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8. SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND ABUSE IN SPORT

INTRODUCTION

There is a powerful tension between two ideas in sport: successful (winning) performance and athlete welfare. Achievement is important in sport and successful performances are the hallmarks of any individual's feelings of well-being and accomplishment. However, when that success comes at the cost of an athlete's well-being, when the imperative to win prevails over the health and wellness of participants, then that sport environment is not a healthy place for athletes. Coaches and authority figures in sport are exploiting others for their own ends when they use power over these athletes for sexual purposes or sexual outcomes (Brackenridge, 2001).

How are the following headlines connected? Long-time assistant basketball coach accused of molesting a team ball boy for a dozen years (Syracuse University); ex-football assistant coach arrested and jailed on new sexual assault charges (Pennsylvania State); Graham James, the "most hated perpetrator" of sexual abuse in hockey (junior hockey), pleads guilty to charges of repeated sexual assaults on two players. In each, coaches were involved. They were the perpetrators, or the knowing bystanders, or the unknowing/unsuspecting "person responsible." And, there is more common ground too. In each case, there were other people who knew or should have known about the breaking or hard-bending of the rules by those who were later charged. In each, the victim(s) got very little justice for taking the courageous steps in speaking out (Kirby & Telles-Langdon, 2012).

From this, it is clear that harassment and abuse are issues in sport. The last two of the accounts, those of Jerry Sandusky (Pennsylvania State Football) and Graham James (Canadian Jr. Hockey) have been high-water or landmark scandals in the US and in Canada, respectively. These cases received wide-spread media coverage and made the public acutely aware of the issues of harassment and abuse in sport.

As authors in earlier chapters have written, sport is a gendered world. From the earliest moments when we try to throw a ball, run a race, jump a bar or swim across a pool, boys are measured against each other and against all girls. Girls are measured against each other. The assumption is that the natural order of things will likely prevail and all but a very few of the boys will be better than all girls. If a boy is not better than a girl, the consequences can be profound, negative and lasting for both. As ludicrous as it sounds, their genders and even their sexualities can be brought into question.

Sport is a social world filled with power relations. At the very top, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) has referential power over the international sport

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federations (IFs) including the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) and the Fédération International des Sociétés d'Aviron (FISA). Where coaches and athletes interact, power also exists. As an award-winning hockey coach, Graham James had authoritative power over the junior hockey players whom he abused: Sheldon Kennedy, Todd Holt and Thereon Fleury. Though coaches have power 'over' athletes, that power unfortunately is not always used to facilitate athlete development (Tomlinson & Strachan, 1996). It can be abused in any number of ways, including through sexual harassment and abuse.

Sport is filled with intercultural relations. The social world of sport consists of nations, cultures and sub-cultures and the interpersonal relationships of those who live within them. Sport makes societies what they are and they in turn make sport what it is. Over the years, sport organizations have been challenged by the women's liberation and anti-racism movements, boycotts of sport at the highest levels, and the exposure of performance-enhancing drug use in sport. Organized sport continues to struggle with the re-establishment of ethical values which, as Brackenridge writes "are supposed to underpin modern sport and to guarantee that the highest possible moral standards…be upheld in sport" (Kirby, Greaves, & Hankivsky, 2000, p. 8).

Following that line of thinking, it can be said that power and gender together in the sport world is not in itself a bad thing. Abuse of power is when social/gender relations go "off the rails" and sport enjoyment, participation and performance suffer. Sport is about health and well-being. It is about the joy of learning sport skills, of racing fast and jumping high. It is about learning how to be a boy and a girl in the world of physical performance. It is about feeling good and being healthy. It is exciting and fun in the moment and its effects last a lifetime. Sport for an athlete should not be, as Brackenridge writes, "a miserable and degrading experience that not only undermines their personal sporting hopes and aspirations but also inflicts long-term damage on their self-esteem and life chances" (2001, p. 4). Everyone seeking to understand gender relations in sport needs to consider how sexual harassment and abuse contaminate healthy relations and damage sport as a social institution.

DEFINITIONS AND THE NATURE AND SCOPE OF THE PROBLEM IN SPORT

The language of sexual exploitation is complex. The language is not only important for naming the issues but also for providing a means for various stakeholders such as researchers, students, parents, athletes, coaches, administrators, lawyers and policy writers and social activists to work together on solving the issues as they arise. All this is made even more complex because what is legal (i.e., the age of sexual consent or prohibited discriminations) varies across international boundaries and across U.S. state lines. Sport is organized in different ways in different countries, making broad-based solutions difficult.

Brackenridge (2001) devotes a complete chapter to the importance of definitions. She suggests that shared understandings and careful language helps to "shape the

way a social problem is defined, explained and addressed" (p. 25). The following are a summary of key terms and definitions:

Sexual exploitation – a continuum of sexual discrimination, sexual harassment and sexual abuse where individuals exercise power, some of them sexual, to manipulate, mistreat, and abuse others. Child sexual exploitation occurs when those targeted, the children/youth, are under the age of majority and/or under the age of sexual consent. Included is a range of behaviors from written or verbal abuse to rape, incest, cyber-bullying and economic exploitation of children. Both the production of child pornography and the luring of children online are child sexual abuse (CCCP, 2012).

Sex discrimination/prejudice – attitudes and related behaviors based on negative perceptions of a group's characteristics (e.g., expecting a person to act in a specific way because of her/his gender or sexual orientation). In the sport context, sex discrimination (continuum of sexual harassment and abuse) includes "unwanted, groomed or forced involvement in sexual behavior (including)…the use of gender stereotypes" (Brackenridge, 2001, p. 35) that undermine an athlete's sense of belonging and personal confidence and also hinder her/his athletic performance.

