eight different topic areas: intercollegiate athletics, gender stereotypes, hazing, integrity, labor issues, sports blogs, violence, and youth sports.

As DeBerri, Hug, Henriot, and Schultheis (2003) identified, the Catholic understanding of human dignity flows from the very fact of our existence. It is not something earned, and not something dependent on race, creed, economic class, abilities, gender, or other characteristics. It is rooted in our being made in the image and likeness of a loving God. This gives persons an equal moral worth and basic integrity, one requiring they be treated with respect as ends in themselves rather than used and abused as means to another's end. This is why Pope Benedict XVI (2007) pointed to our duty to respect the dignity of each person, warning against those with greater power violating the rights of those who are vulnerable and marginalized. As Brady (2008) argued, Catholic teaching holds the measure of every institution is whether it threatens or enhances the life and dignity of persons. The sport business industry is comprised of many such institutions we must judge according to this standard.

I have been involved with sports throughout my life. From an early age I have been both a participant and a fan. I have served on the board and coached in youth recreational leagues for several years. My entire professional life has been deeply tied to college athletics at a diverse range of seven colleges and universities throughout the Midwest. This work has included stints in sports information offices, coaching basketball and softball, and academic positions teaching physical education and sport management. It has put me in a position to think a great deal about how sports can both uphold and undermine human dignity.

The sport business industry can be used by coaches, businesspersons, manufacturers, and governing bodies to enhance the human dignity of others. Special Olympics is one prominent example of a sport governing body enhancing the dignity of previously maligned individuals, those with intellectual disabilities, through opportunities to participate in sport. Sport facilities are used for fundraisers for charity, ranging from golf outings to support well-known causes, to bowl-a-thons where a family rents a local alley to host a benefit for a loved one stricken by a disease.

Yet sport also can undermine one's human dignity. Elite college athletes receive no compensation for their production and have little power concerning their treatment. Women are objectified for their sexual allure as opposed to being respected for their demonstrable talent on the playing fields and in the office suites. Athletes are subjected to humiliation and degradation through hazing rituals for acceptance on their teams. Deceptive practices are commonly accepted in daily business operations. Workers in the factories and in the stadiums scratch out a living on deplorable wages considering the billions of dollars generated. Anonymous bloggers violate the principles of civil discourse while hiding behind screen names. Violent acts are promoted to

sell tickets and generate exposure. And youth sport participants face emotional, physical, and sexual abuse while navigating a system where specialization in one sport is encouraged to the overall detriment of the development of the entire person.

Pope Pius XII stated that sports must be subservient to the good of the soul. He also warned against elevating sport's importance, suggesting our greatness as persons consist of "more elevated aspirations" (Staab, 1957, p. 34). However, opportunities to reach these aspirations are available through sport. I missed out on an opportunity to partner with a local non-for-profit organization and arrange baseball clinics for the kids in Todd's neighborhood. I have failed multiple times throughout my association with sport, and so hopefully readers will learn from these mistakes and be inspired to respond accordingly. Doing so does not mean one has to be less competitive or pursue excellence with less vigor. It does mean we can use sport and the sport business industry to respect the human dignity of all persons, regardless of ability, race, gender, age, or socioeconomic status. We don't all have to be a Rita Jones to help the Todd's of the world.

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## **Chapter 1: On the Backs of the Poor**

My career in college athletics began two weeks into my freshman year at Millikin University in 1988. John Arenberg, the sports information director, noticed I listed “doing stats” as one of my three hobbies in “the meat book,” the publication containing the pictures of the new freshmen arrivals. John was new on the job and needed a student to help keep offensive statistics at home football games. This opportunity led to a work study position as the sports information student assistant, which included basic office work, research projects involving Big Blue athletics, and writing hometown press releases. Under John’s tutelage, I became convinced sports information was my calling.

I mailed more than 35 letters to different colleges in the Midwest during the spring semester of my senior year seeking employment. Rockford College is an independent, liberal arts college with NCAA Division III athletics, and it was the only institution to respond to my blind inquiry. They arranged for me to interview for the open position of sports information director and residence hall area coordinator, which ultimately I accepted. It was during this 1992-93 academic year where I had the opportunity to meet the Regents men’s basketball coach Tim Buckley. Buckley, who went on to enjoy a stint as the head coach at Ball State University, allowed me to help during his practices, sit in on conversations with his staff, and assist in the recruiting process.

This taste of coaching was addictive. I remained in sports information during the early part of my career, but my new dream to serve as a college coach became reality when I accepted a graduate assistant position on the Illinois Wesleyan University women’s basketball and softball staffs for the 1994-95 academic year.

Mandy Neal was my boss at Illinois Wesleyan and recruiting was not her passion. I became the lead recruiter for what became a successful 1998-99 senior class for both sports, and that group's prestige helped land me my first head coaching assignment at Blackburn College. In hindsight it is difficult to determine how much of my recruiting strategies were self-serving with that ultimate goal in mind, and how much was truly founded in guiding young women and their families to the college that best fit their athletic, academic, and social interests. One story may shed some light.

I recruited a post player out of central Illinois without the size or skill to likely ever be an impact varsity player in an Illinois Wesleyan program that annually contended for the College Conference of Illinois and Wisconsin (CCIW) championship. However, she was a nice young woman and could provide depth at both the power forward and center positions. Coaches were kept out of the financial aid process, but I would have guessed she received a lot of institutional monies. She did not dress or act as polished as many of the other women at the school that tended to attract students with high socioeconomic status.

This student had a campus job, presumably as part of her financial aid package. I was in charge of the junior varsity program and it did not sit well with me that her work schedule forced her to miss open gyms in September, so implicit pressure was being placed on her to rethink her priorities. Here was I, a 24-year-old coach without any pedigree, placing pressure on a freshman struggling in a new environment to attend open gyms that the coaching staff was not even allowed to watch and that were a month before practices even began.

Her mother called Mandy, and I was told to back off. I didn't understand. Participation in intercollegiate athletics involves a huge commitment and personal sacrifices, and it can be argued open gyms should be prioritized over a campus job. While this

position is debatable, the attitude behind its delivery is not. It was wrapped in the notion that “I am in charge and you will do what I ask or you won’t play.” Compassion or an attempt at understanding a student’s circumstances was not part of my agenda. And so a player who I actively recruited was reduced to second-class status, and this demotion impacted her minutes played on the junior varsity squad. There was no attempt to help her transition into a comfortable role within the program and with her teammates, and eventually she transferred. We had a large crop of freshman who could play the post, and I was already well on my way recruiting the next class of players that would pass her on the depth chart. So a decision that was probably painful and even costly to her family was of little concern to me.

My attitude at the time permeates college athletics more than we are comfortable admitting. Society sees college athletes, usually football and basketball players, and assumes their lives are full of big games, post-game parties, and celebrity status. We also learn of college athletes receiving inappropriate monies and benefits, being arrested for multiple crimes, engaging in academic dishonesty, and acting like selfish boors, and we make assumptions based on these perceptions.

There are college athletes whose actions and demeanor justify some of the stereotypes. These men and women cannot claim they have been victims of the system because their behaviors cross a line of well-established decency into the selfish, cruel, and self-absorbed. But these individuals are not representative of college athletes. They are exceptions in a world where athletes are exploited for profits and brand awareness, from the billions of dollars generated by NCAA Division I institutions and their partners, to the tuition dollars at the smaller colleges that have dominated my career stops.

This exploitation extends beyond the culmination of an athlete’s intercollegiate career. The NCAA’s licensing arm, The

Collegiate Licensing Company, a division of IMG College, enters into agreements with manufacturers and companies that place logos on their products. One such agreement is with the video game maker EA Sports, who in turn has used former college players' likenesses, numbers, and positions for their highly successful games.

Two recent class-action lawsuits, one led by former UCLA men's basketball standout Ed O'Bannon, and a second by former Nebraska and Arizona State University quarterback Sam Keller, have brought attention to this issue. O'Bannon and Keller's primary argument is that former student-athletes' likenesses are being used without remuneration after their college careers have ended. While the legal issues, with their complicated financial statements and First Amendment interpretations, play out, college sports fans should review the impact on the participants and whether or not their human dignity is being compromised. Though it may be difficult to ascertain exactly who and to what extent, it is unreasonable to assume the intercollegiate athletics industry and its stakeholders do not financially benefit from the continued promotion of former student-athletes not receiving any compensation.

The NCAA mandates a student-athlete sign a release allowing the Indianapolis-based organization to use the individual's likeness for promotional purposes. The 2012-13 version of the NCAA Division III Student-Athlete statement reads as follows: "You authorize the NCAA, or a third party acting on behalf of the NCAA (e.g., host institutions, conference, local organizing committee) to use your name or picture to generally promote NCAA championships or other NCAA events, activities, or programs."

Nothing explicitly states this authorization is in perpetuity. Since a student-athlete signs a similar document annually, it can be reasonably argued the form is limited to only the academic

year identified. And so why should the NCAA and its licensing partners be able to profit financially from the continued use of player likenesses?

The NCAA tackled other issues relevant to student-athlete welfare at its 2012 annual convention. The organization affirmed previously passed legislation allowing its member schools to offer multi-year scholarships to student-athletes. This passage reversed the long-standing practice where an athletic scholarship was for one year, overcoming the objections of many coaches, and it occurred despite the governing body's successfully defeating legal challenges suggesting the one-year renewal was an anti-trust violation. The new legislation offers an attempt at preventing abuses where student-athletes are removed from teams, and in effect their institution, because their athletic ability did not live up to the hopes of the coach who offered them a scholarship. The National College Players Association (NCPA), an advocacy group representing college athletes, provided data showing 22 percent of men's basketball players representing top programs, excluding those underclassmen selected in the National Basketball Association (NBA) draft, annually do not have their scholarship renewed (2012).

It is not uncommon in the business sector for a new boss to clean house of middle and upper management upon his or her arrival. This mentality has extended into intercollegiate athletics, where a new coach arrives and attempts to force out some of the current student-athletes. But should coaches truly be given that same latitude with young men and women? These student-athletes are not middle and upper management who in most cases receive a severance check, have already made a decent salary for a reasonable time period, and who likely already have a college degree and established credentials. Instead, these affected student-athletes often come from working and middle-class families and have no cushion on which to land after being

forced out of the institution where they committed to earn their degree.

But that is what happens when a player's ability to fit into a system or with a coach's personality is called into question. It may be an explicit rescinding of a scholarship or it may be implicit pressure placed on the student-athlete to leave the program. The result is the same, and the financial ramifications of transferring, which may include needing additional semesters to graduate, be damned. A student-athlete no longer has any worth to a university when he or she no longer has worth to the current coaching staff.

It can be big news when a talented player wants to transfer from one school to another. This was the case with former University of Wisconsin men's basketball player Jarrod Uthoff. The Badgers originally attempted to limit the options where Uthoff, who ultimately transferred to the University of Iowa, could continue his academic and athletic success. Yet coaches can break their employment contracts and leave the players they demand so much from without a whisper. There are countless cases where a coach has left one job for another despite years left on his or her contract. One example involved Todd Graham, who left his head football coaching position at the University of Pittsburgh after the 2011 season to accept a similar post at Arizona State University. Graham's farewell to his players was allegedly a generic text message because the timing did not allow anything more personal. Undoubtedly Arizona State officials wanted Graham in Tempe immediately. But how difficult would it have been for Graham to schedule a webcast conversation with his former players to offer a more formal and deserved farewell?

While certainly not in the same realm of big-time college athletics, when I left my previous employer for my current position, I personally called (and at a minimum left a voice message) for every senior physical education and sport management major. I also mailed a personal letter to all of

the underclassmen and incoming recruits. It meant having to explain my decision to a student's father, who was clearly not pleased since his son had based part of his decision to transfer to study in our department. It meant learning from a colleague that another one of my students was in tears upon hearing the news of my departure. I was her academic advisor and had helped counsel her both through the difficult decision of coming out of the closet, and then the heartache when her girlfriend left her a short time after she did so. I understand and respect the desire of many for career advancement, but I do not understand turning one's back on individuals who helped make the new opportunity possible. The new challenge would not exist had it not been for the hard work of employees or student-athletes under one's charge.

There is probably little governing bodies can do to truly corral these situations, but other circumstances in intercollegiate athletics warrant examination. One such practice is known as grey-shirting. This is where players are offered athletic scholarships but later are encouraged to delay attendance, even sometimes after being invited to participate in summer workouts, until the next spring or fall semester because a coach erroneously offered and had accepted more scholarships than the maximum allotment. These coaches assumed some individuals would not accept the scholarships being offered or inaccurately predicted how many fifth-year seniors would return to the program. The Southeastern Conference (SEC) football programs were the most notorious in using this method, and the conference leadership voted to adjust this process over the objections of its head coaches. These coaches, admittedly under a lot of pressure to produce victories on an annual basis, defended the practice as a necessity and downplayed the impact on student-athletes who delay enrollment or who defer their scholarships by paying their own tuition costs the first semester. This defense misses the point that the student-athlete accepted the scholarship with

the understanding it began the fall semester. The student-athlete is likely not interested in such a delay, probably has limited alternatives at such a late date, and may not have the financial means to pay for a full semester of tuition.

Coaches insinuate they do not know how many scholarships they have available on signing day because it occurs before fifth year seniors make a decision on whether or not to return. The authors for the website <http://www.oversigning.com> (2011) offered the following rebuke to this justification:

By over signing, coaches can bring in a few extra guys and work them through the spring while at the same time working the 5th year guys that have eligibility remaining, and then after spring training is over coaches can make a decision as to whether or not they want to renew a 5th year guy who may or may not have graduated yet, knowing all along they have an ace in the hole and will end up with the best 85. The coaches want their cake and eat it too. (This is where the competitive advantage issues come into play, para. 5.)

Grey-shirting is not the only nefarious practice prospective student-athletes need to be mindful of during their recruitment. Dohrmann (2010) described situations where high school basketball players had scholarship offers rescinded before the first day a prospective student-athlete could sign a letter of intent after another player at the same position committed to the same university. He alleged this occurs even when the first student-athlete verbally accepted the scholarship offer and had the full intent to formally sign the letter of intent on what is known as signing day. Dohrmann acknowledged some prospective student-athletes also “play the game,” verbally committing to

one institution while secretly waiting for a scholarship offer from the school they truly wish to attend. But a strong number of recruits, many of whom are first-generation college students, have no true advocate to help them navigate this system.

However, the creation of renewable scholarships and adoption of other reforms are a positive development for student-athletes and represent a success for advocacy groups such as The Drake Group. This organization is comprised of college faculty concerned about the place athletics has assumed in higher education. Their mission, as found at <http://www.thedrakegroup.org/>, is as follows:

To help faculty and staff defend academic integrity in the face of the burgeoning college sport industry. The Drake Group's national network of college faculty lobbies aggressively for proposals that ensure quality education for college athletes, support faculty whose job security is threatened for defending academic standards, and disseminates information on current issues and controversies in sport and higher education. (The Drake Group, para. 1)

Table 1 identifies their three main proposals, some of which were achieved with the reforms passed at the 2012 NCAA convention. Their proposals are based on the view that colleges must deliver the academic opportunities they have explicitly and implicitly promised student-athletes.

### Table 1. Drake Group's Three Main Proposals

#### **Phase I: Academic Transparency**

Ensure that universities provide accountability of trustees, administrators and faculty by public transparency of such things

as a student's academic major, academic advisor, courses listed by academic major, general education requirements, electives, course grade point average (GPA) and instructor—without revealing the names of individual students.

### **Phase II: Academic Priority**

Require students to maintain a cumulative GPA of 2.0 each semester to continue participation in intercollegiate athletics.

Make the location and control of academic counseling and support services for athletes the same as for all students.

Establish university policies that will ensure that athletic contests and practices do not conflict with scheduled classes.

### **Phase III: Academic-Based Participation**

Replace one-year renewable scholarships with need-based financial aid (or) with multi-year athletic scholarships that extend to graduation (five year maximum).

Require one year in residency before an athlete can participate in intercollegiate sport. This rule would apply to transfer students as well as to first year students.

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*Note.* Adapted from “The Drake Group Mission Statement,” 2012. Retrieved from [http:// www.thedrakegroup.org](http://www.thedrakegroup.org).

Table 2 identifies major findings from the National College Players Association's report *The Price of Poverty in Big Time College Sport*. The NCPA's mission is to provide the means for college athletes to voice their concerns and change NCAA rules (<http://www.ncpanow.org/more?id=0004>). Their goals include holding schools responsible for their players' sports-

related medical expenses, prohibiting universities from using a permanent injury suffered during athletics to remove an athletic scholarship, and eliminating restrictions on legitimate employment for student-athletes. The report outlines how extreme the monies being generated are, especially considering it is mostly done on the backs of low socioeconomic student-athletes.

