

## Negative Effects of Hate Crime on Athletes

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### ABSTRACT

Hate crimes continue to be a problem in many industries, including the realm of athletics. The crimes that stem from a prejudicial attitude toward a person's features lead to discrimination, physical violence, and psychological suffering for the victim. This review article delves into the impact of hate crimes on athletes, with a particular focus on those who identify across a spectrum of sexual orientations and identities. It highlights the multifaceted repercussions that such acts of violence and discrimination can have on these individuals, encompassing psychological distress, social isolation, and professional setbacks. The discussion emphasizes the urgent need for heightened awareness within the sports community regarding these issues, advocating for the establishment of protective measures and supportive environments that can mitigate the adverse effects of hate crimes. By addressing these critical concerns, the article aims to foster a more inclusive and safer atmosphere for all athletes, regardless of their sexual orientation or identity. The term hate crime is used to describe different unlawful acts that are performed as a result of prejudice that is directed to specific characteristics such as race, sexual identity, gender, or physical disability. In the realm of sports, athletes hailing from minority communities often find themselves subjected to various forms of hate crimes, which impose significant costs on their well-being. These individuals endure a range of consequences that extend beyond the immediate physical harm, encompassing psychological distress, social isolation, and economic disadvantages. This review article seeks to synthesize both qualitative and quantitative research findings that illuminate the experiences and interests of these athletes. By doing so, it aims to provide a thorough understanding of the multifaceted impacts of hate crimes on their lives, thereby highlighting the urgent need for awareness and intervention within the sporting community.

### INTRODUCTION

Hate crimes remain a significant issue across various sectors, including the world of sports. These crimes, which arise from biased attitudes towards individuals based on their inherent characteristics, result in discrimination, physical aggression, and profound psychological distress for the victims. By examining contemporary trends in criminology and sports science, alongside the unique challenges faced by minority athletes, this review seeks to highlight the critical issues that must be addressed to foster a safe and inclusive environment for all participants in athletic activities. The term "hate crime" encompasses a range of unlawful actions motivated by prejudice against specific traits, including race, sexual orientation, gender identity, and physical disabilities. Within the realm of sports, athletes from marginalized communities often find themselves targeted by such crimes, suffering significant consequences that extend beyond immediate physical harm. The repercussions of these acts can manifest in various forms, including psychological trauma, social isolation, and economic disadvantages, which collectively undermine the well-being and performance of affected athletes. By focusing on the lived experiences of minority athletes, the review will underscore the importance of creating a supportive and discrimination-free environment that not only protects these

individuals but also enhances their ability to thrive in their respective sports. Through a comprehensive analysis of the implications of hate crimes, this work seeks to inform policy recommendations and practical strategies that can be implemented to promote equity and inclusion within the athletic community.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: UNDERSTANDING HATE CRIMES IN SPORTS

### Criminological Perspectives on Hate Crime

A comprehensive understanding of hate crimes and their occurrence in the sports environment, when considering hate crimes using theories in criminology, emphasizes the importance of examining hate crimes from several theoretical criminological frameworks. Semiology is one viewpoint that, according to this author, focuses more on causing social harm than breaking the law. Thus, from the semiological view, hate crime has not only measurable, tangible consequences on victims and communities but also undermines social well-being through the reinforcement of prejudice and persecution (Neu, 2024). Hence, this point of view provides a broader approach towards the elimination of anti-loathing, especially in the context of sports where performance can aggravate such impact by depicting hate crimes as social vices.

Hate crime motive assessment is as important as the desired approach. Knowledge of the carrier's resistance principles helps create treatments for the offender and construct support systems that assist in re-socialization (Skotnicki, 2022). Some social justice interventions that have been known to curb hate crimes in sports include the nonrecognition of homophobic and ableist attitudes in athletes. Hate crimes can be prevented and countered with the help of semiology and resistance research because they focus on the social environment and recovery process.



