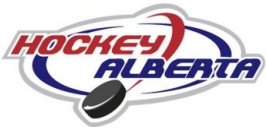


***Good and Poor Sport Behaviors in
Youth Hockey***





Purpose The purpose of this research was to determine the relationship between the influence of parents, peers, and coaches and players' self-reported good and poor sport behaviors in minor hockey. Information obtained from this study provides minor hockey associations within Alberta with valuable information that could aid in educating parents, participants, and coaches about the elements which foster good and poor sport behaviors during both games and practices.

Protocol Data collection took place from February, 2013 to June, 2013 using an online survey protocol. The survey was comprised of scales measuring parent-, peer-, and coach-initiated motivational climate, a good and poor sport behavior scale, questions about the participants' perceived ability, as well as several demographic items. All surveys were completed by male and female PeeWee, Bantam, or Midget players who first received parental approval and then agreed to partake in the study. A total of 285 usable surveys were collected and analyzed.

Motivational Climate Motivational climate, or achievement environment, refers to an athlete's perception about the beliefs and values of the social-contextual atmosphere created by coaches, parents, and peers. Motivational climate is determined by the ways groups are organized, performance is evaluated, the authority figure operates, and by the extent to which social comparison exists. Task-involving climates, which promote learning and skill mastery have been connected with adaptive motivational responses, while ego-involving climates, which promote success in relation to others has been associated with maladaptive motivational responses, including low effort and attrition.

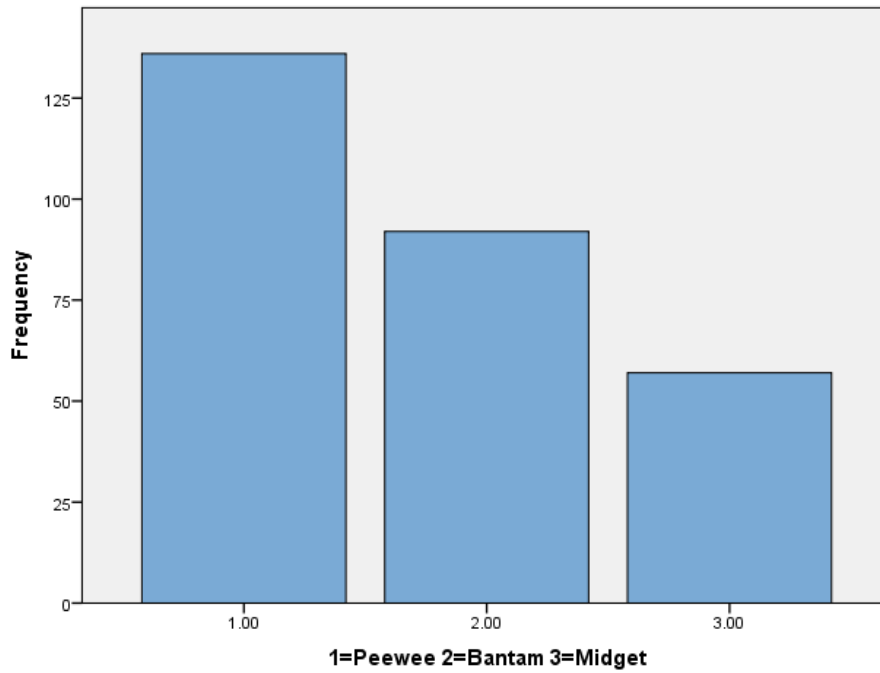
Good and Poor Sport Behavior Sport has often been linked to the fostering of virtues, such as fairness, loyalty, and teamwork, but poor sport conduct demonstrated through argumentative players, sore losers, attempts to cheat, and overly-aggressive acts have an effect, not just on the purity of what was meant by sport, but potentially on the development of the players involved.



