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## A Program Evaluation of Gameday the DIII Way

Erin Beth Wojtkun

*William & Mary - School of Education*, ebwojo@gmail.com

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A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF GAMEDAY THE DIII WAY

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A Dissertation

Presented to the

The Faculty of the School of Education

The College of William and Mary in Virginia

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In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Education

By

Erin B. Wojtkun

March 2019

A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF GAMEDAY THE DIII WAY

By

**Erin B. Wojtkun**

March 22, 2019

**Leslie Grant, Ph.D.**

Committee Member

**Stephanie Blackmon, Ph.D.**

Committee Member

**Gene Roche, Ed.D.**

Chairperson of Doctoral Committee

## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this dissertation to my parents for their unwavering support throughout my academic career. Without their constant support, I would not be what I am today. Mom and Dad! Thank you for everything!

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## Abstract

Through discussion with the membership, Division III of the National Collegiate Athletic Association identified an issue at gameday environments. The fans, especially parents, were causing fan issues at athletic events. This program evaluation focuses on *Gameday the DIII Way* training program. *Gameday the DIII Way* is a program where the NCAA and the Disney Institute partnered to create a training for the DIII membership that focuses on dealing with poor fan behavior. This program evaluation is grounded in a pragmatic paradigm. For this program evaluation, an online survey was sent to a sample population of the participants. The research focused on how administrators, administrators/coaches, coaches, and others in the athletic department perceive the quality of the training, whether participants learned skills to handle fan behavior issues, and explored whether the training encourages participants to help create a policy at their home institution. The results indicated that the quality of the training is good, some skills were learned and there are policies in place at institutions consequently.

Recommendations include that the NCAA needs to do more in-depth research on the role of coaches and others at a gameday event and on how policies are working at institutions. Additionally, the training should better distinguish the roles of coaches and others during an issue with fans. Training needs to provide more information about conflict resolution and handling crowd behavior. Finally, the NCAA needs to change how they distribute the survey, to enhance the validity of research.

A PROGRAM EVALUATION OF GAMEDAY THE DIII WAY

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **Background**

The roar of the crowd gives the 11 soccer players on the field that last little bit of energy to get the win. Anyone who has been to a sporting event knows that fans can have a positive influence on the players participating in an athletic contest, but what does an institution do when there is a fan behaving poorly? Sports are a source of entertainment for college students and with that comes a wide range of fan behavior.

Millions of fans attend National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) athletic events each year. Fan behavior can range from going to an athletic event and cheering from a seat to wearing wigs in school colors and screaming for their team on the sideline or engaging in obnoxious behavior that disrupts the athletic event (Altungul & Fatih Karahuseyinoglu, 2017). Most of the time fans show sportsmanship by respecting the other team and its fans, but sometimes the sideline of a game can be dominated by fans behaving poorly (Rudd, 2017).

Dysfunctional fans and fanaticism are two ways fans can be identified. Wakefield and Wann (2006) in focusing on poor fan behavior identified those with extremely poor fan behavior as dysfunctional fans. Dysfunctional fans have impaired functioning in the social group of sports fans. Dysfunctional fans tend to be more aggressive and highly confrontational in sports environments and act out by being loud and obnoxious

(Wakefield & Wann, 2006). For the purposes of this paper obnoxious means the individual is doing something extremely unpleasant and is noticed by those around them (Obnoxious n.d.) Additionally, dysfunctional fans complain about a lot of decisions from referees, umpires, or team officials (Wakefield & Wann, 2006).

Dwyer, Lecrom, and Greenhalgh (2018) also studied extreme fans who have an intense attachment to a certain sport or team. Dwyer et al. identified these fans as having fanaticism. Fanaticism has four characteristics: internal involvement, the desire for external involvement, a wish to acquire, and the desire for social interaction. The internal involvement characteristic focuses on how an individual becomes a part of the fan group. A desire for external involvement includes how fans join and participate in fan-related activities. A wish to acquire is a characteristic that focuses on fans personal collection of sports memorabilia. Finally, a desire for social interactions is the characteristic that focuses on how much time a fanatic talks about the sport or team in public.

Fanaticism is not just an extreme loyalty to a sport or team; it is a self-fulfilling prophecy (Dwyer et al., 2018). Fanaticism behavior is not only noticed by other fans, referees, umpires, and team officials; the players also notice it. Players do have to deal with fan aggression during college athletic events. Rudd (2017) suggested six themes of fan harassment that are directed at players. These themes include physical characteristics, playing ability, parents yelling, prove fans wrong by playing harder, use of players name or number, and other forms of harassment. A small number of players feel that the fan and spectator actions were hurtful. Some felt that their athletic performances were affected by fan aggression. Rudd suggested extreme fans must be



stopped before poor fan behavior becomes a part of the winning culture at colleges and universities.

The NCAA is the major sports governing body of college sports. The NCAA's core values include integrity and sportsmanship. The NCAA (n.d.-f) states, "values such as respect, caring, fairness, civility, honesty, integrity and responsibility are key to creating a positive competitive environment for student-athletes across the country" (para. 2). The NCAA created numerous campaigns about sportsmanship, but very few on controlling fan behavior. However, there has been a more recent effort by the NCAA to change this negative influence on college sporting events with the creation of *Gameday the DIII Way* service training (Rudd, 2017).

The NCAA created a Committee on Sportsmanship and Ethics in 1997. The purpose of the committee was to develop and implement strategies to improve sportsmanship and ethical conduct and create athletic environments that include respect, fairness, civility, honesty, and responsibility. Since 1997, the committee has focused on two areas: increasing awareness of good sportsmanship through the NCAA Sportsmanship Awards and the creation of best practices and toolkits to help institutions raise awareness of sportsmanship. These two areas of emphasis mainly focus on players' and coaches' actions on and off the playing field (NCAA, n.d.-b). The new sportsmanship initiative, *Gameday the DIII Way*, is the first program of its kind in Division III (DIII) that focuses on sportsmanship of fans at DIII athletic events. DIII is the largest division in the NCAA, including more than 400 schools, and is differentiated from other divisions in that no financial aid is awarded.

## **Problem Statement**

Every institution has its own unique culture. The athletic culture and tradition play a role in the development of an institution's culture. This role is important because it involves students getting involved with their institution's athletic teams. This research is important because the athletic environment should be a positive environment that students enjoy and the event itself reflects well on the institution.

The current culture of the DIII gameday environments is broken. Although there is no literature support, one issue the NCAA found out from membership is that poor parental behavior from youth sports that moves into the DIII athletic environment. Some parents bring a sense of entitlement that because they pay for participation, through tuitions, they can treat coaches, players, officials, and others however they want. The *Gameday the DIII Way* training hopes to create a culture with more respect for players, coaches, officials, and others (J. Jones, personal communication, December 18, 2018).

The focus of this dissertation is to provide a formative evaluation of a program launched by the NCAA to assist administrators, coaches, administrators/coaches, and others combat inappropriate fan behavior. *Gameday the DIII Way* training has been delivered to over 3,000 administrators, coaches, administrators/coaches and others. The training was created after administrators at an NCAA convention through a survey and discussions in groups found out fan behavior was an issue.

At the 2015 NCAA yearly convention, the 11-member sportsmanship and gameday environment working group were introduced to the membership and preliminary survey questions were asked to understand better what the membership felt needed attention in the sportsmanship and game day environment (J. Jones, personal

communication, November 16, 2018). One result of a straw poll revealed that approximately 80 percent of the DIII membership said that parents were the major reasons for poor behavior at athletic competitions (Burnsed, 2017). At the 2016 NCAA yearly convention, a short feedback session was held, and the chair of the working group announced that the group had determined the focus of the work of the group would be on fan behavior. A series of questions were asked by the DIII a working group to understand better what the membership needs to support addressing the fan behavior issue (J. Jones, personal communication, November 16, 2018).

DIII partnered with the Disney Institute to create *Gameday the DIII Way* training to help administrators, coaches, and others combat all poor fan behavior at all sporting events. The training aims to create similar game environments around DIII (Burnsed, 2017).

The NCAA program focused on Division III schools and events. DIII schools have the highest number of student-athletes, but with smaller venues than those seen at DI schools. With small venues, players, coaches, and fans create the personal atmosphere at athletic events. In smaller venues, the moment a fan begins shouting negative comments a fan problem can quickly grow (Ford, 2018).

### **Program Description**

The focus of this section is to explain the context, program of the NCAA *Gameday the DIII Way* training, and stakeholders. The context portion will give details on the structure of the NCAA. The program encompasses seven modules that the facilitator presents. Finally, there is a description of the major stakeholders in this evaluation process.

**Context.** Headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, the NCAA is an organization that is committed to the well-being and success of college student-athletes. Currently, 1,117 colleges and universities participate in three divisions of the NCAA (NCAA, n.d.-h). NCAA Division III is the largest NCAA division with 451 institutions and more than 180,000 student-athletes participating in NCAA athletics. With no athletic scholarships, the main focus of NCAA DIII institutions is academics. Institutions are responsible for limiting the number of academic and athletic conflicts to ensure success in the classroom (Ford, 2018; NCAA, n.d.-e).

**Description of the program.** The training has taken place at 40 institutions and conferences around the country. Any institution or conference can request training to take place. The size of the group of the participants ranges from the size of an athletic department to the size of a conference meeting. For the nine trainings in this sample the size of the trainings ranged from 18 to 230.

Seven modules are used by the facilitator to walk participants through the *Gameday the DIII Way* training (NCAA DIII, n.d.). The entire training lasted approximately 90 minutes. The modules are briefly described below.

**Module one.** Module one focuses on preparing for the training session. The module offers a checklist from the training manual help the facilitator remember what materials are needed and how to set up the room (NCAA Division III, n.d.).

**Module two.** This module is about the opening of the training session. The module gives the participant's safety instructions in case of an emergency and other ground rules. Then, the facilitator has the participants participate in an ice-breaker activity. The ice-breaker activity shows participants through personal experience that

memories are full of emotions which plays into how an individual remembers an experience (NCAA DIII, n.d.).

After the opening ice-breaker, the facilitator begins the with training content. First, the facilitator emphasizes that it is a norm for coaches and other administrators to wait to handle fan situations until the senior administrator comes to clear up a situation at a gameday event. However, the facilitator wants the trainees to know that with the training each of them can perform the tasks when dealing with the poor behavior of fans (NCAA DIII, n.d.).

**Module three.** Module three focuses on explaining the major tenants of the *Gameday the DIII Way* Service Framework. First, the facilitator emphasizes the need for the participants to understand facility requirements and department rules for their respective institutions. Then the facilitator explains the Common Purpose of the *Gameday the DIII Way*. The defined Common Purpose is “We create a respectful and engaging educational environment through athletics, for everyone” (NCAA DIII, n.d., p. 9). The Service Standards that are in module four help maintain focus on the Common Purpose (NCAA DIII, n.d.).

**Module four.** This module focuses on the Service Standards. The standards allow for consistency from sport to sport and school to school (NCAA DIII, n.d.). Safety, responsiveness, dignity, and experience are the service standards of *Gameday the DIII Way*. Safety is the top priority. Safety focuses on keeping the game environment safe for all in attendance. The facilitator stresses the importance of all participants understanding the safety procedures at each venue. Responsiveness is the service standard that emphasizes having a plan for staff working the event if an incident were to

occur. Understanding the plan helps staff to address issues promptly. The dignity service standard includes all gameday staff being respectful to all individuals (NCAA DIII, n.d.).

Additionally, the dignity service standard has administrators and coaches focus on using proper listening skills when handling issues. The final service standard is experience (NCAA DIII, n.d.). The experience service standard means providing a welcoming and presentable environment for everyone who comes to the sporting event (Burnsed, 2017). These standards are created to help have similar environments at all institutions.

**Module five.** Behavior guidelines introduced in module five to allow participants to make connections with the service standards discussed earlier. The combination of the service standard and the behavior guidelines help all institutions in DIII to have similar environments. Some behaviors include ensuring a safe environment by acting when there is a fan disturbance and being respectful to teams and fans is always expected from coaches, administrators, and others. The final emphasis of the module is that an administrator or coach must always remember to act as a representative for their institution and DIII (NCAA DIII, n.d.).

**Module six.** After hearing about how *Gameday the DIII Way* works, module six runs participants through scenarios that may happen on campus. They are asked to reflect on what behaviors and skills they used during acting out during the scenarios (NCAA DIII, n.d.).

**Module seven.** Module seven focuses on the closing of the training. There are three major things the facilitator reminds the participants. First, the facilitator reminds

everyone participating that they must constantly reach for higher standards in attaining a positive gameday environment. Then the participants are reminded to continually strive for a safe and welcoming gameday environment for all. Finally, the facilitator stresses the importance of the Common Purpose that everyone in DIII is reaching for which is a good experience during a DIII athletic event (NCAA DIII, n.d.).

### **Program Development**

The working group described earlier was made up of DIII athletic administrators from across the country who took on the task of providing the membership with a well-organized training module for institutions, including tools to help deal with poor fan behavior. These administrators represented a large diverse range of schools, and they brought extensive experience and multiple perspectives to the development process. The working group suggested a partnership with another organization with equivalent expertise and experience developing training materials for organizations like the NCAA DIII sportsmanship initiative (Ford, 2018). After the research, the working group engaged the Disney Institute because of its superior customer service (Ford, 2018; J. Jones, personal communication, June 18, 2018). The group worked with the Disney Institute on content and made changes where they deemed necessary to help produce a sound training.

The proposal from the Disney institute was based on their previous work with the National Basketball Association (NBA), but they assured the NCAA that they understood the small-campus environments and limited resources of institutions during DIII gamedays. The Disney Institute proposal included visits to two DIII gamedays on

two campuses and a visit to Indianapolis, Indiana to develop the specific service standards for DIII (NCAA, 2016a).

Members of the working group participated in the planning and decision-making of the throughout the proposal development process. They committed to closely work on module five, which focuses on the institutional action plan, and decided to not partner with Division I or Division II on this sportsmanship project to ensure a focus on the DIII needs. Finally, the working group decided that the institutions in DIII already understand the importance of fan behavior at athletic events so no background information on fan behavior needed to be added to the modules (NCAA, 2016a).

In December 2016, it was announced that officially Disney and the NCAA had signed a contract to proceed with the *Gameday the DIII Way* training. Going forward, the Disney Institute and the NCAA began weekly and bi-weekly calls during the development of the program. The planning group of ten NCAA staff and working group members attended the Disney Institute to learn about their customer service content (NCAA, 2016b).

