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2008

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Stacey A. Hall

*University of Southern Mississippi*, [stacey.a.hall@usm.edu](mailto:stacey.a.hall@usm.edu)

Rosalie Ward

*University of Southern Mississippi*

Trey Cunningham

*Northwestern State University of Louisiana*

Lou Marciani

*University of Southern Mississippi*

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### Recommended Citation

Hall, S. A., Ward, R., Cunningham, T., Marciani, L. (2008). Developing a New Curriculum in Sport Security Management. *Journal of Homeland Security and Emergency Management*, 5(1).

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# Developing a New Curriculum in Sport Security Management

Stacey Hall, Rosalie Ward, Trey Cunningham, and Lou Marciani

## Abstract

High profile sporting events in the United States have been identified by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as potential terrorist targets (Lipton, 2005). However, there has been an identified lack of training and education for key personnel responsible for sport security operations (Cunningham, 2007). Recognizing the demand and need for a specialized area in sport event security management, the University of Southern Mississippi School of Human Performance and Recreation developed an emphasis area in sports event security management as part of the Master of Science in Sport Management program. The sport security emphasis area includes three graduate level courses – 1) introduction to sport security management, 2) risk assessment of sport venues, and 3) sport event emergency response planning. These courses were developed by an interdisciplinary team composed of faculty from the USM School of Human Performance and Recreation, individuals from the Center for Spectator Sports Security Management, a curriculum design specialist, and several professional sport security experts. The goal of the emphasis area is to equip current and future sport and entertainment managers with the specialization skills and knowledge needed to address the challenges of homeland security in the sports industry.

**KEYWORDS:** sport event security, education, course development

## Introduction

High profile sporting events in the United States have been identified by the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) as potential terrorist targets (Lipton, 2005). However, there has been an identified lack of training and education for key personnel responsible for sport security operations (Cunningham, 2007; Phillips, 2006). Recognizing the demand and need for a specialized area in sport event security management, the University of Southern Mississippi School of Human Performance and Recreation developed an emphasis area in sports event security management as part of the Master of Science in Sport Management program. The sport security emphasis area includes three graduate level courses – 1) introduction to sport security management, 2) risk assessment of sport venues, and 3) sport event emergency response planning. These courses were developed by an interdisciplinary team composed of faculty from the USM School of Human Performance and Recreation, individuals from the Center for Spectator Sports Security Management, a curriculum design specialist, and several professional sport security experts.

In May 2005, The University of Southern Mississippi (USM) established the Center for Spectator Sports Security Management (SSSM) through a Department of Homeland Security grant. The Center is the first of its kind in the United States, building capabilities among those responsible for sports event security management through research, education, and outreach efforts. Research conducted at the Center for SSSM identified gaps in the education and training of current sport event management professionals. It highlighted the need for new innovative programs to ensure that future sport management professionals are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and abilities to organize and protect major sporting events (Cunningham 2007; Beckman 2006; Hall 2006; Phillips, 2006).

Previous survey research identified gaps in training and education of sport security practices at the intercollegiate level. Research also indicated that currently no formalized training and education directed toward sport event and facility security management are available. Phillips (2006) explored the extent of security outsourcing and assessed the current needs in security planning and training at NCAA Division IA and IAA collegiate sport programs. A survey instrument was mailed in spring 2006 to all NCAA Division IA (N=119) and IAA (N=62) institutions, requesting information on who was in charge of game day operations and security and whether the personnel were institutionally employed, volunteers, or outsourced. Of the 181 surveys mailed, 83 were returned for a response rate of 45.8%. Findings indicated over 60% of the security workers were outsourced. The number one need reported was that of timely and vital security information to help in the prevention, detection, and response to disaster incidents, both natural and man-made. The second highest need reported was

obtaining help in conducting vulnerability assessments and the provision of training for emergency response planning and crowd/fan control workshops.

