

**OPINIONS TOWARDS FAN AND ATHLETIC VIOLENCE AT
SECONDARY ATHLETIC EVENTS**

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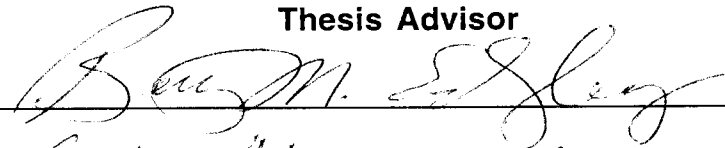
**Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
December, 1996**

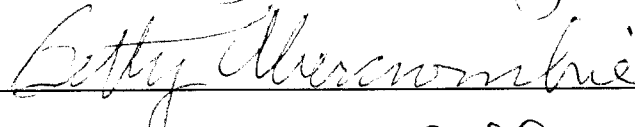
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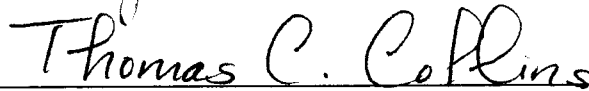
Thesis Approved:



Thesis Advisor







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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My sincere thanks is extended to Dr. Steve Edwards, my committee chair, who guided me through this entire difficult process. I really appreciate his time and energy that he spent helping me to complete my thesis under such a stressful deadline. In addition, I would like to thank my other committee members, Dr. Betty Edgley and Dr. Betty Abercrombie for their time and suggestions.

Next, I would like to thank my husband, Ron, for his love, patience and support throughout my pursuit of my desire to receive my Sports Administration degree. Also, I would like to thank my daughter, Amy, for believing that her mom can accomplish anything when she decides to go for it. Moreover, I would like to thank Ken Ellett, the Broken Arrow Athletic Director, who inspired me to seek my degree in Sports Administration and help me in numerous projects along the way.

Finally, I would like to thank the OSU Health, Physical Education, and Leisure Department for providing such wonderful instructors who really care about their graduate students and work to help students to excel in their chosen fields.

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OPINIONS TOWARDS FAN AND ATHLETIC VIOLENCE AT SECONDARY ATHLETIC EVENTS

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Sport events have been since the first traces of human history. In every civilization the unfortunate specter of violence raises its head to strike fear in those who find themselves in its path Kanaby (1994). Today, crime and violence are important issues facing all persons in the country. Most sociologists and psychologists agree that violence is a behavior that is learned at an early age. Unfortunately, violence is increasing in many school functions, including athletic events. All of these circumstances are causing a great deal of distress. As Geraghty (1994) indicated there is a fine line between expressing enthusiasm and telling fans not to get too out of control. When society condones violence at sporting events, a choice has consequences. Sports teams are playing contests in an empty stadium or gymnasium because fans fear of violence or fear of "hooligans" disruptions. Violent behavior then tends to dictate and control school sports.

When sports legitimize violence, it sends a message that this behavior is acceptably clean as stated by Ateyo (1981). Violent incidents routinely occur in the name of sport. In some states where high school football is revered by some, violent displays are somewhat routine. However, athletic contests do not give anyone a license to participate in violent behavior Rushin (1990).

Since it is impossible to predict when or where violence will erupt, certain precautions must be considered to ensure sports events are played without

incident. The top priority of a school administrator is to ensure the safety of the students and therefore, communication with the administration staff before, during and after the season will make a positive contribution toward the elimination of violent events. All athletic events present potential problems, and the sport itself will determine the extent of necessary supervision and support by law enforcement. If fans or athletes demonstrate over time that they cannot behave in a civil manner during athletic contests, then maybe they need to be policed. Athletes and participants share responsibility for maintaining a reasonably safe environment by knowing the rules, and understanding the consequences for breaking the rules.

Violence can not be halted or stopped without work, cooperation and support. Schools must continue to support the values of academics and activity programs because both are an integral part of education. If spectator behavior is expected to change, specific criteria must be defined, and the spectators must be made aware of the expectations. Those expectations may help athletic administrators assess all aspects of athletic events and develop appropriate strategies that will minimize acts of violence from disrupting them with the following strategies: long-term planning, pre-game planning, law enforcement, spectator policies and local policies.

("According to A Game Plan for Game Safety," 1993) violence at school athletic events is a community problem, not just a school issue. The community and the school district are responsible for the safety, security and well-being of the students. Problems of violence in any community have unique characteristics that need to be recognized. School officials can develop a communication plan and establish an effective communications network. A close examination of the site of any athletic contest may reveal that crime and violence can be reduced through minor changes in the environment.

In order for sportsmanship to become a priority, responsibility beginning with

governing bodies such as the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), and the National Federation of State High School Associations and others would become a starting point Fechter (1995). Each association should continually examine ways to reinstate good sportsmanship by working with leagues, youth groups, governing boards, athletic administrators, coaches, fans, officials and education associations to develop sportsmanship definitions and ethical conduct that can be shared among constituent groups (1995).

Olson (1993) stressed that preventive strategies are aimed at attitude shaping and contingency planning. At major spectator events, one staff member should be specifically appointed as the contest manager. The contest manager should host a pre-game meeting with faculty members and police who are assigned with crowd control duties. A plan of action for quietly intercepting and removing individuals or groups who cause disturbances should be defined and reviewed. Likewise, immediately following a contest the school administration has continuing responsibility for overseeing safety, good order and positive community relations according to Olson (1993).

