

THE EXPERIENCE AND EXPRESSION OF ANGER
AND AGGRESSION IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS
FOR MALE COLLEGE ATHLETES IN
CONTACT AND NON-CONTACT SPORTS

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The Experience and Expression of Anger and Aggression in Dating Relationships for Male College Athletes in Contact and Non-Contact Sports

Introduction

Within the world of sports, one of the most heated current topics is that of athletes and their aggressive behavior in their sport as well as in their personal lives. Most sport psychologists and personnel agree that athletes are socialized to use anger and aggression as empowering tactics in their respective sports as a way to increase motivation, to heighten their awareness and focus, to improve their performance, and to win competitions (Rains, 1980). Sanctioned aggression is the use of physical force that is recognized as being a part of the sport itself, that is “within the rules” of competition.

While no official classification of sports types exist, sports can be informally categorized into different types based on the level of sanctioned contact and/or aggression used. Contact sports are defined as those involving some regular physical contact with other athletes as part of the sport (i.e., takedowns, checking, fouling). Examples of contact sports include wrestling and basketball. Non-contact sports are defined as those involving limited (i.e., sliding into bases) or no contact with other athletes. Examples of non-contact sports include baseball, track and field, swimming, and golf.

While physical contact and/or aggression in competitive sports are expected, there is growing concern that athletes are using anger and aggression inappropriately in sports. Unsanctioned aggression is the use of physical force and/or violence that is not fit with

the rules of the game or sport (Kerr, 1999). Boxill (2003) warns of the potential for brutality in sport.

There is general agreement that the use of unsanctioned aggression in sport is deplorable (Weinberg & Gould, 1999; Widmeyer, 1984). Because of this, suggestions have been posed to reduce the level of aggression in sports (Tenenbaum, Stewart, Singer, & Duda, 1997). These suggestions usually focus on punishment, education and rule change, or stringent enforcement, although they have received criticism for unrealistic expectations and misdirected motivations (Kerr, 1999).

To date, researchers have neglected to explore the issues of anger and aggression in athletes and non-athletes. Most of the research has focused on aggression, which can be viewed as the behavioral manifestation of anger. Direct competition can lead to conflict and, as with many conflicts between competing individuals or groups, attempts at hierarchical resolution may involve the use of aggression (Leith, 1982).

There is research evidence that athletes are exposed to aggression and violence not only in the sport itself, but also in the coaching they receive, which may influence their experience of anger and use of unsanctioned aggression in sports. High school and college athletes report experiencing verbal intimidation, physical intimidation, and physical violence within the athletic programs, including the coaching they receive. In fact, coaching styles of intimidation and violence significantly predicted athletes' use of physical violence in sports (e.g., Shields & Edgar, 1999). These results suggest that not only athletes, but also coaches, deserve close scrutiny when it comes to the common themes of sports violence.

Athletes are also using physical force and aggression not only within their sports, but also outside of sports, in their relationships with partners and spouses (Staffo, 2001). While incidents of domestic violence and assault by athletes have been reported in the news, less is known in the psychosocial research literature regarding athletes' experience of anger and violence in their domestic relationships with partners/spouses and the factors associated with these experiences.

While researchers have explored dating violence among college students in general (e.g., Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Murray & Kardatzke, 2007; Strauss, 2004), less is known about the experience of anger and aggression in college athletes, particularly their use of psychological, physical, and sexual aggression in their dating relationships; and how the type of sport athletes participate in may have an influence on anger and aggression in dating relationships.

The majority of research to date has focused on sexual assault among athletes compared to college students in general. Male athletes have been found to be six times more likely to be reported for sexual assault on college campuses compared to non-athlete male students (Crossett, Benedict, & McDonald, 1995). Similarly, athletes have been found to be 5.5 times more likely to commit date rape compared to the general population of college students (Wieberg, 1991). In a three-year survey study, athletes were found to be involved in one-third of the sexual assaults reported on college campuses (Eskenazi, 1990).

Only one study to date has explored the experience of anger and the use of psychological, physical, and sexual aggression used in dating relationships for college athletes compared to college students in general (i.e., non-athletes; Winterowd &

Edwards, 2002). Male college athletes admitted to inflicting injuries on their partners more so than non-athletes. However, they also report more partner-initiated aggression towards them compared to non-athletes (Winterowd & Edwards, 2002).

Of interest, few researchers have explored anger as an important emotional experience for athletes as well as the use of aggressive tactics in relationships outside of their sport. In the next section, anger will be defined and explored.

Anger

Anger is often a precursor to aggression and is influenced by complex interactions between multiple personal and environmental variables, including neurological and endocrine processes as well as temperament (Deffenbacher, 1996). Pre-anger state and appraisal processes as well as external events triggering memories and images can interact to influence the internal experience of anger and the aggressive responses that follow. Anger can be elicited by a relatively clear external precipitant, which often times is easily identified by an individual (Deffenbacher, 1996); however, unconscious processes can also influence anger experience and expression. The ways athletes experience and express their anger may have a significant impact on their use of physical aggression and violence, both inside and outside of sports.

Anger can be defined as “a psychobiological emotional state or condition that consists of feelings that vary in intensity from mild irritation or annoyance to intense fury and rage, accompanied by activation and of neuroendocrine processes and arousal of the autonomic nervous system” (Spielberger, 1999, 19). Anger is generally considered to be a separate, and more basic, concept than either hostility or aggression. Hostility refers to negative attitudes toward others, with intentions to engage in aggressive, and often times,

vindictive behavior (Spielberger, 1999). This behavior, of course, often coincides with frequent experiences of angry feelings.

According to Spielberger (1999), the experience of anger can be conceptualized as consisting of two main components, known as “state anger” and “trait anger.” State anger is defined as a psychobiological emotional state or a condition characterized by subjective feelings that vary in intensity from mild irritation or annoyance to intense rage. Anger in the psychobiological emotional framework is usually accompanied by muscular tension as well as by arousal of the neuroendocrine and autonomic nervous systems. As time progresses, the intensity of state anger varies as a function of such things as a perceived injustice, being treated unfairly or attacked, or frustration as a result of barriers to goals. Trait anger is defined in terms of “individual differences in the disposition to perceive a wide range of situations as annoying or frustrating and by the tendency to respond to such situations with elevations in state anger.” (Spielberger, 1999, 1). Individuals who report higher levels of trait anger experience state anger more frequently and with a greater intensity than those individuals with lower levels of trait anger.

Spielberger (1999) conceptualizes anger expression and anger control as having four major components including anger aggression, anger suppression, as well as internal and external efforts to control anger expression. Anger Expression-Out refers to the expression of anger toward other persons or objects in a person’s environment. Anger Expression-In, is anger directed inward—in other words, holding in angry feelings and not sharing them with others. Anger Control-Out refers to efforts to preventing the expression of anger toward other persons or objects in a person’s environment whereas

Anger Control-In involves the control of suppressed angry feelings by calming down and/or relaxing when angered (Spielberger, 1999).

Little is known about the experience and expression of anger among athletes, particularly athletes involved in different types of sports, as well as the extent to which they resolve conflicts in aggressive ways. The use of verbal, physical, and sexual aggression in domestic relationships has been conceptualized as attempts to resolve conflicts in their dating and partnered/marital relationships (Strauss, Hamby, Boney-McCoy, Sugarman, 1995).

Psychological aggression is defined as non-verbal aggressive acts. These acts include shouting, destroying property, and name-calling. Physical assault is defined as physically aggressive behavior. Examples of such behavior are slapping, choking, and kicking. Sexual coercion is defined as intent to engage in unwanted sexual activity with another person, in this case, one's dating partner. Examples of this behavior are using force to have sex and using threats to have sexual contact with someone. Injury is defined as bone or tissue damage, pain that lasts for more than one day, and/or a need for medical attention. Examples of this would be cutting, sprains, and bruises. Negotiation is defined as using discussion to settle a disagreement. Examples of this behavior are showing care or concern to a partner, offering to work out a problem, and respecting a partner's feelings.

Only one study to date has been conducted to explore anger experience and expression and use of aggressive tactics to resolve conflicts in dating relationships among college athletes and non-athletes (Winterowd & Edwards, 2002). While there were no significant differences between college athletes and non-athletes in their anger experience

or expression, there were differences between college athletes and non-athletes in their use of conflict tactics of physical and sexual aggression directed toward their partners and vice versa (Winterowd & Edwards, 2002). As mentioned earlier, athletes reported inflicting more injury on their partners compared to non-athletes; athletes also reported experiencing domestic violence from their dating partners more so than non-athletes.

Given the limited research on the relationship between athletic status and violence and given the previously limited definitions of athletic status in the research literature, more research will be needed to better understand the degree to which athletes' involvement in sports team culture serves as a key socializing agent in influencing their experience and expression of anger and their use of aggressive tactics in dating and partnered relationships, which is the focus of the present study.

