

Original research article

THE DEFINITION OF SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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Iztok Retar, Rado Pišot, Edvard Kolar

University of Primorska, Slovenia

Abstract. *The paper gives an overview of the sport management definition, which can contribute to a more transparent understanding of the importance of management as a key factor of success of sport. There is a number of definitions for sports management in the sports literature (Chelladurai, 1994; Bartoluci, 1997; Slack, 1997; Parks & Qurterman, 2002; Daft, 2003; Lussier & Kimball, 2004; Houlihan, 2008; Šugman Bednarik & Kolarič, 2002; Kolar, 2013; Retar, Plevnik, Kolar, 2013). Most of them are pointing out that the definitions are based on the management of key resources, which are important for the realization of the mission and the goals of sports organizations, sports events or for athletes. A general definition that would uniquely explain the definition of management in sport does not exist yet. Therefore, for the purposes of the definition of sport management in the Slovenian area, we are suggesting to apply the Retar et al. (2013, p. 83) definition. This definition provides that "Management in sport is a process of management of key resources and cooperation with important stakeholders, which ensures efficient realisation of business and sporting goals of an organisation and/or sportsman in all management/managing functions."*

Key words: *management, sport, coordination, manager.*

INTRODUCTION

The performance of sports organizations is based on the highly motivated, high quality professional work of the staff and/or volunteers who work in sport. Their work is planned, organized, led and controlled by experts in professional sports management, i.e., sportsmanagers who have, in addition to their capabilities, skills, knowledge and motivation, a number of other competencies ranging from managerial and technical to social. Especially in times of crisis, it is important that competent sports managers, who are very familiar with sports management, establish themselves in the turbulent Slovenian

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Corresponding author: Iztok Retar

Science and Research Centre, Institute for Kinesiology Research, Koper, University of Primorska, Slovenia, St. Titov trg 4, 6000 Koper, Slovenia

Phone: +386 5 6117500 • E-mail: rado.pisot@zrs.upr.si

sports market. Jurak et al. in their survey (Jurak, Popovic, Jaksic, Kolar & Andreff, Bednarik, 2014: 445) note that especially elite sports organizations engaged in top-level sport are expected to be in serious financial problems due to the global economic crisis in the next few years. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to encourage a debate, which will contribute to a more encouraging labour and business environment in sport through the implementation of modern management.

MANAGEMENT, AND MANAGEMENT IN SPORT

Management, as a concept, has multiple meanings. The word comes from the English verb "to manage", which means to master, to control, to lead. It is used both to denote all types of management as well as the science that studies management. In theory, there are several definitions of management; however, what is universally understood is that it is a question of managing the various resources that are vital to the achievement of the objectives in all the basic functions of management: planning, organizing, implementing and supervision (Daft, 2003: 5). Tavčar (2009, p: 13) states that the core activities of business management are the planning and designing objectives, as well as conceiving strategies for their realisation. Among the core activities, he also classifies editing work in the organization and the integration of the organization both internally and externally, the management of the organization and managing people in order to achieve the desired outcome, measuring the outcomes of the organization and assessing the results of people's activities. He believes that "management means controlling of the organisation, its components and the factors of its functioning, and managers are experts for mastering organisations". This definition is important for studying sports management for two reasons: transferring influence on the organizations - sports clubs and associations - and in reference to sports managers who know how to influence them.

Sports management in Slovenia differs from the general concept of management. Those differences are a result of a number of peculiarities inherent in sport, such as organizational structure (e.g., associations, federations of associations, associations of federations, companies, etc.), ownership structure (e.g., private, public, public-private sports organizations, etc.), stakeholder structure (e.g., volunteers, parents, athletes and sports teams, sponsors, donors, etc.), the structure of mission (profit and non-profit) and the structure of key products (e.g., management of an event, an athlete, a sports facility, etc.). The differences are pointed at by Bednarik et al. (1998), who stated that in sport management priority is given to the "co-ordination and sports events management, management of sports facilities, management of human resources, finances, sports, public relations and much more. A new term can be added to Bednarik's definition, i.e., the coordination of athletes, which is of special importance. Management can be understood as a creative process, which allows an organization to reach the set goals of its owner. Particularly, in case of top athletes, it is no longer only a question of just the effective implementation of the organization's objectives, but also of achieving the objectives of the individual - the athlete, or the team. The differences between general and sports management are particularly noticeable in the area of human resources management, where unlike in sport, managers work both with employees and volunteers, which is typical for Slovenian sports market (Kolenc, 1999).

