

## 2013 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2013)

### Taking on the Cause: Exploring Volunteer Coordinators' Identities, Motives, and Commitment to the Golf Fore the Cure Program

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**Management/leadership**                      **Saturday, June 1, 2013**                      **20-minute oral presentation**  
**Abstract 2013-267**                                      **10:50 AM**                                      **(including questions)**  
**(Room 416)**

Recently, there has been a surge in the number of charitable causes utilizing sport activities to raise funds and awareness (Won, Park, & Turner, 2010). Sport activities that leverage health related causes are known as Charity Sport Events (CSEs). Previous literature has highlighted that CSEs provide an environment in which individuals involved have a unique opportunity to attach themselves to two meaningful activities; the sport and/or the cause (e.g., Wood, Snelgrove, & Danylchuk, 2010; Hassay & Peloza, 2009; Filo, Funk, & O'Brien, 2008; Scott & Solomon, 2003). Like the rest of the sport industry, CSEs rely heavily on volunteers to help deliver programs and services (Chalip & Green, 1998; Bang & Ross, 2009). Although extensive research has been conducted on volunteerism, most studies have examined the topic outside the realm of sport (Strigas & Jackson, 2003). Understanding volunteers is industry specific (MacLean & Hamm, 2007). In particular, those that donate their time to sport need to be examined within a variety of environments, to explore the extent to which sport influences those individuals.

Golf Canada is the National Sport Organization (NSO) that is responsible for promoting participation in, and a passion for, the game of golf in Canada. Growing participation, excellence and passion, while upholding the integrity and traditions of the game is the mandate the organization follows (Golf Canada, 2011). To help achieve these goals Golf Canada created the Golf Fore the Cure (GFTC) program in 2004. This initiative targets the female demographic by providing a non-intimidating and fun atmosphere to become involved in the sport of golf, and by partnering with the Canadian Cancer Society (CCS) and Quebec Breast Cancer Foundation (QBCF), raises funds and awareness in the fight against Breast Cancer. Presently, the GFTC program is the largest grassroots recreational golf participation program for women in Canada (Golf Canada, 2011). Since 2010, the number of individuals who volunteer their time coordinating GFTC events has decreased (Golf Canada, 2011). Thus, there is a need to develop a profile of present and past GFTC Coordinators to aid in Golf Canada's pursuit to recruit and retain Coordinators for years to come. The purpose of the current study was to examine who coordinates GFTC events and explore their reasons for getting and staying involved in the program. Specifically, this study explored three areas; (a) Coordinators' social and self-identities, (b) their motivations to become a volunteer coordinator, and (c) what aspects of the events they are most committed to. Using Fluid Surveys, an online survey was created to collect information from present and past GFTC Coordinators. In addition to collecting demographic information, this survey required Coordinators to provide responses to a number of scaled items that were used to elicit their personal identities (derived from Wood et al., 2010), along with their motivation to get involved and remain committed to the GFTC program (adapted from MacLean & Hamm, 2007 and Won et al., 2010). From this information a MANOVA was used to help uncover significant differences between the identity groups based on the number of participants, the total amount of funds raised, and the total number of years involved in coordinating this event.

Once the survey was created, potential participants were contacted via email from Golf Canada. Of the 547 emails that were sent out, 60 bounced back. When possible, telephone calls were made to the GFTC Coordinators whose emails bounced back to secure updated email addresses in order to maximize the number of potential participants in the study. The survey was launched on August 17, 2012 and remained accessible until September 14, 2012. Of the 492 GFTC Coordinators with active email accounts, 115 individuals fully completed the online survey resulting in a response rate of 23.4%. Overall, the majority of the respondents were English speaking (93.0%), white (96.5%) females (92.2%), who were 45 years or older (82.7%), married (73.0%), and employed full time (30.4%) or retired (36.5%).

