

**CULTURES OF SPORT HAZING
AND ANTI-HAZING INITIATIVES
FOR THE 21ST CENTURY**

RESEARCH IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT

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RESEARCH IN THE SOCIOLOGY OF SPORT VOLUME 23

**CULTURES OF SPORT
HAZING AND ANTI-HAZING
INITIATIVES FOR THE 21ST
CENTURY: STEPPING
ACROSS THE MILLENNIUM**

EDITED BY

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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Dr jay johnson is a Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management at the University of Manitoba. His current multiple mixed qualitative methodological interdisciplinary research explores the impact(s) of climatic change on our physical experiences and the interfaces with the environment and climate change. He is investigating how Indigenous and non-Indigenous youth experience the built environment and outdoor adventure/land-based education; community-based research examining the function of the bicycle, culture and community in activ(ism); child labour issues; bullying; sport doping; the use of marijuana and CBD by professional athletes; Mixed Martial Arts, the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) and the pandemic and health; and the cultural intersections of gender, masculinity, race, ethnicity, sexuality and homophobia in team hazing/initiation rituals. He has published extensively on hazing, co-editing *Making the Team: Inside the World of Sport Initiations and Hazing* with Dr Margery Holman. He has published extensively in international journals on issues examining the influence of sex, level of competition, sport type, athletic identity and social norms on hazing and initiations. The work sheds light on who is at risk for engaging in aggressive and violent initiation experiences. His earlier and current research and publications examined the culture of sport hazing and initiations with a continuation of constructing alternatives to the traditionally abusive and harmful practices adopted by teams.

Dr Jessica W. Chin is a Professor in the Department of Kinesiology at San José State University. Her research involves interdisciplinary, critical cultural analyses, focusing on the ways social, cultural, political and historical contexts intersect with the construction of identity through sport and physical activity. In addition to her work on Asian American identity and representation, her current line of research includes investigations of the meanings and experiences of sport hazing and initiation rituals, particularly on girls' and women's teams. Through her work, she identifies and suggests practical steps towards creating changes in sport culture that lead to sustainable, positive experiences for athletes. In collaboration with Dr jay johnson and a team of international scholars, she has researched historical trends of hazing in women's sport, hazing experiences in the Canadian University Sport (USport) System, applicability of outdoor education models for team-building and initiation activities and the role of alcohol in sports team hazing; together, they apply the research findings to develop and implement anti-hazing workshops for university athletes and administrators.

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Elizabeth J. Allan, PhD, is a Professor of Higher Education and Programme Coordinator at the University of Maine. Allan's scholarship on campus cultures and climates includes research about student hazing and its prevention. She has published three books and more than 100 research-based articles, book chapters and reports. Allan was the Principal Investigator for the National Study of Student Hazing (2008) and is currently directing the national Hazing Prevention Consortium – a college and university research-to-practice initiative designed to build an evidence base for hazing prevention. She was the lead researcher for the first data-driven hazing prevention framework (2018) and is affiliated with StopHazing, an organisation dedicated to producing research-informed resources for supporting campus safety and inclusive educational communities.

Brian Crow is in his 23rd year as a Professor in the Department of Sport Management at Slippery Rock University, where he currently serves as the Department Chairperson. He held previous faculty appointments at Hampton University and the University of Southern Mississippi. Crow earned a Doctor of Education degree in Higher Education Administration (1994) and a Master of Business Administration degree (1991) from West Virginia University and a Bachelor of Science degree in marketing from West Liberty University (1988). He has spoken to more than 8,000 student-athletes at 50+ high schools, colleges and universities about the issue of hazing in athletics since 2004. Dr Crow was on the Board of Directors for The Hazing Prevention Network from 2017 to 2022.

Martine Dennie is an Assistant Professor at the University of Manitoba Faculty of Law. Her research dossier includes violence, hazing, abuse and discrimination in sports.

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I am **Bapiwe Gobodo** a dedicated PhD candidate in Sociology at the University of Stellenbosch in South Africa. My research focuses on the intricate and often racialised relationship between masculinity and violence. Exploring how masculine ideals shape and influence patterns of violence in the local context, my work seeks to contribute valuable insights to the broader discourse on gender, violence and societal structures.

Geneva Gudmundson holds a Bachelor's degree in Recreation Management and Community Development from the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management at the University of Manitoba and is currently a Research Assistant in the FKRM and a Research Coordinator in the College of Nursing, both at the University of Manitoba. Her research focus includes health psychology and sociology, health behaviours, physical health, mental health, qualitative methods, mixed methods and arts-based methods. Geneva played a variety of sports, both competitively and recreationally and has had past experience as a rookie (first-year athlete) in multiple sport leagues and settings.