AN OVERVIEW OF THE SELECTED DEFINITION OF SPORT MANAGEMENT

In the literature, there are various definitions of sports management, but most of them are based on the management of key resources that are important for the realization of the missions and goals of sports organizations or athletes. So, Bartoluci (1997: 141) considers sports management to be a process which is characterized by the “coordination of all the factors that affect the achievement of the set goals”. Chelladurai also (1994: 15) justifies the definition of sport management based on “the coordination of different sources, technologies, processes and ad-hoc situations in order to achieve efficient production and sharing of sports services”. The ad-hoc situations mentioned in the definition are very common in sport (e.g., a severe injury of an athlete, extremely poor weather conditions, a biased judge, match fixing, fans riots, doping, etc.), and difficult to predict, which sets management in sport apart just because of those coincidence from management in general. Retar (2006: 47), upgrades the definition of Bednarik (1998) with new elements such as dynamics and not only coordination, but also the acquisition of resources, following the organisation's mission, and making decisions. He states: “Management in sport may be recognized as dynamic acquisition and coordination of resources that are necessary to implement the mission of sport organizations, whereby managers take decisions and responsibility for them.”

Lussier et al. (2004: 5), define sport management as a connecting bridge between the two areas, and state that sports management is a “multidisciplinary field which combines the sports industry and management”. In this way, they connect management with multiple stakeholders in the field of sport: sports organizations, sports marketing agencies, agents, sports facilities and centres, sporting competitions and events, sports recreation, production of sporting goods, professional athletes and sports teams.

Houlihan (2008) determined that sport has evolved into a demanding and complex activity, which includes both professional and voluntary work, the public and private sector, and includes the creation of sports goods and services, marketing, servicing, and on the other hand, the organization of entertainment. Like Chelladurai (1994), he also divides sport into two segments of customers: passive spectators and active users of sports services. Viewers as passive consumers attend both commercial and non-commercial sports events due to the realisation of the need for entertainment and socialising in their spare time. Active users are involved in sporting activities and so they practice it directly. They fulfil their needs, such as for example, the need to move, to maintain their health, to compete, to be entertained, etc.

The differences between conventional management and sports management were accounted for in detail by Smith & Stewart (1999). They found that managers are principally engaged in the rational coordination of all relevant sources, which can contribute to effectiveness, efficiency, productivity and innovativity of organizations, while sports managers in addition are involved in completely irrational elements of sport, such as the feelings of athletes, spectators, supporters. If on the one hand, the growth and profit of organizations are important for managers, for sports managers priority is given to the achieving victory in a competition or an improved position on the competition table, even at the cost of financial losses. In the business world managers only have to follow the restrictions in the legislation that regulates the market, while sports managers, in addition to those legal provisions, also have to respect a number of internal rules of sporting associations which restrict their operations (e.g., events marketing rights, transfers of professional players, schedules of competitions). In the sports market, more than anywhere else in the business world, quality varies regardless the price of, for example, tickets. Thus,

the viewer can witness a world record or not at a sports event for the same price. At work, sports managers are faced with very high customer loyalty to sport brands. For a fan there is no substitute for his club, just like for the consumer, there is no way to find a suitable replacement for the desired product. In addition, there is no substitute identification with brands in sports. Football club supporters will not be able to change their supporters' scarves, caps or jerseys as easily as buyers in other areas.

