

A Struggle Against the Odds:
Understanding the Lived Experiences of Canadian Hockey League (CHL) Players

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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to examine the experiences of Canadian Hockey League (CHL) players using a Foucauldian theory-based analysis. Specifically, this thesis contends that power relations between players and CHL hockey authorities need to be critically assessed. The CHL is the world's leading developmental junior ice hockey league. Comprised of 1,400 hockey players, aged 15–21 years old on 60 teams through three divisions, the CHL is a primary supplier of talent for the National Hockey League. In the last year, several issues surrounding unjust practices within the CHL have been brought to the forefront, indicating that the potential for harassment, abuse, and exploitative practices are heightened in an organization such as the CHL, where profits are extracted from the labour of youth. Ultimately, this study is designed to contribute to both scholarly and public audiences, providing a critical analysis of the welfare of youth in the CHL.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Background

The foundation beneath the Canadian Hockey League (CHL), the world's best developmental major junior ice hockey league, is currently undergoing a monumental shift. A proposed union representing CHL players, called the Canadian Hockey League Players' Association (CHLPA), was introduced in the summer of 2012. The union initiated legal proceedings against the CHL regarding the "blatant disregard for the bare minimum working standards" for its employees (Mirtle, 2012, para. 13). One of the primary foci of the CHLPA, in addition to increased wages, was reforming the education scholarship packages offered to players during and after their junior hockey careers.

Unfortunately, the hope of a union for 1,400 CHL hockey players, aged 16-21 years old, on 60 CHL teams disintegrated quickly (Whamsby, 2012). The CHLPA unravelled within a few months under pressure from the CHL who worked to delegitimize the union before it was established based on the missteps of its organizers. Despite the collapse of the union, issues surrounding the unjust practices occurring in the CHL have been brought to the forefront. Additionally, individuals involved with the CHLPA initiatives are seeking alternatives to ensure the realization of the CHLPA objectives.

The personal connection I share with this issue was formed many years ago and is the underlying reason why I decided to address the unjust practices of the CHL in my graduate research. The following narrative explains how my passion for this study developed.

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My immediate family is comprised of my mother, father and brother. Aside from me, the rest of my family was born and raised in the Czech Republic, formerly known as Czechoslovakia. In 1986, 2 years before my birth, my parents and brother fled from Czechoslovakia, which was under communist reign within the Eastern Bloc of Europe. After two years of moving from country to country, my family settled and made a new home in Canada. I was born soon after and both my brother and I were raised with as much Czech tradition as my parents could integrate into our new North American way of life. One of these traditions was keeping our fandom in allegiance to the Czech football and ice hockey clubs. To this day, there are jerseys, banners and posters displaying the beloved Czech athletic clubs and players of our hometown, Ostrava.

I met Peter¹ in 2007. He came to Canada from the Czech Republic to play hockey in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), one of the three sister leagues forming the Canadian Hockey League (CHL), when he was 17 years of age. Peter could barely speak a word of English and found it difficult to fit in amongst his teammates. His OHL team was located in a remote area of Canada, and he was finding it difficult to adapt to the North American culture. I formed a close bond with Peter, and alongside his supportive billet family I did everything I could to help him adjust to his new life. My family would have Peter over for traditional Czech holidays to allow him to feel like he was “back home.” He quickly became an important part of my family’s life.

Peter came to Canada for the same reason many young European hockey players do, to chase the “dream.” This dream is the opportunity to one-day play in the National Hockey League (NHL). Peter’s hockey skills were evident to anyone who watched him

¹ Pseudonym used to protect the identity of the individual.

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play. He was a big-bodied player who had the ability to skate effortlessly along the ice surface. After his first season, Peter began to adapt to life in Canada and funnelled all his effort into his hockey career. Problems began to arise when he realized his style of play was not aggressive enough for the North American game. Peter did not participate in one fight during his three seasons in the OHL, a total of 184 games. European hockey had left a mark on Peter. He valued skill over aggression. Peter's lack of aggression caused his coach to become frustrated with his game, and many times Peter would come home after practice and desperately confide in his billet mother, telling her how his hockey dream was crumbling. In 2008, Peter was eligible to be drafted into the NHL. He was ranked 179th out of 210 players in the NHL's Central Scouting report prior to the draft. After the seventh and final round, Peter's name was not called by any franchise in the NHL. He was devastated.

Peter contemplated returning to the Czech Republic, however his coach promised him that if he remained in the OHL he would be drafted in 2009. That summer he was offered a try-out contract with an NHL franchise and took part in a week long training camp. This time he was told by NHL coaches to work on his aggression and was subsequently released from the camp. He entered the 2009 OHL hockey season with a vengeance knowing this was the last year he had to prove his worth. At the conclusion of the final round of 2009 NHL draft, his name was not called. Peter's hockey career, his opportunity to chase the dream, came to an abrupt end.

After contemplating whether to continue his pursuit of a hockey career in a European league or focus on his education, Peter decided to dedicate himself to his studies. The CHL offers an educational scholarship package to each player who does not

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sign a professional hockey contract. Under the program, players are entitled to a scholarship of tuition, textbooks, and compulsory fees for each year they played in the CHL. Peter realized that unlike contracts signed by Canadian and American born players, his made no mention of the education program. He contacted the OHL to ask for his funding and was told that the scholarship program was not available to European players.

Many people came forward to help Peter, including a Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) institution that waived the international tuition fees he would normally be obligated to pay. Others offered Peter free room and board. It still was not enough, without funding, Peter was not able to afford four years of undergraduate education. Peter's negative hockey experience in the CHL is what led me to question if there were other players who also encountered unjust treatment within the major junior hockey system.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to conduct a Foucauldian theory-based analysis into the experiences of current and former CHL players. Ultimately, this study is an examination of power relationships within the Canadian junior ice hockey system. The following research questions guide this investigation:

1. What kind of power relations impact athletes in the CHL?
2. How are disciplinary processes used within the CHL?

Underlying Assumptions

van Manen (1990) argues that it is important for researchers to reveal their personal biases and motivations when undertaking research. His central argument holds that a researcher must identify her background, assumptions, and values in order to

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understand how these may impact the overall research. More importantly, by identifying underlying values, the researcher provides the reader with greater clarity in understanding the research process.

It is thus important for me to clearly state my interest in advocating for major junior hockey players who often lack resources to challenge inequitable power relations. I am deeply committed to increasing the fairness with which young hockey players are treated in the early stages of their careers. These values moved to the forefront of my life and to the heart of this research after I had the opportunity to be employed by a CHL franchise. Although players do receive support through multiple avenues, numerous issues remain and players, including those who do not sign with NHL teams, are often treated unjustly.

Outline of Chapters

Chapter Two is a literature review that addresses four thematic areas: physical cultural studies, Foucault's retheorization of the concept of power, child sport injustices, and future directions for child sport injustice research. This chapter will also address gaps in hockey related research. Chapter Three provides a detailed discussion of the methodology that was utilized in this study. The basis of inquiry includes 11 unstructured interviews, supplemented with investigative documents. In Chapter Four, I provide an analysis of four central themes embedded within relations of power including: player contracts, the CHL stipend, training, and violence. Lastly, Chapter Five includes a discussion complemented by my concluding remarks.

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Chapter Two: Review of Literature

This review of literature is focused on four thematic areas: physical cultural studies (PCS), Foucault's conception of power, children sport injustices, and future directions for child sport injustice research. The literature review concludes by addressing gaps in hockey related research.

Physical Cultural Studies (PCS)

The Rise of Physical Cultural Studies (PCS)

The term sport no longer effectively captures the range of work produced within sport sociology. Poststructuralists would agree that the term sport is an empty signifier and has become imprecise in framing areas of study (Andrews, 2008). To this end, physical cultural studies (PCS) developed to enable a more comprehensive analysis of physical culture in all of its forms, not just sport (Andrews & Silk, 2011). Andrews (2008) defines PCS as being “dedicated to the contextually based understanding of the corporeal practices, discourses, and subjectivities through which active bodies become organized, represented, and experienced in relation to the operations of social power” (p. 54).

One of the objectives of PCS is to include intellectual projects that are not adequately captured in its parent disciplines: sociology of sport and cultural studies. Empirically speaking, the differentiation between the sociology of sport and PCS is perhaps the most fundamental. While sport sociology is concerned with paying close attention to its object of analysis: sport, PCS draws from a number of empirical sites such as fitness, dance, recreation, daily living, and work-related activities. PCS is also

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informed by cultural studies, which as a field encourages critical awareness of culture's role in the formation and experience of an environment immersed in power (Grossberg, 1997). Building on this concern, PCS examines how active bodies are affected, organized, and represented in conjunction with the workings of social power.

Furthermore, PCS combines the use of a myriad of theoretical and methodological approaches to aid in understanding the social relations that are produced by, and in turn produce, the active body. Through this understanding and knowledge, PCS scholars attempt to confront unjust social relations (Andrews, 2006, 2008). This means that PCS is useful when engaged in research projects that challenge the status quo. However, the newly emerged field does not arrive without its own challenges. As with any young project, the boundaries of PCS are continually being adapted and formed. These boundaries will prevent the field from becoming too broad or over specialized (Friedman & van Ingen, 2011). Thus, while PCS continues to flourish in its early stage of growth, its meaning and definition are still being negotiated by various researchers.

The Purpose of PCS

PCS scholars, Giardina and Newman (2011), propose that the "field" emerged as an "intellectual meeting point" (p. 39). Giardina and Newman (2011) state the justification of PCS as a new field lies in the unique epistemological orientations and practical opportunities that transcend the boundaries of sport sociology and other disciplines. In particular, within PCS, the body's emancipatory potential is emphasized. This emancipatory potential is displayed by the body through participation in human activity (Giardina & Newman, 2011).

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In a more practical sense, the purpose of research produced within PCS is worth extending upon. Researchers using PCS acknowledge the ways in which their subjectivity may influence the research project. Furthermore, PCS researchers take part in meaningful research with a direct purpose. Although the purpose of each research project may take on various forms, PCS researchers believe that each project should remain meaningful and address relevant social issues. In order to further promote research that matters, Markula and Silk (2011) describe three different types of meaningful qualitative research within physical cultural studies: mapping, critique, and social change. Mapping involves research studies that aspire to provide an overview of certain behaviour, phenomenon, or practices of physical culture. Mapping is useful when little is known about a topic. The process of mapping involves the researcher developing an overview of the phenomenon and describing the linkages between different aspects of this phenomenon. Mapping is often a necessity in physical culture projects, before an in-depth critique or call for change can be made (Markula & Silk, 2011). Critiquing refers to studies where the researcher has identified a problem with a phenomenon or practice of physical culture. The researcher will then offer a critique of the issue, which outlines why the issue is occurring. It is important to mention that while critiquing does examine problematic areas, it does not necessarily lead to change (Markula & Silk, 2011). Social change is the third purpose for physical cultural research outlined by Markula and Silk (2011). Research projects that create and sustain social change can only be engaged in if the researcher has mapped the phenomenon and is familiar with previous research as well as previous critiques. Social change research is more attainable when mapping and critique-

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based research has been undertaken. It is important to note, that projects containing any of the three outlined purposes do not exist in isolation from one another.

Theoretical Orientation Within PCS

Researchers engaging in PCS research contend that, within society, there are fundamental divisions along hierarchical lines including, but not limited to, class, ethnicity, gender, and race. These divisions, which are realized through the operation of power, are imposed social divisions that are identified and contested through PCS. A motivation behind PCS is the need to understand injustices resulting from power relations that impact physical cultural contexts. The focus on power relations is central for researchers who work towards social change and wish to make a difference in the broader social world.

With such an explicit focus on social change within PCS, the field has an “unpredictable” relationship with theory. Wright (2001) states that cultural theorizing is “never about finding ‘the right theory’” (p. 134). Rather, PCS strives to locate theories that enable the project and help the researcher understand the phenomenon (Wright, 2001). As a field, PCS encourages scholars to liberate themselves from the rigidity of theoretical work, and rather use theory in a meaningful way by addressing urgent social issues (Giroux, 2001).

Despite PCS being a relatively new addition to the scholarly community, the values and agendas of PCS researchers are bold. PCS scholars dedicate their research to serve as an emancipating tool against the injustices of society (Kincheloe & McLaren, 2005). Researchers should approach their projects with concern regarding the ways in which social institutions and cultural dynamics fuse to generate social injustice.

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Foucault's View on Power Relations

In the following section, I will outline the ways in which Foucault retheorized the concept of power. I begin with a focus on 'discourse', which is a key term in Foucault's critical theoretical work. Pringle (2007) explains that discourse can be best understood as "a relatively consistent set of ideas that people use to navigate social life and make sense of their experiences" (p. 387). More simply stated, discourse accounts for unwritten rules that govern social practices, control the production of statements, and form what has the potential to be understood and perceived (Johns & Johns, 2000). According to Pringle (2007), discourses such as "sport participation is good for health" remains unchallenged and are considered to be a discursive 'truth.'

Foucault highlighted that power circulates within discourses. He was interested in exploring how specific discourses have the ability to produce advantages or disadvantages for both individuals and groups (Denison & Scott-Thomas, 2011). Foucault's (1972) work gave rise to the word 'discursive practices' which is used to describe the established order of truth, or what is accepted as 'reality' in society. In addition, Foucault believed that discursive practices give rise to what can be called 'knowledge.' In his own words, "there is no knowledge without discursive practices; and any discursive practice may be defined by the knowledge that it forms" (Foucault, 1972, p. 183). Ultimately, Foucault was interested in learning how discourse and knowledge produce particular social practices through the working of power relations (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Foucault's writings on power reveal the "essential link between power relations and their capacity to 'produce' the truths we live by" (McHoul & Grace, 1993, p. 58).

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Foucault (1978) asserts that power is not a possession, and that it cannot be “acquired, seized, or shared” (p. 94). Therefore, although dominant groups are traditionally viewed as holding power, they represent “only the terminal forms power takes” (Foucault, 1978, p. 92). It was not Foucault’s objective to undermine the importance of dominant groups as it was to understand how these groups exercised power (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Foucault disregards questions such as “Who has power?” and “What is the intention of someone with power?” The answers to these questions were believed by Foucault (1980) to follow a circular path that led back to focus on the law and economy. Conceiving power in this way, either based in law or economic terms, was problematic to Foucault as he argues that power is not “answerable to, the economy” (Foucault, 1980, p. 89). Rather Foucault’s focus turned to an examination of how power is *exercised*, and how power produces knowledge. Power, Foucault believes, “is dispersed throughout social relations, that it produces possible forms of behaviour as well as restricting behaviour” (Mills, 2004, p. 17).

From a Foucauldian perspective, power refers to the relations between people, and is understood as a relationship where one person helps direct the actions of another person (Foucault, 1983). Markula and Pringle (2006) add that Foucault’s understanding of power relations does not imply that actions are determined within this relationship, rather they are guided. This can be observed between a coach and athlete, where a specific power relation exists that involves the coach guiding the performance of the athlete. Although the coach possesses the autonomy to direct the actions of the athlete, the athlete remains free to choose his or her responses. Thus, the actions of the athlete can reciprocally affect the actions of the coach. Despite the unbalanced nature of the

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coach/athlete relationship, they can still be considered as existing within a particular power relation (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Disciplinary Power

By viewing power as relational, it is possible for multiple forms of power to exist. One of these forms is known as ‘disciplinary power,’ which is concerned with the control and normalization of individuals. Disciplinary power materialized in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and was linked with the emergence of the capitalist state (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Through the process of being “subjected, used, transformed, and improved” (Foucault, 1975, p. 136), discipline allows for the production of docile bodies. Foucault (1991) further explains the production of docile bodies through disciplinary processes in the following way:

One may have a hold over others’ bodies, not only so that they may do what one wishes, but so that they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus discipline produces subjected and practised bodies. (pp. 137-138)

Disciplinary practices have the ability to mould athletes into what Foucault believed to be ‘bodies of knowledge.’ This is achieved through “meticulous observation of detail...[involving] a whole set of techniques, a whole corpus of methods and knowledge, descriptions, plans, data” (Foucault, 1975, p. 9). Understanding disciplinary power as both an exercise of control and subject matter leads to what Foucault termed as ‘power-knowledge.’ Linking knowledge with power suggests that both concepts imply one another. Foucault (1979) believed that power relations cannot exist without the corresponding field of knowledge, and vice versa. Due to the large role that the power-

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knowledge concept holds in this study, it is important to further discuss its formation.

Shogan (1999) explains that “as the subject matter of a discipline develops so do practices of controlling bodies” (p. 11). However, clarification must be made here as the practice of control is not limiting, rather it is productive due to the formation of ‘knowing’ bodies that obtain skill and ability. When related back to the sporting arena, this concept is reflected through the discourses that circulate within high-performance sport. Foucault (1980) states that disciplinary power can only exist with “the production, accumulation, circulation and functioning of a discourse” (p. 93). Coaches employ these discourses through their coaching practices to produce docile bodies — highly skilled and trained hockey players.

For Foucault, the phrase ‘docile bodies’ does not mean passive bodies. Docile bodies are productive bodies that possess the ability to perform highly rarefied skills. Nonetheless, a certain sense of ambiguity revolves around the use of the word ‘docility’ to characterize highly skilled, disciplined bodies. With respect to movement, athletes remain productive and active, yet they often become passive in the decision making needed for the acquisition of skills (Shogan, 1999). Thus, athletes will conform and submit themselves to a disciplinary power that enables them to participate in sport at an elite level, which ultimately leads to greater recognition rewards (Fiske, 1993).

Panopticism

Disciplinary power, as described above, relies on varying disciplinary techniques to produce docile bodies. A disciplinary technique that is central to this study is surveillance through a panoptic gaze. Panopticism is a notion Foucault derived from an architectural design for a prison, the panopticon, invented by philosopher Jeremy

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Bentham. The panopticon consisted of a central tower with windows facing a building of cells. Each prisoner was thus seen by the supervisor in the tower, however in return was prevented from seeing the supervisor along with the other inmates. Being seen yet not being able to see caused prisoners to have a constant feeling of surveillance. The awareness of potentially being watched leads to an internalization of the gaze and the regulation of one's own behaviour (Shogan, 1999).

Surveillance in high-performance sport can be seen occurring quite frequently, especially during training sessions. Training is tactfully organized by coaches to allow them to see all athletes. Since athletes are unaware of when they are or are not being watched they are constantly engaged in intense activity. Anything less than high intensity often leads to punishment. Through this process, athletes are taught that training with intensity is in their best interests. In addition, by self-policing their own behaviours, athletes have displayed the technologies and values of docility (Shogan, 1999).

Resistance

The power relationship between a coach and athlete is not an equal one. However, this does not mean that the athlete is completely powerless. Foucault believes that embedded within power relations are points of resistance (Markula & Pringle, 2006). The athlete thus exercises his/her own form of power by resisting his/her coaches. This form of resistance can be best observed in instances where the athlete will refuse a coach's instructions, make gestures behind the coach's back, or by discussing the methods of the coach with teammates or friends (Shogan, 1999). Foucault (1982) believes that these forms of resistance occur when an individual is searching for the oppositionary effect of power. Despite not inherently obvious, athletes are always in possession of some form of

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power in their relationship with coaches, which often manifests itself through the act of resistance (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Foucault's retheorizing of power implies that individuals are not just recipients of power, but rather can be seen as a 'place' where power can be both enacted and resisted. Consequently, although repressed individuals can be widely viewed as being subjected to power, they also play a vital role in how power is negotiated within a relationship. Foucault argues that the productive characteristic of power gives rise to alternative forms of behaviour, rather than merely constraining (Mills, 2003). In order to conduct a thorough Foucauldian theory-based analysis, it is imperative to examine the total relations of power, including when individuals are with their equals and how they behave in the public sphere (Kendall & Wickham, 1999). As such, Robinson (1998) argues that in the social context of junior ice hockey, players recognize being treated as objects, and in turn use their own form of power to objectify others. The highly masculine and sex-segregated culture of hockey produces a dangerously hostile defiance towards women. This alternative form of power that is enacted by players can be linked to the loss of control players experience while being bought, sold, and traded by adults. Furthermore, their sexual and social identities are constructed by the ideals of hockey's culture. This culture is one that deems violence and aggression as positive signs of masculinity. In turn, players identify that these are the characteristics needed to exert their own form of power.

Robinson (1998) maintains that a player's lack of power in his own identity construction is the catalyst behind the violent and coercive manner in which players treat young women. Additionally, a player may also exert power over his teammates. Despite

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the loyalty players are assumed to have amongst teammates, a player's true loyalty is to himself and his career aspirations first and foremost. From this perspective, one may conclude that the values within hockey are in need of a rigorous examination (Robinson, 1998).

Child Sport Injustices

This section focuses on the recent emergence of research relating to maltreatment of athletes, specifically maltreatment of children in sport. Current literature pertaining to athlete maltreatment will be outlined, along with recommendations for future research conducted in this area.

The maltreatment of athletes is a growing concern within competitive sport. Critical sport theorists such as Donnelly (1997a, 1997b, 2008), Donnelly and Sparks (1997), Coakley (1993a), and Shogan (1999) question the treatment of athletes, and the long-term impact sport has on competitive athletes. These accounts have led to the promotion of both athlete and child protection initiatives by sport institutions around the globe (Stirling, 2009).