Margery Holman has had a 42 year career at the University of Windsor with a diversity of experiences in sport including teaching, coaching, administration and research. Dr Holman has committed both her academic and community lives to equity, using sport as the primary platform to contribute to positive change. Her teaching career included courses such as Principles of Coaching, Ethics, and graduate and undergraduate Sport and Law. She created and taught a landmark course on Gender in Sport and Physical Activity. She coached university teams for 24 years while also serving as Director of the women's sport programme for 18 years. In 1988, she accepted an appointment to serve as the University of Windsor's first Employment Equity Coordinator, working to develop the first policy to address sexual harassment and abuse on Campus. This led to her research focus on sexual harassment in sport which then evolved into hazing research and the sexual abuses that emerge from these questionable traditions. Her extensive efforts for reform to build equitable and safe sport for all has resulted in multiple university and community awards recognition.

David J. Kerschner, PhD, is the Postdoctoral Fellow for Research and Evaluation for StopHazing. As 2021 doctoral graduate of the University of Maine, Dave has been involved in the work of StopHazing and the Hazing Prevention Consortium since 2013. His dissertation examined factors predictive of varsity athlete hazing experiences across five NCAA Division III institutions and, building off of his prior experience as a Division III athlete and athletic administrator, he aspires to conduct research that will inform practice and change in college athletics. He has published on hazing and hazing prevention in the *Journal of Amateur Sport*, the *Journal of Student Affairs Research and Practice*, and the *Journal of School Counseling*. As 2009 Summa Cum Laude graduate of the University of Maine at Farmington, Dave received his MS in Sport Management from the University of Massachusetts in 2010 and an MBA from the University of Southern Maine in 2012.

David Kirk is a Professor in the Strathclyde Institute of Education at the University of Strathclyde, Scotland. He is an educational researcher with teaching and research interests in educational innovation, curriculum history and physical education and sport pedagogy. Professor Kirk is the editor of the peer-reviewed journal *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy* (Routledge) and editor of *Routledge Studies in Physical Education and Youth Sport*. He has held academic appointments previously in universities in England, Australia, Ireland and

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Hank Nuwer began tracking hazing deaths in a database nearly 50 years ago and continues to this day at his website. He is the author and/or editor of five books and hundreds of articles on hazing and hazing prevention. He is a Professor Emeritus of Journalism from Franklin College and holds an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Buffalo State University for his scholarship on hazing. He resides in Fairbanks, Alaska, and part-time in Warsaw, Poland, where he has published scholarship on hazing in prisons conducted by guards and inmates.

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Fabiana Turelli is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management at the University of Manitoba, Canada. Her undergraduate and master's degrees focused on martial arts and masculinities in Brazil. Her PhD carried out in Europe was a study of the women's Spanish Olympic karate squad. Her postdoctoral study, in Australia, searched for ways to bring theory into practice in a struggle against social issues. Dr Turelli's research line is critical, combining concepts of critical theory, feminism, sociology of sport, Anglophone proposals for critical pedagogies and intersectionality. By being herself a martial arts and combat sports (MACS) practitioner for several years, she advocates for the potential of MACS to holistically empower people.

Alexandre Fernandez Vaz has a Master's degree in Education from the Federal University of Santa Catarina, and a PhD in Human and Social Sciences from Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Universität Hannover, Germany. At UFSC since 1998, he has been a Full Professor and works in the Postgraduate programs in Education and Interdisciplinary in Human Sciences, in addition to coordinating

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Jennifer J. Waldron, PhD, is a Professor in the School of Applied Human Development at Bowling Green State University (BGSU). Her extensive body of work encompasses over 80 peer-reviewed publications, book chapters and presentations at prestigious national and international forums. Dr Waldron's research focuses on critical issues within the realm of sports culture, including hazing as well as gender and sexuality in athletic environments. She strives to shed light on these complex issues, advocating for change within sporting communities so all athletes can flourish. Dr Waldron is the recipient of multiple awards such as the Woman of Distinction award at BGSU, the AAHPERD Mabel Lee Award for Young Professionals and the Regents Award for Faculty Excellence at the University of Northern Iowa.

Christopher Zacharda currently serves as the Senior Associate Dean of Students at Northwestern University. He also is currently a research scholar with the Piazza Center at Penn State University. His career in student affairs spans more than 25 years across various areas: fraternity and sorority life, student conduct, student engagement and leadership, off-campus living, residential life, care and support and wellness. He has also taught at both the undergraduate and graduate level, most frequently in research methods. As an avid swimmer, he began swimming competitively at age five and continues swimming at the US Masters Swimming level. He also enjoys open water swims in Lake Michigan and across the Narragansett Bay and Provincetown Harbor.

FOREWORD

Changes in public attitudes and widespread reforms that accompany paradigm shifts in society astonish members of the public when they occur, but not the scholars, activists and editorialists who saw the necessity of these changes. The latter are seldom surprised that these paradigm shifts finally do occur, although later in hindsight they may express wonder about the breadth, depth and swiftness of successful, earth-shaking movements. Today it may seem inevitable that Mothers Against Drunk Driving, drove to fruition harsher drunk driving penalties and led to the popularity of designated drivers, lower B.A.C. thresholds, zero tolerance for teen drunkenness and a plethora of awareness campaigns such as ‘Buzzed driving is drunk driving’.