The purpose of this study is to explore potential differences between college male athletes in contact (i.e., football, basketball, wrestling) and non-contact (i.e., baseball, track and field, and golf) sports in their experiences of anger, anger expression, use of anger control efforts, and the extent to which they use aggressive tactics in their dating and/or partnered relationships. It is hypothesized that the type of sport an athlete participates in (that is, contact versus non-contact sports) may have an influence on how an athlete experiences and expresses anger and how they resolve conflicts in their dating relationships. More specifically, it was hypothesized that male college athletes in the contact sports would report more trait anger, anger aggression, and less anger control compared with male college athletes in non-contact sports. In addition, it was hypothesized that male college athletes in contact sports would report more

psychological, physical, and sexual aggression towards their dating partners compared to male college athletes in non-contact sports.

Method

Participants

Participants consisted of 77 male college student athletes from a Midwestern university. The athlete participants were involved in the following varsity sports: football (n = 21, 27.3%), basketball (n = 3, 3.9%), track and field (n = 8, 10.4%), baseball (n = 34, 44.2%), golf (n = 1, 1.3%), wrestling (n = 10, 13%). The majority of the participants were freshmen (n = 35, 45.5%), followed by sophomores (n = 20, 26%), juniors (n = 14, 18.2%), and seniors (n = 8, 10.4%). The majority of the athletes were Caucasian (n = 49, 64%) and African American (n = 19, 25%). There were a few athletes who identified as Native American (n = 3, 0.04%), Hispanic (n = 4, 0.05%), and bi-racial (n = 2, 0.03%; Asian/Black and Black/Caucasian). The age range for the participants was 18-27 years, with an average age of 19.70 years (sd = 1.55).

In terms of marital status, the majority of the athletes were single (n = 68, 93.2%); four were in a partnered relationship (5.5%) and one athlete was married (1.4%); four athletes did not report a marital status. About half of the athletes were currently involved in a dating relationship (n = 36, 46.8%) and the other half were not (n = 41, 53.2%). On average, athletes had been in their current dating relationship for about a year and a half (m = 18.63 months; sd = 21.41; range = 0 to 72 months). See Table 1 for a graphic

display of the demographics for the sample. The demographics for the athletes contact versus noncontact sports are provided below.

Athletes in the contact sports. The age range for the athletes in contact sports (n = 34) was 18-22 years, with an average age of 20 years (sd = 1.31). The majority of the contact sport athletes were college freshmen (n = 19, 56%), followed by juniors (n = 8, 24%), sophomores (n = 4, 11.8%), and seniors (n = 3, 8.8%). In terms of racial background, the athletes in contact sports were Caucasian (n = 16, 47%), African American (n = 17, 50%), or bi-racial (African American/Caucasian) (n = 1, .03%).

The majority of the athletes in contact sports (n = 43) were currently single (n = 29, 90.6 %); two were partnered (6.3%) one athlete was married (3.1%); and two athletes did not report a marital status. About 38% of the athletes in contact sports were currently involved in a dating relationship (n = 13) and the other 62% were not (n = 21). On average, athletes in contact sports were involved with their current dating partner for one year (m = 24.8 months; sd = 27.32, range 0-72 months).

Athletes in the non-contact sports. The age range for the athletes in non-contact sports was 18-27 years, with an average age of 19.84 years (sd = 1.72). The majority of the contact sport athletes were college freshmen (n = 16, 37%) and sophomores (n = 16, 37%), followed by juniors (n = 6, 14%), and seniors (n = 5, 12%). In terms of racial background, the majority of the athletes in non-contact sports were Caucasian (n = 33, 77%); 4 were Hispanic (9%) 3 Native American (7%), 2 were African American (2, 5%) and one was bi-racial (n = 1; Asian/African American; 2%).

The majority of the athletes in the non-contact sports were single (n = 39, 95.1%); two athletes were partnered (4.9%); and two athletes in non-contact sports did not report

a marital status (4.9%). About 54% of the athletes in non-contact sports were currently involved in a dating relationship (n = 23) and the other 47% were not (n = 20). The average length of time in dating relationships reported by athletes in non-contact sports was 14.61 months (sd = 15.92), with a range of less than a month to 48 months.

Measures

Participants completed a packet of questionnaires including an informed consent, a demographic sheet, the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory (STAXI-2), and the Conflict Tactics Scale.

State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAXI-2); Spielberger, 1999). The STAXI-2 is a 57-item self-report measure of anger experience and anger expression. The STAXI-2 has seven scales including State Anger, Trait Anger, Anger Expression Out, Anger Expression-In, Anger Control-Out, Anger Control-In, and an Anger Expression Index. Participants rated these items on a 4-point Likert scale. For the State Anger items, the anchors were 1 = not at all and 4 = very much so. For all of the other scales, the anchors were 1 = almost never and 4 = almost always.

The State Anger scale consists of 15 items that measure the intensity of angry feelings as well as the extent to which a person feels like expressing anger at a particular time. An example of a State Anger item is, "I am furious" (Spielberger, 1999).

The Trait Anger scale consists of 10 items that measure how often angry feelings are experienced over time. An example of a Trait Anger item is, "I am quick tempered."

There were two subscales that assessed anger expression. The Anger Expression-Out (AX-O) consists of eight items that measure how often angry feelings are expressed

in verbally or physically aggressive behavior. An example of an AXO item is “I do things like slam doors.” The Anger Expression-In (AX-I) consists of eight items that measure how often angry feelings are experienced but not expressed and/or are suppressed. An example of an AXI item is “I withdraw from people.”

There are two subscales that assess anger control efforts. The Anger Control Out (AC-O) scale consists of eight items that measure how often a person controls the outward expression of angry feelings. “I keep my cool.” The Anger Control-In (AC-I) scale consists of eight items that measure how often a person attempts to control angry feelings by calming down or cooling off. “I try to soothe my angry feelings.”

Of the 57 STAXI-2 items, 42 of the original 44 items of the STAXI are included, along with 15 new items that were constructed solely for the STAXI-2. The normative sample included 1,644 normal adults, consisting of 977 females and 667 males. The subscales reflect the factor solutions found in these analyses. The individual subscales of the STAXI-2 were based on the results of principal component analyses (Spielberger, 1999).

Coefficient alphas for the anger experience scales (state and trait) range from .73 to .94 (Spielberger, 1999). The internal consistency estimates (Cronbach alpha coefficients) for the STAXI-2 subscales for this sample were as follows: Trait anger = .84; Anger Expression-Out = .74; Anger Expression-In = .77; Anger Control-Out = .82 and Anger Control-In = .90.

Researchers have found strong evidence for the relationships between the STAXI-2 anger subscales and other measures of hostility and personality (Buss-Durkee Hostility

Inventory, BDHI, 1957; Eysenck Personality Questionnaire, EPQ, 1975), which confirms the convergent validity of the STAXI-2.

Conflict Tactics Scale-2 (CTS-2; Straus & Hamby, 1995). The CTS-2 is a 78-item self-report measure of the frequency with which people engage in verbal, non-verbal, and aggressive tactics to resolve conflicts in dating/partnered relationships (i.e., psychological and physical attacks against each other and also the use of the partners' negotiation and/or reasoning). Participants rate the extent to which they engaged in each of the conflict tactics listed in this measure, using an 8-point Likert scale (0= This has never happened, 1 = Once in the last year, 2 = Twice in the last year, 3 = 3-5 times in the last year, 4 = 6-10 times in the past year, 5 = 11-20 times in the past year, 6 = More than 20 times in the past year and 7 = Not in the past year, but it did happen). For the purposes of this study, scores on 7 were re-coded as a zero, so that higher scores indicated more frequent use of conflict tactics and lower scores indicated less use of conflict tactics.

The CTS2 has five scales, including Physical Assault, Psychological Aggression, Negotiation, Injury, and Sexual Coercion. The Negotiation Scale assessed the extent to which the person discusses agreements with their partner. The Psychological Aggression Scale assesses verbal and nonverbal behaviors used to symbolically hurt the other person or the use of threats to intimidate their partner. The Physical Assault Scale assesses the use of physical force to resolve conflicts. The Sexual Coercion Scale assessed the use of unwanted sexual force to resolve conflicts. The Injury Scale assesses the extent to which participants injured their partner (including physical damage, pain, and the need for medical services).

The internal consistency reliability of the CTS-2 was conducted using two methods including item-total correlations as well as Cronbach alpha coefficients of reliability. The internal consistency reliability estimates were stronger for the psychological, physical, and sexual aggression subscales and lower for the reasoning scale. This differential was explained as mainly due to the small number of items (three) that make up the Reasoning scale.

The internal consistency estimates (Cronbach alpha coefficients) for the CTS-2 subscales ranged from .79 to .95. These coefficients were as follows: Negotiation = .86, Psychological Aggression = .79, Physical Assault = .86, Sexual Coercion = .87, and Injury = .95 (Strauss, *et al*, 1996).

