

# FOUNDATIONS OF SPORT MANAGEMENT

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# FOUNDATIONS OF SPORT MANAGEMENT

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# Chapter One

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## Introduction to the Sport Industry

Andy Gillentine and R. Brian Crow



### Learning Objectives

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Upon completion of this chapter, the reader should be able to

- Understand the growth of the sport industry;
- Describe the growth of the academic study of sport;
- Identify the myths surrounding the sport industry;
- Discuss the unique features of the sport industry; and
- Elaborate on the challenges of selecting a career in the sport industry.

**Cost of an average college degree in sport management**      **\$ 42,000**

**Number of weeks you will work nights and weekends in this industry**      **52**

**Percentage of friends who will ask for free tickets**      **100%**

**Seeing your stadium full of cheering fans despite a poor record**      ***Priceless***

## ***Welcome to the Sport Industry!***



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### **Introduction**

The sport industry today represents the 4th largest growth industry in the United States and the 11th fastest growing industry in the world (Pitts & Stotlar, 2002; Sports Business Journal, 2003). This accelerated growth has fueled the desire of many people to pursue a career in the sport industry. Thousands of students each year, in the U.S. and abroad, enter academic programs specializing in the study of sport management to prepare for a future in sport.

In addition to the rapid growth of the sport industry, the nature of sport business has changed as well. Sport is now a major component of the entertainment industry, competing for the discretionary income of fans world-

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“Sport is not simply another big business. It is one of the fastest growing industries in the U.S., and it is intertwined with virtually every aspect of the economy—from the media and apparel to food and advertising . . . sports is everywhere, accompanied by the sound of a cash register ringing incessantly.”

Michael Ozanian

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wide. Gone are the days of collecting gate receipts in “cigar boxes” (Gillentine, 2004). Sport is now a multi-billion-dollar industry and growing. This increases the need for sound administrative and business practices and for individuals specifically educated for the unique nature of the sport industry.

### **Why a Career in Sport?**

Before launching into a college degree program and professional career in sport, individuals should fully understand the commitment and dedication required for success in this field. In order to evaluate their current status, it is important to answer the most basic of Socratic questions, “*Why?*”

Probably the most common answer to this question is “*I love sports!*” While it is important to have a passion for your work, a love of sports is probably not enough to ensure a happy and productive career in the sport industry. Upon entering the sport profession, this “love of sport” becomes a job and, like all jobs, will have its good moments and bad. If your motivation also includes “getting to watch lots of games,” your time and money may be better spent purchasing a 52-inch Plasma TV. When you choose sport as a career, you will be preparing for the upcoming event while others are tailgating in the parking lot; most likely you will be working during game time, in addition to several hours after the event. Your passion has now become your occupation. Helping others enjoy

watching the event while you earn your paycheck is the reality.

Another common answer is *“I hope to rub elbows with the rich and famous.”* While you may have greater access to well known athletes and coaches, don't be misled in thinking they will be your new lunch buddies. Frequently entry-level sport managers find themselves disappointed after meeting the “star player” of their new employer. According to David Sampson, President of Florida Marlins, “Quite often you will find these guys are immature, overpaid, and over indulged, just because they can throw hard” (Sampson, 2004).

Others enter the sport industry with dollar signs in their eyes. The sport media is full of stories chronicling the astronomical salaries and monies generated in the sport industry. While it is true that a lucrative living can be made in the sport business, the reality is few in sport administration receive those salaries. The vast fortunes of the owners of today's professional sport franchises were typically made outside of the sport industry. Don't be disappointed, though; a comfortable living can be made in sport management . . . but individuals must be prepared and patient to work toward that level of compensation (see Chapter 14 & 15).

## Opportunities in Sport: Myth and Reality

The sport industry is subject to a high level of public scrutiny. Daily fans evaluate every move made not only by the players on the field, but also by the executives directing the organization. This constant evaluation, however, does not ensure the credibility of those making the evaluation. Therefore many “myths” regarding the sport industry flourish (additional myths are also discussed in various chapters). Many of these myths focus on the potential for a career in the sport industry. Most of these myths are based on antiquated ideas and/or dated information, while others merit

closer analysis because they also infuse accurate information but are presented in a questionable context. Listed below are some of the most frequently cited myths, compiled from a variety of sources regarding seeking a career in the sport industry.

### ***1) Opportunities are limited and the field is saturated with applicants.***

It seems almost paradoxical to state that sport is the 4th fastest growing industry and in the next breath state that opportunities are limited. While obviously there are not an unlimited number of jobs available in the sport industry, there are, in fact, jobs available. In order to be successful in the sport industry, individuals must be mobile. Opportunities in sport are found in locations ranging from New York City to Waco, Texas, to Seattle, Washington, and all points in between. Individuals wishing to enter the sport industry must be willing to “go where the jobs are.” Often people are too myopic in their vision of where they are willing to work, and therefore limit their access to jobs. With regard to over-saturation of the job market, most administrators will agree there are never enough qualified applicants for positions, while there are always too many unqualified ones. It is important for individuals to appropriately prepare and position themselves to become attractive to potential employers.