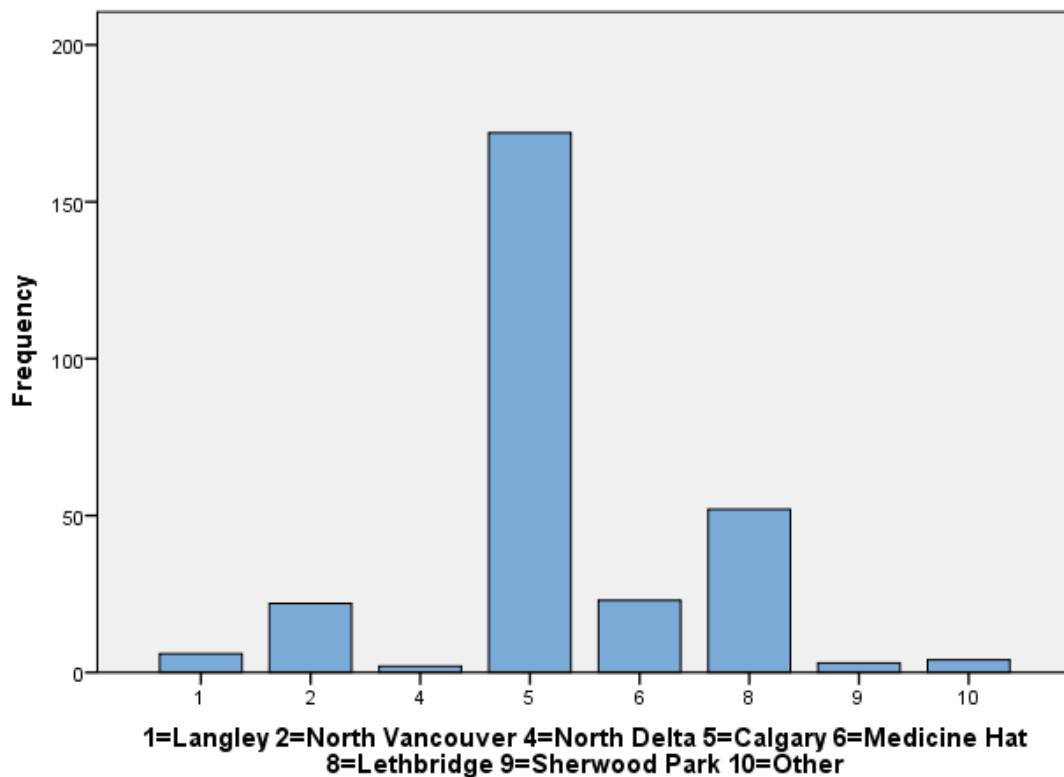
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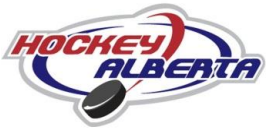
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Level of Play



Hockey Association





Ego-orientation: individual concerned with outperforming others or demonstrating superior ability

Task-orientation: individual concerned with mastering a task as opposed to social comparison

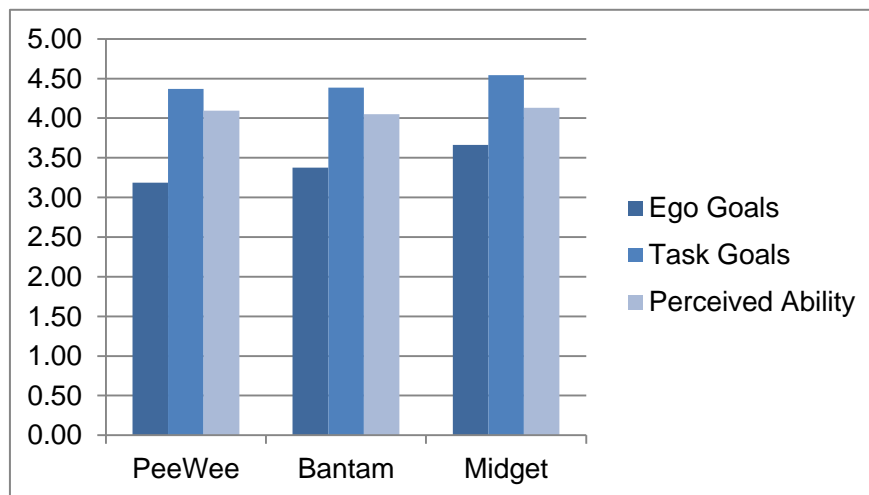
Performance Climate: a sport environment where outperforming others, or winning is primarily valued

Mastery Climate: a sport environment where learning, improvement, and effort are primarily valued

(Nicholls, 1989)

Social influences in sport (i.e., coaches, parents, and peers) foster a mastery or performance climate based on the ways through which these significant others define and promote success. Coaches have been found to impact a player’s motivation through direct instruction and assessment, parents influence motivation through support and facilitation of sport participation, and peers influence one another’s behavior through cooperation, communication, and the relationships that are fostered within the sport context.

Midget players in this sample demonstrated the highest ego-goal orientation levels among all players. They also reported the highest perceived hockey ability and task goal-orientations.



	PeeWee			Bantam			Midget		
	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ego Goals	136	3.185	.8400	92	3.375	.7638	57	3.663	.7116
Task Goals	136	4.370	.5704	92	4.385	.5945	57	4.540	.4170
Perceived Ability	136	4.092	.5470	92	4.050	.5677	57	4.129	.5873

Note: *N*: number of participants; *SD*: standard deviation.



Do Coaches Matter?

Yes!

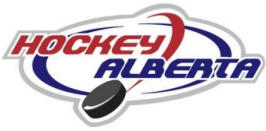
The perception that an athlete has of his or her coach's goal orientation has been found to be a stronger predictor of poor sport behavior than an athlete's own goal orientation (Sage, Kavussanu, & Duda, 2006; Stephens & Bredemeier, 1996; Stephens, Bredemeier, & Shields, 1997). It was concluded that if the slightest amount of ego involvement was perceived by the athletes, any positive effect of a coach emphasis on aspects like hard work and cooperation between teammates would be suppressed, and the athletes were more likely to adopt an ego-involving perspective (Sage, Kavussanu, & Duda, 2006).