**Figure 1: Theoretical Perspectives on the Relationship Between Crime, Media, and the Public (Näsi et al, 2021).**

Research on masculinity builds on this understanding in its explanation of how mainstream masculinity perpetuates hate crime in the sports sector. Non-conforming athletes endanger themselves as society denies the existence of any other form of masculinity; homosexual athletes, for instance, receive rejection from their fellows due to their perceived inability to meet the standards of hegemony. Such a scenario might deter animosity and compel the community to regard hate crimes as simply exercising one's rights. Male athletes are susceptible to the effects of cultural practices that reinforce aggressive masculinity. Therefore, everyone must discuss the expectations surrounding being a man.

**Social Theories of Disability and LGBTQIA+ Rights**

The use of social theories of disability and LGBTQIA+ rights assist in assessing hate crimes against vulnerable athletes. Gay or lesbian athletes, as well as athletes with a disability, are isolated from society because of their sexual orientation and disability, respectively. Disability theory enables the critique of the mainstream sports culture discourse, which 'disposes' people with disabilities as being incapable of engaging in athletic activity (Ward, 2020). As a result of these misunderstandings, this prejudice becomes systematic, and we end up with a situation whereby disabled athletes are discriminated against and are likely to be subjected to a string of crimes based on bias.

Additionally, when discussing how disability intersects with other types of minorities, like the LGBTQIA+ population or people of color, intersectionality is one of the valuable frameworks that might be employed. Working-class athletes who are also lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgender are known as multiple-marginalized athletes. For instance, a disabled athlete who is an LGBTQIA+ person may be vulnerable to hate crimes because they are both gay and disabled (Nadal, 2020). However, this interaction is crucial as it shows how prejudice and power relations might influence people's experiences and make some populations more vulnerable to being targeted by hate crimes in the sphere of sports.

Furthermore, queer theory enriches the topic by providing an understanding of how heteropatriarchal athletic structures oppress queer athletes. Therefore, queer theory identifies the patterns of unfair treatment toward those who go against the cultural ideas regarding gender and sexual orientation, and it also reveals the reasons for hate crimes (Anderson, 2020). The adoption of the heteronormative ideology, for instance, where bullying is the standard issue in sporting subcultures, fosters a hostile environment that places the LGBTQIA+ community in harm's way, as their vulnerability is exploited to make them even more vulnerable to physical violence.

Besides, the social model of disability enables one to explain how the equipment members of the able-bodied society possess an impact on the lives of the athletes with disabilities. As demonstrated above, due to their continued ableism, these athletes risk experiencing physical barriers that impede their engagement in athletic activities as well as psychological and social ones. Such discrimination may also lead to increased isolation and fear, which can make it very hard for disabled persons to play sports under normal conditions.

## HISTORICAL TRENDS IN HATE CRIMES TARGETING ATHLETES

### Early Incidents

Society started paying attention and voicing disapproval of gay athletes in the 1970s and 1980s (Cohen, 2021). For instance, Greg Louganis, an Olympic diver of both Greek and American origin and homosexual orientation, reported increased discrimination both before and following the revelation of his homosexuality (Iannacci, 2023). It is essential to decipher the various nicknames and abuses that he suffered due to the social stigma against homosexuality in sports, primarily when HIV/AIDS had not been well understood and was prevalent. Despite being a gifted gymnast, Louganis was subjected to racism and homophobic remarks during his competitions, which put the racism and homophobia directed at black and gay men in society into perspective.

### The Persistence of Hate Crimes

In the 1990s and early 2000s, there were more complaints of hate crimes, which increased the visibility of LGBTQIA+ athletes. One example of the possible risks associated with athletes in society is the 1998 murder of gay collegiate athlete Matthew Shepard, which sparked discussions about hate crimes linking athletes to homosexual activity (Johnson, 2022). Based on the results of the investigations, there was a rise in hate crimes committed against LGBT athletes over that period. This increase was attributed to prejudice at institutions that failed to protect the identities of those who were susceptible.

### Statistical Evidence

The statistics obtained from the FBI Hate Crime Statistics report show an increase in hate crimes associated with the sexual orientation aspect. It is noted that from 2010 to 2021, the number of hate crime incidents has risen to 10%, which resulted in a broader understanding of hate crimes against LGBTQIA+ and disabled people (Flores et al., 2022). In addition, the number of reported cases actualizes systemic problems in sports culture that perpetuate discrimination instead of promoting tolerance.

