

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF RESOURCE ALLOCATION, PROGRAM GOALS AND DEVELOPMENT FOR FIVE INTERNATIONAL ICE HOCKEY NGB'S

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Abstract

National governing bodies are generally charged with overseeing most aspects of a specific sport for a country. While some countries NGB models have variance in their scope and range, generally the purpose is to promote sport for all participants. An example of respective mission statements, "Lead, Develop, and Promote Positive Hockey Experiences" (Hockey Canada, 2012) and "to promote the growth of hockey in America and provide the best possible experience for all participants by encouraging, developing, advancing and administering the sport" (USA Hockey, 2012) give credence to this expectation. The sport of Ice Hockey has a very well developed history in a small number of countries. The process of administering sport in these countries through the various Ice Hockey governing bodies is well established and has a significant consistent history. One question that seems to arise quite often is the distribution of financial resources for various NGB related programs. This paper aims to qualitatively analyze resource allocation, program goals and sport development for five of the NGB's that have consistently competed at the highest level of international ice hockey. Each of these NGB's utilizes a similar structure and philosophy, but emerge from differing cultural and political viewpoints. This analysis aims to unpack the various models and move to better understand how program and sport development improves or maintains its status within allocation and program directions.

When regulatory bodies make decisions that affect various stakeholders, the need for clarity and transparency in asset management, financial support and program promotion is imperative, especially when the mission clearly states "all participants" (Schneider and Ingram, 1997). Many governing bodies within sport and in other facets of business regularly eschew their mission to support elitism and marketable publicity. This includes ignoring grassroots level development or women's/girls sport development (Farmer, 2012). The issue of stakeholder salience comes into play within this argument. While funding sources for NGB's invest generally to support all of the stakeholder groups, the importance of those stakeholders served may not be equal when resources are disbursed (Mitchel, Agle & Wood, 1997). The true issue with this is the motivation of those who are empowered to choose who are deserving and who is undeserving of said resources (Schneider and Ingram, 1993).

Method

Five national governing bodies that compete consistently at the highest level of international ice hockey were compared. The countries were: Canada, USA, Sweden, Finland and Switzerland. The data were examined qualitatively. The NGB's were compared in a number of categories and cross-referenced to better understand the use of resources to support the stated mission and program goals, noted as overt direction, as well as the covert directions that were less publicized but received substantial resource allocation.

Results

An examination of the financial reports of the five NGB's indicates that elite programs receive an exorbitant amount of the budget in relation to the largest participatory categories and that youth and girls development received a relatively small amount of the planned budget and actual dollars spent in most NGB's. There were difference found by NGB, with NGB's from corporate environments directing more resources to elite development than NGB's from socialist leaning countries. The percentages of resource allocation for elite development were found to be higher in all five NGB's than any other individual group of stakeholders. The programming allocation was found to be different and seemed to correlate to the type of management model the NOC used to fund the NGB.

Discussion

If NGB's claim to utilize sport for development then they may want to rethink the practice of focusing its financial outlay on elite athlete development. There is some evidence that the rise in success at an international and professional level for USA Hockey is related to an increase in overall participation rather than an increase in elite development programs, which has been the promoted reason by USA Hockey. Even in light of this, USA Hockey has launched a program using the long-term athlete development model, while framing it only in elite development. Elite development programs, while important to an NGB, utilize a disproportionate amount of the resources that could be used to affect a larger number participants within the hockey community. This is not consistent among the other NGB's although funding for the smallest but most publicly visible programs does seem to be consistent within all five NGB's. Future directions and suggestions will be presented.

References

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