In March 2017 the working group members created service statements for the established quality standards. Additionally, the groups drafted measurable and coachable behaviors for the statements they provided, and drafts were given to the Associate Director for DIII, my main contact, to review. To expand the range of input available in designing the program, a June Ambassador Engagement Session was created to provide a train-the-trainer style meeting to explain the DIII service standards that were developed during an April meeting in Indianapolis (NCAA, 2017a). Each conference commissioner



nominated one male and one female to attend the session with the working group and NCAA staff.

In July 2017 the working group reviewed the pilot training in May. Details about what worked, and the concerns were discussed among the working group. Additionally, changes were made to the facilitator handbook based on results of the pilot training in June 2017. Finally, the working group discussed the online toolkit that would be provided after the training and decided on three “pillars” for from a blend of survey items that were developed prior to the involvement of the Disney Institute and the Gameday training. The three pillars were coaching/service recovery/conflict resolution, training, and communication (NCAA, 2017b).

There was continuation of discussion about the online training toolkit in the August 2017 video conference. The working group discussed and agreed to continue to discuss the online toolkit. Also, the NCAA staff asked the working group members to continue to come up with gameday scenarios, so they can be incorporated into the *Gameday the DIII Way* training (NCAA, 2017c).

In the November 2017 videoconference, the working group discussed the *Gameday the DIII Way* training that was taking place at the 2018 Convention. The group noted that the training had not been properly added to the registration, so they asked the working group to solicit for more participants. By this point 1,058 participants had been trained through the *Gameday the DIII Way* training (NCAA, 2017d).

The sample for data collection came from nine training sessions out of the 40 held since the beginning of the trainings in November 2017. Schools and conferences ask for the training to be provided. From the nine, six were individual school training and three

were at athletic conference events. The nine trainings had nine different facilitators for the training. The nine trainings make up the response sample.

**The Disney Institute.** The purpose of the Disney Institute is to present new approaches and trainings to organizations who desire change. The Disney Institute has a practical approach that focuses on presenting what success looks like to organizations. They pride themselves on having an open dialogue with organizations at multiple levels and value the power of storytelling that helps align organizations.

The connection between Disney and the NCAA took place at many levels. Disney Institute executives communicated with NCAA executives to ensure that each group understand the other's strategies. At the mid-level leader level, the Disney Institute worked with the NCAA to understand the service standards and helped them engage with front-line workers. With the front-line workers the Disney Institute helped them learn the necessary skills to carry out the NCAA vision (J. Jones, personal communication, June 18, 2018).

The Disney Institute has an insight-based approach to working with client organization. The insight-based approach helps organizations see themes and pinpoints group frustrations. The approach also helps the organization tackle problems through "Disney Best Practices" which are field experiences, video case studies, experiential activities, and interactive storytelling. The organization selects what works best for them (J. Jones, personal communication, June 18, 2018).

The Disney Institute works through a four-phase engagement model. First, they understand the needs of their customer. The Disney Institute prides itself on going beyond the ordinary assessment to understand the organization. The Disney Institute

believes it creates the Disney difference in their work. Practically, they change perspectives by shifting perspectives through providing real-world examples and emphasize what success looks like. The Disney Institute prides itself in being actionable. They are actionable by developing strong action plans for groups and do this through open dialogue and coaching. The Disney Institute considers themselves inspirational through using storytelling to inspire action. Additionally, the Disney Institute consider themselves as authentic because they believe they are true insiders because of their experiences in various aspects of business. Second, the Disney Institute adapts and applies the Disney service standards. Here, the organization, like the NCAA, decides what practices best fit with their organization. Third, the Disney Institute reorients and upskills the organization and energizes the group, especially the front-line, about the goals and initiatives of the program. Finally, the Disney Institute provides ongoing support and coaching to the organization to sustain success (J. Jones, personal communication, June 18, 2018).

For the NCAA, the Disney Institute focused on “creating and sustaining a championship culture” (J. Jones, personal communication, June 18, 2018). The *Gameday the DIII Way* training is based in the Disney Institutes Service Framework. The Disney Institute focuses on customer service because they are constantly trying to exceed the expectations of their customers. The *Gameday the DIII Way* has a common purpose that focuses on customers and in this study, that is the fans. From the Disney Institutes perspective, bettering a fan experience is all about making multiple small changes in a variety of areas to make the whole experience better (J. Jones, personal communication, June 18, 2018).

Athletic administrators from a variety of institutions were trained by the Disney Institute to become the first facilitators. There were 50 self-nominated individuals that became the first facilitators. They were trained in Orlando, Florida (J. Jones, personal communication, March 4, 2019). The training included information on the Gameday the DIII service training program and how to be a good implementer during training (J. Jones, personal communication, June 18, 2018). These facilitators were responsible for training athletic staffs at DIII institutions around the county.

**Stakeholders.** Two major stakeholders are interested in knowing if the training was preparing administrators, coaches, administrators/coaches and others deal with poor fan behavior. The major stakeholders are the DIII leadership and athletic leaders on the individual campuses. The leadership is interested in learning if the members who receive the training feel that the program prepares them to help at athletic events with fans who exhibit poor behavior. In the longer term, leaders are interested in determining the extent to which the *Gameday* training contributes to the goal of changing the culture of DIII athletic events and how it might be customized for local needs.

The fans will never see the data from this program evaluation, but the fans will see the effects of training at athletic events. As a relevant group in this evaluation, the fans will be on affected by the training program. If the training works right, there will be fewer fan experiences that are ruined by one or two fans who exhibit poor fan behavior. Managing the poor fan behavior will generate better gameday environments for all in attendance.

## **Overview of the Evaluation Approach**

This program evaluation is rooted in the pragmatic paradigm approach. The following are the reasons why I picked this paradigm over the postpositivist, constructivist, and transformative paradigms. The root of the pragmatic paradigm is that the truth comes from using common sense and practical thinking. The epistemological assumption is that the evaluator may have relationships with stakeholders when it is appropriate for completing the evaluation. Finally, the methodological assumption in the pragmatic paradigm is “mixed methods can be used as evaluators work back and forth between various approaches” (Mertens & Wilson, 2012, p. 91). When using the pragmatic paradigm evaluators are considered “use branch” evaluators. This means that the evaluator is particularly focused on forging a relationship with the stakeholders. The relationship allows for the evaluator to create quick change and enhance the use of the findings (Mertens & Wilson, 2012, p. 226). I felt this was an appropriate paradigm that fit with the goals of the evaluation.

A program evaluation through the lens of the pragmatic paradigm has several key points. The program evaluation is shaped by the clients. So, an evaluator must be willing to compromise, so the client is satisfied. Additionally, there must be a developed relationship between the client and the evaluator. This relationship requires open communication about the wants and needs of the client (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

The major compromise I have made with the client was in my previous work creating the survey tool. The survey tool was structured with the NCAA’s suggestion that the survey only take five to ten minutes. Additionally, certain wording and scales were used at the request of the client.

For this program evaluation, I developed a relationship with the Associate Director for DIII. We communicated through email and phone conversations. Our main contact was through emails. Usually, these emails contained questions about the *Gameday the DIII Way* because the Associate Director of DIII was actively involved in the work with Disney and oversees the direction of the program. We had over 20 email exchanges and three phone calls during the creation of the logic model and the survey to make sure both aligned with the purpose of *Gameday the DIII Way*. The logic model was created well after the program was created. It was created to illustrate what was being tested. Once the logic model and survey were complete, generally communication was questions about the program itself or questions about the vision the NCAA has for the continuation of the *Gameday the DIII Way* after this evaluation. This communication is critical in the pragmatic paradigm because of the need to have strong communication between the evaluator and those who are working on the current program (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

This open communication included how the NCAA intended to use the results from the survey. Besides knowing if the short-term goals from the logic model are reached, the results will be used to help reach 2018-2019 goals. First, the NCAA is using the results to figure out with the initial training that has been completed is successful and if it will be continued to be presented in the same fashion. The results are helping the NCAA decide if they are training facilitators properly and the data will help the NCAA know if content areas need improvement in the training. Finally, the data will help the NCAA finalize the online content needed for the online training program (J. Jones, personal communication, October 12, 2018).

**Program evaluation model.** In this evaluation, there was a focus on the context, input, process, product (CIPP) model for the development of the program evaluation (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The CIPP evaluation is in the improvement- and accountability- oriented evaluation groups of the five categories of evaluations. Merit and worth are focuses of this type of evaluation. The CIPP evaluation guides stakeholders and evaluators through programs by asking questions and making assessments at the beginning, during, and after the evaluation. The beginning of the evaluation includes the context and input elements, and the end focuses on the product evaluation (Zhang et al., 2011).

The ultimate purpose of the *Gameday the DIII Way* training is to create a cultural change at athletic events at DIII institutions across the country and have an administrator or other gameday managers motivate others to deliver good service on game days. The cultural change that is the focus of the *Gameday the DIII Way* training allows DIII institutions across the country to have similar gameday environments. This program evaluation was a part of the overall evaluation that will take place over time as more and more institutions have individuals trained.

This evaluation was a formative evaluation. The survey research is taking place during the delivery of a program to make improvements to the program (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). *Gameday the DIII Way* was a new program that was rolled out in January 2018. Training took place around the country (Rudd, 2017). The survey collection was completed approximately eight months after the official roll out in January 2018. This program evaluation aims to provide feedback to the stakeholders about how the participants are interpreting the Gameday program. The information collected after

the survey for analysis allowed the DIII leadership better understand what is and is not working with the program and adjust if needed (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The NCAA leadership were open to making changes to the *Gameday the DIII Way* training if the analysis of results indicate that changes need to be made.

**Context.** The needs of the group are evaluated in the context evaluation (Zhang et al., 2011). In a context evaluation, the evaluator is exploring the “needs, problems, assets, opportunities” of the environment of the program evaluation (Mertens & Wilson, 2012, p. 97). Part of the context evaluation includes interviewing the program leaders and other stakeholders, consider the goals of the program and explaining the evaluation findings to leaders and stakeholders (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

For this formative evaluation, the DIII leadership and working group presented the context as an area of need that prioritized knowing how the training is helping participants be prepared to handle poor fan behavior better and if the training concepts are beginning conversations back on individual campuses.

**Inputs.** The “input evaluation component can then help prescribe a responsive project that can best address the identified needs” (Zhang et al., 2011, p. 3). During the input evaluation process, an evaluator is responsible for assessing competing strategies and working plans. Additionally, the evaluator is also responsible for exploring the budget that will be needed to proceed with the select evaluation type (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

There are two major input components. The funding of the evaluation is the first component. For this evaluation, the NCAA DIII funded the creation and implementation of the survey which is the first formative evaluation. Also, the NCAA has made a



commitment of \$1 million dollars for four years to the Disney Institute. The NCAA has the goal of having at least one individual on or close to each institution, so there is continual training taking place to create a changed culture (J. Jones, personal communication, June 18, 2018; July 2, 2018). The second input is the vision of the DIII working group. The working group met in-person in Indianapolis to generate a purpose and vision for a program to combat poor fan behavior (Mertens & Wilson, 2012; Rudd, 2017).

***Process.*** The inputs allow for the process to take place (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Observing the program process and assessing for potential program barriers are part of the process evaluation. Additionally, the process evaluation component tracks for any adjustments that may be needed (Zhang et al., 2011).

As noted, the funds from the NCAA support the first process of the development of the training tool by the Disney Institute (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). After the creation of the survey, a core group of 60 DIII administrators was trained to be facilitators by the Disney Institute. The core facilitators were part of the process because once trained; they were allowed to begin training groups on individual campuses (Rudd, 2017). At the time of this program evaluation, the online portion was not complete. So, participants are only from in-person training sessions.

***Product.*** The product evaluation focuses on the “identification and assessment of intended and unintended outcomes, both short- and long-term” (Mertens & Wilson, 2012, p. 97). Additionally, in the product evaluation there is an opportunity to tell what happens at different levels. Here the merit, worth, and significance of the evaluation are measured (Mertens & Wilson, 2012; Zhang et al., 2011).

The ultimate goal of the *Gameday the DIII Way* service training is to change the culture and environment at DIII athletic events across the nation. Through all the training, DIII leadership and working group hope that the gameday managers and administrators create a gameday experience that emphasizes excellent customer service to all in attendance.

The study was a formative evaluation focused on the success of the short-term outcomes (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). These outcomes were selected because of the age of the program and due to the client's request. The short-term goals of the evaluation are: motivate athletic departments to develop a plan to have a better game day experience, increase the *Gameday the DIII Way* training knowledge, improve skills in handling gameday sportsmanship and fan issues, and report the information to share with the institution.

**Focus of the evaluation.** The *Gameday is the DIII Way* is the first NCAA DIII sportsmanship initiative that addresses poor fan behavior at athletic events, and this evaluation was the first evaluation done on the *Gameday* program. The program evaluation is a formative evaluation that focuses on the short-term outcomes in Figure 1. These short-term outcomes will lead to a culture of positive gameday environments around the country which is the long-term goal.

Creating a good game environment at college athletic events at the DIII level is crucial. Generally, the fans include parents, current students, and locals from the community. To keep people coming back to the games there needs to be a positive environment. The training allows administrators, coaches, administrators/coaches and others at athletic events to be better prepared to handle the gameday issues. This study

was important because it is the first feedback the DIII leadership will receive on the *Gameday the DIII Way* training. The results of this survey help the DIII leadership adjust the training to reach long-term goals.