### ***2) Short-term opportunities are not worthwhile.***

One of the quickest and most effective ways to enter the sport industry is through internships (see Chapter 14). Quite often these positions are designed to be seasonal or short-term. They do, however, provide the individual with the experience necessary to apply for better full-time opportunities as they arise. Often individuals will fill multiple short-term internships in order to gain valuable experience and to begin networking in the sport industry. Do not be discouraged from accepting positions that initially



Photo by Don Whitaker, courtesy of ©stock.xchng iv

indicated a specific beginning and ending date. View these opportunities as a chance to gain new skill and to showcase your abilities.

### ***3) Opportunities for minorities are limited.***

While the number of minorities holding high-ranking sport industry positions is verifiably low, these numbers are changing (Lapchick, 2004). As more and more minorities decide to pursue a managerial career in the sport industry and prepare themselves for that career, we will see a marked change in the demographic make-up of sport managers. The process is and will be slower than any of us desire, but the sport industry has always been willing to allow individuals the opportunity to pursue this career option, and it is often more willing than the rest of society to judge a person on their successes rather than on their race, ethnicity, or gender. Becoming successful in a management position in the sport industry requires the same skills athletes must have to succeed: dedication, commitment, and a willingness to work harder than your competitors. (Further exploration of this topic will be found in Chapter 2.)

Despite the continued existence of these myths, the sport industry does offer many exciting, challenging, and rewarding positions for those deciding to pursue this career path. Managerial challenges in the sport industry may be compared to completing a crossword puzzle. You can clearly see the problem that needs to be solved; there is at least one clue to help identify the best possible answer; the answer's position in relationship to the entire situation is evident; and once the answer is found, immediate gratification is mentally and visually present.

## **The Evolution of Sport Management Education**

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“Men do not quit playing because they grow old; they grow old because they quit playing.”

Oliver Wendell Holmes

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Projections that by the end of the 20th century the GNP for the sport industry would consume more than \$121 billion proved to be entirely too conservative (Rosner, 1989; Meek, 1997; Pitts, 2001). Actual estimates indicate the figure during that time period well exceeded \$200 billion (SBJ, 2003; Pitts & Stotlar, 2002). As employment opportunities in the sports industry have grown, the need for training of sport professionals has received much attention. Universities have quickly tried to develop sport management curricula at the graduate and undergraduate levels to fill the need for professionals trained specifically in sport management/administration. The number of universities offering sport management curriculums has increased from 1 to approximately 200 in the past 40 years (Stier, 2003).

As the interest and participation in sport have grown to all-time highs, so has the need for professional preparation of sport managers and administrators. Large numbers of undergraduates and sport professionals are rapidly returning to the campus to take discipline-specific courses to improve the current or potential employment opportunities (Parkhouse, 1996). The impetus for the development of a sport administration academic program developed when Walter O'Malley (of the Brooklyn Dodgers) urged University of Miami (FL) educator James Mason to imagine the effectiveness of individuals specifically trained to deal with the business of the growing sport industry (Mason, Higgins, & Owens, 1981).

“I ask the question, where would one go to find a person who by virtue of education had been trained to administer a marina, race track, ski resort, auditorium, stadium, theatre, convention or exhibit hall, a public camp complex, or a person to fill an executive position at a team or league level in junior athletics such as a Little League baseball, football, scouting, CYO, and youth activities, etc . . . A course that would enable a graduate to read architectural and engineering plans; or having to do with specifications and contract letting, the functions of a purchasing agent in plant operations. There would be problems of ticket selling and accounting, concessions, sale of advertising in programs, and publications, outdoor and indoor displays and related items . . .” (Mason et al., 1981, p. 44)

From this modest and carefully orchestrated beginning, sport management and sport administration programs have grown rapidly throughout the United States and the world. While the University of Miami may claim to be the “birthplace of sport management education,” the curriculum proposed by Mason in 1957 was considered “ahead of its time” and was not implemented by the Coral Gables institution (Sawyer, 1993). Mason started the first graduate program in Sport Administration at Ohio University in 1966. Ironically, Biscayne College, now known as St. Thomas University, located only 15 miles from the University of Miami campus, became the first university to establish an undergraduate program in sport administration (Masterlexis, Barr, & Humms, 2005). The state of Florida remains a leader in sport management education with no fewer than 18 colleges and universities offering academic programs (SportsBusiness Journal, 2004). The Miami-Dade public schools have even established a special academic program for high school students wishing to pursue a

career in the sport industry (One Community One Goal Annual Report, 2004).

The expansion of academic programs was not confined to only undergraduate and master’s degree programs. Results of a study completed in 1996 showed that no fewer than 22 universities offered doctorate programs with at least an emphasis area in sport administration and/or sport management (Gillentine & Crow, 1996). Despite this finding, sport administration/management academic programs struggle to find enough discipline-specific trained professionals to fill their faculty needs (Mahony, Mondello, Hums, & Judd, 2004).

