

STUDIES IN PHYSICAL CULTURE AND TOURISM
Vol. 17, No. 1, 2010

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**CAUSES OF SPORT CRISES, WAYS OF THEIR ELIMINATION
AND A CRISIS-MANAGEMENT STRATEGIC MODEL**

Key words: crisis management, hardware, software, live ware, mass media, crisis management strategic model.

ABSTRACT

The present study was aimed at determining causes of crises in sport and ways of preventing them in the areas of hardware (facilities), software (management), liveware (psychological and social factors) and mass media from the viewpoints of spectators, athletes, coaches, referees and sport journalists. The study introduces a crisis-management strategic model. 819 subjects completed a questionnaire with two dimensional designs: causes of crisis and crisis-preventive measures. The collected data was analyzed with the use of descriptive statistics, ANOVA and Scheffe's method. In the subjects' opinions the following factors were given as major crisis causes: The first and the most important was software (management), the second factor consisted of hardware and liveware together, and the third factor was the mass media. In order to manage and prevent the crisis causes effectively, a strategic approach should be adopted and the management process should cover the pre-competition, competition and post-competition sport periods.

INTRODUCTION

Social composition of the crowd

The incorporation of the working class into mainstream society is presented by figurational sociologists as a significant reason why soccer spectators behaved in a more civilized way between the two world wars [2, 5, 10]. An idea is posited that the working class between the wars wished to relate to higher social classes of society, so that they could collectively interact at large social gatherings without disorder being created. Maguire points out that the FA actually believed that soccer was especially capable of achieving civilized and orderly behavior among the working classes, particularly in difficult social climates. During the General Strike of 1926 for instance, the "FA committee argued that the playing of soccer would

prove helpful in the present unsettled condition of industrial affairs of the country" [5].

Every year at stadiums, arenas, and other sports areas worldwide, crowd rushes, crushes fires, bombs, heat exhaustion, stage collapses, overcrowding, and rioting result in thousands of deaths. Why do crowds need to be managed? Firstly, large gatherings of people raise the odds of dangerous happenings. Secondly, individuals in a crowd always take for granted that others take the responsibility. Thirdly, big crowds or gatherings of people make changes in action slower and in a more complicated manner. Fourthly, big crowds or gatherings of people make communications slower and in a more complicated manner. And most importantly, big crowds of people raise the possible number of victims [7].

Some major crisis features include ambiguity about the situation, threat to the survival of a sport organization, decreasing opportunities, risk to established goals, stress due to unexpected situations, damage, media attacks, rumors, life threats and financial losses [1, 13]. A sport crisis is understood as the arousal of an unexpected hazardous situation in a sport complex caused by such factors as spectators' rush onto the pitch, throwing explosives, and embroilments of players or fans.

Regarding the great benefits of sports, especially in the social, economic, and cultural areas, sport crises can be a serious threat to them. The sport management must therefore have a comprehensive plan to deal with crises.

The study attempted to find answers to the following questions: Which factors cause sport crises? and What are the ways to prevent sport crises according to various groups of people involved in sport?

Review of literature

Frosdic divided sport crisis factors into three categories: inappropriate structure of sport complexes, overlooking the values, and trends of spectators [3]. Taylor, Tennenbaum, Matthew, Stacey Hall and Spiro in their studies of sport incidents enumerate the following factors: lack of sufficient planning for spectators' comfort; insufficient knowledge about crisis management; lack of special training for the police forces; socio-economic problems of spectators; simple facility management issues including locked doors, improper reentering of a facility; and most likely poor designing, construction and signage. Other factors include rowdy crowds and rioting [15, 16, 8, 14, 11].

In the aftermath of 9/11 most sports leagues, teams and venues carried out threat assessments and updated their security practices [4]. The National Football League developed a "best practices guide" of security and recommended to the Federal Aviation Administration to restrict airspace above all NFL stadiums [6].

The following are the worst sport facility-related deaths in the last 50 years resulting from crowd mismanagement [12].

1. 340 soccer fans died at the Lenin Stadium in Moscow, U.S.S.R on October 20, 1982, when exiting soccer fans collided with returning soccer fans after a late goal was scored. The

fans were crowded into one particular section of the stadium by the police.