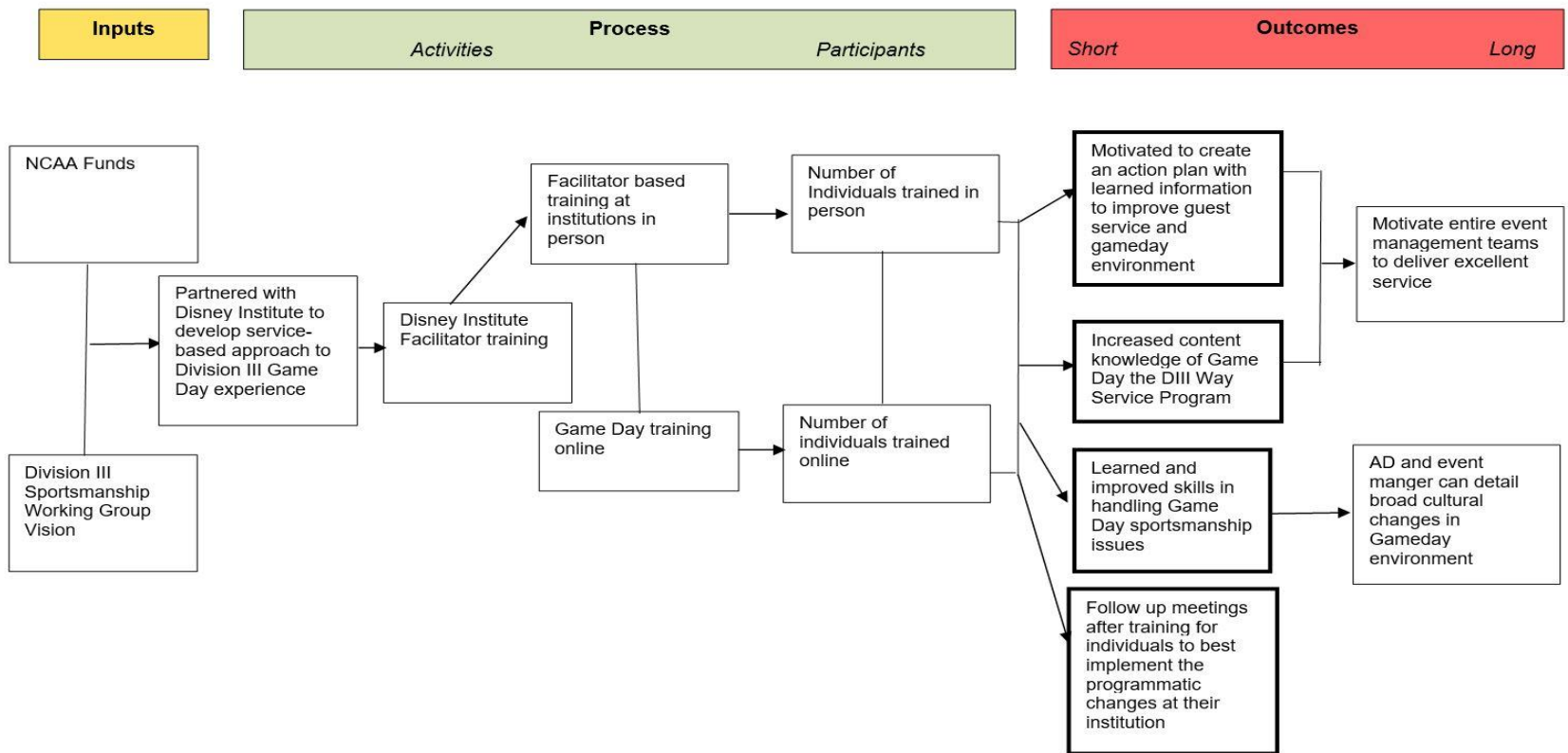


Figure 1: Logic Model-Gameday the DIII Way. This model illustrates the inputs, process, and desired outcomes for the NCAA Gameday the DIII Way training. The bold short-term outcomes are the focus of the program evaluation. |

## **Evaluation Questions**

1. Are there differences among coaches', administrators', administrators/coaches, and other participants' perceptions of the quality of *Game Day the DIII Way training*?
  - a. What knowledge and skills did the participants gain from *Gameday the DIII Way training*?
  - b. What suggestions did the participants make to improve the content?
2. Are there differences in how administrators, coaches, administrators/coaches, and other participants feel about the effectiveness to act based on *Gameday the DIII Way training*?
3. What implementation actions did the coaches, administrators, administrators/coaches, and other participants take following completion of the *Game Day the DIII Way training*?

## **Definitions of Terms**

The following key terms are defined to clarify terms that are used throughout the paper.

*Administrator*: An individual that is part of the administrative team. Examples include the athletic director, assistant athletic director, and financial director.

*Coaches*: Any head coach or assistant coach that works with a sports team

*Evaluation*: “an applied inquiry process for collecting and synthesizing evidence that culminates in conclusions about the state of affairs, value, merit, worth, significance, or quality of a program, product, person, policy, proposal, or plan” (Fournier, 2005, pp. 139-140).

*Others:* Members of the athletic department that are not a coach or administrator.

Examples include grounds crew, sports information directors, and administrative assistants. Additionally, student-athletes fit in this category.

*Poor Fan Behavior:* Fans that are aggressive and highly confrontational and act out by being loud and obnoxious at sporting events (Wakefield & Wann, 2006)

*Sportsmanship:* “Sportsmanship is a set of behaviors to be exhibited by student-athletes, coaches, game officials, administrators and fans in athletics competition. These behaviors are based on values, especially respect and integrity” (NCAA, n.d.-b, para. 3).

## **Summary**

This section introduced the purpose and breakdown of the *Gameday the DIII Way* training. The pragmatic paradigm was introduced, and it was explained how the paradigm fits in the formative evaluation. Additionally, the CIPP evaluation model was introduced and explained. Finally, the logic model and important definitions were explored.

The next section has information on the research that exists on fan behavior and parent behavior. It provides insights on why fan and parent behavior need to be controlled, but also illustrates the lack of research on parent behavior in the college setting. Also, the chapter discusses the history of the NCAA and how the structure of the NCAA came to be.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

This chapter provides a review of literature relating to the issues concerning why *Gameday the DIII Way* training was developed. In this chapter, the history of the NCAA and regulations of sports will be reviewed along with information about DIII and the Disney Institute. Thereafter, the research on behavior and fan aggression will be covered. Finally, there will be a review of literature about parent behavior at sporting events.

#### **National Collegiate Athletic Association and Regulation of College Sports**

Intercollegiate athletics have been in existence for over a century and a half and has faced issues of unfair competition, commercialism, and health and safety. Harvard and Yale held one of the earliest recorded intercollegiate events when they competed in a highbrow regatta. From the very beginning, Harvard attempted to derive an advantage by using a non-student as part of their team. As more events occurred and increasing commercialization took place, mainly making money off the sports event, more teams were looking for an unfair advantage to win. The continued cheating led institutions of higher education to snatch the sports club power from the students and assign the faculty

with the responsibility of overseeing. Even with faculty oversight, concerns continued to rise, in that college athletics still possessed too much commercialization which made events look like amateur sport (Rodney, 2000; Smith, 2000).

Apart from the commercialism and attempts to gain unfair advantage, there were major health and safety concerns in college athletics, with over 18 football deaths in 1905 alone. After the deaths, institutions sought a way to create regulations or abolish sports at the college level. The White House and educators worked together to create the Intercollegiate Athletic Association in order to reform college football. The Intercollegiate Athletic Association name was changed in 1910 to the NCAA, institutions which created rules for all collegiate sports, not just football. The main issues that the NCAA institutions faced were the pressure to win, avoiding excess commercialization, and the need for framing proper regulations that guarantee the safety of athletes. During this time, institutions gained control of athletics as well as oversight from the creation of various conferences (Rodney, 2000; Smith, 2000). The institutional control and new conferences brought power to the NCAA (Rodney, 2000).

Around 1910, the NCAA's main functions involved monitoring football, regulating sports rules, and running championships for different sports. However, the student and faculty oversight continued in a majority of schools (Rodney, 2000; Smith, 2000). By the 1920s, the student base following athletics grew with a progressively increasing access to higher education. In addition, public interest continued to grow, leading to higher attendance at athletic events; the commercialization of sports continued to rise as well. Recruiting student-athletes became a high-stakes game because of the



pressure to win. These changes put greater emphasis on the need for regulations in college athletics (Rodney, 2000).

The Carnegie Foundation report on college athletics was published in 1929. In the report, there were testimonies pertaining to the need to stop commercialization and organize collegiate athletic meets as an avenue for mature athletes (Smith, 2000). In addition, the report illustrated that recruiting was rampant. Student-athletes, particularly in football, were being recruited with promises of an open payroll, extra booster funds, and no-show jobs. The survey found very few institutions which were willing to change (Branch, 2011).

Commercialization grew again when there was a surge in enrollment post World War II. The increase was mainly due to the governmental support of military personnel attending college. The presence of more televisions and radios in homes led to the broadcasting of collegiate athletic meets. In addition, more colleges and universities were adding college athletics, and existing programs were expanding. As gambling and recruiting issues arose more frequently, the NCAA was forced to expand its governance purview (Rodney, 2000; Smith, 2000).

To reduce the amount of bad recruiting practices, the NCAA enacted the “Sanity Code” in 1948 (Smith, 2000, p. 14). The NCAA created the Constitutional Compliance Committee which was ineffective because the only punishment that could be issued for violations was expulsion (Smith, 2000).

The enforcement capability of the NCAA continued to increase over the 1950s and 1960s (Rodney, 2000; Smith, 2000). In 1951, the Constitutional Compliance Committee was replaced by the Committee on Infractions. The Committee on Infractions

possessed a broad range of sanctioning power. This power allowed the NCAA to wield more authoritative power over its members (Smith, 2000). Walter Byers was the Executive Director of the NCAA during the 1950s. He is credited with strengthening the NCAA by growing the enforcement capacity. Moreover, in the 1950s, the NCAA negotiated its first television contract (Rodney, 2000; Smith, 2000).

There was a change in the NCAA in the 1970s and early 1980s. First, in 1973, the Committee on Infractions was established. The Committee on Infractions' purpose was to study the enforcement process formally. The committee decided to separate the prosecutorial and investigative roles in the Committee on Infractions (Rodney, 2000; Smith, 2000). In 1973, the NCAA membership was split into three divisions for both competitive and legislative matters (NCAA, n.d.-f; Smith, 2000).

Even with changes and the adoption of the Committee on Infractions, there remained allegations of unfairness in the enforcement process. Penalization of institutions was the focus of the changes in the NCAA. Again, even with changes, the NCAA remained mired in uncertainty. Institutions did not like how an institution's president was becoming linked with the success of athletics, which created more fear in enforcement (Rodney, 2000; Smith, 2000). Furthermore, institutions were concerned about the growing expenses in athletics. Athletic departments began to wonder about the potential revenue an athletic event could create, but the main worry was that revenue-building ideas would lead to more commercialization (Rodney, 2000).

During the late 1980s, there was increased pressure on the college president to find sources of revenue. The president faced groups such as the board of visitors and alumni, who sought the winning tradition in athletics vis-a-vis the faculty issue with the

large commercialization that had the potential to take away the focus from academics. In response to the pressures on themselves, the presidents formed a Presidents Commission that eventually got involved in the governance of intercollegiate athletics. Over time, the Presidents Commission became vital to the creation of a divisional Executive Committee and a Board of Directors (Rodney, 2000; Smith, 2000).

During the late 1980s and 1990s, efforts were made to figure how the enforcement process worked. A group worked to outline the process of handling enforcement situations. These basic recommendations were implemented to create a better enforcement process (Rodney, 2000).

Prior to the adoption of Title IX, women's sports were mainly recreational and informal in nature. In the college setting, the women's sports usually involved students from their own schools. Title IX legislation stated that women have the right to participate in athletics on a level playing field like men (Bell, 2007). Title IX caused schools to strain because they did not have the money to expand its sponsorship to women's programs (Bass, Schaeperkoetter, & Bunds, 2015; Smith 2000). Thus, schools had to use revenues allotted to male athletic teams (Rodney, 2000). The extra money needed brought stress to athletic directors around the country. So, athletic directors were looking for more fundraising opportunities to help offset costs (Bass et al., 2015).

The growth of television revenue from college sports was an issue during the 1990s. The *NCAA v. Board of Regents* (1984) decision said that the NCAA had violated antitrust laws by controlling what athletic events were televised. The NCAA had been collecting all the money generated from televised events, but the *NCAA v. Board of*

*Regents* changed that. With this change, schools and different organizations that sponsored sporting event could make money off the game (Rodney, 2000).

The first Knight Commission report was published in 1991. The report insisted that the institutional presidents needed to take control of the NCAA, so academic values took precedence over athletic and commercial ones. In 2001, the second Knight Commission report was released. New reformers reported that commercialism and corruption in college athletics were on the rise since the last report was released. At the same time, the NCAA moved into a \$50 million headquarters in Indianapolis, Indiana. By the time of the third Knight Commission report came out, there were still struggles with athletic conferences acting like pro leagues over a group of institutions of higher education. Somehow, money still flowed into the NCAA. For example, the 2011 television deal relating to March Madness had skyrocketed in price and was used to fund the NCAA (Branch, 2011).

Today, there are 1,117 colleges and universities in 100 athletic conferences. The presidents lead the NCAA, and athletic directors oversee the campus athletic staff and athletic policies. The main purpose of the NCAA involves leading college athletes to success on the field by focusing on well-being and fairness, success in the classroom with priority placed on academics and proper support staff, and success in life through development of the team and coaches (NCAA, n.d.-c).

**NCAA Division III.** DIII was created in 1973 when the NCAA divided the membership into three categories. DIII student-athletes cannot receive any athletically related financial aid. DIII student-athletes are fully integrated into the community of the institution. Although, DIII student-athletes can receive financial aid, “athletic leadership,

ability, participation, or performance” cannot be considered for financial aid assistance ( Bass et al., 2015, p. 11). Also, DIII institutions and their athletic departments ask student-athletes to primarily focus on academics. DIII can focus on athletics with the help of the structure of practice and playing seasons, as they are both short and focus on regional competition, so there is less time away from school (NCAA, n.d.-e).

A DIII institution must sponsor at least five sports for women and five sports for men. Each playing season—fall, winter, and spring—must have a sport for each gender. Funding for the athletic department is carried out like it is in other campus departments. Also, the focus is on the participation of the student-athletes rather than the experience of the fans (NCAA, n.d.-d). The student-athletes focus not only gameday experiences but also successes in the classroom.

Division III student-athletes must meet the same academic standards as the general student body. Student-athletes do not receive special housing or support services. All of this allows for the student-athlete to garner experience that includes all aspects of college life (NCAA, n.d.-a). Being able to experience all aspects of campus life does not reduce the competitiveness of the athletic environment.

Despite the restrictions noted above, DIII athletic meets are intense and competitive, as the players are competing “for the love of the game” (NCAA, n.d.-g, para. 3). DIII student-athletes are encouraged to participate in a variety of opportunities around camps both in and out of the athletic environment. While they are part of a competitive athletic environment, there also lies a focus on developing responsible citizens (NCAA, n.d.-a).

## **The Disney Institute and *Gameday the DIII Way***

The Disney Institute is a service provided by Disney to help organizations in multiple ways by offering services that enhance customer satisfaction, conduct professional development courses, and guide summits and conventions of organizations. The foundation of the Disney Institute is based on the Walt Disney Parks and Resorts best practices (Disney Institute, n.d.).

For DIII, the Disney Institute worked on generating the *Gameday the DIII Way* training. The Disney Institute's approach includes prioritizing key themes, identifying the problems, showcasing the key insights, discovering the Disney best practice that will help, and applying the insights. In addition, the Disney Institute worked with DIII to set up a time schedule for the implementation of continued training activities for *Gameday the DIII Way*. The Disney Institute and DIII agreed to a four-year commitment that will expire in 2019 (J. Jones, personal communication, June 18, 2018).