The rapid development of sport management graduate programs occurred through the independent efforts of various universities throughout the country. The lack of coordination between schools caused a fragmentation in the development of programs. Each university or department was free to establish its own

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Table 1.1 NASSM/NASPE Core competencies for undergraduate programs

1. **Socio-Cultural Dimensions in Sport** – Enables the student to recognize that sport is a microcosm of society and is influenced by cultural traditions, social values, and psychosocial experiences.
2. **Management Leadership and Organization in Sport** – Enables the student to define and understand the concepts of management and leadership in sport.
3. **Ethics in Sport Management** – Students should be able to recognize and identify moral issues related to sport in its intrinsic and extrinsic dimensions.
4. **Marketing in Sport** – The student will be able to apply fundamental marketing concepts to the sport industry.
5. **Communication in Sport** – Students will become familiar with the principles of interpersonal communication, mass communication, and interaction with the public as they relate to the sport industry.
6. **Budget and Finance in Sport** – The student will understand why budget and finance in sport is a critical component of all sport related industries.
7. **Legal Aspects of Sport** – The student will become familiar with the legal concept in those areas that they are likely to encounter in the sport workplace.
8. **Economics in Sport** – The student will obtain an understanding of economic principles and their application in the sport industry.
9. **Governance in Sport** – The student will be familiar with various governing agencies in sport and examine their authority, organizational structure, and function.
10. **Field Experiences in Sport Management** – The student will benefit from a culminating in-depth practical experience, bridging the gap between classroom learning and practical application in the sport industry.

(NASPE/NASSM, 1993)

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priorities and areas of emphasis (NASPE/NASSM, 1993). The sport management/administration programs were established and housed in different departments (general business, physical education, management, etc.) according to university preference (Bridges & Roquemore, 1992).

The Sport Management Arts and Science Society (SMARTS), a group organized at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, first examined this curricular fragmentation (Masteralexis et al., 2005). From the initial explorations of the SMARTS organization, greater emphasis was placed on the academic credibility of graduate sport management programs. The recognized need for a standardized review of sport management curricula and programs prompted the formation of the North American Society of Sport Management (Parkhouse, 1996).

The National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) organized a Sport Management Task Force in 1986 to begin the development of standardized core competencies. The NASPE task force formed a partnership with the North American Society for Sport

Management (NASSM) to further explore and develop the standardized core requirements for sport management programs. The recommended standards established by the joint task force identify minimum competencies that should exist in undergraduate and graduate sport management programs. Standards were also established identifying the minimum number of course offerings and faculty needed to offer a program. The Sport Management Program Review Council (SMPRC) was created through the NASPE/NASSM task force to help universities “attain and maintain excellence in undergraduate and graduate education for sport management” (NASPE/ NASSM, 1993). The SMPRC reviews programs volunteering for the approval process through use of the identified criteria and evaluates the program curriculum by area and as a whole.

The development of minimum program requirements and the move toward standardization are the first steps to establish credible sport administration and sport management curriculums. The failure to properly train and prepare managers and administrators is the number one cause of management failure today. Over ninety-eight percent of managers are placed in positions for which they have not been properly trained (Bridges et al., 1992). To help ensure that sports professionals do not follow the same pattern of failure, it is imperative to continue developing quality sport management programs. Currently only 28.6 percent of approximately 220 sport management programs have received approval from the SMPRC (see Figure 1.1). In order for the sport industry to maintain consistent educational and preparation standards, it is important that universities recognize and implement the recommended standards, ultimately leading to program approval.

Figure 1.1 SMPRC Approved Sport Management Programs as of spring 2005

Undergraduate	33
Graduate	26
Doctoral	4



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## What’s the Deal with the Name?

The rapid development of sport management academic programs also created another point of confusion within the industry . . . the name. Individuals examining sport management academic programs will find them listed under a variety of different titles. The most common names for academic programs are either sport(s) management or sport(s) administration. While most professionals agree that the particular name of the program is much less important than program course

content, it is important to understand why there are differences in *sport* and *sports, management* and ***administration***. The early academic programs in sport were frequently housed in departments of physical education. Therefore, the programs were referred to as *sports management* or *sports administration*. The term “*sports*” typically refers to separate sports activities such as football, baseball, etc. The implication, then, is that *sports management* would therefore encompass only the management of these sports activities. *Sport*, on the other hand, offers a more universal description of the variety of activities and occurrences in the sport industry as a whole. These activities may include planning, organizing, and controlling sport programs (discussed in Chapter 4). Parks and Quarterman (2002) offer a clarifying analogy by surmising that the difference between sport and sports is similar to the difference between religion and religions. While religions refer to the different beliefs and denominations (i.e., Catholic, Baptist, Jewish, Muslim, etc.), religion is a broader term that encompasses leadership, belief, operation, and function.

The variance between the use of administration or management also traces its origins to its original home department. The term *administration* was typically associated with those programs and individuals working in the public sector, such as high school or university athletic directors. Since many early programs were housed in physical education departments, the use of this term seemed most logical. The term *management* was typically associated with those organizations and individuals working in the private sector. As graduates of those early programs often saw a larger job market available in educational settings, many programs adopted the term *administration* in their name. Regardless of the name, the true test of an academic degree lies in the program content.