2. 300 soccer fans were killed and 500 injured during the riot that followed an unpopular ruling by a referee in a Peru vs. Argentina soccer match in Lima, Peru on May 24, 1964.
3. Several bleachers at a bullring collapsed and left 222 spectators dead in Sincelejo, Columbia on January 20, 1980.
4. 20 soccer fans were killed during a stampede at a soccer game which became Africa's worst sports-related disaster in Accra, Ghana on May 9, 2001.
5. 96 fans were killed at the Hillsborough stadium during a soccer match between Liverpool and Nottingham Forest in Sheffield, England on April 15, 1989. Most of the victims were Liverpool fans who were crushed when a barrier wall collapsed on an overcrowded area behind one of the goals. It is marked as Britain's worst soccer disaster.
6. 84 fans were killed and 147 injured when soccer fans stampeded before a 1998 World Cup qualifying match between Guatemala and Costa Rica which was held at the Mateo Flores National Stadium in Guatemala City, Guatemala on October 16, 1996.
7. A racing car in the Grand Prix careered into a grandstand and killed 82 spectators in Le Mans, France on June 11, 1955.
8. 80 soccer fans seeking cover during a hail storm at Nepal's national stadium were crushed to death in a stampede because the stadium doors had been locked in Katmandu, Nepal on March 12, 1988.
9. 66 fans were killed in a crush at the Glasgow Rangers home stadium in Glasgow, Scotland on January 2, 1971, after soccer fans tried to leave and chaotically encountered fans attempting to reenter the stadium after hearing that a late goal had been scored.
10. 56 fans burned to death and over 200 fans were injured after a fire broke out in the main grandstand at Bradford's soccer stadium in Bradford, England on May 11, 1985.
11. British Liverpool club fans attacked their rivals, Italian followers of the Juventus team, at Heysel Stadium just before the European Champions Cup final on May 29, 1985 in Brussels, Belgium. A concrete wall had collapsed and 39 fans were crushed to death and over 400 people were injured.

METHODS

The tool for gathering data was two-dimensional consisting of crises-raising factors and preventive strategies. A five-point Likert scale was used for evaluating the answers. ANOVA and descriptive statistical techniques were used in statistical analysis. Samples were randomly chosen from the population universe as follows: 300 out of 40,000 spectators; 250 out of 1,000 athletes; 70 out of 80 coaches; 44 out of 50 referees; and 155 out of 250 sport journalists (Table 1). Questionnaires were given to subjects three hours before the commencement of training or competition. Descriptive statistics, ANOVA and Schaffe's tests were used for analyzing the collected data.

Table 1. Population universe and characteristics of samples and subjects

Subjects	Population universe	Samples	Mean age
spectators	40,000	300	21-25
athletes	1,000	250	23
coaches	80	70	47
referees	50	44	37
sport journalists	250	155	30-35

RESULTS

The obtained research results can be classified into four distinctive groups:

Managerial (software) factors threatening stadium safety

1. Absence of monitoring and control measures for dangerous tools which spectators may bring into the sport complex;
2. Lack of design and maps of enter/exit routes in highly-crowded games;
3. Lack of necessary provisions to transfer athletes and administrative staff into a safe place;
4. Lack of control and supervision of water supply, waste water, power and other like systems;
5. Lack of proper crisis training for administrative staff;
6. Lack of coordination with the traffic police regarding control of the spectators' route traffic flow;

7. Lack of proper facilities (dining places, sanitary facilities, etc).

Structural (hardware) factors threatening stadium safety

1. Careless construction of standard enter/exit routes;
2. Lack of emergency exit routes for athletes, coaches and referees;
3. Lack of designing and installation of fire fighting systems;
4. Lack of consultation with sport specialists about the location of sport constructions;
5. Insecurity of hall roofs and walls;
6. Poor air conditioning, heating and cooling systems;
7. Lack of hygienic services.

Social and psychological (liveware) factors threatening stadium safety

1. Perception of injustice due to the referee's judgment;
2. Coaches' aggression and lack of control on their behaviors;
3. Lack of disciplinary punishments;
4. Spectators' unemployment and economic problems;
5. Spectators and athletes' low educational status;
6. Athletes' irritation and excitation;
7. Commercialization of sport events.

Media factors threatening stadium safety

1. False propaganda and intensification of sport fever in society;
2. The influence of some TV sport shows and intensification of marginal matters about sports events;
3. Aggrandizement of some mentally immature young athletes;
4. Players' interviews without coordination with their club authorities and/or their control.

DISCUSSION

The adopted research hypothesis was that there was not any significant differences between subjects' viewpoints on crisis causes. The study findings show there *are* significant differences between respondents' views.