Cunningham (2007) documented the perceived levels of knowledge and skills of the persons responsible for sport event security management in intercollegiate athletics. The study targeted individuals, such as event management and facility operations athletic directors at Division I-A football schools (N=81). Cunningham addressed the perceptions of their abilities, experience, training, and education. Sixty-two percent of all respondents reported having no formal training, education, or certifications in event security management. It is believed that the identification of these gaps will assist with the development of future education, training, and certification programs. Additionally, Beckman (2006) conducted a tabletop disaster exercise of a hypothetical collegiate sport event incident to highlight deficiencies in plans and increase awareness among key security personnel. Participants identified interoperable communications, lack of training, and educational opportunities as major areas of concern.

Additional research projects conducted at the Center for SSSM have also developed standards and capabilities requirements for effective security management of sport events and facilities among NCAA institutions (Hall, 2006). According to Hall (2006), athletic department staff, hired security staff, and all other game day staff (ushers, vendors, ticket takers, etc.) must be properly trained and aware of DHS security initiatives. Furthermore, a new market has emerged for educational institutions across the nation to offer curriculum and certification programs in the sport security area for aspiring sport venue managers and professionals already in the field (Hall, 2006).

### **Course Development**

Recognizing the demand and need for a specialized area in sport event security management, the USM School of Human Performance and Recreation, in conjunction with the Center for SSSM, introduced an emphasis area in sports event security management as part of the Master of Science in Sport Management program. The goal of the emphasis area is to equip current and future sport and entertainment managers with the specialization skills and knowledge needed to address the challenges of homeland security in the sports industry. Providing this area of specialization area delivers invaluable knowledge and skills to aspiring sport managers in the facility management field.

In light of the research findings, several USM faculty and Center for SSSM staff met in the spring of 2006 to consider course content and materials. Additionally, focus groups and interviews with both academic and sport security professionals were conducted in order to guide the development of course content

and materials. Curricula objectives for the development and implementation of the specialization area in sport event security management for future sport managers were decided. The objectives included:

1. Provide quality, consistency, and accessibility of education regarding the
1. capabilities to identify and prioritize hazards, assess vulnerabilities, and determine risks at sports events.
2. Maximize efforts to support and implement the missions of: prevent, protect, respond, and recover via operational planning consistent with the National Response Plan, National Incident Management System and applicable laws and regulations set forth by the Department of Homeland Security.
3. Develop a critical knowledge base in sport event security management systems to prevent occurrences, reduce loss of life or serious injuries, and mitigate significant property damage at major sporting events.
4. Institute a common language among sport event security personnel to enable effective security management and disaster incident response

The development group decided that three courses should be introduced to provide a foundation for an emphasis area of nine hours in the Master of Science Sport Management 36 hour program. These courses needed to address: (1) potential threats to sports events, including terrorism and weapons of mass destruction (WMD), natural disasters, and crowd management problems; (2) sport security practices and operational plans; (3) threat/risk assessment methodologies; and (4) emergency planning, preparedness, response, and recovery. We wanted to ensure that students had an in-depth appreciation of the threat to (1) sports events, (2) the importance of assessment, training, and exercising, and (3) the need for effective emergency response and recovery systems. To ensure all the critical subject matter was included, three courses were developed that built upon the knowledge acquired from each course. The sequence of courses was: 1) HPR 620, An Introduction to Sport Security Management, 2) HPR 626, Risk Assessment of Sport Venues, and 3) HPR 628, Sport Event Emergency Response Planning. An explanation of each course is provided below:

### **HPR 620, An Introduction to Sport Security Management**

The introductory course to sport security management addresses the nature and scope of sport security and issues involved in securing the homeland from domestic and international threats to sports events. Motives, methods, and impact of terrorism activity, natural disasters, and crowd management issues in sport are discussed. This course also includes an examination of the basic legislation and

operations of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security and its role in protecting the United States by detecting, deterring, preventing, and responding to potential threats. Sport security table top exercises are utilized during this course to ensure the application of knowledge. Upon completion of the course students are able to: 1) demonstrate an understanding of sport terrorism activity, 2) explain homeland security national strategies and principles, 3) identify federal, state, and local roles in the event of a terrorist incident, natural disaster, or crowd management issue (all-hazards approach), 4) detect critical infrastructure protection systems and identify key assets at a sport venue, and 5) analyze sport business preparedness, continuity, and recovery systems. Course activities include: assignments, case studies, site visits, guest speakers, professional presentation, research paper, and final exam. Lectures, discussions, team activities, and table top exercises are intended to reinforce the required text and other additional readings.