## **Unique Aspects of the Sport Industry**

The need for discipline-specific academic preparation for the sport industry is magnified by the uniqueness of several primary features included in the discipline. While at an elementary level these features are similar to skills needed in other business ventures, closer analysis clearly identifies how this industry differs from others. Mullin (1980) first identified three

unique features of sport management: marketing, finance, and career paths. Parks et al. (2002) suggest that the social influence of sport was an additional unique feature of this industry. In addition to these unique features, we believe that the customer base (fans) and the venues also separate the sport industry from other business enterprises.

### ***Marketing***

The marketing aspects of sport offer a great many challenges to the sport professional. Not only does the sport marketer have to clearly identify who the customer is, it is also necessary to recognize where the customer will consume the product. Unlike many products, the same sport product may be consumed in multiple ways simultaneously. Additionally, the sport product is commonly produced and consumed at the same time, offering the marketer little room for adjustment. The specifics of the unique features of sport marketing are covered in Chapter 7.

### ***Finance***

A brief overview of sport finance will quickly indicate the unique components of this industry. Few industries generate the multiple sources of revenue that the sport product does. In many instances, more revenue is generated for these alternate revenue streams than from the core product itself. The sport product also differs from other industries in that multiple forms of business enterprise (corporations, partnerships, sole proprietorships, and non-profits) exist within the same environment. Additional detailed explanations of these varied financial and economic differences will be offered in Chapter 6.

### ***Career Paths***

As the sport industry continues to mature and evolve, new positions and job descriptions will emerge. There are few areas of career emphasis that are not currently available through the various branches of the sport industry. In addition to the emergence of new positions in the sport industry, the current trend toward diversification of the sport industry workforce will continue. The move toward diversification will generate additional positions for underrepresented groups throughout the sport industry. Future changes in technology will only serve to launch new positions within the industry.



## ***Social Influence of Sport***

In order to view the social impact of sport, one only needs to attend a sporting event and observe the myriad of emotions and actions of the crowd. Not only will they support their chosen team, they will suffer with them if they are not successful. Fans demonstrate their emotional and psychological attachment to the event; they will also show their involvement through the purchase of ancillary items from the sport product. From the playing fields to the water cooler, sport is pervasive throughout our country. In 2004, the U.S. was blanketed with a sea of yellow wristbands, indicating support for Lance Armstrong and others who had battled cancer. What started as a small show of support soon became a national phenomenon. These social implications of sport will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2.

## ***Customer Base (Fans)***

Fans (customers) are yet another consideration that adds to the unique aspects of the sport industry. Rarely is such an intense sense of loyalty found in other industries. Sport fans also often exhibit intense levels of identification with the sport product, which makes them feel psychologically connected to a team (Wann, Merrill, Russell, & Pease, 2001). This connection is not deterred by poor seasons or regional location, which allows for expansion of the sport product. Fans also add to the uniqueness of the sport product in that they can influence potential revenue streams of the sport organization in a variety of ways outside of consumption of the core product. Team names and logos are present on almost any product imaginable and purchased by fans. While loyal customers may have strong feelings regarding a particular consumer good, rarely do you find them painted in corporate colors cheering for their favorite detergent!

## ***Sport Venues***

Lastly, the venues in which sport events take place further separate sport from most industries. Most often an industry operates in a single setting that typically offers a quite controlled environment. The sport industry, however, produces and displays its product in a variety of settings that are subject to a variety of external influences. The sport product may also be consumed in a variety of venues at the same time. This

consumption can take place at the stadium or arena, the consumer's home, a sports bar or restaurant, on a radio, or even via the internet. While the sport manager may not be able to control these environments, he/she must recognize the impact they may have on the sport product. The sport manager must also recognize the potential impact that the venue has on customer satisfaction with the sport product.

## **Summary**

The sport industry is a dynamic, exciting, and visible field for career opportunities and academic study. Ultimately, your mastery of the field will provide you with the opportunity to advance beyond entry-level work to a rewarding career. As you look back at the information in this chapter regarding the growth of sport and the study of sport management, think of ways you can improve upon the body of knowledge contained herein. You represent the future of the sport industry, and therefore are responsible for knowing the history and fundamentals of the field, as well as building upon it for the future.

## **Discussion Activities**

1. What are some of the myths surrounding employment in the sport industry? Why do they continue to exist?
2. Identify and discuss the unique aspects of the sport industry.
3. What professional opportunities are available in the sport industry?
4. Explain the differences between sport and sports, and management and administration.

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# Chapter Two

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## Why Sport Management Matters

Catriona Higgs and Betsy McKinley



### Learning Objectives

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Upon completion of this chapter, the reader should be able to

- Describe the reasons why sport managers should study sport;
- Identify current myths in sport;
- Know what we can learn from studying sport;
- Understand the relationship between society and sport;
- Discuss why diversity is such an important topic for sport managers;
- Outline the major laws that prohibit discrimination in the workplace; and
- Describe the major methods utilized in socio-cultural studies to understand sport behavior.

## Introduction

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Sport is estimated to be a \$213 billion enterprise. The phenomenal global impact has resulted in the academic study of sport from a variety of different perspectives. Sports are popular and public activities with a close relationship to society. Together with the financial impact of sport on society, there is a need to analyze the political and cultural importance of sport. **Sport sociologists** focus on many of these issues including the analysis of sport as an industry, the political and cultural implications of sport, sport and globalization, the relationship between gender, class and economics, deviance in sport, and the social organization of sport. Carefully examining **sociological analysis** of sport competition and participation enables us to learn more about human social organization in the sport setting.