## **Sport Fans Behavior**

Fans become fans because of a socialization process. When attempting to understand the process of socialization of sports fans, one can look at the process of how a fan imbibes the values, beliefs, and norms of a sports culture. A fan learns about values, beliefs, and norms from family, friends, school, and the community. Specifically, peers influence male sports fans while school association influences females more (Wann, Melnick, Russell, & Pease, 2001). There are multiple ways in which a fan can learn about values, beliefs, and norms, leading to multiple motives for fans.

Research has illustrated that fans possess multiple motives. Applying this to the *Gameday the DIII Way* training, it is easy to discern that the family motive is important.

A fan who is motivated by family likes the opportunity to spend more time with family (Wann et al., 2001). Parents who attend DIII athletic events want to spend time with family and cheer their children. It is interesting to note that some parents are a source of fan disruption at the DIII level.

**Team identification.** Identification with a team is “the degree that the fan views the team as an extension of self-identity, that is the extent to which the fan feels a psychological connection to the team” (Wakefield & Wann, 2006, p. 168). A strong team identification means a positive relationship is shared between the local team and social-psychological well-being. It helps with psychological well-being because it provides an individual with a connection to the world around. Extroversion and team identification are positively correlated (Wakefield & Wann, 2006). Fans who highly identify are those who constantly support a team from one season to another even when the team is not doing well (Wann et al., 2001). Parents are good examples of highly identified fans because of their emotional investment in their children’s team.

Rudd (2016) found that highly identified fans support the act of distracting the opponent with music or posters. Moreover, they support heckling a coach, referee, or player. Research shows that highly identified fans did not support the use of personal information, yelling obscenities, or throwing objects at opponents (Rudd, 2016).

Being a highly identified fan has its positives for both the individual and community, but some highly identified fans go overboard with aggressive acts at sporting events. Some fans exhibit aggressive behavior that focuses on other fans, players, and referees (Wakefield & Wann, 2006). Highly identified individuals are particularly

aggressive if they believe their aggression will help the team in a particular situation (Wann, Waddill, Bono, Scheuchner, & Ruga, 2017).

High team identification can lead to more internal attributions when a team wins and more external attributions when a team loses. When a team loses, a highly identified fan focuses more on the external attributions that caused the loss because they want to protect their self-esteem (Wann & Dolan, 1995; Wann & Schrader, 2000). Even if the highly identified fan's team loses, they are less likely to separate themselves from the team than fans who identify less. This dedication to the team requires certain self-attributes to maintain a social identity (Wann & Dolan, 1995). To replace lost self-esteem or reestablish a positive identity, a fan can use blasting. Blasting happens when a fan blasts a member of the outgroup with negative comments. Fans feel they are superior when they act negatively toward the outgroup. When this form of aggression works, a fan is more likely to repeat the form of blasting (Wann, 1993). Fans can also use the blasting technique when there is a possibility of winning.

Individuals with high team identification tend to use aggression if the possibility of their team winning exists (End & Foster, 2010; Hilliard & Johnson, 2018; Rudd, 2016). Moreover, a sporting arena environment can promote fan aggression. Hot temperatures, loud noises, and "aggressive cues" along with the possible use of alcohol can make a fan aggressive (Hilliard & Johnson, 2018, p. 307).

**Fan aggression.** Branscombe and Wann (1992) developed a framework that focuses on how theories of aggression apply to sport fans' actions. Definitions of aggression usually include a person using actions that are intended to harm another person who does not want the behavior used against him or her. For their model,



Branscombe and Wann (1992) used the general definition of aggression, in that aggression is an act when someone does harm to another who does not want to be harmed.

Branscombe and Wann (1992) combined several variables that influence fan aggression. First, physiological arousal (Branscombe & Wann, 1992) occurs because of physiological changes that include respiratory and cardiovascular accelerations and decelerations, as well as muscle spasms. This occurs because of a disturbance in the homeostatic regulation and smooth behavioral coordination (Scherer, 2001). Loud noises and crowding around the athletic event can cause a fan to become physiologically aroused. An emotion-eliciting event can lead to a change in an individual's body. Additionally, fans can be physiologically aroused by their high identification with the group of athletes who are participating. This form of arousal has the potential to intensify a fan's hostility toward the opponent's fans (Branscombe & Wann, 1992).

Besides physiological arousal, a fan can be affected by situational arousal. Situational arousal factors include the temperature, crowd size, and noise created in the stadium (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). The higher the temperature gets, the more the probability of interpersonal aggression. Crowding specifically causes discomfort to an individual when there are too many people present in a certain situation. Loud noises played at intermittent intervals cause the most aggression (Wann et al., 2001). These are factors that can increase aggressive responses from fans (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). Environmental factors are not the only thing that cause fans to become aggressive.

Team identification plays a role in aggressive actions. Individual fans can have such a high identification with a team that they can feel a need to protect the team and

their own social identity, so they cause disturbances (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). High team identification is correlated with the want to preform injurious acts toward opponents. A fan who is highly identified is willing to break a player's or coach's leg or trip an opposing player or coach (Wann, Peterson, Cothran, & Dykes, 1999). Highly identified fans have pronounced reactions to both wins and losses. These reactions have the potential to lead to fan aggression (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). In addition, group identification and categorization also affect fan behavior.

Research has shown that there is a link between being a group member, caring about that identity, and the categorization of those in both the in- and out-group (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). In-group individuals can develop a fear of being rejected and not "fitting in." This fear alone can cause a fan to be aggressive (Knapton, Espinosa, Meier, Bäck, & Bäck, 2018). Group membership creates thoughts pertaining to the "us vs. them" mentality among fans. Additionally, it can increase the attributional biases of fans. High identification with the in-group can result in social consequences like ridiculing of outgroup members (Branscombe & Wann, 1992); not only can social consequences occur but cognition can be affected also.

Research has shown that it is possible for an individual's cognition to be affected by arousal. Heightened arousal causes fans to have a reduced capacity to process information. Ingroup/outgroup categorization is simplified when there is less processing of information going on in an individual (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). Research has illustrated that fans feel more favorable toward fans who support the same team versus those from the opposing team (Wann et al., 2001). Moreover, with heightened arousal, an individual may use stereotypical social judgments. Research has shown that fans

encounter trouble avoiding judgment simplifying strategies because of the lack of ability to process information. Using judgment simplifying strategies increases the chance of a person acting aggressively toward the outgroup (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). All sports fans identify with the outgroup when they become sports fans.

An active participant in a specific sport is likely to be a sports fan. A sports fan's motivation to be a fan can be intrinsic or extrinsic. A fan who is intrinsically motivated is a fan because he or she enjoys watching the sports activity. On the flip side, extrinsically motivated fans are fans because of the potential benefits or rewards that are derived from watching the sport. The research illustrated that an intrinsically motivated player is intrinsically motivated to play and possesses an intrinsic motivation to be a fan. Extrinsically motivated participants, too, are extrinsically motivated fans (Wann, Schrader, & Wilson, 1999). There are several forms of aggression a fan can adopt.

Verbal aggression at sporting events is not uncommon, and tolerance for it has increased (Rocca & Vogl-Bauer, 1999). It usually involves yelling obscenities and threats toward intended targets (Wann et al., 2001). Verbal aggression is normally used to put down the self-concept or self-esteem of an opponent (Rocca & Vogl-Bauer, 1999).

Hostile aggression "is motivated by anger with the goal of harming another individual" (Rudd, 2016, pp. 177). Instrumental aggression "involves the desire to harm another individual but with a more beneficial goal in mind" (Rudd, 2016, pp. 177-178). Hostile aggression is more common than instrumental aggression (Wann, Schrader, & Carlson, 2000). Wann, Carlson, & Schrader (1999) found that highly identified spectators used more hostile and instrumental aggressions than lower identified spectators. Also, males are more likely to engage in both hostile or instrumental

aggressive acts than females (End & Foster, 2010). Research among college fans has also uncovered that fans with high team identification admit they are likely to commit physical acts, be verbally hostile and instrumentally aggressive toward the opposition, and use more hostile aggression toward the referee (Hilliard & Johnson, 2018; Rudd, 2016; Wann et al., 2000). Aggression toward the athletes playing is a combination of hostile and instrumental aggression (Wann et al., 2001).

Hilliard and Johnson (2018) researched the relationship between trait aggression and team identification. They also explored if a relationship existed between team identification and the willingness to commit an anonymous act of instrumental aggression. When a fan expresses anger and is engaged in physical and verbal aggression, it is considered trait aggression. The study found that those with trait aggression are more likely to commit an anonymous act of aggression. Additionally, with higher team identification, a positive relationship is identified with the willingness to commit an anonymous act of aggression (Hilliard & Johnson, 2018).

**Dysfunctional fans.** Dysfunctional fans were defined as fans who complain and keel over on confrontation by Wakefield and Wann (2006). Dysfunctional fans are generally more likely to be verbally abusive, consume alcohol, and call into sports radio (Wakefield & Wann, 2006; Wann & Goeke, 2017). Certain environments like sports stadiums are locations where dysfunctional fans feel they can complain and be more confrontational (Wakefield & Wann, 2006; Wann et al., 2017). Highly dysfunctional fans think it is appropriate to use verbal aggression (Donahue & Wann, 2009). Dysfunctional fans harbor aggression toward both officials and opponents. Research has found that highly dysfunctional fans are more likely to report a willingness to

anonymously injure fans, players, and coaches from the rival team. Also, dysfunctional fans are highly assertive (Wann & Goeke, 2017).

Dysfunctional fans feel more comfortable drinking alcohol while at sporting events (Wakefield & Wann, 2006). The act of participating in alcohol drinking sessions takes place at college game days as well. Alcohol influences fan behavior. College students are more likely to consume alcohol on game day (Glassman, Werch, Jobli, & Bian, 2007). Wakefield and Wann (2006) suggested that the results linking higher drinking with dysfunctional fans have implications for the NCAA because it could help control fans (Wakefield & Wann, 2006).

**BIRGing, CORFing, BIRFing, and CORSing.** Basking in Reflected Glory (BIRGing), Cutting off Reflected Failure (CORFing), Basking in Spite of Reflected Failure (BIRFing), and Cutting off Reflected Success (CORSing) are different ways of identifying how fans react to success and failure. BIRFing and CORSing are two extensions of the original concept of BIRGing and CORFing. These terms focus on winning affects a fans behavior. Research has shown that these terms explain the psychological nature of fanship (Campbell, Aiken, & Kent, 2004). First, I will cover BIRGing.

BIRGing happens when a fan is basking in glory of his or her team's win (Campbell et al., 2004; Ware & Kowalski, 2012). The success of the team elevates a fan's self-esteem. Individuals can increase their BIRGing by extending their association with a successful team. During BIRGing, individuals use more of a "we" orientation when referring to a team (Wann, 1993). Team success leads to the creation of positive fans. Both females and males practice BIRGing at the same level. Also, those with high

team identity connect more with BIRGing than CORFing (Campbell et al., 2004; Ware & Kowalski, 2012).

CORFing occurs when a fan wants to protect their self-image and self-esteem by distancing themselves from a team that is unsuccessful (Campbell et al., 2004; Ware & Kowalski, 2012). There is a psychological distance created between themselves and the negative (Wann, 1993). When CORFing occurs, fans will not wear team apparel in public. The fans' language will change when talking about the team, referring more to the team as "they" than "we." In CORFing, team success is in the negative and as a result, fan association is in the negative as well. Individuals CORFer more when they have a lower team identity (Campbell et al., 2004; Ware & Kowalski, 2012). There are, however, individuals who remain positive during team's negative performances success and bask despite a team's negative results.

BIRFing happens when there a team does not perform, but a fan continues to positively associate himself or herself with the team. A fan being loyal to his or her team is a positive trait which can boost self-esteem. Without the team winning, a fan must find other positive associations with the team. In addition, an individual must manage his or her self-image by focusing on other aspects of being a fan (Campbell et al., 2004).

CORSing is opposite in nature to BIRFing.

CORSing, cutting off reflected success, emerges from the internal need for things to be consistent. These fans share a negative association with a team performing positively. The fan wants things to be how they once were. The fan does not want sweeping changes in a team's organization and hopes the same values are adhered to. CORSing fans want individuality and relate with smaller groups of fans. A CORSing fan

does not want bandwagon fans, who only jump on to cheer a team in success and not through unfortunate times (Campbell et al., 2004).

### **Parent Behavior at Sporting Events**

Most of the research on parent behavior at athletic events is focused on youth sport parents (Bach, 2006; Omli, LaVoi, & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2008; Shields, Bredemeier, LaVoi, & Power, 2005). This research is important to the current evaluation because it illustrates the common tendencies parents have prior to their children participating in collegiate sports. While little research has been carried out about parent's actions during collegiate events, this information provides relevant ideas in order to understand how parental behavior develops. It is important to separate parent behaviors from fan behaviors because parents are emotionally invested in the success of their child playing on the field.

Nowadays, most parents are supportive during athletic events, but there are increasing incidents of some parents exhibiting poor behavior (Bach, 2006). Sometimes parents can get carried away and coach from the sideline or verbally attack the referee (Omli et al., 2008). Some negative examples include a mother grabbing a referee by the hair and throwing her down; during a rugby tournament, a coach and players beat the other coach to the point he was unconscious; a parent at a football game came down from the stands and punched the referee at least six times (Bach, 2006). In addition to these examples from around the country, many athletic leaders at the 2015 NCAA convention believe some parents are the fans causing the most trouble at athletic events (Burnsed, 2017).

There has been very little research based on the actual observation of parent spectator behavior at any level. Research has illustrated that most parents instruct and praise. However, approximately 30% of the comments are negative in nature (Omli et al., 2008). There have been plenty of instances where people have witnessed negativity.

Data suggests that athletes, coaches, and parents have witnessed poor spectator behavior. Most commonly, athletes, coaches, and parents view spectators as disagreeing with the referee, swearing, and providing encouragement to play rough, which are subjects of negative spectator action (Omli et al., 2008). Shields et al. (2005) researched on the good, the bad, and the ugly of sports behavior. They found that some parents can be most critical of their child. Parents get frustrated when the child does not do well (Shields et al., 2005). Parents' frustrations can affect their children's performances.

Poor spectator behavior can influence how youth sports athletes perform in an athletic event. Youth sports participants believe poor sports behavior is acceptable because of poor parent behavior. Most spectators are parents, and they are likely to highly identify with the youth sports team (Shields, Lavoie, Bredemeier, & Power, 2007). The high identification with the youth teams carries over onto the collegiate setting.

Cummings and Ewing (2002) defined a fanatical parent in youth sports as one who places a lot of pressure on the child to succeed. Also, a fanatical parent believes it is okay for a player to argue with their coaches and the referees. A fanatical parent is controlling and overly worried about results. Finally, a fanatical parent always wants to win the trophy and have a child who wants to make it to the professional leagues (Cummings & Ewing, 2002). Fanatical parents are not the only type of parents on the sidelines.