Chilly climate – the social environment where women are consistently treated differently than men in a way that disadvantages women. For example, across the sporting world, women hold fewer positions of power than do men. A chilly sport climate may also be one that is tolerant of but not welcoming to women; one that does not mentor women, nor have policies and procedures for issues such as harassment, employment equity or child care. The concept of chilly climate can also be used to describe the differential and disadvantageous treatment of others in sport, usually minority groups (Brackenridge, 2001). Though more rare, chilly climate can also be used to describe a social environment in sport that consistently advantages women over men.

Sexual harassment – a range of behaviors of a sexual nature by a perpetrator that are unwelcome and/or unwanted by a targeted individual or group. Sexual harassment includes sexual gesturing and comments of a derogatory nature, inappropriate physical touching, sexist jokes and overt sexual behaviors.

Sexual assault – "a term used to refer to all incidents of unwanted sexual activity, including sexual attacks and sexual touching" (Brennan & Taylor-Butts, 2008, p. 1). According to Brennan and Taylor-Butts (2008), the "focus is on the violence rather than the sexual nature" (p. 1) of the behaviors. In the U.S., sexual assault is defined as "any type of sexual contact or behavior that occurs without the explicit consent of the recipient. Falling under the definition of sexual assault are sexual activities (such) as forced sexual intercourse, forcible sodomy, child molestation, incest, fondling and attempted rape" (The

United States Department of Justice, 2013, p. 1). Sexual assault is a form of sexual violence that includes when a person's 'sexual integrity' is violated and/or when weapons or threats or physical attacks are used against them.

Child sexual assault – sexual violence/sexual assault on underage athletes, those under the age of consent as legally defined in the jurisdiction. In Canada, sections 271 and 272 of the Criminal Code include sexual interference, invitation to sexual touching, sexual exploitation, incest, anal intercourse and beastiality. In Australia, where "sexual abuse is defined as sexual activity between an adult and a child," a child is defined as under 18 years old (Leahy, 2012, p. 118). Leahy also indicates that such sexual activity is "regardless of whether the child understands the sexual nature of the activity (and includes) sexual contact by force or threat of force" (Leahy, 2012, p. 118). Sexual abuse includes acts involving physical contact such as masturbation and sexual touching and acts without touching such as exhibitionism and pornographic photography (p. 118). In the U.S., the National Sexual Violence Research Center (NSVRC, 2012) indicates that there is some preliminary evidence of declining rates of child sexual abuse and other forms of child neglect and mistreatment. Brackenridge (2001) considers the distinction between child and adult athlete to be morally, though not legally, irrelevant when addressing sexual assault within the sport context.

Grooming – "is the process by which a perpetrator isolates and prepares an intended victim. Entrapment may take weeks, months or years and usually moves steadily so that the abuser is able to maintain secrecy and avoid exposure" (Brackenridge, 2001, p. 35). Grooming may also include a quid pro quo, an exchange of benefits for sexual favors.

Sexual coercion – involves persuading someone to engage in sexual activity even after she/he has indicated her/his unwillingness to do so. Sexual coercion is also persuading a child to engage in sexual activity. The persuasion may take many forms, from the very subtle to overt, including social and emotional manipulation, manipulative use of punishments and privileges, and the use of alcohol or drugs.

Lack of sexual consent – consent or the lack of consent make a difference in how sexual activity is understood. Brackenridge (2001) indicates that "sexual contact between an adult/coach and a child/athlete is always wrong; that the abuser is always responsible for his (her) actions" (p. 38). Also, an athlete cannot give 'valid consent' to persons who have authority or a position of trust over them (e.g., coaches). A child below 'the age of consent' cannot consent to sexual activity. "Consent obtained by coercion is invalid" (Archard, 1998, p. 3).

Sexual shakedown of a team – when a person in a position of authority, such as a coach, manager, medical staff member or athletic trainer, engages in

> sexual interactions with some or all members of a team (Kirby, 2013c). It is not possible in such circumstances for the person in a position of authority over the athletes to gain their consent.

As is evident, many of the definitions are overlapping. These show that individuals may experience more than one form of abuse, more than one time, and by more than one perpetrator. They may experience sexual abuse as children and then again as adults. The abuse may occur over a short time or an extended period of time and the forms of abuse itself may vary over time. Sexual exploitation, the overarching term in this chapter, recognizes the role of authority figures in sport and the way in which they can abuse.

As research and child protection practices are becoming more international and the reach more global, the more complex things are becoming. Age of consent, for example, is not the same in different countries. Moreover, sport is managed in many different social, cultural, religious and economic environments and it is impossible to create a 'one size fits all' set of solutions to sexual exploitation. However, what the research has revealed so far is that the problem of sexual exploitation appears in all societies and is also part of the sport world in those societies. Research has also shown that sexual abuse is a systemic issue in sport, which means that it is entrenched within the world of sport. No one sport is free from the problem. There is also no research that definitively shows one sport to be more risky than another.

PREVALENCE

There are no accurate measures of the amount of sexual exploitation in any nation's population (Brackenridge, 2001). However, Terry and Tallon (2003) indicate that within the U.S., vicitimization studies suggest that the "scope of the problem is extensive" (p. 5). A global study of violence against children was undertaken by Pinheiro (2006). The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF, 2007) then commissioned a follow-up focused on sport (Brackenridge, Fasting, Kirby, & Leahy, 2010). While debate continues about the magnitude of the issue of sexual exploitation outside versus inside the world of sport, there is a steadily growing body of evidence about sexual exploitation in sport. This work has proven especially useful in providing an overall sense of the problem in sport.