Table 2. Major Findings of *The Price of Poverty in Big Time College Sport*

- In the 2010 academic year, the average annual scholarship shortfall (out of pocket expenses) for Football Bowl Series (FBS) “full” scholarship athletes was \$3,222.
- The percentage of FBS schools whose “full” athletic scholarships leave their players in poverty is 85% for those athletes who live on campus and 86% for athletes who live off campus.
- If allowed access to the fair market like the professionals, the average FBS football and basketball player would-be worth approximately \$121,048 and \$265,027 respectively. This does not count individual commercial endorsement deals.
- Football players with the top 10 highest estimated fair market values in 2009-10 were worth between \$345,000 and \$514,000. The top spot was held by University of Texas football players. While 100% of these players received scholarships that left them living below the federal poverty line and with an average scholarship shortfall of \$2,841 in 2010-11, their coaches were paid an average of more than \$3.5 million each in 2010, excluding bonuses.
- Basketball players with the top 10 highest estimated fair market values in 2009-10 were worth between \$620,000 and \$1 million in 2009-10. The top spot was held by Duke men’s basketball players. While 80% of these players received

scholarships that left them living below the federal poverty line and with an average scholarship shortfall of \$3,098 in 2010-11, their coaches were paid an average of more than \$2.5 million in 2010 excluding bonuses.

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Note. Adapted from *The Price of Poverty in Big Time College Sport*, by the National College Players Association, 2011, pp. 1-33. Retrieved from <http://www.ncpanow.org/research?id=0024>.

The Drake Group and the NCPA emphasize the abuses that occur in NCAA divisions where student-athletes are offered scholarships and where the financial statements demonstrate significantly increased expenses at a time when higher education, and tuition costs specifically, is facing great scrutiny. And while there is disparity in finances, the attitudes are not always necessarily different at the non-scholarship institutions.

NCAA Division III athletes receive no athletic-related financial aid. However, the talent and athletic ability these student-athletes demonstrate cannot be denied. Their passion for the game allows them to manage the time demands imposed by coaches, faculty members, friends, and family. They do all of this while paying tuition dollars for their opportunity to participate.

Yet these athletic departments knowingly and unknowingly take on some of the same attitudes modeled by their Division I counterparts. I have either attended or been employed at five different NCAA Division III institutions for a total of 23 years. It is my experience that these schools usually do live up to the NCAA Division III philosophy statements placing “athlete first and spectator second” and that student-athletes are not to be treated differently than other members of the student body. However, that should not be taken to mean that every action taken is congruent with this philosophy. Specifically, in my career I have witnessed the following:

- Coaches forcing players to practice for approximately 90 minutes after returning to campus at midnight from a tough road loss despite classes the next morning
- Coaches strongly discouraging their student-athletes from going into certain academic areas or taking classes with specific professors, even providing an exact listing of such teachers to avoid
- Coaches explicitly forbidding student-athletes to miss an in-season athletic practice for any academic-related activity
- College officials stating that exposure in larger media markets for the institution outweighs the class time student-athletes miss due to travel when deciding conference affiliation

These are only a handful of examples. Across Division III, it is clear that student-athletes often face pressures to prioritize their athletic participation above and beyond what is implied within the NCAA Division III philosophy. And in some cases, the pressures may be outside the student-athlete's full realization.

During my third season as the head women's basketball coach at Blackburn College we were fortunate enough to have enough players on the roster to field a junior varsity team. We were scheduled to play a junior varsity/varsity doubleheader against my former employer Illinois Wesleyan University on the Tuesday evening prior to Thanksgiving. The Titans were forced to cancel the junior varsity game on short notice, something that unfortunately often happens due to lower than projected participation numbers when the schedule is created. One of the hardest jobs a coach has is to tell junior varsity players, who practice equally as hard, already have fewer game opportunities, and who are still adjusting to a reduced status after high school stardom, that one of their games has been cancelled. But that was my predicament. So I offered the junior varsity players the chance to travel with the varsity team, sit on the bench fully dressed, and be eligible to participate. The players were told it would be

unlikely they would play and the decision was completely theirs. Their attendance was not mandatory, and they were welcome to head home for an early start to their Thanksgiving Break.

I suppose as a coaching staff we meant what we said at the time. But in reality we believed there was only one decision a junior varsity student-athlete could truly make, and that was to take the opportunity to sit on the varsity bench. The players were offered a choice that truly did not exist. So we were surprised when the majority of the players, including those with a realistic chance to be promoted to the varsity squad later in the season, decided to go home to their families.

One player lived in deep southern Illinois, farther from home than almost any player on our roster. So this player would be unable to see her family until Wednesday, because I would not want her making such a long drive by herself upon our return to campus after midnight. By all accounts, she was one of the least skilled players in the program, an undersized guard with below average athleticism, ball handling skills, and scoring ability. Her best assets to the program were an intelligence that allowed her to memorize the other team's plays, making her invaluable to the scout team, and a friendly personality and great smile that we used to our advantage when asking her to host recruits. But her decision to travel to Bloomington and dress with the varsity gave her a chance at some minutes as we were decimated on the scoreboard, and it also permanently bumped her ahead of her more talented teammates on the depth chart who decided to not join the varsity that evening. The coaching staff noticed who made the sacrifice, and we rewarded accordingly.

The culture surrounding intercollegiate athletics needs continued reform to better protect the dignity of often vulnerable student-athletes. The higher education community has the responsibility to see this reform through and ensure that all student-athletes at their institutions are afforded the opportunity to receive a quality education and well-rounded experience as

opposed to being exploited for financial gain and brand identity. This includes alleviating some of the pressure on coaches to win. It is this group who are responsible for guiding all of their players toward becoming responsible contributors in society and for ensuring all persons under their charge are treated with respect.

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## Chapter 2: Sex Sells

My mom purchased a *Sports Illustrated* subscription for me when I was eight years old. The first issue to arrive was the 1979 swimsuit issue, probably part of a special offer mom had not read through carefully. Even as a young boy who knew nothing about sex, the cover shot of Christie Brinkley in a bikini running her hands through her hair, and the picture inside of Cheryl Tiegs's nipples showing through her white mesh swimsuit, was exhilarating. I was not provided the opportunity to indulge as mom took the issue away, expressing her disappointment and threatening to cancel the subscription. The next two covers featured boxer Danny Lopez and basketball star Moses Malone, so I was able to enjoy the sports world again, just minus the hint of sex.

The implicit and explicit associations with sex are why women's figure skating and gymnastics typically rank among the most watched Winter and Summer Olympic sports respectively. It is why female tennis players and golfers who are considered more "mainstream attractive" are covered differently in the media and have more lucrative endorsement deals. And it is why women continue to face obstacles having their athletic prowess celebrated absent commentary on their sex appeal.

Current and former professional athletes like tennis player Anna Kournikova, auto racer Danica Patrick, and golfer Natalie Gulbis are adult women who make informed decisions in a capitalistic economy to market their sex appeal for financial gain. A decision to support or condemn their actions must be made in that light. Wanda Little Fennimore, author of *The Spectacle of Danica Patrick*, was especially critical of the race icon's association with godaddy.com's provocative television

advertisements, believing these and Patrick's photo shoots imply acquiescence in the objectification of women as passive, sexual objects (2010). But rather than solely criticize those women who provide the supply side of the economic equation, we also need to investigate those responsible for creating the demand.

Breslin (2012) decried this sexualization where a woman's value comes predominantly from her sexual appeal and at the exclusion of other personal characteristics. As Huber (1996) argued, the ethics of human dignity questions the decision to use other people or even oneself inappropriately as an instrument to obtain a goal. Unfortunately, the sport business industry frequently uses women as instruments to generate publicity and revenues.

I attended multiple sporting events from October, 2010, to January, 2012, taking notes about anything that could supplement the courses offered in the Loras College sport management program. The notes were then transcribed and subsequently coded for common themes. The issue recorded most frequently was the manner in which women were depicted for their sex appeal. The observations included how women associated with the event, and not exclusively the athletes themselves, were exploited to sell or promote the product.

The Eastern Iowa Outlaws are a roller derby team that debuted at the Dubuque Five Flags Center in the fall of 2010. The athletes were introduced on opening night, adorned in regular roller derby uniforms. The coaches and other persons associated with the team were also announced, including a busty brunette dressed in a revealing blue police officer's blouse. Her apparent role that evening was to represent the law in contradiction to the "outlaws," but ultimately her presence, intended or not, served to resonate with the male members in the audience.

Formula 1 auto racing comes to the Iowa Speedway in Newton each summer with the Iowa Corn 250. Cooper Tires

had exhibition space outside the grandstand in 2010. The manufacturer lured males passing by to their display by having a representative ask them to join two attractive women for a picture. Patrons were given a code to download this picture for free, and undoubtedly Cooper hoped individuals would post these photographs on Facebook or other social media outlets in an attempt to increase their brand awareness.

The use of beautiful women to lure and entertain male patrons is a common technique. A former female student of mine enjoyed professional stops at multiple Midwestern colleges early in her career, including one where an NFL team held its training camp. During a guest speaking appearance, she told a sport marketing class that one of her roles during training camp was to entertain team officials and other dignitaries at local nightspots. I was dismayed with her naiveté concerning her selection as a young, attractive, single young woman to host these men.

A prominent male employee for a professional sports team told the same class part of his responsibilities with the team's marketing department was to entertain high profile clients representing companies the team was soliciting for significant sponsorship dollars. Some of these clients wanted to be entertained at strip clubs. Though as a family man he admitted being uncomfortable in such establishments, he thought his job would be threatened if these sponsorship deals fell through for any reason, and so he went along.

Sports teams are as comfortable using sex appeal to their advantage at live events as they are behind the scenes. The Milwaukee Bucks Energy dance team is involved with a promotion called Guys Night Out. Fans receive drink tickets, a Bucks Pilsner glass, and the opportunity to attend a post-game meet and greet with members of Energy for a packaged price. The post-game activity allows fans to receive autographs from and have their pictures taken with select Energy dancers.

The Dallas Cowboy cheerleaders have aired seven seasons of their own reality television show “Making the Team.” The Country Music Television (CMT) program covers the annual tryouts and has included situations where coaches have told aspirants they are not slim enough to fit their ideal look, or where women have padded their bras to look bustier in the hopes of making the squad. Two members of the team traveled to Dubuque for a public appearance and autograph session as part of the 2012 Big Boy Toy show, an exposition for many area sports and recreation businesses. The event includes local beer distributors that in some years have had women with tight shorts, small tops, and bare mid-riffs approach customers offering free samples of the company’s latest product.

One sport that recently has incorporated beautiful women in these roles is hockey. Many teams now employ ice girls, adorned in cheerleading-type attire, to perform promotional functions. The Dubuque Fighting Saints, a United States Hockey League (USHL) team, employed a group of young women known as the Ice Angels during their inaugural 2010-11 season. Their job was to clean the ice twice a period and assist in game day promotions. Their uniforms included a long-sleeve shirt that did not inappropriately expose either cleavage or the midriff section, unlike their professional counterparts with the New York Islanders and Chicago Black Hawks. However, new management eliminated the positions for the 2011-12 season in favor of a more “street team” approach to their game-day promotions staff. The Fighting Saints wanted to better attract their target market of women heads of households, and they did not believe the Ice Angels fit with that strategy. This decision was not without protest by fans wanting the diversion of twenty-year olds in tight shorts cleaning the ice.

The link between sport and selling sex occurs elsewhere in the sport business industry. The restaurant chain Hooters clearly

promotes the sex appeal of waitresses at their restaurants to generate revenue. They have become a large corporation and recognizable brand that also sponsors bikini contests, publishes a magazine, licenses their products, and enters partnerships with major sport governing bodies. The World Cup and NASCAR were aggressively promoted at a Kansas City location during the summer of 2010. The restaurant had signs claiming they were the official sponsor of “soccer’s biggest extravaganza,” while small replicas of race cars hung from the ceiling and were affixed to the wall.

The company has also sponsored the Hooters Collegiate Match Play Championship, receiving mixed responses from higher education institutions as described in a 2004 article in *Athletic Management*. Some athletic departments declined to send their men’s and women’s golf teams, believing it would be inappropriate for their universities to be associated with the restaurant chain. Therese Hession, head coach of the women’s golf team at Ohio State University and president of the National Golf Coaches Association (NGCA), which organized the women’s tournament, said her group put a lot of thought into the sponsorship before approving it. “There was no way I was going to get my team or the NGCA involved in something where female student-athletes would be embarrassed or degraded in any way, so there were a number of things I was very specific on,” she was quoted as saying in the article. “For example, the sponsor wanted to have some of their Hooters girls at the awards ceremony, and we insisted that they wore full warm-up suits, not the outfits they typically wear at Hooters’ restaurants” (*Athletic Management*, 2004, p. 4).

Focusing on the attire misses the point. Hooters gained exposure and activation opportunities by sponsoring the tournament. And regardless of how women representing the chain dress at an awards ceremony, their entire business model

is predicated on women in revealing outfits. Hession said she was comfortable with the Hooters sponsorship because none of the female student-athletes who competed at the event expressed reservations. But college athletes are not a group of individuals with a lot of power to voice dissent. The more appropriate method would have been to ask the athletes their perceptions of Hooters and similar restaurants as it relates to the exploitation of women, and ask them to balance these attitudes with the benefits of attending a prestigious tournament.

Students in a 2012 Loras College January term Sport Business class studied how women were depicted in the sport business industry. The students were subsequently asked to reflect on their observations at sporting events and conversations with industry leaders to determine when an organization uses sex appeal to promote its business. A class roster of 15 men and 10 women were able to articulate when they believed such usage was distasteful. What they found the most offensive was not the actions of any professional or college sports team, or sport manufacturer or retailer, but instead some of the local girl's dance troops that performed at a local sports and recreational festival. Mostly prepubescent girls were dressed inappropriately and performing suggestive routines at this family event where area sports leagues offer registration services and local sports vendors promote their products. Unfortunately, a new generation of girls were simultaneously perpetrators and victims in reinforcing the notion that their value to an audience was based on their looks and ability to move in a seductive fashion.

The Lingerie Football League is another example of how women's sex appeal and attire are used to generate exposure and revenue. The twelve-team league features athletic women dressed in shoulder pads and a helmet, but also tight shorts and a bra. The women are playing real American tackle football without any gimmicks other than their uniforms. This is significantly

different than the Rick's Basketball Association (RBA), a basketball league featuring exotic dancers working for Rick's Cabaret International upscale gentleman's club locations across the country. Retired National Basketball Association (NBA) star Dennis Rodman wanted to take this concept a step further by hosting a topless basketball game. Women representing a strip club in Long Island would challenge another team in a game for charity. The idea for the game faded once the NBA lockout at the time was lifted, but it does beg the question of whether a charity, which presumably makes a responsible contribution to society, would be willing to deviate from their mission statement and accept a sizable financial donation to associate with such an endeavor.

The professional wrestling industry has an important responsibility in their depiction of women when considering their young, male demographic. A Total Nonstop Action (TNA) wrestling house show came to Dubuque in 2010, and beauty Angelina Love seductively ground her vaginal area over the ropes before entering the ring, much to the delight of the crowd at the Five Flags Center. Industry leader World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) has used the tag line "Sexy, Smart, and Powerful" to market their female talent. The "divas" have sexy photo galleries on the organization's web page, and they are not always portrayed as smart and powerful in their skits; in some story lines the women are clearly subservient to their male counterparts. Admittedly, the organization has reduced the number of lingerie matches, pillow fights, and bra and panties matches, where a winner was determined by being the first to strip her opponent to her underwear. But there can be little doubt the "sexy" in the tag line is the first descriptor for a reason.

One of the more notorious examples of the sport business industry utilizing sex is the annual *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue, which generates more advertising dollars and sells more

copies at the newsstand than any other issue. The 2012 issue continued a recent trend in featuring both models and current athletes, as soccer player Alex Morgan, golfer Natalie Gulbis, and swimmer Natalie Coughlin posed nude in body paint. Consumers who purchase the *Sports Illustrated* swimsuit issue certainly know what they are buying. And so do patrons who “like” targeted advertisements on their Facebook page such as Fox Sports Southwest Girls, with its thumbnail photo featuring two women in tight T-shirts. More subtle are the sports web pages with pictures of busty women in revealing tops with titles referencing “hot cheerleaders” or “hot athletes” located near the end of their stories. The intent is to entice readers to click on the photograph, leading them to a gallery of additional sexy photographs and, of course, information from sponsors.

The web site <http://www.Yardbarker.com> is one sports web page that makes photo shoots of attractive women readily available. The site, which explicitly identifies their partnerships with two mainstream media outlets with the heading “Yardbarker with Foxsports.com on msn,” features both legitimate sports stories and rumors. A reader scrolling down will have no trouble finding the site’s special section of Barker Beauties. It is also not uncommon for the site to offer photo galleries of attractive women who offer any connection to the sport business industry. Table 1 identifies just a few of the slide shows that were available on their site from November, 2011, to May, 2012.

Table 1. Slide Shows Available on <http://www.yardbarker.com> from 11/2011 to 5/2012

- A collection of seductive photos of Austria’s 21 hottest female athletes
- Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) ring girl Arianny Celeste’s 2012 calendar

- UFC ring girls
  - Racing star Danica Patrick in a bikini
  - Hot daughters of professional athletes
  - Cheerleaders of professional teams
  - Cheerleaders of college teams competing against each other that week
  - Attractive female college co-eds at schools competing against each other
  - Hot wives and girlfriends (WAGS) of Major League baseball players
  - Rank them: The hottest tennis WAGS
  - Hot WAGS of the NFL draft
  - F1 grid girls will get your engine started
- 

Former New York Jets sideline reporter Jenn Sterger was embroiled in a controversy involving former quarterback Brett Favre, with the latter alleged to have texted Sterger a picture of his genitals. Some web pages placed a sexy picture of Sterger to the side of their news account. The picture linked to a gallery of photos she had taken for the men's magazine *Maxim*. Sterger had made a conscious decision to market her sex appeal by doing the shoot, and undoubtedly was compensated at market value. But the photos were not relevant to the story, and it was inappropriate to include the thumbnail picture and the link.