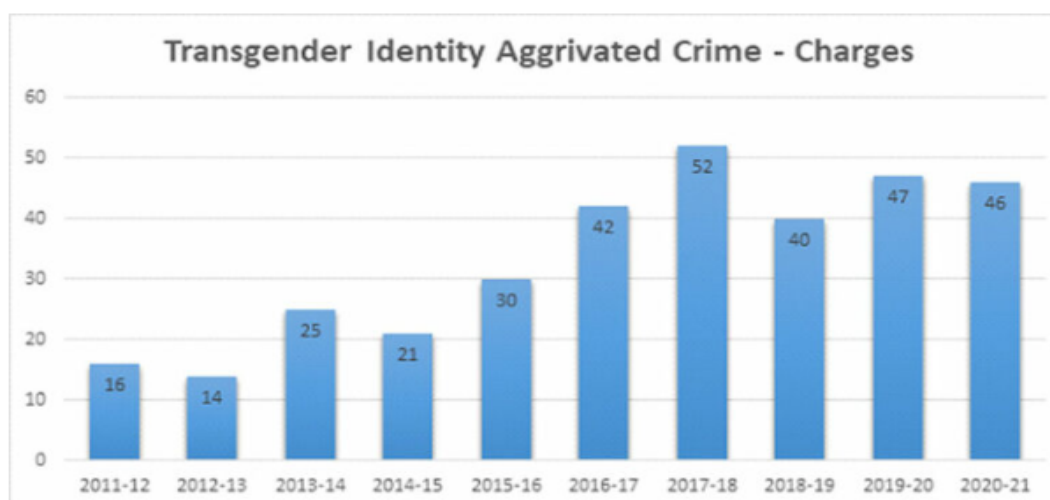
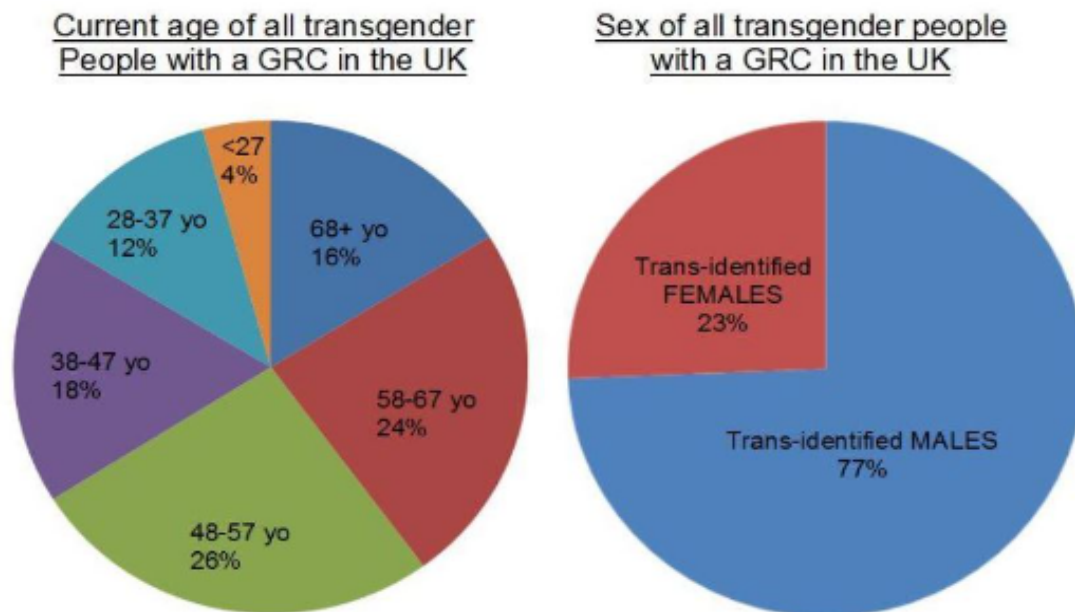


Figure 2: Hate Crime Figures (Flores et al., 2022).

