
THE IMPLICATIONS OF ANTI-DOPING ON HIGH PERFORMANCE SPORT HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

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Type: Professional Practice
Category: C: Drugs in Sport - Current Issues and Challenges for Sport Management

Abstract

AIM: To A critical review of the literature is undertaken to develop deeper insights into how sports organisations respond to external integrity regulation by examining the implications of anti-doping on practice among sports managers using the lens of human resource management (HRM), where a strategic approach to employee recruitment, hiring and retention is emphasized.

BACKGROUND: Sport is facing increasing external regulation of issues seen to diminish its social capital, often termed the integrity of sport (e.g. doping and match fixing) (Rowbottom, 2013). The World Anti-Doping Agency and the World Anti-Doping Code (WADC) were introduced after the manifest failure of peak sporting organisations to respond to what was seen as a significant threat to the social capital of sport by governments (Hanstad, Smith & Waddington, 2008), and the market value of sport by sponsors and sporting organisations (cf Solberg, Hanstad & Thøring, 2010). While the policy literature around the Code is well developed, the literature examining how anti-doping has influenced management practices is still emerging. Over a decade of experience with WADC compliance means there is now scope to start evaluating how anti-doping has changed management practices in sport. Given the WADC's focus on individual level punishment, HRM is an appropriate starting point to consider how managers both prevent and respond to doping violations among staff (e.g. athletes, support personnel, administrators and coaches).

ANALYSIS: HRM practice is considered through four main issues Four issues are used to exemplify the implications of the WADC for HRM practice that have emerged from the literature around the practice of anti-doping. The first is that the WADC regulates how staff achieve performance outcomes. This effect emerges through employment

contracts with clauses requiring WADC compliance (e.g. Australian Sports Commission, 2004) which necessarily constrains what high performance managers and their staff can do (e.g. which supplements can be given to athletes). The second issue is that managers need to divert resources to administer anti-doping. The dominant strategy is "passive compliance" demonstrated in the Cycling Australia Review (Woods, 2013), which represents a short term saving with potentially long term costs. This is reflected in the third issue, which stems from the minimal investment in training staff about the WADC (see Mazanov, Backhouse, Connor, Hemphill & Quirk, 2013). Evidence indicates knowledge of the WADC among staff is insufficient to avoid inadvertent sanctions, meaning key staff could be lost at critical times (e.g. in-competition violations) (Mazanov, Hemphill, Connor, Quirk & Backhouse, 2014). The fourth relates to the dual interests of health professionals as employees of sports programs which mirrors the debate around the role of health professionals and injury (McNamee & Phillips, 2011).

CONCLUSIONS: As an exemplar of how organisations respond to external regulation of integrity, HRM responses to anti-doping indicate a strategy of minimal investment of resources to achieve compliance. This is a rational response in a resource constrained environment when the main focus of business is performance outcomes rather than processes. Like other market sectors, this suggests that sporting organisations see external management of processes to improve sectoral "integrity" (e.g. reduce perceived threats to social capital or market value) in terms of administrative compliance rather than core business.

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EASM 2014