

A Season-Long Team-Building Intervention: Examining the Effect of Team Goal Setting on Cohesion

Julie Senécal,¹ Todd M. Loughead,² and Gordon A. Bloom¹

¹McGill University and ²University of Windsor

The purpose of the current study was to determine whether the implementation of a season-long team-building intervention program using team goal setting increased perceptions of cohesion. The participants were 86 female high school basketball players from 8 teams. The teams were randomly assigned to either an experimental team goal-setting or control condition. Each participant completed the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ; Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer, 2002; Carron, Widmeyer, & Brawley, 1985), which assessed cohesion at both the beginning and end of the season. Overall, the results revealed a significant multivariate effect, Pillai's trace $F(12, 438) = 2.68, p = .002$. Post hoc analyses showed that at the beginning of the season, athletes from both conditions did not differ in their perceptions of cohesion. However, at the end of the season, athletes in the team goal-setting condition held higher perceptions of cohesion than athletes in the control condition. Overall, the results indicated that team goal setting was an effective team-building tool for influencing cohesiveness in sport teams.

Keywords: team building, team goal setting, team cohesion

Cohesion has been defined as “a dynamic process that is reflected in the tendency for a group to stick together and remain united in the pursuit of its instrumental objectives and/or for the satisfaction of member affective needs” (Carron, Brawley, & Widmeyer, 1998, p. 213). Not surprisingly, coaches are interested in enhancing the cohesiveness of their teams because it is believed that greater cohesion is related to improved performance and team success (Bloom, Stevens, & Wickwire, 2003; Carron, Bray, & Eys, 2002; Loughead & Hardy, 2006). Carron, Colman, Wheeler, and Stevens (2002) determined the strength of the cohesion-performance relationship in their meta-analysis, which contained a total of 9,988 athletes from 1,044 teams. Overall, the results showed a moderate-to-large significant circular relationship between cohesion and performance in sport. Given this finding, it is not surprising that attempts have been made to enhance cohesion.