The Sterger example reinforces comments attributed to sports announcer Pam Ward suggesting women in sports journalism and broadcasting are being hired more for their sex appeal than their demonstrable talent. Trumbull (2003) agreed with this sentiment in her work examining Ward's entrance into a male-dominated profession.

This practice is not limited to female sports broadcasters. Hammermesh (2011) defined lookism as "pure discrimination in

favor of the good-looking against the bad-looking.” Studies have been conducted to determine whether good-looking individuals, both men and women, are more likely to be hired than their less attractive counterparts despite equal or greater qualifications. Many sport business industry leaders graduate from Masters of Business Administration programs. Hamermesh (2011) discovered graduates of such programs who are handsome men make \$250,000 more in lifetime earnings than their lesser looking counterparts. Attractive women do not have higher starting salaries than their less-attractive colleagues, but they do enjoy faster earnings growth.

Lookism is not limited to adults. A photographer for a Christian youth sports camp once told me she recommended a photograph of a cute girl instead of a picture of a “goofy looking” kid for its promotional brochure because it would appeal better to prospective families. Organizers of the 2008 Summer Olympics had a nine-year-old Chinese old girl lip-sync the national anthem while a less attractive child did the actual singing from a different location. This example may be the most extreme yet, since the concept of lookism is being introduced, reinforced, and unchallenged at such young ages.

Degrading women and using sex to sell sports comes down to human dignity. Was human dignity being upheld when personalities on the St. Louis radio station 590 KFNS, “The Fan,” offered free World Series tickets for two women who came to the studio and engaged in the hottest lesbian kiss while being filmed and critiqued?

Major companies advertised their products on the podcast of the lesbian kiss. Consumers purchase the *Sports Illustrated* calendars and magazines, eat at Hooters, and click on the web links taking them to photo galleries. Whether it is an eight-year-old boy in 1979 looking at a picture of Christie Brinkley in a bikini, or an auto racing fan cheering for Danica Patrick, there

is a market for attractive women. This leads some to exploit their sex appeal for their own personal and financial gain while simultaneously reinforcing the notion that a woman's primary asset in the sport industry is her looks. Thus, it is imperative companies reflect on the human dignity of all persons, and not just those who have agreed to utilize their appeal, when making business decisions. By offering different images of women, the sport business industry has an opportunity to establish a counter-culture that respects and not undermines each person's dignity.

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### **Chapter 3: Ritual Don't Make Better Teammates**

I received my first college coaching position, in women's softball and basketball, at a small liberal arts college while completing my master's degree at a neighboring university. I was nervous during the beginning of my first non-traditional, fall softball season. My previous coaching experiences involved youth baseball, the Villa Grove Blaze Amateur Softball Association (ASA) Class A team, and volunteering for different Rockford College athletic teams while employed full-time as their sports information director. This would be the first time my coaching abilities and performance would be formally assessed.

The 16 practices were relatively uneventful, though early warnings surfaced that a local freshman was deservedly going to beat out a popular senior and returning starter at second base. Two other freshmen were also en route to unseating another senior as the team's number two pitcher. But the drama accompanying those situations was months ahead in the future when the team gathered at a restaurant near campus after the last fall practice. Here I was told that all new players, coaches, and athletic trainers would have to stand on their chairs and sing the school fight song. I was told I was going to be hazed.

The literature offers several definitions of hazing. Allan and Madden (2008) defined it as "any activity expected of someone joining a group (or to maintain full status in a group) that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate" (p.2). This last clause is an important part of the definition as it rejects any notion of consent. Sussberg (2003) offered a similar definition but added specific descriptors. He defined hazing as "to intimidate by physical punishment, to harass, to try to embarrass, or to

subject to treatment intended to put in ridiculous position” (p. 1423).

McGlone and Schaefer (2008) classified hazing using two categories: physical and psychological. They identified examples of physical hazing as beating, branding, paddling, consuming alcohol, using illicit drugs, and forcing excessive exercise. Psychological hazing examples included being subjected to verbal abuse, or being forced to commit crimes or simulate sexual activities.

Being asked to stand on a chair and sing to a group is a form of psychological hazing. I am an awful singer, and can recall the puzzled and dirty looks fellow parishioners at SS Mary and Joseph Catholic Church in Carlinville shot in my direction when I attempted to sing the hymns with any alacrity. Singing to a bunch of women who were my subordinates would be especially embarrassing.

I informed the head coach I did not plan to partake in the activity, whose response was a friendly yet firm “everyone has to do it.” For the first time, I worried about getting in trouble with my new boss. We had not had any problems but were still forging a professional relationship after only a month of working together.

The festivities began as planned after everyone had their fill of pizza. Each new player took her turn singing in front of her teammates and other restaurant patrons to varying degrees of success and with much laughter. On the surface, it appeared everyone was having a good time, though some players were clearly more nervous and embarrassed than others. The spirit in the restaurant was relaxed, and did not overtly seem to be a power trip imposed by the returning players on the new ones to keep them in their place. Yet regardless of the spirit or the intent, this is exactly what was happening.

As my turn drew near, my resolve grew stronger while my nerves got weaker. But thankfully after the last person was done there was no outcry for me to participate. It is likely my relationship with the players had not developed to the point where they were comfortable in asking or pressuring me. And either the head coach forgot about me or decided not to press a member of her staff in the same light-hearted manner she did with her players. A showdown was avoided and I again felt secure in my job.

A more serious form of hazing involved a friend who played college football. He was an offensive lineman, eventually overcoming his lack of size through hard work to become the team's starting long snapper as a senior. He described hazing that happened at the end of training camp during his freshman year to some of the more brash new faces and those freshmen already receiving repetitions with the first and second teams. On his account, several players were forced to slide on a Slip-N-Slide through puddles of the seniors' urine. My friend was not a threat to any upperclassmen's position, so his hazing experience might seem milder in nature if such comparisons are appropriate. Still, he was forced to walk to a local gas station and approach the counter to purchase the current issue of *Playgirl* and a jar of Vaseline. He was able to laugh off the embarrassment, and so the tangible impact he suffered does not compare to the physical and emotionally scarring that occurs in large numbers at athletic settings throughout the country. This chapter cannot possibly record all the hazing incidents reported in the literature or depicted on the news, but it will point to some telling examples of what is a still too common practice.

Sussberg (2003) recounted such an example in his article *Shattered Dreams: Hazing in College Athletics*. Female soccer players at the University of Oklahoma in 1997 were driven by members of the coaching staff to a deserted elementary school

during a road trip to the University of New Mexico. New players were then blindfolded, made to wear an adult diaper, forced to simulate oral sex on a banana, and smeared with whipped cream to simulate ejaculation as part of their initiation to the team.

The men's soccer team at Quincy University in Illinois engaged in their own hazing rituals in the early 2000s. New players entered a room one at a time to chants of "Bloody Feet." Thumbtacks were spread across the floor, and the men were ordered to stand barefoot on a chair. An athlete was blindfolded, heard his teammates say "Do you trust us?", and was told to jump off the chair and onto the floor, unaware that the returning players had replaced the tacks with popcorn (Farrey, 2003, p. 1).

The veteran players were stunned to learn the university reprimanded them. They believed the evening was a fun night offering the new recruits the chance to demonstrate respect for the returnees, and under no circumstance would they have allowed one of their teammates to actually jump barefoot on tacks. These young men underestimated both the emotional ramifications of the activities and the likely ostracizing of teammates unwilling to assent to the group's wishes.

Punishment is being meted out to persons associated with hazing activities more frequently. This includes not only the athletes, but coaches and administrators. Franklin & Marshall College fired the coach that had previously led them to a NCAA Division III women's lacrosse national championship as a result of alleged hazing incidents within the team (Matuszewski, 2012). The band director at Florida A & M University was fired after a band member reportedly died of hazing activities. Individuals familiar with the Florida A & M case reported that the university's band had a culture of hazing that had long gone overlooked. The alleged rituals included "the hot seat," where a band member was beaten with drumsticks and mallets while covered with a blanket, and "crossing over" where a victim could

be immune from future hot seats by successfully walking from the front of the bus to the back while being brutally attacked (O'Brien, 2012). A high school band in Georgia suffered a similar hazing incident that forced the cancellation of the squad.

The cancellations of band programs have parallels in athletics, where university officials have suspended varsity programs and cancelled entire seasons. Humboldt State University cancelled their 2012 men's soccer season after evidence of hazing activities surfaced involving new players being forced to perform humiliating acts and consume large amounts of alcohol; a similar investigation led to a three-game suspension of their women's soccer team. The University of Vermont cancelled the 1999-2000 hockey season after it was discovered veteran members of the team allegedly forced younger players to drink warm beer until they vomited, pass a hunk of chewed bread from mouth to mouth, and hold each other's genitals while the rookies marched in an "elephant walk." Northwestern University temporarily suspended the activities of their women's soccer team prior to their 2006 season for hazing activities. These included players being paraded around campus blindfolded in their undergarments, forced to consume alcohol in large amounts, required to engage in kisses with each other, and required to perform lap dances for the men's soccer team.

As the prevalence of reported incidents has increased, state legislatures have responded with tougher laws. Forty-four states have some sort of hazing legislation and a comprehensive list of these state laws is available at <http://www.stophazing.org/laws.html>. Some of these laws specifically address extreme forms of hazing such as sexual assault, additional types of violence, and consumption of alcohol resulting in extreme sickness or death. Two states have recently discussed hazing legislation that establishes significant consequences for the offenders. A Georgia state representative proposed a law making any student convicted of hazing ineligible to attend a state school or college.

Florida officials, responding to the Florida A & M band member's death, proposed legislation that would render those who engage in or witness hazing, including victims if they do not self-report, ineligible for financial aid at the state's universities. The latter is certainly controversial, especially in situations where a victim has already suffered great physical or emotional harm. But both proposed laws demonstrate a change in attitudes, the fact that such behavior is increasingly considered dangerous and criminal. Hopefully this attitude will make its way to the locker rooms and clubhouses.

Michael Reynolds (n.d.), author of the article *Developmental Disruptions: Hazing through Theories of Involvement, Power, and Privilege*, appropriately questioned why individuals would subject others to such degradation in the spirit of being teammates. Reynolds argued that hazing underscores some of the darkest human tendencies: the will to exert power over others, the inability to confront wrong for fear of reprisal, and the reckless disregard for human life and dignity.

Yet some continue to believe that hazing is not problematic and may actually be beneficial. They believe hazing does not compromise one's human dignity and individuals trying to curtail these behaviors are responsible for wussifying our nation. The blogger "AW from KC" responded to a news story about members of a Utah high school cheerleading team who were suspended for hazing girls new to the squad by smearing condiments on their bodies, including peanut butter spread on a girl with a peanut allergy:

I think it's unfortunate that the girl had a peanut allergy, obviously it wasn't major as she has recovered. Hazing is honestly a part of life, and really kids have been softened by a world of protection. Next you will say college dorms should all be shut down because

of hazing. (<http://usnews.msnbc.msn.com/news/2012/05/17/11745977-police-high-school-cheerleaders-suspended-for-hazing-incident-in-utah#comments>, 2012, p. 1)

Allan and Madden (2008) offered scientific analysis of these pro-hazing perceptions. They surveyed more than 11,000 students at 53 postsecondary institutions during the 2007 calendar year. The instrument included questions about the respondent's experiences with hazing and their perceptions about hazing on campus. The results indicated that students generally had positive views of hazing. Students reported undergoing hazing activities gave them a sense of accomplishment and belonging to a group, and it allowed them to do better in classes.

Allan and Madden's (2008) research also revealed the reasons many students who identified being hazed did not report the incident to authorities:

- Minimization of hazing – students did not think it was a big deal
- Being hazed is a choice – students willingly engaged in hazing so they did not believe repercussions were appropriate
- Rationalization – students believed undergoing hazing made them better persons
- Normalization – students believed hazing rituals are traditions that should be left alone
- Lack of awareness – students did not realize it was hazing
- Disagreement with definition of hazing – students believed society is imposing their definition

There is still a powerful idea that hazing is necessary for a team to bond. This was strongly challenged by former Oklahoma University women's soccer player Kathleen Peay, one of the victims of the hazing described in Sussberg's article, who left

the program after her teammates violated her trust and human dignity. Funk (2009) pointed out that some National Football League (NFL) coaches have eliminated long-standing hazing rituals at training camp, assuming hazing will be harmful to their team chemistry. Being degraded in front of peers, regardless of a shared experience, is more likely to foster dissent, mistrust, and anger than team unity.

But this new stance against hazing activities is not yet widespread among the coaching ranks. The numbers continue to demonstrate hazing is a problem, especially within intercollegiate athletic teams. Crow and Rosner's research (2002) indicated more than 80 percent of student-athletes had been involved with some form of hazing. These students were asked to indicate their participation in, or knowledge of, hazing behaviors. A study conducted at Alfred University (1999) revealed approximately 80 percent of student-athletes endure "questionable or unacceptable activities as part of their initiation onto a collegiate athletics team." Allan and Madden's (2008) more recent work suggested a lower figure of 55 percent, but still a number too high. The following are examples, taken from both studies, of the most prevalent and egregious hazing instances that respondents self-identified experiencing.

- Tattooing, piercing, head shaving, or branding
- Depriving oneself of food, sleep, or hygiene
- Consuming extremely spicy or disgusting concoctions
- Participating in drinking alcohol contests
- Being tied up, taped, or confined in small spaces
- Paddling, beating, kicking, or beating others
- Kidnapping and abandoning
- Drinking large amounts of alcohol to the point of getting sick or passing out
- Performing sex acts with opposite gender

Loras College students Olson, Miller, and Potter (2011) conducted research on the attitudes Iowa Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (IIAC), an NCAA Division III conference comprised of nine small, private institutions located throughout the state, student-athletes hold about hazing. Some of their results were a pleasant surprise and in direct contradiction to the Alfred University study. IIAC athletes, by an overwhelming majority of 75 percent, stated they did not believe hazing exists on their campuses, even when provided a broad definition. Meanwhile, 85 percent of the respondents who completed their surveys believed hazing is not positive. Their results did, however, also indicate IIAC athletes are similar to their national counterparts in that they would not be likely to inform school officials if they knew of a hazing incident.

Hill (2001) identified two main reasons why hazing activities are prevalent in athletics and frequently go unreported. The first is that athletes' identities are tied to their sport and being a member of a team; they will endure humiliation and pain to protect this status. Hill described individuals who have always been athletes and who do not want to be on the outside, so they are willing to go along with things they find uncomfortable. He also believed some athletes even look forward to the process. The second argument is that coaches often turn a blind eye. This can be rectified through strong leadership. Crow and Phillips (2004) provided solid recommendations for anti-hazing policies that athletic departments can implement to protect the dignity of the student-athletes. These included clearly defining hazing to coaches, administrators, athletes and trainers; implementing alternative team-building strategies; training coaches, administrators, athletes and athletic trainers to recognize hazing; and including athlete's off-field behavior in a coach's evaluation. The latter is not without controversy but certainly places more pressure on coaches to recruit student-athletes with strong character and to adopt a "no tolerance" message on hazing.

Sometimes we must sacrifice some of our individual identity for the good of a collaborative effort. This may mean sharing some sales leads with the new associate, hitting the ball to the right side of the field to advance the runner, or allowing a new colleague to assume responsibilities historically our own. There are also times when our sense of pride is so strong we don't allow ourselves to laugh off an embarrassing incident. Pride in these instances can hinder our ability to build stronger relationships.

But there is a clear distinction that must be drawn between being embarrassed by something that occurs accidentally, such as dropping a tray of food in the cafeteria, and enduring intentional ridicule or physical, sexual, or emotional harassment as the price of entry into a group. This must include even what may seem less troubling acts such as being forced to sing a school song in front of one's peers or subordinates. Eliminating these activities that fragile-minded persons force others to do makes us stronger as a society, not weaker. Membership or acceptance in a group, on a team, or in an office setting should never involve the loss of one's human dignity.

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## Chapter 4: The Truth Depends on the Audience

I told occasional lies as a kid to stay out of trouble, but they were not part of a regular pattern. However, I was busted for a significant act of dishonesty during the summer of 1983 at Peoria's new, state-of-the-art Landmark Recreation Center. My parents were unable to afford the Atari or Nintendo systems popular during that era, so my opportunities to play video games such as Mrs. Pac Man, Donkey Kong, Frogger, and Q\*bert were limited to three options: playing with friends such as Robbie Clark, who had the Atari system and who was so skilled at Pac-Man that he was always forced to quit since otherwise the game would never end; the K Mart location in Morton, where my brother Jeremy and I would rush to the display system to play Adventure and Asteroids while mom shopped with our younger brother Jared; and arcades such as in the Pekin Mall and at Landmark.