Teenagers do not invent violence, they learn it according to Gelman (1993). Young people act out the attitudes and ethics of adults closest to them. In the last thirty years, Americans have developed a culture of violence surpassing in its pervasiveness equivalent to anything that has been experienced before. Moreover, everyone seems aggressively on the defensive these days Gelman (1993). Fans love to see aggressive behavior whether it is on the court or the field. The danger, psychiatrists say, is that the constant repetition of violence and violent imagery desensitizes us in much the way a therapist desensitizes a phobia patient: by deliberate exposure to what is scary. The failure of schools to adapt is only one example of what social analysts believe is a general failure of will. The levels of tolerated violence in the media, in sports and in the real world keep spiraling upward.

Kanaby (1994) strongly believes that school districts should teach values and contribute to the moral development of young people. Kanaby echoed what President Clinton said, "We must help to insure for the next generation of children the values that were given to us" (1994). School administrators, coaches and teachers' positive behavior can influence participants and fan in the athletic programs. In fact, the Education, Health and Human Services, Labor and Justice departments of the U.S. House of Representatives have begun work on a new school-crime task force, whose mission is to develop and coordinate strategies on crime prevention and intervention in and around schools and school activities (1994).

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is to solicit and compare the opinions of secondary principals and athletic directors regarding fan and athletic violence at athletic events.

Justification for the Study

Violence at school athletic events is a community problem, not just a school issue. Therefore, schools reflect the community which they serve. In essence both the community and school are responsible for the safety, security, and well-being of the athletes, students, administrators and fans at interscholastic events. Problems of violence in any community have unique characteristics that need to be recognized. Safety plans for special school events should be developed as part of a comprehensive safe school's plan with representatives from the entire community. Creating a partnership between the school,

community, and law enforcement can help identify concerns of school constituents and solicit their support.

The Extent of the Study

The study will be delimited to:

1. The subjects will include 4A , 5A and 6A athletic directors and principals in Oklahoma schools.

The study was limited by:

1. A lack of random sampling that was available.
2. The use of one measure of 4A, 5A and 6A surveys designed by the researcher.

Hypothesis

1. The following hypothesis will be tested at .05 level.
2. There will be no difference between the principals' and athletic directors' opinions regarding fan and athletic violence at athletic events .

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Communication Network

This committee consisted of student participants, parents, school administrators, coaches, sponsors, officials, and local law enforcement personnel and community leaders who would oversee an entire athletic program for the school and community (Kanaby, 1994).

Violence

Violence is defined as the threat or use of force that injures or intimidates a person (Lang, 1991).

Violent Activity

Violent activity is characterized by verbal threats, physical, emotional or racial harassment by an individual or group of individuals which has the effect of impairing or might have the effect of impairing the health or welfare of any student or staff member (McConaghy, 1994).

Violent Behavior

Violent behavior is the application of great physical force to damage or destroy (Langone, 1984).

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

This chapter is a review of the literature that relates to secondary athletic violence. The sections address strategies, risk management and related studies.

Strategies

Ybarra (1994) studied the specific strategies to address the influx of violence at the interscholastic athletic events at the request of a county-wide task force who had been assembled to identify possible solutions to the eruption of violence at high school athletic events. Ybarra suggested that pre-planning was crucial and must be implemented from the beginning. He suggested that a planning session should involve at a minimum a school administrator, athletic director, maintenance supervisor and district or local law enforcement. The athletic calendar should be reviewed carefully, and all potentially volatile athletic events should be identified and discussed. Moreover, careful assessment of these events at this juncture cannot be overemphasized.

According to Kanaby (1994), he urged community groups, parents, school administrators and students to "use their imagination" and work together to develop ways to teach values such as fairness, citizenship and caring. He believed that sports can teach values and contribute to the moral development of young people. These young people need direction from informed and sensitive coaches who understand their role in the process. In turn these coaches need training, reinforcement and guidance from athletic administrators, principals and superintendents in order to facilitate the process. Although plans must be in place to deal with crowd control at events, school officials must not

give up on the hope that they can have an effect on the behavior of individuals in and around our nation's schools.

The article, ("NIAAA Round Table: Issues Affecting Nation's High Schools Discussed By Six Athletic Directors," 1992), addressed the changes in sportsmanship among spectators and athletes over the past several years. The panel agreed that altercations or abrasive kinds of interaction between players and officials have increased. They also stated that sportsmanship, or lack thereof, displayed by spectators over the past few years has left a great deal to be desired. Although the panel discussed the negative impact of this situation, there seemed to be some change toward a positive direction as well. As a start most schools have begun to select a school in their district to receive a sportsmanship award at the end of each year. This step is forcing every school to make a conscious effort towards sportsmanship. Some schools are publishing an athletic newsletter several times a year with information on sportsmanship. Finally, administrators are encouraging coaches to become more knowledgeable in terms of how their own behavior influences students.

("According to A Game Plan for Game Safety," 1993), the threat of violence is becoming so accepted that school officials and coaches have had to develop contingency plans. Dealing with violence at athletic events has become a top priority. Primary components of a strategy to curb violence include facility preparation, an effective communication network, crisis prevention, adult supervision, school/law enforcement partnerships and student participation. Furthermore, creating a partnership between the school, community and law enforcement can help identify concerns of school constituents and solicit their support.

McConaghy (1994) emphasized that openly dealing with issues related to violence can help create school environments where violence in any form is not tolerated, and school communities should recognize the need to confront these

issues head-on and collectively to ensure that when students protest abuse they will be supported- -not silenced. If schools are to improve the quality of the education they provide for young people and are being thwarted by violence, then they need all the help that is available (1994).