The research on sexual exploitation in sport is relatively recent and, as suggested above, difficult to compare. According to the research:

- more is known about the sexual exploitation of girls than of boys in sport;
- more females than males experience sexual harassment and abuse in sport (numerous studies);
- there is serious under-reporting of sexual harassment and abuse, particularly by males (Brackenridge, 1997; Kirby et al., 2000; Robinson, 1998);

- 29% of 266 elite female and male athletes (Kirby et al., 2000) complained of sexual harassment by men and some women in the sport environment; 51% of 660 elite female athletes experienced sexual harassment (Fasting, Brackenridge, & Sundgot, 2000);
- from a sample of 370 elite and club athletes, 31% of females and 21% of males were sexually abused. Of those, 41% of sexually abused females and 29% of sexually abused males were abused by sport personnel (Leahy, 2012, p. 118);
- just under 1/5th of 210 university athletes in the U.S. reported experiencing sexist or derogatory comments (Volkwein & Sankaran, 2002);
- repeated unwanted sexually suggestive glances (Fasting, 2012), humiliation and ridicule are common forms of sexual harassment experienced by athletes (Fasting et al., 2000; Kirby & Greaves, 1996);
- 21.8 % of 266 elite athletes reported sexual intercourse with authority figures in sport; 8.6% reported forced sexual intercourse; 8.6% reported being sexually assaulted under the age of 16 (child sexual abuse) (Kirby & Greaves, 1996);
- 90% of sexual harassment and abuse is male to female; the other 10% is roughly split between female to male, male to male and female to female (Kirby et al., 2000);
- there is some limited support for a link between penultimate (sub-elite) performance skill and pubescent years (Stage of Imminent Achievement [SIA], Brackenridge & Kirby, 1997) when risk of sexual abuse may be highest;
- harassment by peer university athletes is greater than by coaches (Holman, 1995) or authority figures (Fasting et al., 2000; Fasting, Brackenridge, Miller, & Sabo, 2008);
- there is a high tolerance in sport of sexual harassment (and abuse), hazings, initiations and bullying within teams (Kirby & Wintrup, 2002; Robinson, 1998).

As is evident, there are overlapping information points from the various studies. Most studies were done with elite/high performance athletes on national teams and national development teams or with student-athletes in universities. A small number of studies have been conducted with parents of athletes (Brackenridge, 1997), stakeholder groups, (Parent, 2011) or with a variety of sport organizations (Brackenridge et al., 2007; Parent, 2011; University of Ottawa, 2011). Without comparable approaches, it is difficult to conclude more than that sexual exploitation is a significant problem in sport, the nature of which is not yet fully understood.

Why is sexual exploitation so difficult to measure? First, sport has a reputation as a good place for young people to develop. It is, by and large, a healthy place for athletes and for those who facilitate athletes' participation and achievements. Research on sexual exploitation is not usually welcomed in such environments and at best, is generally considered an unwanted distraction. Second, though the world of sport is quite public, much of the preparation for competition goes on out of the public eye and behind closed doors. Young athletes are often asked to behave as if they are young adults – young ambassadors who have responsibilities for training

and competing, for travelling, representing their community or nation, and speaking to the media (Brackenridge, 2001; Kirby et al., 2000). Sexual exploitation of these young ambassadors occurs most often in private and both athletes and perpetrators are reluctant to talk about it at the time and frequently, for many years afterwards. Third, the "Dome of Silence" (Kirby et al., 2000) actively discourages athletes from speaking out. Athletes who do speak out about the violence they have experienced, may not be believed and may suffer consequences such as 'negative progress' in their athletic career and lack of personal support from teammates and other personnel in sport. Fourth, various research codes of ethics make research with victims of sexual abuse, and with children, very difficult. Access to information about what athletes' experience outside of the actual performance of sport is extremely limited (Brackenridge, 2001). Fifth, the researchers and legal scholars have various definitions for sexual exploitation, so comparative work within and across nations is difficult. Research and child protection networks are increasingly working in coordinated ways, however, comparative work across national boundaries and jurisdictional units remains difficult. Despite these difficulties, the private to public shift is underway as athletes are sharing their stories and accounts of athletes' sexual exploitation appear in the press.

SEXUAL EXPLOITATION RISK FACTORS

Research primarily by Brackenridge (1997, 2001) and Cense and Brackenridge (2001) has provided a comprehensive description of risk factors. Are some sports riskier than others? What common characteristics or themes exist as part of the sport culture, athletes' profile and abusers' profile that might assist with understanding where and how sexual exploitation exists?

Sport Culture Risk Factors

A closed sport system is one of the primary risk factors associated with the sport culture. A closed sport system is one where the coach is generally authoritarian in approach and athletes are managed in a tightly controlled, restricted environment with high demands. The athletes typically experience high levels of competition with each other and, because of that, may be largely separated from social support including friends and family outside of sport. Such sports would not be characterized as consultative, either by the coaches or the athletes, and would likely be fairly insensitive to athletes' racial, religious or sexual orientation differences. Fasting et al. (2000) found that there was more abuse by authority figures in women's individual sports that were characterized as more "masculine." For men's sport, few studies exist and no particular sports stand out as riskier. Brackenridge (2001) and Kirby and Greaves (2000) agree that, as yet, there is no real data on risk associated with team or individual sports and that abuse can occur in many places (e.g., at the sport venues during and around the practice times, at the home of the coach, during

training, at social events, or on road trips). Research to date shows that one sport is not riskier than another, but that good sport practice to provide safe opportunities for athletes must exist in every sport.

