

The Challenge of Combining Organisational and Sport Performance Management. The Case of the Come-Back of Belgian Hockey at the Olympics

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Abstract

Aim of the Paper

In 2004, the Royal Belgian Hockey Association (ARBH) decided to elaborate a 2005-2012 action plan aiming to qualify the Belgian Hockey team for the London 2012 Olympics. Sports and organisational aspects of the daily workload were integrated in a report covering the strategic analysis, the development of the plan and its implementation (Zintz 2006). We assumed that an enhanced organisational performance would have a positive effect on the sports performance (Chelladurai et Haggerty 1991, Bayle et Madella 2002, De Boscher, Bingham et al. 2007).

Theoretical Background

For a long time, public authorities and the international sports governing bodies were in charge of the piloting of the sports federations. They were largely governed "from the outside" (Zintz et Dissart 2008 (in press)). As a consequence they lost a major part of the decision making process (Speckbacher 2003). Nowadays they share the sports "market" with many economic and social stakeholders. The result of such evolution is that they have to organise themselves in an instable and complex environment where a strategic management and a high level of efficiency are requested.

Data Analysis

A configurational analysis of the ARBH conducted according to six dimensions showed a sports federal bureaucracy (Zintz 2004) . This bureaucracy tries to take the interaction of structural, political and contextual variables of the Belgian sports system into account.

Discussion

Based on the six dimensions of this cartography, a strategic model was proposed relying on three cornerstones, namely the statutory goal of ARBH, its mission statement and five strategic goals. Based on this model it is the objective of the strategic action plan to focus on the missions and to enhance the entrepreneurial

capacities of the ARBH. A sports specific strategic project was initiated in 2004 (Belgian National Team 2012). This project couldn't reach short term goals because of many external influencing variables. Participating to the 2012 London Olympic appeared to be realistic if the sports strategy became part of the global organisational and sports strategic plan.

The global strategic plan, as from 2006, allowed the ARBH to present its Olympic project as highly visible in a "pro-hockey" process, through a clear mission and vision, with strategic priorities with regard to internal organisation, new financial resources and communication. Those pillars sustain the development of the ARBH while evacuating majors risks related to a sports bureaucracy.

Based on our organisational cartography of the ARBH and on a mintzbergian approach of bureaucracies, our analysis shows how this highly bureaucratic federation reinforced in a few years its missionnaire and entrepreneurial characteristics. It shows also how a global strategy supports the sports strategy of the ARBH. These considerations give some power to our hypothesis: an enhanced organisational strategy would allow sports performances that represent the qualification of the Belgian Hockey team for the 2008 Olympic in Beijing.

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