Transgender identity aggravated crime stayed roughly at the same level as 2019-20 with 46 charges reported in 2020-21 with an aggravation of transgender identity, compared to 47 in 2019-20.



**Figure 3: Data from MoJ official statistics:**

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/tribunals-and-gender-recog-certificates-statistics-quarterly-january-to-march-2017-and-2016-to-2017>

According to GIRES' 2011 prediction, just 20% of transgender people in the UK were expected to seek medical attention for their condition at some point.

## **PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL IMPACTS ON ATHLETES**

### **Physical Harm from Hate Crimes**

Hate crimes take different dimensions, but when they lead to attacks on athletes, the impact is always severe. Being an athlete, therefore, means being defined by the level of physical strength. A hate crime that results in bodily harm not only affects the well-being of the athlete in the present but jeopardizes their career (Buy, 2024). In particular, for those sportsmen who rely on their physical strength and muscle memory, such crimes cause severe and prolonged suffering, career interruption, and sometimes retirement. This section will outline various forms of bodily harm that stem from hate crimes, the process of healing, and its consequences for an athlete and their career and personal self-image.

### **Types of Physical Harm:**

The humiliation directed toward athletes in hate crime incidents often entails an element of violence aimed at causing harm to the target. According to Godzisz 2024, these attacks can, therefore, cover a broad spectrum, starting with more superficial forms of assault like shoving or slapping to more graphic violence such as beating, stabbing, or shooting. Such attacks are usually premeditated, and the resulting hate fuels the intent to inflict the worst on their targets. Various factors can influence the severity of the injury: whether the athlete was easily

distinguishable from others, the extent of the prejudice that provoked the act, and the availability of a weapon or other tools of violence.

An excellent example of this is the violence that transgender athletes encounter from society, since gender issues in sports are a significant concern. For instance, Mack Beggs, a transgender wrestler, experienced threats of violence and aggression from fans and opponents. Similarly, several cases of assault have been described, particularly concerning LGBTQIA+ persons in the wake of games or other functions where gay athletes are easily identifiable and may suffer bias-motivated attacks (Godzisz, 2024). The violence originates from patriarchal culture and a long-held belief about the acceptable and appropriate roles of its inhabitants in the sphere of sport. Likewise, disabled athletes are subjected to violence, especially being in a position where they are expected to compete in sports, as prejudices follow people with such disabilities. In these cases, the athletes face that even the least significant injury can have hefty consequences. A simple push or knock or an actual attempt on the opponent's life affects their disability in one way or another in a way that the athlete cannot perform in the previous form. These assaults not only physically harm them but also send a message to society to reject these athletes since they do not represent the so-called standard form of athleticism.

### **Long-Term Effects of Physical Injury:**

To many athletes, the body they possess is the only asset that is within their direct control. Physical harm received from a hate crime can thus result in detrimental long-term effects on the victim. It is critical to stress that hate crime-related injuries are more poignant than usual sports injuries, as the latter is usually expected and is part of athletic training; in contrast, the former is intentional and driven by resentment. It becomes a lengthy process to recover due to the effects of knowing that one because of one's orientation and the added physical harm.

### **Career-Ending Injuries:**

Many hate crimes cause injuries that can lead to the premature retirement of an athlete. Fractures, sprains, or concussion injuries may take a long time to heal, and sometimes players may not perform at the same capacity as before the injury (Avedesian et al., 2020). Consequently, the injuries resulting from hate crimes have high personal and financial repercussions for the affected athletes, whose careers are shortened in the process. They lose their means of earning a living and their roles and goals in life since much of their worth is linked to sports accomplishments. It is worse for unadulterated human beings who have practiced through adolescence and adulthood to reach these elite standards and then be removed from them by violence, purely on account of prejudice.

### **Rehabilitation Challenges:**

Often, injuries are not fatal, but the process of rehabilitation is both a physically and emotionally draining process. The athletes subjected to hate crimes not only require physical therapy but also have to endure a process of healing their emotional and psychological selves (Adamson et al. 2022). Rehabilitation can be very lonely, especially if an athlete feels abandoned by his team, coaches, or even fellow athletes in the sporting arena. This is even more difficult for minority athletes, who may already be experiencing some level of oppression because of their race, gender, or ability.