Athletes' Risk Factors

Much of the literature devoted to athletes' risk factors focuses on their vulnerabilities (i.e., past abuse, female athlete triad, minority status) (Brackenridge, 1997; Drinkwater, Loucks, Sherman, Sundgot-Borgen, & Thompson, 2005). Research shows that girls are more at risk than boys in sport, but the underreporting about boys remains a serious problem. There is also some initial research on the vulnerabilities of para-athletes, those athletes who compete with disabilities (Kirby, Demers, & Parent, 2008). Further, athletes who are in the stage of imminent achievement (Brackenridge & Kirby, 1997) and/or rely heavily on the coach or other authority figure while being somewhat distant or isolated from friends and family may be more at risk (Brackenridge, 2001). It does not seem to matter whether the athletes are in a greater stage of undress (e.g., swimming versus rugby) or whether the athletes are in individual or team sports.

Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender athletes (LGBT). LGBT athletes are exposed to a particular risk – homophobia. Both Kirby et al. (2000) and Brackenridge and Kirby (1997) agree that homophobia belongs on a sexual harassment and abuse continuum, with its placement dependent on what form the homophobia actually takes. The most reported forms of discrimination appear to be verbal harassment, physical violence, and exclusion. Baks and Malecek (2003) describe the mechanisms of homophobia in sports as a "prisoner's dilemma" – if participants come out of the closet, they experience the hostile sport environment, and if they stay in the closet, sexuality is not addressed and their silence contributes to homophobia and invisibility. Many sport leaders and participants are uncomfortable talking about homophobia in sport (CAAWS, 2007). For many, it is easier to simply deny, ignore or make fun of the issue. In this void of discussion and information–sharing, stereotypes and myths persist. The fear of being outed, of being excluded from the team or accused of being sexually deviant, makes LGBT individuals an easy target for perpretators.

Athletes with disabilities. Athletes with disabilities, like other marginalized groups (e.g., LGBT), are particularly vulnerable to violence and abuse. Sport practice occurs in a variety of settings, and often, the athlete living with a disability may be dependent on the support of a care-giver, an attendant, or a friend. Where a power imbalance exists, particularly when institutional care is involved, there is an increased risk of abuse to people with disabilities. In reviewing the sport disability literature, we were startled by some of the specific vulnerabilities present (Kerr, 1999). For example, physical handling, drug administration, and drug testing for athletes living with disabilities are likely unique and there may be many opportunities for inappropriate

touching to occur. Also, though the patterns of sexual abuse may be similar for all athletes, the particular form of abuse of an athlete with a disability may be related to the nature of vulnerability. For instance, while most people have a sexual identity and they may or may not be comfortable in expressing that identity (Kirby & Huebner, 2002), athletes with disabilities may have to fight an uphill battle to have their sexuality accepted. They may have to deal with others who either disbelieve that they can have a sexual identity or outright refuse to accept that there may be a variety of ways to express and experience that sexuality. At this time, there is very little work on the sexual exploitation of athletes with disabilites (Kirby et al., 2008).

Abuser Risk Factors

The majority of the literature devoted to sexual exploitation in sport focuses on the coach as the abuser, however, other individuals in positions of authority are also important to acknowledge (e.g., medical personnel, athletic trainers, or team selectors). As an authority figure, the coach has direct and regular contact with athletes, though often initiates contact with the athlete outside of sport by integrating him/herself into the athlete's family or offering the athlete special privileges outside of the sport context. Disturbingly, athletes do not always see sexual encounters with their coaches as negative (Brackenridge, 2001; Burton Nelson, 1994). Risk factors include where a coach is a boundary challenger – for example, one who tells "off color" jokes, touches athletes unnecessarily, "engages in ambiguous sexual behavior" (Brackenridge, 2001, p. 136) or performs tasks outside the realm of coaching such as massages or counseling an athlete's personal problems. The coach also is in a trusted position and may be able to boundary push without criticism because of a winning record and success with a variety of athletes. Coaches with a sense of impunity and entitlement to know and control everything about their athletes would likely be seen as a risk for the athletes. There is also some research that suggests sexual exploitation by peer athletes may be a risk (Fasting et al., 2000; Holman, 1995), particularly when the sport environment has a tolerance for peer bullying and sexual encounters in sport (Robinson, 1998). Together, the sport culture and athlete and abuser risk factors serve as cautions about the kinds of behaviors that may be problematic in sport.

A dome of silence exists over those in sport, including athletes and coaches. Many are reluctant to expose abuse in sport because of the sheer power "such exposure has to destroy personal, team or even national identities" (Kirby et al., 2000, p. 27). The image of sport is positive; a place where one can play safely, achieve one's potential and share in the challenges and joys of one's teammates. Sport is a place of good values like hard work and honesty of effort and cooperative endeavour. It is also a place of contrasts; of tremendous privacy where one's efforts are made often on long and lonely training paths out of the public eye, and of tremendous publicity where even the most intimate of one's details are known by the public at large. The dedication required of a top-level athlete or a top-level coach contributes to this

image. But sexual exploitation contaminates sport. It happens in a very private place, a place protected by the interdependence of the athletes, the intensity of sport, the highly competitive atmosphere, and even the highly symbolic (nationally valued) nature of the activities (Kirby et al., 2000). The sport norm would be suppression of disclosure and exposure. Speaking out about sexual exploitation risks personal criticism, scandal for the sport and the abuser, upset of the tight social relationships of the sport and even personal ostracism from the team. Breaking through this dome of silence is a task not only for the athletes who are sexually exploited, but is a shared task for all who love sport and are committed to safe sport.