The internal consistency estimates (Cronbach alpha coefficients) for the CTS-2 subscales for the sample in the present study were as follows: Negotiation = .85, Partner Negotiation = .82, Psychological Aggression = .82, Partner Psychological Aggression = .82, Physical Assault = .94, Partner Physical Assault = .95, Sexual Coercion = .64, Partner Sexual Coercion = .73, Injury = .92, and Partner Injury = .86.

Evidence of construct validity is provided by the results of several analyses using the CTS-2 as a measure of violence. Several examples exist reflecting the construct validity of the CTS-2. Among these: a consistency exists between findings using the CT Scales and the bodies of evidence concerning the “catharsis” theory of aggression control (Straus, 1974). The CTS-2 is successful in obtaining high occurrence rates for socially undesirable acts of physical and verbal aggression. Research using the CTS-2 data has demonstrated that violence patterns are correlated from one generation to the next (Straus

et al., 1996) and are consistent with previous theories and findings regarding familial transition of violent behavior (Carroll, 1977).

The CTS appears to have good convergent validity and discriminant validity. The CTS-2 scales of psychological aggression have been highly correlated with physical assault ($r = .87$ for men; Strauss et al., 1996). Physical assault has also been significantly and negatively related to social integration (i.e., People who are not as integrated into mainstream society reported engaging in more physical assault; Ross & Straus, 1995).

Demographic Sheet. Participants completed a one-page demographic sheet that included information concerning their sex, age, race, year in college, athletic status, sport participating in, and information related to their most recent dating relationships including whether or not they are currently in a relationship; how long they have been in the relationship; when the most recent significant relationship was; and the length of time they were dating.

Procedure

Staff members of the Student-Athlete Academic Center of Oklahoma State University were contacted to set up times to administer packets to the athletes to fill out in a group format. The researcher achieved this by coordinating several meetings to correspond with the arrival of all student athletes for the fall 2008 semester, as well as throughout the semester, at the Academic Center. The researcher assembled participants at multiple sites to gain the data from the athlete population.

Athletes were given the opportunity to review and sign an informed consent form that explained the general purpose of the study as well as the potential benefits and risks

of participating. They were then asked to fill out the 57-question STAXI-2 and the 78-question CTS2 and turn it in to the researcher in their packets.

Results

The focus of the present study was to explore contact versus non-contact sports type group differences in anger experience, expression, and the use of aggression as conflict tactics in dating relationships for male collegiate athletes. The athlete participants in this study were categorized into either contact or non-contact sport type groups. Contact sports included football, basketball, and wrestling. Non-contact sports included baseball, track and field, and golf.

A series of multivariate analyses of variance and univariate analyses were conducted to explore athletic sport type group differences in anger experience and anger expression and the use of aggressive tactics in dating relationships.

In the first MANOVA, state and trait anger were the dependent variables. There were significant sport type group differences in state and trait anger when considered together, $F(2, 72) = 3.16, p < .05$. Follow-up univariate analyses revealed significant sport type group differences in trait anger, $F(1, 73) = 5.2, p < .05$, but not state anger $F(1, 73) = 3.81, p > .05$. Athletes in contact sports reported more trait anger ($m = 18.15, sd = 6.70$) than athletes in non-contact sports ($m = 15.24, sd = 4.32$).

In the second MANOVA, anger expression-out and anger expression-in were the dependent variables. There were no significant sport type group differences in anger expression-out and anger expression-in, when these scales were considered together, $F(2, 74) = .34, p > .05$.

In the third MANOVA, anger control-out and anger control-in were the dependent variables. There were no significant sport type group differences in anger control-out and anger control-in, when these scales were considered together, $F(2, 74) = .10, p > .05$.

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to explore sport type group differences in overall anger expression. There were no significant sport type group differences in overall anger expression, $F(1, 75) = .81, p > .05$.

A series of five analyses of variance (ANOVA) procedures were conducted to explore sport type group differences in athletes' levels of negotiation, psychological aggression, physical assault, and sexual coercion, and injury directed toward their dating partners. Athletes in contact sports significantly differed from athletes in non-contact sports in their use of psychological aggression, $F(1, 72) = 6.46, p < .05$ and injurious behaviors toward their partners, $F(1, 73) = 7.21, p < .01$. However, athletes in contact and noncontact sports did not significantly differ in their use of negotiation, $F(1, 73) = 2.37, p > .05$, physical assault, $F(1, 72) = 3.17, p > .05$, and sexual coercion $F(1, 72) = 2.50, p > .05$, according to their self-report. In summary, athletes in contact sports reported higher incidences of psychological aggression and engaged in more injurious behaviors directed toward their dating partners compared to athletes in the non-contact sports.

Additional analyses were conducted to explore sport type group differences in athletes' perceptions of their dating partners' use of tactics toward them when conflict occurred in their dating relationships, including use of negotiation, psychological

aggression, physical assault, sexual coercion, and injury (i.e., whether the athlete was injured by their partner).

A series of five analyses of variance procedures were conducted. Athletes in contact and noncontact sports significantly differed in their perceptions of their dating partners' use of negotiation, $F(1, 73) = 105.03, p < .001$, psychological aggression, $F(1, 73) = 5.16, p < .05$, and physical assault, $F(1, 73) = 6.53, p < .01$. Male athletes in contact sports reported more incidences of their dating partners using negotiation, psychological aggression, and physical assault with them in their dating relationships compared to male athletes in the non-contact sports. However, athletes in contact and non-contact sports did not differ in their perceptions of their dating partners' use of sexual coercion $F(1, 73) = 1.58, p > .05$, and injurious behaviors, $F(1, 73) = 3.36, p > .05$, towards them.

Discussion

While most of the research in the field of athletics has focused on performance enhancement, with the increased use of violence in sports and the impact this has had on athletes' lives, the focus of the present study was on the experience and expression of anger and domestic aggression reported by male athletes in contact and non-contact sports.

In particular, sport type group differences (i.e., athletes in contact versus noncontact sports) were explored for anger experience and expression, and the use of aggressive tactics to resolve conflicts in dating relationships. Contact sports were defined as those involving some regular physical contact with other athletes as part of the sport (i.e., tackles, takedowns, fouling). Examples of contact sports include wrestling and football. In this study, wrestling, football, and basketball were the contact sports. Non-contact sports were defined as those involving limited (i.e., sliding into bases) or no contact with other athletes. Examples of non-contact sports included baseball, track and field, and golf.

Results of this study indicated that athletes in contact and noncontact sports significantly differed in their experience of trait anger as well as the use of tactics to resolve conflicts in their dating relationships. They also reported differences in how their dating partners treated them.

Male collegiate athletes involved in contact sports reported higher levels of trait anger and reported more incidences of using psychological aggression towards their

dating partners as well as injuring their dating partners more than male collegiate athletes in non-contact sports. In addition, male collegiate athletes in contact sports reported more incidences of their dating partners using negotiation, psychological aggression, and physical assault tactics toward them compared to athletes in the non-contact sports.

The results of the present study build on the findings of Winterowd and Edwards (2002) who found that male collegiate athletes tended to inflict injuries on their partners and report more partner-initiated aggression towards them compared to male college students who are not collegiate athletes. The present study extends the work of Winterowd and Edwards (2002), in that male collegiate athletes in contact versus non-contact sports were compared using the same measures of anger and aggression to explore how the type of sport might impact the variables of interest, rather than exploring whether men participate in collegiate sports or not. So, while significant differences were found between athletes and non-athletes in their use of aggressive tactics by themselves or their partners in their dating relationships (Winterowd & Edwards, 2002), there is also evidence that the type of sport male athletes participate in also has an impact on their experience of anger as well as the use of aggressive tactics by themselves or their partners.

Male athletes in contact sports experience chronic anger and deal with conflicts in their dating relationships (i.e., that is, engaging in more psychological aggression and injury towards dating partners) and perceive their dating partners' use of aggression towards them as a significantly different experience, on average, compared to male

collegiate athletes in non-contact sports. It is unclear whether the type of sport an athlete participates in may create a culture of anger or aggression, or whether certain types of personalities of athletes are attracted to and achieve success in certain types of sports, that may play a role in explaining these findings.

The current study is particularly meaningful when considering previous research (Staffo, 2001) that indicates that male college athletes are behaving in increasingly aggressive manners in their dating relationships. The results of the current study seem to extend the research of Winterowd & Edwards (2002), who had previously found male college athletes reported that they inflicted more injuries on their partners than non-athletes. The present study has shown that not only athletes, but particularly athletes who are involved in more physical sports (contact) report higher levels of psychological aggression and injurious behavior toward their dating partners compared to athletes who are involved in less physical sports (non-contact).