### **HPR 626, Risk Assessment of Sport Venues**

The second course, Risk Assessment of Sport Venues, educates the student on the risk assessment process, including how to conduct a vulnerability assessment of a sport venue and how to determine threat/vulnerability/risk levels. Students learn how to identify vulnerabilities, analyze and mitigate risk, and harden sport facilities through consequence reduction proposals. Weapons of Mass Destruction (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosive [CBRNE]) are also addressed during this course. Students are required to complete a vulnerability assessment of a sport venue and present findings with countermeasure improvement proposals to the respective site. Upon completion of the course students are able to: 1) demonstrate the importance of organizing and building a multi-disciplinary team (Sports Event Security Assessment Team [SESAT]), 2) evaluate potential threat elements (PTEs) (including WMD incidents) at a sports facility, 3) determine vulnerable targets at the local level, 4) conduct a vulnerability assessment of a sport venue, 5) determine potential countermeasures and strategies to improve security at a sports venue, and 6) assess the importance of contingency planning. Course activities include assignments, case studies, vulnerability assessment of an approved sport venue, vulnerability assessment report, professional presentation, research paper, and final exam.

### **HPR 628, Sport Event Emergency Response Planning**

The final component to the emphasis area is the Sport Event Emergency Response Planning course. This course builds specific capabilities and understanding relative to the resources necessary for effective emergency response to a disaster event, be it domestic, natural, or terrorist based. It covers the roles of all

recommended agencies involved, i.e. emergency management, local fire, police, sheriff, and ambulance services. This course provides an overview of emergency response and security plans for major sporting events, including crowd management, perimeter and access control, vendor and contractor management, and crisis management. As part of this course, students develop security operational plans and emergency response and evacuation plans for major sporting events. A virtual stadium software program is utilized in this course. Upon completion of this course students are able to: 1) demonstrate an understanding of emergency response and security plans, 2) identify and analyze components of a Emergency Response Plan and develop one for a major sporting organization, 3) appraise physical security measures, 4) identify crowd management issues and control strategies, 5) evaluate perimeter and access controls, 6) evaluate vendor and contractor management systems, and 7) analyze incident/crisis management processes. Course activities include assignments, case studies, site visit, guest speakers, development of an emergency response plan, emergency response exercise, professional presentation, research paper, and final exam. Team work exercises are an integral part of the learning process.

External consultants also serve as a major resource for these classes. Courses are taught by a member of staff and assisted by professionals in the field in order to provide a unique field-based perspective and to ensure effective communication of the desired knowledge, skills, and abilities in the sport event security management arena. The specialization in sport event security management learning objectives specifically address critical tasks identified in the U.S Department of Homeland Security Target Capabilities List (TCL, 2005) and the U.S. Department of Homeland Security Universal Task List (UTL, 2005) to protect critical infrastructures, such as sporting venues (see table 1).

### **Curriculum Design**

The instructional design models and methods used to develop the sport event security management curriculum include: (1) ADDIE, (2) Bloom's Taxonomies of the Cognitive and Affective Domains; (3) Keller's ARCS model of motivation: attention, relevance, confidence, and satisfaction; (4) a variation of the Rapid Prototyping Model; and (5) Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction: gain attention, inform learners of objectives, stimulate recall of prior knowledge, present material, provide learner guidance, provide feedback, assess performance, and enhance retention and transfer of knowledge and skills. The Spiral Curriculum, based on the work of Jerome Bruner, served as the basic method for combining models, strategies, and delivery of content by progressing from simple acquisition and comprehension of knowledge to the more complex levels of application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation, and transfer of skills and knowledge to actual

Table 1.