The rehabilitation process for athletes with disabilities is challenging in comparison to their able-bodied counterparts. Physiological impairment from a hate crime can worsen their conditions, requiring more time to heal or may result in a need for further medical attention. Unfortunately, an athlete in this position often has difficulty seeking proper medical attention, and getting the medical treatment they need can be expensive, or they may face prejudice in the healthcare system.

**Psychological Impact of Physical Harm:**

This section deals with the health consequences of hate crimes. The effects caused by the physical attack due to one's identity are unimaginable and make the recovery process very difficult psychologically. People involved in hate crimes may have post-traumatic stress disorder, anxiety, or depression, and diagnoses could slow down their physical rehabilitation.

***Fear of Repeated Violence:***

The leaders also try to establish that one of the worst impacts of hate crime physical attacks is the possibility of experiencing the same thing again. This fear can lead to the inability to attend competitions, practice with teammates, or even publicly demonstrate oneself. For athletes whose status is already precarious and rendered as minority subjects, the conditions hint at more violence in the cycle of fear and avoidance. Consequently, they may detach themselves from their sport, team, and fans, hence increasing the level of their psychological disorders.

***Impact on Performance:***

Physical pain is one factor, while its psychological impact can significantly affect an athlete's capabilities. This complication keeps an athlete alert, always guarding against such danger. This takes time, energy, and focus away from the actual athletic training and competition. Sometimes, an athlete might intentionally perform below par to avoid getting noticed and, hence, safe from any possible attack. This cycle of fear and underperformance only helps to perpetuate the exclusion of minorities from sports, once again proving the saying that is sports do not discriminate.

**Societal Repercussions of Hate Crime-Related Physical Harm:*****Hate Crimes Send a Clear Message:***

They explicitly convey the message that certain groups are not allowed in sports. This message goes beyond causing harm to the direct victims and touches on the greater societal community of athletes with the same identity as the victim. LGBTQIA+ athletes, people with disabilities, and other minority players may feel even more disenfranchised, thereby aggravating their exclusion in the world of sports.

***Visibility and Representation:***

If prominent sports personalities are disabled or bench-warmed because of hate crimes, then it just limits the representation of minorities in the said field. Inclusion and representation are essential for minorities who do not belong to the mainstream world of sports. Physical violence against minority athletes in hate crimes eliminates them from the public sphere, reinforcing the message that sports are meant for specific populations that do not deviate from expected gender, sexual, or able-bodied orientations.

### ***Impact on Policy and Governance:***

The physical victimization aspect of hate crimes also has polymorphic effects on sports policy and governance. Sporting organizations also have the cardinal duty of ensuring that athletes are safeguarded from harm in all aspects of life. However, it emerges that the available policies that seek to tackle hate crimes in sports are either insufficient or completely lacking. The physical harm inflicted on these athletes brings about the need for sporting organizations to seek enhanced measures such as increased punitive measures, full support to the victims involved, and also better measures against discrimination.

### **Psychological and Emotional Damage**

#### **Emotional Repercussions: Fear and Anxiety:**

Criminal acts that are based on prejudice aim at creating feelings of intimidation among the victims as a way of telling them that, due to their identity, they are vulnerable to attack and other forms of abuse. In the case of athletes, there is an added element because they will be in the public eye more often. LGBTQIA+ athletes or athletes with disabilities usually feel that the latter is directed at them and people from their minority groups since these representatives from minorities have higher visibility.

The threat of future violence is one of the most devastating emotional impacts seen in athletes who are hate crime victims. Such victims may develop anxiety and always expect to be attacked again during competitions, training, or in their daily lives. This heightened awareness can lead to one experiencing social anxiety or even a panic disorder, and hence, they are not secure in their setting (RayatSarokolaei et al., 2022). Similarly, athletes who must be physically and mentally fit to compete suffer from emotional exhaustion due to this fear, affecting their performance and health.