According to the United Nations Convention, a child is anyone under the age of 18 years (United Nations, 1989). Furthermore, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) holds that the elite child athlete is "one who has superior athletic talent, undergoes specialised training, receives expert coaching and is exposed to early competition" (Mountjoy et al., 2007, p. 163). Elite child athletes form a distinct population who experience high levels of training and competition, and are thus exposed to certain risks (Oliver, Lloyd, & Meyers, 2011). It is therefore important for sport organizations to protect the welfare and well-being of elite child athletes by implementing policies that

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acknowledge the vulnerability of children (Stirling, 2009).

There is limited research on the maltreatment of children in sport. There is also a lack of consistency in the terms used to address the maltreatment of young athletes. Terms such as harassment, abuse, and bullying are used interchangeably and comprise subcategories of maltreatment in sport. However, there are many abusive behaviours that are not adequately captured within youth sport literature. To ensure the transferability of research, it is paramount that there is consistency of terminology pertaining to the maltreatment of young athletes. Definitions are provided below.

Maltreatment in Sport

Crooks and Wolfe (2007) refer to maltreatment as “volitional acts that result in or have the potential to result in physical injuries and/or psychological harm” (p. 3). In the athletic environment, young athletes may experience maltreatment in a multitude of forms by coaches, parents, administrators, and officials. These forms can be categorized as relational or non-relational maltreatment, a distinction that depends on the nature of the relationship in which the behaviour occurs. However, it is important to mention that all maltreatment, whether relational or non-relational, occurs within relationships of differential power (Stirling, 2009).

Relational Maltreatment

Relational maltreatment consists of four major forms that include: physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, and neglect (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007). These forms of maltreatment are considered relational due to the fact they occur in the context of a critical relationship (Stirling, 2009). A critical relationship is one that holds substantial influence over an individual, and consequently their sense of safety, fulfillment of needs,

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and trust (Crooks & Wolfe, 2007). Sport relationships of these kinds include athletes' relationships with constituents of a mentoring role such as parents, coaches, and teammates (Stirling, 2009). This proposed research study on CHL athletes will concentrate on the experiences of emotional abuse and not physical abuse, sexual abuse, or neglect.

Emotional abuse.

To date, research pertaining to abuse within children and youth sport has predominantly focused on sexual abuse, leaving emotional abuse to garner significantly less attention. The term "emotional abuse" is also referred to as "psychological abuse." It is important to note that while these two terms are similar, they are not parallel (O'Hagan, 1995). The American Humane Association (AHA) (1980) defines emotional maltreatment/abuse as "active, intentional, berating, disparaging or other abusive behaviour toward the child, which impacts upon the emotional well-being of the child" (as cited in Stirling, 2009, p. 1092). Thus, in order for behaviour to be categorized as emotionally abusive, a pattern of potential harmful non-contact behaviours occurring in a critical relationship must be present.

Within sport, emotional abusive behaviour has been distinguished into two types: verbal emotional abuse and non-verbal emotional abuse. However, research pertaining to athletes' experiences with either types of emotional abuse has been limited (Stirling & Kerr, 2008). In the mid-1990s, Gravely and Cochran (1995) conducted a preliminary exploration of emotional abuse in a broader study focused on sexual abuse in sport. The researchers conducted two separate surveys in 1994 and 1995 amongst US student-athletes. The results of the study indicated that 22% of respondents experienced some

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form of emotional abuse in regards to coaching techniques (Gravely & Cochran, 1995). A study by Gervis and Dunn (2004) specifically addressed emotional abuse of elite child athletes by their coaches. The results showed that all 12 participants had experienced some form of emotional abuse, and further indicated that the abuse served as a threat to the psychological well-being of the young athletes (Gervis & Dunn, 2004). Given the reported prevalence of emotional abuse experienced by athletes, much more research is needed in this area.

Non-Relational Maltreatment

Maltreatment that does not occur in the context of a critical relationship is referred to as non-relational. These forms of maltreatment include, but are not limited to, bullying, harassment, exploitation, and child labour, which are committed by persons who are not in a close relationship with the athlete. Despite the fact that non-relational maltreatment occurs within a distant relationship, this does not exclude relationships with coaches, teammates, or the sport organization itself (Stirling, 2009). I focus here on child labour as a form of non-relational maltreatment.

Child sport labour.

In the 1950s, North America witnessed the birth of community and club sport programs designed specifically for children. Some 20 years later, sport sociologists and psychologists began to express concern regarding these programs, such that children were suffering from stress, anxiety, increased aggression levels, pressure from parents, and high drop out rates. After the late 1980s, and despite the increasingly negative experiences of children involved in high-performance sport, Coakley (1993a, 1993b) and Donnelly (1993a, 1997a, 1997b, 2008) are among very few researchers who have

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conducted studies on the non-relational form of abuse known as child sport labour.

Donnelly's (1997a) research is founded upon the 1989 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child that indicates that due to their vulnerability, children require special care and protection. Furthermore, Donnelly (1997a) seeks to protect the youth athlete under child labour laws by connecting the global issue of child labour to the experiences of children in high-performance sport.

Donnelly (1997a) forewarns that the intention of drawing parallels between child labour and sport is not to compare the "young carpet-weavers in Pakistan, or the young prostitutes in Thailand, and the talented young athletes who may be found in the high-performance sport systems of many developed and some rapidly developing nations" (p. 393). Rather, the parallels aim to shed light on the work-like atmosphere of sport and help identify sport as a type of work. Children in sport have been exposed to work-like activity as the growing opportunities for lucrative careers in professional sport have emerged. Some parents are tempted by this possibility, and encourage the heavy involvement of their children in high-performance sport at early ages. Governments of various countries have also begun to value international success in sport events and have dedicated funding to elite participation, as well as the development of programs that seek early identification of athletic talent (Donnelly, 1997a).

Perhaps the most significant parallel with child labour is when young athletes are financially compensated for their sport involvement. Despite the fact that it is possible for children to be employees of professional sport, they fall into a unique legal loophole. Elite athletic children are allegedly protected by laws that protect all children. These laws include areas such as compulsory education and occupational health and safety.

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However, the discrepancy lies in the fact that the legal system has been slow to respond to rapid changes occurring in sport (Donnelly, 1997a), as well as changes in acting, music, and the arts.

Future Directions for Child Sport Injustice Research

It is only within the last two decades that negative experiences of athletes have been labelled with terms such as maltreatment, abuse, or sport labour (Donnelly, 1997; Donnelly & Petherick, 2004). The research conducted in this area proves that injustices occurring in child sport are not isolated incidents (Stirling, 2009). In order to challenge and shed light on these issues, further investigation is needed, which will also identify the extent of the problem and identify possible solutions. One such solution is the development of prevention and intervention initiatives (Stirling, 2009). Guterman (2004) suggests that research involving prevention initiatives should address five consecutive stages: 1) identify the nature of the problem; 2) clarify risk and protective factors; 3) design and pilot test initiatives; 4) conduct clinical trials to evaluate intervention; and 5) facilitate large-scale implementation. This model can be used as a guide for future research regarding maltreatment in sport. In addition to Guterman's (2004) model, future research on maltreatment should involve collaborative methods in order to produce the best prevention, intervention, and treatment techniques (Stirling, 2009).

The major junior hockey world changed forever after former players, Theo Fleury and Sheldon Kennedy, revealed the sexual abuse they were subjected to by their coach, Graham James. Following both of these testaments, more players came forward with strikingly similar allegations against James. Investigative researcher, Laura Robinson (1998), thoroughly examines the world of junior hockey to uncover the abuse that has

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tainted Canada's favourite game. Robinson (1998) reveals the multiple forms of sexual abuse occurring in the NHL's breeding ground, and the damaging effects it leaves on individuals both within and outside junior hockey's institutions. Aside from Robinson (1998), there is limited research involving the abuse of young athletes, specifically with regards to emotional maltreatment. The following section will outline the most relevant hockey related literature, and reveal the gaps in research associated with emotional abuse in the sport.

Relevant Hockey Literature

Hockey has long been romanticized as Canada's wonderful, traditional game. It has only been in recent years that scholarly literature has highlighted problematic areas within the sport. Research relating to on-ice violence and hegemonic masculinity comprises a large portion of this literature. Subsequently, there remain significant gaps for scholars to address within the hockey research and literature.

Violence in Youth Hockey

The issue of violence in hockey continues to be prevalent at numerous levels including youth and professional leagues. Within major junior hockey, the CHL has made efforts to adopt more severe sanctions for displays of violence. However, the league continues to expect its athletes to play a style of hockey that makes them ideal prospects for the NHL (Maki & Shoalts, 2012). As such, violent and aggressive behaviour is seen as a positive asset in a player's game. At the highest level of hockey in North America, aggression has always been valued (Klein, 1993), and this value has seeped down into younger hockey subcultures.

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The NHL, CHL, as well as the minor league affiliates of the NHL all have dedicated roster positions for the team's "enforcer." The enforcer possesses an aggressive and violent persona that is used by coaches to heighten the intensity of the team, or give teammates a boost of motivation. Enforcers are typically not the best skaters, nor do they usually have an abundance of skills, instead these players seek to intimidate their opponents through the use of violent acts of aggression. The NHL attempts to convince fans that enforcers make the game safer through the league's self-policing approach (Atkinson, 2010). For instance, the NHL argues that enforcers have the "ability to throttle an opponent" into playing a more responsible style of hockey (Proteau, 2011, p. 28). Ironically enough, these 'policemen' type of players end up breaking the laws of the game just as much as other players. According to Proteau (2011), enforcers follow a "twisted code" (p. 23) that both stains and deprives the game of its precious talents. Furthermore, Proteau (2011) believes these "well-liked players...are in the spotlight for the wrong reasons" (p. 25). Ultimately, the issue of fighting remains as an inherent risk players must willingly accept on the ice.

The safety of players has become a serious concern for the well-being of athletes. Although the NHL prides itself in making safety their ultimate priority, the focus of the league is debatable. Gary Bettman, commissioner of the NHL, positions the issue of violence in favour of the traditionalists of the game by stating "fighting is part of our game and it always has been" (Proteau, 2011, p. 32). Regardless of what the gatekeepers claim to be true, hockey continues to promote, sell, and teach a violent type of game.

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Hegemonic Masculinity

Expressions of gender are generated in specific ways within the ice hockey realm. Elite-level men's hockey favours hegemonic masculinity, which is defined by Connell (1990) as "the culturally idealized form of masculine character" (p. 83). In his extensive ethnography of an AHL team, Robidoux (2001) explains that the professional hockey community forms a "family" in which team goals and commitments are shared. Furthermore, a collective, narrow, and restricted worldview is adopted, which results in a shared identity "informed by a physically dominant, white, heterosexual male model" (Robidoux, 2001, p. 127). Physical dominance becomes the most valued form of masculinity and one that players learn to adopt. Robidoux (2001) warns that such a narrow construction of masculinity that is produced within an institution can have detrimental effects on the personal development of players, as it is a falsely formed identity. Consequently, young hockey players are members of a "homogenized workforce achieved at the expense of the individual" (Robidoux, 2001, p. 128).

Hegemonic masculinity includes traits such as "respect, honour, courage, loyalty, aggressiveness, dominance, independence, occupational achievement, risk-taking, assertiveness and competitiveness" (Weinstein, Smith, & Wiesenthal, 1995, p. 837). The hockey arena allows players to express these traits in a very literal way, such as demonstrating their aggressiveness via physical confrontations. More importantly is how the hockey arena acts as a secluded area of the hockey subculture. Robidoux (2001) described the hegemonic masculine forces operating in a "closed society" (p. 126) that is purposefully gender segregated. By participating in this subculture, players learn to adopt an ideological outlook that is centred upon masculine attributes (Allain, 2008). This

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approach to hockey causes an ongoing problem of isolation and loneliness for players who fail to integrate into this closed-off subculture (Allain, 2008). Robinson (1998) expresses similar views in her work on violence and sexual abuse in hockey when she describes the competitive hockey culture as an all-encompassing institution that makes the process of socialization difficult.

The majority of literature that is focused on masculinity within the game of hockey draws attention to the fact that the lives of young elite hockey players is unique in that they are often separated from their families at a young age. When players move to new cities to play in the CHL they often tend to group together, which allows them to feel a sense of communion (Robinson, 1998). Players live with billet families, who are often pre-selected for the player by hockey operations staff. The role of a billet family is to provide room and board for the player. Despite how well-intentioned the billet family is, one cannot expect them to act as surrogate parents. What would normally be the responsibility of parents, such as making sure the player goes to school, does his homework, eats properly, and associates with the right individuals becomes the sole responsibility of the young player himself (Roy, 2007). These players enter into a subculture that revolves around being bought, sold, and traded by adults, which causes them to lose control over large portions of their lives. Furthermore, hockey at the highest level has always valued aggression and physical dominance as the ideal traits of masculinity (Robinson, 1998). The hockey community becomes a place where the performance of masculinity is expected, including physical confrontations by players on the ice. These notions of masculinity are then reinforced by the media through the celebrations of violence (Allain, 2008).

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A review of sociological hockey literature reveals a significant gap in research on the lived experiences of CHL hockey players. To date, there have been very few detailed examinations of the CHL (Vaz, 1982; Kirke, 1997; Robinson, 1998). Furthermore, these examinations did not assess the power relations between players and coaches. As the primary developmental league for the NHL, it is imperative that further research be conducted in regards to the CHL and its impact on the lives of young athletes.

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Chapter Three: Methodology

Chapter Three outlines the theoretical perspective used in the study, the methods used for data collection and data analysis, as well as the ethical considerations undertaken in this research. The purpose of this research is to conduct a Foucauldian theory-based analysis into the experiences of CHL players who do not get recruited to the NHL. Ultimately, this study is an examination of power relationships within the Canadian junior ice hockey system. The following research questions guide this investigation:

1. What kind of power relations impact athletes in the CHL?
2. How are disciplinary processes used in the CHL?

Methods

By considering how this study is methodologically framed, one can better understand the purpose and results of this research project. The following section details Foucauldian discourse analysis (FDA), which was chosen as the method for this research project. The section will also outline data collection procedures including participant selection/sampling, recruiting participants, the role of the researcher, data collection and analysis, followed by trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

Foucault's Theory of Discourse

Before expanding on the methodology, it is important to define key terms, specifically 'discourse.' The term 'discourse' has an array of meanings across multiple disciplines. The complex history of the term makes it difficult to locate one meaning, as 'discourse' is used in a variety of ways by different, or even the same, theorist(s). Accordingly, this study will primarily focus on Foucault's conception of discourse.

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One key distinction of Foucault's understanding of discourse from other explanations is that unlike other theorists who limit the concept of discourse to language and linguistic systems of grammar, Foucault understands discourse in terms of bodies of knowledge (McHoul & Grace, 1993).

Foucault (1972) uses the concept of discourse in the following ways:

Instead of gradually reducing the fluctuating meaning of the word 'discourse', I believe I have in fact added to its meaning: treating it sometimes as the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a number of statements.

(p. 80)

Three definitions of discourse can be extracted from the above quotation. The first is the broadest: "the general domain of all statements." This includes all texts and utterances that have both meaning and effect in the world. Foucault uses this wide definition in his earlier work, where discourse is framed at a theoretical level (Mills, 2004). Foucault uses the second definition, "an individualizable group of statements," more commonly, and specifically when examining certain structures within discourse. This second definition is concerned with identifying discourses, in the form of utterances, that are coherent, regulated, and that contain commonality. Consequently, certain discourses will emerge such as a discourse of femininity, a discourse of racism, and so on. The third and final definition of discourse Foucault provides, "a regulated practice which accounts for a number of statements," carries the most resonance with theorists. Mills (2004) believes that, with this definition, Foucault is less concerned with the texts and utterances produced than he is with the structures and rules that produce those texts and utterances.

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As Mills (2004) explains, “it is this rule-governed nature of discourse that is of primary importance within this definition” (p. 6). Foucault’s definitions of discourse not only reflect that the term and its meanings are interchangeable, but that discourses reflect how knowledge and social practices are formed.

Participant Selection/Sampling

The selection of participants was based on a purposeful sampling strategy using criterion and snowball sampling methods. The logic behind purposeful sampling lies in the selection of information-rich cases. Information-rich cases allow the researcher to select participants who can add a great deal to the purpose of the study (Patton, 2002).

Creswell (2007) explains that criterion sampling is a technique where the researcher has a predetermined set of criteria for selecting participants. In other words, participants are chosen based on particular attributes, features, characteristics, or experiences (Pitney & Parker, 2009). Furthermore, Patton (2002) asserts that the main point of criterion sampling is to understand information-rich cases which can help reveal major system weaknesses that ultimately become the researcher’s opportunity for improvement.

This study utilized the following three criterion for participant selection:

1. The individual must have played in one of the following 3 sister CHL leagues: Ontario Hockey League (OHL), Western Hockey League (WHL), or Québec Major Junior Hockey League (QMJHL).
2. The individual must have played in one of the above-mentioned leagues for one or more full seasons.

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3. The individual must have participated in the CHL as a youth under the age of 18 years.

A snowball sampling strategy was also used in conjunction with criterion sampling. Snowball sampling is an alternative method in locating information-rich informants (Patton, 2002). The method is largely used to study rare groups of people who are scattered, yet remain in correspondence with one another. Snowballing sampling involves identifying subjects in their current sample by the use of referrals. This design is particularly useful when studying secluded groups (Corbetta, 2003).

Sampling Procedures

According to Patton (2002) there are no specific rules pertaining to sample size in a qualitative study. Patton (2002) asserts that a sample size should reflect the purpose of the study and coincide with what time and resources are available to the researcher. For the purposes of this study, 11 research participants were selected and interviewed. Pseudonyms were used to protect the identity of all informants, unless requested otherwise. Table 1 provides a list and profile of the 11 participants. Additionally, it was my intention to include participants across all three sister CHL leagues to seek geographical variation in the interview data.

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Table 1 — *List of Participants*

Name	CHL League	Birth Year	Seasons Played in CHL (Years)	Total Years Played in CHL (Number of Years)	Drafted to NHL
Aaron	OHL	1988	2005-2008	3	No
Petr	WHL	1988	2006-2009	3	No
Neil	OHL	1989	2006-2009	3	No
Dan	OHL	1985	2001-2006	5	Yes
Adam	OHL	1988	2005-2007	2	No
Vince	OHL	1990	2007-2009	1	No
Steve	OHL	1989	2005-2009	4	No
Jamie	OHL	1990	2007-2011	4	No
Blair	OHL	1987	2004-2008	4	No
Tyler	OHL	1989	2006-2010	4	No
Calum	OHL	1995	2011-current	2 (current)	Yes

Recruiting Strategies

Recruiting participants for this study involved the use of personal connections I had established with players. Consequently, through word-of-mouth, I extended my sample to include additional participants. These sampling techniques assisted in connecting with individuals who have played in all three sister CHL leagues. This is an important aspect of the study as experiences are bound to differ from individual to individual, and more importantly, from league to league. In addition to personal connections, I contacted the head hockey coach from a Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) institution who expressed interest in my research and offered to put me in contact with players on the team's roster who met my above mentioned criteria.

Informants were contacted by telephone using a script (see Appendix A), and also through e-mail (see Appendix B). In both scripts, I explained the purpose and nature of the study. I also outlined the criteria for the study and what was involved. Participants

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were fully aware that participation was voluntary, and that there was no pressure or obligation associated with taking part in the research study as explained in the consent form (see Appendix C).

Data Collection Process

This study relied on three forms of data collection: interviews, document analysis, and a reflexive journal. In order to understand another person's perspective, Patton (2002) suggests the use of in-depth interviews as a data collection method for qualitative studies. Selecting the type of interview that will produce the most useful information to address the research questions is crucial (Creswell, 2007). This study used both face-to-face interviews and telephone/Skype interviews. While face-to-face interviews held preference, Skype and telephone interviews were conducted when geography did not allow me to meet the participants in person. These interview methods were selected due to the rich descriptive experiences they can garner for a qualitative inquiry (Creswell, 2007).

It is also important to note that interviews can vary in form. Two primary methods a researcher may choose from include structured or unstructured interviews. Structured interviews are rigidly designed and include precise questions developed by the researcher. Conversely, unstructured interviews are more exploratory as questions are formulated during the interview process (Gay & Airasian, 2003). I chose to utilize a semi-structured interview process for this study. Semi-structured interviews include a list of questions, but account for the fact additional questions may be developed as needed throughout the interview (Creswell, 2007). The semi-structured interview process allows

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the researcher to guide the interview, and grants her the autonomy to probe deeper into the issues as they occur (Glesne, 1999).

The semi-structured interview guide that was used in this study consisted of three interrelated themes: personal sport histories; CHL hockey experiences; and understandings of power relations within the CHL. The first theme was used to identify discourses in the informants' hockey background. As the researcher, I was interested in learning about the early beginnings of the participants' hockey career and the role of their family. The second theme specifically addressed the participants' lived experiences while playing in the CHL. Here I was interested in learning about the players' experiences, emotions, and thoughts on playing in the CHL. The last theme addressed power relations within the CHL and examined if and how the participants understood them. This theme helped to determine the extent to which the players were conscious of power relationships and what strategies the players employed to deal with, or resist, the impact of power relations as players in the CHL.