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"Sport recapitulates society and when you look at sport, what you're really doing is looking in a mirror and at some point you have to realize that that says something very important about us all."

Harry Edwards

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In many sport management classes, the primary focus of learning for students is, of course, on management. While many students are interested in sport and have a good working knowledge of trivia, statistics, and teams, few students understand the complexities of sport as a **social institution** and phenomenon. We all think we know a great deal about these activities, but we often readily buy into the myths that are perpetuated by those involved in the management and organization of sport. It is important to separate the truth from the falsehoods so that we can gain a clear idea of the role of sport in our lives. Students will gain a great deal from an analysis of sport from a socio-cultural perspective that is both applicable to their future roles as sport managers and to their own knowledge base in sport.

Why should we study this subject and why is it important that we dispel the myths surrounding this activity? Understanding the answers to those questions will en-

able you ultimately to become a better consumer of sport and a better sport manager.

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"The saddest day of the year is the day baseball season ends."

Tommy Lasorda

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## Why Should We Study Sport?

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Undoubtedly, why we should study sport is an important question for any student and appears to be easily answered by the following examples:

- **Sport is omnipresent.** It is all around us and affects our lives in a myriad of different ways. It is an important part of our lives and thus merits our attention. We all know of people whose lives revolve around their favorite team or athlete. These individuals (fans) often know more about sport trivia than what is happening economically or politically in the U.S. or the world. Why would someone be so interested in what appears to be a trivial and unimportant part of society? The answer is fairly simple—sport is a fascinating and multi dimensional activity. In many ways, it is far more interesting than many other aspects of our lives. Why do we know so much about sport? It's similar to learning the words of a song—the tune appeals to us and we commit it to memory. We love sport and most of us want to know and learn more about it.
- **Sport coverage has increased dramatically over the past decade.** It would be impossible to pick up a newspaper or switch on the radio or television and not see some form of sports coverage. Television in particular has been responsible for bringing sport to the masses. Network and cable stations utilize sport to attract viewers and advertise other television programs. The Super Bowl and other major sporting events attract millions of viewers each year and command millions of dollars in advertising revenues.
- **Many of the role models adopted by our children are athletes.** Players such as Mia, Kobe, Serena, Michael, and Shaq are instantly recognizable and

have an impact on the way our children act, dress, and think. Similar to other media figures, sports stars are entertainers and may provide a distraction from reality. The media coverage afforded to these sport stars is unparalleled. As a public, we appear unable to get enough of watching our favorite sports stars both on and off the court/field.

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“Football is like life: it requires perseverance, self-denial, hard work, sacrifice, dedication, and respect for authority.”

Vince Lombardi

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## Myths in American Sport

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**Myths** are stories that often become our realities. As sport managers, we are assailed by a number of myths that appear to be real. In effect, the media has largely shaped our feelings and attitudes about sport. An overwhelming number of people get their information from watching television rather than reading a book. We do not reflect upon sport programs or sport information, we experience them. As such we fall victim to the ways in which the media shapes our perceptions of sport. In effect, the information often presented to us is highly subjective. An analysis of the socio-cultural aspects of sport reveals the following myths:

- College sports programs generate huge profits for their universities.
- **Title IX** has resulted in complete equity for men’s and women’s education-based athletic programs.
- **Title VII** has resulted in complete employment equity for men and women outside the education setting.
- Sport gambling is a victimless activity.
- Sport is the only way for many children to build self-esteem.
- Sport is apolitical.
- Communities benefit economically and psychologically from supporting a professional sport franchise, thereby justifying expensive public subsidies.

- Drug abuse is not a problem in sports.
- Sport is one of the few places in society where African Americans get equitable treatment.

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“Sports do not build character ... they reveal it.”

John Wooden

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## What Can We Learn from Studying Sport?

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Sport is an important element of American life that is so pervasive we are all affected by it. Studying sport from a social perspective will help us understand the **culture** of our society and help dispel some of the myths that have been purported. Imagine that a Martian spaceship landed in America on the day that a major sports event was being covered. What could those visitors learn about our society from watching that sports event and our reactions to it? If the event was the Super Bowl, perhaps the Martians could conclude that we as Americans love activities that are fast-paced, exciting, and aggressive. In addition, the signage around the stadium may help the alien conclude that there are major connections between sports and the business world. In watching the advertisements shown during the breaks in competition, they may also understand how economics play an important part in defining what sport is in this country. In



Photo by Dorota Bernatek, courtesy of ©stock.xchng iv

short, we study sport from a social perspective to learn more about our culture.

Culture represents the norms and values of individuals and groups within society. Sport in America mirrors what is occurring in the rest of our society. Politics, economics, inequities, social relationships, and deviance in society can all be viewed through an analysis of sport. Sport, in essence, is a microcosm of American culture. Thus, the more we understand about sport, the more we can reflect on what is happening in the rest of society.