The results showed that an important element in subjects' viewpoints was that they considered lack of management skills and proper planning to be highly significant both before and during athletic events. They also mentioned management training as a useful tool for preventing crisis in sport areas. Other important factors included inappropriateness in sport complexes; inattention to the spectators' feelings, values and needs; and stressful and agitated atmosphere created by the media.

Furthermore, it was found out that the factors influencing sport crises include the supposed injustice resulting from referees' judgment; coaches' aggressiveness and their inability to control their behaviors; economic problems of some spectators, most importantly their unemployment; personal frustrations of some subjects and their manifestation in the form of aggressiveness; observing violent behaviors in society and/or in the media by the spectators; the way the police act toward the spectators; commercialization of sports; and the degree of considering logical demands on comfort facilities of the spectators.

Crisis management should provide answers to the following questions concerning crisis identification and control [9].

What is a sport crisis (crisis nature recognition)?

What situation makes it happen (crisis ground recognition)?

Who causes a crisis to happen (human-based causes)?

Where and in which situation can a crisis occur (identification of time and place of crisis events)?

Which methods are helpful in crisis control and management?

Studies regarding subversive effects of sport crises, should consider their causes and preventive methods from a strategic standpoint. One of such crisis-management strategic models is presented in Figure 1. It is divided into the preventive and reactive management branches – the former having the educational and cognitive aspect and the latter dealing with the time of the crisis occurrence and its immediate aftermath. This comprehensive model can be of great help in sport crisis management.

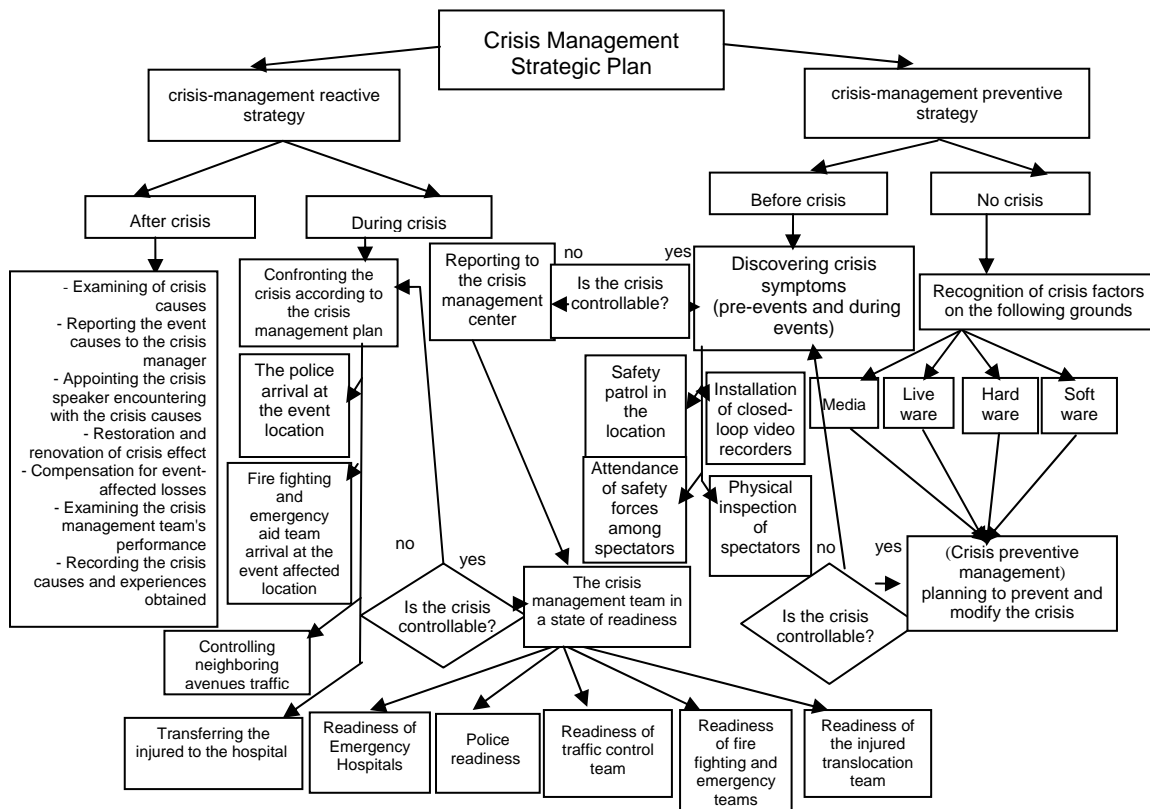


Figure 1. Crisis-management strategic model

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