PERPETRATORS AND EXPLOITERS

Who Sexually Exploits Children in Sport?

Sexual exploiters in sport are identical to those outside of sport, although sport may provide different opportunities for them to abuse. They may be individuals who deliberately seek children for sexual purposes and do so in a calculated and purposeful manner. These people specifically come to sport because there are opportunities to work as volunteers or in a paid capacity with limited supervision and a great deal of freedom. Or, they may be more opportunistic, as in those who will engage in abusive behavior "if the situation presents itself" (CCCP, n.d., p. 26). They may have a distorted sense of coach-athlete relationship, about appropriate physical contact with athletes, and issues about healthy friendships and intimacy. Sexual exploiters may "believe the athlete is interested in them and that sexual contact is harmless… they do not see their offending as forced or offensive" (CCCP, n.d., p. 26). In either case, the abusers create opportunities for the athletes to be physically close to them. They may look for athletes' vulnerabilities and ways to isolate an athlete from others (e.g., to drive them home, have them live in the abuser's home, or to segregate them for special training). They may also create opportunities for the athlete to be exposed physically in front of them (e.g., in the change room or on the Internet). In any case, the abuser uses his/her position of authority and trust to gain and keep access to athletes. As long as the athlete is silent and no bystanders speak out, and there are no immediate consequences for the abuse, the abusers can continue to justify to themselves why they are good for the athlete (Pascal, 2012).

The Question of Easy Access in Sport

The debate continues about whether paedophiles and other sexual exploiters come into sport because of access to children or whether sport provides opportunities for individuals to become paedophiles, child pornographers or child traffickers. The answer is both.

Those who seek access to children, particularly vulnerable children, can get quite close to athletes as long as there is some coaching skill or voluntary capacity that

can provide the route. Although it is more difficult to gain access through the school system, it is not impossible for a skilled abuser. For community and club sport, sport is generally welcoming for those who want to contribute – to drive, to help with events, to fundraise, to do the communications, to chaperone athletes, to clean out facilities after practices and so on. Individuals can volunteer often without going through a criminal screening or even an informal interview.

For the more opportunistic abusers, once the individuals find their place in sport, as coaches or others in positions of authority or with opportunity to be close to vulnerable athletes, they move down the road to becoming a sexual abuser.

Access to athletes continues as long as the following are in place:

- The abuser is a dedicated, award-winning contributor to the sport and to the athletes and the abuser looks just like everyone in sport;
- There are silent bystanders who have not noticed, are not suspicious nor cannot believe that abuse is occurring;
- The sport environment continues forward in an unruffled way – the opportunities for abuse continue to escalate without causing a ripple on the surface;
- The potential for abuse is legitimated by sport practice (e.g., late practice or competition schedules mean athletes have to stay at coach's home; coach offers lots of extra exclusive coaching for an up-and-coming athlete; coach offers to help athlete who is struggling with homework, finances or family issues);
- Those around the abuser do not understand harassment and abuse issues nor do they understand their legal responsibility to report suspicions of abuse (CCCP, n.d.; Kirby, 2013c).

THE CYCLE OF ABUSE AND GROOMING PROCESS

One of the most durable models to explain the abuser profile is Wolf's Cycle of Offending (Fisher, 1994). It had some early support because of the assumption that children who were abused became abusers. As Brackenridge (2001) rightly indicates, this model poorly explains female victims of abuse. The cycle also describes a pattern based primarily on poor self-image. The cycle progresses from poor self-image → expects rejection → withdraws → unassertive → compensatory fantasies → sexual escapism → grooming → outlet → transitory guilt → push away guilt → and back to poor self-image. But, as Brackenridge points out, the determined sex-offender in sport is not operating from poor self-image, but often has a sense of entitlement and uses power to target and abuse athletes.

The grooming process, first flagged by Wolf in 1984 but expanded and applied to sport by Brackenridge (2001), starts from a predator stance. The grooming process is a series of behaviors that some abusers patiently use to engage targeted athletes in sexual behavior. The Predator Cycle progresses from good self-image → good personal skills → expects approval and acceptance → seeks public profile → assertive → assumption of superiority → sexual confidence → increased sense of control → increased

self-confidence → and back to good self-image (Brackenridge, 2001). Brackenridge then identified four stages of grooming as targeting, building trust, developing isolation/control and sexual abuse/secrecy. Grooming is perhaps the most insidious of means used by abusers because they target athletes who have existing vulnerabilities such as previous abuse experiences, problems at home, disordered eating, or difficulties in fitting into a team. An abuser then creates an individual relationship with the athlete based first on special treatment and extra attention, friendship, and some seemingly innocuous quid pro quo requests for errands and favors. When the abuser is "sure of the athlete" (sure he/she will be silent, keep a secret), the athlete is then separated from the team members, family and friends through demands to spend time with the abuser. Often, for example, a coach who is grooming an athlete may know more about that athlete than anyone else around them (Starr, 2013). This information is then used to control where, when and how the athlete interacts with the coach. The 'spending extra time' with the athlete converts to 'spending sexual time.' The targeted and now fully compromised athlete is then pressed into secrecy and silence through either being made to feel very special ("I love you and I will divorce my wife for you!") or shaming ("how could you lead me on like this?") or threatening ("if you tell, I will make sure you won't go to Nationals").