## Frameworks for Understanding the Relationship Between Sport and Society

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“Individual commitment to a group effort—that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”

Vince Lombardi

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Not everyone agrees about what is important in studying sport and society. The method of analyzing sport from a cultural perspective has resulted in the development of a sub-discipline called **sport sociology**. Sports sociologists are interested in how humans relate to each other in the sport context, how values affect these relationships, and how humans organize sport activities (Coakley, 2004). Sport sociology is a science and derives most of its methods and theories from its parent subject: sociology. Sport sociology is often a difficult and complex area to analyze because social phenomena in the sports world are complex, subtle, and elusive. Sport is a *dynamic* activity that is constantly evolving and changing. Sport sociologists conduct research into the development of sport, patterns of culture, values, and sports organizations. Sport sociologists have many questions about what is important and what is not. To that end, cultural practices in sport are studied from a number of different perspectives. Understanding and applying these perspectives to a study of sport in the social context can be a valu-

able tool for students who wish to further their understanding of this area.

Theories are valuable ways to examine the effect of sport on society. Theories attempt to examine patterns and provide answers for why things happen in sport. The important thing to remember, however, is that no one theory can hope to explain all parts of the sport experience because of the inherent limitations of each one. Hopefully what these theories can offer us are methods by which we can answer questions related to the values of our culture and the relationship of these values to sport.

## What Areas Do Sport Sociologists Investigate?

Sociologists study sport in a variety of different ways. The focus of analysis is not confined solely to elite athletic experiences (such as professional, Olympic, or intercollegiate participation); rather we are interested in all facets of involvement in sport and physical activity. Areas of consideration include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Sport and Social Values
- Socialization into Sport
- Youth Sport
- Sport and Education (interscholastic and intercollegiate)
- Sport and the Economy
- Sport and the Political System
- Violence in Sport
- Use of Performance-Enhancing Substances
- Gambling and Sport
- Sport and Religion
- Sport and the Mass Media
- Social Stratification
- Diversity Issues in Sport
- Future of Sport

Analyzing these areas permits us to look beyond statis-

tics, teams, and trivia into a more meaningful exploration of the impact that sport has on our everyday lives. The analysis of sport from a longitudinal perspective (e.g., youth sport through interscholastic, intercollegiate, and professional participation) gives us an opportunity to review the major influences in our decision to engage in this practice and to explore the reasons for our continuance/non-continuance in this activity. Questions like the following can be answered by reviewing our own experiences:

- Why did we play the sports we played?
- How did we become interested in those particular activities as opposed to others?
- What was the role of our parents/guardians in learning to love sports?

An investigation of the close relationship between the economy and sport reveals the multi-dimensional nature of this activity. To say that sport is “*big business*” is truly an understatement in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Similarly, those who purport that politics have no impact on sport need to understand and appreciate how local and national governments affect sport participation and sport consumption.

A brief review of the political events surrounding the last 100 years of Olympic competition is enough to convince anyone that political interventions, particularly boycotts, are a fundamental part of international sport competition. Major problems in society (e.g., drugs, violence, gambling) can also be analyzed in the sports context. Understanding why these social problems exist in sport helps to explain the motivation of athletes to engage in these practices and the pressures that lead to these abuses. Why do athletes commit violent acts on and off the field? Why do athletes take performance-enhancing substances? Why do fans riot? Why do male athletes abuse women? All these questions can be answered from a sociological perspective.

## Diversity and Sport

Perhaps the most important area for sport managers to appreciate and understand is that of **diversity**. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, a focus on all discriminatory practices related to diversity in the workplace is critical. Functioning as an effective and efficient sport manager re-

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“Prejudice is a burden which confuses the past, threatens the future, and renders the present inaccessible.”

Maya Angelou

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quires an understanding, true appreciation, and constant application of non-discriminatory practices. Diversity is more than just an analysis of **racism** and **sexism**. According to the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (U.S. EEOC), federal laws including Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) specifically address the illegality of any employment-based **discrimination** with regard to race, color, religion, gender, national origin, disability, or age. Sexual harassment is also addressed.

### ***Race/Color Discrimination***

Although African Americans represent a large percentage of those who play professional sports, the opportunities for advancement to the administrative, front office, and coaching ranks are sadly limited for this minority group. Additionally, the contributions of Mexican Americans, Native Americans, and Asian Americans to sport have largely been ignored. Focusing on these issues is critical to our understanding of sport and to enhancing our role as sport managers in a diverse and complex society.

**Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964** covers federal, state, and local governments, employment agencies, labor organizations, and private employers of 15 or more people. The law states that it is unlawful to discriminate against any employee or applicant for a position based on his/her race or color (U.S. EEOC, 2002). The law prohibits discrimination in all phases of the hiring, employment, promotion, work compensation, and termination spectrum. Further, it is illegal to discriminate based on personally held or social stereotypes and assumptions about the competence, characteristics, or performance of any racial group. For example, the sport manager would be creating a hostile work environment by telling jokes that portray an in-



dividual or group in a negative light (either to the individual or behind his or her back). Such actions are illegal. Examples of stereotyping that may lead to a negative work environment also include the use of disparaging remarks and criticisms or negative statements made in relation to a person's race or color. Such actions are termed "verbal harassment." Race/color discrimination violations also include isolating one group from interaction with others in the work place (segregation) and requesting pre-employment information regarding race that may be used in excluding a job candidate from selection for employment.