According to Geraghty (1994), the flux of tragic incidents at athletic events, numerous schools have been pushed to implement some type of crowd control policies to avoid over-crowding in student seating areas. Officials at various schools across the country have been forced to look closely at ways to control fans at athletic events. Some schools have increased the number of security guards at games by selling reserved seats in the student section instead of general admission. Some schools have raised the height of the fences between the stands and the field from four feet to six feet. In addition, officials now check fans carefully to keep alcohol out of the stadium.

Nylen (1994) wrote that disorderly and criminal behavior from a crowd does not come like a bolt from the blue. It is predictable. In such situations there is usually a build-up period. The police must be able to read the crowd and know when an explosion is likely. Good planning, trained and experienced law enforcement personnel, good observation skills and good police management make it possible to counteract an extremely negative and difficult-to-handle situation (1994).

Risk Management

In order to prevent undesirable events and to relay direct remedial responses to actual incidents of fighting and spectator unrest, Olson (1993) wrote that long range and immediate plans must be developed and consistently implemented. He outlined general guidelines for pre-contest planning and the orientation of

contest supervisors. Moreover, prevention efforts must be focused in long term on the control of student, coach, parent, and spectator emotions and behaviors.

Miller (1993) stated that threats of violence serve as direct warning of disruptive behavior. Therefore, school authorities who know of threats of violence that they believe are well-founded may not refrain from taking reasonable preventive measures simply because violence has not yet occurred. The design and implementation of sound crowd control policies can help prevent such accidents and losses. An emergency plan is an integral component of risk management. A comprehensive emergency plan can ensure that a minor incident does not become a major incident and that major incidents do not become fatal.

Caudle (1994) believes that providing a safe environment is now the priority. No schools, regardless of location, size, or public or private status are immune to crisis. All must establish an action crisis-management plan and crisis team before the need arises. Such schools can best protect staff and students because they can defuse situations before violence erupts. Likewise, since schools reflect the communities they serve, community involvement should be part of the efforts to eliminate violence. Parents and volunteers should be involved in monitoring athletic events. Many students reported they would feel better if more adults were around just observing the events. They also said that if students knew an adult was watching, disruptive behavior would decrease. Moreover, hiring a full-time police officer to monitor at school and attend all school activities would be helpful. Once again, the concept of high visibility is reinforced. School violence is increasing, but there is hope. Without hope the situation will not improve. Without planned strategies violence will not be eliminated. Through the united effort and commitment of the school, parents, students and community violence on school campuses can be decreased and ultimately make the impact (1994).

Related Studies

Fechter (1995) indicated that there was good news, bad news, and challenging news on the state of sportsmanship at the interscholastic level. He stated that the good news is that authorities have recognized the problem of decaying sportsmanship and have taken steps to correct it. Positive results are already being documented. The bad news is that there is a long way to go, and the problem will not be solved overnight. The challenging news is that continued progress requires that everyone involved, superintendents, principals, athletic directors, coaches, players, officials, cheerleaders, fans, security personnel and even play-by-play announcers shoulder some responsibility for shoring up deteriorating behavior. He explained that this list of people were like rungs on a ladder of responsibility; if one fails, it makes the climb back to good sportsmanship more difficult, if not impossible (1995).

Bennett and Zwitz (1995) wrote that as a society many Americans have come to believe that one can do or say anything that does not hurt someone else seriously. In addition, it should not be surprising that contemporary high school athletes have come to view hostility during competition as a normal condition. As a further indication of the decline of the values of amateur sports as a nationally respected institution, consider another body of research that has shown that athletes tend to score lower on tests of moral reasoning than their non-athletic classmates. Given a traditional belief that through athletics athletes develop better self images and self discipline, this is an alarming finding. When viewed from this perspective the long-held theory that suggests "athletics builds character" can be challenged on its merits (1995).

Gelman (1993) stated that the team's performance reflected directly upon the fan: team success is personal success, and team failure is personal failure. Gelman also reported on a study conducted by two psychologists who

concluded that rooting for the team of one's choice can be hazardous to one's head. After a string of losses, for instance, fair-weather fans can abandon their team by choosing not to attend any more games, but true grandstand fans are denied that option. They are stuck with their team, in sickness and in health; it becomes part of their identity. The basic finding was that after a win, mood and self-esteem measured higher; after a loss they were significantly lower.

Wilstein (1995) wrote that the fighting, taunting and "trash talking" among pro and college players, shown repeatedly on television, has led to similar actions in football, basketball and baseball in high schools. Since adolescents make numerous judgments about athletes beyond their performances, the character traits in athletes that older kids most admire are intelligence, caring, sportsmanship and morality. These are the traits that need to be emulated rather than the mound-charging brawls at the major league level where the kids will perceive this as appropriate behavior. Defining what athletes represent in society goes to the heart of what young people and adults expect of them. When the meanings become blurred, so does the athlete's place in his/her profession.

Teenagers do not invent violence, they learn it according to Gelman (1993). Since young people are exposed to countless hours of violence from movies to pro athletic events, their behavior is simply a repetition of their exposure to these events. Gelman went on to state that the failure of schools to adapt is only one example of what social analysts believe is a general failure of will; a kind of paralysis in the face of the growing dimensions of the problem. Sadly, the levels of tolerated violence in the media, in sports and in the real world just keep escalating.

