

Blowing the Whistle on Sports Officiating Abuse

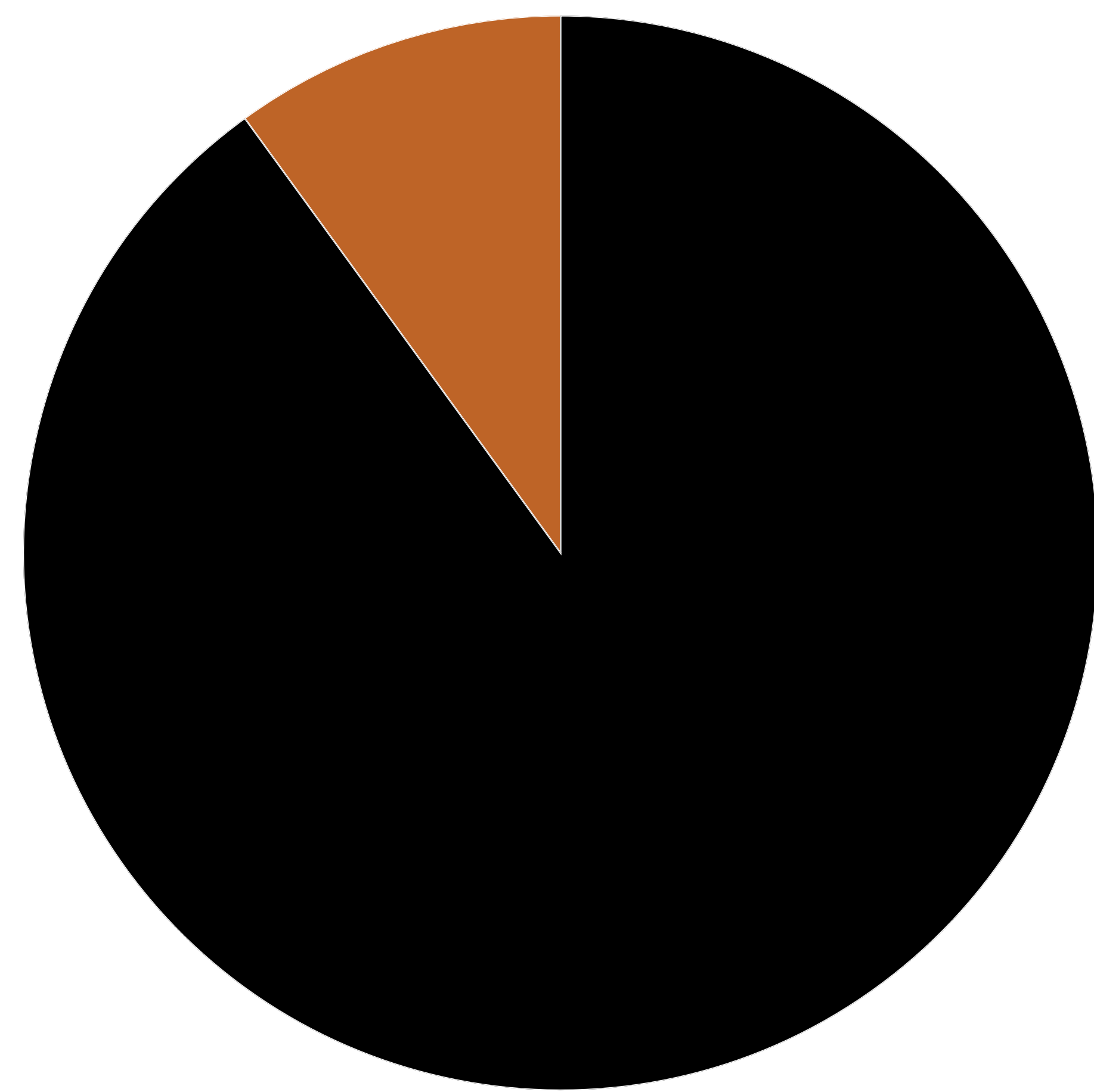
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I've been refereeing ice hockey since I was 12 years old. Through my time officiating, I have seen a consistent number of officials drop out. This continued decrease in the number of officials has caused a major problem within youth sports. Youth sports are consistently growing, but the number of officials is consistently plummeting. Of the officials I have seen drop out, it's either been due to mental health issues or a lack of ability to deal with abuse. I decided to investigate the effects of officiating abuse as well as the effect it has on the mental health of the officials themselves.



I currently referee ice hockey in the "North American Hockey League" within USA Hockey's Officiating Development program. Officials working in the "ODP" often have a goal to someday referee professional ice hockey.

Throughout my project, I spoke to multiple officials whom I've worked with to come up with practical solutions to the referee shortage crisis. These proposals included identifying prospective young officials, getting former players involved in the sports, and educating parents on proper conduct



Physical and emotional abuse toward sports officials doesn't just effect the mental health of the officials themselves, it effects the **future** of youth sports.

According to a 2017 National Association of Sports Officials survey, nearly 90 percent of the 17,000 referee participants suffered verbal abuse in their role as officials.

Want more information?

Read my research about the effects of officiating abuse on mental health and youth sports!