A researcher should strive for the flow of the interview to be conversational in nature. To achieve this, I followed the advice of Gay and Airasian (2003) and Creswell (2007) by becoming familiar with the research questions and memorizing them prior to the interview. The interview guide for this study was organized according to themes and major topics in the order that they were asked during the interview. More specifically, the questions asked participants to reflect on their lived experiences in regards to their hockey careers. Following a semi-structured interview format allowed me to address particular themes, while simultaneously provided the informant with freedom to express

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their experience. A list of sample questions can be found in Appendix D, along with a full transcript from a selected interview in Appendix E.

Digital Recording

All interviews were recorded digitally. Patton (2002) states that there is no substitution for the actual words of the individual being interviewed, as these words act as the “prize sought by the qualitative inquirer” (p. 380). Recording interviews allowed the participants to fully concentrate on the flow of the interview, and more importantly, fully captured their responses (Glesne, 1999). Prior to recording, participants were informed that all audio material would be strictly used for data collection and analysis and would be deleted once the study is completed.

Transcribing

Although the activity of transcription can prove to be a tedious and time consuming, personally transcribing audio material allows the researcher to become better familiarized with the data (Glesne, 1999). Interviews were transcribed verbatim and a ‘clean’ copy was provided to participants for member checking. The revised or ‘clean’ copy provided to the participants was more readable as utterances such as ‘uh’ and ‘ah’ were removed to make a more comprehensible document for participants to read. Further steps that were taken to familiarize myself with the data and to validate its accuracy included re-listening to the recordings while reading through transcripts. Reviewing the interviews also allowed me to begin identifying emerging themes as a preliminary stage of data analysis. Participants also had the opportunity to clarify or add corrections to the transcript.

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Storing of Data

In accordance with the Brock University Research Ethics Board guidelines, raw interview data were securely stored and eventually destroyed in an appropriate manner following completion of the research.

Document Analysis

In addition to interviews, other documents were analyzed for information pertaining to data collection. These documents included investigative work through the form of books and newspaper articles, as well as player contracts and CHL policy reports. The purpose of including investigative pieces was to collect additional writings on the experiences of present and past CHL hockey players. In addition, the player contracts and CHL policy reports gauged the accountability of the league.

Reflective Journal

Patton (2002) asserts that “reflection and introspection are important parts of field research” (p. 264). As such, the thoughts, feelings, and experiences of the researcher should be considered vital components of data collection (Patton, 2002). Keeping a reflective journal throughout the research process helped record methodological notes, observations, and preliminary analysis. Particular moments occurring in the interview, as well as participant characteristics, were noted to aid in data analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2003). Additionally, the reflective journal included personal reflections that were used as data. After the conclusion of each interview, additional time was scheduled to journal and reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of the interview. This time also allowed me to reflect on my own thoughts, feelings, and experiences about the interviews in order to make any needed improvements.

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Data Analysis

Despite the fact that the qualitative researcher is constantly in the process of interpreting collected data, the systematic analysis process begins after the transcription of interviews. Data analysis is regarded as a crucial aspect in the research process as it essentially determines the quality of results (Markula & Silk, 2011). In terms of qualitative research, there are several techniques that can be used to analyze data. Like other areas of qualitative research, data analysis is dependent upon the paradigmatic views of the researcher. The following will address theory-based analysis as it pertains to this study.

Discourse and Theory-based Analysis

Researchers working within a poststructuralist or postmodern paradigm put great emphasis on the meanings individuals make within various contexts, such as social, political, and economic. Consequently, the researcher is required to conduct a thorough analysis that will strengthen interpretation and enhance the final analysis (Markula & Silk, 2011). The analysis process for a poststructuralist researcher entails working within a distinct theoretical framework when interpreting information from interviews (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2007). Therefore, it is important for the researcher to reveal how he/she will analyze data through their own particular theoretical lens. This study analyzed data using a general pattern for analysis borrowed from Markula and Silk (2007, p. 109), which is outlined below:

- Identification of themes
- Analysis of the themes:
 - Intersections with themes;

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- Discrepancies with themes;
- New themes;
- Connection with power relations, theory and previous literature.

Foucault's (1978) 'cautionary prescriptions' for understanding the work of discourses was used as a guide for the interview analysis. Foucault (1978) warns that locating specific discourses is not a trivial task, as discourses are challenging to decipher due to the various discursive elements that can come into play. Therefore, the researcher should attempt to uncover "numerous and even contradictory discourses" that "govern the interviewees' perceptions" (Markula & Pringle, 2006, p. 106).

Thematic Coding and Analysis

Upon first review of the data, 20 emergent themes were identified. These themes can be found in Table 2. The themes are reflective of the dominant discourses of power that frame how players come to know, and understand, the game of hockey. Foucault (1978) warns that the task of identifying and dividing discourses is not in itself simple, and that recurring and contradicting discourses that shape the perception of the interviewee should be targeted. Following Foucault's strategies, the 20 themes were subjected to a secondary analysis where periodic and repetitive discourses of power were grouped as intersections, and consequently themes were merged and combined. As a result of the secondary analysis, 4 major themes were created that frame the results of this study.

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Table 2 — *List of Themes*

Preliminary Analysis Emergent Themes
Admiration of Hockey Players
Agents
Billets
CHL Contract
Education Package
Emotions for the Game
European Transition
Fighting
Goalie Position
Hockey as a Relationship
Hockey as Labour
Hockey Identity
Hockey Injuries
Moving On
NCAA Eligibility
NHL Dream
Parental Involvement
Promises
School Grades
Stipend

Reflexivity

The growth of qualitative research has emphasized the role of reflexivity.

Reflexivity allows the researcher to achieve a state of self-awareness by disclosing underlying assumptions and beliefs related to the research project (Laverty, 2003; Patton, 2002). It is important to examine how my personal perspective has influenced my role as a researcher within this study. The following section will outline the reflexive process used in the project.

Put simply, reflexivity is the art of reflecting on the actions of the researcher (Willis, 2007). In order to practice reflexivity, the researcher must seek to understand her biases and identify the consequences these biases may have on the data (Fontana & Frey,

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2005). Research notes were kept throughout the research process, which allowed me to be as attentive as possible and “to undertake an ongoing examination of *what I know* and *how I know it*,” (Patton, 2002, p. 64, italics in original). Review of these research notes aided in data analysis by separating my own perspective from the perspective of the participants. Furthermore, Patton (2002) suggests that owning our own perspective allows the researcher to take seriously the responsibility of authentically communicating the perspectives of those we interview.

Trustworthiness

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) assert that establishing trustworthiness is essential to the validity of findings in qualitative research. Historically speaking, lack of rigour and validity have been targeted as weaknesses within qualitative studies (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), and it is for this reason that this study attempted to showcase approaches to establish rigour and trustworthiness. In its simplest form, trustworthiness asks, “How can the inquirer persuade his or her audience that the findings of the inquiry are worth paying attention to, worth taking account of” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 291)? Lincoln and Guba (1985) present four criteria in answering this question: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Credibility

In order for findings to be deemed credible, the research must present data in an authentic fashion that are provided to them by the participants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Furthermore, the validation of a research project should be confirmed throughout the whole of the study and not be considered as a separate entity. To this end, this study incorporated the use of member checking in order to enable participants to confirm that

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their experiences are accurately portrayed through the data (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

In addition, the interview process asked participants to explain responses and ask clarifying questions when necessary. The conclusion of each interview also allotted time for participants to add any remaining thoughts to the experiences they divulged. Finally, transcripts from interviews were sent to each respected participant for review to rule out misinterpretation and attain respondent validation (Patton, 2002).

Transferability

The second criterion for establishing trustworthiness presented by Lincoln and Guba (1985) is transferability. Transferability is defined as “a direct function of the *similarity* between the two contexts, what we shall call *fittingness*,” (Lincoln & Guba, p. 124, italics in original). In other words, it is left to the reader to decide whether or not findings from the study are transferable to other contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, it is imperative for the researcher to express their findings using thick descriptions. Patton (2002) explains that rich descriptions take the reader into the experience and setting depicted, and allows him/her to determine the “fittingness” of the study’s results.

Dependability

The third criterion of trustworthiness is dependability, which measures if the findings are consistent and could be repeated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). With regards to addressing dependability, this study relied on an audit of my research methods by a thesis committee. The purpose of an audit is to validate the rigour of my data, as well as the data’s confirmability, which will minimize the potential of bias and maximize the accuracy of the study (Patton, 2002).

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Confirmability

The last criterion of establishing trustworthiness is confirmability, which mirrors what post-positivist researchers refer to as objectivity. Meanings that surface from data derived from post-positivist research are valued for their objectivity, so that two independent researchers could agree on the meanings gathered from the data (Gillis & Jackson, 2002). Within qualitative inquiry, confirmability is established through the incorporation of an audit trail and increases the study's trustworthiness. An audit trail allows for conclusions, recommendations, and interpretations to be retraced by an external auditor, who then concludes whether or not the inquiry has been conducted in a sufficient manner (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper, & Allen, 1993).

Ethical Considerations

Patton (2002) states that it is important for qualitative research to address ethical considerations due to the fact qualitative methods are highly personal. Qualitative researchers travel into the experiences of others, and are taken inside of the lives of participants. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) present four central ethical issues in qualitative research, including: informed consent, confidentiality, consequences, and the role of the researcher. The consent form located in Appendix C addressed all of these issues to the research participant prior to participation.

Informed Consent

Informed consent provides participants with information prior to the beginning of each interview. This information includes items such as the purpose of collecting the information, for whom is the information, what questions will be asked in the interview, and what the risks/benefits are for the participant (Patton, 2002). The consent form, as

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well as the information sheet explaining the study, addressed these issues to participants.

In addition, participants had full knowledge of the research questions prior to the onset of the interview. This gave the participants the chance to be in the best position possible to answer questions in a meaningful fashion (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).

Confidentiality

In order to protect confidentiality, researchers are advised to change the name of their participants by attributing pseudonyms to protect their identities (Patton, 2002). The notion of identity protection was adhered to throughout the study, unless requested otherwise by participants. Patton (2002) mentions that informants may challenge the protection of privacy by insisting on “owning their own stories” (p. 411). Consequently, participants may feel empowered through the delivery of their own stories and request the use of their real names. This study embraced the fact that informants felt a sense of attachment to their stories, and therefore, when requested, used their real names as a way to deliver empowerment, healing, and pride (Patton, 2002).

Consequences

The consequences of a study involve the ethical considerations of assessing potential risks involved with the project. The main point to consider is if potential risks outweigh the importance of gained knowledge (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The purpose of this study did not involve great risk to the participant.

Role of the Researcher

It is important for researchers to define their role to participants. As such, I explained to my research participants that I wanted to know about them, and their life, in

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order to understand their experiences better and to advocate for social change. It was my hope that by disclosing an advocacy role, a mutual reciprocity was established and accepted by participants (Patton, 2002).

Concluding Remarks

The purpose of Chapter Three was to outline this study's theoretical perspective, research methods, and ethical consideration. By illustrating the research process with clarity, it is my intent to better prepare the reader to understand the research data, as well as the final results. Chapter Four of the study will report on the findings from the research data.

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Chapter Four: The Workings of Power in Chasing the Dream

Statement from CHL President David Branch:

We are of the opinion that no junior hockey league in the world has made more changes to support the best interest of its players both on and off the ice as the CHL.

(CHL, 2012, para. 4)

Tyler: *It's like child slavery down there. It's a joke...50 dollars a week? But as a kid, I made the team, I was just trying to fly under the radar. You're not going to say shit. Now that I'm older, I realize that was bullshit.*

The purpose of this chapter is to examine power relations within the CHL and to understand the workings of power, as well as its effects on individuals. In this study, I understand and utilize the term 'power' using a Foucauldian perspective, in that power is "produced from one moment to the next, at every point, or rather every relation from one point to another" (Foucault, 1978, p. 93). Through this perspective, Foucault (1978) theorized power as a network that "ends by forming a dense web that passes through apparatuses and institutions, without being exactly localized in them" (p. 96). To this end, I explore the mutually existent instances of submission and resistance occurring in the practice of power within players' relationships. By analyzing these relations of power, I can position the bodies of CHL players to be productive, rather than serving as passive dupes.

Four themes involving the practices of the CHL will be addressed in this chapter including: player contracts, the stipend received by players, training, and aggression. These themes have been selected based on the prevalence with which submission and resistance simultaneously unfold within them.

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When we say “the dream”, what exactly do we mean?

The CHL has established itself as one of the world’s best developmental hockey leagues in the world. Countless high caliber players, now displaying their talent professionally around the world, are products of the CHL. With the ways in which the league trains and teaches its players, the game of hockey remains unmatched. However, reaching the ranks of professional positions players against difficult odds. Campbell (2013) quantified the number of players who have gone through the junior system and found that of all the boys enrolled in hockey, and born in Ontario in 1985, 0.04% have gone on to play in the NHL. Despite these vividly telling numbers, young hockey hopefuls remain transfixed with ambition and desperately hold on to what is better known as ‘the dream.’

To understand relations of power in the CHL requires that lived experiences be explored, and that players’ memories are critically examined. This chapter focuses on the Foucauldian concepts of docility and resistance, how these aspects work with one another, in opposition to one another, and how they blossom in singularity. Understanding how these concepts form, and exist, allows power to be understood as being “employed and exercised through a netlike organisation” which positions individuals as “the vehicles of power, not its point of application” (Foucault, 1980, p. 98).

This journey has allowed me to navigate through the lived experiences of 11 current and former CHL players. Over the span of two months, I explored the stories of these players in a completely raw and uninterrupted form. Each story revealed a strikingly new narrative, consumed with each participant’s own unique experience. In a paradoxical fashion however, as the experiences of participants began to interweave in

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my mind, what I once thought to be unique, evolved into multiple and distinct resemblances. The resemblances to which I am referring lie in the manifold power relations between CHL players and the hockey institution. This study sought to critically examine and challenge these relationships of power.

In his work, Foucault rejected the notion that power was a possession an individual, group, or institution could acquire. For Foucault, power resembles a verb, something that can be performed, and which does not need to be solely repressive in nature. This study moves beyond seeing power as only repressive, leaving individuals powerless, and instead considers the operation of power in the everyday relationships between players and the hockey institution (Mills, 2003).

Before diving into a critical assessment of the power relations in the CHL, it is important to reflect on the meaning of hockey to players, and the role of the game in their individual lives. I asked players to narrate the goals and desires they once had, or still have, in relation to the sport in order to establish a sense of the true value hockey held, or still holds, for them:

Steve: *When I was playing in the [CHL], my goal was going to the NHL, just like every friggin' player [who]'s playing. Fucking going to play in the NHL and make millions.*

Tyler: *I wanted to make [hockey] my life.*

Jamie: *The NHL was mainly my goal, to go and play pro hockey.*

Neil: *When I was playing minor hockey all I thought was that I would one day be playing in the NHL. Not making it wasn't even a consideration. I was just trying to pick what team I wanted to be on.*

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The four preceding excerpts establish the absolute singular focus players have and further reveals the desires of young hockey hopefuls. These narratives also emphasize that the singular, ideal result for hockey players playing in the CHL is to go on and play professional hockey in the NHL.

Signing Their Bodies Away

Given this mindset, of playing professional hockey at all costs, young boys with the talent required to play in the CHL will enter into a contract negotiation process with the organization that owns their hockey playing rights. A CHL contract is composed of various important articles including an education scholarship, a bi-weekly salary referred to as a stipend, and the conditions a player must follow in order to receive these aforementioned benefits. As the participants reflected on the day they signed their contracts, it is easy to recognize patterns of docility. Foucault (1991) explained docile bodies are a production of disciplinary techniques that subject and transform bodies to operate as one wishes. This aforementioned docility is outlined in the passages below:

Neil: *We just signed it right there. I didn't read it, didn't know anything about it, I just knew that as soon as I signed it I would be playing in the CHL. I didn't care what it said really.*

Brandon: *That's all it really is...they say, "sign here" and then they just don't care. As soon as you sign you can play and that's all they really care about because you're 16 years old. The thought of being a CHL hockey player is a lot more than what are you going to do after this.*

Given the players' focus on the NHL, not enough consideration is given to the contracts on the players' own admission. Players, some of whom are underage and without the

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accompaniment of a parent or guardian, are signing legally binding documents without proper overview or lawful advice. Although the consequences of signing a contract are not immediately evident, they will affect the player later, particularly if they do not make the NHL. To that end, players who are fortunate in having parents or guardians knowledgeably informed in contractual procedures may hire legal counsel to aid with the negotiation process. I asked Aaron, a participant in this study, why his parents sought the advice of a lawyer when negotiating with a league that publicly prides itself in honouring the well-being of its players both on and off the ice. Aaron slightly smirked at my inquiry, identifying that I had much to learn about the operations of the CHL. He continued to explain that his father was concerned with the possibility of loopholes in the contract, mainly in regards to the education package being offered to his son, and for that reason he was adamant in having a lawyer review the contract. Aaron recalls that after the lawyer had assessed the contract, he addressed the concerns he had to him and his father. Despite Aaron being preoccupied with distractions of playing in the CHL instead of the present moment, after all he had much greater concerns, such as what number he would have sewn on his new CHL jersey, he does remember the lawyer issuing a warning when he said, *“I know these are standard contracts, but they are very slanted towards the team.”* The lawyer Aaron’s family selected was familiar with contracts presented by the CHL, as he had seen them before in instances when he advised numerous other players, just like Aaron, about what the contract obligated the players to do and what it prohibited. As such, on that day for the first time, Aaron gained a momentary appreciation of the significance of the contract and its impact on his experiences in the CHL and beyond.

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However, after a few seconds he continued debating whether the number 12 or 6 would look better on the back on his jersey.

In order to demonstrate how uninformed many players are when entering into a legal agreement with the CHL, the experience of Adam, a participant in this study, is revealing. Adam grew up in a hockey family. His father had a lengthy playing career in the NHL, and chose to play his last few years of hockey in a European league located in Austria before he retired. Adam was still very young when his family lived in Austria, and it is there that he first learned how to skate. He recalled being in Europe, and the cultural contrasts it presented in relation to living in North America. Growing up watching his father play hockey at the professional level, and later coach in both the CHL and NHL, engrained the sport into the forefront of his life and dreams. Adam reminisced on being given permission by his father to explore the dressing rooms of the teams he coached before and after practices. He remembered looking up to the players his father coached and described them possessing a god-like persona. From a very early age, hockey consumed Adam's life, and there was no other way of life for him. During my interview with Adam, I asked him if he always wanted to play hockey. He processed my inquiry as comical, laughed, and then answered, *"That's all I wanted to do, that's it."* The tunnel vision Adam had acquired and spoke about is embedded within most hockey players. Simply put, the game must occupy the forefront of their lives if they ever wish to compete at a professional level. Later in the interview, when I asked Adam about the time he signed his CHL contract, he confirmed he paid little attention to, nor was he concerned with, the agreement details. He simply wanted to play and make the NHL.

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Adam: *It didn't even matter what was on that sheet. It could have been anything, it could have said that they could have done whatever they wanted to my body, or sell it. I didn't care, I just wanted to play.*

Adam's disinterest during the contractual negotiation was a behaviour he had learned through his hockey-centred upbringing. The moment he signed his CHL contract signified a step closer in following in his father's footsteps. Similarly, the determination he had to make his father proud prevented any doubts of whether or not the CHL did indeed have his best interests at heart.

The beneficiaries of a hockey player's determination extend far beyond the individuals he seeks to make proud, and even extend past his own personal satisfaction. This determination is what in fact allows the CHL to operate as a multi-million dollar organization that profits off the talent of its adolescent players. The singular focus of one day playing professional hockey motivates young hockey hopefuls to navigate their lives towards playing in the CHL, and often harvests a sense of trust within them that the CHL will provide for them. While determination is unarguably an attribute that any parent would wish their child to possess, it is a characteristic that the CHL uses to derive profits while hiding the reality that the majority of its players will never step foot on NHL ice.

Through a Foucauldian lens, Adam's comments can be regarded as docile behaviour formed through disciplinary power enacted by the CHL. While Foucault would argue that Adam does in fact exercise his own form of power, he is foremost engaged with the immediate outcome of playing in the CHL rather than reflecting on how his contract may put him at a disadvantage. Disciplinary power enacted by the CHL reflects what Foucault (1980) refers to as the 'normalization of subjects' so that they are

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“destined to a certain mode of living or dying” (p. 94). Many modern sport theorists agree that sporting bodies often become docile through disciplinary processes, which are then used to perpetuate existing power relations (Andrews, 2000; Chase, 2006; Markula & Pringle, 2006; Pringle & Markula, 2005; Shogan, 1999). While Adam reflected on his frame of mind when signing his CHL contract, it became evident that this is a place where power is enacted by the league and embodied by the players. The CHL system is one instance where his focus on becoming a professional hockey player was rewarded.

Adam was not alone in this type of susceptibility to oppressive power relations during contract negotiations. Petr, a former European CHL player, spoke to the engrained thought process hockey players use when signing their contracts. He went as far as suggesting that the contract was something players were expected to ignore.

Petr: *The contract was nothing I would think about, it wasn't something you should pay attention to. I was just happy to be there, I was happy someone picked me up, I would literally sign anything.*

From the interview data collected, player vulnerability was commonly identified through CHL contract negotiations. Along these lines, Foucault argued that where there is power, there is always resistance. More specifically, resistance is “formed right at the point where relations of power are exercised” (Foucault, 1980, p. 134). Foucault maintained that power relations, even at the point of most constraint, are productive in the way they allow new behaviours to emerge. CHL contract negotiations are a place where power was noted to not only be enacted, but also resisted. Here, players participated in an active role in the formation of their relations with members of the hockey institution.