Another type of parent that youth athletes report is a crazed fan. Youth sports athletes do not normally welcome the types of behaviors associated with them. Crazed fans are known for arguing and blaming others. Their comments can be derogatory in nature and they could disrupt the game environment. Also, crazed fans are known for yelling and fanatical cheering. Some parents can get overexcited on the sidelines (Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011).

**What the athletes want.** Omli and Wiese-Bjornstal (2011) researched on how youth sports athletes want parents to behave. Youth sports athletes preferred a supportive parent. A supportive parent can act in three ways according to participants. First, a supportive parent can act by using attentive silence where they pay attention and do not yell. A supportive parent can cheer and encourage the athletes. Finally, supportive parents can praise athletes, show empathy to all those playing, and be ready for a protective intervention if someone is going to get hurt (Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011).

In general, youth athletes do not want their parents to coach them from the sidelines. The instruction from parents can contradict what a coach is saying and make the player frustrated. Youth players do not like critical encouragement either. The critical encouragement can be annoying and hurtful. Youth athletes prefer advice provided in private conversations (Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011).

**Programs to help parent behavior issues.** One recommendation to help deter some parents' poor behavior in youth sports is the Parent Orientation and Membership program which is conducted by the National Alliance for Youth Sports. The program is in the form of a video-based training that aims at eradicating poor parent behavior. The

program covers topics such as safety, modeling sportsmanship, and injury prevention (National Alliance for Youth Sports, n.d.).

Another program is the Youth Enrichment in Sports (YESports) “A Self-Instruction Program for Youth Sport Parents.” This program aims at helping parents understand how sports can contribute to youth development. It encourages parents to help their children see self-improvement and be positive and motivational on the sidelines. This program is in the form of a self-instruction online video for the parents of children participating in youth sports (YESports, n.d.).

### **Summary**

Throughout the history of the NCAA, there has been a continuing challenge to ensure that sports are regulated. There is pressure to make sure that enforcement policies are framed appropriately. Additionally, the NCAA wants to control the commercialization of collegiate sports to a minimum. However, keeping the commercialization at bay may be difficult with the continual television right agreements for March Madness (Rodney, 2000).

Fans have been an important part of collegiate athletics for a long time. Fans become fans through a socialization process; they also become fans through influences from family, peers, school, and the community. Fans possess various motives, but for the *Gameday the DIII Way* training, the family is considered the most important motive (Wann et al., 2001).

Highly identified fans have various motives to be sports fans. Generally, if a team wins, a highly identified fan will say that it was for intrinsic reasons, but if they lose they would say it was because of extrinsic factors (Wann & Dolan, 1995). Highly identified

fans can be aggressive when they want to protect their own social identity, or they believe it will help the team they identify with win (Branscombe & Wann, 1992).

Fan aggression can come in a variety of forms. Aggressive fans can direct their aggression to the opposing players, opposing fans, and referees. Forms of aggression include verbal, hostile, instruments, and trait (Hilliard & Johnson, 2018; Rocca & Vogl-Bauer, 1999; Wann et al., 2000). Both physical and physiological reasons cause different types of aggression (Branscombe & Wann, 1992). Fan aggression can also occur at all levels: youth, high school, college, and professional.

Most of the research on parent behavior is centered around parents of youth athletes (Bach, 2006; Omli et al., 2008; Shields et al., 2005). Over the years, there has been an increase in toleration of poor fan behavior (Bach, 2006). Youth athletes do not like their parents criticizing them during an athletic event. The youth would rather have information provided to them during the course of a private conversation (Omli & Wiese-Bjornstal, 2011). Youth sports do organize some educational programs for parents to attend in order to be educated about how to act on the sidelines (Bach, 2006; YESports, n.d.).

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODS

#### Introduction

This chapter not only focuses on the program evaluation of the NCAA survey for *Gameday the DIII Way* training, but also on how the NCAA survey was developed, implemented, and analyzed. As noted in Chapter 1, the purpose of this study is to understand if the *Gameday the DIII Way* training program is reaching its short-term goals. The short-term goals of the training program include aiding in the process of participants gaining content knowledge about the *Gameday the DIII Way* service program, improving skills to deal with poor fan behavior, and providing them with the motivation to create an individual action plan. With respect to institutions, the goals concern how to improve gameday service and the gameday environment.

In the pragmatic paradigm, the methodological approach involves “match methods to specific questions and purpose of research” (Mertens & Wilson, 2012, p. 91). To examine if the short-term outcomes are reached, a survey approach was considered appropriate by the NCAA.

The program evaluation was a formative assessment that was designed to help the DIII leadership better understand where adjustments were required to be made in order to reach the intended short-term outcomes. Additionally, with the adjustments to better reach short-term outcomes, it was hoped that there would be a better chance to reach the long-term outcomes. This program evaluation is formative in nature and is part of a

greater continual process to evaluate how to reach long-term goals. There will be a need to conduct more evaluations after the online training becomes available as an opportunity to receive the *Gameday the DIII Way* training.

A desired long-term outcome was to motivate an entire university athletics management team to provide quality service at athletic events. Having quality service at athletic events begins with one person understanding the importance of the training and sharing what is learned. By seeing a *Gameday the DIII Way* training participant in action during a fan disturbance, others in the athletic department would become motivated to focus on creating an excellent gameday environment for everyone at an athletic event. The other long-term outcome was to create a broad cultural change on gameday with the help of the athletic director and events manager. A broad cultural change would come about when participants bring back the skills they learned at the *Gameday the DIII Way* training and successfully implement a gameday policy. The more people gain the skills and understand the goal of the *Gameday the DIII Way* training, the more likely it is that the culture will shift in DIII.

The evaluation was designed in cooperation with the staff of the NCAA to determine if the *Gameday the DIII Way* training is effective, if any parts of the training need adjustment, if the gameday program DIII should continue to allocate resources toward the project, and if the facilitators are presenting the training effectively. Mertens and Wilson (2012) said an appropriate relationship between the evaluator and the stakeholders is good when it allows for the results of the survey to be used (p. 90). With open communication being carried out with the DIII administrator, it was concluded that if there are significant differences in how coaches, administrators,

coaches/administrators, and others in different positions view the training, the NCAA would explore if the information presented needed to be adjusted (J. Jones, personal communication, July 26, 2018). If the results indicated that there were areas of the content that needed more clarification, the information would be used to adjust the problem areas, and the information would also help the creation of online content (J. Jones, personal communication, October 12, 2018).

### **Research Questions**

1. Are there differences in coaches', administrators', administrators/coaches and other participants' perceptions of the quality of *Game Day the DIII Way training*?
  - a. What knowledge and skills did the participants gain from *Gameday the DIII Way training*?
  - b. What suggestions did the participants make to improve the content?
2. Are there differences in how administrators, coaches, administrators/coaches, and other participants feel about the effectiveness to act based on *Gameday the DIII Way training*?
3. What implementation actions did the coaches, administrators, administrators/coaches and other participants take following completion of the *Game Day the DIII Way training*?

### **Study Participants and Selection Process**

The preexisting data was collected from a voluntary response sample from a sample of those individuals who participated in the Gameday training. After the creation and approval of the survey by the NCAA research department, the survey was distributed by email to 571 participants in previous Gameday training sessions, either at their

institutions, conference meetings, or at a session conducted at an annual convention. Since the NCAA did not have individual email addresses for participants, the survey was distributed by the session facilitators. Survey response data is included Chapter 4.

### **Data Sources**

**Survey design.** The NCAA *Gameday* survey was an online survey, primarily composed of forced choice items with selected open-ended items. I helped create the survey during my previous work with the NCAA from February 2018-August 2018. I was asked to create a survey that would provide information to show if the short-term outcomes, as described in Figure 1, were being reached. I developed the base of the survey, but the NCAA included a large amount of input during the survey creation process. There were several email and phone exchanges between the NCAA national office and me about the survey design stage. Even with the changes, the tool remained in line with the mixed methods survey that is part of the pragmatic paradigm. The changes are appropriate because the evaluator should work with the stakeholder to ensure that findings emerge (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

To make sure this is an acceptable tool for the NCAA, the survey was reviewed by the NCAA research department (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The research department changed the survey to meet the standards of NCAA research.

1. The first major change in the opening statement of the survey. Here my personal information and information about why I am doing the survey had to be removed so it could match NCAA research guidelines.
2. There was an addition of a demographic section to better compare results.

3. The Likert Scale underwent a major change as it was transformed from a three-point scale to a five-point scale to meet NCAA research guidelines.
4. Instead of forced choice items that allows a participant to only choose one answer, the NCAA created items that were check all that apply. Specifically, Items 3, 8, 10, and 12 were changed.
5. In my version of the survey, there was an open-ended item about what skills were learned. This question was changed to a check all that apply question with multiple answers and an “other” option to fill in an answer. Additionally, after these survey items, there is a survey item with a text box to add information about previous selections. This change was made to Items 8, 9, 10, and 11.

Both the original and amended survey, which incorporates the changes listed above, were exempt from protocol by the William and Mary Institutional Review Board. The NCAA research department placed the survey in the Qualtrics survey creator. The survey was then ready for distribution.

**Survey instrument.** The final version of survey had three main parts. Part one consists of demographic information. The questions focused on the time between the training and the survey, in what way the participant took the survey, and what position the participant holds in the athletic department. The first question about how the participants received the training has only two options, which are in person and online. For this study, all participants are individuals who took in-person training because the online format is not complete. The NCAA kept this question in the survey for future research. The second question about the time between the training in the survey had



three options: less than six months ago, six to twelve months, and more than a year ago. The final question in this section was about what position the participant holds had three options: administrator, coach, and other position; the participants checked all that applied.

Part Two had four questions that focused on the outcomes of the training. A Likert-type scale which had five points was used: strongly disagree, disagree, somewhat agree/somewhat disagree, agree, and strongly agree. The participants' answers were as follows: (a) I am satisfied with my *Gameday the DIII Way* Training experience, (b) my facilitator presented the *Gameday the DIII Way* Training content in a way I could easily understand, (c) I gained new knowledge about the *Gameday the DIII Way* initiative and the national standards on game day service, and (d) I feel prepared to handle game day sportsmanship issues.

Part Three had five main questions focusing on suggested areas of improvement and on gathering identifying actions that had been taken to implement ideas covered in the training session. The first question focused on what content needs improvement. The participant could select all that applied. The choices were as follows: *none, the content is fine, history and benefits of the program, service standards, behavioral guidelines, how to apply to programs on your campus*, and *other*, with a space to fill in an answer. Then, there is an open text box that prompted, "For each survey item you selected above please tell us what you believe can be done to improve it." The second main question focused on what new skills the participant learned to use when facing sportsmanship issues. Again, the participant selected all that applied. The choices were: *better guest service, conflict resolution, knowledge of how to address issues at events, how to deal with crowd*

*behavior*, and *other*, with a text box to fill in an answer. Following the question, there was a text box that allowed the participant to fill in any other new skills the participant wants to learn. The next question evaluated what the participant did upon returning to campus to discuss the *Gameday the DIII Way* training. The participant selected all that applied from the following responses: *I met with my Assistant Athletic Director or Athletic Director, we had a post-training meeting with the athletic staff, no formal meeting or discussion has taken place, we plan to meet soon to share what I learned at training*, and an open text box for an alternative response. The fourth question focused on asking if the participant's athletic department considered a plan of action to deal with crowd behavior. The answer selections were *yes* or *no*. If the participant selected *yes*, two more questions were presented. The first asked if the institution had a policy in place and the second question asked who the main contact for the policy is. The final question asked the participant if she/he had any final comments about the *Gameday the DIII Way* training or campus implementation.

This survey was the first formal review of the *Gameday* training. The survey was distributed to both institutions and conferences that received the training. In the future, the NCAA wants to have participants take the survey immediately after the training. Once this occurs, the NCAA will need to evaluate how participants rate the training compared to this evaluation.

### **Data Collection**

Data collection for this study was conducted using Qualtrics, an Internet-based survey tool. The NCAA national office sent an email to the facilitator. They are required to do this because the NCAA leadership never receives information about who attended,

so there is no way for NCAA to directly contact participants. The email sent included a message that asked the facilitator to send out the email. The facilitator, who is usually different at each training session, sends it to the athletic director or conference commissioner who, in turn, distributes it to the participants. The participants participated in the survey voluntarily by following the link provided in the email.

### **Data Analysis**

The survey analysis included both quantitative and qualitative aspects which fits in the pragmatic paradigm (Salkind, 2010). The following review reflects the applicable analyses for each research question.

**Evaluation question #1.** Are there differences regarding coaches', administrators', administrators/coaches, and other participants' perceptions of the quality of *Game Day the DIII Way training*?

- a. What knowledge and skills did the participants gain from *Gameday the DIII Way training*?
- b. What suggestions did the participants make to improve the content?

To evaluate question one, I used descriptive statistics, Analysis of Variance (ANOVA), and a Tukey post-hoc test to identify if there are any significant differences among the four groups (administrators/coaches, coaches, administrators, other participants). ANOVA is a statistical test that is used for determining if there is a significant difference between three or more unrelated groups. A one-way ANOVA tests if the means of the unrelated groups are significantly different. However, the test cannot identify what groups are significantly different. So, a Tukey post-hoc needs to be performed. The Tukey post-hoc illustrates where the significant differences are between

the groups (Laerd Statistics, n.d.). The ANOVA and Tukey post-hoc were performed through Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software. To perform analysis, the Likert-scale options were made numeric, with 5 as *strongly agree* and 1 as *strongly disagree*. The middle point is *somewhat agree/somewhat disagree* at 3. All unanswered questions were left as blanks in the data.

In the survey, there was an option for some questions to provide additional information. To analyze this and any additional open-ended questions, I selected the constant comparison analysis technique to code. To use this analyzing tool, the researcher must first read through the entire set of responses to the question. Then, the researcher must place the responses in small groups. A theme explains each coded small group. The similarly coded groups are then combined and identified. Once identified, the researcher documents a synthesis of findings (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Questions were evaluated except *N/A* responses.

The constant comparison analysis technique is based on the constructivist grounded theory. The constructivist grounded theory focuses on what can be constructed from the data collected. There can be multiple meanings that the data presents. Researchers need to “immerse themselves in the data in a way that embeds the narrative of the participants in the final research outcome” (Mills, Bonner, & Francis, 2006, p. 31). The data are interpreted through a coding process that helps ensure that the data is interpreted in a realistic way (Mills et al., 2006).

**Evaluation question #2.** Are there differences in how administrators, coaches, administrators/coaches, and other participants feel about the effectiveness to act based on Gameday the DIII Way training?

