

The effectiveness of a national training program on the level of preparedness of sport event security action teams.

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Stadium and arena managers need reliable and skilled personnel responsible for developing game day security policies and procedures with risk management as the foundation (Davies, 1998). Therefore, effective risk management training is imperative for those who manage large scale spectator events due to the potential for mass injuries and casualties, venue and property damage, and local to national economic impact. However, previous research (Cunningham, 2006; Phillips, 2006) identified deficiencies in the level of preparedness of intercollegiate venue managers as it related to command and control, effective and efficient emergency response, and ability to safely evacuate the venue. In addition, Cunningham (2006) identified a lack of formal and informal training and education of intercollegiate venue personnel with six out of 10-managers reporting no formal game day security training, education or certification. In order to increase security knowledge and awareness and improve the level of preparedness, the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS) commissioned the Center for Spectator Sports Security Management (CSSSM) to design, develop and deliver a national sport event risk management training program for National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) institutions. The objectives of this project were to 1) design a training program for sport event security action teams (SESATs), 2) develop sport-specific security curriculum, 3) deliver the content to increase security knowledge and awareness, and 4) evaluate the effectiveness of the training program. The curriculum design and development involved a 2-day focus group session.

Data collection on the first day received feedback from a panel of subject matter experts (SMEs; n=11) representative of professional and intercollegiate sport, event security management, risk management, emergency management, and local law enforcement while the second day received feedback from 7-SESATs (n=35) representative of NCAA Division I, II, and III institutions. An analysis of needs, gaps and demands in sport event security management were recorded. In addition, curriculum content was discussed and a consensus agreed upon for specific learning modules and objectives. Results of the focus group sessions were 1) a SESAT team includes 5-members from stadium (or arena) management, the local emergency management director, campus police, emergency medical services, and fire/HAZMAT personnel and 2) the training program should be a 2-day workshop to include 11-modules. Once the curriculum for the 2-day training program was approved by DHS, the CSSSM conducted 3-workshops during a five month period to pilot test the curriculum. Pilot I was delivered to 2-SESAT teams of Division III institutions (n=9) while Pilot II and III were delivered to 3- and 6-SESAT teams of Division II (n=15) and Division I institutions (n=28). The course included the following 11-modules: 1) Introduction and Pre-Assessment, 2) Threat Assessment, 3) Multi-Agency Collaboration, 4) Emergency Response and Recovery, 5) Sport Security Planning, 6) Risk Assessment, 7) Sport Security Organizing, 8) Staff Training, 9) Incident Rehearsal, 10) Practical Application, and 11) Conclusion and Post-Assessment. Course evaluation methods included a pre-test and post-test to assess participant learning in addition to participant feedback on the quality of instruction, training and materials in order to change and improve the training program. In specific, a 25-item exam assessed each participants level of preparedness on a 4-point scale as it related to threat assessment (TA; 2-items), multi-agency collaboration (MAC; 3-items), emergency response and recovery (ERR; 5-items), security planning (SP; 3-items), risk assessment (RA; 4-items), security organizing (SO; 3-items), staff training (ST; 4-items), and incident rehearsal (IR; 1-item).

Data analysis for both the pre-test and post-test was completed using the SPSS 16.0 program. In specific, data analysis included descriptive statistics (means and standard deviations), paired sample T-tests and analysis of variance. The results of the data analysis produced the following: 1) the ANOVA indicated no significant differences in the pre-test and post-test scores between participants of Pilot I, II and III; 2) descriptive statistics indicated SESAT personnel pre-training strengths were risk assessment (3.30 +/- .75) and security organizing (3.18 +/- .55) while their weaknesses were threat assessment (1.75 +/- 1.00) and multi-agency collaboration (2.42 +/- 1.00); 3) paired sample T-tests indicated significant difference in pre-test and post-test scores with an improvement in six out of 8-factors ($p < .001$) and total score ($p < .001$); and 4) post-test scores statistics indicated further improvement in the level of preparedness of the 52-participants with scores of the 8-factors ranging from 3.33 (.44) to 3.82 (.51). Upon final approval of the DHS, this training program will be launched at the national level to include SESAT personnel of NCAA Division I, II and III institutions (n=5000). There will be further analysis of the effectiveness of this

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national training program on the level of preparedness of SESAT teams which will be discussed in addition to recommendations for other sport-related safety and security programs.