My small allowance usually went toward baseball cards, but on one July morning I had saved enough quarters to play arcade games while mom bowled in her women's league with my Aunt Kathy and Aunt Jean. I played Mrs. Pac-Man 12 times and became obsessed with achieving an all-time personal best score. I had an inexplicable need to continue playing, but was now out of money. So in my desperation, I placed a piece of paper in the change machine with the hope of receiving some quarters. I even drew numerals on the corners in a futile attempt to fool the technology. The machine wasn't tricked, and it got jammed in the process. The manager had to come over and fix the machine, and upon discovering the reason for the malfunction promptly threw me out of the facility.

To my knowledge, my mother never learned of my misdeed. Jeremy and my cousins Wendy and Teresa joined me in walking on the sidewalk outside the facility in the hot morning sun, badmouthing the manager for upholding the integrity of his business. It was impressive to attract a loyal following, but inside I felt awful. I confessed my sin at my next sacrament of reconciliation, and after doing my penance was confident that I would never again engage in such an egregious form of dishonesty. Little did I know then what would happen fifteen years later.

I spent the 1998-99 academic year as the head coach of the Blackburn College women's basketball team. This was my third, and ultimately last, season on the bench. The previous year's team had enjoyed one of the best seasons in school history, pinning the only St. Louis Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (SLIAC) loss on 22-win Fontbonne College, defeating my former employer and regional power Illinois Wesleyan University in an emotional game the afternoon after Valentine's Day, and finishing third in the now defunct National Small College Athletic Association (NSCAA) national tournament. Approximately 80 percent of the scoring from the 1997-98 squad had graduated, and this current version was young and inconsistent while still gaining confidence using a new offense better suited for the team's skill set.

Yet the 1998-99 team had shown signs of overachieving, winning the most non-conference games in school history and remaining in the SLIAC title chase through the first round of conference play. This good play was evident during a contest against league favorite Fontbonne, who would sweep through the conference without a loss. The Griffins had become a chief rival as our two programs battled for conference supremacy, and we threw everything we had at them in a close game at Dawes Gymnasium on the Blackburn campus. Our fate was sealed,

however, when our second-team all-conference selection missed two free throws with less than ten seconds left that would have tied the game. I was angry a winnable game had slipped through our fingers. And my venom was directed at Fontbonne's star point guard, who had talked trash all game and now was a bit too exuberant for my taste as she congratulated my players during the post-game handshake. Instead of taking the high road, I decided to let her know my thoughts on her sportsmanship. She then offered her opinion on my comments and verbal sparring ensued. I finally turned away to gather my things and begin my post-game routine, when I inexcusably uttered a derogatory term in her direction.

My two assistant coaches heard my remark and immediately ushered me toward our bench to remove me from any possible controversy. I did not believe anyone else heard my insult, but rumors began to swirl among the team before our next practice. I decided to be proactive and went to the athletic director first thing on Monday morning. I told him of the verbal confrontation, and of the accusations, but I assured him the derogatory term in question was not used. I repeated the same thing to my team in a quick meeting before Monday's practice. I even went so far to ask the player who I insulted to fax an affidavit saying she never heard me use the word, which of course I knew she did not. Ultimately, I lied to protect myself. It remains the most blatant form of dishonesty I have ever engaged in.

The ancient Roman philosopher Cicero asked, "Where is there dignity without honesty?" But we must first define honesty. Thornton, Champion, and Ruddell (2012) defined honesty as not deceiving or lying to others. Lumpkin, Stoll, and Beller (1999) categorized dishonesty as a principle with the three negative precepts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Should the tricks of the trade that are commonly accepted as sound business practice be construed as dishonesty? The following scenario, one described in one of my Loras College sport management classes by an industry representative, is an example of such a practice.

A group sales representative for a minor league sports franchise was working with a local university to arrange an alumni night. Closing the sale would result in a high commission. This particular sales staff member learned the school was considering another local sports team for their group night and that price would be an important variable factored into the final decision. So he called his competition and posed as a member of a fictitious company interested in an outing so he could learn how far the other organization would reduce their price to attract such a large group. He then used that information to better his offer to the university alumni office. The institution ultimately went with his organization and bought more than 1,000 tickets to the game.

It is clear this sales associate deceived his competitor by posing as someone he was not so he could gain valuable pricing information. Thornton, Champion, and Ruddell (2012) would characterize this deceit as dishonesty. But would this characterization be applicable in an industry where success is determined by results, and such behavior and strategy is expected and even rewarded with commission checks and promotions?

The United States Catholic Bishops document *Economic Justice for All* (1986) urged that economic decisions be judged by whether or not they protect or undermine the human dignity of the person. Does dishonesty automatically undermine the human dignity of the person deceived, or is it dependent on the circumstances?

Is withholding of the truth a lie by definition? My assistant coaches did not report my indiscretion, allowing me to escape career damage. In my career, I too have protected colleagues and students by not reporting infractions that would have resulted in disciplinary action as severe as termination, suspension, or expulsion. This includes not reporting colleagues at a previous employer whom I knew were involved in romantic and sexual

relationships with traditional-aged students. Were these individuals' human dignity protected or undermined by my not informing their supervisor of their misdeeds and allowing them to avoid punishment? More clear is that my inaction compromised the human dignity of the students involved. These students made conscious and informed decisions as adults to enter romantic relationships with a coach or professor, but they could never be equals in an arrangement with such a disparity in power.

There may also be those in middle or upper management with first-hand knowledge of something important to the company that will impact employees, but who are expected to keep such knowledge quiet until organizational leaders deem it appropriate to let people know. Does an athletic director who has made the decision to not renew the contract of a head coach or fellow administrator have the responsibility to let that individual know as soon as the final determination has been made? Such knowledge would give the terminated person a head start on finding alternative employment. But there may be reasons important to the college or a particular team why announcing the decision prematurely would cause harm. So is an immediate supervisor withholding such information denying the person his or her human dignity?

There are multiple examples in the sport business industry that involve some sort of dishonesty or deception. I purchased a hobby box of 2011 Topps Series Two baseball cards that guaranteed two relic cards and one autographed card to be distributed among the enclosed jumbo packs. Relic cards have a piece of the player's bat, glove, or uniform embedded into the card while an autographed card is one with an original signature featured on the card's front. I did not receive an autographed card and decided to contact the manufacturer. The hobby shop owner where I purchased the box advised me to inform Topps

that I also did not receive a relic card. His rationale was that several of his customers had not received satisfactory service from Topps when submitting similar complaints. His definition of unsatisfactory service was that the customer received an autograph or relic of a low-level star as opposed to a hobby leader. He thought if I stated I was missing two cards instead of one, Topps would be more willing to correct a larger error with better replacement cards. That the fact the box guaranteed an autograph card, and not necessarily an autograph card of a star player, was irrelevant in his estimation. I told the owner his strategy was not appropriate as it was dishonest, and ultimately I proceeded in the original intended manner that was just. Approximately eight weeks later Topps mailed me a Mike Leake autographed card. A baseball card featuring the Cincinnati Reds pitcher is not great by hobby standards, but I was satisfied with both the process and the result.

Lying to Topps would have been unacceptable. But would it have violated any person's human dignity? Topps is a publicly traded company which generates considerable revenues. No employee or shareholder would have been laid off or incurred a tangible financial loss if the company had gone into its vaults to issue one more replacement relic or autograph cards. But it is not that simple. The more customers that swindle the company with fraudulent complaints, the more likely Topps will have to raise their prices to offset their incurred losses. Increased prices potentially squeezes collectors on the lower side of the socioeconomic scale out of the hobby, and the reduced customer base subsequently impacts the hobby shops and on-line retailers in such a manner that may hurt their profit margin. This scenario may be theoretical, but it is imperative the possibility of a false request for an additional relic card be viewed not as just one isolated case.

Intent to defraud, as opposed to a legitimate mistake, may be necessary to argue a manufacturer or retailer is being dishonest when their product is not as advertised. Dishonesty attaches to manufacturers, retailers, and all middle agents when knowledge of the defect or condition becomes apparent and corrective action is not taken. If a sales associate intentionally lies to a direct question concerning a product, than the employee, and possibly even the business who hired him or her, is guilty of deception. The customer reasonably assumes the associate has the implicit authority to answer such questions and is doing so honestly.

We should assume sporting goods stores and other businesses follow the law when they produce their advertisements. Educated customers anticipate additional details may be in fine print. The Dick's Sporting Goods 2012 Baseball/Softball Team Packet offers a 1 5/8 x 2 3/4 coupon featuring a picture of a baseball glove and the words "Take 10% off any baseball or softball glove." Below that in a legible, but considerably smaller font, is the following:

Limit one item per coupon per customer. Cannot be combined with any other offers, coupons, team discount or Guaranteed In-Stock markdown, or used for gift cards, licenses or previously purchased merchandise. Coupon valid on in-store purchases only. No reproductions or rain checks accepted. Excludes all gloves \$160 or more. Some additional exclusions may apply. See store for details.

How should the appropriate balance between the consumer's responsibility to review information and the responsibility of a business creating team coupon packets to drive customers

to the store be determined? And do customers incur the same responsibilities dealing with established retail chains as opposed to independent individuals or organizations?

A case in point occurred during my time in the coaching ranks. A colleague had her players complete several fundraisers to help raise money for the team's annual spring trip to Florida. Wealthier families were allowed to write a check covering their expenses so their daughters did not have to participate in the fundraisers. But most players needed to fundraise to help offset their costs.

The team partnered with a local bank on one such fundraiser. Patrons who went to the bank and made a transaction on this particular Saturday morning received a token redeemable at Wal-Mart for a free car wash, courtesy of the team. Other persons wanting their vehicle cleaned were expected to pay five dollars. The coach had her players take turns standing on the south end of the retailer's parking lot holding a 28 x 22 poster board that read FREE CAR WASH in large block letters. Underneath in small letters, that were in no way visible from the highway, was the phrase "With token." This was clearly a deceptive practice, but some persons inappropriately rationalize the action by stating no one should expect anything for free and it is common knowledge such car washes are fundraisers. There may be some truth in these two statements, but that still does not justify the deception.

Dishonesty in sales practices expands beyond the retail industry. Recruiting is a form of a sale for hiring managers, search committee chairs, coaches, professors, and admissions counselors. It involves attempting to convince a prospective student or employee to attend your institution, play with your team, or work in your office.

Successful recruitment involves accentuating the positives. Search committees hosting a strong candidate may deflect direct

questions concerning salaries with cost of living data, raise histories, or additional means a person can supplement his or her income. Those involved with recruiting students have different strategies. All prospective Loras College sport management students and their families are informed how our case study teams have won three national championships and that our recent success is unparalleled by any school in the country. Participation on these teams is a result of a tryout process, and students incur associated costs with their travel, but while I don't deny this, I don't emphasize these facts as heavily during a recruit's visit.

MacMurray College in Jacksonville, Illinois, was a chief rival of Blackburn during my tenure as the head women's basketball coach. We recruited several of the same players, and I often saw MacMurray coach Don Mulhern at high school basketball games. His 1997-98 Highlanders' squad started four talented freshmen while my team started four seniors. Our schools often recruited in the same high schools, and it was to my advantage to describe his starting lineup's makeup to recruits in an attempt to suggest playing time would more likely be immediately available on my team. Some might consider this an unethical recruiting practice, but the starting lineups were a verifiable truth and thus not dishonest. Was the human dignity of potential recruits violated, especially if their college choice was impacted? Determining this involves a balancing act between the sales representative and the consumer. Where is the responsibility of the recruit and their representatives to ask the right questions and press for satisfactory answers? And how does it compare with the recruiter's dual responsibility of being honest but also getting student-athletes to play for his or her institution?

Dishonesty can also involve the recruit's stretching the truth in an attempt to gain favor with a coach or hiring manager.

High school athletes may accentuate their statistics or take them out of context to look more favorable to college coaches and recruiters. Job applicants can do the same when detailing their experiences to prospective employers. An example would be my nonexistent college athletic career. Some jobs in college athletics prefer a candidate have experience as a college student-athlete. I began playing tennis recreationally during my last years in high school and early years in college. My only formal lessons were from the East Peoria Fon du Lac Park District when I was a pre-teen. I was one of the better players in high school physical education class, but I failed to ever win a match in the Pekin City Tournament. I was involved in blatant dishonesty when one of my friends subbed for another in a Sunday morning consolation doubles match when my original partner could not attend. My friends were of equal ability and so I justified the action because I was not bringing in a ringer. But this was irrelevant and an unsatisfactory justification.

I eventually improved enough to be one of the better players in my college physical education activity class. I defeated Millikin's number one women's singles player in our own version of the Battle of the Sexes. Some of the men's tennis players were friendly acquaintances of mine and I knew the head tennis coach from class and my campus job in the sports information office. And so during the fall of my sophomore year, I notified my friends of my intent to go out for the team. The Big Blue's men's tennis program did not have large numbers, so making the team was not going to be a steep hurdle.

I attended the team's first informational meeting and stayed apprised of what was happening in the program for several weeks during the fall, non-traditional season that consisted only of the encouragement to practice on one's own. I may have signed NCAA materials and media releases, but I do not recall getting on an official roster with the sports information office. I never officially quit the squad but by the time spring rolled around

my interest had waned. I never joined the team for the spring season, ending a career that would have resulted in playing the exhibition matches scheduled for the guys who don't make the top six. It would be dishonest for me to suggest I was a college athlete.

I have served on multiple search committees for coaching and athletic administrator positions. I have never been involved with any high-profile situations involving dishonesty such as when the University of Notre Dame pressured football coach George O'Leary to resign only days into his tenure after it came to light O'Leary embellished his resume by falsely indicating he possessed a Master's degree and intercollegiate varsity football letters. Malloy, Ross, and Zakus (2003) used the O'Leary scenario to pose questions for discussion in a case study in their book *Sport Ethics: Concepts and Cases in Sport and Recreation*. They wanted their readers to consider whether O'Leary should have been given a pass since Notre Dame had not practiced due diligence in its background research prior to offering him the job. The authors posed a second question concerning whether or not it was ethical for Notre Dame to fire O'Leary for misrepresentations that did not hinder his ability to coach football. Notre Dame's negligence did not nullify O'Leary's misdeed, and his action ranging from negligence in proofreading application materials to the more probable dishonesty does call into question his ability to serve as the leader of a major college football program or any sport business.

I have called candidate's references and had persons get upset because they barely knew the applicant who identified them. One noteworthy example of this name dropping eliminated an otherwise impressive applicant's candidacy to become a college's athletic director. The gentleman's honesty was never specifically questioned for erroneously identifying a high profile person as a professional reference, but his judgment certainly was.

Information can mislead and also can be shared, sometimes inappropriately. I owned a successful girls' basketball camp in Carlinville in the late 1990s. Carl Clayton replaced me as the Blackburn women's basketball coach, and I thought it appropriate he be allowed to run his own camp without competition from me. So I sold him the names and contact information of each person who had attended my camp. I never acquired permission from any of these families, and the families never signed anything implicitly or explicitly giving me permission to sell their information to a third party. I recalled this situation when my former ticket sales representative with the St. Louis Blues solicited me for tickets representing his new employer the Kansas City Royals. I thought it was dishonest that he took my contact information, property of the Blues organization, with him to his new job. Maybe he was ignorant of the need to respect the dignity of his customer base, much like I was when it came to my camp.

Sometimes dishonesty may have moral justification. The movie *Cheaters* fictionalized the true story of the 1994-95 Illinois Academic Decathlon championships when Chicago Steinmetz, an open enrollment school, upset magnet school and perennial power Chicago Whitney Young in the state finals. Steinmetz students cheated when one of the team members paid for a copy of the exam, providing the entire squad time to read the questions and discover and memorize the answers.

When accused by organizers and representatives of the Chicago school board, the characters in the movie used terms such as “the ultimate affirmative action” and an “act of civil disobedience” to rationalize their dishonesty. They defended their actions by saying the system was corrupt, accusing Whitney Young of receiving benefits other public schools don't and hinting parents had purchased a P.O. Box in Chicago just so their kids could attend the prestigious school. Dr. Plecki,

the teacher, says that “sometimes one has to break the rules to change them.”

Certainly this is true. I sympathized with the Steinmetz team as a working-class kid who knew the feeling of not being provided the same financial advantages as others. But in this instance, the justification used came after the fact; the kids as depicted in the movie *Cheaters* were motivated to win and conveniently used classism in hindsight. So their argument rings hollow.

Sometimes there may be business reasons for dishonesty. One of my students described a situation at the minor league baseball team where she interned. The team’s previous general manager allegedly made bad deals with multiple groups where he promised free food and drink in exchange for the purchase of a set number of tickets. The general manager left the organization, and his replacement did not believe the team could financially absorb these costs and thus voided the agreement. Customers, who made the deal in good faith, were irate with the change. The organization admittedly would take a huge financial hit by giving away so much free food, but it was the team’s ownership group that hired the original general manager, and thus the team should be bound by the promises he made.

We are ultimately called on to always respect others. Deception to gain favor in recruiting, sales, or employment status violates the principles set forth in *Economic Justice for All*. Sometimes dishonesty directly impacts others in a hurtful way, and other times the domino effect can be too theoretical to ascertain. Regardless, the safest course to protect a person’s human dignity is for institutions and individuals to be truthful in their interactions.