### ***Sex Discrimination***

While sport is largely considered to be a meritocratic organization that does not discriminate according to sex, an analysis of stratification and diversity issues in sport can quickly reveal the realities. Sport has long been a male preserve, and females have been excluded from participating in sport-related activities. Federal laws prohibit such discrimination. In reference to the school and university setting, **Title IX** was passed in 1972 as part of the Educational Amendments Act and prohibits sex discrimination in education agencies that receive federal funding. Title IX has been effective in many ways in improving participation levels of females in sport associated with educational settings. The law, however, has not erased deep-rooted personal prejudice and discrimination against women athletes and administrators.

Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 prohibits sex discrimination in areas outside the education setting, such as in fitness centers, sport arenas, and other venues. Because sport is still organized and controlled primarily by white men, the "glass ceiling" that exists in the business world is certainly restrictive to women who wish to advance to upper management and front office positions in the sports world. Though the private sector has seen an increase in women in managerial positions from 29% in 1990 to over 36% in 2002, at the same time, women comprise 48% of the private sector workforce (U.S. EEOC, 2002). As a sport manager, it is imperative that management positions are equally representative of all facets of the public sector and do not reflect bias in hiring based on the sex of the applicant.

### ***Sexual Harassment***

Sexual harassment can be found in many forms in the workplace. **The Pregnancy Discrimination Act**, an amendment to Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, provides protection for pregnancy-based discrimination including pregnancy, childbirth, and pregnancy-related medical conditions. Further, pregnancy cannot be used as a reason to refuse to hire a woman. It is within the bounds of the law for an employer to request a doctor's statement regarding any work-related limitations due to pregnancy; however, an employer must hold open a position that was temporarily vacated due to pregnancy leave.

Title VII also protects men and women against workplace sexual harassment, including requests for sexual favors from those in a position of power (i.e., supervisors) or those serving as co-workers, workplace conditions that create a hostile or unwelcome environment for either gender, and same-sex harassment. EEOC statistics for fiscal year 2002 show 25,526 charges of sex-based discrimination. During the same time, 29,088 sex-discrimination charges were satisfied, resulting in recovery of monetary benefits of more than \$94 million. Obviously, it is imperative that the sport manager understand and implement workplace practices that are free of all forms of sexual discrimination. Programs focusing on the prevention of sexual harassment include sensitivity training for all managers and employees, the establishment of a procedure for filing complaints, and quick resolution/action regarding every sexual harassment issue filed.

### ***Religious Discrimination***

It is illegal for employers or employees to discriminate based on religious beliefs in the workplace. This includes during the hiring process, during the creation



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of work schedules, during the promotion process, or in establishing workplace rules. In fact, a manager is to make reasonable efforts to provide workplace flexibility regarding various religious convictions of workers, as long as those accommodations do not infringe on the beliefs or work environment of other employees. The manager must also take care to prohibit workplace religious harassment among employees and ensure that one person's religious beliefs do not result in negative workplace business interests for others in the facility. For example, the manager must take care to assure that additional business costs are not incurred as a result of their decisions regarding workers' religious convictions, and that one group of employees does not receive special considerations regarding salary, work schedule, or work materials to the detriment of other groups or individuals. While religious persecution has been practiced for hundreds of years, there has been an increase in discrimination regarding the employment of Muslims, Arabs, and Sikhs since the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

### ***Disability Discrimination***

**The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990** protects individuals with disabilities from being discriminated against in the workplace. The ADA delineates a person with disabilities as an individual who "has a physical or mental impairment that limits one or more major life activities, has a record of such an impairment, or is regarded as having such an impairment" (EEOC, 2002). As in previous areas of discrimination, the manager has the responsibility of accommodating schedules, modifying facilities, and adjusting policies and operating procedures for individuals with disabilities. Again, there is an undue hardship consideration wherein the accommodations enacted by the manager must not involve additional expense or hardship for the business owner, and the work or product produced by the facility must be of the same quality as expected from all employees.

### ***Age Discrimination***

Because many organizations have less than 20 employees, thus generally negating the position of a Human Resource officer for the company, it is critical for the sport manager to be aware of and implement non-discrimination in all areas of the workplace. This is true when working with individuals who are given less than

satisfactory entry opportunities, job placement, work scheduling, and promotion/retention opportunities. **The Age Discrimination in Employment Act (ADEA) of 1967** was initially passed to protect workers age 40 and older from age discrimination in the above-mentioned areas. The ADEA was amended by the **Older Workers Benefit Protection Act of 1990 (OWBPA)** to include a focus on age discrimination and loss of workplace benefits. The OWBPA also provided for older worker protection in the area of protocol establishment that must be followed when employers are asked to waive their rights when filing settlement claims regarding age discrimination. This legislation is particularly critical to workers who have been affected by company mergers, acquisitions, and job displacement due to downsizing.