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Take for instance Tyler's contract experience. Tyler was not selected in the CHL draft, however he was offered a try-out position with a CHL franchise. The try-out occurred during the club's camp that was scheduled at a time when Tyler's parents were going on vacation. Luckily, a close friend of Tyler's was expected to report to the same camp, and as such his friend's parents agreed to act as Tyler's guardians throughout the event. Before Tyler's parents left on vacation, they voiced several worries they had regarding the CHL camp. His mother was specifically concerned with her son's National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) eligibility. From the moment a player signs a CHL contract, or plays a game, he is deemed no longer eligible to receive an NCAA scholarship as he is now classified by the NCAA as a professional athlete. NCAA bylaws consider CHL players as professional for two reasons; the first being that players receive a stipend that is beyond actual and necessary expenses, and secondly that Hockey Canada classifies CHL players as being 'major junior,' terminology they believe to be linked to athletic professionalism. Since the NCAA is an amateur-centred sport organization, CHL players are prohibited from competing for institutions within its membership. The NCAA does however allow players to participate in a 48-hour camp with CHL organizations. If a player does not participate in an exhibition, regular season, or playoff game, and if he does not sign a contract or accept any gifts from the organization, he maintains his NCAA eligibility. Tyler recalled his mother being aware of these somewhat complicated restrictions, "*My mom would always do her research, and she's the one who found out about playing and losing your scholarship to the NCAA.*" Consequently, Tyler's mother instructed her son to refuse to play any games for the franchise unless he was presented with a contract that contained an education package of equivalent benefit to an NCAA

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scholarship². Tyler noted that this was the promise he made to his parents. After a successful 48-hour camp with the CHL club, Tyler was approached by the general manager of the organization who requested that Tyler play in a scheduled exhibition game the next day. Knowing that if he stayed past the already accumulated 48-hours, and played in a game for the club, he would lose his NCAA eligibility, Tyler declined the general manager's (GM) offer. He described the moment in the following passage:

Tyler: *So then after training camp was done we had our exhibition game against [OHL Team] and [GM name] didn't want to sign me, he wanted to see how I did in the exhibition game first. So I said, "Well I can't do it, I promised my parents that if I came here the only way I would play is if I got a school package. I promised them that so I can't do it."*

After the meeting Tyler went back to the hotel where he was staying to pack his things before his departure back home in the morning. He felt that he had performed the best way he could during the camp, and that there was nothing more he had to offer to convince the club of his talent. Although his refusal to play in the exhibition game resulted in a sense of regret, he was diligent in maintaining the promise he had made to his parents. He went to sleep that night thinking about what he would do the next day back at home. The news he woke up to however was unexpected.

Tyler: *The next morning when we woke up, they wanted to sign me to a contract and stuff. So I said I'll sign and then played that next day.*

Vicky: *So then the GM gave you a contract...*

Tyler: *Ya. [laughs]*

² The specific benefits and rewards issued by the CHL will be discussed in more detail later in this study.

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The promise Tyler made to his parents served more purposes than he originally knew. His refusal to play in the exhibition game indicated to the franchise that he was a confident player aware of his abilities, and that he expected adequate compensation through an education package. Tyler essentially conveyed that if the organization was not interested in offering him a position on the team, another one would be. Tyler's experience was constructed through a sense of autonomy in which he felt free to make a decision. Markula and Pringle (2006) explain that an athlete's personal decisions have the ability to "reciprocally influence the actions of the coach" (p. 35). This was evident in the above passage as Tyler's refusal to play in the exhibition game resulted in him receiving a CHL contract with an educational clause. In Tyler's case, although his relationship of power with the GM was unbalanced, Tyler still exercised power. This example also serves to reveal Foucault's (1982) understanding of power and that "power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free" (p. 221). For Foucault, freedom is a precondition for any relationship of power and is viewed as being mutually exclusive to any form of power.

Pulling Teeth: Receiving a CHL Education Package

Presently, when a player signs a CHL contract they are awarded a post-secondary scholarship, better known as an education package. The education package includes the full cost of tuition and book fees for each year of service the player provides to his respected CHL organization. In the past, negotiations between the CHL and players resulted in vastly different education packages. The more skill a player possessed and the stronger negotiation tactics used resulted in a higher amount of money awarded to him in his education package. This process has since been changed to reflect a more

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standardized education package distributed to players. Although it is unclear as to when this method of allotting players' education packages was standardized across the league, the 11 interviews conducted in this study revealed that the shift occurred in or around 2010. This study includes interviews with players who underwent contract negotiations prior to 2010, and reveals additional instances of players exercising their own power. Below is an excerpt that alludes to the autonomy with which Blair entered his contract negotiation process.

Vicky: *Do you remember if the team said anything to you about the education package?*

Blair: *That was totally on my mind. I mean that was all that we were really negotiating. [OHL Team] traditionally...they didn't have a whole lot of money at the time so the packages weren't too extensive. So for us it was trying to negotiate that.*

Vicky: *So you got a certain amount of money for each year?*

Blair: *Yep, for every year I played in the league I was given 5,250 dollars.*

Consequently, the CHL contract process that occurred before 2010 forced players, such as Blair, to pay particular attention to the relation of power existing between them and the CHL organization. This means that there was a possibility of players exercising resistance to offers made to them by the club, emphasizing that the athlete is still relatively free within the relationship (Markula & Pringle, 2006).

Regardless of when a player signed his contract, or which method was used to award the player his education package, much ambiguity remains in terms of the monetary value of the scholarship. In the passage above, Blair signed his CHL contract

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after a negotiation process, however another participant of this study who also signed his contract prior to 2010 was not subject to such arbitration.

Dan was a first round CHL pick in his designated draft year. Due to his exceptional talent and superior hockey skills, the CHL team that had selected him presented Dan with a meticulously crafted contract. In order to protect Dan's best interests, his parents had entered into a relationship with a hockey agent who vowed to professionally represent their son in any negotiations. The agent had forewarned Dan and his family of what the CHL team would potentially offer in the proposed contract. Although Dan signed his contract before 2010, the CHL franchise crafted a contract that specifically reflected his talent level. Thus, unlike Blair, Dan was given a full education package for each year he played on the team. I asked Dan to explain the process he experienced.

Vicky: *Was there anything about an education package in the contract?*

Dan: *Ya, I had a full education package.*

Vicky: *Did they mention that to you?*

Dan: *My agent told us all about the education aspect. I think before I even got drafted he was telling us what to expect because I knew I was going to get drafted, probably in the first or second round. So he told my parents, "This is what a contract will look like, this is what he wants to go after." I remember him telling my dad about the education package and how it works. My dad, he has no education, he got his high school diploma and that was it. So the education thing was so big for him, he said, "That better be in there, it better be this amount of dollars, it better say this, this, and this," and I remember my dad being a real stickler on that. But, I mean, if I didn't have a good agent and didn't have a dad*

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who was so involved, and my mom was the same way too, but I mean if I didn't have them I would have no knowledge of that, right? But if you don't have anyone to tell you that stuff who says the team couldn't slip it out of that contract? You may never know if it's there.

Not only does Dan's narrative expose the fluctuation in value of the education package he received compared to Blair, it also depicts a sense of hesitancy from CHL organizations to reveal vital information to players and their parents. Retrospectively, Dan identified the significance of having a well-informed group of individuals supporting his best interests.

Like Dan, Calum is another participant of this study who was drafted in the first two rounds of the CHL draft. A major difference between the two players is that their contracts were signed a decade apart, and Calum remains as a current CHL player who was drafted in the first round of the 2013 NHL draft. My interview with Calum was unique, in that I had the opportunity to speak with both him and his mother. Playing the role of a typical 17 year-old star hockey player, Calum's responses were often programmed, I had the sense that he had done this numerous times before. When it came time in the interview to explore the details of his CHL contract, Calum would often look to his mother to provide answers. I made a note of explaining that, in the past, players underwent negotiations to secure an education package, and that the dollar amount varied for each individual. Although this is not the case today, Calum's mother alluded to the fact that negotiations still exist for additional benefits that complement tuition fees.

Below is the exchange from this interview:

Vicky: *You used to have to negotiate your education package.*

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Calum's Mother: *There still is negotiating. Not everyone gets the full package.*

Some people get the residence, the books and tuition, some get books and tuition.

Some guys get the 4 years guaranteed right away with everything. Some guys it's year to year. It all depends what he's negotiated with the manager.

Vicky: *Is his guaranteed?*

Calum's Mother: *[smiles and nods yes]*

Vicky: *Not that you'll need it. [Participant is a top rated NHL prospect]*

Calum: *Hopefully.*

My interview with Calum revealed that although the CHL has standardized the tuition benefits in the education package, further benefits such as residence fees and book fees are still open to negotiation, but are not readily available to players unless their skills warrant greater incentive to sign with the franchise. Additionally, Calum's narrative reiterates how talent level and parental advocacy are key factors in determining what a player's education package will contain, factors also noted in Blair's experience. By relating the theoretical aspect of power relations to the above two scenarios, talent level and parental or agent advocacy can be seen as aspects contributing to a player's point of resistance against the workings of power. This point of resistance is garnered through the "questioning, refusal and creation" of the contract by players and their representatives (Shogan, 1999, p. 87). Thus, when viewed through a post-structuralist lens, CHL contract negotiations are a space where dominant power relations are produced, and where resistance to this power and its effects takes place (Andrews, 2000; Chase, 2006; Markula, 2003).

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To further highlight the pattern of discrepancies in education packages and resistance to what is being offered by the franchise, Appendix F provides an agreement presented to a player by his CHL organization. This agreement is separate from the player's contract and serves to expose the abundance of added benefits the CHL is prepared to offer when signing a top-level prospect. The education package offered in this agreement totals an amount of 95,000 dollars US, a figure unprecedented in comparison to what is offered to other players. Additional benefits include a personal laptop, 3,000 dollars in travelling costs for the player's parents, and 2,500 dollars for off-season conditioning. Reflective of the player's talents, this lucrative³ agreement represents what is offered to an individual the organization is eager to sign. Furthermore, a highly skilled player is in a better position to resist what he deems as an unfair contract.

Unfortunately, there exist instances in which players do not have well-intentioned agents or support from parental figures. This allows the CHL to utilize disciplinary technologies, which in turn result in a player being constrained in his actions (Shogan, 1999). Such was the case with former CHL player, Milan Doczy. Milan, a European player from the Czech Republic who came to North America to pursue a hockey career in the CHL. Unable to speak English, and with no access to either his parents or an agent, Milan signed his CHL contract with the understanding that he would not be allowed to play in a game unless done otherwise. Moreover, due to the language barrier he faced upon his arrival to North America, the GM of his CHL club conveniently positioned yellow arrowed stickers on the contract that directed Milan where to place his signature. He knew nothing of an education package that was awarded to all CHL players, a

³ I use the term "lucrative" to emphasize that this agreement is relative to what is offered to other CHL players.

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package that was entirely missing from his contract. Years later, when Milan decided to retire from hockey and embark on an academic career, he was denied his education package based on the explanation that there was no precedent for a European player redeeming the scholarship money from the league. After countless efforts made to further probe the issue with the CHL, Milan's story was published as an article in *The Toronto Star*, a nation-wide read newspaper. The media attention on the issue forced the CHL to act and grant Milan his rightfully deserved education package (Cribb, 2012a, 2012b). Milan's hardship uncovers the problematic nature of docility in the training of athletes, particularly when supported through institutions such as the CHL. Furthermore, the disciplined behaviour of high-performance athletes is reflected in adherence to militaristic instruction. Shogan (1999) holds that the conformity of sporting bodies results in individuals having little control. This was reflected in the ultimatum Milan's GM issued when presenting him with the contract, an ultimatum that threatened he would not be allowed to play unless he signed the contract.

CHL players and prospects are under constant surveillance and regulation in ways that are both subtle and obvious, leading to the normalization and acceptance of such systems in their lives. These docile hockey bodies can appear to have a diminished sense of control and to be highly disadvantaged. This holds true with Adam's experience in obtaining his education package. Adam signed a CHL contract that designated him with 6,000 dollars per year for the three years he provided service to the organization. After graduating from the CHL and not being drafted into the NHL, Adam decided to play in a semi-professional hockey league. Unfortunately, this endeavour did not appeal to Adam for long, and after a few months he retired from the game and applied to university. As

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the academic year had already commenced at the institution to which he was accepted, Adam began attending courses as a part-time student during the University's second semester. As such, his tuition fees totalled an amount of 1,700 dollars, a cost quite less than the full year's worth of courses. Given that his education package contained 6,000 dollars a year, Adam continued his education with the impression that the remainder of the money he had not used his first year, a total of 4,300 dollars, would be carried over and made available to him. This however, was not the case. Adam explained the exchange he had with the CHL when he inquired about the remaining money he had not used in his first semester at University.

Adam: *This year I called the guy from the OHL and I was like, "Well, what the hell is going on here? Do I have money? I have a full course load." And they're like, "Well no, you spent it, here's year one here's year two and there's the third year." And I said, "Well, that's kinda bullshit, no one advised me about anything like that." So this year it had to come out of my pocket. Technically I used 1,700 bucks the first year, so I lost the other 4,300 dollars, it went down the drain, and they told me that afterwards, that it doesn't roll over.*

It is important to note that discipline used to produce high-performance athletes should not be wholly criticized. For without discipline athletes would lack the necessary skills and abilities required to perform. However, questions centred upon the ethics and values used in enacting disciplinary technologies require further examination (Shogan, 1999). As per Adam's case, it is evident that the authorities of the CHL took advantage of his disciplined body, along with his desire to play professional hockey, and withheld information from him. Fiske (1993) asserts that a disciplined athlete is someone who acts

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with submission “to the power of a particular way knowing/behaving in order to participate in that power” (p. 64). Fiske’s (1993) statement can be used to conclude that Adam’s desire to play hockey in the CHL caused him to comply with passivity during his playing career. It was only after Adam was removed from the league, at a point when his hockey dream had evaporated, that he began to become aware of, and discontent with, the details and loopholes in his education package. Aaron, who experienced a strikingly similar situation, also mirrored this kind of discontentment.

Aaron: *I was actually lied to...well not lied to, I just think he didn't know, he was a rookie GM at the time. I was under the impression that that money could carry over but it ended up being...*

Vicky: *Carry over, what do you mean by that?*

Aaron: *So let's say my tuition and my books cost 6,000 dollars in year one of school, I was under the impression that \$1,500 would carry over [player's package was 7,500 dollars per year]*

Vicky: *Right, and you thought that you would get that ...*

Aaron: *It doesn't happen.*

In this passage, Aaron is cautious in describing the actions of his GM. Although he expressed feelings of being misled, Aaron was quick in correcting himself and re-crafted his words to insinuate that rather than lying to Aaron, the GM simply did not know the correct procedure with which the education package was distributed. This reveals that despite dissatisfaction at the end of their CHL careers, former players still behave with the discipline to which they complied while active in the league. Consequently, docility remains deeply embedded in some retired CHL players who indicate the strong

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magnetism of disciplinary technologies and their lasting effects.

After completing the interviews for this study, it was evident that the education package rewarded by the CHL is a significant asset for a player's future. As Campbell (2013) reveals, only 0.04% of the 67,715 boys born in 1985 who were enrolled in hockey in Ontario played at least one game in the NHL. This further illustrates the value of the education package in the lives of CHL players. Campbell (2013) further illustrates the odds of a player making it to the NHL by asking readers to consider the bench of a CHL hockey team during a game, and envision that only one or two of those players will have a sustainable career at the professional level. This highlights that the odds of a CHL player playing even a single game in the NHL are against him. Many participants of this study accepted this reality and indicated how important the education package was given their potential failure to realize their hockey dream. Jamie and Vince, players who are both a few years removed from the league, reflected on the impact of their education packages below:

Jamie: *Obviously I'm glad to get the package that I did because now I don't have to pay for school, right? I mean you look at something so small and now I'm glad I had a father who was aware of it, and my agent who was very well aware about the situation.*

Vince: *Getting your OHL package is awesome, I think I have 20,000 dollars' worth of money, which is awesome, that's huge.*

Although the education package serves as a financial relief for many players, it is not always enough to fully cover the expenses of attending a post-secondary institution.

Many packages fall short of the additional tuition and living costs. What began to surface

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during these conversations was the issue of the stipend allocated to players during their CHL player careers, a stipend that is not considered to be reflective of their expended time and effort.

The CHL Stipend: A Salary or Pocket Change?

Under the current policies of the league, CHL players receive a bi-weekly stipend that ranges from 50-200 dollars, depending on the player's seniority and skill level. In today's economy, the value of the stipend can be considered as a relatively modest earning. This represents approximately 900-3,600 dollars a year, although food and shelter are covered by the billet family, Statistics Canada assesses the 2012 low income cut off for singles living in urban areas to be 16,537 dollars a year (Statistics Canada, 2013). From the league's perspective, the stipend is viewed as an allowance rather than a salary. To further justify this classification, the league argues that their players have no expenses while playing in the CHL, since all living and housing needs are met through the accommodation of billet families. Nonetheless, when seen through a modern economic perspective, the stipend is not a sufficient compensation for players' labour.

Appendices G and H include an appeal from a Manitoba court ruling in 2000 that determined that CHL players were involved in insurable and pensionable employment. The appeal contains a testimony from the owner of the Brandon Wheat Kings (WHL) organization, Kelly McCrimmon. McCrimmon noted that the stipend received by players had only increased by 20 dollars from the time he himself played in the CHL 20 years prior. By incorporating an investigative approach, this study included the examination of several documents, such as this court case. However, despite an in-depth analysis of the aforementioned legal document, little is known about the ramifications and impact of this

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ruling. Nonetheless, several players interviewed for the study voiced their concerns regarding the disparity of salaries they earned.

Neil: *I'm pretty sure I've read that players [who] were playing in the 70s were making 50 bucks a week, you'd figured with the amount of increase in desire, and the popularity of the CHL that they would increase the paycheck with that.*

Steve: *50 bucks a week didn't get me shit. I had to ask my parents for money. You can't really live off that, \$50 a week. I was going through it pretty quick.*

Jamie: *I knew a player whose dad played in the CHL years and years ago, probably 20 or so years ago, and he was receiving 50 dollars a week 20 years ago. And the economy now is ridiculously growing, so the players should receive a lot more money.*

Adam, whose story was discussed earlier, mirrored McCrimmon's testimony by confirming the similar value of the stipend to what his father was receiving from the CHL 30 so years ago.

Adam: *Players get the same as my Dad did when he played. How does that work? I think they take advantage of kids. I don't complain, I don't ever say, "Oh man, it was a grind." I had the most fun in my life, but you take advantage of kids who would sell their soul to play on that team, and you pay him 50 bucks a week? It doesn't buy you a lunch.*

Neil, a participant in this study who played his last CHL game in 2009, is now in his third year at a post-secondary CIS institution. Having had an average major junior career, Neil decided to utilize his education package that is worth four years of tuition fees. The game of hockey remains at the forefront in his life, and he continues to play for

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the CIS team that recruited him following his days in the CHL. Adjusting to life after the CHL has not been a simple transition, however Neil noted that he feels his identity is now moving closer towards being a student, rather than what he has always been, a hockey player. The evolution of becoming a student has been gradual for Neil, but he maintains that hockey will forever be entangled within his persona. With the personal transition came numerous adaptations to the daily necessities of a young adult life, and its accompanied financial responsibility. Though his tuition is covered by the CHL, money remains difficult to come by when faced with a full course load. Neil reflected on the stipend he once received from the CHL, and how the modest amount of his paychecks did in fact seem like an allowance rather than a salary:

Neil: *I mean you got by with it, but the money would go towards spending. I didn't have to buy food or anything like that, right? So you would use it to spend on whatever. But you buy one thing and your money is gone for the week, and you have no money left.*

An immense sense of regret emerged when Neil recalled the money he had earned, and how it quickly dissipated. Although it may not have been a fulfilling income, the money would undoubtedly aid him in his life now. One of the new necessities to which Neil referred was transportation means and his desire to purchase his own vehicle.

Neil: *When I look back on it, because I'm looking at getting a car now and I need to move out on my own and get my own place, and now when I look back on it, I had all that money and it would have been nice if I had someone around, someone part of the organization, part of the CHL who would have been like, "Listen you can't just go out and spend all this, you need to start saving, you need to start*

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putting some aside.” That would be a big help to a lot of kids, because I know every year I left the CHL for the summer, I left with no money, I left with 0 dollars.