The description of the abuse of Sheldon Kennedy by coach Graham James followed the typical grooming and sexual exploitation pattern. In one of the most public cases of sexual exploitation, Graham James groomed 14 year old hockey player Sheldon Kennedy, and other young hockey players (cousins Thereon Fleury and Todd Holt) for sexual abuse. Kennedy described how James helped him with hockey skills, took him on trips, and bought him special clothing. Later, twice weekly special homework/practice sessions turned into opportunities for sexual abuse involving punishments, threats and humiliations (Kirby & Fusco, 1998). These abuses continued, just under the public radar, until Kennedy was 18 years of age. James went to court in 1997, charged by Kennedy and an unnamed player. As is often the case, Kennedy was the first of several to come forward. James went to court again in 2012, this time charged by the two cousins. James began serving his second prison sentence in 2012.

In 2012, in a case that shocked America, Pennsylvania State University became the focal point of child protection in college sport and thrust Dr. Katherine Staley, a research scientist for the Justice Center at the University into the lead for Penn State's Child Sexual Abuse Conference: Traumatic Impact, Prevention and Intervention. In the spirit of open sourcing, much of the conference material was posted on line at *protectchildren.psu.edu* and the archived videos were made widely available. As described at the very beginning of this chapter, Jerry Sandusky was found guilty of 45 counts of child abuse. Sandusky regularly worked with children in The Second Mile Program and contributed to the Pennsylvania State Football program for many years. Problems with his behavior towards at least one child had been identified to members of the University administration more than a decade prior to charges and court. The late head coach, Joe Paterno, along with others in positions of authority,

knew about the suspicions. Paterno's inaction may have failed to halt Sandusky's continuation of child sexual abuse. When the case finally did come to court, there were many victims and much damage to all concerned.

An unusual case that links child exploitation in sport with the violence of school shootings occurred in 1996 when Thomas Hamilton shot and killed 16 children and one teacher at the Dunblane Primary School (Bell, 2004). Bell writes that Thomas Hamilton was interested in rifle clubs and in "Boys Brigade" and became more and more involved in Boy Scouts. After some reported issues with his leadership, he was asked to resign and preceded to organize his own boys clubs (16 in total). The clubs were for young boys, Bell writes, who participated in football, gymnastics, swimming and target practice. Brackenridge (2001) noted that while the Scout movement dealt effectively with Hamilton by banning him, once he was with his own unregistered clubs, Hamilton had unsupervised access to children. In other words, Hamilton used sport to attract lots of children. Reports had come to the local police about his sadistic, demanding behavior and some boys complained that he "would do things that made them uncomfortable and would pay them off to keep quiet" (Bell, 2004, p. 3). With no charges laid, Hamilton proceeded to purchase guns and to then murder 17 people. While the children killed were not, in and of themselves, groomed for sexual exploitation, the children participating in the boys clubs were most certainly sexually exploited.

CONSEQUENCES OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

For Sport

A principle consequence of sexual exploitation for sport is the loss of what sport means to its participants. Paul Melia of the Canadian Centre for Ethics and Sport writes that while sport has incredible potential, it cannot realize that potential in just any kind of sport. The potential is "realized only in good sport" (2013, p. 1). He argues that principles based on "striving to be the best, striving for excellence, giving everything one has on the field of play to win, also [must] include playing fair, keeping it fun, respecting others, staying safe and giving back" (Melia, 2013, p. 1). A sport environment with sexual exploitation means that sport cannot produce strong, healthy athletes.

Another principle consequence is that organized sport may find itself short of skilled labor. Sport depends upon skilled, though often volunteer workers. Distinctions are needed for when the work is being done by volunteers or by paid workers. The screening process for entry into sport and for job performance must be no less stringent for the volunteer workers. Clear performance criteria and evaluations for all who work in sport would greatly enhance the quality of the sport workplace. On a child protection note, since those who sexually abuse in one environment are known to move along to another environment when things get difficult, and sport is no different, there is cause for concern if volunteers or paid workers in sport move

from team to team or region to region with any frequency. Unfortunately, there are cases where a sport organization has quietly asked a person to leave a club because of sexual abuse only to see that same person resurface at a competing club. This practice is known as nimby-ism – the "not in my backyard'" way of handling (mis-handling) sexual abusers. It does not help the sport organization at all because, no matter how quiet the proceedings, word gets out and the sport organization becomes known for taking the easy way out.

A third consequence is that it is tough to coach in an environment that has trouble both ensuring that good coaches get what they need and poor coaches are either trained up or screened out. There is a lot of power in the role of being a coach. Pritchard (2007) writes that coaches have highly important positions in sport – leaders of "small but not inconsiderable empires" (p. 129) – where they have lots of authority and can dictate what they want to happen. While these environments can produce strong athlete performances, they also protect the traditional ways of doing things. Change is not always welcome in sport. Safe sport represents a new approach to how coaches work with athletes and with each other. For example, there are Codes of Conduct in many U.S. national sport organizations including volleyball, gymnastics and swimming. These lay out limits for coaches around such issues as alcohol and drug use, criminal behavior, and sexual boundaries with others, including minors, in the sport. They generally impress upon coaches the need to keep up to date and fully informed on harassment and abuse issues. Sport organizations can help set the standards of good practice using Brake's (2013) two pillars – coaching ethics and athlete welfare. Sport organizations must take a stand against sexual exploitation!