A more recent earth-shaking change is the #MeToo Movement’s takedown of privileged persons who formerly got away with sexual assault, harassment and out-and-out rape. Society has experienced the insistence on seatbelt use, an increasing clamour for privacy protections and the emergence of toughened building codes, prosecution of rogue police, truth-in-lending credit card protections, disclosures on food labels, on and on.

The anti-hazing push seen internationally in countries such as Canada, the United States, the Philippines and India are, in my opinion, somewhere in a liminal state between ‘boys will be boys’ coddling of perpetrators and institutional eye shutting towards hazing practices at one extreme, and, on the other extreme, a steamrolling populist movement to #stophazing and to impose relevant criminal penalties when hazing activities include forced drinking, sexual assault, male-on-male rape through penetration and negligent ‘requirements’ such as the ingestion of disgusting and toxic substances, cult-like mind games, sleep deprivation and physical violence.

In sports hazing at one extreme, we see coaches euphemistically term the practice ‘team building’, and we still see professional sports teams parade so-called rookies through public displays of humiliation in the guise of tradition, which by any other definition would be seen variously as workplace harassment, battery, assault and unsportsman-like conduct. Following the Sweet 16 victory of UCLA over Baylor University in 2024, Trojans head women’s basketball coach Lindsay Gottlieb noted gleefully that star JuJu Watkins had to undergo a mild, non-criminal hazing because of her freshman status. Sports Illustrated described the stunt as ‘hilarious’. While Gottlieb is known for her levity and a clean programme, the incident demonstrates that ‘hazing’ is regarded by some coaches and players as ‘a good-natured tradition’, despite numerous examples where that ‘tradition’ somehow goes haywire.

By way of example, time and again, some coaches defend hazing under the belief it is a 'team-building' practice. In 2019, then-Lathrop High School football coach Roy Hessner ignored warnings that several of his players could not swim when he nonetheless ordered them to the deep end of the pool while taking off and putting back on a heavy sweater. As a result of the drill, three unconscious boys were rescued and taken to a Fairbanks, Alaska hospital. Hessner resigned under a clamour of protest by the parents of players.

High-profile hazing examples in professional sports also include many egregious examples. Here are three.

- (1) First-year Manchester United soccer player David Beckham was made to masturbate to a photo of a veteran male player.
- (2) Miami Dolphins veteran Richie Incognito was accused of hazing and bullying teammate Jonathan Martin, although Incognito put the blame back on Martin who he said had mental problems.
- (3) A long list of hockey hazing allegations that include unwanted sexual abuse, nudity and the claim of former Sarnia Sting player Daniel Carillo who asserted that he was paddled daily with a hockey stick and urinated on in the shower.

At the other extreme, sports reporters often file stories as newsworthy when coaches in various sports announce that hazing of first-year players is verboten. Even more newsworthy is when serious hazing allegations are made and coaches like New Mexico State's basketball coach Greg Heiar and Illinois' Northwestern University football coach Pat Fitzgerald get sacked by their institutions.

I believe that the present volume is important not only as an indispensable work of scholarship contributing to the literature in the study of sports sociology, but it also may be of crucial importance for college presidents, athletic directors and coaches needing a roadmap to accelerate efforts to eradicate hazing at their own institutions.

The volume addresses contemporary sport hazing practices through an analysis of what these often destructive rituals mean for those athletes who endure them and for those who perpetuate them, but also delineates, exposes and interprets the conduct of coaches and administrators whose action and negligence allow these barbaric, draconian customs to continue. To that end, the volume offers constructive ways and means to build team spirit and camaraderie without resorting to destructive and offensive rituals.

Of equal importance, the scholars and researchers represented here also unveil practical and theoretical examinations of hazing practices in light of the latest research on ethnicity, gender and race. Editors Jay Johnson and Jessica W. Chin collectively over their long careers have contributed books, studies and presentations on hazing that, while academically flawless and sound, are written in prose accessible to athletics professionals, the media, parents and other interested parties. In particular, I have admired their well-known sociological examination of alcohol in varsity and club sport hazing published in 2020. The lethal combination of hazing and requiring the drinking of copious amounts of alcohol in an

initiation has killed, among others, Western Illinois University lacrosse player Nick Haben, University of Minnesota at Duluth rugby player Ken Christansen and, allegedly more recently, Lyon College baseball player James Gilfedder.

My own involvement includes a database of hazing deaths that I began in 1975 after University of Nevada Wolfpack football player John Davies was savagely beaten, physically worn down and made to drink a deadly mixture of grain alcohol, wine, beer and whiskey that ended in his death. Prior to Davies' death, the hazing by fellow athletes of the Sundowner Club was witnessed openly by many members of the UNR community, including myself.

It is not lost on me that this volume is coming out in 2024, a single year shy of the 50-year anniversary of the violent and totally avoidable death of Nevada's John Davies. I anticipate learning much about what is different and what has stayed the same since I wrote about the behavioural implications of Davies' death in a groundbreaking article at the time for *Human Behavior* magazine. In closing, I believe this volume has important implications overall for the culture of sport in society.

Hank Nuwer
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