The regulation of the stipend occurs within an interesting power dynamic between hockey operations and players. Due to the system used to operate the CHL, authorities within the organization exercise power in a way that enables them to minimally compensate players. Keeping in mind that Foucault (1978) rejected the notion of power being centrally located, dispersion of power is evidenced by the shifting power relation occurring in the allocation of the modest stipend. Once the player is in possession of his stipend, he is now free to use it on his own accord and acts in a newly formed relation of power. Neil noted that the freedom, or power, he exercised in spending his stipend was irresponsible and resulted in impulse purchases. He mentioned that many of his teammates faced the same financial reality. What this phenomenon illustrates is that despite participants displaying resistance to the value of the stipend, a longing for an authoritative figure to enact power and financially advise players exists. In other words, the league can be considered as robbing its players of imperative financial skills by not providing them with guidance. Power relations within the allocation of the stipend coincide with how Foucault conceptualized power as a capillary-like network in which points of resistance can be found embedded (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Furthermore, disciplinary processes used to normalize the behaviour of players during contract negotiations can be seen resurfacing in the desire for control to be enacted on them. In the passage above Neil alluded to a desire of having an individual within the CHL responsible for financially advising players. He noted that he may have been in a better

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financial situation had there been someone encouraging him to save his stipend. Even though Neil resents how much he was paid, he indicates a yearning for more control in his life. This exposes the contradictions and tensions within a disciplined athletic body that help the CHL maintain its cultural dominance. Foucault (1975) asserts that once an individual is subjected to discipline's "field of visibility," he "assumes responsibility for the constraints of power; he makes them play spontaneously upon himself; he inscribed in himself the power relation in which he simultaneously plays both roles; he comes the principle of his own subjection" (p. 76). Thus, through a Foucauldian lens, CHL players eventually subject themselves to the same discipline initially enacted upon them, which allows the league to uphold its supremacy.

Concerns with the stipend were highly prevalent among the players interviewed for this study, and as such deserve to be further addressed. Blair, a participant now five years removed from the league, embarked on an educational pathway upon graduating from the CHL. After having completed his undergraduate degree, Blair pursued a Master's degree and is now employed with a marketing corporation based out of the Toronto area. Having little to no attachment to the game in his current life allowed for a distinctly critical perspective on the issue of the CHL stipend.

Vicky: *The other thing I wanted to know is what the amount of money you got, it was 50 dollars?*

Blair: *Yep, 44 dollars, \$88 bi-weekly.*

Vicky: *Do you think that should be changed?*

Blair: *Yep. That's the same amount of money they were making in the 1950s.*

Factor in inflation, the road trips, and hours at the rink, it's bizarre to me. And I

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agree with the point that 50 dollars is actually enough to survive on, because you're literally not buying anything, right? But just because you can survive off that doesn't mean it's right. We can say professional athletes can survive on a fraction of what they're making. But, if the demand is there to pay players, if people are going to watch them, then they deserved to be paid that much. Same reason a lawyer and an accountant deserve to make more than everyone else. It's just the demand for their services, and they have unique skills. I'm not suggesting you go out and that those players need to be making 1,000 dollars a week, but I'm saying it should go up at least 2.5% a year, like the average inflation rate. Which it literally has not budged in 40 years, that's absolutely insane. And I guess the teams will argue that the education packages have gone up. Ya, I'll give them that. They have. But they didn't from the 1950s until 2010, right?

The high degree of resistance evidenced by Blair's commentary exists in tandem with the relation of power with which the stipend is delivered by hockey authorities. Shogan (1999) holds that resistance occurring in response to disciplinary power has little leverage in changing the totalizing effects of the discipline. Consequently, Blair's critique of the economically deficient stipend does little to challenge the control of the CHL. The relation of power in which the CHL financially operates presents a vast spectrum that appears to be laden with excess authority and influence at the organization's end, leaving players disadvantaged.

The child sport injustice literature argues that instances of maltreatment, a term used by sport theorists such as Donnelly (1997a, 1997b, 2008), Donnelly and Sparks (1997), Coakley (1993a), Stirling and Kerr (2008) and Stirling (2009), are rampant in an

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organization such as the CHL. A specific form of maltreatment, known as child sport labour, is of particular interest in this study. Child sport labour draws parallels between sport and a work-like atmosphere, with the intention to uncover how children in high-performance sport can be better protected by the law (Donnelly, 1997a). The United Nations' Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) suggests that children require heightened protection due to their vulnerability. Below, Article 32 of the CRC specifically addresses economic protection of children, shedding light on the realities of CHL players:

Article 32

1. States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child's education, or to be harmful to the child's health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.
2. States Parties shall take legislative, administrative, social and educational measures to ensure the implementation of the present article. To this end, and having regard to the relevant provisions of other international instruments, States Parties shall in particular:
 - (a) Provide for a minimum age or minimum ages for admission to employment;
 - (b) Provide for appropriate regulation of the hours and conditions of employment;
 - (c) Provide for appropriate penalties or other sanctions to ensure the effective enforcement of the present article.

(United Nations General Assembly, 1989, pp. 9-10)

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Article 1 posits that children deserve the right to be protected from economic exploitation. As seen in many of the excerpts above, CHL players are receiving a stipend for their athletic services that has ignored the economic reality of inflation, as well as the increased profit generated by the CHL in the past 30 years. This leads to question, if CHL players are not receiving a portion of these increasing profits made by the CHL, who in the organization is? Coakley (2006) indirectly addresses this question by noting that high-performance sport often witnesses the financial livelihood of adults, such as coaches, trainers, and managers, being dependent upon child performers. Furthermore, unlike areas of the entertainment industry such as film, the financial gain of adults from children in elite sports is not regulated. CHL players dedicate countless hours training, playing, and travelling week after week and although delegating these hours into a traditional work schedule would be unrealistic, their efforts deserve to be properly compensated. This study holds that the issue of challenging the economic welfare of elite child athletes needs to be met with human rights legislation, such as the CRC. Donnelly (2008) states that abiding by the CRC recognizes child athletes in “a period of growth and development,” and that the conditions in which they train, compete, and are bought and sold should be regulated by governments. Thus, as human rights continue to be routinely violated in the sporting realm, it is imperative that the welfare of high-performance child athletes becomes a future international foreign policy initiative (Donnelly, 2008).

When considering the CHL stipend through a researcher’s perspective, it becomes clear that players are being exploited by the league. Participants who are now retired from the league support this claim, which was demonstrated through the data excerpts

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disclosed within this section. To that end, additional questions regarding the financial marketability of players revolved around how current CHL players view the league's financial priorities. In my interview with Calum, he alluded to seeing pictures of his teammates and himself displayed around the city where his CHL organization is located. Billboards, magazines, hockey cards, and apparel are stamped with his face and name. He noted the abundance of fans in the arena who purchase tickets to watch the club play games throughout the season, along with countless jersey auctions and special events. A steady stream of money flowing in, money that he contributed in generating and ironically, money to which he will never have access. Calum further alluded to this realization in the passage below:

Calum: *I mean there's a lot of sacrifice that we have to take. Also with everything that we do, we put a lot of time and effort into hockey and we play for the coaches and the organization. They're making lots of money. Maybe it would be nice for us to get a little extra. We're trying to represent them, you know? It could be like a little thank you.*

Given Calum's age, and the fact he was drafted into the NHL this spring, I was surprised by his awareness of the marketing strategies employed by the CHL franchise. Despite the fact his hockey career is being projected to evolve past the major junior level, Calum's vision remained unclouded when he voiced his support for players to receive a larger stipend. His perspective, coupled with the normalizing behaviour he has been taught by the CHL, gives rise to a rather subdued form of advocacy for a higher stipend, in his own words, "*it could be like a little thank you.*" While it may be subdued, Calum's support

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for a more fair stipend certainly exists and he is not alone, as the aforementioned participants also spoke to the economic injustice they have faced.

Unlike the variation of benefits found occurring in education packages of players based on their skill levels, this study found that the CHL stipend is relatively similar in value from player to player. Furthermore, skill level and player age, characteristics taken into account when rewarding education packages, were found to have little to no influence on the bi-weekly compensation rate of players, aside from an increase of 50-70 dollars, a 20 year-old player receives. In this study, the analysis of the CHL stipend perhaps yields more questions than answers. Questions such as: How is the CHL held accountable? Why is the CHL exempt from adhering to child labour laws? To what extent are adults profiting off of the efforts and skills of children? And most importantly, why has the stipend received by CHL players not been adjusted to reflect the changing economy over the last 30 years?

Training the Troops

Andrews (2000) states that sport “is implicated as an optic of modern disciplinary power: a mechanism of surveillance which renders visible and intelligible the normal body, and the abnormal body against which the norm is constituted” (p. 124). Elite sport, therefore, functions both to normalize athletically differentiated bodies and to further differentiate bodies that do not adequately pass as athletically fit. The CHL has adopted many normalizing and differentiating technologies that are exercised through in-season and off-season training. For example, CHL players are disciplined by the rules of hockey training, rules that Shogan (1999) feels “prescribe certain actions, proscribe other actions, and describe boundaries or contexts within which these actions make sense” (p. 4).

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Players who are disciplined into following these rules do so to avoid potential negative consequences, such as getting cut from the roster or a decrease in ice time. Similarly, training rules are followed for the potential of positive rewards including an increase in ice time and participation on special teams, such as penalty kills or power plays. Andrews (2000) suggests that surveillance is utilized so that coaches may better implement “regimes of measured, corrective and continuous corporal training, designed to facilitate the controlled manufacturing of suitably docile bodies” (p. 122). The findings of this study indicate that technologies of surveillance have extended beyond the ice surface and have become embedded in the bodies, psyches, and daily lives of CHL players. The authority of training experts causes players to internalize training regimes and recognize that one’s body and behaviour are continuously under surveillance by coaches, trainers, and other decision-making actors (Andrews, 2000; Markula & Pringle, 2006). Neil, a former CHL player, speaks to the internal forces of surveillance to which he once adhered.

Vicky: *It seems that hockey players now have to do that extra training to get to a high level.*

Neil: *Oh ya...I lost a lot of friends, going through this and my first stages of junior because I put so much time into it. I said, “I want to do this, I want to be a hockey player.” That was my life, just working out. So when all of my friends were like, “Come hang out” I was like, “I seriously can’t, because I got to be at the gym.”*

The self-surveillance that Neil used to navigate his training works within a relation of power that comes at minimal cost to the CHL (Markula & Pringle, 2006). Issuing an

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inspecting gaze is all that is required by the league, a gaze that then internally influences players to act in accordance with discipline. It is because of this effortless gaze that Foucault (1980b) regarded self-surveillance as a “superb formula” that allows the continual exercise of power over individuals at a minimal expenditure (p. 155). Foucault (1980b) further defined the notion of an inspecting gaze as “a gaze which each individual under its weight will end up interiorising to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against himself” (p. 155). Although internalized and silent, self-surveillance permeates within players of the CHL, and is a silent tactic used for the submission of individuals to comply with a coercive relation of power.

Hockey though, did not always bring with it an inspecting gaze, and it is only within the last decade that players began dedicating an abundance of off-season time to advanced training. Dan, one of the eldest participant of this study, played his last CHL game seven years ago and has been witness to the changing disciplinary methods of the game.

Dan: *The summer going into my draft year I was 15, and it's funny because I was still playing lacrosse up to that point. I remember talking to my dad and he asked, “Are you sure you want to play lacrosse? What if you get hurt? You have a big year coming up, your draft year.” There was a lot of anticipation for my draft year, so I stopped playing lacrosse and focused on hockey. That was the first year I focused on off-season training. I remember going to a personal trainer, getting an education on how to train, how to get stronger. I'm a 1985 birthday and it was unheard of for me at 14, 13, 12 years old to go train in a gym. We played soccer,*

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baseball, and lacrosse in the summer. You didn't talk about hockey, you didn't train for hockey, you just played sports and I think that it's moved away from that. I always see young kids training now and I think it's crazy. There's been a shift from kids going home to play baseball and soccer and now they just train for hockey. It's such a bad thing to do, you've got to refresh your mind. It's scary that you have to do that at 15 or 14 years old now.

Dan's narrative identifies changes to the game of hockey that have infiltrated new disciplinary techniques used to increase performance demands. These novel training methods encourage players to train hard at an early age if their desire is to play in the CHL. More alarming however, is that the relations of power used by the CHL to operate its league have now extended above and beyond to minor hockey players who may very well not even have the opportunity to touch CHL ice. A participant from this study, named Aaron, also reflected on this transformation in hockey, and how early training has become a necessary mandate of the sport.

Aaron: *My generation, and by my generation I mean players born in 1988 and older, didn't have training that started early on. I started working out in high school for hockey, where now you'll see kids who are in grades 5, 6, 7, 8 doing resistance training. So it was different in the sense that I didn't have to do that training. Now it almost seems like if you want to play hockey you have to do that.*

When analyzed through a Foucauldian perspective, these observations give rise to a measure of conformity amongst athletic bodies. More specifically, CHL players and CHL hopefuls seek to reach an athletic level that is held as the accepted norm. If the player 's

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fitness drops below this norm, he engages in training that disciplines his body back to the league's preferred athletic level.

In addition to players measuring the ability of their own bodies, CHL organizations hold yearly fitness camps attended by the current players of the respected organization, yearly draft picks, and players who remain in the system after not having previously made the roster. Here, at the fitness camps, players become objects of disciplinary power as they are compared, rated, and judged by experts within the organization who note any abnormalities in fitness level. Having attended this form of camp not even one year ago, I asked Calum to reminisce on that experience.

Vicky: *You went to camp that year?*

Calum: *Ya, I went to camp.*

Vicky: *How was that?*

Calum: *[pauses]...Scary.*

Vicky: *Scary?*

Calum: *Scary. I was out there with guys [who] were a lot bigger than me, and a lot stronger than me.*

What Calum witnessed at the organization's fitness camp were players highly trained and disciplined. The fitness level of players performing in the CHL is testament to not only the training they must endure to remain competitive in the league, but the prerequisite training required from young players hopeful to one day play major junior hockey.

Preparing for Battle

Violence in North American ice hockey has triggered a recent surge of concern over player safety and well-being. Injuries involving the head, neck, and spine have been

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avidly studied due to their frequent occurrences in the game (Carli, De Jesus, & Martineau, 2012; Winder, Brett, & Hurlbert, 2011; Wennberg & Tator, 2008; Tator, Provvidenza, & Cassidy, 2005; Asplund, Bettcher, & Borchers, 2003; Benson, Rose, Meeuwisse, Kissick, & Roberts, 2002; and Biasca, Wirth, & Tegner, 2002). In addition, the mental health of players has become an issue in need of examination following the sudden deaths of former NHLers Rick Rypien and Derek Boogaard (Johnson, 2011). While mainly seen occurring at the professional level, violence has had a trickle down effect dissipating into junior and even minor hockey. As the main feeder system for the NHL, the CHL is perhaps most influenced by violent behaviour in professional hockey, and has integrated violence as a crucial skill in the development of its players. An offshoot of violence that occurs most prevalently in the CHL is on-ice fighting, a skill required of players hoping to maintain a roster position and reach the ranks of professionalism. As I moved deeper into the data analysis phase of this study, fighting emerged as a substantial theme that was entangled in power relations, as well as a pivotal aspect into the lived experiences of participants.

Blair was drafted in the mid-round of the CHL selection draft; he was not the most talented hockey player and this was something he quickly realized after acquiring a position on the team's roster. Realizing he needed to make an impact on the coaches and management of the team, Blair was forced to alter his game to adhere to the heightened level of violence in the CHL. Below is a passage where Blair remarks on his first year.

Vicky: *How was your first year with the team?*

Blair: *First year was okay. I was a fourth line player, small guy [who] had some skill but I only played half the games, I was a healthy scratch the other half. I had*

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to fight and do things that weren't really part of my game to stay there, so it was rough but I was just happy to be there.

In addition to Blair, Neil also reflected on enhancing his position on the team through the addition of violence to his game:

Neil: *That summer there was just a lot of training to get ready for the next year. I had kind of taken on a role of a fighter at that point.*

Vicky: *That was the year you decided to be a fighter?*

Neil: *I decided probably half way through my first year, because that's how I was going to be able to play. The team didn't really have a fighter, so I figured if I took on that role it would give me the chance to dress more and play more.*

Both of these passages suggest that the tendency to perform in a violent manner is a learned behaviour not an initial feature of a player's game. According to Smith (1979) and Vaz (1980), the formation of violence into a learned behaviour is the amalgamation of two factors: violent patterns of athletic role models and the rewards violence garner from coaches, teammates, and the community. These factors combined to form a context in which the utilization of violence is deemed as normative behaviour. In Blair and Neil's case, adopting fighting as a mechanism of their game was believed to be a rewarded action warranting them a secure roster position.

In general, hockey seems to operate within a relation of power that supports and encourages fighting. Even though excessive violence is largely contested in most sports, it is a widely supported behaviour by hockey insiders. Coaches, management, and community members are all key actors who encourage players to participate in violent behaviour. Although many submit to the pressures of violence, a sense of resistance in

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the form of reluctance was noted appearing in the experiences of players who had participated in fighting.

Vicky: *Did you like fighting?*

Neil: *At the end, I loved it.*

Vicky: *Do you remember your very first fight?*

Neil: *I remember being so terrified because I had asked for a trade at this point and I was starting to fight a little bit more. I figured in order for me to get some real credibility as a fighter, and to get interest in teams, I had to fight the league tough guy. The guy beat me up pretty good and I remember going into the fight shaking because I did not want to do it, but I knew that I had to. I actually called my Mom the night before and told her not to come to the game because I was planning on fighting him [laughs].*

Neil's hesitancy in the narrative above is evidenced through multiple feelings. One of these feelings includes denial, where he stated, "*I did not want to do it...*" He also displayed signs of nervousness leading into the fight when he recalled "*going into the fight shaking.*" In addition, he issued a warning to his mother to prevent her from attending the game; "*I actually called my mom the night before and told her not to come to the game because I was planning on fighting...*" However, despite his uneasiness, the social environment of his hockey club had designated Neil with the role of being a fighter. Messner (1990) writes that individual roles within an athletic context are determined through a hierarchical system governed by clearly defined rules. These rules are generally respected by players, who use them to negotiate and renegotiate their

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relationships. In the passage below, Neil describes rules he was issued by his teammates and coach that assigned him with an aggressor-type role.

Neil: *The coach had said something beforehand too. He said “Well, these guys [opposing team] only have 5 defensemen...if we can get this guy out for 5 minutes for fighting one of you guys that will help our team out because then their other defenseman will be tired.” So then everyone looked at me because they knew I started taking on that role. I remember going across the ice and hitting the guy, I was way out of position just to hit him and he looked at me and just took his helmet off.*

Vicky: *Did he say anything?*

Neil: *No, he didn’t say anything at all, he just looked at me and knew that’s what I was trying to do, so he took his helmet off, dropped his gloves. So I was thinking, “Oh great” and I took my helmet off, dropped my gloves, and kept backing up farther and farther from him. Eventually the refs stepped in and broke up the fight so we each just got 10 minutes [penalty] but we didn’t have to fight, so I was like “Thank God.” I actually thanked the refs for saving my life [laughs] because this guy would have killed me.*

Through a Foucauldian lens, Neil would still be regarded as being relatively free to decide his response of whether or not to accept the fighting role. However, the internal fear through which he navigates during the confrontation signifies the imbalanced relationship of power existing between him and his team. To better understand this imbalance, it is helpful to hypothetically reverse Neil’s situation. If Neil had refused to adopt the role of a fighter, his actions would have reciprocal effects on the coach and his

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teammates. Included amongst these effects, is the possibility of Neil's actions inducing the coach to exercise discipline in decreasing his ice time, and his teammates losing respect for Neil due to his refusal in accepting and performing his designated role on the team. Foucault's (1983) definition of a relationship of power implies that the action of one person directs the "possible field of action of others" (p. 221). This definition can thus be paralleled to Neil's situation with much relevancy, as the consequences of not fighting would affect the behaviour and actions of his coach and teammates.

Brothers at War

To that end, it is important to address the masculinity promoted through hockey's distinct aggressiveness. Allain (2008) holds that the CHL is a space where hegemonic masculinity serves as a privileged expression. Defined by a pioneer in the field of masculinity, Connell (1990) classifies hegemonic masculinity as "the culturally idealized form of masculine character" (p. 83). Normative traits of masculinity such as dominance, aggression, courage, and loyalty are celebrated in elite and professional North American hockey, making the CHL a unique site in which these attributes can be performed literally (Allain, 2008). By providing players a space to fulfill their masculinity, the CHL gains the ability in also enforcing this identity through violent play. Consequently, a masculine social context creates "clear-cut boundaries" for the relationships between players that allows them to experience closeness within their teammates in a strictly platonic fashion (Messner, 1990, p. 290).

Tyler, a participant previously referred to in this study, was readily known around the CHL as a "tough guy," who flaunted his dominating masculine identity. In my interview with Tyler, much mention was given to a former teammate named Kyle with

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whom he had developed a strong camaraderie. The two had known each other long before making their debuts in the CHL, however their friendship was forever solidified after incidents of a particular game.

Vicky: *Do you remember your first fight?*

Tyler: *Yes. I fought [player name].*

Vicky: *How'd it go?*

Tyler: *It went well. I cut him open over his right eye. It was Kyle's first fight too. He did really well against [player name].*

Vicky: *Really?*

Tyler: *Ya, I think then and there it kind of established our friendship. We were already pretty close, but when we fought...we had something. I would get him going, and when he would fight it would get me going, you know? We both just fed off each other.*

To Tyler and Kyle, fighting in hockey is the ultimate test of courage an individual can demonstrate in the game. Meanings attributed to these masculine performances result in a high degree of respect amongst teammates, and between players and coaches. Not only did displaying aggression heighten his worth as a player, but it also allowed Tyler to form a meaningful relationship with his fellow teammate. Eventually, Tyler went on to play four seasons in the CHL, carrying with him the reputation as an enforcer acknowledged throughout the league. Showcasing strength, resiliency, and force from the outside, was not however indicative of how Tyler felt internally within his own body.