For Athletes

Until all athletes are protected, sport is not completely safe for athletes. While the child protection work in sport does help with risk or threat assessment and can lessen the dangers for athletes, not all sports have equal access to those trained in risk assessment. For those athletes who are exploited, there may simply be no disclosure – no telling of the abuse to anyone. The pressure to remain silent is immense. There is what has been called "the choice of one" (Kirby, et al. 2000), that is – the athletes are faced with a true dilemma of either speaking out and loosing what appears to be a single road to the Olympic Games or remaining silent and put up with the abuse to protect their sport careers. For those who do decide to disclose, just whom do they disclose to? If it is another athlete or a close friend, will the disclosure get into the hands of the trained harassment officer? If so, will there be prompt action to prevent any further harm to the athlete and the start of due process to ensure that the 'accused' is also fully respected by the process? Will sport organizations be open to fully managing the disclosures in a way that first protects the people involved rather than the reputation of the sport? And, once a case is handled according to the policies and procedures and even if the case goes to court, the athlete who is sexually exploited will spend a long time healing. Fortunately there are a number

of supports for those who are sexually exploited, and some of them are specific to sport. Athletes are children first and athletes second. As athletes, they have the increasing support of a much wider violence protection network for children – the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC, 2013) in the United States, the Canadian Centre for Child Protection (CCCP, 2012) and the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) – Child Protection in Sport Unit (NSPCC, 2002) in the UK.

For the Coach or Other Person in Authority

There is always an inherent vulnerability in the coach–athlete relationship that makes it difficult for those outside that relationship to understand the relationship dynamics. Coaches can "protect themselves" by engaging in good practice. Good coaching practice includes:

- keeping the coaching environment "open" rather than in a closed and secretive space,
- engaging in discussions with athletes, coaches and parents and others in sport about the nature of harassment and abuse and about acceptable standards of behavior,
- ensuring positive and respectful treatment of the athletes is at the center of all good coaching practice, and
- implementing penalties for disrespectful and abusive behavior.

Where professionals are involved, such as medical personnel, sport administrators or professional coaches, there are professional standards of behavior often written into codes of conduct and guidelines for performance. Regular reviews of performance will ensure good performance and also, protect the professional coach as well as the athletes and the sport organization. Just as policies are in place for child protection, they are also there to ensure procedural fairness for all. So, where there is a strong policy environment for child protection, a coach (or other person in positions of authority) who is suspected of sexually abusing an athlete will be able to fully rely on the procedural steps in those policies for the respectful management of the situation.

DEMYSTIFYING THE MYTHS

The most popular myths associated with sexual abuse in sport include the following:

1. *I have never heard a complaint in my sport. We don't have any problems with harassment and abuse.* Sexual exploitation can happen in any sport – individual or team, summer or winter sport, sport for the young and sport for the masters, sport for para-athletes, for LGBT athletes, for all. Every sport needs to provide for the eventuality of a disclosure of sexual exploitation by being fully prepared. Each sport needs to establish widespread informed proactive discussions about

respectful sport, engage in ongoing child protection policy development and have good personnel management practices. Having no complaints can mean that there is no safe route for an athlete to disclose abuse, that the pressure to remain silent and 'keep the secret' is very powerful, or that the sport has an 'open secret' environment where everyone knows but nobody talks about abuse.

2. *We know everyone really well in our sport. We are a big happy family. Everybody loves our coaches and all the other support people too. We even love the bus driver! There are no strangers here, so we don't have a problem.* People who exploit children may be attracted to sport because it is where children are, and/or where they may be able to gain access to children with relative ease. Others are already involved in sport but then sexually exploit children because the opportunity presents itself – an opportunistic abuser. The principle threat is not 'stranger danger' (Brackenridge, 1997), but is a threat from inside the sport organization. Also, though coaches may be seen to be the main issue, abuse can come from other adults in the sport environment. While admirable that everybody gets along and is a happy family, the person who sexually exploits children fits in well to such environments and uses the normalcy of the interactions to hide the abuse activities.
3. *Our coaches are trained and licensed. They even get criminal checks. Many are award-winning. And our athletes have many top-notch performances. Our coaches take special interest in the athletes and often give them lots of special attention. We have nothing to worry about*. Proper qualifications are not related to likelihood of sexual exploitation. However, as part of credentialing, sport organizations can regularly discuss the issues of respectful, value-driven sport, one free of discriminations and abuses. This ensures that the issues are out in the open and may alert people to the signs of abuse. While criminal checks are an excellent part of a child protection program, they are not helpful in identifying those who have not already been charged for sexual exploitation. Since there is a major problem with underreporting of abuse, criminal record checks cannot stand as the only method of prevention. It is ideal when coaches take an interest in the athletes and give them lots of attention, but it should not pass into an unhealthy attention, one where the coach-athlete relationship becomes private and secluded and out of bounds for healthy interactions with others. Unhealthy special attention is to be avoided. Having good practices for prevention of abuse is important. These practices need to be discussed often and understood by all.
4. *When we travel, we always bring a chaperone. The athletes are always supervised. There are always volunteers to help with this. We always have the males stay together and the females stay together. That's the way we ensure no problems will arise*. Sexual abuse can happen anytime and anywhere, including on trips for competition. There may be more opportunity for abusive contact with athletes and therefore, supervision is necessary. Sport organizations should have child protection policies in mind when choosing those who will supervise. Also, abuse happens from male to female, female to female and from male to male. Thus,

segregation by gender is not sufficient to ensure abusive behavior does not occur.