To analyze the Likert-type scale questions, I used quantitative methods of analysis; descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were calculated and presented (Triola, 2001). To assess statistical significance among groups, I used an ANOVA and a Tukey post-hoc.

**Evaluation question #3.** What implementation actions did the coaches, administrators, administrators/coaches, and other participants take following completion of the *Game Day the DIII Way training*?

For the multiple-choice question in which the participant can check all that apply, the analysis was descriptive and presented as a frequency table. It is important to recognize that for the “check all that apply” survey items, there were more selections than the number of participants. For the multiple-choice question that has yes/no responses, a frequency table was prepared provided. Table 1 not only illustrates how the evaluation questions match with the data sources but also provides the data analysis tools that were used.

Table 1

*Data Sources and Data Analysis Tools for each Evaluation Question*

Evaluation Question	Data Sources	Data Analysis
1. Are there differences regarding coaches', administrators', administrators/coaches, and other participants' perceptions of the quality of <i>Game Day the DIII Way training</i> ?	Survey items 4 and 5	Descriptive Statistics, ANOVA Post-hoc Tukey
a. What knowledge and skills did the participants gain from <i>Gameday the DIII Way</i> training?	Survey items 6, 10 and 11	Descriptive Statistics, ANOVA Post-hoc Tukey Frequency Table Qualitative Coding
b. What suggestions did the participants make to improve the content?	Survey items 8 and 9	Frequency Table Qualitative Coding
2. Are there differences in how administrators, coaches, administrators/coaches and other participants feel about the effectiveness to act based on <i>Gameday the DIII Way training</i> ?	Survey item 7	Descriptive Statistics, ANOVA Post-hoc Tukey
3. What implementation actions did the coaches, administrators, administrators/coaches, and other participants take following completion of the <i>Game Day the DIII Way training</i> ?	Survey items 12 and 13	Frequency Table Qualitative Coding

## **Timeline**

February 2, 2018: contacted DIII Vice President Dan Dutcher about performing a project evaluation on a DIII program

February 14, 2018: confirmation of working with the DIII *Gameday the DIII Way* for a formative program evaluation

February 27, 2018: conference call with three members of the DIII working group and DIII leadership

April 25, 2018: finalized the logic model with DIII leadership

May 18, 2018–December 12, 2018: Dissertation Chapter 1-3 work

May 28, 2018: Exempt from IRB protocol

August 1, 2018: Finalized survey

August 2–current: Survey distributed

August 2, 2018–November 2018: Data collection

December 12, 2018: Proposal defense

December 15, 2018: Exempt from IRB protocol for completed survey

December 15, 2018: Results received from the NCAA

December 15–January 6, 2018: Data clean up

January 8, 2018–January 12, 2018: Data analysis

January 13, 2018–January 19, 2018: Interpretation of results

March 22, 2019: Dissertation Defense

## **Delimitations, Limitations, Assumptions.**

**Delimitations.** A delimitation of this study was how many survey items were asked and how long the survey could be because the NCAA wanted the survey to be

completed in five minutes. With this request, the number of survey items asked in the survey. If there was more time, I would have added items about the service standards and common purpose that are introduced in the modules of the training.

**Limitations.** There is no way to know much about the overall population because the NCAA does not keep a master list of participants. Another limitation of the study is that all the participants were not trained by the same facilitator. So, the delivery of the training could vary from one facilitator to another. Also, the sample selection process was an issue because the sample was limited to only those who participated in a certain month and not a random selection from the population. The anonymous survey did not allow for any follow up to remind individuals to take the survey.

Additionally, there is a limitation on being able to control the amount of time between the training and the time of the survey. Time in between the training and taking the survey is a factor that could affect how participants respond to the survey. Also, the participants could have interpreted the questions in a different way (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). Since the NCAA has power in decisions about what data were required to evaluate the *Gameday the DIII Way* training, I was unable to triangulate my data.

**Assumptions.** This study assumed that the participants would take the appropriate time to fully read and answer the survey items based on their training experience. With the survey, I must assume that the participants are answering the survey items truthfully. Additionally, I must assume that the participants are aware of the gameday process at their individual institutions. Some background knowledge of the issues facing administrators and coaches on gamedays is important.



## **Ethical Considerations**

**Professional evaluation standards.** The *Program Evaluation Standards* are a group of standards and ethical guidelines that were formed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation. The *Program Evaluation Standards* have five main attributes: utility, feasibility, propriety, accuracy, and meta-evaluation (Mertens & Wilson, 2012). The following descriptions explain how I applied the *Program Evaluation Standards* during my research.

**Utility.** The utility attribute focused on the needs of the stakeholders. The stakeholders must be pleased with the process and products produced through the entire program evaluation process (Yarbrough, Shulha, & Caruthers, 2011) This is also true in the pragmatic paradigm. The relationship between the evaluator and the organization is critical in the pragmatic paradigm (Mertens & Wilson, 2012).

In this study, I had to maintain intensive contact with the stakeholders, especially with the DIII leadership. In my previous work, the stakeholders were involved in the creation of the logic model and the survey. I considered all comments when producing the two survey items. During the creation of the two items, I sent drafts to DIII leadership for thoughts. The DIII leadership then sent across marked up documents on the changes they would like to see. With the help of those comments, I edited the documents.

One additional utility standard expectation was the researcher had to be qualified to run a program evaluation. I had maintained a professional relationship with the Vice President of DIII since the time I served in the DIII Student-Athlete Advisory Committee. I asked him for an opportunity to evaluate a program in DIII to fulfill my dissertation

requirement. The Vice President of DIII got me in touch with another member of the DIII leadership about the possibility of evaluating the *Gameday the DIII Way* training. He thought that my program evaluation experience in the classroom setting was adequately credible to allow me to move forward in working with the NCAA (American Evaluation Association, n.d.).

**Feasibility.** The feasibility standard focuses on the efficiency and effectiveness of the evaluation process (American Evaluation Association, n.d.). In this evaluation, the feasibility standard ensures that the survey is relevant to the start of the *Gameday the DIII Way* service training. This was the first evaluation of the *Gameday the DIII Way* training, and it was carried out approximately eight months after the official launch of the training. This period was what DIII requested. To ensure efficiency, I considered the length of time it took to complete the survey. The DIII leadership requested the survey take approximately five minutes, so more participants were willing to complete it.

The logic model guided the effectiveness of the survey for collecting data. The logic model illustrated the short-term outcomes that were important to the NCAA. The DIII leadership provided feedback during the development of the logic model. With a strong logic model, the effectiveness of the survey was stronger because I knew what outcomes the NCAA wanted to learn about from the program evaluation survey.

**Propriety.** Propriety focuses on “standards support what is proper, fair, legal, right and just in evaluations” (Yarbrough et al., 2011). As the evaluator, I paid close attention to the stakeholder’s interests and needed to ensure proper and fair evaluation. There was heavy input of my prior work with respect to the creation of the logic model,

and the survey was created with DIII leadership input to ensure the program evaluation was created right (Yarbrough et al., 2011).

Also, there was no threat of harm to the participants in this study. The survey was completely voluntarily, and the participant could stop at any time. At the end of the study and analysis of the data, the DIII leadership had full privilege to view the data (Yarbrough et al., 2011).

**Accuracy.** The accuracy standards intend to ensure there is valid and reliable information, sound designs and analysis, and direct communication free of bias. The program evaluation is grounded in theory and information is gathered through a sound survey technique. Also, the survey can be trusted as reliable because it was written and approved by the DIII leadership and the NCAA research department. Additionally, there was formal data analysis performed on the survey results (Yarbrough et al., 2011)

### **Research with Human Subjects**

Although preexisting data set will be used in this study, the proposal will be submitted to the William and Mary IRB to ensure compliance with human subjects' research. The internet survey used in the study was completely voluntary and allowed users to exit at any time. There were no survey items about supplying a name or institution in the survey. Thus, the data set came to me without any identification. The only grouping I came to know was if the participant was an administrator, administrators/coaches. a coach, or part of the other group in different positions. With no identifying survey items on the survey, the data reported to the stakeholders will be anonymous.

The IRB process at the College of William and Mary required students who are working with human subjects to complete the modules of the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) for compliance training (CITI Program, n.d.). I completed the CITI Program on February 10, 2016, and my training will continue through February 9, 2019.

Since my research involves adult participants, I sent my protocol for approval to the Protections of Human Subjects Committee at the College of William and Mary. In my prior work with the NCAA, I submitted my survey protocol for clearance. I first submitted on May 16, 2018 and was exempt from a formal review on May 28, 2018 (William and Mary, n.d.). Once the survey was edited by the NCAA research department, I sent the survey to the William and Mary Institutional Review Board again. As previously discussed, all the changes from the NCAA were included in the submission for IRB approval. The protocol was exempt on December 15, 2018.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

The purpose of this formative evaluation is to explore if the *Gameday the DIII Way* training program is reaching its short-term goals as laid out in the logic model. Here, in Chapter 4, there will be a statistical analysis, quantitative and qualitative, of the results of the online survey the NCAA distributed.

#### **Summary Findings for Study**

The survey was sent to participants in the *Gameday the DIII Way* training. The NCAA selected the eight groups and I selected one among whom the survey was distributed. The participants selected to receive the survey were participants who received training after the survey was finalized in August 2018 and my selection had received training in July 2018. I added one conference training group to add another conference, since there were only two conference trainings selected. A total of 571 surveys were sent out and 195 participants completed the survey for a response rate of 34%. Fourteen administrators/coaches, 36 administrators, 110 coaches, and 34 others in different positions completed the survey (Table 2). One survey response did not include what position the individual held, so the data could not be used because the evaluation questions focus on comparisons between groups. There were 167 individuals who underwent the *Gameday the DIII Way* training less than six months ago, 24 who participated 6-12 months ago, and three who participated more than a year ago.

Table 2

*Breakdown of Respondents to the Survey*

Role	Respondents
Administrators	36
Coaches	110
Both Administrators and Coaches	14
Others	34
<b>Total</b>	<b>194</b>

This chapter analyzes both the quantitative and qualitative questions related to the research questions. To analyze the quantitative questions, an ANOVA and post-hoc Tukey were used. Table 3 provides the descriptive statistics for the quantitative questions. The analysis used for the qualitative questions was the constant comparative technique from grounded theory (Mills et al., 2006).

Table 3

*Descriptive Statistics for Quantitative Items*

Survey Item	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I am satisfied with my <i>Gameday the DIII Way</i> Training	193	4.21	0.81
My facilitator presented the <i>Gameday the DIII Way</i> Training content in a way I could easily understand.	193	4.50	0.60
I gained new knowledge about the <i>Gameday the DIII Way</i> initiative and the national standards on game day service	192	4.12	0.90
What new skills did you learn to help when fan sportsmanship issues arise?	193	4.39	0.63

Overall, the short-term goals from the logic model are being reached according to the data collected. The training is positively received, new knowledge and skill have been learned, and policies are being created to combat poor fan behavior. The following sections gives the detailed results of the *Gameday* survey.

**Evaluation question #1.** Are there differences regarding coaches’, administrators’, administrators/coaches, and other participants’ perceptions of the quality of *Game Day the DIII Way training*?

- a. What knowledge and skills did the participants gain from *Gameday the DIII Way* training?
- b. What suggestions did the participants make to improve the content?

For the main question, I am satisfied with my *Gameday the DIII Way* training, an ANOVA test was completed with a set alpha level of 0.05 for survey Items 4 and 5,

which were Likert scale items. For Item 4, participant satisfaction with the *Gameday the DIII* training, each respondent group was compared ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ), administrator/coaches ( $N = 14$ ,  $M = 4.21$ ), coaches ( $N = 109$ ,  $M = 4.03$ ), administrators ( $N = 36$ ,  $M = 4.44$ ), and other positions ( $N = 35$ ,  $M = 4.50$ ). The ANOVA results indicated that there was a significant difference between groups as illustrated in Table 4,  $F(3, 189) = 4.56$ . The post-hoc Tukey showed a significant difference in response between coaches and administrators ( $p = .03$ ), and coaches and others in different positions ( $p = .01$ ).

In survey item five ( $M = 4.51$ ,  $SD = .60$ ), my facilitator presented the *Gameday the DIII Way* training content in a way I could easily understand, participant ratings of the clarity of the presentation by their facilitators were compared. The administrator/coaches ( $N = 14$ ,  $M = 4.43$ ), coaches ( $N = 109$ ,  $M = 4.41$ ), administrators ( $N = 36$ ,  $M = 4.58$ ), and participants in other positions ( $N = 34$ ,  $M = 4.74$ ) were compared. The results of the ANOVA test illustrated that there was a significant difference between groups,  $F(3, 189) = 2.93$ , which are illustrated in Table 5. The post-hoc Tukey indicated that there was a significant difference between the coaches and the other participant group ( $p = .03$ ).

Table 4

*ANOVA for Item 4: I am satisfied with my Gameday the DIII Way Training experience.*

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Between Groups	8.46	3	2.82	4.57	.004
Within Groups	116.66	189	0.61		
Total	125.12	192			



Table 5

*ANOVA for Item 5: My facilitator presented the Gameday the DIII Way Training content in a way I could easily understand.*

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Between Groups	3.03	3	1.01	2.93	.035
Within Groups	65.22	189	0.35		
Total	68.25	192			

**Evaluation question 1-a.** For part a of evaluation question one, survey Items 6, 10, 11 were used for analysis. Survey Item 6 measured the degree participants believed that they gained new knowledge about the *Gameday the DIII Way* initiative. Comparing respondent groups on this question required an ANOVA test with a set alpha level of  $p < 0.05$  to be run. For survey Item 6, the mean was 4.10 and the standard deviation was 0.95. Again, the administrators/coaches ( $N = 13, M = 4.15$ ), coaches ( $N = 109, M = 4.00$ ), administrators ( $N = 36, M = 4.22$ ), and the group of other participants ( $N = 34, M = 4.38$ ) were compared. The ANOVA test for significant differences between groups showed that there was no significant difference between groups,  $F(3, 188) = 1.77$ . Table 6 illustrates these results.

Table 6

*ANOVA for Question 6: I gained new knowledge about the Gameday the DIII Way initiative and the national standards on game day service.*

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Between Groups	4.30	3	1.43	1.77	0.15
Within Groups	151.94	188	0.81		
Total	156.25	191			

Survey Items 10 and 11 help answer evaluation question 1-a: What knowledge and skills did the participants gain from *Gameday the DIII Way* training? Table 7 shows the frequency table of responses to item 10 of the survey. The top three responses participants selected were better guest services selected 86 times, knowledge of how to address issues at events selected 85 times, and conflict resolution selected 79 times. Item 10 of the survey includes another selection of “other” and only nine participants selected the option. Of the nine responses, the most common answer that was coded was nothing new/reinforcing skills already known. One quote was “No new skills; reinforcement of skills already in place.”