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## **Chapter 5: You Have to Earn Your Keep**

The capacity to work hard is a learned skill. Demonstrating the ethic to complete a task at the highest level despite personal sacrifice is a value several mentors instilled in me. Early in my career the lessons came from John Arenberg and Dave Kidwell, sports information directors at Millikin University and Eastern Illinois University respectively. They both demonstrated how one had to put in long hours on the job, and that attention to detail and accuracy were paramount. Even small mistakes had to be corrected, despite the time involved to do so and the “hit” one may take with constituents.

I detassled corn during high school and college. I became a crew leader for Sommer Brother Seed Company at age 15, a promotion which earned me an extra quarter an hour. I wanted my group to be the most efficient and productive. Other crews purposefully stalled in the middle afternoon sun to lazily ride out the rest of the day, but I pushed to get that extra round completed even though there was no extra compensation for doing so. Productivity, an honest effort, and quality work mattered.

I also bailed hay at every opportunity during those summers, taking several turns being the person at the highest and hottest point in the barn as the bails were unloaded off the tractor. I often umpired baseball games after being in the fields all day, making for days that lasted from 5:30 in the morning until 10:00 at night. This schedule was good preparation for my first job after graduation at Rockford College during the 1992-93 academic year. My official duties were to serve as the sports information director and residence hall area coordinator, but I also became a volunteer assistant coach for the men’s and women’s basketball and the softball teams. My compensation

was \$100 a month, before taxes, and room and board. However, I was able to work for individuals such as Tim Buckley and Joe McCarthy. These gentlemen taught me the lessons of hard work previously learned in the sports information office but now applicable in the coaching arena with the countless nights on the road recruiting and time demands necessary to prepare a team for the next game or season.

At one point early in my career, I accepted a graduate assistant position in the sports information office at Northwest Missouri State University in Maryville, but it concluded prematurely upon the realization a Master's degree in English did not suit my interests. Students pondering graduate assistantship options should avoid my mistake of selecting an institution exclusively for the job without having an interest in the particular academic program. I withdrew from classes during my first semester, rendering me ineligible to continue my athletic department duties. However, I stayed with the university's sports information office through the 1993 Bearcats volleyball season without pay, racking up extensive credit card debt to offset living expenses, so as to minimally fulfill my obligation to the school's fall sports season.

Thankfully my parents always made it clear freeloading at home would not be tolerated after graduating college. I returned home for two weeks after my failure at Northwest Missouri State, but left again after Thanksgiving. This time my destination was Charleston, Illinois. I slept on the floor of my friend Lance Huber and his roommate's apartment while waiting to gain acceptance into the graduate program in sport management at Eastern Illinois University. Lance was serving as a student coach for the men's basketball program and introduced me to Dave Kidwell in the sports information office. Dave afforded me an opportunity to work at men's and women's basketball games, and this led to a regular student assistant position when

classes began. I supplemented my income until the spring semester began by driving more than one hour each way from Charleston to Decatur on Illinois Route 121 to make minimum wage working as a Christmas season runner in the advertisement department for the *Decatur Herald and Review*.

I transferred from Eastern Illinois University to Illinois State University beginning in the fall of 1994 as part of a career change from sports information to coaching after receiving the graduate assistant women's basketball and softball coaching position at Illinois Wesleyan University. I remained at Illinois Wesleyan as a part-time coach after receiving my master's degree a year later, so I supplemented my \$2,000 stipend and coaching career with a full-time job working at the Tazewell County Resource Center (TCRC). I was a job coach for intellectually challenged individuals, which usually meant cleaning hotel rooms at a hotel in Normal while simultaneously supervising a crew of four men cleaning other rooms. So having a Master's degree earned me seven dollars an hour to clean guests' trash, vomit, blood, and secretions. Similar to the days in the corn fields, my focus was to clean as many rooms as fast as possible without compromising hotel's standards. I was paid by the hour but was not interested in going slow, since I wanted to leave the hotel to get to my "real job" in the basketball offices.

I have repeatedly experienced ending a pay period with fewer than 25 dollars in a checking account while having no savings. I took out additional loans, deferring the debt incurred as an undergraduate student, to help me through graduate school. My wife Cheryl and I had no leftover income in our early 30s after paying private school tuition for my doctoral program at Saint Louis University and bills related to the new additions to our family. Those were stressful times because we were always a medical mishap or broken appliance away from serious financial disarray, yet we managed our money tightly, worked hard, and

took advantage of the relative good health God bestowed on us. So I don't take kindly to the complaining of individuals who have to make sacrifices to earn a living, especially those early in their career, or those who expect the government to amend their student loan debts. There is dignity in work, and one has to do the work and make the financial sacrifices for an extended period before one can fully reap more tangible benefits.

Pope Leo XIII offered one of the greatest articulations on issues related to labor in 1891 with his papal encyclical *Rerum Novarum*. This document, sparked by labor unrest throughout the world due to poor working conditions and the rise of socialism, was authored at a crucial time in the labor movement's origins. Pope John Paul II (1991) summed up the times in his encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, written on the one-hundredth anniversary of *Rerum Novarum*:

Labor was characterized by high rates of production which lacked due regard for sex, age, or family situation, and were determined solely by efficiency, with a view to increasing profits. Labor became a commodity to be freely bought and sold on the market, with price determined by law of supply and demand, without taking into account the bare minimum required for the support of the individual and his family. (Characteristics of *Rerum Novarum*, para. 4)

*Rerum Novarum* did three important things. It delineated the rights and responsibilities of business owners, their management representatives, and their labor force. It described the necessary balance between one's work and one's faith. And it affirmed the concept of private property. Leo XIII challenged companies and their managers to pay their workforce a living

wage. Himes (2001) identified a just wage as a human right necessary to uphold respect for an employee's human dignity. What constitutes a living wage is debated by economists and is a concept with different connotations in various parts of the world, but morally it holds the same meaning in any country or economy.

The encyclical also stipulated business owners should recognize unions and the right of workers to organize, and to ensure the work week provides employees appropriate time to worship. More importantly, *Rerum Novarum* sought to have employers reflect on their attitudes and not merely alter their actions. Workers are to be seen as individuals and not merely the means to another's prosperity, as described in this inspiring excerpt:

The following duties bind the wealthy owner and the employer: not to look upon their work people as their bondsmen, but to respect in every man his dignity as a person ennobled by Christian character. They are reminded that, according to natural reason and Christian philosophy, working for gain is creditable, not shameful, to a man, since it enables him to earn an honorable livelihood; but to misuse men as though they were things in the pursuit of gain, or to value them solely for their physical powers - that is truly shameful and inhuman. (Leo XIII, 1891, para. 20)

The Pontiff's document also assigned responsibilities to the workers. He charged them to always work hard and to not unnecessarily stir the pot within the company with undue strikes or unreasonable demands. Their right to organize was affirmed, but workers were cautioned to not align themselves with organizations that were Godless in nature, a reference to the rise

of some of the socialist groups at the time *Rerum Novarum* was published.

It is amazing how 120 years later the document still remains on point, despite the changes in examples and terminology. A more modern concept called corporate social responsibility (CSR) has emerged during the last score as corporations and organizations have realized they have greater moral and philanthropic responsibilities to society, as opposed to solely maximizing profits. Carroll and Buchholtz (2003) defined CSR as the “economic, legal, ethical, and discretionary expectations that society has of organizations at a given point in time” (p. 36).

Companies see the value with engaging in CSR. However, a study by Inoue, Kent, and Lee (2011) demonstrated professional sports teams or leagues that explicitly engaged in CSR had insignificant or even negative impact on the financial performance. The authors theorized this was a result of companies making surface attempts to engage in the practice, as opposed to having social responsibility as part of a strategic corporate mission.

Carroll (1991) identified four components of CSR. These are economic (making a profit), legal (obeying the law), ethical (the responsibility to act in a manner with societal expectations, where it can be argued there is not a universal expectation in this area), and discretionary (to go beyond societal expectations). The latter is where corporate social responsibility can be applied to challenge the norms of employee relations within human resource departments. Carroll rightly identified employees as one of an organization’s several stakeholders. He then identified the responsibilities warranted to them by describing three types of management styles with employee stakeholders (Table 1). The immoral management style is ineffective, archaic, and does not maximize the human dignity potential of the labor force. The moral management style, on the other hand, is considered ideal.

## Table 1. Type of Management Orientations Toward Employee Stakeholders

### Immoral Management

Employees are viewed as factors of production to be used, exploited, and manipulated for gain of individual manager or company. No concern is shown for employees' needs/rights/expectations. A short-term focus exists that is coercive, controlling, and alienating.

### Amoral Management

Employees are treated as law requires. Attempts to motivate focus on increasing productivity rather than satisfying employees' growing maturity needs. Employees are still seen as factors of production but the remunerative approach is used. Organization sees self-interest in treating employees with minimal respect. Organization structure, pay incentives, rewards all geared toward short- and medium-term productivity.

### Moral Management

Employees are a human resource that must be treated with dignity and respect. The goal is to use a leadership style such as consultative/participative that will result in mutual confidence and trust. Commitment is a recurring theme. Employees' rights to due process, privacy, freedom of speech, and safety are maximally considered in all decisions. Management seeks out fair dealings with employees.

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*Note.* Adapted from "The Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility: Toward the Moral Management of Organizational Stakeholders," by A. B. Carroll, 1991, *Business Horizons*, 34(4), pp. 39-48.

Carroll's aim is for the business community to gain a fuller understanding of what it means to engage in moral management and how this impacts the interaction with different stakeholders. One area where these lines get blurred is when a business outsources or subcontracts work or functions.

Many companies in the sport business industry subcontract their food or custodial operations to a third party. Some subcontractors pay meager wages, but the host facility deflects the criticism by pointing out the low-paid workers are not their employees. But do these companies, especially when they are driven by a mission statement based on a faith or secular tradition which advocates for the poor, have a responsibility to not enter into such contracts without mandating a living wage for all employees associated with the outsourced work? It appears to be contradictory to mission for organizations to simply pass the blame onto the subcontractor paying the wages and to claim "market conditions."

Other companies outsource the manufacturing of their product. NIKE is one such company which has largely been unsuccessful in convincing the public that they are entering appropriate partnerships with the factories where they subcontract production. The popular shoe manufacturer originally deflected complaints surrounding the compensation and treatment received by the Indonesian and Vietnamese workers who made the shoes. NIKE ultimately responded to the criticism in the early 1990s by releasing a Code of Conduct concerning their relationship with third-party contractors. This document outlined the company's position on the following core standards: forced labor, compensation, benefits, overtime, environment, safety and health, and documentation and inspection. Abuses still have been reported, and NIKE entered into a settlement in January, 2012, after allegations of workers at a Nikomas, Java plant were forced to work unpaid overtime for a period of time to meet production goals.

NIKE has faced public scrutiny due to its status as market leader, but other sports apparel companies have also faced backlash due to labor problems stemming from outsourced manufacturing in other countries. Institutions should reference their mission statements when entering agreements with apparel companies and be prepared to terminate the agreement when the apparel company's actions contradict their core values. Russell Athletic faced the threat of several universities' terminating their licensing agreements after the Atlanta-based company closed a plant in Choloma, Honduras when workers formed a union in response to alleged unjust labor practices. Russell, a subsidiary of Fruit of the Loom, reopened the plant as part of an agreement with the Workers Rights Consortium, an independent labor rights monitoring organization. This was after pressure from a group known as United Students against Sweatshops had persuaded 89 different colleges or universities to either end or suspend their licensing agreements with Russell (Greenhouse, 2010). The University of Wisconsin threatened to end its contract with Adidas after the company apparently failed to make severance payments to an Indonesian plant. Adidas representatives claimed the contractor/owner illegally closed the plant and that they should not be responsible for severance payments that were the subcontractor's responsibility. A university committee, which previously ended a contract with Nike over their treatment of workers in Honduras, still insisted the actions were a violation of a labor code of conduct (Walker, 2011).

University faculty, administrators, and students become involved with many labor issues, but may not always advocate for their own students with the same passion as they do for the employees of shoe and apparel manufacturers. Institutions may not be doing enough to protect their students who receive academic credit for unpaid internships, a practice now bearing greater scrutiny. Dr. Susan Foster, professor of business at St. Leo

University, authored the article “Would Your Unpaid Internship Pass Regulatory Scrutiny” that appeared in an October, 2010 issue of *Sports Business Journal*. Foster reported the Department of Justice planned to crack down on companies in violation of the 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act. This legislation makes clear the benefit to the intern must be greater than that to the company, and courts have held this applies when the intern is directly generating revenues to the company. A sales intern, for example, would have to earn commissions on her successful efforts.

The 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act also stipulates interns are not to take the place of a regular worker. This means that an employee cannot be fired and replaced by an unpaid intern. But does it also imply that an unpaid intern should not be hired instead of a paid employee to perform the same responsibilities? Many sports businesses insist on not paying their interns, yet rely on these individuals to run a significant portion of their daily operations; these students are crucial to the organization’s fiscal health. Sometimes the owners or managers are ignorant of the law, and other times they are trying to save money while taking advantage of a student’s ambition. It is the responsibility of faculty supervising internships to advocate for their students and, when warranted, refuse their placement at an organization in clear violation of both the letter and spirit of the law.

Another group of unpaid laborers are volunteers. Sport organizations, including those for profit, rely on thousands of volunteers to help organize their events. The supply of individuals willing to serve in the industry allows companies to use these persons to perform multiple and necessary tasks that would otherwise necessitate compensation.

The Walt Disney Company is a large, for-profit corporation that partners with its subsidiary ESPN on an extensive volunteer initiative through their Wide World of Sports Complex. Their Sports Enthusiast program organizes volunteers for multiple

sporting events hosted at the complex by non-for-profit organizations. Individuals are not paid, but earn points for their service that can be redeemed for theme park tickets.

The Sports Enthusiasts program is described on its web page as giving “community members a chance to be involved in their community, be a part of their favorite sporting events and support various charities while having a great time with friends and family” (<http://espnwos.disney.go.com/events/volunteer/volunteer-sports-enthusiast-program/>). Volunteering invokes positive feelings and is a laudable act. But Disney’s program arguably exploits these positive feelings for their own financial gain. Disney benefits on the front end as the labor costs for the sporting events are reduced. They also benefit on the back end when volunteers redeem their free tickets, yet pay for parking, food, and other items associated with a theme park visit.

Other sport entities rely heavily on volunteers. The Iowa Speedway relies on hundreds of volunteers when they host the Iowa Corn 250 Formula One race. An older gentleman working the merchandise tent at the 2010 race said he traveled one hour, one-way every year for the opportunity to be associated with the race. A few hours east on Interstate 80, the community of Silvis, Illinois, hosts the Professional Golfers Association (PGA) tour stop The John Deere Classic. The tournament boasts more than 1,400 volunteers who are assigned to one of 12 different areas. Volunteers for the John Deere Classic must purchase their own shirt and hat for the opportunity to offer their service. By not purchasing the uniforms, tournament organizers are able to distribute more revenues for the charities they support.

Loras College sport management students volunteered in multiple event management roles at a tri-state area sports and recreation festival, an exposition-style event offering local sport entities the opportunity to showcase their organizations and products. The festival includes a sports card and memorabilia

show, and features a stage where local dance outfits, judo clubs, and other performers display their talent. The host entity is structured as a corporation and does not have not-for-profit status. So despite the organization's integrity, the service the festival provides the community, and the educational value students receive assisting with event management, my preference is that unpaid student volunteer hours required as part of a class should be steered toward non-for-profit organizations.

The preceding examples have involved persons volunteering at large events, but such donations of time, talent, and treasure can take other forms. A group known as Friends of Baseball organized a large fundraiser to raise monies to help rebuild the Dubuque Sports Complex, a baseball and softball facility devastated by a severe flood during the summer of 2011. The facility is a for-profit outfit that otherwise may have been forced to go out of business without this support. So in this instance the generosity and tireless work of countless individuals arguably interfered with the *laws* of capitalism. But it is both an example of how sports can be unique, and how customers who receive a quality service subsequently help a for-profit business in need, which reflects the ideal *spirit* of capitalism.

It is this ideal spirit of capitalism for which we should strive. All workers should be treated with respect and should be compensated fairly as defined by the region's economic structure. All workers should recognize that hard work and sacrifice is necessary for success in today's economy, give a dignified effort to their employer, and respect the organization and its representatives. Leo XIII got it right more than 120 years ago with *Rerum Novarum* in his attempt to establish the rights and responsibilities of both sides of the labor-owner relationship. Hopefully, hiring managers and employees will work collectively to ensure a harmonious workplace environment that values the human dignity of all persons.

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## Chapter 6: Be Careful What You Write

The creation, and subsequent explosion, of the World Wide Web and social media sites has significantly changed how people communicate. We now often dialogue without face to face contact or talking on the telephone. Sports teams and businesses must continue to find ways to incorporate these new applications to their advantage as a means to attract, engage, and retain customers. Social media networks and blog sites, in particular, afford the customer base the opportunity to voice both affirming and dissenting opinions. It is these latter instances where people can hide behind anonymous screen names when making comments that, free speech notwithstanding, have no place within the spirit of civil discourse.