Results of Minor Hockey Research in Canada:

Ego goal involvement was a positive predictor of poor sport behavior (PSB) and a negative predictor of good sport behaviors (GSB). This supports the Achievement Goal Theory (AGT) literature which connects a performance outcome or social comparison, based definition of success with maladaptive strategies like "winning at all costs" (Dunn & Dunn, 1999; Kavussanu & Roberts, 2001; Nicholls, 1984).

How Can Coaches Make a Difference?

- Avoid focusing on performance outcomes, especially winning and losing
- Ask players what they learned from a game or a practice (win or lose)
- Coach effort, not results
- Encourage learning – be excited when athletes are in the process of learning new skills, even if they haven't mastered them yet
- Break drills into incremental learning processes
- Be encouraging with truthful, specific, skill feedback
- Help teammates pick each other up
- Value and coach concepts like respect, enjoyment, teamwork
- Track improvement and be excited about small steps forward
- Support hard work
- Remember that sport should be fun!



Do Parents Affect Behavior in Sport?

Parents play a significant role in developing morals and promoting specific behavior in youth sport. Parents have been labeled as the most important sport socialization agent for youth athletes (Brustad, Babkes, & Smith, 2001) and they serve to interpret their child's experiences and achievements while modeling appropriate behavior (White, 1996; White & Duda, 1993).

Due to parents' significant role in a child's development, they can also impact their child's perceived motivational climate. For example, a mom who asks her child immediately upon the completion of a game whether the team won could be perceived as fostering a *performance climate*, while a dad who asks his child if s/he had fun or improved a skill after a game could be viewed as promoting a *mastery climate*.

A significant relationship has been found between an athlete's views regarding appropriate moral behavior and the perception of their parent's approval of cheating and aggression toward opponents (Guiverneau & Duda, 2002). LaVoi and Babkes Stellino (2008) found that youth hockey players who:

- perceive their parents to be moderately involved with their hockey,
- do not induce fear or anxiety with regards to losses, and
- define success in multiple ways

were more likely to report good sport behavior in the form of concern for and graciousness toward their opponents.

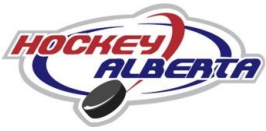
Results of Minor Hockey Research in Canada Related to Parents

Specific to the results of the analyses of PeeWee level relationships, dad-initiated motivational climate emerged as the *only significant predictor* of GSBs, while the overall poor sport regression model was not significant. Dad "*Learning & Enjoyment*" motivational climate was a significant positive predictor of GSB which aligns nicely with a mastery motivational climate within Achievement Goal Theory (Nicholls, 1984).

Specifically, this finding suggests that when fathers were perceived as promoting learning and enjoyment in hockey, over other things like winning and competition, the players reported engaging in Good Sport Behaviors.

What can parents do?

- Avoid focusing on performance outcomes, especially winning and losing
- Encourage learning – be excited when athletes are in the process of learning new skills, even if they haven't mastered them yet
- Track improvement and be excited about small steps forward
- Support hard work
- Remember that sport should be fun!



Can Peers Influence or Predict Good and Poor Sport Behaviors?

Peers, or teammates, are another social influence to consider as a predictor of good or poor sport behaviors. Several studies have supported team morale, or social goal orientation, as perhaps the strongest predictor of aggression and poor sport conduct (Stephens & Kavanaugh, 1997; Stuntz & Weiss, 2003), perhaps more so than individual goal orientation. This is especially important to consider when examining factors that contribute to poor sport behavior in older athletes, as research has found that by early adolescents, the need for social affiliation and peer approval can become a greater influence in an athlete's life as compared to adult influences (Brustad, Babkes, & Smith, 2001). Studies have shown that when an athlete perceives teammates to approve of aggressive behavior, they too were more likely to approve of, and engage in, aggression in sport (Stephens, 2000). A negative relationship was noted between the perception of team norms that approve of the intent to injure an opponent and a perceived team mastery climate. Furthermore, a significant relationship has been found between the perception of intra-team conflict and a reported ego-involving motivational climate (Vazou, Ntoumanis, & Duda, 2005)

Peer Relationships Change as Players Get Older...

As players get older and begin playing more competitive hockey, their relationship with their peers becomes increasingly important. In PeeWee hockey, where coaches are often revered, peer relationships are less significant and usually involve fewer conflicts. As players get into Bantam and Midget levels, peers are relied upon for support, conflicts are more frequent when teammates don't get along with each other, and peers have greater levels of influence on other players. For example, if three players on a Bantam A team are constantly encouraging their teammates, that good sport behavior is likely to spread around the team. Unfortunately, poor sport behaviors often spread in the same ways.