According to Langone (1984), he addressed some troubling questions that violent behavior raises. Why, for example, do some athletes and fans become more aggressive than others at athletic events? He continued by stating that it

was not intent to judge these violent acts beyond the implicit message that they offend human dignity, nor to influence the reader to judge them; rather, it is to provide some insight into why people behave violently, and perhaps some clues as to what may be done to prevent such behavior.

Atyeo (1981) stated that spectators have become so familiar with sports' violence that we barely recognize them for what they are. While many of our precious games are undeniably thrilling, invigorating and occasionally even breathtakingly beautiful, they are also by the same token savage, cruel and ruthlessly violent. Furthermore, each year American sportsmen and sportswomen sustain a staggering toll of twenty million injuries serious enough to be treated by a doctor (1981). The sports which began life as war games - boxing, wrestling, football and so on - we have continued as war games, playing them in exactly the same manner as we fight our wars - to win by any means at our disposal, including tooth-and-nail violence (1981).

Terry and Jackson (1985) stressed that two important sources of reinforcement for athletes are the spectators and the media. It is impossible to determine the exact proportion spectator response and media coverage which provides positive reinforcement for sports violence. However, it can be from the lack of overt disapproval that both spectators and the media largely condone violence as part of the game. It should be noted, however, that the degree of spectator and media acceptance of violence depends upon the sport in question. In some sports, violence has attained "an aura of legitimacy" (1985). Fortunately, violence remains absent from the majority of sporting contests. Nevertheless, the social importance and visibility of those sports in which violence is legitimated indicates the extent to which violence has permeated the sports arena.

("The NIAAA Round Table: Five High School Athletic Directors Discuss Several Issues" 1995). The article addressed various impacts and effects that

have resulted from increased taunting, harassing and unsportsmanlike conduct among student athletes. Various schools have taken a positive stance on the issue of unsportsmanlike behavior by promoting positive sportsmanship. For example, sportsmanship manuals have been written to point out the roles and expectations to everyone who has a role in interscholastic education including officials. This sportsmanship emphasis extends to spectators and students as well. Taunting or "trash talking" is prohibited on the courts or in the stands. Likewise, interscholastic athletics are stressed as an integral part of the educational process. Therefore, sportsmanship is taught and emphasized.

During the past few years experienced officials have reported an increased occurrence of abusive, threatening, racist "trash talk" and other unsportsmanlike incidents during interscholastic competition across the nation as examined by the article, ("Sportsmanship: Coaches, Administrators Have Role In Stopping Unacceptable Behavior" 1994). These incidents have included taunting from spectators and team benches, harassment and threats during competition and insults or menacing actions toward opponents following individual plays. In fact, some high school players and spectators have attempted to emulate the behaviors of certain college or professional athletes and have justified these confrontations as a "normal part of the game" (1994).

Moreover, the negative emotions and verbal or physical abuse that evolve from the act of unsportsmanlike "trash talking" clearly violate the foundations of sportsmanship and are inconsistent with educationally sound athletic competition. The article stressed that there is no justification for expending educational tax funds to support threatening or demeaning behavior that could lead to the arrest of an ordinary citizen if exhibited elsewhere in society. An athletic educational commitment must occur to stop this unacceptable conduct before it spreads further.

The article, ("Sportsmanship: Preventive, Reactive Measures Established By

NIAAA Committee," 1992), stated that educators, reporters and research writers have reported an increased incidence of player altercations, contest disruptions and unsportsmanlike behavior during high school athletic competition. To compound the problem these incidents have been characterized by increasing severe verbal and physical abuse of officials, players, coaches and contest supervisors. With nearly fifty percent of secondary students involved annually in some form of activity program, recurrent reports of negative behavior make it clear that sportsmanship values and behaviors do not occur as natural outgrowths of sports competition (1992). Instead, research findings corroborate the fact that achievement of high standards of sportsmanship requires focused attention and persistent efforts by educational leaders at all levels.

According to a survey conducted by Weisenburger, Underwood, and Fortune (1995), school violence is definitely an issue, but certainly not in every community. Respondents from urban school districts, those with over 5,000 students are the ones which primarily perceive violence as a problem. Students and staff may be physically safe, but school violence adversely affects student and staff morale. Board members believe they are taking effective steps to control violence, including strict enforcement of policies on violence and implementation of new programs to help students and teachers cope with societal changes that lead to violent behavior. The key findings stressed that whether violence is a problem in schools depends largely on whom you are and where you live. Overall results reports that students, staff and spectators are safe at school and school activities, and school districts are successfully implementing a wide variety of measures to keep them that way (1995).

The recent suggestion by one Washington, D.C. area high school principal that the policy to ban spectators from basketball games is idiotic as stated in his editorial titled: ("Don't Ban Fans...Punish The Criminals," 1995). Games played in empty high school gyms would signal these hooligans that they hold the

power to control interscholastic sports in the D.C. area. A better remedy is to fortify security patrols at games where violence might be expected. In addition, parents and other law-abiding citizens might feel more secure in the presence of beefed-up security forces. Regardless of the course of action taken by high schools one thing is perfectly clear--there are individuals out there who actually enjoy disrupting athletic events (1995). Better security at these games coupled with clear signals that law-breakers will be punished, is the best way to keep crowds under control and spectators safe.