Bruised, Bloody and Broken: The Aftermath

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Given the demanding nature of hockey it is inevitable that the bodies of players become drained and injured. Training, playing games, and fighting are amongst the causes attributed to players' bodily decline. Throughout his four seasons as an enforcer in the league, Tyler experienced detrimental physical consequences, some of which he still suffers with today. When I asked Tyler to reflect on his second season in the CHL, it was not the wins, losses, or points he scored that first came to mind, rather it was the moments of physical pain he had absorbed that had left an imprint on his memory.

Vicky: *How did that second year go?*

Tyler: *It went well, but by the end of it I was having some hip issues. I'd get up in the morning, and I lived in the basement of the billet house and I'd barely be able to walk up the steps. I had really bad hip issues, so I was getting therapy and stuff, but I just played out the year. It got the point where I'd come off the ice during intermission and sit down to rest, and it'd be hard to just get up off my stall and get it going again.*

Adopting the role of a fighter early on forced Tyler to move through the rest of his career with 'the enforcer' as his single identity, and the hip issue he faced in his second year would only be the beginning of an endless list of injuries. Consequently, by his fourth and final year in the league Tyler's dominant masculine identity was evaporating, as his body was no longer capable of performing at a high level of physicality. The intimidating status he held within the league and the community, along with the rewards he once reaped from his coaches for his displays of violence, were benefits he could no longer use to explain why he had decided to subject his body to such damage. Tyler's downfall were accompanied with what he could best describe as feelings of depression.

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Tyler: *That injury ended my season. I thought I hit rock bottom there. Two surgeries and now I messed up my hand. It was the worst year of my life. I was so messed up mentally. I was definitely depressed and after that it only got worse because my shoulder was already messed up.*

In short, Tyler's story is a reflection of the heavy personal costs that must be paid by participants in violence. Although many argue it is part of the game, the consequences of fighting and violence damage players beyond physical and emotional repair.

Fighting however does not stand alone in its potency. Training for hockey, and playing the game itself are physical endeavours that do not discriminate when delivering injuries, and plague even those who avoid partaking in additional violent acts such as fighting. A vicious cycle begins to emerge where players are seen as submitting to a form of disciplinary power, that permanently injures their bodies. Messner (1990) contends that athletes who are viewed as being in excellent physical condition are in fact prone to a high incidence of injuries. In addition, normalizing players to behave with docility has been noted to result in harmful effects. Messner (1990) explains that the reciprocal results of high-performance athletic training occurring when "the instrumental rationality which teaches athletes to view their own bodies as machines...ultimately comes back upon the athlete as an alien force: the body-as-a-weapon ultimately results in violence against one's own body" (p. 211). To illustrate the frequency of injuries caused by hockey, the results of this study noted instances of injury across the experiences of all 11 participants. I acknowledge that this sample size is not indicative of the CHL as a whole, however I simultaneously contend that a commonality amongst 11 individuals cannot be simply

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classified as coincidence. Select narratives concerned with player injuries will now be further explored.

Aaron was not projected to be drafted into the NHL, but in no way did that dissolve his hope, hope that the hockey gods would grant him his long-standing childhood wish of becoming a professional player. Two months prior to the NHL entry draft, Aaron was playing in a regular season game for his CHL organization when the unimaginable happened, an incident not even the hockey gods could prevent. During the first period of the game, a play was directed towards the net where an entanglement of bodies quickly ensued. Among the bodies was Aaron, who happened to lose his balance and fall to the ice. To the fans watching that night, the fall appeared as nothing out of the ordinary, and so they patiently waited for Aaron to get back up. However, after a few extended moments Aaron was not moving from the position where he had fallen, and after hearing a frightening popping sound come from his knee he realized that he could not stand. With the help of his teammates and trainer, Aaron was escorted off the ice and into the dressing room. As he sat waiting for the team doctor to arrive, negative premonitions swirled through his mind about the extent of his injury. More importantly was the thought of the NHL entry draft occurring in two months' time, and how this injury would impact his chances. When the doctor arrived he conducted a series of tests on Aaron's knee.

Aaron: *The doctor did the ACL test, and then he did the MCL test and said, "I think you tore your MCL and ACL." That was when I just sank. I didn't cry from the injury, I cried because I realized that holy shit this is huge. And I would say that that injury was the beginning of the end of my hockey career.*

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After not being selected in the NHL entry draft, and following countless months of rehabilitation, Aaron was finally ready to step back on the ice. As exciting as it was for him to return to practicing with his team, Aaron had prepared himself to face an inevitable reality, in which his body would be unable to recover back to a fully healthy state. Unfortunately, hockey does not pause and wait for the return of the injured. Instead, games come and go, and players continue training with vigorous tenacity in hopes of reaching the dream. When Aaron returned from his injury almost half a year later, the season had progressed, and players he had once competed against were much faster and stronger than he had remembered. In a rather unrequited fashion, it seemed as if hockey had moved on and forgotten about Aaron.

This study reveals an immediate parallel between players submitting to, and resisting, relations of power. Subsequently, injury experiences provide a platform where submission and resistance are manifold in expression. Petr, the former European CHL player, spoke to his experience with hockey and how he continuously faced various physically hindering barriers. Submitting his body to constant training was a practice normalized in Petr's mind, an essential activity to be performed in his quest to attain the dream. And as such, when injuries began to emerge, Petr pushed on by denying the requests from his body to rest. By resisting the physical breakdown of his body, Petr continued training and playing games. Although his perseverance to remain an active player resulted in further injuries, his coaches and trainers made no protest. Instead, the all-knowing hockey authorities continued watching from the sidelines, and witnessed the inevitable collapse of their player. Below is an account of the resistance demonstrated by Petr in response to the plague of injuries he faced.

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Vicky: *How did you feel when you were injured?*

Petr: *It was just super frustrating. I've always had minor injuries during my CHL career. I actually never really had a full season without injuries. In my second year, I was just pissed off, I wanted to finish the season. I broke my hand and played 13 days later, then I broke my foot. I decided to have a screw put in it so I could play as soon as possible, and came back two or three weeks later. So I played with a screw in my foot and a broken hand. I had a cast on my hand playing hockey, I had a screw in my foot playing hockey and I already knew that my wrist was messed up and needed surgery. So I was just a mess, just trying to grind it out, but I obviously couldn't perform as well as I used to and I knew that.*

Shogan (1999), who borrows from Foucault in examining high-performance athletes, explains that the constant observing and judging of players by coaches produces standards of the athletes' performances. These standards can demonstrate whether players perform above or below expectations. Correct training, according to Shogan (1999), involves coaches working to close existing gaps in performance in order for athletes to perform at a desired level. The gap in performance experienced by Petr however, went unaddressed. Accordingly, the power relation between Petr and his coaches displays a substantial imbalance that functioned in oppressing his well-being. As in Aaron's experience, and regardless of Petr's perpetuating resistance to the circumstances, the game of hockey quickly fled from his life.

Parting Ways, Moving on, and Letting Go

Parting ways with a sport that consumed the majority of their lives was not by any means trivial for the participants in this study. Of the 11 players interviewed, only two

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continue to be significantly active with the game. Calum, the current CHL player, appears to have a promising hockey career ahead of him, and Tyler, who played his last CHL season in 2010, has spent the last three years playing for affiliate NHL farm team organizations. The remaining nine participants however, have all, in their own way, begun to prioritize their lives differently. Hockey will always remain part of their lives, and while some of them continue playing for CIS institutions or participate in coaching, they recognize the importance of re-establishing their identities. Paradoxically, the injuries have somewhat aided in their personal reconstruction. The following narratives articulate Aaron and Petr's acceptance of moving on from hockey from their experiences of physical discomfort.

Petr: *There's a lot of politics, a lot of injuries and a lot of luck that you have to input into a hockey career. If I didn't have any injuries and made it [to the NHL], I might have looked at it differently, but I know how I was doing my last year playing junior, and I know how quickly it changed. In a matter of weeks I broke my hand, or I broke my foot, and you know you can't control that.*

Aaron: *I loved playing, so I wasn't going to stop practicing, but I was also really hurting so I wasn't asking for more playing time either. It was a gradual thing, but it was more like reacting to my body kind of thing. The team had asked me to come back and to try and play for my over age year but I said, "No, I can't."*

In addition to these narratives, Tyler's experience deserves to be further addressed. Although he now plays professional hockey, his retirement from the CHL made him question the worth of continued participation in the sport. Tyler's first injury occurred in

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his rookie season in the CHL, and what began as an irritation in his hip area, transpired into countless surgeries along with lengthy time spent in rehabilitation during his four years in the league. At the conclusion of his CHL career, all the inner turmoil he experienced from the constant breakdown of his body erupted, and the feelings of depression he faced consumed his thoughts regarding his future. Consequently, Tyler decided to take a leave from hockey and allow his mind to heal. I asked Tyler to explain what he was thinking during this break, and what he learned through his period of personal reflection.

Tyler: *I was just in another world. I was still mentally screwed up. I just said, "Fuck it" I just wanted to get out of town, just leave everything and just find myself, just to see what happens. After all that stuff I was thinking something is telling me I shouldn't be doing this with my life. I was in another place. I'd wake up every morning and start crying and I didn't know why. I learned a lot about myself. I think if none of that stuff ever happened to me I wouldn't be playing hockey right now.*

Fortunately for Tyler, time spent away from the game allowed him to realize he never wanted to be without it. He does not recall one day going by without his mind being completely immersed in thoughts of hockey. As such, Tyler continues to submit himself to the same disciplinary technologies that once destroyed his health, the same power relations that burdened his mental health and the same power relations that regarded his body as a machine.

Continuous exposure to disciplinary technologies is the very essence that allows players to perform with the necessary skill set required in the CHL. Likewise, these same

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disciplinary technologies are what allow athletes to ‘choose’ how they athletically perform (Shogan, 1999). In some cases, these choices involve playing through injuries, in others, they include deciding to retire from a game engrained within their lives.

Regardless of players submitting to, or resisting, the violence and injuries sustained through hockey, many of their CHL endings seem to unravel in similar fashion. Finally, there comes a point where they all abandon the dream they once so adamantly chased.

This study explores the workings of power within the CHL by examining how players function in various power relations. Instances of players subjected to oppression and conversely, privilege, within specific relations of power were illustrated through the study’s findings. Using a Foucauldian framework to understand how power operates, allowed for power to be regarded as something that circulates, rather than as a possession. Furthermore, this theoretical framework permitted the relationships CHL players have with authoritative figures to be critically examined and positioned on a wide spectrum of power relations. Four specific themes in which power relations were prevalently identified, including player contracts, issuing of the stipend, and the consequences of both excessive training and violence. Results of the data analysis suggest that the CHL serves as a site where hockey authorities are given endless opportunity to unethically utilize positions of privilege. To that end, while players were noted to exercise their own form of power, these instances occurred either seldomly or in discrete fashion.

The CHL is an environment where individuals with similar desires and motivations come together in attempting to reach the professional ranks that hockey offers. Situating these players and their degree of talent together creates an atmosphere where distractions are infrequent, and the best in young hockey players emerges.

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Csikszentmihalyi, Rathunde, and Whalen (1993) examined the role of social environments in the development of young persons' talents and reported that adolescence is a time that introduces probable conflict between the required conditions for talent development and preserving sustainable peer relationships. To summarize, I hold that the CHL is an environment that allows players to focus on their athletic commitment without having to experience a disparity between their hockey development and their need for peer relationships. Nick Bollettieri, founder of the world famous Nick Bollettieri Tennis Academy located in Bradenton, Florida, has been witness to the positive effects of placing like-minded young people in the same environment, and maintains that the motivation garnered amongst them is the most prominent factor of an adolescent's success. The roster of champion tennis players to come out of the Bollettieri academy speaks to the effectiveness of this formula (Campbell, 2013). In addition, as a developmental hockey league, the CHL produces more NHL calibre players than any other league in the world. Although the odds of a player going on to play professional hockey are similar to the odds of winning a nation-wide lottery, the CHL remains as the best and fastest route.

Despite its ability to develop hockey players, I argue that the monopolistic nature of the CHL provides its authoritative figures with power that may have detrimental effects on players. The results further reveal that the privileged position authoritative figures of the CHL have in the lives of players allows power to be often enacted unethically. These unethical practices were evidenced in the four themes discussed in the chapter, and can be seen to take on various forms, some more noticeably harmful than others. In the remaining chapter, a summary, conclusion, and recommendations will be

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provided. I also examine results of the study that left a profound impact on me, as the researcher, but that did not align with the intended purpose of this project. As well, suggestions for future research directions are made.

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Chapter Five: Concluding Remarks

Vicky: *So it looks like we've covered everything.*

Steve: *That's it? You got me all going here, you got me all fired up. This was like free therapy.*

This thesis originated in a personal quest to deliver social justice to athletes affected by the imbalance of power relations in specific sporting environments. What began as advocacy for a single CHL player, grew into a project that attempted to reveal instances of injustice within the wider borders of the league. In this final chapter, I want to conclude by offering a summary of the theoretical framework underpinning the roots of the research questions, as well as incorporating aspects of the research that left a substantial impact on myself as the researcher. In addition, limitations of the study are addressed, and suggestions for future research pertaining to the lived experiences of CHL players are made.

Foucault and the Workings of Power

This research began with asking two interrelated questions: 1) What kind of power relations impact athletes in the CHL? and 2) How are disciplinary processes used within the CHL? Both of these questions can be best understood by using Foucault's comprehension of the workings of power. For Foucault (1978), clarifying what he meant by the term "power" was essential, as he recognized the common use of the word led to misinterpretation. In his understanding, Foucault asserted that power was not a possession that could be seized, but rather an omnipresent embodied phenomenon (Markula & Pringle, 2006). The focus of Foucault's work was concerned with examining how power operates and the results of its occurrence. Furthermore, he recognized that

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power was reflected in the everyday relations between people or groups, and defined a relationship of power as “an action by one person to help guide another’s conduct” (Foucault, 1982, p. 221). A precondition Foucault emphasized as essential in any relationship of power was that subjects must be free, and it is this freedom that gives rise to resistance. Without the possibility of resistance, Foucault (1982) asserted that relations of power would simply not exist. Consequently, the focus on individual relations, and his later work on bodies as the target of disciplinary power, makes Foucauldian theory a useful framework for understanding the lived experiences of athletes (Foucault, 1991). Shogan (1999) gives further merit to synthesizing Foucauldian concepts as they relate to sport, and states that “the components of modern power as it emerged in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, read like a ‘how to’ manual for coaches two hundred years later” (p. 9).

Recent studies in sport and exercise have been dominated by a Foucauldian-influenced form of structuralism (Andrews, 2000; Chapman, 1997; Cole, 1993; Haber, 1996; Heikkala, 1993; Johns & Johns, 2000; Light & Kirk, 2000; Markula, 1995; Markula & Silk, 2011; Shogan, 1999; Star 1999; Theberge, 1991; Tomlinson, 1998; Young & White, 1995). The benefits of utilizing a Foucauldian perspective when navigating through this study included the various details of CHL players’ relations to be exposed. For example, the completion of a preliminary data analysis resulted in the emergence of over 20 themes where power was noted to be evident. To that end, a secondary objective of this thesis was to unmask the value in understanding the social impact of sport through a Foucauldian lens.

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Unexpected Emergent Themes

As a young researcher, it became clear to me that remaining engrossed in the original questions that guided this project was imperative in achieving fluid progression. Moving through this journey however, involved the emergence of unexpected themes that were impossible for me to defer. One such theme embraced the emotional impact lived experiences in the CHL left on participants. The CHL is a closed community where hegemonic masculinity is the privileged, and encouraged, form of expression. Faulkner (1974) found that a “moral code” players follow links masculine forms of behaviour to elite men’s ice hockey (p. 288). He further interpreted the normalization of proactive aggression and violence in the hockey environment, and how this concerns player identity. The results of this study indicate that the consequences of overt aggression in both violence and training come in the form of injuries, which not only weaken a player’s body, but also contribute to the deterioration of a player’s psyche. In addition to injuries, expressions of masculinity allow players to adopt a specific identity while playing in the CHL, an identity that is no longer evident following the end of their career in the league. Prioritizing hockey at a lower level of importance in their lives was seen to produce instances of a personal identity crisis in participants whose hockey careers concluded at the CHL level.

Petr’s experience of moving on from the game reveals the personal conflict he battled in terms of grasping a newly formed identity. From an early age, Petr had aspirations to play professional hockey. His desire to become the best was in fact so strong, that he moved away from his family in Europe in order to chase the dream in North America, home of the NHL. During his four years in the CHL, all of Petr’s energy

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and efforts were directed towards becoming a better hockey player. However, just like countless other players, his dream ended there. Petr began attending a CIS University, and although not at the level to which he was once accustomed, he continued to play hockey for the institution. I was interested in understanding how Petr's personal identity evolved after playing in the CHL.

Vicky: *Was hockey a large part of your identity when you played in the CHL?*

Petr: *Ya.*

Vicky: *And now?*

Petr: *I don't even want to be a hockey player. Ever since I went to [CIS university] I've made more friends outside of the team, I never wanted to be known as the hockey player here. Sometimes you mention that you're an athlete, but if I'm having a normal conversation, I don't even mention it anymore. After so many years, you don't just want to be known as that, because you don't want to be put in a box, 'a dumb hockey'. Unless I have my tracksuit on, nobody really knows I'm a hockey player.*

In the above exchange I had with Petr, I sensed a degree of resentment towards a game for which he had once longed, and an identity by which he used to swear is the same identity he now attempts to erase. In Petr's mind, there are negative connotations with being identified as a hockey player later in life, and he remarked on the purposeful intention he uses to mask his former self.

Rebranding former hockey identities prevailed as a repetitive theme across the data. Leaving the game presented a stark void in the lives of participants, and Petr was

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not alone in his quest to erase his past persona. I asked Blair to address his first year removed from the CHL, when he began attending a CIS institution as a student-athlete.

Vicky: *So at that point if someone asked you what you were, would you say you were a student or a hockey player?*

Blair: *At that point I intentionally tried to brand myself just as a student. Hockey had done everything for me up to that point. Now I had to get good grades, I worked my ass off out of fear really, and then I ended up on the Dean's list and whatnot. But, it was out of fear. I tried to brand myself [pauses] I would always be an athlete, everyone [who] knows me knows I'm an athlete, but for me it was intentionally trying to say I'm a student.*

An interesting aspect to draw out from the passage above is the fear Blair alluded to in knowing that hockey would no longer be of primary importance. He goes on to state that this fear was the driving factor behind his academic success, and it was in fact the fear of no longer having a hockey identity that allowed him to thrive in his new environment.

At a particular point in the research process I came to the realization that my role as a researcher extended far beyond collecting data for this thesis. Due to the masculine disposition of the CHL, many of its players are not afforded the opportunity to express their feelings. Consequently, as I steered through this journey I became a therapeutic resource for participants in whom they felt comfortable to confide. At times, I was forced to set my research questions aside and simply listen to experiences unfold. My interview with Vince left a profound impact on my understanding of young hockey players. As a goalie, Vince was cast at a distinct disadvantage. Unlike players, who compete to earn one of approximately 22 roster positions on a given CHL team, Vince was battling to

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earn one of two, as hockey clubs normally only have two goalie spots. His entire CHL career came accompanied with feelings of insecurity regarding his value to the team. In the narrative below, Vince reminisces on a time in his career when he felt confident in his abilities and performance, yet was not given the opportunity to play.

Vicky: *So how did that year go with hockey?*

Vince: *Hockey, it could have gone better. I definitely played well when I got in, but again being back-up goalie and having [coach name] as the coach, he just didn't like me and I don't know why. I did everything he told me to do, I never gave him attitude or anything, I always worked hard for him. I couldn't wrap anything around that because growing up I was always told by my coaches and my parents to listen to your coach and always work hard. So when you're put into that situation and you're working hard, you're playing well and you're listening to your coach and you're not giving him attitude, and he still doesn't like you and he still won't play you it's just so degrading. It's something you want to do so bad and you'll do anything at the time to pursue it and for it to work, and it's just not happening. You know if I'm not playing well and you don't like me that's fine, send me home, don't play me, but if I'm playing well and I'm working hard for you, don't drag me along, tell me straight up, tell me to go home and play for a different team.*

Vicky: *That's what you wanted to say to him?*

Vince: *Ya and [pauses] ...this is weird because it's the first time I've opened up about this.*

Vicky: *It's okay.*

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Vince: *It was definitely degrading.*

Vicky *It was all you probably thought about...*

Vince *Ya. I mean going home every night, I wasn't happy. I wanted to be happy, because I wanted to play, you know? And I just couldn't. I just wasn't happy. And people wonder why players just hang up the skates, well there you go, you know?*

Despite his efforts to adhere to a strict regime within the sport, Vince's efforts were not sufficient to earn him a chance to compete. This passage reflects the confusion Vince was faced with in understanding why submitting to his coach did not warrant him the rewards other players received. More importantly, Vince's experience exposes the significant emotional impact power relations have on individuals, where they feel belittled, insignificant, and helpless. The advocacy for player equality with which I had entered this project was further engraved into my future research aspirations through this specific interview.