Context has been shown to be an important consideration when considering such issues of anger and aggression, and Kerr (1999) argued that only unsanctioned aggression (i.e., aggression that is not permitted by the rules of sports) is cause for concern. Hence, aggression beyond what is acceptable within the sport may be the problematic area that many believe can lead to aggression beyond the sport itself (Maxwell 2004). The distinction between criminal violence that takes place in the personal lives of athletes, far removed from these sports-sanctioned areas, seems to be increasingly problematic and commonplace (Staffo 2001). Research findings support alarming numbers of instances of

sexual and physical assaults involving college athletes (Toufaxis, 1990; Curry, 2000). This problem needs to be addressed at a number of levels, including the sports culture itself, the perks of being an athlete on college campuses and how college administrators and athletic departments, including counseling centers responses to incidents of domestic violence by athletes when it occurs; as well as normalizing the need for prevention and remediation of personal and interpersonal stressors for male athletes in addition to the academic and sport stress that they already may be experiencing.

The startling numbers of sexual and physical assaults by male college athletes cited by previous researchers (Toufaxis, 1990; Curry, 2000) have been given a more specific context given the findings of the present study. Perhaps a contributor to the psychological, physical, and sexual aggression that occurs outside of athletic competition may be due, in part, to the aggressive nature of the sports that some athletes are involved in. More research is needed to explore the connections between sports type and culture and the use of aggression outside the sport. In addition, more research is needed to understand why male athletes in contact sports have more chronic anger and experience more domestic violence in the dating relationships compared to male athletes in noncontact sports.

If indeed, certain types of sports create a culture of anger and aggression that is successful on the field or court, but then bleeds into athletes' personal and interpersonal lives, then preventative interventions must be taken to ensure that athletes do not carry their anger and aggression in the sport home to their dating partners and significant others

in their lives. For example, people at various levels of involvement in athletics would be well-served to recognize and acknowledge an athlete's difficulty with separating out aggressive behavior for sports gain vs. aggressive behavior in general. This is particularly crucial in light of the differences in consequences, meaning violent behavior may be an appropriate conflict tactic in a sports arena while that same behavior may be criminal when it comes to a dating partner. If athletes with certain anger and aggression predispositions are attracted to certain types of sports, then these athletes may benefit from additional support to address their anger and aggression so that it does not interfere with their personal and professional lives. Several people in an athlete's lives are capable in one capacity or another to serve as a positive role model for them, ranging from assistant coaches to mentors. Further, services such as counseling centers are available for athletes to address any anger or aggression issues that are problematic in their personal lives.

The results of the current study provide several implications for clinical practice in the field of psychology. For example, educational programs can be developed by universities in the future to provide psycho-educational information to both college athletes and coaches. This program could include information on distinctions between healthy expressions of anger and expressions that are known to be problematic. Other pertinent information to be included could be related to trademarks of healthy dating relationships vs. warning signs of unhealthy relationships. The fact that highly aggressive acts are commonplace in some college sports is one that does not always seem

to be directly addressed by the public at large. Psycho-educational programs can provide this direct communication while also noting some of the legal or interpersonal problems and ramifications that can result from engaging in that same behavior with dating partners.

Group counseling sessions provided by universities might be an effective way to provide a supportive environment for athletes who may be struggling with issues of interpersonal discord or aggression issues. A group session environment could help remove a possible stigma associated with therapeutic work while providing athletes with a place to discuss personal issues. This setting could also allow the same “teamwork” mentality that can so effectively bring them together and/or allow them to succeed in their respective athletic experiences.

Individual counseling offered by universities can be an invaluable tool when offered to college athletes. One benefit of this service is to allow an athlete a confidential setting in which to discuss any relevant issues that the athlete may be struggling with. Counseling could potentially provide the opportunity to discuss some of the long-standing issues, experiences, and/or behavior that may need to be addressed or improved.

While this study was able to provide information on male collegiate athletes at one particular university, it might be beneficial to assess some of the experiences of college athletes from across the United States. One limitation of the current study was the relatively small number of participants (77), which makes it more difficult to generalize to the population of male collegiate athletes as a whole. Another limitation is

the relatively small number of sports that the athletes were sampled from. By using multiple universities for future research, the hope is that more contact and non-contact sports may be involved as a way to compare the two sport-type groups.

Future research possibilities are abundant in the area of college athletes and the culture of sports in general, particularly as they relate to issues of anger, aggression, and dating experiences. As the current study showed, the college athletes involved in contact sports reported higher levels of trait anger than their counterparts involved in non-contact sports. Future research could conceivably address the issues that might contribute to these levels of anger. Numerous possibilities and explanations might account for this, including previous traumatic events, heightened pressure to perform, lack of role models, family of origin issues, family dynamics, and social racism. The hope is that continued research in these areas of athletes' experiences could shed light on the possibilities for the phenomena of heightened aggression levels and behavior that occur away from their athletic arenas. Since trait anger plays such a pivotal role in athletes' lives, particularly those in contact sports, more research is needed to address factors that may contribute to this anger.

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Table 1

Demographics of the Sample (n = 77)

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Range</u>
Age	19.70	1.55	18-27

<u>Race</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Caucasian	49	64%
African American	19	25%
Native American	3	4%
Hispanic	4	5%
Bi-Racial	2	3%

<u>Year in School</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Freshman	35	45.5%
Sophomore	20	26.0%
Junior	14	18.2%
Senior	8	10.4%

<u>Sport Type</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Football	21	27.3%
Basketball	3	3.9%
Track & Field	8	10.4%
Baseball	34	44.2%
Golf	1	1.3%
Wrestling	10	13.0%

<u>Partner/Marital Status</u>	<u>n</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Single	68	88.3%
Partnered	4	5.2%
Married	1	1.3%
Not reported	4	5.2%

	<u>Mean</u>	<u>SD</u>	<u>Range</u>
<u>Relationship Length (in months)</u>	18.63	21.41	1-72

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviation Scores for STAXI-2 Anger Subscales

Variable	M	SD	Range
State Anger	18.91	7.78	15-55
Trait Anger	16.51	5.58	10-38
Anger Expression-Out	16.68	4.29	8-27
Anger Expression-In	17.35	4.37	8-31
Anger Control-Out	22.74	6.00	8-40
Anger Control-In	21.05	5.16	8-30

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviation Scores for the Conflict Tactics Subscales

Variable	M	SD	Range
Negotiation	45.64	40.16	1-150
Psychological aggression	9.56	18.77	1-125
Physical assault	9.50	31.78	1-233
Sexual coercion	7.03	16.76	1-94
Injury	3.68	11.04	5-65
Partner Negotiation	41.73	36.17	29-150
Partner Psychological Aggression	11.36	23.55	1-127
Partner Physical Assault	10.08	29.94	1-196
Partner Sexual Coercion	6.99	18.77	1-121
Partner Injury	4.96	16.39	1-113

Table 4
Means and Standard Deviations for STAXI-2 Anger Subscales by Type of Sport

<u>Anger Subscales</u>	<u>Athletes in Contact Sports</u>	<u>Athletes in Non-Contact Sports</u>
	(n = 33)	(n = 42)
State Anger	20.85 (10.52)	17.38 (4.18)
Trait Anger	18.15 (6.70)	15.24 (4.32)
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	(n = 34)	(n = 43)
Anger Expression-Out	17.12 (4.48)	16.33 (4.15)
Anger Expression-In	17.68 (3.64)	17.10 (4.90)
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	(n = 34)	(n = 43)
Anger Control-Out	22.44 (5.43)	23.00 (6.47)
Anger Control-In	21.00 (5.35)	21.30 (5.10)
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	(n = 34)	(n = 43)
Anger Expression Index	40.00 (12.19)	37.16 (11.45)

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviations for CTS-3 Subscales by Type of Sport

<u>CTS-3 Subscales</u>	<u>Athletes in Contact Sports</u> (n = 33)	<u>Athletes in Non-Contact Sports</u> (n = 41)
Negotiation	53.58 (40.29)	39.24 (39.39)
Psychological Aggression	15.66 (24.18)	4.80 (11.32)
Physical Assault	16.73 (44.46)	3.68 (13.57)
Sexual Coercion	10.42 (21.26)	4.29 (11.56)
Injury	7.36 (15.52)	.71 (3.12)

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

In this review of the literature, the research on anger and violence among athletes will be reviewed. Given the scant research on anger among college athletes, the research on anger and college students will be discussed as well as the research on the emotional experiences of athletes, including their use of aggression.

Definitions and Theories of Interpersonal Aggression

The use of verbal, physical, and sexual aggression in domestic relationships has been conceptualized as attempts to resolve conflicts in their dating and partnered/marital relationships (Strauss & Hamby, 1995). Psychological aggression is defined as non-verbal aggressive acts. These acts include shouting, destroying property, and name-calling. Physical assault is defined as physically aggressive behavior. Examples of such behavior are slapping, choking, and kicking. Sexual coercion is defined as intent to engage in unwanted sexual activity with another person, in this case, one's dating partner. Examples of this behavior are using force to have sex and using threats to have sexual contact with someone. Injury is defined as bone or tissue damage, pain that lasts for more than one day, and/or a need for medical attention. Examples of this would be cutting, sprains, and bruises. Negotiation is defined as using discussion to settle a disagreement. Examples of this behavior are showing care or concern to a partner, offering to work out a problem, and respecting a partner's feelings (Strauss & Hamby, 1995).