#### **Depression and Low Self-Esteem:**

Hate crimes impact students' general feelings and emotions, such as the emergence of despair and poor self-esteem, in addition to making them feel terrified and incensed during the occurrence. The majority of players who are the subject of hate crimes have poor self-esteem, especially when the victim is the victim of a crime motivated by their gender, sexual orientation, or handicap.

Performance and achievements on the field or track determine an athlete's sense of self-worth. Hate crimes undermine this confidence by questioning the victim's core beliefs, leaving them feeling weak and incapable. When they encounter hatred from others, they question whether they should continue participating in these athletic events. The emotional detachment they experience from their chosen sport diminishes their value by constantly reminding them that they are "other" and inferior. Upon inquiry, most of them disclosed that they were unhappy, exhibiting feelings of melancholy, despair, disengagement, and loss of interest in activities they had previously enjoyed before playing sports.

### ***Effect on Performance:***

Mental health conditions like depression or poor self-esteem have an early impact on how well a performance is carried out. Fitness is also crucial for the same reason since fitness is for the mind, which decides a player's performance at the critical time of a match. This is true because,



on occasion, depression can cause an athlete to lose focus during practice or competition, leading to subpar performance. Since their identity will make them hated no matter how hard they work, they could no longer desire to put in as much effort. Thus, these psychological difficulties result in emotional tiredness, which develops into a dreadful cycle that can further deteriorate a person's standards and self-esteem.

### ***Case Study of Depression in Athletes:***

According to Hartman's (2023) research, those who experienced hate crimes were more likely to experience clinical depression than those who did not. Twenty-odd athletes from minority groups participated in this cross-sectional study; forty percent of the athletes in the hate crime groups showed signs of depression. One group had been involved in a hate crime incident recently, while the other group had not been involved in any hate crime incidents at all. The study raises awareness of the harm that hate crimes against athletes may do to their mental and physical health in addition to their physical health.

### **Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and Trauma:**

Some of the hate crimes affect athletes' psychological state in more severe ways than merely increasing their levels of fear and depression, as other studies indicate that athletes develop PTSD. PTSD is a mental health disorder that may develop after witnessing or experiencing a traumatic event, and the major symptoms are reliving the event through flashbacks, nightmares, severe anxiety, and thoughts that are out of control (Trajkov, 2023). Some of the athletes have endured some of the most violent and aggressive hate crimes, and this means that even after the physical injury has healed, there is always the psychological barrier that one has to overcome.

In PTSD, the athletes may have various effects that would make it hard for them to perform in their sport. This can happen during training or competition, which means that the athlete has to relive the traumas of the hate crime. So, while hyperarousal assists athletes in responding quickly to threats, it prevents them from escaping, slowing down, or even relaxing, affecting their performance. In extreme cases, athletes refrain from returning to the teams and even avoid the sport completely due to the remainder of the attack.

### ***Case Study on PTSD in Sports:***

Ramos, Burgess, and Ollen (2023) highlighted the story of an LGBTQIA++ athlete who was assaulted outside the sports center and later developed PTSD. In this case, the athlete serves as a professional runner who was threatened with a homophobic attack that left its mark on him physically as well as emotionally. After the attack, he began to join training and race but often had flashbacks, which forced him to stay away from competition for almost one year. It also shows how traumatizing hate crime experiences disrupt an athlete's career and mental well-being and that recovery involves therapy and a context that embraces the survivor.

### **Emotional Isolation and Alienation:**

Hate crimes also cause such athletes to be emotionally isolated due to fear or embarrassment of being around other people. The challenges of acceptance for a victim of a hate crime are hard, as they feel deserted by their teammates, coaches, and even the sports fraternity if they are on a sports team and are victims of LGBTQIA+ athletes or persons with disabilities. Consequently,

there is a significant sense of isolation and abandonment due to a lack of willingness to speak out for fear of backlash and further discrimination, as reported in many cases involving athletes.

### ***Lack of Support Systems:***

The victims of hate crimes in athletes feel as though their teams or sporting organizations have left them behind. This lack of support further aggravates the situation, leaving athletes in their traumas alone. For athletes in the LGBTQIA+ community, there is heightened concern when reporting incidents of hate crime since they may feel that coming out as the attackers' target will further isolate them in their chosen sport (Pickles, 2021). Likewise, disabled athletes may refrain from reporting hate crimes for the same reason: they expect their claims to be ignored or they desire not to be regarded as 'weak.'