How Can You Help Facilitate Good Sport Behaviors on Your Team?

- Model good sport behaviors – they still look at adults, and coaches and parents matter
- Minimize negative comments and actions...players are always watching
- Be respectful of opponents and referees, even when it is hard...they're still watching
- Be intentional about the positive actions you want to see from your kids
- Be supportive
- Help players appreciate the work that everyone is doing as a part of the team
- Make sure they are having fun!



Good and Poor Sport Behaviors

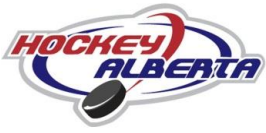
A multitude of studies have revealed that primarily ego-oriented athletes tend to display immature moral reasoning and indicate greater approval of unsporting conduct that includes intentional aggression, injurious acts and cheating. Alternatively, highly task-involved athletes tend to report more positive sportspersonlike attitudes, are more likely to engage in moral behavior within the context of sport, and show greater approval of good sport behavior.

Unless the environment emphasized by significant others, coaches in particular, is high in morality, any positive effect that task orientation has on behavior can be suppressed by even the slightest amount of ego involvement from significant adults. Oftentimes, in the context of competitive sport, an athlete who would not typically engage in acts that would jeopardize or harm another person may suddenly act poorly because of social pressures, or the perception of being under the direction of others (Shields & Bredemeier, 2007). However, an athlete who is highly ego-oriented, while participating in a perceived mastery climate or one that stresses the process of learning or mastering new skills and promotes the athletes who give their best effort, is more likely to transition to a task-involvement, at least within the particular context (Treasure & Roberts, 1995).

According to Minor Hockey Players in Canada

Examples of GPSBs in Youth Hockey

<u>Good Sport Behaviors</u>	<u>Poor Sport Behaviors</u>
-Encouraging other players	-Not listening
-Listening to the coach	-Trash talking
-Picking up the pucks	-Yelling at teammates
-Always giving your best effort	-Laughing at someone when they make a mistake
-Cheering for teammates	-Interrupting a drill
-Having a positive attitude	-Fighting with teammates/opponents
-Helping players up off the ice	-Not trying hard in drills
-Passing the puck to everyone on your team	-Shooting pucks while coach is talking
-Congratulating other team after the game	-Slamming stick on the ice
-Playing fair	-Saying mean things to others
-Saying nice save to opposing goalie	-Taking a cheap shot at an opponent
-Be respectful to players, coaches, & officials	-Selfish penalties
-Skating hard on every shift	-Breaking stick when you lose
-Crash net w/o jabbing the goalie when he has the puck	-Checking an opponent because they are good
-Shaking hands with the referee after the game	-Chirping at the ref while skating or from the bench
-Tap your stick when an injured player gets up	-Not shaking hands after the game



Research Conducted by:

Research Team from the University of Northern Colorado



Melissa J. Davies, PhD Candidate

Sport Administration

Melissa has experience officiating hockey and basketball, playing collegiate golf, and as an assistant coach on a team which competed during an NCAA Division II National Golf Championship. Her research focuses on the marketing and management implications surrounding the social psychology of sport and exercise, as well as consumer behavior and brand management. Melissa originally hails from Rocky Mountain House, Alberta.



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Social Psychology of Sport & Physical Activity

Brett has coached basketball at the youth, high school, collegiate, and international levels over the past decade, and was a three-sport collegiate athlete. He teaches coaching/officiating classes at UNC while doing research in multiple different countries. Brett's primary areas of interest are successful coaching, motivation, and sport in culture/society. Having grown up just outside of Minneapolis, Minnesota, hockey is one of Brett's favorite sports to follow and watch.



Lyndsie Coleman, PhD Student

Social Psychology of Sport & Physical Activity

Prior to coming to UNC, she spent her college career playing NCAA Division I women's soccer at Arkansas State University. Lyndsie spent a year coaching soccer in college as well. Lyndsie holds various soccer coaching certifications, and has been a youth soccer coach for the last 8 years. Her current research focus is on positive youth development and executive functioning within a youth sport context as well as social influence on behaviors in sport and exercise settings.



Dr. Megan Babkes Stellino, Professor, Research Advisor

Social Psychology of Sport & Physical Activity

She teaches undergraduate and graduate level courses on the psychology and sociology of sport, developmental kinesiology, motivation, and motor behavior. Dr. Stellino's research focuses on the influence that significant others (parents, siblings, peers, coaches) have on the developmental psychosocial components of youth sport involvement and physical activity. Dr. Stellino is a former Division I collegiate gymnast, and has coached individuals of various sports and ability levels. She has two young sons who are developing hockey players in Colorado.