I have had disagreements with individuals on Yahoo Answers and Major League Baseball chat rooms. It is puzzling why such interaction left me upset despite dealing with complete strangers. However, there are times when electronic communication can be problematic even when it is not anonymous, as the following scenario illustrates.

The late Mr. Al Schram is a legendary name on the Loras College campus. He is credited with establishing one of the country's premier college intramural programs, and for founding what is now known as the Division of Physical Education and Sport Studies (PESS). The college has a generous scholarship endowed in his name. The fund allows the top physical education teaching, sport management, and sport science majors, as determined by the faculty after a lengthy application process, to receive a monetary award. The Al Schram Award is the top honor a student can receive from the divisional faculty. The process culminates with a ceremony recognizing the recipients the first Sunday night in December.

There are always several strong candidates, and so every year legitimate contenders fall short of being honored. PESS faculty members have fielded complaints from students who thought they deserved the award. One year, a nominee had been suspected by a colleague from another division of academic dishonesty. This professor believed the cheating likely occurred but was unwilling to report it in the absence of more solid evidence, and I became involved as the student's advisor. The student became quite upset, but offered evidence in her defense that satisfied me. I thought the matter was concluded.

Thus I was surprised when this student sent me an e-mail after the Al Schram Award ceremony asking me about confronting the professor who had suspected her of academic dishonesty. At one point, she also asked about the date the Al Schram Award was decided and under what criteria. I interpreted her e-mail to suggest the committee had used the cheating rumor to deny her the award. Since no one on the awards committee had any idea about the accusation, my return message firmly defended my faculty colleagues on the committee.

I had a close relationship with this student and thus became stressed over the exchange. I called her into my office where we could discuss the situation in person, since electronic communications can be ambiguous absent the accompanying body language. This meeting was productive. She was interested in the information made available to faculty during the deliberation process, but she was not making accusations. She learned how her words could have been interpreted, and I learned to more cautiously render judgment in reading such messages. All ended well, but this scenario demonstrates how quickly an otherwise positive relationship can be negatively impacted by electronic communication.

Facebook is a social media site that has changed how we share information and interact with our friends and

acquaintances. The social networking giant has offered people many new opportunities to communicate, but not without potential problems. The information posted may be interpreted by the reader in a different manner than the author intended. It also has a permanent shelf life.

Hiring managers advise job seekers to be careful with both the photographs and comments posted to their Facebook and other social media accounts. Individuals in the sport business industry who have spoken to my students on personnel matters have confirmed the practice of reviewing an applicant's on-line profile before making a hiring decision. Such reviews can, among other things, find extreme political views, derogatory or discriminatory comments about groups of individuals, or social behavior that may not have involved the best discretion.

I have intervened with a former student who was engaged in an argument on Facebook with another individual concerning the merits of his favorite college football team. He used the term faggot in a derogatory manner to describe his adversary, and so I politely advised him it was best for him to remove this post. This former student held an entry-level position in the sport business industry, and future employers could access his indiscretion and use it against him. I also did not want his remark to be a public representation of his alma mater or myself. The individual removed the post and apologized.

We always need to respect the human dignity of everyone, and this includes what we blog and post about each other. Faggot is a derogatory term, and its use tears down rather than respects human dignity. But this example is hardly an isolated one. Readers can go on-line to almost any sports blog network and discover offensive and vile comments directed at individuals and at groups.

Often these examples are based on long-held stereotypes in American society surrounding race, gender, sexual orientation,

and religion. I compiled some examples of inappropriate public responses to sport industry stories from a myriad of sites from November, 2011 to May, 2012. The stories ranged in topic, but usually centered on a controversial matter. Sites such as <http://www.sportviews.com> offer a clear warning indicating profanity and insults are not acceptable. The search engine Yahoo! offers regulations (Table 1) for those commenting, but the reader has to click on an obscure link to access them. Below is the text with accompanying commentary from several of the most egregious examples. The blog posts provided are reprinted verbatim, meaning the author's misspelling and grammatical errors are not corrected.

### Table 1. Yahoo! Comment Posting Guidelines

Comments on Yahoo! allow you to start discussions, ask questions, and share your opinions. Here are a few things to consider as you post:

- Please be considerate and respectful of your fellow posters.
- Use standard writing style and punctuation. Regular sentences and basic grammar will help others understand you.
- Do not use profanity, obscenities, abusive language, or otherwise objectionable content as determined by Yahoo!, in its sole discretion. Comments should not harass, abuse, or threaten another's personal safety or property, make false statements, defame, or impersonate someone else.
- Remember this is a public forum. Do not post personal information including phone numbers, email or mailing addresses, or credit card information belonging to you or others.
- Do not copy others' material, trademarks, or other intellectual property—it is illegal. This includes cutting and pasting

content from other websites. Comments should be your own original thoughts.

- Do not post HTML, viruses, or other malicious code.

Yahoo! reserves the right to refuse or remove any comment that does not comply with these guidelines or the Yahoo! Terms of Service and to terminate your Yahoo! account (including email) for a violation. Yahoo! is not responsible or liable in any way for comments posted by its users. ([http://help.yahoo.com /l/us/yahoo/comments/article\\_comments/comment-guidelines.html](http://help.yahoo.com/l/us/yahoo/comments/article_comments/comment-guidelines.html), 2012, p. 1)

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### Religion

Quarterback Tim Tebow became a polarizing figure during his time with the Denver Broncos because he outwardly expressed his faith while performing his craft in front of millions. Personally, I think our country needs more individuals who are not afraid to give credit where it is deserved, and he has not crossed any line of public display that I hold. But he certainly has for a lot of people, including both those unafraid to voice their informed opinion in a respectful manner and persons who demonstrate ignorance and religious bigotry with a complete lack of civility. Gpotts thought it appropriate to ridicule the religious beliefs of Tebow and other persons of faith with his posting on a story featuring the former Heisman Trophy recipient.

*Most sane rational people stop believing in fairy tales around 8-9 yrs old. He should not display his arrested development constantly.*

Tebowing, going to one's knee in contemplative prayer, rose in popularity in conjunction with the quarterback. Controversies ensued when students began doing this in high school and were suspended for either committing a public display of religion, or disrupting the school's ability to educate, depending on the point of view. Violence even ensued, as two individuals performing the ritual at a high school basketball game in South Carolina were assaulted. Bruce 101 offered the following incendiary post on the Fox Sports account of the incident.

*I AM SO \*\*\*\* I N G glad! I hate fads, especially ones with religious overtones...beat them all to hell!*

Many of the harshest and most hateful comments were from individuals unimpressed with Tebow. But some of his supporters were equally vile. Flea 1 offered the following comment, in a response to a fellow blogger named Rancher, concerning the same story about the South Carolina attacks.

*Rancher just say you hate Tebow and Christians and get over the Muslim thing no one cares but you and if someone through down a rug to celebrate their beliefs no one will say a word in the media because they are afraid of offending those A Holes but have no problem criticizing others.*

A person with the screen name Bombs and Missiles became irrational defending students who were suspended for Tebowing.

*You must have been the teacher everyone hated. Let kids be kids and maybe they will grow up with all that "nonsense" Out of their system instead of taking it with them in to adulthood. IF MY*

*CHILDREN DECIDE TO PRAY WHILE DOING ANYTHING, AND THE SCHOOL DOESN'T LIKE IT BECAUSE IT CAUSES A DISRUPTION, THEN I WILL MAKE SURE THERE IS A DISRUPTION EVERYTIME EVOLUTION IS TAUGHT TO THEM . . .*

Religion was also the subject of heated comments when Fox Sports writer Jennifer Floyd Engel wrote a piece questioning whether sports should be played on Christmas. Engel raised valid points and referenced the National Hockey League (NHL) as an example of a sports league where the collective bargaining agreement requires the Christmas holiday off. I thought Engel missed a related point on how lower-level employees, such as the concessionaires, media assistants, and parking attendants impacted by sporting events undoubtedly have little say on whether or not they receive Christmas off.

This topic is an example of one where persons should be able to engage in healthy debate and civil discourse. A person could counter that watching sports on Christmas offers families something to do together, and sometimes a few have to sacrifice for the majority. However, such arguments were not found in a post by T UWOG4All.

*Isn't it ironic that a Flynn (pagan Catholic) would make such a comment ... most people try to hide their ignorance. You enjoy flaunting yours. Christmas is a pagan holiday (mithra). Sports are controlled by the pagan roman Catholic church. People who celebrate mithra are unknowing, mindless humanoids that are too lazy to read his bible to know God's plan...*

## Race

Religion was not the only topic where persons commenting revealed their ignorance. Human dignity was also attacked by comments directed toward an individual's race. The Washington Capitals Joel Ward, an African-American, was the victim of racist attacks on two separate occasions during the 2012 National Hockey League playoffs. The first time was when he scored the winning goal against the Boston Bruins in the seventh game of the playoff's first round. The second came from his team's own fans when his foolish penalty late in the game allowed the New York Rangers to score both the tying and game-winning goals. Most of these racist comments were posted anonymously and many were then removed, or the senders deactivated their Twitter accounts. Michael Kays offered this commentary on a news story describing the tweets.

*(((RACISTS!))) OMG run for cover! Seek shelter!  
Pointless really; black people are doin' just fine  
destroying dey'selves. Mmmm...U know datz rot.*

Another example involved posted comments after Detroit Lions defensive lineman Ndamukong Suh, an African-American, blatantly stomped on the arm of an opponent in a game during the 2011 season. The act was inexcusable and punishment was meted, but there is no correlation between Suh's race and his actions. Striker 426 disagreed, referencing the famous gorilla from early 1980s Nintendo games to characterize Suh on a news story surrounding the incident.

*Looks like dumb\*\*\*\* Donkeykong really put his  
foot in it this time. Watching him throw a tantrum  
and then leave the field made my day.*

The description of African-Americans as monkeys appeared multiple times. A story surfaced indicating former professional basketball star Dennis Rodman was attempting to put together a topless women's basketball game for charity. Rodman's attempt at exploiting women did not warrant support, but also did not necessitate this volatile message from Big Daddy White Boy.

*Somebody SHOOT this phukin MONKEY...How much more GAY can one SILVER BACK be.....put a 50 caliber in his FAT mouth!!*

Yet another comment using the monkey analogy was in response to a story on former Indianapolis Colts football coach Jim Caldwell, an African-American. The Colts suffered through a poor 2011 season under Caldwell. This resulted in Joe\_namath, presumably not the New York Jets Hall of Fame quarterback, posting this diatribe.

*That bum Caldwell couldn't coach his way out of a paper bag. Let face it. He is another Dungy Donkey who didn't deserve the job in the first place. Other than that.....lets see another ill prepared minority pick'em. Hopefully, Obama will be available real soon.*

When the entertainer Lil Wayne was allegedly denied his requests for multiple front-row tickets for his entourage at a sold out 2012 Oklahoma City Thunder playoff game, he was quoted as implying race had something to do with the decision. He did not seem to comprehend his celebrity status should not warrant special consideration with Thunder ticket representatives, but jabotheecat took his view too far with this commentary.

*Next time you feel unwanted Lil Boy, just drink some cough syrup with some juice. F-ing house negro.*

Another story on the Yahoo! Sports web page was meant as a human interest story, but it became a forum for individuals to write a range of irresponsible comments. The story and accompanying video footage featured a great move made by a sixth grade basketball player. The boy who made the great play was an African-American while the boy guarding him was white. In his reaction, the blogger Voice of Reason invoked a common stereotype about African-Americans in another sport.

*Show me a black kid that can swim and that would be a viable story you don't see every day.*

Another blogger, with the ridiculous screen name i\_bang\_midgets, reinforced a different stereotype.

*I bet the white kid has better grades.*

Neither comment advanced a productive dialogue on the complicated race issues our country faces. Instead, the comments reinforced negative perceptions of the individuals who hold such beliefs. These individuals were offered a forum to express their views, and an increased level of comfort in articulating and sharing them. Thus, they missed the opportunity to discuss legitimate differences on the issues in a civilized manner, instead resorting to offensive and mostly anonymous postings.

## Gender

The chapter on gender outlined how women are often portrayed in the sport business industry in ways that rob them of their human dignity. It described how sports web pages can

be an accessory to this portrayal when thumbnail photos of sexy women are placed near their stories, despite no relation to the story, to attract readers. Some web stories do focus on women in sports or other legitimate gender-related issues, but these stories also afford readers the opportunity to offer unfortunate commentary that reinforces gender stereotypes involving both men and women.

United Fight Championship (UFC) uses sexy women as ring girls in an attempt to cater to their target audience. Arianny Celeste is one woman who has effectively marketed her sex appeal through her appearances in the ring, as well as her calendars and photo shoots. She has become one of the faces of UFC, and was featured in a story reporting on her conflict with UFC fighter Chael Sonnen. Blogger Max Steele attacked Celeste and other women with the following remarks:

*Sonnen is not dissing all the ring girls, which he actually should, but just this one dumb as a rock Arriyani. Have you ever heard her talk? She is barely able to complete a full sentence. Obviously she is one of those girls that has been told she is beautiful since the time she was born and not held up to any other standard. That is why girls like her become strippers, prostitutes or gold digging whores cause they can't rub two braincells together. But of course all you womens libbers are complaining he is a misogynist buit then you say nothing about female genital mutilation, raped women in muslim nations being forced to marry the rapist, honour killings all by islamist terrorists. You are all so devout to your ideals when you know you are safe in your*

*office but when it is time to stand up and count for something and put your neck on the line for true womens rights you run away with your burning bra between your legs. Hypocritical scum bags, all of you.*

Another reader with the screen name Robert attacked Sonnen's masculinity, subsequently reinforcing other gender stereotypes, with these vile comments.

*Sonnen prefers little boys. He enjoys laying on top of other men. He's always had a big mouth for accommodating other men. What would he want with a ring girl?*

Sarah Burke was a free style skier who tragically died in an accident while performing a dangerous jump. Billy Witz wrote an article challenging the skiing industry and society at large to do more to prevent these athletes from engaging in increasingly high-risk behaviors that go beyond the sport's traditional norms. The article is another example of one that should spark healthy debate on the role of governing bodies and sponsors in protecting athletes who knowingly assume risks inherent in their sport. Readers should be able to disagree on and debate this important issue. Instead, Harley Hookers attacked Witz and his masculinity.

*Billy W. ... please go back to your pansy fedora world and let the real skiers and boarders do their thing in a hair raising extreme sport. Everyone knows the rules when they strap them on, or get into a NASCAR stock car, or Speed Strip drag racer. I bet you drive a Blue Prius in a*

*18 wheeler world. Stick to something you might know something about... like flower picking or helping mom n the kitchen.*

The period during which I compiled these comments included the infamous sexual abuse case involving Jerry Sandusky, the former defensive coordinator at Penn State University, but it also included the case of Philadelphia sports columnist Bill Conlin, who was accused of sexually molesting girls throughout his career. The alleged activity is egregious and unworthy of a legitimate defense, but some web comments are devoid of any sense, including this one by Kruk Nut.

*Hopefully he at least had some self respect and molested a little girl instead of a boy.*

Melty, whose screen name had the subtitle “rhythmic slapping sounds,” posted the following remarks.

*He was probably trying to talk to some kid about baseball in his unbearably verbose and boring way, and the kid was probably like . . . dude . . . just \*\*\*\* me in the ass and let me get on my way.*

It is difficult to ascertain why some bloggers perceive the need to spew such hatred and ignorance. It is also unclear what value set they hope to protect with their incendiary comments on issues related to gender and masculinity.

### Violence

In the next chapter, I will look at how violence is portrayed in the sport business industry and how it robs individuals of their human dignity. Inappropriate on-line comments frequently espouse violence as well.

Bletso commented on the criminal sentences imposed on a group of Phillies fans who were involved in a fight at a bar near Citizens Bank Park that resulted in a death.

*Pretty sure the rest of the world could give a crap if a nuclear bomb destroyed philly . . . life would be better as a result.*

Another threat involving the horror of nuclear war was included in a story concerning X Games skier Langley McNeal. The American was disqualified after a French skier complained about her uniform, which was in violation for being too aerodynamic. Originally, some thought the governing body had disqualified McNeal for wearing an armband meant to honor fellow skier Sarah Burke. KrayzieBone22, commenting before the investigation upheld and explained the disqualification, offered a diatribe featuring his opinions.

1. *why didn't anyone say something to her before the race started!*
2. *\$\$@%!\$ the French! \$\$@%!\$@% COWARDS!*
3. *I'm all for Iran Nuking France! I would happily turn a blind eye to that!*
4. *I only eat FREEDOM FRIES!*

More specific threats were directed against Kyle Williams after the NFC Championship game when the San Francisco 49ers punt returner fumbled a return that led to the New York Giants winning score. Multiple examples of hatred were posted across Facebook and Twitter, including the following example.

*@KyleWilliams\_10. I hope you, your wife, kids and family die, you deserve it.*

HundAv3ng3r wished death on Michael Vick in a post following a story reporting on an appearance by the Eagles quarterback, who was previously and justifiably convicted for his role in a dog fighting ring, at a Philadelphia-area Toyota dealership. The blogger attempts to defend his rationale for remaining upset with Vick even though he had served his sentence, but then clearly crosses the line.

