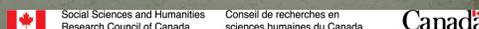


Psychological skills and factors related to ice hockey officials coping and performance

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- Officials are essential to organized, competitive sport
- They play a preeminent role in fulfilling organizational objectives
- Hockey Canada estimates approximately 1/3 of officials “retire” every year
- Underrepresented in the area of sport psychology



Objectives

- to explore motives for becoming an ice hockey official;
- to identify sources of stress and determine the extent and levels of stressful experiences;
- to identify coping strategies used;
- to explore the concept of hardiness in officiating;
- to identify skills necessary for successful officiating performance.

Research Methods

- Data collected quantitatively
 - On-line or paper-and-pencil survey (PSS; HOSSI; ASCI; PVS-III-O; M-COPE-R; 1 to 5 point Likert Scales)
 - 265 officials (91.7% male; 28.2 yrs of age \pm 13.9 yrs; 9.9 yrs experience \pm 9.8 yrs
 - Level 1 - 63
 - Level 2 - 75
 - Level 3 - 86
 - Level 4 - 29
 - Level 5 - 8
 - Level 6 - 2
- Data collected qualitatively
 - 25 males; Levels 1 to 4
 - 7 females; Levels 1 and 2





Stress and Officiating

- Anecdotally, reports of physical and verbal abuse of officials abound

| Type of Stressor | M (SD) | Range | F value |
|---------------------------------|------------|------------|-----------------------------|
| Fear of mistakes | 3.18 (1.4) | 1.0 - 7.5 | $F(1,253) = 4.24, p = .041$ |
| | 3.54 (1.4) | 1.0 - 6.75 | |
| Fear of abuse | 3.03 (1.6) | 1.0 - 8.0 | $F(1,252) = 0.57, p = .45$ |
| | 3.17 (1.5) | 1.0 - 9.0 | |
| Working with a partner official | 2.64 (1.5) | 1.0 - 7.0 | $F(1,255) = 3.45, p = .064$ |
| | 2.98 (1.5) | 1.0 - 7.33 | |

- Why?
 - Measurement issues
 - Not perceived as stressful

Stress and Officiating

- I believe that it's just *moderate* stress. There are times where you do get stressed because you made a wrong call, and you have to deal with the little kids and coaches. So it does build up a little stress, but then, again, its not that much because you're going out and doing something that you love to do so that takes away more of the stress. And again you're out with another person so, it all evens out. I don't think there's a lot of stress, depending on how the game goes. If you get into the older age groups like when you're dealing with 18 and 19 year olds and there's a couple fights, it might get a little stressful because you have to deal with the kids running each other and fighting and everything like that. But, again, those are the odd times you see that, when people get really stressed from a hockey game. Most of the times you'll see someone doing something they love, helping out the kids and community so it evens out.
- I was the first female official in XXX and, my first year I had so many fathers be like "Girls aren't supposed to be refing" so many times. I'd walk out of the rink and I had a grandfather come up to me and be like, "Since when do girls ref? It's a guys workplace." Like, it was just, like, its 2000 and what buddy. Like, you're kinda being ridiculous. I dunno just stuff like that and it made you feel unsure of yourself. Like I know a couple of times I was like "I don't wanna do this anymore." I had people yelling at me that I shouldn't be on the ice because I'm a girl, I have coaches that just don't respect me because I'm a girl. They' think that they can just push stuff over me and yea, I dealt with it, I got through it. I kinda just let it go and zoned them out as much as I could and just kept going.

Extent of Stressors

- Stressors experienced most often:
 - Levels 1 and 2
 - Making a wrong call
 - Verbal abuse by coaches
 - Confrontations with coaches
 - Verbal abuse by spectators
 - Support partner official after they have made a mistake
 - Levels 3 to 6
 - Verbal abuse by spectators
 - Verbal abuse by players
 - Verbal abuse by coaches
 - Calling a major penalty or a game misconduct
 - Making a controversial call
- Threats of Physical Abuse
 - Level 1 – 15.9%; Level 2 – 18.7%; Level 3 – 27.9%; Level 4 – 44.4%