According to Smith et al. (1999) the work of sports managers is also characterized by an extremely rigid supply of sports services for customers. Thus, for example, the summer and winter Olympic Games take place every four years, the finals of the Champions League in football once a year, and so on. These differences require specific adaptations in sports management and require a number of specific competencies, which sports manager must have in order to act in sport. Beech & Chadwick (2014: 16-17) noted that sports management differs from other forms of management, especially in dealing with sporting events and events that are a key service of numerous sports organizations. They are determined by the time (a game of football takes place each Sunday), by the place (at a prescribed football stadium) and by the envisaged duration (two half times, forty-five minutes long each). The same goes for human resource management since there are no sports services without sports participants; thus, the specificity of sport management is the work done with athletes, coaches, spectators and fans. The two authors, like other researchers, note that sports management has its own limitations imposed by the umbrella international, national and local sports organizations within a single sport discipline. They also noted another difference, i.e., the large dependence of the level of revenues from sports performance regardless of costs. Only by a better classification in the competition rank can one note the increased revenues of an organisation (higher compensation for television rights, more spectators, more sponsors, etc.), without incurring significantly higher costs. Sports management is particularly characterized by seasonal revenues and the unpredictability of results.

In case of a private company, the sports manager receives from the owner, or from the founder in the case of a public institution or association, a mandate for his management services, both in terms of business and human resources management, and he is therefore responsible for the sports organisation, for the athletes, the sports facilities and/or sports events. In order to be an effective manager, one needs knowledge and experience, which are part of one's knowledge and motivation. Experience in management is very important. Namely, the survey on successful Slovenian managers shows that two-thirds of operational success is provided by experience, one fifth by good employees, and only a tenth by education (Nosan, 1999: 12). "Sports managers, in addition to general knowledge about management, need special knowledge about sport, however the higher their managerial function is, the less knowledge of sport they need." (Kolar, Jurak, Bednarik & Kolenc, 2007: 47).

Parks et al. (2002: 20) add a social dimension and state that sports management comprises four key areas: "sports marketing, sports organizations funding, management of human resources and the impact of sport as a social category." In their definitions, they put forward both the direct and indirect power of sport, not only in economic terms but also in social and other non-economic areas. Thus, sports managers can either have a positive or negative influence on these impacts of sport in society. Kolar & Zaletel (2013: 6) interpret the concept of sports management from a functional point of view and determine it "as an organizational function and process of planning, promotion and control of the organization and functioning."

While studying the definition of sport management, of course, we cannot ignore sports managers, who are experts for sports organization and athlete-related issues. In

Slovenia, the first in-depth studies were carried out by Šugman et al. (2002). They defined sports managers as sports workers who are exclusively engaged in sports management. They justified the emergence of the need for a sport manager with the growth of economic activity and the new ways of acquiring business in our sport, following Slovenia's independence. They ascertain that sports managers are supposed to be personalities who combine a large amount of knowledge and skills. The authors focused on the study of skills and competencies as well as on the personality of managers. They also emphasised that sports managers "are distinguished by the specific skills they need for" the management of "sports management". In their work, they do not specify, what the required specific sports manager's skills are, but they emphasise the managers' proper dealing with people in sports organizations. They believe that a "modern organisation is understood as a complex system, where several components, important for its functioning, are linked and interdependent. One of the most important things is the management of human resources" (Šugman et al., 2002: 218-219). The authors particularly focused on the personality of a sports manager. The determined personality, according to Musek (1997), who interpreted it as an unrepeatable and unique whole, consists of the character, temperament and other human abilities. Musek places personality into the context of material living both in physical and psychological, biological, social, historical and synchronic form. The guiding principle, for which the said authors highlight the personal characteristics of a sport manager, is his ability to recognize his negative personal traits and to know how to control them, at the same time being able to put forth of his positive features. In their opinion, the most important personal characteristics are the following: maturity, calmness, ability of personal development, self-esteem, transmission failures, curiosity, a healthy lifestyle, ability to take responsibility for their decisions, credibility, honesty and the ability to obtain the confidence of employees and support immediate family environment. Retar (2011) summarises that management of sport means above all planning, leadership and control of business processes as well as the management of all key resources that are important for achieving the goals of sports organizations. "Sport actually has never been just a private good, or either only a public good, as it has been defended by certain social systems. Since it is increasingly becoming a complex and sensitive social and economic category, there is never enough knowledge of how to manage a sports organization. Of course, it is necessary to mention that sport is an integral part of the culture and traditions - both for the individual and society, and it is thus even more important to know the motives and attitudes of individuals entering the sports organization as well as the society that affects it." (Retar, 2011: 8).