Falkner (1995) wrote that sports have been around longer than the potato. This hype and hoopla surrounding sport is not uniquely American. It should therefore come as no surprise that behind sports hype anywhere is a passion for games that existed long before anyone closed a 10 year deal over a power lunch. There are other national values that are also mirrored in the sports that can be insidious and destructive: the importance of winning and the cynical fan. Likewise, the pressure placed on the high school athlete does not allow him/her to enjoy the sport. The parents want to live through their child first of all, and secondly, they want their child to receive a college scholarship (Falkner 1995). Until the fans, parents and community unite to support the athletic programs, inappropriate behaviors and expectations will continue to plague interscholastic athletics.

("The NIAAA Round Table: Five High School Athletic Directors Discuss Two Key National Issues," 1995). These five high school athletic directors were asked to comment on the effect of gang membership as it has an impact on athletic participation in their area. The general consensus that gang involvement is pervasive around the country and unquestionably has an impact on athletic participation. The administrators have indicated that there is a group of youngsters with athletic talent in each of their schools who, because of their gang affiliation, do not try out for sports. If the athletic programs are going to

survive the gang violence and gang influence, then the programs must be aggressive. By providing strong, comprehensive and easily accessible athletic opportunities, it makes a convincing argument for potential gangsters to get involved in a positive activity.

("The NIAAA Publications Committee," 1993) noted a marked increase in the incidence of disruptive violence in U.S. schools. It has been well documented in numerous professional education journals and in contemporary news reports. Entire issues of school administrator journals and safety publications have been dedicated to topics such as weapons and narcotics control, suppression and curtailment of gang activities and a wide range of physical security messages. Drug wars, "turf" battles and other sources of gang conflict have caused damage to property and injury to teachers, support staff and innocent bystanders (1993). Unfortunately, this wave of pre-moral behavior has not been isolated to students of high school age. Gang recruitment and violent acts have been reported among elementary and middle school students in some urban areas. Sports programs have emerged recently as important components and positive alternatives to the temptations, pressures and frictions that may evolve from boredom and idleness within economically depressed and gang dominated neighborhoods (1993).

CHAPTER III

Method

Preliminary Procedures

A pilot survey "Fan and Athletic Violence at Secondary Athletic Events" was conducted to determine the validity. The surveys contained 20 questions that addressed the subject of violence at secondary athletic events. Forty-five pilot surveys were mailed to various 6A, 5A and 4A Oklahoma athletic directors in August of 1996. A stamp self-addressed return envelope was enclosed. A five point Likert Scale was utilized in the surveys for the 6A, 5A, and 4A athletic directors and principals to check the best choice that expressed their opinion. The scale ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The internal consistency reliability of .80 was achieved. Therefore, suitable content validity and reliability were evident.

Subject Selection

The subjects for this study included 100 6A, 5A, 4A and 3A athletic directors and 100 principals selected from the Oklahoma Coaching Directory. Each athletic director and principal were mailed the survey "Fan and Athletic Violence at Secondary Athletic Events" to complete. From these 200 surveys, a return rate of 50 per cent was anticipated.

Operational Procedures

The surveys asked the athletic directors and principals to circle their school classification and gender. Next, the survey identified who the researcher was and why the athletic directors and principals were asked to take the time to complete the survey. Then, the directions indicated how to choose the answer that best expressed their opinion on this subject. A stamp self-addressed return envelope was enclosed with each survey and mailed to both athletic directors

and principals in September of 1996.

Statistical Analysis

From the forty-five pilot surveys received, twenty-three returned surveys were received that calculated an internal consistency => coefficient alpha of $r = .80$. When the two hundred surveys were mailed for the study, the mean and standard deviation for each of the twenty questions of the returned surveys were presented as a total. The principals and athletic directors were considered separately. Also, the t test of the surveys will be conducted and compare the answers of the athletic directors and principals separately on each statement.

CHAPTER IV
Results and Discussion

From the two-hundred surveys entitled: "Fan & Athletic Violence at Secondary Athletic Events" thirty-six surveys were completed by secondary athletic directors and thirty-one surveys completed by secondary principals. Information received from the thirty-six athletic directors, fifteen 6A responded, eight 5A responded, nine 4A responded, three 3A responded and one survey was not circled to indicate the school's size. From the thirty-one principals, fifteen 6A responded, eleven 5A responded and five 4A responded to the survey. Twenty-six male athletic director respondents were circled, and five surveys did not circle either gender. Twenty-four male principals were circled, six female respondents and one did not circle either gender. From the two-hundred surveys entitled: "Fan & Athletic Violence at Secondary Athletic Events," the Table I showed the responses to each statement by both the athletic directors and the principals. The table illustrated the means and standard deviation of the survey on each statement and each response by both groups.

Table I
MEANS + STANDARD DEVIATIONS
FOR THE SURVEY RESPONSES

Variables	Athletic Directors (mean)	Principals (mean)	Athletic Directors (Standard dev.)	Principals (stand. dev)
Q 1	3.6	4.0	1.0	1.0
Q 2	4.1	4.0	.52	.94
Q 3 *	2.9	3.6	1.0	1.1
Q 4	2.8	2.7	.97	1.1
Q 5 *	3.9	4.5	.93	.49
Q 6	4.2	4.3	.50	.54
Q 7 *	2.3	3.0	.99	1.1
Q 8 *	4.0	3.3	1.0	1.1
Q 9	4.4	4.4	.50	.49
Q 10	4.3	4.1	.62	.59
Q 11	3.0	3.0	.98	1.2
Q 12 *	3.4	4.0	.81	.79
Q 13	3.2	3.5	1.0	.81
Q 14	2.9	3.3	.85	1.0
Q 15 *	4.0	4.3	.64	.65
Q 16	4.0	4.0	.78	.68
Q 17	3.0	3.4	.85	1.2
Q 18 *	2.6	3.3	1.0	.95
Q 19	4.3	4.3	.47	.79
<u>Q 20</u>	<u>3.7</u>	<u>3.7</u>	<u>1.1</u>	<u>.86</u>

*denotes significant differences $p < .05$ t test

Results of the responses from the surveys indicated that seven of the twenty statements on the survey were significantly different and will be individually addressed in the following discussions.