*Summary of TCL and UTL critical tasks related to course learning.*

Target Capabilities List	Universal Task List
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. develop awareness of terrorism</li> <li>2. conduct threat/risk analysis, site surveys, and assess site impact</li> <li>3. support regional and state prevention activities of potential hazards to sports</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. develop and implement risk management plans in cooperation with local agencies to ensure multi-agency collaboration and support incident management requirements</li> <li>2. develop emergency response planning capabilities and jurisdictional preparedness programs</li> <li>3. conduct disaster exercises in coordination with local supporting agencies to challenge management and response operations</li> <li>4. conduct vulnerability assessments of critical assets and key resources</li> <li>5. develop guidelines for physical protection of infrastructure (PPS) and consequence reduction proposals</li> </ol>

participation in activities requiring higher order thinking and problem solving. Figure 1 is a visual representation of the basic course design process utilized in course development. The ADDIE phases of analyze, design, develop, implement, and evaluate are shown. The development phase of the model indicates the basic components of the course and utilizes Keller's ARCS, Gagne's Nine Events of Instruction, and various instructional strategies. The model developed by the curriculum specialist shows the relationship between the ADDIE model and the Rapid Prototyping Model. Utilizing the general concepts of both models, the courses are continuously in the process of review and revision of the initial course prototype to ensure continued quality, relevance, and current information.

Instructional methods employed are competency-based, which indicates the presence of learning objectives, and performance-based, which indicates evaluation centered on observed performance and plans of application. Instructional strategies include printed materials, videos, vocabulary, self-study guides, PowerPoint presentations, discussion and dialogue, self-assessment quizzes, small and large group activities, drill and practice, simulations, field experiences, lecture, case studies, and problem-solving. Resources used include campus maps, stadium plans, stadium simulations, subject matter experts, and guest speakers. Case studies require the synthesis and application of the