Limitations

A significant limitation of this study stemmed from the geographic boundaries that defined the breadth of this study. Given the time frame I was afforded for the completion of this project, I was limited in the participant recruitment which was not entirely reflective of the broad scope of the CHL. For that reason, ten of the 11 participants I interviewed were all former, or current players, of the OHL, one participant was a former WHL player, and no players from the QMJHL were interviewed. Although there are many similarities in the way the three sister leagues of the CHL operate, it would be naïve to discredit the importance of existing differences. For instance Petr, the former WHL player in this study, noted that obtaining his education package was a

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relatively smooth process. He even remarked on how officials from the WHL were proactive in contacting him to explain how his education package would be delivered, and offered him additional guidance upon request.

Discussion

I should be clear that my intention is not to characterize the CHL as an exclusively oppressive hockey league. The organization offers players a glimpse of how professional hockey operates, and most participants were grateful for the years they were afforded playing in the league. Moreover, the CHL has made significant strides in delivering education opportunities to active players, and extends these opportunities following their participation through the funding of education packages. My objective through this study is to emphasize, that despite the league's recent reformations, changes reflecting the welfare of players have taken decades to implement, and crucial areas in need of revision still remain. Standardized education packages were seen emerging around 2010, and although standardization increases the equality in value of the package, negotiating for additional benefits is still occurring with players who are exceptionally skilled. Moreover, the majority of participants in this study alluded to the difficulty in obtaining their education packages, and how communication with the league regarding this matter is at times problematic.

In addition to education packages, I hold that the stipend CHL players receive is not reflective of their employment arrangement with the league. The number of hours players devote in terms of training, games played, travel, and community service events extend beyond 60 hours per week while in-season. Although I understand the difficulty in compensating players for each hour they provide to their franchises, I strongly assert the

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need to incorporate minimum wage standards in allocation of the stipend. Moreover, the current 50-120 dollar bi-weekly stipend should financially reflect modern economy and as such increase in value.

While this study was taking place, a union aimed to represent CHL players, called the Canadian Hockey League Players' Association (CHLPA), was being formed. Items on the agenda of the CHLPA included increasing wages and reforming education packages. In response to the emergence of the union, the CHL worked to delegitimize the organization by imposing pressure on its organizers to abolish their efforts. Following the relentless determination of the CHLPA, the CHL hired a private investigator to reveal the somewhat scandalous past of one of the union's co-founders. The investigator exposed that the co-founder is involved in a lawsuit with Hockey Canada, in which he is being accused of committing fraud against the sport governing body (Whamsby, 2012). Withholding much of the backstory, and the fact the co-founder claims he is innocent of the charges, the CHL held the interest of media that published versions of the story leading to the collapse of the CHLPA.

During the interviews for this study, I made a point to ask participants to share their perspectives regarding the possibility of a CHL players' union. The responses to my inquiry were surprising, in that the viewpoints of participants seemed to be unaffected by the scandals surrounding the proposed union. Below I draw from my interview with Blair, and include his response to the proposition of a CHL players' union:

Vicky: *Looking back on it now, do you think players need some sort of unionization in the CHL?*

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Blair: *Totally. I was a big advocate of it when I played. There were talks of it. I think the issue is that essentially your career is two and a half or three years if you're lucky in the CHL. So it's really just a transition league, it's a stepping stone and the players [who] really matter, the superstars, they're only there for two, maybe three years, and they're going on to big money. Then you've got the fringe players who are just happy to be there. And then you've got the other people in the middle who actually play three or four years. No one steps up to make that call, no one has really put it forward. Although there was a small attempt there a few months ago, but that was a big fail.*

What Blair conveys in the passage above is that there are, what he believes, three kinds of players in the CHL. The first type of players is the superstars, who remain in the league for two to three years before moving on to play professional hockey. The second type is the players who did not expect to play hockey at the CHL level, and are too thankful to protest their circumstances. The third type is composed of the majority of the players in the CHL, and will not go on to play hockey past the major junior level. According to Blair, these players are the individuals who spend the most time in the league, and due to their playing duration deserve to have their best interests protected by a union. Thus, despite the failure of the CHLPA, Blair is adamant for the prospective re-emergence of a union, one that will ensure protection over the majority of players in the league, the type of player he himself once was.

Listed below are additional participant excerpts that address thoughts on a potential CHL union.

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Vince: *I definitely, definitely, definitely think it should be done.*

Aaron: *I think you could do it and I'm sure it will come up again, if not sooner rather than later. I'd be curious to see how the CHL responds. They're making money off the backs of children and that's kind of odd to see.*

Adam: *Yeah, I think so. For sure. There's a lot of stuff, even with injuries where you play a few years and get hurt for life, you know what I mean? My first year in the CHL I broke my hand and now it's deformed and I can't close it. So little things like that, and I got nothing for that, I just did it for them in their packed arenas and they make money and none of the kids make money.*

Petr: *It should be pretty easy to form a group of people who could take charge of that, and maybe make sure that new players, especially the ones from Europe coming into the league, get everything explained to them. Because really, I had no idea about the league, I didn't know how many teams were there, I didn't know anything about the contracts or education package, nothing.*

The results of this study indicate that participants support the formation of a union for CHL players. Conversations centred upon player protection transpired into reflections of moments where participants felt they could have benefited from the support of a union. In particular, Adam spoke to an injury he experienced in his first year playing in the CHL. Despite the fact he is currently four years removed from the league, the damage he encountered to his hand that first year has continued to affect him. Adam expressed that the bodily sacrifice he made to his franchise, a sacrifice that continues to hinder the ability of his hand to function, was uncompensated. Considering the profit he helped to generate for the team by showcasing his talent to an arena filled with thousands of

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spectators, he feels his efforts were severely underappreciated. Like Adam, Petr also drew from personal experience when addressing his support for a union. Due to his inexperience with North American hockey, coming to the CHL as a European positioned him as “automatically disadvantaged in the league” (Allain, 2008). Both Allain (2008) and Robidoux (2001) address the exclusiveness of North American hockey as an ongoing problem for European players, who find it difficult to adjust to its norms. Lacking the knowledge of the North American style and operation of the game, Petr signed a CHL contract unaware of the elements it addressed, such as the education package. For Petr, a union would have allowed him to better understand the league’s procedures, as well as aid him in adapting to new surroundings.

In her investigative book, titled *Crossing the Line: Violence and Sexual Assault in Canada’s National Sport*, Robinson (1998) exposes the abuse occurring in the CHL and makes a call to action by advocating for a critical examination of the game. Robinson further addresses the monopolistic dominance of the CHL and how this position allows the league’s gatekeepers to often behave with a blatant disregard for basic moral principles. The problematic environment of the CHL is explained by Robinson (1998) below:

Total institutions, if they are strong enough, can ignore all the major issues of our time, including human rights, globalization, workers’ rights, free enterprise, the rise of liberal democracy, and the rise of the ethic of care in sport. It is only when complaints reach the public and are too serious or too numerous to be ‘buried’ that total institutions are forced to examine their fundamental practices. (p. 58)

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Robinson (1998) recognizes that as a powerful institution, the CHL comes under scrutiny only when the severity of the issue is too grave to ignore. Take for example Milan's story, a former CHL player who struggled financially for two years until finally a newspaper article prompted the league to award him his rightfully deserved education package. Perhaps the most telling experiences are those of Theo Fleury and Sheldon Kennedy, players who felt trapped in silence for 21 years before they confessed to being sexually abused by their CHL coach, Graham James. Major junior hockey is a system that is under the complete control of tradition-bound men whose actions are held unaccountable and unchecked. The establishment of a union would allow young CHL players to reclaim the ownership of their destinies, and most importantly, provide a standard of accountability for hockey authorities.

The CHL remains a significantly under-researched area in hockey-related scholarly literature. It is imperative for a league that employs children, as per the UN categorization of a child, to come under critical examination for the purpose of protecting the well-being and interests of its players. We must move away from viewing the CHL as a dominating institution exempt from adhering to "the major issues of our time" (Robinson, 1998, p. 58) and instil measures that hold its organizers accountable. Conducting research motivated by social justice is a step forward in eliminating powerful institutional values that foster commodification over the welfare of its members, employees, and consumers, and can aid in creating a healthy, child-centred system.

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Appendix A

Telephone Script

For Skype/telephone interviews the following opening dialogue will be presented before any of the above questions are asked of the participants:

Researcher: “Before we begin, I would like to reiterate the process of consent related to your participation in this study.

I am referring to an email to which you replied, which states the interview process, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality procedures and data publication methods. Do you remember replying to this email to me as the lead researcher on this study and do you still feel comfortable with giving your consent to participate in this study?”

If subject answers “yes”:

Researcher: “Wonderful, I will keep the email in my records and before we begin I will remind you that if you for any reason begin to feel uncomfortable with the questions being asked of you in this interview, please feel free to cease your involvement at any time.”

If subject answers “no”:

Researcher: “I will re-send you the email consent form and will you please read it and reply to the email before we begin the interview”. (At this point, the researcher will politely hang up the telephone and recommence the interview when the participant has read and agreed to the terms outlined in the email consent form).

For face-to-face interviews, the researcher will bring in a hard copy of the email the participant previously consented to and opening dialogue will go as follows:

Researcher: Before we begin, I would like to reiterate the process of consent related to your participation in this study. I am referring to an email in which you replied, which states the interview process, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality procedures and data publication methods. Do you remember returning this email to me as the lead researcher on this study and do you still feel comfortable with giving your consent to participate in this interview?”

If subject answers “yes”:

Researcher: “Wonderful, I will keep the email in my records and before we begin I will remind you that if you for any reason begin to feel uncomfortable with the questions being asked of you in this interview, please feel free to cease your involvement at any time.”

If subject answers “no”:

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Researcher: “Alright, well I am going to leave the room and allow you to read over the document and please let me know when you are finished doing so. If you do not want to participate in this study then I will not proceed with the interview.”

If subject agrees to give consent, interview will go on as follows:

Researcher: “Great, I will keep this document in my records and before we begin I will remind you that if you for any reason begin to feel uncomfortable with the questions being asked of you in this interview, please feel free to cease your involvement at any time.”

If subject does not give consent interview will not proceed.

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Appendix B

E-mail Transcript for Telephone and Face-to-Face Interview

Dear [Participant name],

My name is Vicky Grygar and I am a Graduate student in the Faculty of Applied Health Sciences at Brock University in St. Catharines, Ontario. I am conducting research for my Masters thesis entitled

The purpose of this e-mail is to inquire if you would be interested in participating in an interview regarding your experience playing in the Canadian Hockey League (CHL).

The intent of the study is to understand player experiences in the CHL in order to identify any areas the league could improve in. These areas could include, but are not limited to, education policies, financial compensation and the overall quality of player life. This one-on-one interview will require approximately 60 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary, and as such, you reserve the right to decline in answering any question. If you choose to terminate your participation in the interview at any time please know there will be no negative consequences. Pseudonyms will be used to protect your name, franchise affiliation, names of coaches, and any other information you deem private.

If you would be interested in participating please indicate when a convenient time would be, along with location. In addition, a letter of invitation outlining the process of the study will be e-mailed to you immediately. If no, I'd like to thank you for taking the time to read this.

If you have any questions prior to our interview, please do not hesitate in contacting me through e-mail at [vg08wb@brocku.ca]. Any additional comments, questions, or concerns may be directed to the faculty supervisor of this study, Dr. Cathy van Ingen (Department of Kinesiology, Faculty of Applied Health Sciences, Brock University) by email at cvaningen@brocku.ca.

This study has been reviewed and has received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board (REB) at Brock University (file #_____). The Research Ethics Board Officer may be contacted by e-mail at reb@brocku.ca or by telephone at 905-688-5550 ext 3035.

Thank you and I look forward to hearing from you

Sincerely,

Vicky Grygar
Graduate Student
Department of Health and Physical Education
Brock University

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Appendix C

Letter of Consent Form

Date:

Project Title: A Struggle Against the Odds: Understanding the Lived Experiences of Canadian Hockey League (CHL) Players

Principal Student Investigator:
Vicky Grygar,
Graduate Student
Department of Health and Physical Education
Brock University
(905) 359-8874
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Faculty Supervisor
Dr. Cathy van Ingen,
Associate Professor
Department of Kinesiology
Brock University
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cvaningen@brocku.ca

INVITATION

You are invited to participate in a study that involves research. The purpose of this study is to understand the experiences of former Canadian Hockey League (CHL) players.

WHAT IS INVOLVED

As a participant, you will be asked to participate in a single interview with the researcher. Participation will take approximately one hour of your time. The interview will take place face-to-face, via Skype, or the telephone, which will be chosen as preference to you.

POTENTIAL BENEFITS AND RISKS

Potential benefits of participation include the opportunity to reflect on past experiences in the CHL and offer insight into areas of improvement for the league. There are no known or anticipated risks associated with your participation in this study.

CONFIDENTIALITY

Data collected during this study will be stored on the researcher's personal laptop computer, which requires a password for access. The data from the interviews will be transcribed verbatim and the audio recordings and transcriptions of the interviews will be stored in a locked filing cabinet at the researcher's home office. Data will be kept for four years after which time the data will be shredded and recycled. Access to these data will be restricted to Vicky Grygar (Researcher), and Dr. Cathy van Ingen (Supervisor). Participant names and organizational affiliations will be replaced with assigned pseudonyms for publication purposes and never disclosed in written or oral presentations of the study.

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VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you wish, you may decline to answer any or all questions asked throughout the duration of the interview. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time.

PUBLICATION OF RESULTS

Results of this study may be published in professional and academic journals and presented at conferences. Feedback about this study will be available from Vicky Grygar via e-mail once the study has been completed.

CONTACT INFORMATION AND ETHICS CLEARANCE

If you have any questions about this study or require further information, please contact the Principal Student Investigator or the Faculty Supervisor using the contact information provided above. This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through the Research Ethics Board at Brock University (file # _____). If you have any comments or concerns about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Research Ethics Office at (905) 688-5550 Ext. 3035, reb@brocku.ca.

Thank you for your assistance in this project. Please keep a copy of this form for your records.

CONSENT FORM

I agree to participate in this study described above. I have made this decision based on the information I have read in the Information-Consent Letter. I have had the opportunity to receive any additional details I want about the study and understand that I may ask questions in the future. I understand that I may withdraw this consent at any time. By replying to this e-mail I acknowledge that I am participating in this study and that I am providing informed consent.

Signature: _____

Date: _____

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Appendix D

Sample Interview Questions

1. Where did you grow up?
2. At what age did you first begin to play hockey?
3. At what age did you first begin to play organized hockey?
4. Describe the role of your parents during the beginning of your hockey career.
5. At what age did you begin to take hockey in a more serious manner?
6. At what age did you seek an agent?
7. Describe the feeling of being drafted into the [WHL, OHL, QMJHL] of the Canadian Hockey League.
8. Take me through the process of signing your CHL contract.
9. Describe your feelings about moving away from home to play for [team].
10. How would you describe the relationship you had with your coach, teammates and billet family?
11. Describe an average day for you while playing in the CHL.
12. Describe your level of satisfaction with how you were financially compensated by your team.
13. What kind of educational support did you receive from the [franchise name]?
14. What were your goals in regards to your hockey career at this stage in your life?
15. At what point did you know that you would not continue on playing in the National Hockey League (NHL)?
16. What kind of educational support did you receive following the end of your CHL career from the [franchise name]?
17. How would you describe your overall experience playing in the CHL? Are there any areas in which you feel the league could make improvements?

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Appendix E

Participant #10: Tyler
Skype Interview
March 14, 2013

I: What is your earliest memory of skating or playing hockey?

P: My dad was actually my coach in house league in [city]. He used to run skating lessons and I would always go out with him and do it. [arena] in [city]...Saturday morning practices at 6am, I remember getting changed at home into my equipment, and he would fire up the car and warm it up and then we'd be at the rink by 5:30am.

I: Did you want to play or did your parents put you into it?

P: I'm pretty sure I wanted to play, but you don't really know that when you're a young kid. Obviously my parents got me started with it.

I: Was there a point where you realized your talent was different from other people?

P: Not really [laughs]. I played my first year in house league 2 years up because my older brothers an [year of birth] and I'm an [year of birth] so to make life easier on my parents I just played with my brother and then the following year I went down and played with my own age group and actually started playing and stuff. I played on a team called [team name] and we ended up winning all of Ontario and stuff against 9 year olds. That was kind of a cool year.

I: Did you play triple A after?

P: Ya, my dad was actually offered a coaching job with [team name] and so I went to those try outs because obviously life would be easier if I was playing where my dad was coaching, I went to those try outs and they said I was too advanced for everyone there, so then before the season even started with them I went and started playing with the [team name].

I: Did you like your dad as a coach?

P: No, I hated it. He was really hard on me and he has a temper. He's a screamer, he yells, but he always took it harder on me and my brothers.

I: Would he talk about it at home at stuff after?

P: More like on the bench and in front of the other teammates, I guess he didn't want to show he was taking it lighter on me because I was his kid. Sometimes we would talk at home. If I did something stupid, or if I got too many penalties or something he wouldn't

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even talk to me, he would give me the silent treatment. I would get in the car and he'd be waiting outside and we wouldn't talk for a week.

I: Was your goal the OHL?

P: I don't know if I really had a goal when I was younger. I was just playing because it was fun, and then once it got more competitive and serious the older you got, then I actually realized...I don't know. My mom was born in [European country] and my dad was born in [European country] and none of them really played sports. My dad just kind of picked up hockey to learn it so we could get into it, and I mean anyone can really teach first timers to start skating, you don't really need to know much. So I didn't really know too much about it, but eventually as the years went on, got older, I wanted that, ya, for sure.

I: Did you have an agent before the draft?

P: No.

I: Do you remember the day of the draft?

P: Ya. I didn't even get drafted. The night before [OHL Team] called me and said they would take me within the [round #s] and then the next day came and I was at a practice for the [team name] the junior A team. The draft kept going on and people kept getting updates, I eventually got off the ice and I still wasn't drafted and it was the 10th round already so I was pretty rattled. And then the draft ended up finishing and I didn't end up getting drafted.

I: How'd you feel?

P: I was pretty upset.

I: Did you go home?

P: Oh ya. Of course I did. I went straight home, I was pretty upset because I was expecting something, you know?

I: Ya, for sure. It's funny I talked to some guys and one guy told me he locked himself in the shower and started crying...

P: Oh ya.

I: ...because he thought he was going to go higher.

P: I definitely started crying because I thought I was going to get drafted, and I didn't even get drafted. I thought my world was over.

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I: So what happened after that?

P: After that I just ended up playing...the 15 year old year that was my draft year I was playing for the [team name] a junior A team and I actually got hit behind the net and was knocked out cold and ended up missing the rest of that year with a concussion. And then the following year I played my midget year with the [team name] and then after that year was up I got a try out with the [OHL Team] the following training camp.

I: So you were 16 or 17?

P: I was 16 turning 17 that year.

I: Do you remember going to camp? Were you nervous?

P: Ya I actually went with my buddy [player name] and I went with him and his mom to camp, because I knew him and had grown up playing with him, went to school with him in [school name]. We grew up going to school together and became really good buddies so I got a try out with him, with [OHL Team] so my parents were actually on a cruise at the time. So he offered to take me down with his mom.

I: Was he already on the team?

P: No he was drafted by them but didn't play his first year.

I: How did the camp go?

P: Went well. I was actually a defenseman at that point still. My whole life I was a defenseman up until that point. I went to camp as a D-man. I don't know, I had a good camp, I just kind of had to...I said to myself I had to do something to set myself apart from their draft picks and someone asked me to fight my first inter-squad game and I did. I beat him up, did pretty well.

I: Was that one of your first fights?

P: Ya, actually it was [laughs]. Obviously in minor hockey you can't fight and in junior A you get suspended for it so they don't really condone it.

I: Were you fired up?

P: Ya I was [laughs]. I kind of felt bad for the guy because he was older than me and he was trying to make a name for himself too and make the team. By the time we got up to eat our meal his face was pretty messed up.

I: Did you decide going in that you needed to fight to make this team?

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P: No, it kind of just happened. I was always kind of a blue collar guy, I always had to work for everything and I'm pretty intense and competitive. I like hitting and everything, I was just hitting out there and playing my game and then someone asked me to fight off the draw and I was like "ya sure" and then it ended up working out well for me. I don't know, my whole life has kind of been lucky like that, with opportunities like that and I've just done well with them.

I: So then you made the roster?

P: Ya. By the end of training camp, my parents were still on the cruise so I couldn't really get a hold of them. My one deal with them was that if I went to camp I wouldn't play in a game unless I was signed and got a school package because obviously you give up your scholarship rights after right?

I: Your parents told you to do that?

P: Ya, so then after training camp was done we had our exhibition game against [OHL Team] and [GM name] didn't want to sign me, he wanted to see how I did in the exhibition game first. So I said "well I can't do it, I promised my parents that if I came here the only way I would play is if I got a school package. I promised them that so I can't do it."

I: What did he say?

P: He said "alright, I understand" and I ended up leaving that meeting and I went back to the camp to pack my bags and I was going to leave that next morning. The next morning when we woke up they wanted to sign me to a contract and stuff. So I said I'll sign and then played that next day.

I: So then he gave you a contract...

P: Ya [laughs]

I: Did he tell you what you would get for school?

P: \$5 grand a year.

I: That's what he said? \$5 grand?

P: Ya.

I: Did he say anything about books?