Coping Styles and Strategies

| Coping | M (SD) | F value |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
| Problem- vs Emotion-focused coping | | $t(1,242) = 26.59, p = .000$ |
| Goal setting | 3.03 (.92) 3.33 (.78) | $F(1,241) = 7.53, p = .007$ |
| Confidence | 4.10 (.71) 4.37 (.45) | $F(1,242) = 12.43, p = .001$ |
| Concentration | 3.83 (.70) 4.11 (.45) | $F(1,241) = 13.54, p = .000$ |
| Coping with Adversity | 3.81 (.67) 3.97 (.53) | $F(1,240) = 4.71, p = .031$ |
| Performing Under Pressure | 3.25 (.07) 3.70 (.06) | $F(1,239) = 24.03, p = .000$ |

Hardiness

- The existential courage that aids one in pursuing the future despite uncertainty

Maddi et al., 2002

- Commitment disposition:
 - a tendency to involve oneself in whatever one is doing
 - Invested in their relationship to the social context so that they cannot easily give up under pressure
- Control disposition:
 - The tendency to feel and act as if one is influential rather than helpless in the face of varied contingencies of life (Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982)
- Challenge disposition:
 - Change, rather than stability, is normal in life and the anticipation of changes are interesting incentives to growth (Kobasa, Maddi, & Kahn, 1982)

Hardiness values

| Scale | Level 1 (n = 57) | Level 2 (n = 67) | Level 3 (n = 78) | Level 4 (n = 26) | Stats |
|------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------------------|
| Challenge | 3.42 (.84) | 3.81 (.61) | 3.96 (.59) | 4.16 (.49) | $F(3,239) = 10.91$; $p = .000$ |
| Commitment | 3.61 (.71) | 3.88 (.54) | 3.87 (.56) | 3.83 (.44) | $F(3,236) = 2.96$; $p < .033$ |
| **Control | 3.27 (.48) | 3.54 (.44) | 3.44 (.49) | 3.50 (.46) | $F(3,232) = 3.80$; $p < .011$ |

1 Never to 5 Always scale

Officiating Intentions

| Intention | Level 1 | | Level 2 | | Level 3 | | Level 4 | |
|---------------------------------------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|---------|------|
| | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No | Yes | No |
| To return to officiating next year | 81.7 | 18.3 | 89.7 | 10.3 | 91.4 | 8.6 | 92.6 | - |
| To attend a clinic in the off-season | 53.3 | 46.7 | 41.6 | 52.9 | 37.0 | 63.0 | 56.0 | 44.0 |
| To become certified at the next level | 51.6 | 43.8 | 40.3 | 49.4 | 13.8 | 80.5 | 14.8 | 77.8 |

Skills and Abilities



- Hockey Canada:
 - The ideal official should have the speed of a sprinter, the endurance of a marathoner, the tact of a diplomat, the mind of a professor, and the unruffled demeanour of a supreme court judge. It would also help if he had 20-20 vision and was stone deaf

Skills and Abilities



Limitations

- Very few Level 5 and 6 officials
 - Ongoing attempts at recruitment
- Very few females
 - Ongoing attempts at recruitment
- Most intend to return to officiating
 - May be highly committed to officiating



Summary

- Motivations
 - Previous experience as an athlete as well as the influence of a significant other (particularly coach) could be important for recruitment
- Stressful experiences
 - Not a lot of stress experienced overall; however significant stressful experiences
 - Coaching abuses seem to be particularly prevalent
- Coping styles and strategies and Hardiness
 - Development sessions for officials may want to start to train different strategies for coping and developing hardiness
- Intentions
 - Need to delve into the reasons why officials do not intend to continue with their development
- Skills and Abilities
 - Complexity of officiating skills and abilities



Policy Implications

- Fundamental to the Canadian Sport Policy's focus on development is the notion that participants have the right to be provided with a "safe and secure" environment
- One of the Officials' responsibilities is to make the game safe and fair
- We cannot forget the safety of the official, particularly when the officials are young
- Policy needs to reinforce the acceptable behaviour of the other participants on the sport field

Future Directions

- Oh so many
- Where I am going from here:
 - Officiating supervision
 - Biofeedback to enhance officiating performance
 - Coaching behaviour



Thank you