### **Addressing Psychological and Emotional Damage:**

Concerning the psychological and emotional trauma resulting from hate crimes, more attention should be paid to the need for proper support provided to athletes by sporting organizations and other governing bodies. This includes providing coverage of the athletes' mental health, letting them receive counseling and therapy where necessary, and, most importantly, providing platforms where they can report any injustices without fear of reprisals.

### ***Therapeutic Interventions:***

This indicates that therapy should be the backbone of healing regarding hate crimes among athletes. Cognitive Behavior Therapy (CBT) can be used to explain the athletes' feelings and how they can handle the trauma, if any, while trauma-focused therapy can assist athletes in recovering from the ordeal (Werner et al., 2023). In therapy, athletes get a chance to talk about their emotions of fear, anger, and isolation, as well as strategies to reclaim their confidence and worth.

### ***Support from Teams and Coaches:***

It should also be noted that teams and coaches are an important source of support for athletes who have become victims of hate crimes. Coaches can ensure that athletes do not suffer severe psychological traumas resulting from hate crimes by creating supportive atmospheres that make the athletes feel accepted. Teams should also be equipped to identify distressed athletes and be available to support the athletes so that they cannot find themselves stranded after an attack.

### **Intersectional Challenges: Athletes with Disabilities and LGBTQIA+ Athletes**

Athletes with disabilities or the LGBTQIA+ community are already stigmatized in society; thus, the intersectionality of athletes with disabilities and hate crime makes it even more complicated for them. Intersectionality means the intersections of social categories, coined by Kimberlé Crenshaw as a set of unique ways of oppression and dominance (Warrier, 2022). Refugee sportspeople are also in a more vulnerable position when they are part of other victims of hate crime; for instance, if they are both members of the LGBTQIA+ community and disabled.

### **Double Marginalization and Compounded Vulnerabilities:**

The LGBTQIA+ disabled athletes experience what is regarded as double jeopardy in their careers. This means that they are discriminated against and biased not only for their sexual

orientation or gender identity but also for their disability. This overlay of prejudice can intensify the aggression they experience in all facets of their existence and the sporting context (Martin et al., 2020). Ableism, as well as homophobia or transphobia, are evident in hate crimes against these athletes, making disability and sexual orientation hate crimes different forms of violence targeting different angles of the victim.

### **Case Study: Intersectionality in Hate Crimes:**

An example of the intersectionality of hate crimes was demonstrated in the case of Chantelle Brown, a Paralympic athlete and a gay woman with a mobility impairment. Being a lesbian and a person with disabilities during her athletic career was also a bumpy road for Brown, as she was constantly receiving ableist abuse from her opponents who doubted her ability to be a professional athlete and homosexual abuse from spectators and her colleagues (Wilke et al., 2023). This two-tiered oppression proved to be emotionally draining for Brown, and she felt abandoned by her team. This type of abuse accumulated and negatively impacted her mental state, which forced Brown to seek therapy due to the hate crimes she had experienced.

### **Barriers to Reporting and Access to Support:**

Disabled athletes who are also members of the LGBTQIA+ community find themselves struggling when it comes to reporting the incidents and seeking help. Many fear their grievances and concerns will not be listened to but ignored or escalated to punish them for bringing up their intersectionality. This is especially the case in the sporting context, where there is a known or suspected absence of diversity or where discrimination against both the LGBTQIA+ community and people with a disability is endemic.

Moreover, many athletes with disabilities experience physical challenges in seeking legal or emotional support. For example, some may have physical challenges that prevent them from attending face-to-face therapy sessions. In contrast, others have to experience an inaccessible reporting system that does not consider athletes with disabilities (Waller et al., 2020). LGBTQIA+ athletes suffer from similar constraints when it comes to accessing support services because they might not be allowed to disclose their sexual orientation or gender identity in certain societies.