5. *Our athletes are very confident and strong–minded. If a problem existed, they would tell us for sure. We don't have a problem here*. Underreporting is a problem that is not linked directly to the performance or the confidence levels of the athletes. Disclosure is difficult for any athlete and the manner of disclosure may differ depending on the circumstances surrounding an athlete.
6. *A consensual sexual relationship between two adults is none of our business. If the athlete is an adult – with regard to the law – then it is not our job to do anything about his or her relationship with the coach*. Sexual relationships with athletes happen at all levels – youth, high school, college and professional. At the youth and high school levels, such relationships are a criminal offense. At the college or professional levels, it may not be a criminal offense, but it is a breach of coaching ethics and an abuse of power by the coach, even when the relationship is 'consensual' (Brackenridge, 2013; Griffin, 2013).

CONNECTING THE DOTS AND FIGHTING BACK

Prevention: Child Protection and Child Safeguarding

Child protection is everybody's business. Everyone connected to sport must become skilled at connecting the dots. The dots are the red flags about "outside the rules" behavior that in the past (may have) regularly gone unreported (Kirby & Telles-Langdon, 2012). Sport organizations have to provide a clear route by which such reporting can occur. Potential abusers need to feel that they are continually visible and under scrutiny in a sport that wants to protect its participants.

While researchers and activists in sport have paid attention to sexual exploitation for more than three decades, sport organizations are now under considerable pressure to rapidly change their social and cultural environments. Connecting the dots, as described in the previous paragraph, is an important part of how sport organizations can take some responsibility. For example, the Cal Ripken, Sr. Foundation (CRSF) formalizes the importance of taking responsibility by underlining individual compliance. The CRSF is a foundation to help disadvantaged young people learn critical life lessons and build character through baseball and softball-themed programs. They have produced a child protection policy template that includes space for a signature indicating that each individual has read and agrees to abide by the policy (CRSF, 2013). Parent (2011), in her comprehensive study of the sexual harassment and abuse in sport in the Province of Quebec, discovered that respondents perceived a lack of clear leadership from their sport organizations. Parent also recognized their perceptions of a prevailing sense of indifference toward the issues, a belief that insufficient time, resources and competence were available for prevention planning, and an overall lack of comprehensive measures in place to prevent sexual harassment and abuse. What this amounts to, she wrote, is "a lack of rules regarding behavior management in sport organizations" (Parent, 2011,

p. 144) and recommended that sport organizations establish external barriers (e.g., for recruitment) and internal barriers (e.g., behaviors management).

Once We Know: Managing the Cases

Speaking out about child sexual exploitation is difficult. Walking away from or doing nothing about suspected child sexual exploitation makes one complicit in that abuse (Brackenridge, 2001). In many countries, such as Canada, it is also illegal to let suspected child abuse go unreported. Thus, when athletes disclose their experiences with sexual abuse, or an onlooker reports about something disturbing he/she has witnessed, the "reporting" has begun. A safe sport environment is one of immediate support whereby the harassment officer is immediately contacted, really listens to the disclosure/report, and conducts an accurate recording of the disclosure. The sport-specific sexual harassment policies and legal rights and responsibilities then should 'click into place' with steps immediately taken to reduce the opportunity for any further harm and to commence the fact finding investigation.

Since the sport culture is one of keeping the "Dome of Silence" over the negative experiences and events, an organization's first response to suspected abuse may well be to 'wish it away' or to minimize the account. However uncomfortable this may be for sport organizations, reporting is only the first of a number of actions that together will ensure the case is handled appropriately, efficiently and respectfully. Sport has the ability to offer a safe environment for all. The capacity to protect the "young people in sport and through sport" (Tiivas, 2013, p. 5) is built through conscious effort and skill. Creating a safe place, where participants can thrive, is the goal for child protection.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

Paul Melia (2013) wrote that when sexual exploitation in sport is reported but nothing is done, it is tragic for the athletes and for sport. Sport has lost its way and is out of touch with its foundational values Melia continues, and when people in sport cannot determine what the right thing to do is, then we have a crisis in sport.

Modern sport is not particularly equitable. Vulnerabilities can appear when inequities exist and power is not equally shared. Sexual exploitation in sport is an abuse of power by those with authority over others, where the "outside the rules" behaviors take the form of sexual discrimination and sexual comments, sexual touching, sexual assault, bullying and cyber-bullying, hazing and initiations, and child sexual exploitation and child trafficking. Sexual exploitation of girls and boys in sport makes everyone shine the light on sport. It is in this light that we see the violent underbelly of sport, the damage and the roots of it – we see what is wrong with sport and what needs to happen to make sport better.

One approach to breaking the pattern of negative behaviors is through the use of children's rights and, more broadly, human rights, to eliminate discrimination and

other forms of violence in sport (David, 2005). Sport researchers and child protection experts are increasingly working in coordinated ways, though comparative work across national boundaries and jurisdictional units remains difficult. The children's rights and human rights approach is complimented when countries work across social, cultural and political mandates to find shared ways of making sport safe for all.

Sexual harassment is the problem that 'hits sport in its guts.' Sexual harassment is in sports' backyard. Harassment-free sport is good for society and good for its participants. The challenge is to act proactively to make sport harassment-free for all its participants. (Kirby, 1995, p. 61)

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