*Vick has NEVER expressed any remorse for what he did. He has expressed regret for getting caught and blamed his deeds on growing up poor. He didn't simply run a dog fighting ring. He personally tortured and killed dogs. You can rehabilitate a person like that any more than you can rehabilitate a child molester or serial rapist. Can ANY of you who are preaching forgiveness and absolution honestly say that you would forgive the man who molested your child or raped your wife? If not, then you are in no position to be preaching to anyone about this waste of life. I hope someone DOES kill this monster as the world would be better off without him and as for the dealership, they got what they deserved for backing such a despicable excuse for a human being.*

Blogger The Past is Gone offered a specific reference to hanging, a violent act usually resulting in death. The person's remarks followed a story reporting on the first day of the trial of the University of Virginia men's lacrosse player accused of killing his girlfriend.

*They need to hang your @\$%#ing ass beside him for feeling sorry for him. you must have lots*

*of money also or just do not give a @!\$%# about this girl. he was spoiled and could not get his @!\$%#ing way as he was used to.*

The use of social media sites and electronic messaging offers many advantages to its users, but it also must be managed with care. Our country correctly values a person's freedom of speech. But with rights come responsibilities, including respecting the human dignity of everyone even when offering critical commentary. One such responsibility is for persons to own up to their remarks. Anonymity may be necessary when a sensitive story may involve personal or professional repercussions. This research specific to blog comments on sports stories, however, has discovered that anonymity is a coward's way to spew hate. The people behind these screen names should ideally eliminate and adjust their comments and attitudes, but at a minimum stand behind them and accept the consequences. Media and other host sites related to the sport business industry must do more to force the disclosure of identities of these individuals in an attempt to protect those victimized by the vile comments.

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## Chapter 7: Put Away the Sword

I always remember having a quick temper. It can be tripped when one of my children is disobeying, a fellow traveler on the road is driving incompetently, or someone I encounter is rude. Thankfully, my good sense has trumped my temper in my weakest moments. It is these worst occasions where I have avoided violence, yet still confronted officials, parents, players, coaches, colleagues, and other persons in the sport business industry.

The time I came the closest to losing control was during the summer of 1993 when the 13 and 14-year old baseball team I coached in Loves Park, Illinois, traveled south on Interstate 39 to Eureka to play my brother Jared's Marquette Heights squad. One of our baserunners was called out at the plate on a close play, and I informed the home plate umpire of his error in judgment. I had my say and was returning to the dugout when he muttered something inaudible under his breath. I consider such action an egregious act of disrespect, as those close to me have learned. I immediately turned and began walking quickly toward the umpire, asking him to repeat himself. Thankfully, the coaches for my brother's team knew me, quickly interfered, and physically cut me off. I honestly don't know what I would have done or what would have happened to me had they not intervened.

The closest I ever came to a real fight was in fifth grade when a classmate and I fought sticking up for our younger brothers during an afternoon recess. Several kids surrounded us as we walked in a circle with our fists high. He threw a punch and missed, leading to more trash talking before our classmates warned that the recess moderator was walking in our direction.

We remained classmates through high school and the incident was never an issue again.

The concept of affording every person human dignity should protect us from violence. Eitzen and Sage (2003) defined violence as physically assaultive behavior that has the potential to, or does, injure another person or persons. In addition to physical pain and suffering, violence tears at a person's inner being and self-confidence, and it hinders his or her ability to engage in healthy relationships. Violent acts are the opposite of treating each other with respect and compassion.

Important among our human rights are a person's right to life, liberty, and security. Violence against another person diminishes his or her right to life and security. The United States Catholic Bishops offered the following statement on the topic of violence in their 1994 Pastoral Message *Confronting a Culture of Violence: A Catholic Framework for Action*:

Violence -- in our homes, our schools and streets, our nation and world -- is destroying the lives, dignity and hopes of millions of our sisters and brothers. Fear of violence is paralyzing and polarizing our communities. The celebration of violence in much of our media, music and even video games is poisoning our children. Beyond the violence in our streets is the violence in our hearts. Hostility, hatred, despair and indifference are at the heart of a growing culture of violence. Verbal violence in our families, communications and talk shows contribute to this culture of violence. Pornography assaults the dignity of women and contributes to violence against them. Our social fabric is being torn apart by a culture of violence that leaves children dead on

our streets and families afraid in our homes. Our society seems to be growing numb to human loss and suffering. A nation born in a commitment to “life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness” is haunted by death, imprisoned by fear and caught up in the elusive pursuit of protection rather than happiness. (Introduction, para. 1).

The Bishops’ document challenged society to examine its attitudes and actions when it comes to violence and demands we hold large institutions accountable for how they portray violence. Our sport culture, comprised of large institutions such as media outlets, Fortune 500 companies as sponsors, and national and international governing bodies, celebrates violence. Fierce and vicious hits appear repeatedly on highlight reels in our sports broadcasts. Teams post similar video footage on their Web pages and their Facebook accounts. These acts of aggression are also used in promotional materials soliciting viewers to television programming or spectators to a future game.

Hockey is a sport known for its violence. A Minnesota high school varsity player was paralyzed from the neck down after being checked from behind, leading the Minnesota Hockey Association and other state governing bodies to adopt Jack’s Pledge: Playing Hockey the Right Way. This program challenges coaches and players to commit to minimizing violence in the game while maximizing safety. Stickers were placed on the back of helmets of players involved with the program, and penalty minutes for hits to the head or from behind were doubled.

Some have called for a ban on the fights that have long been a staple of the game. Already the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS) and the NCAA ban the practice and award stiff penalties for offenders. USA Hockey is reportedly considering following suit due to recent research focusing on concussions

and head injuries. Steinbach (2012) cites statistical research suggesting the removal of fighting would reduce non-fighting penalties, thus disputing the claim that fighting is necessary to stop cheap shots and to police the game. However, some hockey officials are leery about the impact on attendance if fighting is banned, thus inappropriately placing the possible economic benefit ahead of the safety and dignity of their players.

I know several families who do not attend hockey games because of the fights. But survey results published in the *Sports Business Journal* in 2011 indicated almost 70 percent of their readers, a demographic comprised primarily of current and future leaders in the sport business industry, believed fighting is a “key part of the game” and that the National Hockey League (NHL) should not ban it.

I attended Millikin University in Decatur in central Illinois, the Land of Lincoln’s dividing line in the St. Louis Blues and Chicago Blackhawks rivalry, and in the early 1990s both teams were atop the now defunct Norris Division. My friends and I loved the fights, and enforcers such as Kelly Chase and Tony Twist of the Blues and Dave Manson and Mike Peluso of the Blackhawks were among our heroes. We played street hockey after classes wherever we could find an open tennis court on campus or in the city. We emulated these fights with our tough talk and fake skirmishes.

I attend hockey games today and my opinion on fighting has completely changed. Though my impressionable boys like and mimic it, it is ridiculous to see a bunch of adults stand and cheer, hoping one person will hurt another. In my view, anything done to another person that is illegal outside the sports arena should bring similar consequences inside of it. Isolated cases of player on player violence in hockey have successfully made their way through the court system, but well-established precedent remains quite lacking.

But fighting is not limited to hockey. A highly publicized brawl during a 2011 college men's basketball game between the University of Cincinnati and Xavier University warranted criminal prosecution for the offending players. Yet the prosecutors did not file charges, believing the institution's disciplinary systems offered a more appropriate option than the criminal justice system. The offenders should not have been afforded this privilege – in what other setting would such vicious hits be left for human resource departments and company administrators to sort out? The media should have challenged the decision. Instead most agreed it was better for the schools to handle it on their own, which consequently did not result in any expulsions. Colleges expel students for engaging in violence while on campus or otherwise representing the school, but these men were held to a different standard because of the revenue they help generate.

Violence is not restricted to fighting. The National Football League (NFL) was rocked when current and former players and coaches of the New Orleans Saints were accused of organizing and contributing to a pool of money used to reward Saints defenders for violent hits. The NFL said the scheme involved 22 to 27 defensive players targeting opponents, including quarterbacks Aaron Rodgers, Cam Newton, Brett Favre and Kurt Warner. “Knockouts” were allegedly worth \$1,500, “cart-offs” \$1,000, and payments were doubled or tripled for the playoffs.

Most commentators correctly argued such behavior is unprofessional. Football is a violent game, but to purposefully intend to remove players from a contest is an egregious threat to their safety. Both the league and union must work together better to protect the players, as evidence continues to mount suggesting a causal relationship between playing football and brain damage and cognitive decline.

Baseball is the sport I coach and played. Like other sports, it has unwritten rules. Hard but legal slides into second base to break up a double play are considered clean, even though the middle infielder can be injured. A runner sliding outside the base line or too far past the base to do the same thing is acting outside the spirit of the game. Pitchers need to be able to throw inside and control the inner portion of home plate. But they should not hurl a ball purposefully at another player to send a message, regardless of a pitcher's command or even if the intended location is the buttocks where a person has more fat. Nowhere else can you throw a hard object at another's body with intent to inflict pain. Konecky (2011) interviewed several baseball players who believed athletes should be prosecuted for their dangerous actions. They argued that by not prosecuting, society is providing another example of how sports can be considered above the law. There is little evidence to believe, however, that this is the future direction of sport law.

I taught my players to "cut the cutter" during my basketball coaching days. This meant they were to impede, with a nudge, any offensive player without the ball who was setting a screen or who was cutting to the basket as part of the offensive set. This is against the rules, but I used it as a strategy to defend the basket as opposed to one designed to intimidate the opponent. Bumping someone would not usually cause bodily harm, but during a physical game a hit could be hard. So is this violence according to Eitzen and Sage's definition? When does physical play in sport cross that line?

Hard hits are common in football, rugby, roller derby, and a host of other sports. These violent acts can be used to promote stories, teams, or leagues. Violence can also be used as story lines in skits that often accompany sporting events. Even the family-friendly Harlem Globetrotters shows make light of violence. Recent tour stops in eastern Iowa included skits involving fake

slaps and pinched rears. Another skit featured a Globetrotters player pulling down the pants of an opposing player. These acts are similar to old television shows, such as *The Three Stooges* and *Bugs Bunny* cartoons, so we must be careful to not overreact to situations that have long been held humorous and that probably do not lead to additional violence in our schools and on our streets. But we must also never underestimate the impression left on the children watching.

The professional wrestling industry also attempts to market its product as family friendly. My brother Jeremy and I watched All-Star wrestling on Saturday mornings before the World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE) became the nation's industry leader. Terry Funk was one of the leading bad guys on those shows during the early 1980s. After a victorious match against a jobber, a wrestler who always lost to the stars, Funk appeared to brand his insignia into the man's chest with his branding iron, a prop that still comes with his Mattel wrestling action figure meant for children.

The amount of violence the WWE allows on its television shows and specifically its popular Monday Night Raw program has fluctuated. During the late 1990s, hard-core matches, where using any object imaginable on your opponent was considered acceptable, were popular. So were "First Blood" matches where the wrestler who drew blood from his opponent first was declared the victor. Professional wrestlers are elite athletes who endure violent hits and falls as part of their craft, but attendance at live events, without the television angles, demonstrate how much of the action is staged. Yet, it was amazing how the Dubuque Five Flags Center crowd reacted to the possibility a club with nails protruding from it would be used as a weapon at a Total Nonstop Action house show. They also cheered when thumbtacks were spread across the canvas, hoping to see their hero slam his opponent into the tacks. Some fans want the

blood, which often is real, and may even boo if their lust is not satisfied. Professional wrestling organizations continue to exist where these types of matches are the industry norm.

Professional wrestling mogul Vince McMahon, in a famous interview with Bob Costas on the former Home Box Office (HBO) program *On the Record* in 2001, declared the industry does not explicitly market to kids. McMahon provided Costas examples of how his shows had reduced the content which might be considered inappropriate for children, and he cited research indicating the SmackDown show brought families together more than any other entertainment program. McMahon also said professional wrestling has a large fan base and this fact demonstrates its content must be socially acceptable.

Costas should have followed up by asking McMahon why he allowed the WWE to enter licensing agreements with manufacturers and retailers to sell products geared toward kids, an impressionable audience more likely to emulate the violence they see and be unable to contextualize it. Kmart is a title sponsor of the WWE's house show tour. I visited a local store in January, 2012, to record observations on the WWE licensed products available because I had asked my students to do the same as part of a class assignment. I found multiple toys featuring WWE characters. These included action figures, championship belts, and miniature wrestling rings. Several of these toys were manufactured by licensing partner Mattel and most had an age designation suggesting kids six years and older could safely play with the toy. Six year olds should not be watching professional wrestling.

The store also had boy's apparel featuring WWE stars. While most of the T-shirts featured John Cena, a long-time "good guy" or "face," others included a mixture of characters that had spent considerable time as a "heel" or "bad guy." The shirts

were available in sizes 6, 8, 10, and 12, with the size usually corresponding with a child's age. The apparel and toys were the primary WWE products available, but there were also videos, posters, calendars, and backpacks. McMahon accurately places a preponderance of the burden for what children are consuming on their parents, but my shopping experience contradicts McMahon's suggestion the WWE does not market their product to elementary-age children.

Weapons such as kendo sticks, barbed wire, and fire have made their way into professional wrestling matches. One weapon I have not seen introduced is guns. Guns and weaponry in general are morally neutral objects. However, that does not mean the gun industry, both the primary and secondary market, deserves a free pass on the violence associated with its products. Attending a gun show with my father and son in 2011, it was interesting to walk around and see the older guns. However, I was disturbed to see one dealer selling old Nazi pins. Certainly the dealer had a legal right to sell these products. Equally certain are that the pins are legitimate historic artifacts that some collectors in that genre may want. But World War II collectors did not appear to be the target audience at the show's opening night. It is important to know why this dealer believed it appropriate to sell products that represented terrible human atrocity, and also how he would ensure the sale of the pins would not be to a person intending to use them for propaganda and hate.

Another form of violence with links to the sport business industry is human trafficking. Reports suggest the human sex trafficking of under-age girls and foreign women dramatically rises at the host city of the Super Bowl in the days leading up to the game. The Indiana state legislature enacted new laws specifically targeting human trafficking prior to Super Bowl XLVI in Indianapolis. However, the Super Bowl committee

has refused to enter partnerships with advocacy organizations supporting the public service “I’m Not Buying It” campaign because they do not want to associate their product with human trafficking. The NFL has a responsibility to publicly take a stand against this practice that denies women their human dignity if evidence demonstrates a link of increased activity before and around its biggest game. Future conversations on this issue need to discuss what role the NFL should take in public service announcements, and also whether the governing body should pressure future state legislatures to enact similar legislation before awarding future bids to host sites.

Violence permeates the sport business industry in multiple ways, both in and outside of the actual athletic arena. Controlled aggression on the field of play should not be demeaned, but sport governing bodies must continue to research the long-term impacts of violent collisions and respond accordingly. But when aggression results in criminal acts, and when the industry uses these acts to promote its products, then we must do more to demand that human dignity for all participants and spectators be protected.

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## **Chapter 8: It's Not Always about the Kids**

There have been several times when my inappropriate actions have represented the often maligned culture surrounding youth sports. The chapter on violence opens with one of the more egregious instances. Another instance also involved my temper but without violent overtones. This happened during the summer of 1992 when I coached my brother Jared's 11 and 12-year-old baseball team in the Marquette Heights/North Pekin Recreation Association. The team was sponsored by Pat and Sam's, a mom and pop grocery shop where as a kid I spent many allowances on baseball cards.

The Pat and Sam's team was in a battle for first place in the four-team league standings, but was losing to the last place squad late in the season. I cannot recall a specific play or series of events, but I left the field in disgust with the team's performance. I simply walked out of the dugout and headed north to check out the action on the other diamond, letting a group of kids fend for themselves without so much as an assistant coach. Pat and Sam's lost the game, but more surprising was that no parent, other than my mother, approached me to justifiably criticize my actions as being unsafe or blatantly unacceptable.

I pulled a similar stunt the next summer while living in Rockford and coaching a 13 and 14-year-old baseball team comprised mostly of kids from the nearby working class community of Loves Park. The team was sponsored by a local business owner whose son was on the squad. He and his wife upset me when they intervened and disallowed Jared, in town for a week to attend the Rockford College baseball camp, from moonlighting for the team. My brother would have boosted the team's talent level, and so I threatened to leave the park when

learning they overruled my lineup card. The team's sponsor cajoled me into staying, but I was too immature to appreciate his reasoning. I cared about wins, regardless if less talented players had to play fewer innings to accommodate my brother, but he was rightly looking out for the kids and families who paid the team fee and committed to the ups and downs of an entire season together.

In this case, serving as a role model played second fiddle to satisfying my ego. When the Loves Park team traveled to East Peoria for a weekend trip, I shared a hotel room with my female assistant coach, someone with whom I was hoping to start a romantic relationship. The boys on the team made jokes at what they envisioned was going on that night in our room (but which was not), making grunting and slapping noises to simulate what little they knew on the subject of sex.

Where were my morals? Why would I allow people to think something sexual may be happening with someone whom I hoped to begin dating more formally? How was that treating a person I cared about with respect and dignity? Was I that desperate for the affections of a group of kids that undoubtedly do not even remember my name almost 20 years later? And where were the parents, including the team sponsor, in counseling or even ordering me to show more discretion and arrange for a second hotel room?