Plastovski (2012) in his study notes that the leading staff in the sports clubs in Slovenia coordinate work, manage, plan, acquire and transfer information, make decisions, communicate, control, dispose of tangible and intangible resources, motivate, represent the club, introduce innovations and act enterprisingly. He further notes that there are no differences between the competences of Slovenian sports managers working in profit or non-profit sports organisations, although some experts (Slack, 1997; Jurak, 2006) believe that the differences in management exist both in terms of size, purpose, as well as the type of sport organizations. Plastovski describes the concept of a sport manager as the synergy of features and functions of a manager in his narrow definition of a planner, organiser and supervisor of the work processes, as well as the leader in the capacity of a catalyst and motivator of employees in the sports organization.

CONCLUSION

Based on the abovementioned considerations, it can be concluded that the general definition that would uniquely identify the concept of management in sport does not yet exist. Hence, we propose that within the Slovenian sports area, we could use the definition of sport management, given by the authors Retar et al. (2013: 83) as follows: "Management in sport is a process of coordination with key resources and successful cooperation with key stakeholders to facilitate the effective realisation of business and sporting goals of the organisation and/or the athlete in all the processes of management". The authors, in addition to the classic elements of the definition of management, i.e., the process and the key organisational functions such as planning, implementation and monitoring, also classify within the definition the concept of key resources, which can differ significantly between sports organizations, depending on factors such as the type of sports organisation, its size, mission and decision-making process. They also add a new element, identified as successful cooperation with stakeholders, because they believe that success in sport is based on the synergistic effects of several factors, from coaches, sponsors, media, kinesiologists, physicians, physiotherapists, to engineers, etc. Retar et al (2013) define a sports manager as a competent professional in sport, who has the ability to use knowledge, skills, personal qualities, experience and motivation in their own way to effectively carry out the expected work or fulfil the role in the area of sport management. The author further explains that the competence of the sports manager is in particular the result of one's individual motivation to properly activate his knowledge, to carry out the work in a subjective way, and to successfully accomplish the role that has been expected or required from him by a specific environment.

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DEFINISANJE MENADŽMENTA U SPORTU

U radu se proučava definicija menadžmenta u sportu, koja može doprineti transparentnijem razumevanju važnosti upravljanja kao ključnogfaktora uspeha u sportu. U literaturi postoji mnogo različitih definicija sportskog menadžmenta (Chelladurai, 1994; Bartoluci, 1997; Slack, 1997; Parks i Quarterman, 2002; Daft, 2003; Lussier i Kimball, 2004; Houlihan, 2008; Šugman et al., 2002; Kolar, 2013; Retar et al., 2013). Većina definicija temelje na menadžmentu ključnim resursima, koji su važni za ostvarenje ciljeva sportskih organizacija, događaja ili sportista. Opšta definicija koja bi jedinstveno objasnila menadžment u sportu još ne postoji. Zbog transparentnijeg definisanja sportskog menadžmenta autori predlažu definiciju (Retar, Plevnik i Kolar (2013., str. 83) koja menadžment u sportu definiše kao proces koordinacije ključnih resursa i saradnje s najvažnijim učesnicima, štoobezbeđuje efikasno ostvarivanje poslovnih i sportskih ciljeva organizacije ili sportista u svim funkcijama upravljanja.

Ključne reči: menadžment, sport, koordinacija, menadžer.