Table 7

*Frequency Table: Item 10, What new skills did you learn to help when fan sportsmanship issues arise? (check all that apply)*

Response Option	Responses
Better Guest Service	86
Conflict Resolution	79
Knowledge of how to address issues at Events	85
How to Deal with Crowd Behavior	62
Other	11

Survey item 11 was an open-ended item asking participants what skills they wish they had gained. Two themes emerged from the 24 responses. Table 8 illustrates the themes and codes. The first skill participants wish they learned was conflict resolution. Conflict resolution was a skill that was a selection choice for Item 10; however, some participants felt that there were no conflict resolution skills taught during the training as they explained in Item 11. A participant commented, “there was nothing in the training about conflict resolution, so it seems odd that it's even listed as a new skill we could have learned. This is a glaring omission that needs to be added to the training.” Another quote was, “I would [have] liked to learn some tips on conflict resolution and crowd behavior. For example, sometimes a whole student section is being rowdy and can be difficult to isolate one individual.”

The next theme was how to deal with fans, summarized as “how to talk/approach fans who are being inappropriate or negative” and “the best ways to remove an unruly fan if it gets to that point.” Another quote to go along with this theme is, “What to do if

things go the other way and people don't follow directions.” This goes back to the research question about what knowledge individuals gained or wish they had gained from the training.

Table 8

*Qualitative Emergent Themes and Codes for Survey Items 10 and 11*

Item	N	Emergent Theme	Codes
10	9	No New Skills	Nothing None
11	24	Conflict Resolution	No training Conflict Resolution Glaring Omission Unruly Fans
		Approaching Fans	Talk/approach Fans Deal with Fans

**Evaluation Question 1-b.** For evaluation question 1-b, the survey items about what content needs improvement (Item 8) and what can be done to improve the content (Item 9) were explored to answer what suggestions the participants made to improve the *Gameday the DIII* training. In item eight, the participants checked all that applied. The most frequent response was that the content was fine. The next most frequent response was how to apply the training to campus. Table 9 illustrates the responses to item eight of the survey.

Table 9

*Frequency Table: Item 8, What training content do you feel needs improvement? (check all that apply)*

Response Option	Responses
None, the content is fine.	116
History and benefits of the program	12
Service Standards	9
Behavioral Guidelines	16
How to apply program on your campus	42
Other	11

Item 8 offered an “other” response with a text field for entering open-ended data. Eleven responses were received, yielding two main themes for this write-in section: making the training more specific to issues teams or institutions are having and how to implement them. The codes included implementation, structure, and individual needs. In this category participants commented, “structure the training more to the issues that the university is having” and “more hands on/direct implementation strategies (such as verbal cues for altercations).” Additionally, one participant commented the need for specifics according to the sport, “How to apply game day training for our tennis program.” One participant believed facilitators need to know more, saying, “the presenter should do more research on the institution to know that school and how to help with game day preparation.” These statements create a theme because the statement is seeking more

direct directions from the training. These write-in answers help answer the research question about what content needed improvement in the *Gameday the DIII Way* training.

Survey Item 9 asked participants to comment on how the training could improve based on their selections in Item 8. There was a total of 53 responses to Item 9. One theme was the request for the training to have more specific examples of issues that have occurred and how they were handled. The codes included more relatable and improved specific campus examples. Some participants responses included, “wanted more specific examples and best practices that schools are using” and “examples of issues that have occurred on D3 campuses and how it was handled and how it should have been handled.”

Another theme included having more time to spend on issues pertaining to the specific institution. The codes for this theme were specific campus issues, provide examples, real life examples, and too generic. Participants commented about this theme in various ways including, “talk specifically about issues pertaining to our campus, not other campuses”, “More relatable to our department” and “prove the benefits of the program are worth it. Specific campus training would be more beneficial than a group discussion.” Additionally, another participant said, “talk specifically about issues pertaining to our campus, not other campuses.” One participant discussed how the specific institution was not improved by stating, “It seemed like the content wasn't applicable to our school. The presenter didn't seem to have ideas on how to improve our specific campus game day experience.” Table 10 illustrates the themes and codes for Items 8 and 9.

Table 10

*Qualitative Emergent Themes and Codes for Survey Item 8 and 9*

Item	N	Emergent Theme	Codes
8	11	Direct Implementation at Institutions	Implementation Structure Individual Needs
9	53	Specific Training	More Relatable Improve Specific Campus Examples  Specific issues from campus Provide Examples
		Specialized Training to Institutions	Real Life Examples Too generic

**Evaluation question #2.** Are there differences in how administrators, coaches, administrators/coaches, and other participants feel about the effectiveness to act based on *Gameday the DIII Way training*?

Evaluation question two is answered through the results of item seven, I feel prepared to handle game day sportsmanship issues, on the *Gameday the DIII Way* survey. Survey item seven ( $M = 4.39$ ,  $SD = .63$ ) is a quantitative item that required an ANOVA test that had a set alpha of  $p < 0.05$  and a post-hoc Tukey. Administrators/coaches ( $N = 14$ ,  $M = 4.36$ ), coaches ( $N = 109$ ,  $M = 4.28$ ), administrators ( $N = 36$ ,  $M = 4.47$ ), and others in different positions ( $N = 34$ ,  $M = 4.65$ ) were compared. The ANOVA test showed that there was a significant difference between groups,  $F(3, 189) = 3.25$ . The post-hoc Tukey test illustrated that there was a significant difference in responses

between the coaches and others in different positions ( $p = .02$ ). Table 11 shows the ANOVA results for item seven from the survey.

Table 11

*ANOVA for Item 7, I feel prepared to handle game day sportsmanship issues.*

	<i>SS</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Between Groups	3.72	3	1.24	3.25	0.02
Within Groups	72.14	189	0.38		
Total	75.86	192			

**Evaluation question #3.** What implementation actions did the coaches, administrators, administrators/coaches, and other participants take following completion of the *Game Day the DIII Way* training?

Items 12 and 13 of the survey helps answer and evaluate question three by exploring what actions participants took after the completion of training. The most frequent result was there was no formal meeting or discussion had taken place. Table 12 shows the frequency table. In the other option, the most common answer written was that the training was conducted with the whole athletic staff present. Another response that was that was common was there were discussions about *Gameday the DIII Way* training at department/staff meetings.



Table 12

*Frequency Table: Item 12, When you returned to campus to discuss the Gameday the*

*DIII Way Training, which of the following occurred? (check all that apply)*

Response Option	Responses
I met with my Assistant Athletic Director or Athletic Director	38
We had a post-training meeting with the athletic staff	36
No formal meeting or discussion has taken place	85
We plan to meet soon to share what I learned at training	20
Other	22

Item 13 asks if the athletic departments has considered a plan of action for crowd behavior. Table 13 gives the specific numbers, but 74.6 % of 189 participants said that their athletic department had considered a plan of action. Item 13a was a question that only those participants who answered “yes” to item 13 had the opportunity to answer. Table 14 shows specific results, but 79.2 % of those who thought about a policy have a policy in place. Those who answered “yes” to item 13a said 13b can be answered; 13b asked who the main contact for the policy in place was. Table 15 shows the results for Item 13b. The most common main contact for crowd behavior policies was the athletic director.

Table 13

*Frequency Table: Item 13, Has the athletic department considered a plan of action to deal with crowd behavior?*

Response Option	Responses	%
Yes	141	74.6
No	48	25.4
Total	189	

Table 14

*Frequency Table: Item 13a, Have you put the policy in place?*

Response Option	Responses	%
Yes	99	79.2
No	26	20.8
Total	125	

Table 15

*Frequency Table: Item 13, Who is the main contact person for the policy?*

Response Option	Responses
Athletic Director	54
Assistant Athletic Director	26
Coach/staff	10
Other	8
Total	98

## Summary

In Chapter 4, both quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data from the online survey were explored. Each of the three evaluation questions were explored by way of the analysis. The evidence provided does suggest that the short-term outcomes of the Gameday logic model are met. Overall, coaches ( $N = 109$ ,  $M = 4.03$ ) were significantly less satisfied than the other participants ( $N = 35$ ,  $M = 4.50$ ), but the overall satisfaction with the training was positive ( $M = 4.51$ ,  $SD = 0.60$ ). Many participants learned new skills and provided good suggestions on how to improve the training. Most of the participants have thought about a plan of action for poor fan behavior. In Chapter 5, I will further discuss the results and make recommendations to the NCAA about the *Gameday the DIII Way* training.

## CHAPTER 5

### RECOMMENDATIONS

I have encountered and experienced many different DIII venues during my time as an assistant women's soccer coach—some positive and some negative. *Gameday the DIII Way* training is an important program for the NCAA. The NCAA has made significant investments in terms of money and time to train over 100 facilitators and 3000 participants with the *Gameday the DIII Way* training and will continue to do the same for many more participants in the future. The overall goal of the program is to assist institutions in creating athletic environments that are characterized by a blend of the best competition and good sportsmanship. This goal is important as students continue to use athletics as a college selection tool. Furthermore, it helps student-athletes develop a sense of belonging and shapes the college experience for parents, alumni, and students (Shulman & Bowen, 2003). If, as some scholars suggest, athletics is a unique element in the personal development of a student, the success of the *Gameday* program takes on even more significance.

The recommendations in this chapter are designed to help the NCAA strengthen the current design of the DIII *Gameday* program to accomplish the goals of improving the athletic environment in DIII. This study has been guided by the pragmatic paradigm, and the recommendations are based on the three assumptions in the paradigm: (1) the importance of formative assessment in successful evaluation; (2) the assumption that

evaluators in this paradigm value the formation and maintenance of relationships with stakeholders, which will encourage making adjustments to the program to increase the chances for success (Mertens & Wilson, 2012, p. 226); and (3) embracing the need for further mixed-methods research to provide valid data for future decisions.

Formative evaluations may focus on either processes or outcomes and are conducted while a program is being implemented. Commonly, the evaluation can reveal the misunderstandings and shortcomings of a program's design that can be resolved as more data about the program becomes available. For example, the current study includes two research questions identified by the NCAA that focus on the difference between administrators, administrators/coaches, coaches, and others. It was difficult to establish why the results of the questions were important to the NCAA in evaluating the success of the program. The analysis of the findings indicated that there were statistical differences between coaches and other participants, but the differences were not large enough to have practical implications on program development. Further conversations with the NCAA are required to determine how these findings may be applied.

The second assumption that guides the development of recommendations pertains to the role of the evaluator. Evaluators working within the pragmatic paradigm attempt to form close relationships with the stakeholders. This relationship is important because evaluators can relate to the needs of the stakeholders, which may help them interpret and apply the results (Mertens & Wilson, 2012, p. 226). Evaluators working within this paradigm form associations with the stakeholders that are more like that of coaches than judges.

Evaluators are often required to assist with programs that may have been put together without tools such as logic models, assessment strategies, or action plans. Evaluators who embrace the values of the pragmatic paradigm can use their relationship with program leaders to suggest conducting additional targeted research to build on previous work. In this study, the logic model was built well after the program had been designed and delivered, and there are many points where more targeted research can contribute to program improvement.

Finally, a pragmatic researcher uses a mixed-methods approach to ensure that the research method matches the question and purpose (Mertens & Wilson, 2012, p. 91). Mertens and Wilson (2012) suggest that the primary objective within the pragmatic paradigm is to produce data that is helpful for the stakeholders. They advocated that the mixed-methods approach is appropriate, and, in this study, having qualitative and quantitative data is useful for the stakeholders. The recommendations in this chapter will require multiple additional pieces of research to address both qualitative and quantitative questions.

In the next section, I explore how the data help make recommendations to improve the *Gameday* training. First, I discuss the limitations and challenges of the survey. Then, the positive findings and the areas for improvement are discussed. Finally, I provide specific recommendations.

### **Addressing the Limitations and Challenges to Validity**

The *Gameday the DIII Way* training requires further evaluation because this is the first formative assessment exploring whether the program is successful in attaining its short-term goals. According to the NCAA, changes and adjustments will be made after

this formative assessment. After the changes, the training must be evaluated again to ensure that the goals are being met and the training meets the standards of a program the NCAA would like to continue.

The findings suggest that participants find the program well designed and well facilitated and have high levels of satisfaction with the quality of the training. Overall, the participants agree that they gained new knowledge about the *Gameday the DIII Way* initiative and felt confident to handle a gameday situation. The planning process used by the sportsmanship working group in conjunction with the Disney Institute seems to have produced positive results.

However, although the findings from the survey indicate a high degree of satisfaction with the product of the survey, the limitations imposed by the NCAA are substantial and should be considered in the evaluation. Four limitations should be noted: (1) the sample selection process, (2) the number of questions on the survey, (3) the use of an anonymous survey, and (4) the timing of the distribution.

The first issue in interpreting the data from the surveys pertained to the process and timing of the sample selection. The initial email survey was sent to 571 participants who had taken the training between July and November 2018. The NCAA selected most of the sample while I added one group to be surveyed. The NCAA selected the sample pool because it contained the participants trained after the NCAA and I completed the final survey. Only the July 2018 group was outside that sample. Therefore, no participants were selected from November 2017 to June 2018. Furthermore, the NCAA decided to limit the responses available for the sample. However, a total of 3387 individuals have currently taken the training, so there may be important differences

between the participants from the earlier sessions and those who participated more recently.

Another limitation was the way the NCAA distributed the survey, as this affected the validity of the survey. The NCAA did not email the participants directly. They emailed the survey to the facilitator of the training, and the facilitator distributed it to each athletic director or the participants. No format for the email that the NCAA required was available. The distribution varies each time. Email distribution causes problems with reliability and accuracy. The reliability is impacted because email distribution may have resulted in participants missing out on emails and not reading them.

The use of anonymous online forms may increase response rates by helping make respondents more comfortable about the confidentiality of their answers, but some inherent limitations characterize it. Anonymous forms prevent researchers from sending reminders to potential responders who have not responded, which tends to depress response rates. In this case, as the NCAA did not have data about all the participants, it is impossible to know how representative the sample is and estimate nonresponse bias. Finally, the use of online surveys allows for the cost-effective gathering of self-report and perception data, but other methods are needed to measure actual behavior.

The distribution, the time between the training, and the distribution of the survey varies. The time between the participants receiving training and taking the survey varied from less than three months to twelve months. This can affect the results because the participants with a longer time between the training and survey may not remember the details of the training as clearly as those who have taken the survey more recently.



Even with these limitations, the results of the survey provide useful insights into the reactions of the participants and suggestions for further research. Future studies should be designed to address the concerns regarding the depth of the research and selection of the sample.