P: Nope. He just told me that it's a pretty good deal for a free agent. I didn't have an agent, [player name]'s Dad came in with me because my parents weren't there either. So he came in with me as my representative [laughs] and he agreed because I think [player

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name] got \$5500 and I mean he was drafted and stuff and I wasn't drafted so \$5 thousand I thought was a fair deal.

I: What year was this?

P: 2006-07 season.

I: Now it's like for every year you play you get it covered, full tuition and books.

P: Holy shit, that would be nice.

I: Do you remember your first regular season game?

P: Yeah. Actually no I don't. I don't remember if we were home or away. I remember my first exhibition game we went to [city] for training camp and we played the [OHL Team] and I got an assist my first game so I was pretty pumped about that.

I: Do you remember your first fight?

P: Yes. It was at home in [OHL Team] we were playing [OHL Team] and I fought [player name]. I fought him 6 times that year too.

I: How'd it go?

P: It went well. I cut him open over his right eye. It was [player name friend on team]'s first fight too. He did really well against [player name].

I: Really?

P: Ya, I think then and there it kind of established...me and [player name friend on team] were already pretty close, but when...we had something. I would get him going and when he would fight it would get me going, you know? We both just fed off each other.

I: Did you live with billets?

P: Me and [player name friend on team] lived together.

I: With a family?

P: Ya.

I: Was that good?

P: Ya, it was great. I had a couple different billet families. My first year they were kind of struggling with billets so I was with [player name friend on team] temporarily they said, because his billet only wanted one player. But it ended up being February and I was still there. And then obviously as the trade deadline comes and they start moving guys they

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had more space, so then I went to another place and I didn't like these billets. The following year I came I didn't want to live with them because they were just in your face, as soon as I got home they would be like "oh so what happened at the rink today? I heard this, I heard that" like...just shut up. I just wanted to eat dinner. All they wanted to do was gossip. I moved out of that place and moved into another place and they were awesome. But then the following year I came back and they were having financial issues as a family, obviously they don't get paid enough, the billet families, so it's not like they were breaking even, or even making money with me. I mean they struggled to tell me but it was in the summer one time when I was going by, they told me to come by and the mom talked to me and stuff. They were so upset about it, but I mean obviously I wasn't mad about it. Then I ended up moving in with [player name one team], [player name], [player name], we had a 4 man billet house with grandparents. It was awesome.

I: How did your first year go?

P: Ya. I mean...I had to learn everything. As I said, I didn't get drafted. My parents didn't really have the best background with hockey. My mom would always do her research, she's the one who found out about playing and losing your scholarship to the NCAA, so they were pretty smart about that. But I didn't know the hockey side of it, you know?

I: Ya, for sure.

P: It was a learning experience for me the whole year.

I: It was different from what you were used to...

P: Ya, well I also, I went there and I went to [high school name in hometown] so when I went there to [OHL Team] they had actually 2 schools. They had a private school, just like [high school name in hometown] and a school just like everyone else went to. In order for me to graduate, because I had one more year left at [high school name in hometown] because I was going there since I was in grade 7, so my parents wanted me to go to the private school and take all their courses and then I could transfer back here to [high school name in hometown] and graduate. So that's what I did.

I: What were you thinking at this point? What did you want to do with hockey?

P: I wanted to make it my life. I mean I was a good student, I love school, I could go back to school anytime I wanted, I really enjoyed it but I wanted to make hockey my life.

I: So then you came back for a second year?

P: Yep. Quarter way through the second year we were losing to [OHL Team] one game and the coaches put me on forward for a shift and I ended up scoring a goal, ever since then I stuck forward. So it was a new learning curve for me. I had to learn a new position that I never played before in my life, so it was like I was a rookie all over again.

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I: Was your role the fighter at that point?

P: Ya. Like I said, when I made the team I fit myself into that by mistake, by chance. You know the guys on the other team that you're potentially going to fight, you know? But it's not really staged where you go and ask them during warm up. I mean even here [professional league name] and my first game here we were playing [team name] and I went over in warm up and asked him if he would give me a go just because it was my first game, you know? Just give me a chance. And we ended up getting at it, but usually it doesn't really happen like that.

I: How did the rest of that second year go?

P: It went well, but by the end of it I was having some hip issues. I'd get up in the morning, and I lived in the basement of the billet house and I'd barely be able to walk up the steps. I had really bad hip issues, so I was getting therapy and stuff, but I just played out the year. It got the point where I'd just come off and it would be the intermission and we were sitting down and it'd be hard to just get up off my stall and get it going again. That summer I ended up having hip surgery at [hospital name] and by the time training camp rolled around again we were in [city] and we were doing a bag skate, at the end I was on all fours in the corner because I couldn't skate. My hip was messed up still. I ended up going home for therapy for 4 weeks and then I tried a cortisone shot a couple times, and it would be good for a week and then I wouldn't be able to walk again. I ended up having another surgery, the hip is a new thing in the last 10 years, so there's only a handful of really good surgeons. This one [doctor name] who is the [NFL team] team doctor, he's a hip guru in North America, he's the one who teaches everyone about it. He was coming to [OHL Team] to the [hospital name] to do a hip scope seminar. He was doing 3 surgeries and I had did a lot of, me and [player name on team] did a lot of community service there. It got to the point where I was going 3-4 times a week, just after practice, just to go there and help out. So once I heard he was coming they knew I was having hip problems, they had the doctors there actually look at x-rays and MRI's and stuff, and they were the ones who asked if I wanted to have it done by [doctor name]. So they had to write a letter to the [city] headquarters of [hospital name] because it's just a kids' hospital, and they had to get it approved because I was over 19. They ended up doing that and I had my surgery there, in [month] which saved my hockey career. Then I went home and did 3 and half months of straight rehab, 6-7 days a week and I ended up coming back and played the last [number] games of the year. But it was too hard to jump back into hockey at the end of the year, it get's faster every game from the beginning of the season. So then after our season ended I got to go play in [team name] in the [pro league name] just to get some more games in. I did that, I did pretty well and then I got an invite to [NHL team] camp that following year. I went to [NHL Team]'s camp that following year and it kind of gets hairy the next couple years after this. [laughs]

I: So you were done with [OHL Team]?

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P: No it was my third year with [OHL Team] and I had my hip surgery but at the end of that year the GM for [NHL Team] saw me play for a bit and [coach name] was our coach, he knew him. So they talked about me, and he came to watch a couple games but he wanted to see my play more because he didn't really see me much because of my surgery. So he was the one who got me to go to [team name]. I played there until the end of [team name]'s season, because the pro season is longer than the junior season. I played [number] games, and then [GM name] brought me to [NHL Team]'s camp that following year and so I was in [OHL Team] first for training camp and the day before I was supposed to leave, you know how they have a bunch of exhibition games during training camp and stuff, so my coach had me teach some of the younger guys who wanted to fight, and wanted to learn how to fight, you know? And I was holding on to one of the guys and he fell and as he fell I was hanging on, and my thumb snapped back. I thought I just sprained it, you know I had the feeling in my hand, but I thought nothing was broken, it's alright. I just sprained it. The next day I had to fly out to [tournament] I didn't pass my physical because my hand was torn up. I torn my ulner collateral ligament it's called and got sent home the next day, didn't even participate. I only got to participate in two practices. It was my first opportunity to battle back, after my two surgeries, I was really excited, you know? And then I was just crushed. So I came home back to [OHL Team] rehabbed for 8 weeks and this is my 4th year, my over age year. I started playing, my first 3 games, was playing really well and then ---

P: I ended up going back to [pro league]. The year before I went, well that same coach was still there. Played [number] games there, and then I got stepped on my wrist with a skate. It ended my season. I woke up the next morning and had hooks coming out of each finger nail, and fishing wire coming down. I thought I hit rock bottom there. 2 surgeries, [NHL camp], and now I messed up my hand. It was the worst year of my life.

I: How frustrating was that?

P: Oh ya. I was so messed up mentally. I was definitely depressed. After that, because it gets even worse. So I rehabbed, I ended up having my shoulder done at the same time as my hand because my shoulder was already messed up. So then I rehab after all that, a whole summer of rehab and then I got a chance to go to the [NHL Team] camp, and I'm from [city] it's my hometown so I was fucking pumped, right? I got invited to the rookie camp only. So I go to their rookie camp and they have that tournament in [city] and I play in that and do well, and they ended up inviting me to main camp. My first practice in main camp I get a puck to the face and loose my 2 front teeth, which is fine, not a big deal. And then I make it to the very last day of camp and things were going great, I was doing amazing in the inter-squad games and everything. I didn't get any exhibition games but I was still there. Then on the very last day they released me and didn't really say anything. I was so upset, because I thought for sure I was going to get something. Literally I went home that night, it was a Friday, I slept on it, Saturday I woke up and booked a flight out to [city], Sunday morning I left to [city] and went to [CIS University]. I was 3-4 weeks late, the school year had already started you know? So I went to [city] with my hockey gear, I didn't even have a backpack yet, and a bag full of clothes. I showed up there, didn't have a clue, these guys just put me in a residence on campus,

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didn't have a backpack. I had to go buy a backpack, buy my books and then get someone to show me around campus. I haven't been in school for 3 years now full time you know? I was so lost...so lost.

I: When did you decide to go to school?

P: Well I had it set up just in case, as a back up plan. I didn't really want to go, I just did it to make my parents happy. So I had that already all set up throughout the summer, but I was thinking I was going to get something from [NHL Team] to play pro. So I didn't end up getting anything from [NHL Team], I could of gone to play in the ECHL league and play for [team] right away but I didn't want to. I was just in another world. I was still mentally screwed up. I just said "fuck it" I just wanted to get out of town, just leave everything and just find myself. Just to see what happens. After all that stuff I was thinking something is telling me I shouldn't be doing this with my life, you know? So I did that, finally found my way with school, did really well in school, played the season out, but the ECHL coach kept in touch with me and he kind of fell in love with me. I was still young, I was [age] but I got to know him really well because the [pro league] wasn't the best pro league, I was the youngest guy in the whole league. So he kind of took a liking to me. And then I went to [CIS University] for the year and then February came around, the end of the CIS season, so once the season ended I already had a flight booked out. We had a Friday/Saturday game and that ended our season and I had a flight booked out on Sunday morning. So I packed up my whole apartment at [CIS University] I just left it all there [laughs] because I had to go back to write exams after, I didn't just want to throw away the semester. I still had my apartment rented until the end of April. I just left all my stuff there in my apartment, I went to the rink, grabbed my gear and then I called my [CIS University] coach while I was at the airport to tell him I was leaving and that I was going to play pro. And their like "woah, woah, why don't you come in and we'll talk about, you're a big part of the team, we don't want you to just leave" and I'm like "I'm really sorry, it's too late, I'm already in the airport about to board my flight" [laughs] so they were kind of pissed about that. The assistant coach understood, I still keep in contact with him. So then I went to [pro league team] played out the rest of the year there, had a blast, did well. The day the season ended I left, went back to [CIS University] and I had 6 exams to write.

I: How'd you do?

P: I talked to all my profs before I left, and because I was doing so well in school before I left, they understood. So they were keeping up with him while I was in [pro league team] and when I came back I basically sat down with each prof and they gave me a crash course for that last term that I missed. I did well, I passed all 6 exams. I had an 89% average. I stayed out there for the summer because I bike a lot and [city] is unbelievable. I stayed out there. Before I even left [pro league team] I was talking to [player name]'s dad, because he knows hockey and he knows my whole story. And I was in another place, in [city] I'd wake up every morning and I'd have to go to class, but I'd wake up and start crying and I didn't know why. I had to go see a psychologist, I told my coaches about it. So I went to see a psychologist once a week about it while I was there. The people that know me from [CIS city] don't really know me, because they saw a different

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person of me, you know? So that was tough. But I just knew, every month I kept talking to the coach and all I thought about was hockey. Sometimes I wouldn't go to class because I'd just go to the rink and workout or go on the ice, or something you know? I knew I wanted to keep playing, so that was a good sign, because that's why I went there, you know? To figure out if I still wanted to keep doing that after all the shit that happened.

I: It sounds like you learned a lot there.

P: Ya, I learned a lot about myself out there. I think if none of that stuff ever happened to me I wouldn't be playing hockey right now. So I went there to figure my shit out, but then I went back for the summer, took a couple more courses and just lived out there for the summer. I just enjoyed a summer without having a surgery for once, you know? I enjoyed it. I went back [to pro league] after the summer, got ready for training camp. In [month] of that year I broke my hand. I got jumped in a fight and the guy had his helmet on and I hit his helmet a couple times and I broke my hand. It still looks...look at what my hand looks like [shows hand] after two surgeries that's as straight as my fingers can go. It won't go straight. Even though that happened, I wasn't mad about it at all but it wasn't something I could of controlled, you know? It was a freak accident, my hand broke, not a big deal, and I still had a great year, the most fun year of hockey I ever had. After that year I stayed out in [pro league team] for the summer and had two surgeries on my hand, just hung out. Then I went back to training camp and I played in my first game and I hit someone at center ice and got suspended. We had way too many guys on our roster, and you could only keep a certain amount of guys and in order to serve a suspension you have to be on the active roster, so my coach said he would have to release a guy in order for me to be on the roster and serve my suspension, which he didn't think was fair. And this was my 5th season with him so I was really close with the guy. He told me it was the hardest thing he had to do but he had to trade me because he couldn't keep me on the roster and take up someone's spot because of the suspension I had to serve. So he ended up trading me to [pro league team] where the assistant coach there was a buddy I had played with. So I had the connection there and he knew it would be a good spot for me, so I went there. I played there and then I got called up to [pro league team] and I've been here in [pro league team] until now.

I: So what now?

P: Well now I'm playing in [pro league team] and it's been a while and it felt great when they told me I got called up, you know? It's been a great opportunity because they've been talking to my coaches for about a month before they called me up, because they didn't just want to call me up on a Friday and throw me right to the fire and play. So they were waiting for a good time to bring me in and I could practice for 3 or 4 days first. After all-star break they had one game and then they didn't play again for another week so they called me up after that. So I practiced all week and then got into it, into the game and I'm still here.

I: That's good.

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P: [smiles]...ya.

I: If you had a kid and he could go to the NCAA or to the CHL where would you tell him to go?

P: I mean, I don't have any regrets. Although it's kind of been a shitty ride, I wouldn't take anything back, you know? To me, having an education is huge. Especially nowadays you can't get a regular job without having a degree, and a regular degree is nothing these days. I don't know. I don't know. I mean, it's worked out for me so far, you know? So I don't know if I would change it, but college is awesome too. I have so many friends who played in college, but I think if you want to make your life out of hockey, I would still send them the major junior route. But I would send him to the WHL, not the OHL. I don't like David Branch.

I: Do you think players need a union?

P: Ya. It's like child slavery down there. It's a joke...\$50 dollars a week? In [OHL Team] too actually, you'd get \$50 dollars a week, but then guys who drive would get gas money every week, and they drive guys to school and everything. Well, let's say [player name] was driving me to school every morning, our GM would take money out of my \$50 dollars a week to pay gas for [player name]'s gas money, which isn't right. They weren't supposed to be doing that, you know? But as a kid, I made the team, I was just trying to fly under the radar. You're not going to say shit. Now that I'm older, I realize that was bullshit. We were getting paid \$50 dollars a week, getting taxed on that and then he's taking money out to pay guys for gas money when he [GM] should be paying for it? It was brutal. Eventually, once a new GM came in he straightened that out and it wasn't happening anymore but that was bullshit. Once a week you'd get a pay check for \$80 bucks and then the second week is when they would take the gas money, so I was getting pay checks for \$52 bucks for every 2 weeks.

I: Does it ever worry you about everything you hear in the news about hockey injuries lately?

P: I'm just coming back from a concussion right now.

I: How does that feel?

P: You know, it's weird. I've always heard guys talk about it but I didn't really...I was just like "oh...alright" but there's pressure behind my eyes, pressure in my skull, I felt like puking every time I woke up, I couldn't focus. Like if I was talking to you right now last week...if you were talking to me I would be listening to you and looking at the screen, but I really wouldn't be able to tell you what I was looking at on the screen, I would just be gazing at nothing. So that was kind of weird, but I'm better now.

I: It just slowly goes away?

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P: Ya. They are really cautious about it here. They don't let you do anything until you're symptom free for 3 days. Then they start you on a light 20 minute bike ride and if you're good you go on a 30 minute bike ride, and then if you're good you do sprints, a workout, and then even more sprints, and then a harder workout. Then you start skating on your own, then you start skating with the team and then you do an impact test and if you're good you can start playing.

I: Are the pro minor leagues really different from the CHL?

P: Ya. I mean...the CHL, it's the time of your life. It's the best time in hockey you'll ever have because you have absolutely no responsibility. You're a big deal in your town because you're 17 years old and you go to high school...and people...you don't really get it then. But when you look back at it...I mean everyone wishes they could go back to their junior days, because you have no responsibility and you're just playing hockey. All your friends back home think it's awesome, it's cool. But once you move on and play pro, it's a job. It's not just fun and games. It is fun but there are times during the season when it's not fun at all and you hate it because certain things happen. When you're getting paid, you don't make that much money but still if you're making \$600 bucks a week and you have another guy making \$1000 bucks a week, and the guy who is making \$600 bucks a week is playing well and producing more you're going to get released or you're pay is going to get bumped down, you know? So it's pretty stressful, and as soon as you turn pro, I was talking to someone about this a couple weeks ago, it's stressful because every single day is a job interview for you, especially as you move higher. They watch everything on video from every game, they don't miss anything. The way your skates are turning, the way your stick is, they watch you every practice, they're evaluating you because there's thousands of players in the world, hundreds of thousands of players who want to take your job. So every single day there's a guy working just as hard as you, if not harder to steal your job, so everyday they're evaluating you, it's like a job interview.

I: It sounds like you've come to terms with the fact that this is your job.

P: Yep.

I: When did you realize that?

P: This year. When I got traded. When I got traded I was like "oh...it is just a business" you need to put a winning team on the ice whether you're close with the guy or you just met him. That's when I realized that the best players are going to play and if you're not competing and if you're not doing as well as you should be, someone else is going to take your job. That's when I realized it is just a job. You can't go to work everyday and not do your job, just sit at your desk and go on Facebook all day, because you would get fired. And if you don't come to work everyday at the rink, at practice, you're going to get traded or you're going to get released.

A STRUGGLE AGAINST THE ODDS

I: Do you think the CHL is a big business?

P: I mean...it is for them. Not for the players. For them, they make a lot of money. It's the best junior league in the world. They make a lot of money off the players. They hire a bunch of interns every year that they don't have to pay, they pay their real employees shit and they work like dogs.

A STRUGGLE AGAINST THE ODDS

Appendix F

Additional Player Benefits

In-Season and Off-Season Education Costs

The Club will cover and provide, as per normal Club policy, the enrolment costs which shall include tuition, books and other fees for the Player to attend a suitable academic institution while the Player is with the Club. Club will purchase a laptop for Player's use. Such educational costs, which would include costs associated with both High School and/or Post-Secondary classes, shall be in addition to the US\$95,000 payment for Post-QMJHL Education costs stipulated in this Agreement.

Parental Travel

The Club will provide US\$3,000 per season to defray costs of Player's family to travel to Halifax during the time the Player is with the Club.

Living Accommodation (Billeting)

The Club will provide to the Player for his entire period of stay a suitable billet family.

'Release' Costs

The Club will cover any reasonable costs associated with the 'release' of the Player from his previous Club.

Summer Training/Fitness

The Club will provide to the Player the services of the Club trainer for fitness support and guidance during the time the Player is with the Club.

In addition the Club will provide to the Player an allowance of US\$2,500 per season commencing with the summer of 2010 to be used to defray the costs of the Player's off-season conditioning.

Appendix G

Appeal from Manitoba Court Ruling

Page 1

*Indexed as:***McCrimmon Holdings Ltd. v. Canada (Minister of National Revenue - M.N.R.)**

Between

McCrimmon Holdings Ltd. and 32155 Manitoba Ltd., a partnership o/a Brandon Wheat Kings, Appellant, and The Minister of National Revenue, Respondent, and Daryl Stockham, Intervenor

[2000] T.C.J. No. 823

[2000] A.C.I. no 823

Court File Nos. 2000-1538(EI), 2000-1540(CPP)

Tax Court of Canada
Winnipeg, Manitoba**Rowe D.T.C.J.**

Heard: October 2, 2000.

Judgment: November 24, 2000.

(24 paras.)

Unemployment insurance -- Insurable employment -- What constitutes -- Employer-employee relationship.

This was an appeal by a major junior hockey club from the Minister's decision that players for the club were engaged in insurable and pensionable employment. The club argued that the relationship between the players and the club was more akin to a form of private education. It argued that the money the players received from the club was an allowance rather than a salary. Players who had graduated from high school were entitled to post-secondary tuition for every year of service to the club. The Minister argued that the evidence clearly established an employment relationship between the players and the club.

HELD: Appeal dismissed. The players were paid employees of the club. An amendment to subsection 5(2) of the Employment Insurance Act would be required to exclude junior hockey players from the category of insurable employment. While there was an educational component to the con-

Appendix H

Appeal from Manitoba Court Ruling

can play for a chosen professional team as an under-age 19-year old player provided the professional league compensates his former WHL team by paying the sum of \$100,000. 7 of the WHL permit three 20-year olds on the roster of each team and they are referred to "over-age" players. As a result, most players remain in the WHL for only four years. The Hockey League (NHL) rules permit an 18-year old to play in that elite league but not in a