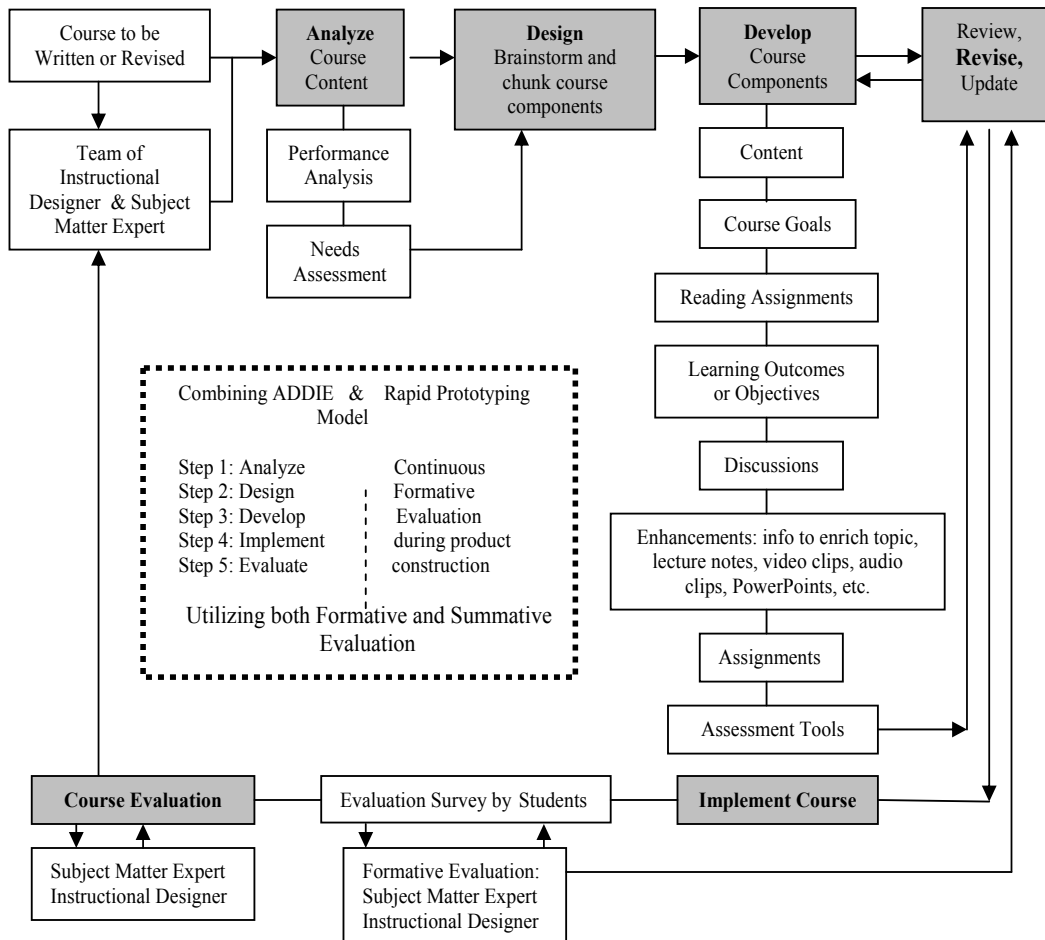


Figure 1. A course development model. (Develop by Dr. Ward, 2007)

participants' knowledge, skills and experience to disaster incidents, such as inclement weather, active shooter, improvised explosive devices (IED), vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices (VBIED), bomb threats, crowd control, and bio-hazardous materials.

Students receive instruction on developing pre-disaster mitigation plans, emergency response and evacuation plans, risk management plans, and the organization and coordination of media briefings and planning/orientation meetings for all individuals and agencies involved in game day operations. Student teams develop operational plans addressing disaster incidents and present the plans to the class to receive feedback and evaluation. By using a variety of instructional models and strategies, students will experience in-depth learning creating the potential for transitioning of knowledge and skills to real world circumstances by future sport event security managers.

## Initial Offering and Evaluation

The first sport event security management course was offered in fall 2006. Fourteen students enrolled in the course. This number proved beneficial for class projects and presentations. An example of the course progression (unit-by-unit) for HPR 620, An Introduction to Sports Security Management is presented in Table 2.

Table 2.

*HPR 620, Introduction to Sport Security Management Course Progression*

HPR 620 Course Progression	
Unit 1	Understanding Terrorism
Unit 2	Terrorist Motivations
Unit 3	International vs. Domestic Terrorism
Unit 4	Homeland Security
Unit 5	Sport Event Threats
Unit 6	Sport Event Security Systems
Unit 7	Sport Security Planning and Operations
Unit 8	Sport Incident and Emergency Management
Unit 9	Sport Business Continuity and Recovery
Unit 10	Legal Implications of Sporting Incidents
Unit 11	Public Awareness and Preparedness
Unit 12	Edge of Disaster: Future Implications

The second and third courses were offered in spring 2007 and summer 2007 respectively. Fifteen students enrolled in each class indicating the demand for exposure to this new discipline. Students expressed enthusiasm for the subject area and generated debates on several matters, including the balance between enhancing safety practices at sports venues and diminishing the spectator's experience. Also, the importance and development of sport security plans through multi-agency collaboration received much attention. We were extremely pleased with student participation. Each course received highly favorable feedback from students on their evaluation forms. Student written comments expressed satisfaction with the relevance of the courses to the management of sports events and current industry problems. They believed the use of experts as guest speakers and site visits improved the learning experience and were critical to understanding real world situations. Students thought that the courses broadened their perspective on sports event security and its relation to homeland security. Students also indicated that this unique emphasis area will be extremely helpful to their job search and inevitably their performance in a professional role working for a sport organization.

## Conclusion and Future Directions

Gaps related to effective training/education and emergency preparedness at major sports events have been identified through research. Effective security management of large-scale spectator sports events is vital nationwide because of the potential for mass casualties and catastrophic economic impact. Therefore, it is imperative that all current and future sport managers responsible for security at sports events become adequately educated and trained in sport security practices. According to Hurst, Zoubek, & Pratsinakis (n.d.), "In today's unstable environment and threat of terrorist attacks, sport organizations need to institutionalize security measures in policy and procedure guidelines, train personnel on the guidelines and stage exercises to drill and test incident response plans" (p. 4). The University of Southern Mississippi now offers courses in sport event security management, the first program of its kind in the United States.

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