Statement number one: *Violence at athletic events has increased over the past ten years.* There were no significant differences in responses. Both the athletic directors and principals agreed with this statement with a mean of 3.6 and 4.0.

Statement number two: *The threat of violence has prompted school officials and coaches to develop preventive plans.* There were no significant differences in responses. Both athletic directors and principals agreed with the statement with a mean of 4.1 and 4.0.

Statement number three: *Violence near your high school has prompted a tightening of security at games.* This statement was the first of the seven statements that the athletic directors disagreed with the principals. The athletic directors mean indicated a negative 2.9 compared to a positive 3.6 by the principals. To speculate as to why the athletic directors responded so differently from the principals could be viewed from the perspective that principals thought of the student body, and the athletic director may have been only thinking of the athletes and fans. The t value drawn from the two populations was -2.62 and ($p < .65$). According to Geraghty (1994), with increasing incidents at athletic events, school officials at various schools across the country have been forced to look closely at ways to control fans at athletic events. Equally important, Nylén (1994) reported that good planning, trained and experienced law enforcement personnel make it possible to counteract an extremely negative situation.

Statement number four: Violence at athletic events has become a top priority in your administration. Both the athletic directors and principals disagreed that this statement was a priority with a negative mean of 2.8 and 2.7 respectively. Possibly the majority of the respondents have yet to believe that violence has become a problem in their schools. The reason could stem from the fact that the respondents have not experienced athletic violence to date.

Statement number five: Violence at school athletic events is a community problem and not just a school issue. Even though both of the athletic directors and principals agreed to the statement, the variance of -3.6 t value and ($p < .66$) notes a major difference in how this statement was perceived by the respondents. This statement was the second statement of the seven statements that revealed substantial differences in the standard deviation. The difference in the way this statement was perceived by the respondents could stem from the various lack of communication from school administration and communities. Numerous schools may not want community input or involvement in strategic planning for school activities. Likewise, many communities do not want to take the time to become involved in the planning of various school events because of the time commitment. Some communities take the attitude that they pay taxes for the school to handle any situations that may occur. However, according to Kanaby (1994), he urged community groups, parents, school officials and students to "use their imagination" and work together to develop ways to teach values such as fairness, citizenship and caring. In addition, Cauble (1994) only through united effort of the school, parents, students and community, violence on school campuses can be decreased.

Statement number six: Safety plans for athletic events should be developed as part of a comprehensive safe school plan. There were no significant differences in the responses. The athletic directors agree with 4.2,

and the principals agreed with a 4.3 mean that some type of plan should be implemented in planning in case a problem could happen at an athletic event.

Statement number seven: *Violence at athletic events is a problem where you live.* The athletic directors responded with -2.3 response indicating that violence at athletic events was not a problem in their community . However, the principals responded with 3.0 expressing more concern in regard to the violence occurring at their schools. This statement represents the third of the seven questions with a t value of -2.3 and ($p < .66$). Possibly, the principals who responded positively to this statement are including some of the violent areas of the community as potential danger to athletic competition. Also, the possibility that some of the principals may have noted violent behavioral problems in other school related activities in the past. Research indicated that students, staff and spectators are safe at school and school activities, and school districts are successfully implementing a wide variety of measures to keep them that way. Caudle (1994) stressed that providing a safe environment is now the priority. No schools--regardless of location, size or public or private status--are immune to crisis, and all must establish an action crisis-management plan before the need arises (1994).

Statement number eight: *The location and size of a school district enhances the perception of violence at athletic events.* Both the athletic directors and principals responded positively to this statement; however, the difference of 2.8 t value and ($p < .66$) was significantly higher than the normal standard deviation. Even though the respondents were in agreement with the statement, their variances demonstrated that the athletic directors evidently felt stronger than the principals felt on this statement. Likewise, the particular sporting event may have influenced the athletic director's decision from past experience with violent disruptions because of the numbers. According to Weisenburger, Underwood and Fortune (1995), agreed that school violence is

definitely an issue, but certainly not in every community. The key findings stressed that whether violence is a problem in schools depends largely on who you are and where you live.

Statement number nine: *Your athletes feel safe at athletic events.* The respondents agreed that their athletes felt safe at athletic events with a mean of 4.4 each.

Statement number ten: *Your spectators feel safe at athletic events.* There were no significant differences in the responses. The athletic directors responded with a 4.3 mean and the principals responded with 4.1 mean indicated that their fans feel safe at athletic events.

Statement number eleven: *Your board of education views athletic event violence as a priority.* There were no significant differences in the responses. The respondents had responses of 3.0 each indicating that athletic violence was not a priority in their schools.

Statement number twelve: *Staff training programs would be effective in crowd control athletic events.* The respondents marked that they agreed with this statement. The difference in the two groups agreement was a t value of -2.8 and ($p < .64$). Since the respondents did not know the amount of staff training that would be necessary, it is impossible to determine why the two groups disagreed on this particular statement. Without more information it can only be speculated as to why the deviation is so great. One possibility that was considered the athletic directors and principals considered whether it was cost effective to implement this mandatory staff training. Since most schools are on a strict budget, the funding of such a program would create a problem, and if the board of education failed to view athletic violence a priority, necessary funding would be difficult to attain. According to Miller (1993), the design and implementation of sound control policies can help prevent accidents and losses. Consequently, administrators who have emergency plans in place are

more likely to control any situation with effective communication network.