### ***Methods Used in Socio-Cultural Studies to Understand Sport Behavior***

Sport sociologists largely rely on the methods of the parent discipline (sociology) to research areas in sport. Sport sociology is a science, and as such the concentration of research in the area is geared towards the collection of accurate and verifiable evidence. **Surveys** (questionnaires) are valuable methods of learning about group and individual preferences and opinions. Sometimes the facts we need are not recorded by anyone and we have to ask people questions. For example, asking a fan what motivated them to attend a particular sports event can provide us with very valuable information regarding consumer (fan) behavior. A questionnaire can be completed by an individual in a fairly short period of time and may produce a large volume of data that can be analyzed quickly and efficiently. **Interviews** with fans, participants, and sport consumers are also widely used to explain various aspects of sports participation and consumption. Interviews can be more revealing than surveys, especially when open-ended responses are used to gather information. A close-ended (yes/no) response tells the researcher very little about the actual reasoning behind a decision. Asking questions such as "why" can be far more revealing, and some of the most interesting studies are ones that use this approach singularly (e.g., ethnographic studies). **Observational studies** also produce data that can help a sport sociologist understand aspects of sports participation. For example, subjects who are unaware they are being watched and

their behavior recorded are acting naturally in their environment and are not being asked to recall past information or misrepresenting their experiences (as in an interview). There are many other methods of collecting data; however, the main responsibility of the researcher in this area is to accurately collect, record, analyze, and interpret the facts. In our search for the truth, we rely on scientific methods of data collection to accurately describe what really exists as precisely and objectively as possible.

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“In our lives we will encounter many challenges, and tomorrow we face one together. How we accept the challenge and attack the challenge head on is only about us—no one can touch that. If we win or lose this weekend, it will not make a difference in our lives. But why we play and how we play will make a difference in our lives forever.”

Beth Anders

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## Summary

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Examining sport from a socio-cultural perspective is obviously critical for those entering the sport management profession. Concepts related to sport and other social institutions are important for the sport manager to understand. The development of modern sport has been influenced by many factors that have affected our perceptions about this topic. In addition, the concepts of diversity discussed in this chapter are also critical from many perspectives. As a sport manager you will interact with individuals from different racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. A good sport manager is one who affirms diversity in the workplace and accepts all individuals for their contributions to the sport organization. Differences should be embraced and not feared, and individuals should be judged on their merit, not on the color of their skin or what they choose to believe. Confronting prejudice and discrimination in the workplace is a difficult thing to do, but as a manager it is important to realize that part of your

responsibility lies in challenging the barriers to employment diversity, thereby providing a safe and secure workplace for all employees. Strategies for managing diversity are important for achieving workplace equity; however, the first step in the process must be a review of one's own prejudices and an examination of why these prejudices exist. Only when we confront our own fears and discriminatory behaviors can we begin to effect change in others.

## Discussion Activities

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1. Does sport bring people together or tear them apart? What specific instances can you think of to support your view?
2. Go to the web site of a professional franchise or college athletic department and access the page that introduces their management team. Record the following:
  - a) Number of male vs. female managers
  - b) Types of managers by gender (e.g., Is the Athletic Director a man or woman? Is the Assistant Director of Marketing a man or a woman?)
  - c) If pictures are provided—how many minority managers are there in this organization?

Once you have collected this data, answer the following questions:

- a) Is there a disparity in gender of those associated with the franchise or sport organization?
  - b) Are the administrative positions staffed by only men, only women, or a percentage of both?
  - c) Are the administrative positions staffed only by Caucasian personnel, or are underrepresented groups evident in top management?
  - d) Is the wording used by the franchise or sport organization inclusive or exclusive according to gender, race, or ability? Provide specific documentation of your findings.
3. Choose two of the myths outlined in this chapter. Using the web or other resources, provide two examples of specific information that help to refute each myth.
  4. Analyze the content of a sports section of a local

or national newspaper. Record the following information:

- a) The number of articles featuring male athletes
  - b) The number of articles featuring female athletes
  - c) The number of photographs featuring female athletes
  - d) The number of photographs featuring male athletes
  - e) The number of articles featuring minority athletes
  - f) The number of photographs featuring minority athletes
  - g) Answer the following questions: Who does the media choose to focus on with regard to sport? Which gender/races are most included? Which gender/races are most excluded?
5. Once Upon a Time. Many athletes are viewed as role models by children and youth. With a partner, write a fairy tale (“Once upon a time, there was a child who...”), in which the child in the story emulates undesirable attributes of professional athletes (i.e., greed, drug abuse, gambling, poor sportsmanship, bullying). The negative attributes should not contribute positively to the growth or social interaction of the child in any way. Share your story with another pair in the class. Then, correct the two stories so that “all lived happily ever after!”
6. Shared Feelings. Create a list of words that describe you and your experiences. Include reference to gender, race, marital status, year in school, favorite food, hobby, religion, political affiliation, club membership, athletic team membership, sports you like to watch, sports you like to play, favorite dessert, pet ownership, favorite vehicle, socioeconomic status, favorite chain restaurant, favorite sports teams. Share this list with two other people, and compare your similarities and differences. What does this exercise tell you about yourself and those in your class, as related to this chapter?

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