Aspects of Cohesion include:

- Environmental factors
  - Orientation of the organisation
- Leadership factors
  - Leadership Styles and Behaviours
  - Coach and athlete relationships
- Personal characteristics of the group members
  - Traits, Achievement Motivation
- Team factors
  - **size** of the team - Small teams also tend to be more cohesive, as there is more identifiable responsibility on each player.
  - how **similar** the group members are to each other - Teams where members are similar in age and ability tend to have greater cohesion than those with a very diverse membership.
  - how **stable** the team members are (more stable=better)
- Cohesion
  - **Task** cohesion is the degree to which group members work together and are committed to achieving common goals.
  - **Social** Cohesion is the degree to which group members like each other and get on, trust and support each other.
- Group Outcomes
  - How does the outcome of one performance affect the stability of the team afterwards?
- Individual Outcomes
  - How does the outcome of one performance affect the behavior of each individual afterwards?
- Type of sport
  - In **interactive** sports, where the members need to interact to be successful, such as football, netball and volleyball, high levels of group cohesion will enhance performance. However, in **coactive** sports where members of a team do not need to directly interact, such as golf, bowling and athletics, the level of group cohesion does not appear to affect performance.
- Roles
Carron strongly emphasized the importance of roles in developing team cohesiveness.

Roles

Carron specified that roles are an important aspect of group cohesion. If a team member is given an individual role within the group then they will feel that they have a sense of purpose and that they have a part to play in helping the team – in this case group cohesion will improve.

If however the team member does not understand their role [role clarity] or does not want their role [role acceptance], then group cohesion will suffer as the team member is not happy with their role within the group. Role clarity and role acceptance both effect how well the team member performs his/her role and this in turn affects the effectiveness of the team and group cohesion.

Roles can be formal, e.g. wing attack, centre forward, goal keeper
Or
Roles can be informal, e.g. the clown of the group, or the gossip, or the bossy one!
**Measuring Group Cohesion**

Carron attempted to measure Group Cohesion using the GEQ [Group Environment Questionnaire]. This has 18 items for which answers must be indicated on a Likert Scale.

The GEQ measures 4 aspects of cohesion:

- group integration: task
- group integration: social
- individual attractions in the group: task
- individual attractions in the group: social.

A number of research studies have found the GEQ to have strong validity and reliability and as it acknowledges the multidimensional nature of group cohesion it may make it easier for the users to identify specific areas for improvement within the sport group being measured.

**Research Evidence demonstrating the effects of winning or losing on perceived group cohesion**

*Kozub and Button (2000)* investigated the influence of a competitive outcome on perceptions of cohesion in rugby and swimming teams aiming to investigate the effects of winning or losing on perceived group cohesion. They used a sample of 60 male rugby players and 60 male swimmers. All the 120 participants completed the Group Environment Questionnaire (GEQ) immediately before and after rugby matches and dual swim meets.

Kozub and Button found that only the two task dimensions of the GEQ altered significantly from pre to post competition. For rugby, the group’s task integration mean score increased slightly following a win but decreased significantly following a loss. For swimmers, the mean score for group task integration increased significantly from pre to post meet for both winners and losers. Finally for both sports, the attractions to the group task increased from pre to post event regardless of the outcome. This research suggests that different dimensions of group cohesion, may be affected differently by success and failure. It appears that the perceived level of cohesion does increase following success in some sports. This suggests that team cohesion can be enhanced by success.
The findings of some studies indicate a strong association between cohesion and sport performance, and between cohesion and satisfaction.

**Factors affecting Group Cohesion**

Carron looked at the following aspects of group cohesion in sport:

- Theoretical framework
- Application to sport
- Implications and limitations
- Future directions

**Theoretical framework**

Originally Festinger et al (1963) proposed that Group Cohesion was bi-dimensional, i.e. that there are 2 or more dimensions involved in group cohesion. These psychologists believed that in order to understand group cohesion it was necessary to consider both the source of the rewards available for the task and how these rewards could be achieved.

Eventually these ideas developed into the two components of group cohesion known as:

- **Task cohesion**
- **Social cohesion**

Task cohesion is the degree to which group members work together and are committed to achieving common goals.

Social Cohesion is the degree to which group members like each other and get on, trust and support each other.

**Sports Research Perspective**

Even though it is acknowledged that there are these two dimensions to group cohesion, they are generally dealt with as one.
E.g. Martens et al developed the Sport Cohesiveness Questionnaire, which measured 7 aspects of group cohesion

“Two questions ask team members to assess other members of the team relative to feelings of friendship and team influence; three questions ask the athlete to assess his or her relationship to the team in terms of a sense of belonging, value of membership and enjoyment; and the remaining two questions ask the athlete to evaluate the team as a whole in terms of teamwork and closeness. “

http://www.answers.com/topic/sport-cohesiveness-questionnaire

The 7 aspects focus on relationships and teamwork, rather than how well the team work towards the task.

This shows that social cohesion is generally over emphasised when group cohesion is studied and task cohesion is overlooked, even though it is accepted that both are dimensions which contribute towards group cohesion.

**Limitations**

- Social cohesion is over emphasized when group cohesion is studied.
- Other factors that induce cohesiveness are overlooked, such as the goals and objectives relating to the team’s performance – lowering validity
- Also groups that have low level attraction between members and negative feelings between team members do not necessarily break up or suffer disruption.
- Attraction is not needed for groups to form, formation can occur because people share similar values or they can see a clear goal-path.
- There is no agreed single, general concept of cohesiveness.
- Cohesiveness is based on aggregation of group scores, rather than individual scores meaning that values can be skewed, modal values for example could be overlooked.
**Future directions**

Carron has brought together various parts of an overarching system for developing cohesiveness in sports teams. If group cohesion is to be developed then all the factors in the diagram will need to be considered.
Application to sport

1. Consider both the task cohesion and social cohesion of your team. Cohesion tends to be thought of as one dimension (social) but doing so rules out other contributing factors.

2. Ensure your team members each have roles that they understand and are happy to perform.

3. If team cohesion is enhanced by success, aim to enable your team / group to experience success.