

## An initial exploration of the factors influencing aggressive and assertive intentions of women ice hockey players

KIM M. SHAPCOTT<sup>1</sup>, GORDON A. BLOOM<sup>2</sup>, and TODD M. LOUGHEAD<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>University of Western Ontario, Canada

<sup>2</sup>McGill University, <sup>3</sup>University of Windsor, Canada

*The purpose of the present study was to investigate women ice hockey players' aggressive and/or assertive behavioral intentions and factors that may have influenced these intentions using the Theory of Planned Behavior as a guide. This study used stimulated recall interviews as the main method of data acquisition. A systematic observation analysis was also employed to aid the stimulated recall interviews. Participants were university female ice hockey players. The results revealed several reasons for aggressive and assertive behaviors, including the score, the players' attitude, and the influence of coaches, parents, teammates, and referees. As well, aspects of frustration, retaliation, and intimidation were discussed by the participants. These findings augment the literature on physicality in women's ice hockey and demonstrate the usefulness of the Theory of Planned Behavior for understanding and explaining the factors influencing aggressive and assertive behaviors.*

KEY WORDS: Aggression, Hockey, Qualitative research, Theory of Planned Behavior.

Since the mid 1970s, there has been a substantial amount of research and public debate regarding levels of "aggression" in sport, particularly in ice hockey (Widmeyer, Dorsch, Bray, & McGuire, 2002). The majority of this body of research has primarily focused on boy's or men's hockey. However, the sport of ice hockey has seen a sharp rise in the number of female participants. In the last decade, women's participation has risen over 600%, with more than 51,000 women now playing ice hockey in Canada (Canadian Hockey Association, 2002). Given the recent growth in women's ice hockey,

---

This research was supported from a grant received by the Social Sciences & Humanities Research Council of Canada.

For correspondence: Gordon A. Bloom, Ph.D., Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education, McGill University, 475 Pine Avenue West, Montreal, Quebec H2W 1S4 Canada (e-mail: gordon.bloom@mcgill.ca).