## **SOCIO-POLITICAL RAMIFICATIONS**

### **Limited Access to Support Systems**

Crimes of hate tend to isolate the athletes from important social-political supporting structures within government and sports organizations. In general, the athletes who face hate crimes remain isolated and denied the essential services they may need, including counseling, legal services, or support from advocacy organizations within their communities. Hartman (2023) also noted that athletes with minority status, including the LGBTQIA+ or those with disabilities, are not well protected by governmental sports development programs because there is a lack of bias-free programs in many sectors.

In this regard, Bills and Vaughn (2023) call for amending the Hate Crimes Prevention Act to include special provisions regarding athletes' rights, especially the minority ones. Some critics argue that existing laws for the masses are not protective enough for athletes who become victims of hate crimes, and they are socially and politically vulnerable to seeking justice or

rehabilitation. There is a lack of support for survivors, which means that the cycle of victimization is continued, and athletes are not assisted when they want to return to sports and society after being victims of hate crimes.

### **Impact on Career Progression**

Tackling hate crime as a burgeoning barrier to athletes' career advancement There are implications of hate crimes that tend to be catastrophic to the progress of athletes. They weaken their competitiveness because bodily harm, psycho-emotional distress, and social exclusion impede development. They may have their practice sessions and games disrupted, hence losing valuable time, which they might have used to gain more experience, secure sponsors, or acquire higher ranks in swimming. Hartman (2023) explains how, after being victimized, it is easy for athletes to be dropped from endorsement or promotional campaigns as sponsors and other related bodies may be wary of being associated with such individuals or even those seen as 'abnormal.'

### **The Role of Sports Institutions**

Hate crimes also significantly influence sports, with sports federations and organizations either minimizing or amplifying their impact. However, hate crimes targeting minorities remain an issue that most institutions have not shown much progress towards addressing. Despite adopting policies and campaigns against discrimination and promoting equality by some federations, enforcement tends to lack strictness, and the measures taken may not guarantee the safety of marginalized athletes. According to Hartman (2023), most sporting bodies neither possess the capacity nor the desire to deal with the hate crimes problem adequately.

In contrast, certain sports institutions have awoken to the fact that hate crimes are real, and measures are being taken to address the issue. Thus, according to Bills and Vaughn (2023), sports organizations can develop safer and more inclusive contexts for all athletes, particularly athletes of color, by including forensic science, legal changes, and advocacy into their models.

## **PREVENTIVE MEASURES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Forensic Science and Policy Reforms**

Hate crimes against minority athletes have been a significant issue, and forensic science as a subdiscipline proved useful in investigating these crimes and providing evidence that can be legally used to prosecute the offenders. Schaub (2023) has stressed the need for incorporating forensic techniques in investigating hate crimes in sports to ensure that these incidents are identified, reported, and dealt with appropriately. Moreover, Canadian policy reform, like amending the Hate Crimes Prevention Act to have special sections to protect athletes and coaches, helps end discrimination.

### **Counseling and Rehabilitation**

To reduce the long-term effects of hate crimes, rehabilitation counseling should be provided to the affected athletes. It gives them directions on how to handle the emotional and psychological disorders that they encounter. Current research recommends the development of specific counseling services for minority athletes to help them develop coping mechanisms, regain self-esteem, and deal with issues such as PTSD or anxiety.

## Sporting Federations and Cultural Change

National and international sporting federations should have policies that ensure athletes, especially lesbians, gays, bisexuals, and transgender people, are protected from discrimination. Regarding the consideration of minority sports people, there will be ways by which sporting authorities can fight and prevent hate crimes against these groups through zero-tolerance policies, awareness creation, and promoting cultural change.

## CONCLUSION

The review has employed various conceptualizations of injury, which include physical injuries, neurotic damage, and socio-political ramifications, to debate and investigate the implications of hate crimes on minority athletes in a firm and diverse manner. Regarding sexuality, handicap, and gender, the data presented provide a convincing justification for protective measures and support services for athletes who become victims of hate crimes. Furthermore, more interdisciplinary studies are required to comprehend and prevent hate crimes in sports; these studies must be well-represented across several disciplines.

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