Consistent with the approach taken by Wood et al. (2010), a hierarchical cluster analysis was performed on the items relating to identity and it was determined that three groupings were appropriate for this sample; Event Enthusiasts (n = 52), Golfers (n = 44), and Non-enthusiasts (n = 19). These groups were determined based on the scores on items from the identity section of the survey, six of which were related to the "cause" and the other six were related to the

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sport (i.e., golf). Coordinators were grouped as Event Enthusiasts if they scored high on all the items, the individuals grouped as Golfers were those that scored high on the items relating to “golf” and low on the “cause” related items, and the Non-enthusiasts scored low on both sets of items. These groupings are somewhat in contrast to the findings of Wood et al. (2010), who identified a fourth group (“cause fundraisers”) who scored high on the items related to the “cause,” but low on the items related to the sport.

The items relating to motivation were adapted from MacLean and Hamm’s (2007) study on Volunteers at the CN Canadian Women’s Open, and Won et al.’s (2010) study on participants in health related CSEs. Five items related to female participation were also included to capture Coordinators’ affinities toward the goals of this program. An exploratory factor analysis was completed using a principal-components analysis extraction method with Oblimin rotation. This analysis identified four motivational factors that accounted for 62.13% of the variance: (a) Philanthropy (29.94%), (b) Leisure (17.63%), (c) Female Participation (9.51%), and (d) Egoistic (5.05%). A confirmatory factor analysis was executed on the items adapted from MacLean and Hamm (2007) relating to commitment, which confirmed three sub-scales accounting for 67.06% of the overall variance; (a) Love of Sport (49.09%), (b) Volunteer Role (11.72%), and (c) Community Growth (6.26%). Using Cronbach’s (1951) alpha coefficient, the reliability of the motivation and commitment scales were calculated and revealed strong levels of internal consistency ( $\alpha = .913$  and  $.959$ , respectively). The alpha coefficients for each of the extracted factors were also calculated, with the four motivation subscales ranging between  $.836$  and  $.928$  and the three commitment sub-scales ranging between  $.860$  and  $.950$ , which are all within acceptable ranges (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2007; Nunnally, 1978).

The MANOVA results revealed significant differences between the identity groups with respect to the areas of motivation and commitment ( $\lambda = .428$ ,  $F = 5.443$ ,  $p = .000$ ). Specifically, the results revealed significant differences between Event Enthusiasts and Non-enthusiasts in four areas; Philanthropy ( $p = .002$ ), Community Growth ( $p = .001$ ), Love of Sport ( $p = .001$ ), and Volunteer Role ( $p = .002$ ). Significant differences were also revealed between the Event Enthusiasts and Golfers in three areas; Philanthropy ( $p = .000$ ), Community Growth ( $p = .000$ ), and Volunteer Role ( $p = .002$ ). Lastly, there was one significant difference revealed between the Non-enthusiasts and Golfers; Love of Sport ( $p = .000$ ). Even though the univariate ANOVA tests did not uncover any significant differences between the identity groups with respect to the funds raised, the number of participants, and the number of years involved, post-hoc analyses uncovered a trend suggesting that Event Enthusiasts may have been with affiliated with the GFTC program for longer period of time compared to the Golfers ( $p = .061$ ).

The results show that no matter which group an individual Coordinator belongs to, the number of people who attend and the amount of money raised is not affected. From this standpoint, Golf Canada representatives should focus on recruiting as many people as possible to become GFTC Coordinators and not focus on a specific type of person. However, given Golf Canada’s concern for retaining these individuals, and since the cost it takes to recruit new Coordinators is higher than it is to retain them (Wood et al., 2010), emphasis should be placed on recruiting Coordinators who are more likely to remain in the program beyond one year. Although no significant differences were uncovered between the groups with respect to the number of years involved with the GFTC program, there was a trend which suggests that Event Enthusiasts have been involved with the program longer than Golfers ( $p = .061$ ). Further evidence of this trend was revealed in the Event Enthusiasts’ higher philanthropic motivations for becoming involved in the GFTC program. Moreover, Event Enthusiasts demonstrated a stronger commitment to community growth and their role as volunteers.

This presentation will discuss the implications of these findings in relation to Golf Canada’s concern for declining numbers of GFTC Coordinators in recent years.