Youth sports have played a big part in my life. It has included baseball, bowling, tennis, basketball, and swimming. It has involved roles as a participant, coach, official, league administrator, and parent. The latter is the most difficult role to navigate. Despite my criticisms of such parental attitudes, there remains a flawed part of me that understands when parents see their child's success, failure, and behavior reflecting their ability as fathers and mothers.

So in 2005 I drove my four-year-old son Joseph 50 miles from Carlinville southwest to Bethalto once a week for a full month so he could be formally initiated to America's pastime. The Bethalto Boys and Girls Club offered clinics introducing the game's basic skills that were unavailable in Macoupin County. Since then, I have spent eight years as a Dubuque Little League board member, and this has helped me shift my opinion about the appropriate age to begin organized baseball, and I strongly disagree with Little League International's 2011 decision directing chartered leagues to accept four-year olds. The additional revenues and opportunity to develop a brand association with families are positives, but neither is worth the lack of tangible skill development on the diamond due to the age group's inability to stay focused for the necessary period of time. The same benefits of motor skill development, socialization, and physical activity for the kids, and networking opportunities for the parents, could still occur in pre-schools, child care centers, and neighborhoods without their being under the umbrella of organized youth sports.

Joseph started bowling in a league when we moved to Dubuque, and during his initial years I became nervous when it was his turn in the tenth frame of a close match. It was remarkable how much his ability to knock down five pins, even if it resulted from a fortunate bounce off the bumpers, impacted my self-worth. Thankfully, these feelings and attitudes changed with maturation, and Saturday mornings at the bowling alley now usually include a book, my laptop, or papers to grade to keep me occupied, resulting in only the occasional look up to feign interest in my kids' scores.

The Center for Ethical Youth Coaching (2011) estimated more than 30 million young Americans play organized sports. Youth sports have become a lucrative industry, as evident by the billions of dollars spent on facilities, participation fees,

equipment, travel expenses, and private coaching. Many think the opportunities afforded by such participation include the ability for children to manage relationships with adult authority figures, understand rules and strategies in activities deemed important to our American culture, and learn to interact with their peers (Eitzen, 2012).

However, youth sports have also become an industry studied for the actions and motives of parents, coaches, and governing bodies. This scrutiny includes physical, emotional, and sexual abuse of athletes by parents and coaches; overspecialization in one sport that can lead to emotional burnout and physical overuse injuries; interference with family worship activities; the exploitation of kids for the financial gain of coaches and others and for the ego satisfaction of parents and guardians; and the overall boorish behavior of participants and spectators.

The Canadian Youth Hockey Association depicted some of these problems in a series of infomercials they produced in the early 2000s and that remain available on YouTube. The skits successfully use humor to push their message, but are troubling because the situations staged are so easily identifiable. Personal favorites in the series include a father berating a teacher during a classroom sack race because another child's sack was not of regulation size; a father pressuring his son to do better in a neighborhood hide and seek game by ordering him to get in a manhole; and a mother so upset with her daughter's losing a Pin the Tail on the Donkey game at a birthday party that she storms out of the house, stranding her daughter to get her own ride home.

It is difficult to explain why adults compromise the human dignity of our nation's children in the world of youth sports for seemingly their own motives. In some instances the reason can be large financial gain. Dohrmann (2010) described a culture in competitive Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) boys' basketball

where coaches recruit top players regionally and even nationally to play on their teams. The initial recruitment can include cash payments, shoes, and apparel provided by the AAU coach to the families. These families may then move several hours away for their son's basketball career, or allow their child to live with the coach or a designated family with whom they have nothing more than a casual relationship. The AAU coach is rewarded later when he can "deliver" a kid to a high school, college, or shoe company. The payoff for the coach can come directly from the shoe companies, the player himself if he makes the National Basketball Association (NBA), or the college and high school programs where the kid is steered to play. The latter may occur without the player's knowledge, since the coach may elect to not share any information from institutions where either he or the shoe company he represents do not have a relationship.

The exploitation of children extends other countries. Guevara and Fidler's (2002) book *Stealing Lives: The Globalization of Baseball and the Tragic Story of Alexis Quiroz* revealed how top baseball prospects as young as 12 in Latin American countries are removed from society and hidden in baseball academies by their buscones, people best understood as part agent and part coach. The buscones feed and house the kids during their remaining years of training, and deliver the players who make the most progress to Major League Baseball teams with which they have relationships. The players who do not develop their talents to the level necessary to play professionally are left without a high school education in a region where approximately 40 percent of the population lives in poverty.

The release of *Stealing Lives* sparked outrage and reform, but Latin American baseball players continue to face obstacles. Scouts employed by the Chicago White Sox and New York Yankees organizations were accused of inflating the value of prospects. The Latin player would receive a higher signing bonus

than their talent warranted under normal market conditions, and the player, usually unaware of the scheme or being bribed, then offered a significant cut of the bonus to a scout or buscone (Quinn and Fainaru-Wada, 2008).

Coaches and buscones are not the only persons gaining financially from youth sports. Indoor sport facilities are built in regions where winter prevents much in the way of outdoor practice. These facilities need youth athletes to rent practice time and pay for coaching instruction at their establishment all year to remain fiscally viable. This overspecialization is a concern many sport leaders share.

Siedentop (2009) defined the sport specialist as “an athlete who trains year-around for his or her sport, competes on the school team in that sport, and is likely part of a sport club in that sport during the off-season” (p. 134). Two leading organizations collaborated to produce the joint “A Position Statement by the National Association for Sport and Physical Education’s (NASPE) Middle and Secondary School Physical Education Council (MASSPEC).” The document endorses the notion of playing multiple sports, as opposed to fixating on one, at least through the middle school years. It also cites overspecialization as one of three concerns within the youth sport industry.

NASPE published its own position statement concerning overspecialization. “Guidelines for Participation in Youth Sport Programs: Specialization Versus Multiple-sport Participation” offers recommendations for parents, teachers, and coaches, and interprets the research from multiple disciplines. Four of their recommendations are provided in Table 1.

Table 1. NASPE Position Statements on Specialization Versus Multiple-Sport Participation

- Participating regularly in a variety of sports and physical activities yields many documented physical, psychological, and social benefits related to both short-and long-term development and to future participation in both recreational and competitive sports.
- Young people who specialize in a sport year round encounter several documented risks, because overtraining and excessive time commitment to one activity are disruptive to overall development when a young person is not yet 15 years old and is not able to make informed decisions about life-influencing priorities.
- Using intense and specialized sport participation as a strategy to win championships and scholarships, and to create athletic careers, often is counterproductive because it frequently causes burnout and undermines overall personal development throughout childhood and adolescence.
- The motivation to achieve excellence is highest when young people have experiences in multiple sports and can make informed choices about the sports in which they want to specialize during adolescence.

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*Note.* Adapted from “Guidelines for Participation in Youth Sport Programs: Specialization Versus Multiple-Sport Participation,” by National Association of Sport and Physical Education, 2010.

The National Alliance of Youth Sports (NAYS) is another leading organization advocating for appropriate values in the youth sports industry. Their mission is:

The National Alliance for Youth Sports (NAYS), a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization seeks to make the sports experience safe, fun and healthy for ALL children. In addition, NAYS promotes the value and importance of sports and physical activities in the emotional, physical, social and mental development of youth. The Alliance believes that participation in sports and activities develops important character traits and lifelong values. In addition, NAYS believes that the lives of youngsters can be positively impacted by participation in sports and physical activities if the adults involved have proper training and information. ([http://www.nays.org/Who\\_We\\_Are/mission\\_and\\_history.cfm](http://www.nays.org/Who_We_Are/mission_and_history.cfm), 2012).

NAYS advocates its goals through the release of national standards (Table 2). These standards are laudable and address many of the issues outlined in this chapter.

#### Table 2. National Alliance for Youth Sports National Standards

- Youth sports programs must be developed and organized to ensure, as well as to enhance, the emotional, physical, social and educational well-being of children.
- Youth sports are only one portion of a child's life that must be balanced with other social and educational experiences and activities.
- Adults involved with youth sports must receive training and important information about the program and must be held accountable for their behavior.
- Individuals with regular, repetitive access or contact with children must complete the screening process to ensure the safety and well-being of children.

- Parents/guardians must take an active and positive role in their child's youth sports experiences.
- Everyone involved in youth sports programs should exhibit positive sportsmanship behavior at all times.
- Youth sports programs must provide safe playing facilities and equipment, healthful playing situations, and proper first aid applications should the need arise.
- Parents, coaches and league administrators must provide equal play opportunity for all youth regardless of race, creed, sex, economic status, or ability.
- Parents, coaches, officials, fans, players, and administrators must be drug, tobacco, alcohol and performance enhancer free at youth sports activities.

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*Note.* Adapted from “National Standards for Youth Sports,” by National Alliance for Youth Sports, 2008.

As the last standard indicates, it is amazing how sports facilities continue to sell alcohol at youth events. These entrepreneurs and organizations fail to recognize the contradiction of selling an adult-only product, where the consumption can lead to inappropriate and risky behaviors, at events featuring children. More likely, they do recognize the conflict and simply elect to minimize it so as to not threaten their bottom line.

Gymnastics and figure skating are sports where multiple reports indicate NAYS standards have been violated. Ryan (1995) depicted coaches who intimidated and berated young female athletes concerning their weight, withheld food during tournaments, and conspired with physicians to minimize and cover-up legitimate injuries requiring rest. Jennifer Sey, the 1986 United States Gymnastics Champion, offered similar anecdotes in her auto-biography *Chalked Up*. Sey's reflections included inferences of sexual abuse of athletes by coaches

that were confirmed by the author during an e-mail interview conducted by Loras College sport management students. Eitzen (2012) described girl's gymnastics as a sport where their "stage of imminent achievement" (p. 116) parallels with their sexual maturity into puberty, making them most vulnerable to sexual abuse by coaches. In November, 2011, former United States Gymnastics Federation coach Don Peters had his coaching privileges permanently revoked and was removed from the sport's Hall of Fame following an investigation into sexual abuse accusations. These young athletes are isolated from their families for long stretches of time and become dependent on their coaches, creating a culture ripe for such inappropriate behavior.

Private instruction has traditionally been a staple of individual sports such as gymnastics. The privatization of youth sports is gaining more popularity in the traditional team sports as well, at least for the most talented, competitive, and wealthy kids. This is to the detriment of interscholastic sports. Many student-athletes have told me how their club volleyball, soccer, and softball teams carry much more prestige and priority than their high school counterparts.

The United States Soccer Federation (USSF) recently announced, in a self-serving move, that all of its U.S. Development Academy teams will expand their schedules by three months and not allow their players to compete on their high school squads. A former Director of Coaching for an eastern Iowa soccer club was candid about how he hoped to infuse this philosophy into the community's youth soccer scene. His desire was to raise the competitive level of play through year-round participation, and admitted the by-product would be the most talented boys and girls would not compete on their high school teams.

The Ohio High School Athletic Association (OHSAA) is concerned by this move away from school-sponsored sports. Undoubtedly they view club and other sports as a threat to their existence. Representatives from the organization have produced a series of articles addressing their concerns. *The Columbus Dispatch* series “Little Leagues, Big Costs” found youth sports are fraught with dangers because they lack uniform standards and oversight. The report concluded that children are more susceptible than ever to injury, families spend thousands of dollars chasing elusive scholarships, and adults sometimes mar the experience with unruly and even criminal behavior.

However, exploitation and inappropriate behavior also occurs in high school sports, so caution must be used when pushing interscholastic athletics as the only model. Rosengren (2003) offered a prominent example in his review of Minnesota’s high school hockey culture. He followed the Academy of Holy Angels hockey program, located in the Minneapolis suburb of Richfield, and described the transfer of a talented senior hockey athlete to the Catholic high school. The controversial transfer was allowed, and the school’s admissions director admitted the boy’s hockey ability played a role in the decision. Private schools do need to recruit and be viable in the market to be self-sustaining, but there are ethical lines that can get crossed too. Rosengren quoted a Catholic high school admission counselor who stated that coaches are asking kids to transfer all the time and this is fine unless you are “bringing in kids to prostitute them for their athletic ability.” This counselor offered no guidance as to how to determine when such prostitution takes place, but parents at the school alleged that hockey players, who as a percentage were much less likely to be Catholic and subsequently were taking admissions spots from Catholic grade school kids and their families, were brought in simply to be ringers for the hockey program. School officials countered

by arguing a school's diversity of athletic talent is similar in importance to maintaining racial diversity, an argument that seems shallow and is not reinforced in the literature.

The Rev. R. J. McGrath, president of Providence High School in the Chicago suburb of New Lenox, revealed his zealousness for the importance of interscholastic athletics to Catholic high schools during his presentation *To Play as Jesus Did: Catholic Social Teaching and Sports*. McGrath (2011) adamantly defended the notion that "success is a by-product of excellence" as it pertained to interscholastic athletics and the school's overall reputation.

McGrath identified parents as the biggest obstacle to running a successful athletic program. New Lenox Providence enrolls several children from higher socio-economic families. The financial pull these families wield raises important questions concerning how much classism persists in the youth sport industry. Membership on the elite travel teams and attendance at the premier camps can read like a community's social registry. Youth sports advocates should be concerned about the potential advantages in better coaching, equipment, and facilities that money can buy. Human dignity issues arise when kids are denied athletic participation opportunities because a child's family cannot meet the financial burdens.

These opportunities are not always denied just because of a family's financial situation. To the best of my knowledge, almost every player on the multiple travel baseball teams I have been associated with has come from a family where the two parents were married to each other. There has not been discrimination toward a kid with different family circumstances, but shared custodial arrangements do result in logistical problems that can prevent a child from making enough of the weekend commitments to make participation in travel baseball feasible. And so these kids also miss out on the social benefits and chance

to improve their skills against better competition because of factors outside their control.

I believe parents can be unfairly pigeonholed, and reality shows like *Dance Moms* only perpetuate the stereotypes of parents as intrusive and pushing their kids into emotional and physical pain. But sometimes the stereotypes are accurate. I have observed many negative behaviors by parents. These include:

- Parents obstinate when a request to have a younger sibling moved to a classification outside their age and skill range to play with an older sibling is denied. These families wanted to minimize their time commitments and do not have the best interest of the younger child in mind.
- Parents distraught when their son or daughter is denied selection to an All-Star team.
- Parents upset with the number of innings their less-developed child was getting on the infield, and then rudely disrupting a game with profanity.
- Parents baiting umpires, being obstinate in their criticism of them, and spewing profanity in their direction.
- Parents volunteering as base umpires who show up the home plate umpire when a call goes against their child's team.

It is easy for critics to claim youth sports are in a perilous state because of self-motivated parents. It is not that simple. The issue of protecting the human dignity of our nation's future is a responsibility we all share. A child's demonstrable success in sports can affirm the self-worth and accentuate the bottom line of parents, coaches, and administrators for a myriad of sociological and psychological reasons. The youth sport community must constantly guard against this threat of misplaced priorities and ensure to the best of its ability that today's youth are instructed and governed by appropriate role models. The community

should also ensure all persons associated with the enterprise, including opponents, teammates, and officials, are treated with respect and human dignity.

### Postscript

I was at Davenport's Garfield Park where my oldest son's Dubuque South All-Star team was playing Davenport East in an important Little League World Series pool play game. Joseph came in to pitch in a crucial situation and his walking the first two batters did little for my blood pressure. He then gave up a bases-loaded double to right center. A pitcher should go between third base and home on such a hit until he or she knows where the throw is going to go, but Joseph instead immediately backed up home. Three runs scored on the play and as he walked back to the mound he stumbled on the lip where the grass meets the dirt, fell on his left arm, and rolled to a sitting position until his coaches came out. I was standing at the top of a hill behind home plate thinking he needed to get up, quit being so dramatic, and get back to the f\*\*king mound. Instead he was coming out of the game.

I normally do not talk to my children during their games unless I am coaching them, but I angrily walked to the first-base dugout to tell Joseph I was leaving to go watch my younger son Michael's All-Star game across town. At that moment I did not care if Joseph's game was finished first and that he and the other riders we took would have to wait until I returned. I lambasted Joseph for coming out because the decision disrupted his coach's substitute pattern. I informed him he was letting his teammates down in a big game and giving the impression he was being soft for coming out for nothing more than falling down.

His left arm still hurt to twist it the next morning, meaning he could not catch any ball not thrown or hit perfectly at his glove. There was still swelling, so we continued to ice the injury

and give him Ibuprofen. We decided to take him to the hospital late that morning. After ordering X-rays, the doctor informed us Joseph had a fracture just below his left elbow. He would not be playing in that night's big game, where the winner would advance to the district semi-finals, or any game for the next six to eight weeks.

This manuscript was almost finished at the time of the injury. The doctor's words hit me hard as I realized my actions, words, and attitudes contradicted every reason I wrote this book. I had become the person this work frequently criticizes. It showed that despite good intentions, we sometimes fail in treating people with the respect they deserve. Hopefully, I will continue to learn from my mistakes and we will all strive to emphasize human dignity for all persons related to the sport business industry.

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