Theories of Aggression

Several theories have been developed to explain the concept of aggression, including the Frustration-Aggression Theory (Dollard, Doob, Miller, Mowrer, & Sears,

1939), Berkowitz's reformulated Frustration-Aggression Theory (Berkowitz, 1965; Baron & Richardson, 1994) and Social Learning Theory (Bandura, 1973). Frustration is viewed as the result of blocked goals or desires; built-up frustration can result in aggression (Dollard et al., 1939). However, not all people who are frustrated respond with aggression; the propensity to be aggressive is situation-specific and often learned behavior (Berkowitz, 1965).

Aggression and Violence in Sports

With interpersonal aggression is not condoned in our society, the use of aggression in sports is. Aggression in sports is often encouraged as a competitive strategy for athletes. But this aggressiveness can also be viewed as violent behavior.

Researchers and social scientists have attempted to determine exactly what constitutes violence with regard to sports and athletes. Boxill (2003) concluded that violence is a physical form of aggression. Using different theories of violence and aggression, he has discussed the question of intent to harm, concluding that violence is physical assault carried out with the intent to physically injure another individual. The use of violence in sports is considered legitimate if athletes' actions are congruent with the nature of the sport itself. However, use of violence in sports, for example, excessive force, and unnecessary bodily contact can also border on being criminal in nature.

Boxill (2003) theorized different types of sports violence. The brutal body contact category of sports violence comprises all significant (i.e., high magnitude) body contact performed within the official rules of a given sport: tackles, blocks, body checks, collisions, legal blows of all kinds. Such contact is inherent in sports such as boxing, wrestling, ice hockey, rugby, lacrosse, football, and to lesser degrees in soccer,

basketball, water polo, team handball, and the like. According to Boxill, it is taken for granted that when one participates in these activities one automatically accepts the inevitability of contact, also the probability for minor bodily injury, and the possibility of serious injury. In legal terms players are said to “consent” to receive such blows. On the other hand, no player consents to be injured intentionally. Legal body contact is nevertheless of interest as violence when it develops into “brutality.” A rising toll of injuries and deaths, followed by public expressions of alarm, then demands for reform, typically signal this condition. An “intrinsically brutal” sport like boxing always hovers not far from this point; for this reason, boxing is almost everywhere regulated by the state, albeit often inadequately. When body contact assumes an importance out of proportion to that required to play the game (when inflicting pain and punishing opponents are systematized as strategy, and viciousness and ferocity are publicly glorified) a stage of brutality can be said to have been reached. Such practices may strain the formal rules of sports, but they do not necessarily violate those rules. To summarize, Boxill identifies brutal body contact as contact that “conforms to the official rules of the sport, hence legal in effect under the law of the land.”

Baron and Richardson (1999) define aggression as “any form of behavior directed toward the goal of harming or injuring another living being who is motivated to avoid such treatment.” Such behavior may be verbal or physical and must be directed at another person instead of an object. For example, an athlete throwing his or her equipment to the floor or cursing one’s play would not be categorized as aggressive behavior. Instead, these behaviors would be seen as signs of anger and frustration.

When assessing aggressive behavior in sport, the distinction between sanctioned and unsanctioned aggression should be recognized (Kerr, 1999). Kerr argues that only unsanctioned aggression is cause for concern and he points out that many sports have incidences of aggression that are tolerated or informally accepted. These behaviors, once accepted, become sanctioned even though they do not comply with the official rule structure. In sports such as soccer, for example, it is common practice for players to argue with officials. Kerr points out that tolerance of aggressive behavior simply because it is common does not justify its use, nor does it alter the fact that the recipient is often motivated to avoid such behavior. Therefore, the definition of aggression adopted for this report will follow that suggested by Baron and Richardson with the addition of official endorsement. That is, aggression in sport is any behavior, not recognized as legal within the official rules of conduct, directed towards an opponent, official, teammate, or spectator who is motivated to avoid such behavior. This definition assumes, then, that behavior is intentional, and potentially, reflects both hostile and instrumental aggression (Husman & Silva, 1984). Instrumental aggression is included within this definition because the intent to cause injury is present. However, not all instrumental aggression falls within the definition. In the sport of boxing, for example, where attempts to harm the opponent by punching are crucial to the participants' success, biting, head-butting, or kicking an opponent would be considered aggressive acts. Furthermore, informally sanctioned behavior such as arguing with officials would also be considered aggressive if the official rules of the game identify it as unacceptable.

McKay (2000) examined research that explores the connections between violent strategies in sport which may carry over into life outside of sports. He has studied the

everyday life of college athletes and group dynamics of sport participation focusing primarily on aggression and the masculine identity of athletes. Using a case study documenting locker room conversations as well as intensive interviews with college athletes regarding their life histories, McKay provided insight into the pressures, anxieties, and subculture of elite sports. He also describes the symbiotic relationship between campus bar owners and athletes which encourages the privileging of athletes as well as provides them with a stage for aggression and violence (2000).

While the recent NBA brawl has served as possibly the most visible and shocking incident to date, other recent violent incidents have shed a negative light on the issue of violence and aggression amongst athletes. Among these incidents are: an all-out brawl between two major-college football programs; an assault on a spirit squad member by a University of Nebraska football player, resulting in a concussion and missing teeth by the spirit squad member and assault charges against the player; and a major league baseball player's felony assault charge stemming from striking a heckler by throwing a chair at him. One of the assumptions made both directly and indirectly from interviews is that the NBA brawl might have influenced the football players of the University of South Carolina and Clemson University to exhibit little to no restraint on the field after watching hours of footage of the basketball brawl (Maxwell, 2004).

While repeated viewing of violent sports incidents such as this one may or may not contribute to violence by other athletes, it would seem natural to wonder if viewing violence within the sports world has an effect on the general public as well (including non-athletes). Sabo, Gray, and Moore (2000, pp. 127-146) suggest that there is not enough sport sociology research studying the links between sports, masculinity, and male

aggression against women inside and outside of sports but that there is much discussion surrounding the issue. They describe in detail a study of battered women who were reportedly beaten by male partners during or shortly after televised athletic events. The women were interviewed by telephone and the data were analyzed for differences, commonalities, patterns, and themes. Eighteen women who self-reported as having been beaten by their male partner during or after viewing a sporting event on television volunteered for the study. These women were recruited through notices placed in the personals section of a regional newspaper, *The Buffalo News*. The average age of the participants at the time of the interviews was 31 (Median = 29; range = 21-44). The authors' concluding remarks state that the women placed masculinity in the foreground and central to their partner's violence and that televised sports aroused emotional and cultural associations with masculinity, which in combination with other factors lead to domestic violence. This study is useful because of its ability to link the connection between the emotional arousal associated with sports and the accompanying violence that ensues. However, one wonders if more themes might emerge if a higher number of respondents had participated.

Staffo (2001) discussed the distinction between criminal violence that takes place in the personal lives of athletes as opposed to the violent acts that commonly take place on the court, field, track, mat, etc. He points out that criminal violence outside of competition is an increasing problem among athletes of all ages. He stresses the importance of the problem by citing statistics that show the ever-increasing incidences of violent behavior by athletes and points out different ways that sports team organizations have attempted to deal with this issue.

Citing social learning theorists such as Alfred Bandura, Staffo reflects on how many theorists believe that athletes respond with increased aggression after they are routinely exposed to models of aggressive behavior. Furthermore, in the sports culture, he notes that aggression that takes place “within-the-rules” is not only tolerated, but encouraged. Staffo also points out that teachers and coaches who display overly aggressive behavior should realize that they are contributing to the overall problem as well.

Reliable statistics on the incidence of athletes committing antisocial acts are difficult to obtain. According to Staffo, this realization is what has led some experts to argue that male athletes are no more prone to violence than the male population in general. However, a three-year survey conducted by the National Institute of Mental Health during the 1980’s found that athletes were involved in about one third of 862 sexual attacks on college campuses (Toufaxis, 1990). During the same period, another national study of 24 gang-style sexual assaults on college campuses found that most involved members of athletic teams-particularly football and basketball-and fraternities (Toufaxis, 1990).

Curry (2000, pp.162-175) has also examined research that explores the connections between violent strategies in sport which may carry over into life outside of sports. He has studied the everyday life of college athletes and group dynamics of sport participation focusing primarily on aggression and the masculine identity of athletes. Using a case study documenting locker room conversations as well as intensive interviews with college athletes about their life histories, Curry has attempted to provide insight into the pressures, anxieties, and subculture of elite sports. It also describes the

symbiotic relationship between campus bar owners and athletes which encourages the privileging of athletes by way of providing free or almost free alcoholic drinks to them. It is this type of privileging that is noted by Curry to provide them with a stage for aggression and violence.

