

## *Development of an Instrument to Measure Spectator Aggression*

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Spectator aggression (physical and verbal) is a serious problem in North American sport. This is evidenced by a variety of behaviors including verbal assaults, throwing objects at opposing players, chanting derogatory statements, vandalizing, and fighting, (Steinbach, 2008; Wahl, 2008; Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001; Young, 2002). Recent concrete examples have been particularly evident in college athletics. For instance, a large group of student basketball fans known as the “Pit Crew” at the University of Oregon (2007-2008 season) were involved in making threatening phone calls to an opposing player’s cellular phone as well as pelting the player’s family members with popcorn cartons, empty cups, and casting a variety of insults (Wahl, 2008). As another example, Illinois student basketball fans chanted profane language at an opposing player simply because he had chosen not to accept a scholarship from Illinois (Steinbach, 2008; Wahl, 2008).

Sport spectator aggression has primarily received attention on two major fronts. First, various policies and initiatives have been implemented to improve sportsmanship and quash fan aggression and violence (Hofstetter, 2006; Report on the Sportsmanship and Fan Behavior Summit, 2003). Second, the phenomenon of fan aggression has spawned great interest in its cause. Social and behavioral scientists have developed a host of theories and determining factors (Simons & Taylor, 1992; Wann et al., 2001). However, compared to the amount of effort to study the causes of sport spectator aggression and its removal, little attention has been given to measurement. This is evidenced by a review of the fan aggression literature in which only five instruments were found related to spectator aggression (Capella, 2002; Wakefield & Wann,

2006; Wann, Haynes, McLean, & Pullen, 2003; Wann, Peterson, Cothran, & Dykes, 1999; Wann, Schrader, & Carlson, 2000). After closely examining these instruments, it is argued that they are not adequate for measuring sport spectator aggression. Key reasons include the nature of the items and the limited number of items to represent the theoretical construct.

The Sport Spectator Attitude Scale (SSAS) was developed in response to the dearth of extant instrumentation available to measure spectator aggression. It is proposed that this new instrument will improve researchers' abilities to more accurately test hypotheses concerning the causes of spectator aggression as well as provide data that will allow both administrators and sport scholars to evaluate the efficacy of programs and policies that are implemented to improve sportsmanship among fans.

The purpose of this presentation will be to present the nature of the instrument, its reliability and validity and major findings yielded from the second pilot study containing a sample of 221 college student sport spectators.