Statement number thirteen: Cultural awareness training would be effective for violence at athletic events. There were no significant differences in the responses. The respondents indicated that a cultural awareness training would not be effective for violence at athletic with a 1.2 variance.

Statement number fourteen: A "preventive program" for crowd control should be mandatory at your school. There were no significant differences in the responses. Although the athletic directors' responses of 2.9 were less than the mean, the differences of -1.2 were not significant. These responses indicated that a preventive program for crowd control should not be mandatory at their schools.

Statement number fifteen: Violence at secondary level athletic events reflects violence in today's society. The athletic directors' mean response of 4.0 differed to the principals' 4.3 with a variance -2.0 t value and ($p < .64$). This difference was perplexing to the researcher. The researcher has no explanation as to why both groups felt so differently towards this statement. It would be interesting to find out why the athletic directors did not feel as strongly as the principals did on this particular statement. One explanation of these responses that these respondents do not see a relevance in the statement. Moreover, these respondents may believe that violence has not increased at their school since they have employed there and simply disagree with the statement. According to Kanaby (1994), he believes that school districts should teach values and contribute to the moral development of students even if society does not. Moreover, school officials and staff's authority over the participants and spectators in the athletic programs can determine positive behavior during and after the contest.

Statement number sixteen: It is necessary for each school to have a crowd control plan implemented. There were no significant differences in the

responses. The respondents were in agreement with their responses with only -.20 in variance t value. These responses could indicate that the respondents believe that some type of crowd control plan should be in place at their schools as long as there is no cost involved.

Statement number seventeen: Metal detectors at gate entrances would be effective in monitoring crowd control. The respondents seem to be in agreement with this statement with a variance of -1.4 t value with no significant differences. These responses indicate that if a potential problem existed the use of metal detectors would be effective in monitoring crowd control.

Statement number eighteen: Changing athletic events from evening hours to daylight hours would help deter violence. The athletic directors responded with a negative mean of 2.6. However, the principals responded with a 3.3 leaning more in agreement with the statement. The t value drawn from the two populations was -3.09 and ($p < .64$). Possibly, the athletic directors were thinking how this time change would financially affect them. Whereas the principals could be thinking competition in the daylight hours may help stop numerous outsiders from attending the athletic contests because of either working hours or the disruptive outsiders would be more visible during the day. According to Geraghty (1994), changing the regular scheduled contests to daylight hours sends a message that the disruptive spectators would hold the power to control secondary sports.

Statement nineteen: Both athletes' and fans' sportsmanship expectations should be emphasized prior to the season to help crowd control. The respondents agreed to this statement and -.25 represented the variance t value with no significant differences.

Statement number twenty: Violence at secondary athletic events have escalated because of the behavior of college and pro athletes on television the past ten years. The respondents agreed with the statement with a .22

variance t value.

Summary of Survey Results

This chapter noted seven of the twenty questions which represented significant differences of the standard deviation. The thirty-six athletic directors and the thirty-one principals who responded to the one hundred surveys in each group represented about a thirty percent return rate. The hypothesis stated that there is no difference between opinions expressed by athletic directors and principals on violence at secondary athletic events is rejected because the athletic directors' and principals' responses to various statements.

CHAPTER V
Summary of Findings

The purpose of this study addressed secondary level athletic violence and solicited responses from Oklahoma secondary athletic directors and principals on their opinions towards fan athletic violence. The return rate from the surveys on "Fan & Athletic Violence at Secondary Athletic Events" was over thirty percent. From the twenty question survey, the respondents significantly differed on seven questions. The hypothesis stated that there will be no difference between opinions expressed by the secondary athletic directors and principals surveyed. This hypothesis was rejected because of the data presented in survey results. The sample from the athletic directors and principals pointed that these professionals differed significantly on seven statements in the twenty statement survey that they completed. The .05 significant level indicated the difference on the seven statements listed on the chart.

Conclusions

The respondent's opinions on secondary athletic violence differed more than was anticipated from the study. The survey results indicated that athletic directors and principals agreed that athletic violence should be a concern not only in the school but also in the community. However, without more specific data to analyze, the reasons as to why the respondents differed on several questions on the survey cannot be answered. Based on the findings of this study it was concluded that athletic violence at athletic events is a concern viewed by athletic directors and principals of Oklahoma schools. Because athletic directors and principals may have different philosophies toward what contributes to violence, more communication should be studied as to why these respondents differed on their responses to various statements of the survey.

Recommendations For Future Study

It is recommended that this study should be expanded to include more questions addressing more specific concerns of disruptive violence at secondary athletic events. Also, the study should solicit opinions from coaches of various sports, superintendents, school board members and community input. The investigation of key elements should be addressed to ensure safety to both athletes and spectators.

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APPENDIX

Survey: "Fan & Athletic Violence at Secondary Athletic Events"

To: Athletic Directors
 From: Angelia J. Wishert

School: 6A 5A 4A 3A
 (circle one)

Gender: M F
 (circle one)

Subject: I am presently working on my thesis in Athletic Administration at Oklahoma State University. I would appreciate it if you would take the time to answer the enclosed survey at your earliest convenience. Since I am on a time frame, I would greatly appreciate it if you could complete the survey and mail it back to me in the enclosed stamped envelope by **October 4, 1996.**

Directions: Listed below are twenty statements about fan and athletic violence at the secondary level. For each one, place a check mark in the box that best expresses your opinion on this subject.