Athletes are not the only participants involved in sports violence themes. A recent study by Shields & Edgar (1999) examined verbal intimidation, physical intimidation, and physical violence in high school athletics, both by program and by sport. They used a questionnaire designed for high school athletic directors where they oversee programs for approximately 100,000 student athletes per year. Athletic directors' perceptions of verbal intimidation, physical intimidation, and physical violence were measured using two-point Likert scales of 148 returned and usable surveys. Their results showed that aggressive-style coaching was the only significant predictor of verbal intimidation in basketball and football, physical intimidation in football and soccer, and physical violence in basketball and soccer. In addition to this style of coaching, contextual setting was a significant predictor of physical intimidation in basketball, attitude was a significant predictor of physical violence in football, and pressure was a significant predictor of verbal intimidation in soccer. Their findings reveal four subsets of antecedent behaviors or conditions that should receive attention when dealing with verbal intimidation, physical intimidation, and physical violence: contextual setting, attitude, pressure, and coaching. The coaching component clearly was associated with all three identified problem areas, and across all sports, the coaching component was the only antecedent significantly associated with verbal intimidation and physical intimidation. Coaching was also found to be one of two significant predictors of physical

violence (the other being contextual setting). Their results suggest that even more than the athletes, coaching deserves closest scrutiny with regard to these sports violence themes.

Athletes and Identity Development

The link between athletics and a person's sex, moral, and character development has been examined extensively. This section will review previous studies involving the role of athletics regarding a person's overall development and/or identity. Sports have long been considered to display what would generally be seen as masculine traits and themes. Bredemeier & Shields (1986) suggest that Haan's theory of interactional morality can be used to provide a framework for social scientific research into moral issues. They claim that Haan's model, however, must be adapted to the unique context of sport. This study applies the concept of frame analysis as a procedure for clarifying the moral reasoning associated with athletic aggression. Furthermore, they state that in contrast to similar acts in everyday life, moral ambiguity characterizes some sport acts intended to deliver minor noxious stimuli. They also warn that the label of aggression should be used with caution when designating such acts.

Long (1986) investigated the relationship of masculinity to self-esteem and self-acceptance in female professionals, clients, and victims of domestic violence as well as college students. She used the Personal Orientation Inventory, Bem Sex Role Inventory, and the Rotter Internal-External Locus of Control Scale to administer to subjects together with a demographic sheet. She used correlations to examine the relationship and relative predictive significance of masculinity, femininity, educations, occupation, and locus of control self-esteem and self-acceptance. She found that masculinity was the best

predictor of self-esteem in all groups and the best predictor of self-acceptance in all groups except professionals. Femininity was generally irrelevant in all groups. Long concluded that masculinity does appear to be a significant predictor of mental health, not only of self-esteem but also of the more difficult to effect counterpart, self-acceptance. Further, it appears that masculinity is an important predictor, not just for college students but also for professionals, clients, and victims of domestic violence.

Kleiber & Roberts (1981) attempted to reconsider the “character” construct with regard to athletes, fueled by the long-standing belief that sport builds character. They also attempted to isolate the character construct’s social elements and to establish its susceptibility in childhood to the influence of organized sport experience. Using pro-social behavior as one manifestation of evolved social character, they assessed the influence of organized sport in a field experiment with 54 children from two elementary schools. The children were given the Social Behavior Scale (Knight & Kagen, 1977) before and after experimental manipulation. Participants were taken from the classroom to a room where the testing was conducted by letting them choose 10 times among four alternatives on the scale, with each choice providing poker chips for themselves and for another child in the school, with the chips later to be exchanged for a prize. Kleiber & Roberts’ manipulation was apparently effective in creating a realistic sport competition experience. On the pretest with the Social Behavior Scale, they discovered that those boys and girls with the most sport experience were significantly more likely to deny gift-redeemable chips to other children ($r = -.33$ for boys and $-.39$ for girls). Both of these correlations were significant at the .05 level. Newman-Keul post-hoc tests revealed that experimental male subjects gave reliably fewer chips on Trial 10 after the sport exercise.

No differences between either of the control groups and the female experimental group were evident. Boys who were in the experimental sport group showed a mean response between rivalry and superiority on Trial 10. Although the general assumption that “sport builds character” was not strongly supported or refuted in their investigation, at least with males, it showed that pro-social behavior may be inhibited by sport experience.

The notion that aggressive behavior can be learned was proposed by Albert Bandura and his Social Learning Theory. While he did acknowledge the role of physiological, genetic, and motivational factors, Bandura stressed the importance of learned behavior acquired through social interaction as applied to the expression of anger. He proposed that aggression is learned through observations or through direct experience of aggressive acts, together with perceived or actual approval for acting aggressively. In his famous experiment, Bandura was able to demonstrate that children replicate the aggressive behavior of adults who they have observed behaving aggressively towards a Bobo doll (Bandura, Ross, & Ross, 1963). This experiment supported the idea that aggressive behavior is indeed mimicked.

Social learning theory has been steadily receiving support from research examining aggression in sport. Celozzi, Kazelskis & Gutsh (1981) found that watching a violent hockey match increased aggression in people with high trait aggression scores but talking about violent hockey matches did not. This would indirectly suggest that aggressive behavior is learned through observation of others accomplishing their goals through the use of violence. And since aggression in ice hockey is actively supported and encouraged, young children can quickly learn from perceived “expert” role models that aggression is an acceptable and often desired behavior (Weinberg & Gould, 1999).

The majority of aggressive acts, however, are most likely not simple repetitions of learned behavior. The aggressor normally responds to a perceived threat, and is influenced by the situation and various personal factors such as trait aggression, cognition, and affect. Research examining the background of athlete aggression in sport has for the most part focused on situational factors and performance outcome. And because of the high frequency of aggressive acts, the majority of research examining the relationship between aggression and performance has focused on the sport of hockey (i.e. McCarthy & Kelly, 1978; Russell, 1974). These studies have found positive relationships between the use of aggressive behavior and success. However, others have insisted that aggression can only decrease individual performance (Gill, 1986; Silva, 1980; Wann, 1997).

The experience of anger as measured by the STAXI-2 can be conceptualized as consisting of the two previously-mentioned components of state and trait anger. State anger is defined as a psychobiological emotional condition or state characterized by subjective feelings that vary in intensity from mild irritation or annoyance to intense rage. Anger as a psychobiological emotional state is generally accompanied by muscular tension and by arousal of the neuroendocrine and autonomic nervous systems. Over time, the intensity of state anger varies as a function of perceived injustice, being attacked unfair treatment by others, or frustration resulting from barriers to goals or goal-directed behavior. Trait anger is defined in terms of individual differences in the disposition to perceive a wide range of situations as annoying or frustrating and by the tendency to respond to these situations with elevations in state anger. A person with high trait anger

scores experiences state anger not only more often but also with greater intensity than a person with low trait anger scores.

Anger expression and anger control can be thought of as having four major components. The first component, known as Anger Expression-Out, involves the expression of anger toward other persons or objects in the environment. The second component, Anger Expression-In, refers to anger that is directed inward, such as suppressing angry feelings. The third component, Anger Control-Out, is based on controlling angry feelings by preventing the expression of anger toward other persons or objects. The fourth and final component, Anger Control-In, is related to the control of suppressed angry feelings by calming down when angered.

Anger has been associated with a number of different variables including physical ailments such as elevated blood pressure and hypertension (Gentry et al., 1982; Harburg et al., 1979;), coronary heart disease (Haney & Blumenthal, 1985; Julkunen et al., 1994; Spielberger & London, 1982; Williams et al., 1980) cancer (Greer & Morris, 1975) and aggressive behavior. In fact, researchers have found negative health consequences to be associated with consistently experienced, suppressed, or aggressively expressed forms of anger (Siegman & Smith, 1994; Spielberger et al., 1995). Anger has additionally been associated with such mental health issues as depression (Clay et al., 1993) and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (Lasko et al., 1994; McNew & Abell, 1995).

Aggression and Domestic Violence Among College Students

According to the National Dating Violence Resource Center (2009) dating violence is defined as “controlling, abusive, and aggressive behavior in a romantic relationship...and can include verbal, emotional, physical, or sexual abuse, or a

combination of these.” Incidents of dating violence, including psychological, physical, and sexual aggression, have been reported by college students in general. Sellers and Bromley (1996) found that 32% of college students in America reported dating violence by a previous partner, and 21% reported violence by a current partner. Perhaps more alarming are the results of a study by Caponera (1998) that found that 39-54% of college student dating violence victims remain in their physically abusive relationships.

In terms of physical and psychological violence, numerous researchers have examined these forms of violence among college student populations as well. Rates of physical violence reported by college students is staggering; between 20% and 45% of college students have experienced physical violence during their college years (Amar & Gennaro, 2005; Makepeace, 1981, 1986; Strauss, 2004). In another study, Murray and Kardatzke (2007) found that psychological violence seems to be the most common form of dating violence among college students.