### **Findings for the Survey**

The survey yielded four findings. The perceived quality of the *Gameday the DIII Way* training was high. Overall, the participants agreed that they gained new knowledge about the *Gameday the DIII Way* initiative as well as gameday standards. On average, the participants felt confident to handle a gameday situation; 99 participants stated that their departments had a policy in place. However, there is no way to know if the participants came from the same institution and if the policy was in place before the training took place. These two issues should be addressed in further research. A future survey should have a more specific question about the institution having a policy in place before the training or developing one after the training. The evaluation must focus more on how the institution is working to change the culture at their university.

As the perceived quality of the training was high ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 0.81$ ), the NCAA can see some evidence that the training that was created with the Disney Institute was worth the partnership. The NCAA suggested that the results of this survey could play a role in their decision to continue the training. They feel they should continue the Disney partnership for now. Furthermore, they will have to undertake other evaluations to ensure that the training is positively impacting the participants. The research will need to be targeted; mixed-methods research should be conducted to provide data for formative evaluation. The mixed-method research should contain Likert-Scale questions

that focus on how the training is perceived but it should also be characterized by more encouragement to provide suggestions on how to improve the training. With the progression of time, the research should shift to explore whether the culture of DIII is changing. This means there is a need for more questions about how other institution environments are dealing with fan behavior.

Additionally, the NCAA needs to consider fidelity of implementation. Fidelity of implementation looks into how administrators implement a program (Dusenbury, Brannigan, Falco, & Hansen, 2003). The NCAA should learn about how schools are implementing the gameday program at their school.

The survey results indicate that participants believe they are gaining new knowledge about the training and the expectations pertaining to gameday standards. This should encourage the NCAA with respect to the fact that the knowledge and information about gameday situations are being received by participants. One of NCAA's short-term goals was to help participants acquire more skills to handle gameday issues better. The participants agreed that they felt prepared to handle a gameday situation. This is a finding, as it illustrates that the program goals are being met. A challenge that remains is that there is no way to truly know if the participants have learned new skills or are able to handle gameday issues, as seeing the participants in action is not possible.

Participants reported that their institutions have policies in place to address gameday situations. This was a short-term goal set by the NCAA, which is being attained. Moreover, the NCAA should consider adding some information for institutions that already have policies in place. To do this, the NCAA should have a specific quantitative project that determines if an institution has a policy in place and what is

included in the policy. Specifically, research should explore whether the policy has been in place before the training or after the training. Additionally, research may explore the elements of the training used by an institution. Finally, it is essential to secure feedback about how the policy works at different athletic events.

### **Areas for Improvement Suggested by the Survey**

The survey results suggest four areas in which the training can be enhanced. First, the aspect of conflict resolution is not adequately covered in the training. Second, participants want more specific campus examples. Third, the training fails to inform about the ways to handle crowd behavior. Finally, more than half of the institutions represented have not scheduled any sort of follow-up. It is important to recognize that there will need to be implementation of suggests to improve the training.

Implementation is, “The process of incorporating an intervention—ideally an evidence-based one—to a specific setting” (Demiris, Oliver, Capurro, & Wittenberg-Lyles, 2014).

Fewer than 50% of the participants selected conflict resolution as a skill learned, and others mentioned the lack of skill development in conflict resolution. Highly identified fans, which could include some parents, are more likely to use aggression (End & Foster, 2010; Hilliard & Johnson, 2018; Rudd, 2016). With this information the NCAA should investigate where information on conflict resolution can be added. To make these changes there needs to be participation, for example from facilitators, to further the reach will be on the implementation of changes (Demiris et al., 2014).

Fan disruptions can turn into conflicts, and the participants feel the need for more training on this issue. The NCAA should collect baseline data to understand better how often policies are being used at institutions who already have them. A mixed-methods

approach should be used to gather baseline data, which should include quantitative questions about how often the policy is being used and qualitative data about how the policy is working. The survey should be distributed to both administrators and others responsible for gameday management. The qualitative data should be collected through interviews with administrators at different institutions.

Furthermore, the participants wanted more specific examples of gameday issues. They want examples that relate to their campus. Adapting changes like specific examples, can have a positive effect on the participants and raise the effectiveness of the training (Demiris et al, 2014). This suggests that the participants did not learn all the skills required to handle an ongoing fan disruption. The NCAA working group came up with the scenarios used in module six of the program. However, with this evidence, the NCAA should reconsider the way it formulates the scenarios used in module six. When reconsidering the ways to create scenarios, there needs to be considerations on how to include specific examples from the participants' institutions present at the training. Facilitators should be responsible for getting in touch with the participating institutions to understand the specific issues at different institutions.

Another skill that was not significantly acquired by the participants pertained to the ways to handle crowd behavior. This observation from the data should concern the NCAA. The main purpose of the training is to make the gameday environment welcoming to all those present at the contest. If the participants do not feel that they have learned the ways to handle crowd behavior, the training is missing a crucial part to ensure positive gameday environments. The NCAA should review how handling crowd behavior is taught in the training and consider the ways to improve such content so that

more participants feel they have acquired the respective skill when they leave the training.

Along with reviewing the content on handling crowd behavior, the NCAA should explore how the training discusses the ways to take the information back to individual institutions. Over half of the participants did not undertake any activities, such as engaging in meetings or discussions, when they got back to their campuses after the training. The NCAA should review the way they discuss bringing back information to campuses. This will help the NCAA better reach the short-term goal of motivating the department to have an action plan or policy that helps the institution create a positive gameday environment.

### **Specific Recommendations**

Mertens and Wilson (2012) suggest that the findings from a pragmatic paradigm evaluation should be used to strengthen the program and illustrate progress. The results indicate that the survey was well constructed and provided initial results. However, adequate data was lacking to identify the following: (1) whether the program is moving in a way to ensure that the long-term goals of motivating the entire event management teams to deliver excellent service will be eventually met and (2) whether the athletic director and event manager will be able to detail the broad cultural changes in gameday environment. Despite restrictions, there is enough data to suggest some specific recommendations to improve the *Gameday the DIII Way* training.

**Role of coaches and other participants.** The *Gameday the DIII Way* training is created to train anyone working in a gameday environment. A goal of the training is to illustrate that all roles are important in creating a positive gameday environment (NCAA

DIII, n.d.). The data does show significant differences between groups, but it is unclear how the NCAA wants to use these findings. However, in the training, the NCAA does not specify set roles for those that are a part of the gameday environment.

Individual expectations are not laid out for persons who are part of gameday environments. A major group that needs to understand their role in a gameday disturbance is the coach. Some coaches may be a part of the administrators working on a game day for a different sport than the one they coach. However, it leaves the question about what entails the role of a coach who is coaching a team in competition in a gameday disturbance. As coaches are on the sideline, the responsibility of controlling fan behavior should fall on someone else.

Furthermore, coaches are not the only participants who may wonder what their specific role is in a gameday disturbance. Other participants have various roles in the athletic department. An example of such a group is that of athletic trainers. Generally, athletic trainers are on the side where the teams are placed in the case of an injury. Therefore, athletic trainers need to know what their specific role is in a gameday situation.

I suggest that the NCAA include information about what the roles of coaches and others on the team sideline during fan disturbances. To do this, the NCAA may need to conduct research to understand the perceived role that coaches see themselves playing. Such research should be qualitative in nature. The NCAA needs to ask different coaches what they believe their role is on a game day. This can be expanded to include those in other positions. If the results suggest that coaches do not see themselves to be playing an

important role in handling fan behavior issues, the NCAA needs to specify who needs to take responsibility during such fan disturbance situations.

**Parents and dysfunctional behavior.** DIII institutions generally do not have large stadiums such as DI athletics. These small environments make even a single fan disturbance incident gain momentum much faster (Ford, 2018). From personal experience, some parents are also disruptive and can act as dysfunctional fans as well. There has been no research on parents as fans in the collegiate setting or specifically them as dysfunctional fans, but some parents can be loud and obnoxious in various ways (Omli et al., 2008). Some parents can be obnoxious when they engage in behavior that involves constantly harping on about their own child, undermining the opposition, or attacking the officials. They most likely do not fit in with the other audience at the game (Wakefield & Wann, 2006). Parents usually attend events to provide encouragement to and cheer for their child's team, but obnoxious parents stand out. This is important because the involvement of such parents changes the environment. Obnoxious parents can cause others to react to things that are said and affect the players.

**Conflict resolution.** Both the quantitative and qualitative data from Items 10 and 11 illustrate a need for the inclusion of conflict resolution training. This is important because of the threat of altercations if fans with poor behavior disagree with those trying to resolve issues at hand. A dysfunctional fan is more likely to be confrontational in a sporting arena (Wakefield & Wann, 2006; Wann et al., 2017) which is important for the NCAA to acknowledge so they can be prepared for confrontations. Additional information could be provided in module five under safety. In module five, the first

guideline that the facilitators discuss is safety, and to ensure safety to all, it may be important at this point to discuss conflict resolution (NCAA DIII, n.d.).

For the 2018–2019 period, the NCAA aims to make sure the content is good, and the training is solidified so that the online training can be completed. Adding conflict resolution to the online training curriculum should be done before the online training modules are complete. The NCAA will need to work with the Disney Institute to add this content to the training curriculum, as they are responsible for helping the NCAA with content and training (Disney Institute, n.d.).

### **Summary**

The *Gameday the DIII Way* training has been designed to ultimately change the culture of the gameday environment. Research illustrates that numerous types of fans and fan behaviors exist that can cause issues at athletic events. Through discussions and a straw poll, it was discovered that some parents of current players cause the most issues on campuses.

The *Gameday the DIII Way* training has been developed to train gameday event staff on how to combat poor fan behavior. This study focused on exploring whether the *Gameday the DIII Way* training is attaining its short-term goals of motivating participants to encourage their department to create a policy to combat poor fan behavior, increasing the knowledge base of participants about controlling fan behavior, ensuring that participants learn new skills to deal with fans, and encouraging discussions about the training when participants return to their respective campuses. A mixed-methods survey was used, which was grounded in the pragmatic paradigm.



The results indicate that the short-term goals of the program are being met. There are some significant differences between coaches, administrators/coaches administrators, and others in different positions. However, there are questions on why the NCAA wants to know about the ways these questions will help it. The pragmatic paradigm suggests that the results of the survey should be used to improve the program. Even concerning the questions on how the significant differences are important to the NCAA, several suggestions are made to improve the program. Overall, the suggestions, which includes undertaking more research and evaluation, can be used to help the NCAA achieve its long-term goals.

## APPENDIX

### *Gameday the DIII Way Training Feedback Survey*

Thank you for participating in this NCAA survey. The results will be used to improve the Gameday the DIII Way Training to keep on track to creating a new gameday culture all around Division III.

By participating in this survey, you understand you are participating voluntarily. You are free to leave the survey at any time. The survey is anonymous, and no one will be able to identify your answers. This survey will take approximately five minutes.

1. How did you receive your Gameday the DIII Way Training?
  - In person: from a trained facilitator
  - Online
2. When did you receive your Gameday the DIII Way Training?
  - Less than 6 months ago
  - 6 to 12 months ago
  - More than a year ago
3. What is your position in the athletic department? (select all that apply)
  - Administrator
  - Coach
  - Other

Indicate your level of agreement with the following four statements:

Strongly Agree Agree Somewhat agree/Somewhat disagree Disagree

Strongly disagree

4. I am satisfied with my Gameday the DIII Way Training experience.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Somewhat agree/Somewhat disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  
5. My facilitator presented the Gameday the DIII Way Training content in a way I could easily understand.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Somewhat agree/Somewhat disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  
6. I gained new knowledge about the Gameday the DIII Way initiative and the national standards on game day service.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree
  - Somewhat agree/Somewhat disagree
  - Disagree
  - Strongly disagree
  
7. I feel prepared to handle game day sportsmanship issues.
  - Strongly Agree
  - Agree

- Somewhat agree/Somewhat disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

8. What training content do you feel needs improvement? (check all that apply)

- None, the content is fine.
- History and benefits of the program
- Service Standards
- Behavioral Guidelines
- How to apply program on your campus
- Other\_\_\_\_\_

9. For each item you selected above, please tell us what you believe can be done to improve it.

10. What new skills did you learn to help when fan sportsmanship issues arise?

(check all that apply)

- Better guest service
- Conflict resolution
- Knowledge of how to address issues at events
- How to deal with crowd behavior
- Other

11. What other skills would you have liked to learn?

12. When you returned to campus to discuss the Gameday the DIII Way Training, which of the following occurred? (check all that apply)

- I met with my Assistant Athletic Director or Athletic Director

- We had a post-training meeting with the athletic staff
- No formal meeting or discussion has taken place
- We plan to meet soon to share what I learned at training
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

13. Has the athletic department considered a plan of action to deal with crowd behavior?

- Yes (if Yes move to 13 a.)
- No

13 a. Have you put the policy in place?

- Yes (if Yes move to 13 b.)
- No

13 b. Who is the main contact person for the policy?

- Athletic Director
- Assistant Athletic Director
- Coach/staff member
- Other

14. Do you have any other comments about the Gameday the DIII Way training or campus implementation?

Thank you for your participation.

Click Submit to electronically upload your feedback.

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## VITA

**Erin Beth Wojtkun**

### Education

**JOINT DEGREE STUDENT-DOCTOR OF EDUCATION/MASTERS IN BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION | MAY 2019 | THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY**

- Interested in research about the success of collegiate student-athletes
- Barton Mallow Fellowship Award Recipient 2015
- Thom Terwilliger Higher Education Fellowship Award 2017
- Graduate Assistant for Dr. Stephanie Blackmon and Dr. Pamela Eddy

**MASTERS OF ART OF TEACHING | MAY 2010 | CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY (CNU)**

- Major: Elementary Education
- Student Teaching completed in Newport News, VA and Panama City, Panama

**BACHELOR OF ARTS | MAY 2009 | CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY**

- Major: Psychology
- Minor: Leadership Studies
- Awards and Activities: USA South Conference Women of the Year 2009, President Leadership Program National Leadership Award, CNU Athletics Community Service Award, CNU Student Activities Service Award for Individuals (over 110 hrs. of community service), Study Abroad In England Summer 2007, Member of the NCAA Division III National Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (2007-2010-Selected to NCAA Management Council 2009-2010)

### Experience

**INTERN FOR THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT | THE COLLEGE OF WILLIAM AND MARY | JUNE 2016-AUGUST 2016**

**COORDINATOR OF ACADEMIC SUCCESS | CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY | MARCH 2014-JULY 2015**

**ASSISTANT WOMEN'S SOCCER COACH | CHRISTOPHER NEWPORT UNIVERSITY | SEPTEMBER 2011-CURRENT**