	<i>Strongly Agree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Undecided</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Strongly Disagree</i>
1. Violence at athletic events has increased over the past ten years.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }
2. The threat of violence has prompted school officials and coaches to develop preventive plans.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }
3. Violence near your high school has prompted a tightening of security at games.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }
4. Violence at athletic events has become a top priority in your administration.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }
5. Violence at school athletic events is a community problem and not just a school issue.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }
6. Safety plans for athletic events should be developed as part of a comprehensive safe school plan.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }
7. Violence at athletic events is a problem where you live.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }
8. The location and size of a school district enhances the perception of violence at athletic events.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }
9. Your athletes feel safe at athletic events.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }
10. Your spectators feel safe at athletic events.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }
11. Your board of education views athletic event violence as a priority.	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }	{ }

- | | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Undecided</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly Disagree</i> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 12. Staff training programs would be effective in crowd control at athletic events. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 13. Cultural awareness training would be effective for violence at athletic events. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 14. A "preventive program" for crowd control should be mandatory training at your school. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 15. Violence at secondary level athletic events reflects violence in today's society. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 16. It is necessary for each school to have a crowd control plan implemented. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 17. Metal detectors at gate entrances would be effective in monitoring crowd control. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 18. Changing athletic events from evening hours to daylight hours would help deter violence. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 19. Both athletes' and fans' sportsmanship expectations should be emphasized prior to the season to help crowd control. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 20. Violence at secondary athletic events have escalated because of the behavior of college and pro athletes on television the past ten years. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |

Thank you for completing my survey, and as previously instructed, return the completed survey in the enclosed stamped envelope.

*Angelia J. Wishert
7445 South 111th E. Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74133*

Survey: "Fan & Athletic Violence at Secondary Athletic Events"

To: Principal
From: Angelia J. Wishert

School: 6A 5A 4A 3A
(circle one)

Gender: M F
(circle one)

Subject: I am presently working on my thesis in Athletic Administration at Oklahoma State University. I would appreciate it if you would take the time to answer the enclosed survey at your earliest convenience. Since I am on a time frame, I would greatly appreciate it if you could complete the survey and mail it back to me in the enclosed stamped envelope by **October 4, 1996.**

Directions: Listed below are twenty statements about fan and athletic violence at the secondary level. For each one, place a check mark in the box that best expresses your opinion on this subject.

- | | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Undecided</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly Disagree</i> |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Violence at athletic events has increased over the past ten years. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. The threat of violence has prompted school officials and coaches to develop preventive plans. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. Violence near your high school has prompted a tightening of security at games. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Violence at athletic events has become a top priority in your administration. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. Violence at school athletic events is a community problem and not just a school issue. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Safety plans for athletic events should be developed as part of a comprehensive safe school plan. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. Violence at athletic events is a problem where you live. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. The location and size of a school district enhances the perception of violence at athletic events. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. Your athletes feel safe at athletic events. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. Your spectators feel safe at athletic events. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. Your board of education views athletic event violence as a priority. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

- | | <i>Strongly Agree</i> | <i>Agree</i> | <i>Undecided</i> | <i>Disagree</i> | <i>Strongly Disagree</i> |
|--|-----------------------|--------------|------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|
| 12. Staff training programs would be effective in crowd control at athletic events. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 13. Cultural awareness training would be effective for violence at athletic events. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 14. A "preventive program" for crowd control should be mandatory training at your school. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 15. Violence at secondary level athletic events reflects violence in today's society. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 16. It is necessary for each school to have a crowd control plan implemented. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 17. Metal detectors at gate entrances would be effective in monitoring crowd control. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 18. Changing athletic events from evening hours to daylight hours would help deter violence. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 19. Both athletes' and fans' sportsmanship expectations should be emphasized prior to the season to help crowd control. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |
| 20. Violence at secondary athletic events have escalated because of the behavior of college and pro athletes on television the past ten years. | { } | { } | { } | { } | { } |

Thank you for completing my survey, and as previously instructed, return the completed survey in the enclosed stamped envelope.

*Angelia J. Wishert
7445 South 111th E. Avenue
Tulsa, Oklahoma 74133*

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 10-09-96

IRB#: ED-97-023

Proposal Title: OPINIONS TOWARDS FAN AND ATHLETIC VIOLENCE
AT SECONDARY ATHLETIC EVENTS

Principal Investigator(s): Steven W. Edwards, Angie Wishert

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

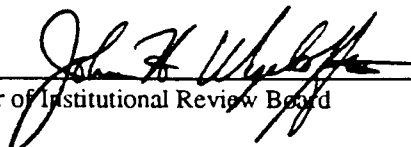
ALL APPROVALS MAY BE SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
AT NEXT MEETING, AS WELL AS ARE SUBJECT TO MONITORING AT ANY TIME DURING
THE APPROVAL PERIOD.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A
CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD
APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR
APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval
are as follows:

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: October 10, 1996

VITA

Angelia J. Wishert

**Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science**

**Thesis: OPINIONS TOWARDS FAN AND ATHLETIC VIOLENCE AT
SECONDARY ATHLETIC EVENTS**

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**Experience: Raised in Comanche, Oklahoma; employed as a
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**Professional Memberships: Oklahoma Coaches Association
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