In terms of sexual violence, Berkowitz (1992) found that 51% of college males admit to perpetrating one or more sexual assault incidents during college. Fisher, Cullen, & Turner (2000) found that five percent of college women experience attempted rape or completed rape in a given year. Further, they found that 12% of completed rapes, 35% of attempted rapes, and 22% of threatened rapes occur on dates by college students. Johnson & Sigler (1996) found that 60% of acquaintance rapes on college campuses occur in casual or steady dating relationships.

In two studies of physical violence and sexuality among college students conducted by Cogan & Fennell (2007), they found that more than 75% of men and 60% of women reported engaging in physical violence toward others. More than 90% of these

men who committed violence toward their dating partners were also violent to others in general; however, women reported engaging in violence toward their dating partners only. The use of violence was associated with general depression as well as sexual depression (i.e., dissatisfied and depressed about their sexual experiences). Further, people who were violent with others (i.e., non-partners) had more sexual preoccupation and more alcohol use problems compared to those who were not violent. When college men and women were classified into four different groups based on their use of violence. The four groups were: those who reported committing physical violence to partners only; those who reported committing physical violence to non-partners only; those who reported committing physical violence to both partners and non-partners; and those who reported committing no physical violence to either partners or non-partners. These groups did not significantly differ in the experience of sexual fantasies or their sexual functioning in general. In summary, a significant percentage of college men and women report engaging in physical and/or sexual violence toward their dating partners, and suggest a role of depression in partner violence and antisocial features (i.e. intense aggression, assaultive behavior, lack of remorse, etc.) in violence toward others in general.

Koss, Gidycz, & Wisniewski (1987) acknowledged the difficulties and thus the inadequacies in gauging the prevalence of sexual assault, given that sexual assault is still an underreported phenomenon. These methodological problems therefore affects the incidence rates of criminal victimization, including the national crime rates, as well as the number of convictions, and the incarceration rates of offenders of sexual assault.

In the Koss, *et al.* (1987) study, 6,159 college women and men, enrolled in 32 institutions of higher education in the United States, completed the Sexual Experiences Survey. Their findings supported published assertions of high rates of rape and other forms of sexual aggression experienced by students on college campuses.

In an attempt to better understand statistics such as these, some researchers have begun to explore college students' attitudes toward dating violence (Murray, Wester, & Paladino, 2008). Murray et al. (2008) found that college students who experienced dating violence were more likely to engage in self-harming behaviors within 90 days of being victimized.

In another study, West and Wandrei (2002) presented 157 college students with videotaped situations depicting dating violence victims. Male college students were more likely to condone violence and blame the victim compared to female college students (West & Wandrei, 2002).

It has been hypothesized that college students' attitudes influence their likelihood of being involved in a violent dating relationship (Carr & VanDeusen, 2002; Pipes & LeBov-Keeler, 1997). As an example, dating violence perpetration seems to be more likely among individuals who are more tolerant of violence against women (Carr & VanDeusen, 2002), and people involved in abusive relationships seem to believe that dating violence is more common than it actually is (Pipes & LeBov-Keeler, 1997).

No matter what the type of violence that takes place within an abusive dating relationship, the main function of the violence is to maintain the perpetrator's power and control over the victim within a context of domination and manipulation (Loyd & Emery, 2000; Smith & Donnelly, 2001).

While the majority of research on dating violence has focused on college student experiences in general, the purpose of the present study is to explore the use of psychological, physical, and sexual aggression among college athletes, particularly those in contact versus noncontact sports, to see whether the type of sport that athletes participate in may have an influence on their experience and expression of anger as well as the use of aggressive tactics in their dating relationships.

Appendix A

Informed Consent Form

We invite you to participate in a study exploring emotions and conflict resolution strategies in relationships with dating partners. Participation in this study involves the completion of three questionnaires which should take no longer than 20 minutes.

Possible benefits of participating in this study include increased awareness of your emotional reactions to issues that occur in your relationship with partners. We hope the results of this study will provide important information on how people cope with emotions in relationships. There are no foreseeable risks of participating in this study. However, some of the questions ask about how people resolve conflicts in relationships with partners, which can include strategies such as verbal fighting, physical aggression, and sexual behaviors; these questions may be viewed by some participants as sensitive in nature.

Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, please complete the three questionnaires and place them in the manila envelope provided for your convenience. There is no penalty for refusal to participate, and you are free to withdraw your consent and participation in this project at any time without penalty and still remain in the study. You may refuse to answer specific questions on the questionnaires particularly if your answers could identify you. Please notify the project director or the person handing out the questionnaires if you choose not to participate.

All of the information you provide is strictly confidential, and no individual participants will be identified. Survey responses will be tracked by identification numbers only.

We genuinely appreciate your participation in this study. If you have any questions regarding this research study, please feel free to contact Dylan Burns at 405-744-5472 or Dr. Carrie Winterowd in the School of Applied Health and Educational Psychology, 4th floor, Willard Hall at 405-744-6037. If you have questions about your rights as a research volunteer, you may contact Dr. Shelia Kennison, IRB Chair, 219 Cordell North, Stillwater, OK 74078, 405-744-1676 or irb@okstate.edu

Appendix B

DEMOGRAPHIC SHEET

Directions: Please answer each question by filling in the blank, checking the blank, or circling the number that best describes you.

- 1) How old are you? Age _____
- 2) Gender: _____ Female _____ Male
- 3) Are you a: _____ Freshman student _____ Sophomore _____ Junior _____ Senior
- 4) Are you: _____ a) Single
 _____ b) Partnered (living with partner)
 _____ c) Married
 _____ d) Separated
 _____ e) Divorced
 _____ f) Widowed
- 5) Racial Identity: (check all that apply)
 - a) _____ African American/Black
 - b) _____ American Indian/Native American
 - c) _____ Asian/Asian American
 - d) _____ Caucasian/European American
 - e) _____ Hispanic/Latino/Latina
 - f) _____ Other (Please explain):

- 6) Are you currently in a dating relationship? _____ yes _____ no
- 7) If yes, how long have you dated this person?

- 8) When was your last significant dating relationship? _____
- 9) How long did you date this person?

- 10) Are you an athlete in a college sport? _____ yes _____ no
If yes, identity your primary sport: _____

Appendix C

STAXI-2

This questionnaire is divided into three Parts. Each Part contains a number of statements that people use to describe their feelings and behavior. Please note that each Part has different directions. Carefully read the directions for each Part before recording your responses. There are no right or wrong answers. In responding to each statement, give the answer that describes you best.

Part I Directions

A number of statements that people use to describe themselves are given below. Read each statement and then **circle the number** which indicates how you feel right now. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement, but give the answer which seems to best describe your present feelings.

1 = Not at all 2 = Somewhat 3 = Moderately so 4 = Very much so

How I Feel Right Now

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. I am furious. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 2. I feel irritated. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 3. I feel angry. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 4. I feel like yelling at somebody. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 5. I feel like breaking things. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 6. I am mad. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 7. I feel like banging on the table. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 8. I feeling like hitting someone. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 9. I feel like swearing. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 10. I feel annoyed. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 11. I feel like kicking somebody. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 12. I feel like cursing out loud. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 13. I feel like screaming. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 14. I feel like pounding somebody. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 15. I feel like shouting out loud. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |

Part 2 Directions

Read each of the following statements that people use to describe themselves, and then **circle the number** which indicates how you generally feel or react. There are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement. Give the answer that best describes how you generally feel or react.

1 = Almost never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Almost always

How I Generally Feel

- | | |
|---|---------------------|
| 16. I am quick tempered. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 17. I have a fiery temper. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 18. I am a hotheaded person. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 19. I get angry when I'm slowed down by others' mistakes. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 20. I feel annoyed when I am not given recognition for doing good work. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 21. I fly off the handle. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 22. When I get mad, I say nasty things. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 23. It makes me furious when I am criticized in front of others. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |
| 24. When I get frustrated, I feel like hitting someone. | 1.....2.....3.....4 |

25. I feel infuriated when I do a good job and get a poor evaluation. 1.....2.....3.....4

Part 3 Directions

Everyone feels angry or furious from time to time, but people differ in the ways that they react when they are angry. A number of statements are listed below which people use to describe their reactions when they feel angry or furious. Read each statement and then **circle the number** which indicates how often you generally react or behave in the manner described when you are feeling angry or furious. Remember that there are no right or wrong answers. Do not spend too much time on any one statement.

1 = Almost never 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Almost always

When Angry or Furious....

- 26. I control my temper. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 27. I express my anger. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 28. I take a deep breath and relax. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 29. I keep things in. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 30. I am patient with others. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 31. If someone annoys me, I'm apt to tell him or her how I feel. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 32. I try to calm myself as soon as possible. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 33. I pout or sulk. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 34. I control my urge to express my angry feelings. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 35. I lose my temper. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 36. I try to simmer down. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 37. I withdraw from people. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 38. I keep my cool. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 39. I make sarcastic remarks to others. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 40. I try to soothe my angry feelings. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 41. I boil inside, but I don't show it. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 42. I control my behavior. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 43. I do things like slam doors. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 44. I endeavor to become calm again. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 45. I tend to harbor grudges that I don't tell anyone about. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 46. I can stop myself from losing my temper. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 47. I argue with others. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 48. I reduce my anger as soon as possible. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 49. I am secretly quite critical of others. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 50. I try to be tolerant and understanding. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 51. I strike out at whatever infuriates me. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 52. I do something relaxing to calm down. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 53. I am angrier than I am willing to admit. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 54. I control my angry feelings. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 55. I say nasty things. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 56. I try to relax. 1.....2.....3.....4
- 57. I'm irritated a great deal more than people are aware of. 1.....2.....3.....4

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Appendix D

RELATIONSHIP BEHAVIORS

No matter how well people in dating relationships get along, there are times when they disagree, get annoyed with the other person, want different things from each other, or just have spats or fights because they are in a bad mood, are tired, or for some other reason. People in dating relationships also have many different ways of trying to settle their differences. This is a list of things that might happen when you have differences. **Think of the most significant dating/couples relationship you have had this past year.** Please circle how many times you did each of these things in that relationship in the past year, and how many times the person you dated (dating partner) did them in the past year. If you or your dating partner did not do one of these things in the past year, but it happened before that, circle "7."

How often did this happen

0 = This has **never** happened
in the past year?

1 = **Once** in the last year

2 = **Twice** in the last year

3 = **3-5** times in the last year

4 = **6-10** times in the past year

5 = **11-20** times in the past year

6 = **More than 20** times in the past year

7 = Not in the past year, but it did happen

1. I showed my partner I cared even though we disagreed.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. My partner showed care for me even though we disagreed.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. I explained my side of a disagreement to my partner.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. My partner explained his or her side of a disagreement to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

5. I insulted or swore at my partner.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. My partner did this to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. I threw something at my partner that could hurt.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
8. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
9. I twisted my partner's arm or hair.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
10. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
11. I had a sprain, bruise, or small cut because of a fight
with my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
12. My partner had a sprain, bruise, or small cut because
of a
fight with me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. I showed respect for my partner's feelings about an issue. 0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
14. My partner showed respect for my feelings about an issue. 0
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
15. I made my partner have sex without a condom.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
16. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
17. I pushed or shoved my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
18. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
19. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a
weapon)
to make my partner have oral or anal sex.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
20. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
21. I used a knife or gun on my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
22. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
23. I passed out from being hit on the head by my partner
in a
fight.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
24. My partner passed out from being hit on the head in a
fight
with me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
25. I called my partner fat or ugly.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

26. My partner called me fat or ugly.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
27. I punched or hit my partner with something that could hurt.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
28. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
29. I destroyed something belonging to my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
30. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
31. I went to a doctor because of a fight with my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
32. My partner went to a doctor because of a fight with me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
33. I choked my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
34. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
35. I shouted or yelled at my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
36. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

How often did this happen

0 = This has **never** happened
in the past year?

1 = **Once** in the last year

2 = **Twice** in the last year

3 = **3-5** times in the last year

4 = **6-10** times in the past year

5 = **11-20** times in the past year

6 = **More than 20** times in the past year

7 = Not in the past year, but it did happen

37. I slammed my partner against a wall.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

38. My partner did this to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

39. I said I was sure we could work out a problem.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

40. My partner was sure we could work it out.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

41. I needed to see a doctor because of a fight with my partner,

but I didn't.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

42. My partner needed to see a doctor because of a fight with me,

but didn't.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

43. I beat up my partner.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

44. My partner did this to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

45. I grabbed my partner.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

46. My partner did this to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

47. I used force (like hitting, holding down, or using a weapon)

to make my partner have sex.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

48. My partner did this to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

49. I stomped out of the room or house or yard during a disagreement.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

50. My partner did this to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

51. I insisted on sex when my partner did not want to (but did

not use physical force).

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

52. My partner did this to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

53. I slapped my partner.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

54. My partner did this to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

55. I had a broken bone from a fight with my partner.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

56. My partner had a broken bone from a fight with me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

57. I used threats to make my partner have oral or anal sex.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

58. My partner did this to me.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

59. I suggested a compromise to a disagreement.

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

60. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
61. I burned or scalded my partner on purpose.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
62. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
63. I insisted my partner have oral or anal sex (but did not
use physical force).
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
64. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
65. I accused my partner of being a lousy lover.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
66. My partner accused me of this.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
67. I did something to spite my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
68. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
69. I threatened to hit or throw something at my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
70. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
71. I felt physical pain that still hurt the next day
because
of a fight with my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
72. My partner still felt physical pain the next day
because
of a fight we had.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
73. I kicked my partner.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
74. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
75. I used threats to make my partner have sex.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
76. My partner did this to me.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
77. I agreed to try a solution to a disagreement my partner
suggested.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
78. My partner agreed to try a solution I suggested.
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Appendix E

Resource List

To all OSU participants:

We thank you for completing questionnaires for this study exploring emotions and conflict resolution strategies in dating relationships. Sometimes, when people participate in research studies, they may become aware of their own feelings and experiences that they may wish to discuss with others, including counseling professionals. We have provided you with a list of resources in case you become aware of your interest in seeking assistance to cope with your thoughts and feelings about your dating relationships, your anger, and/or your conflict resolution strategies. Please feel free to talk with the research assistant if you have any questions, concerns, or comments. You may also wish to contact the primary researchers of this study, Dr. Carrie Winterowd or Dr. Steve Edwards, 434 Willard Hall, Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, 74078 at (405) 744-6040. We appreciate your participation in this study.

Resource List

This is a list of some centers that provide counseling services to students in the community.

**Counseling Psychology Clinic
408 Willard Hall
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744-6980**

**University Counseling Services
310 Student Union
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744-5472**

**Center for Family Services
243 Human Environmental Sciences
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, OK 74078
(405) 744-5058**

VITA

Dylan Burns

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

Dissertation: THE EXPERIENCE AND EXPRESSION OF ANGER AND AGGRESSION IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS FOR MALE COLLEGE ATHLETES IN CONTACT AND NON-CONTACT SPORTS

Major Field: Educational Psychology

Biographical:

Education: Graduated from Ponca City High School, Ponca City, Oklahoma in May 1994; received Bachelor of Science degree in Journalism from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in May, 1999; received Master's of Science in Community Counseling from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in August, 2002; Completed the requirements for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counseling Psychology at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in December, 2009.

Experience: Employed by Oklahoma State University as a graduate assistant, teaching assistant, and practicum student, Oklahoma State University, 2002 to 2005; Employed by Boston Medical Center and Lemuel Shattuck Hospital, Boston, Massachusetts, 2006 to 2007; Employed by Oklahoma State University Counseling Center , 2007 to present

Professional Memberships: American Psychological Association, student affiliate; American Indians Into Psychology, fellow

Name: Dylan Burns

Date of Degree: December, 2009

Institution: Oklahoma State University

Location: Stillwater, Oklahoma

Title of Study: THE EXPERIENCE AND EXPRESSION OF ANGER AND
AGGRESSION IN DATING RELATIONSHIPS FOR MALE COLLEGE ATHLETES
IN CONTACT AND NON-CONTACT SPORTS

Pages in Study: 67

Candidate for the Degree of Doctorate

Major Field: Counseling Psychology

Scope and Method of Study: The purpose of this study was to examine the differences in the experiences and expressions of anger in dating relationships among male college athletes involved in contact and non-contact sports. The data was derived from athletes' scores on the State-Trait Anger Expression Inventory-2 (STAXI-2) and the Conflict Tactics Scale-2 (CTS-2). The sample consisted of 77 male college athletes at a large Midwestern university. A series of multivariate analyses and univariate analyses were conducted. In the first MANOVA, state and trait anger were the dependent variables. In the second MANOVA, anger expression-out and anger expression-in were the dependent variables. In the third MANOVA, anger control-out and anger control-in were the dependent variables. In the ANOVA, sport type group differences in overall anger expression were explored. A series of five ANOVA procedures were conducted to explore sport type group differences in athlete's levels of negotiation, psychological aggression, physical assault, sexual coercion, and injury directed toward their dating partners.

Findings and Conclusions: Analyses of the data found that higher levels of trait anger were reported by college athletes involved in contact sports versus college athletes involved in non-contact sports. Further, the athletes involved in contact sports significantly differed from athletes involved in non-contact sports in their use of psychological aggression and injurious behaviors toward their partners. Contact sport athletes also significantly differed in their perceptions of their dating partners' use of negotiation. Results of the study indicated that athletes in contact and non-contact sports significantly differed in their experiences of trait anger, as well as the use of tactics to resolve conflict in their dating relationships. They also reported differences in how they perceived their dating partners' use of conflict tactics towards them.

ADVISER'S APPROVAL: Carrie Winterowd, Ph.D.
