

Sport Club Management

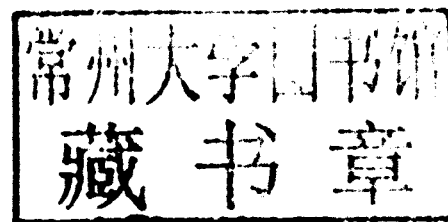


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Sport Club Management

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Sport Club Management

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To Lynn, Cullen, Patrick, and Maggie, my reasons for being.

Preface

The need for well-organized sport clubs and strong club leadership is greater than ever. In the past, sports in America have relied on the interscholastic environment to offer participation opportunities and to develop future players; but school budgets are being cut; sports are being dropped; and qualified coaches choose not to coach because of low pay, long hours, and underappreciation. The emerging reality is that sport clubs are often where children are introduced to sport and taught how to play a variety of games. Sport clubs also have a major influence on the development of elite athletes and foster a lifetime commitment to sport participation and a healthy lifestyle for the well-being of both individuals and society. To play a part in creating this reality, sport clubs must be run efficiently in all aspects.

I became aware of the growing influence of sport clubs while developing and teaching a course on soccer club management for the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA). In offering the course, I was impressed at how professional some soccer clubs were and the scope of services they offered. I was alarmed, however, at how little some managers understood what it takes to manage all aspects of a club effectively. This concern was the impetus behind writing *Sport Club Management*. Those who read and use this book will have at their disposal information that will enable them to develop, manage, and sustain highly organized, professional, and structured clubs.

In sports such as soccer, volleyball, swimming, gymnastics, and track and field, the sport club environment is more developed. In these sports, clubs in many cases consist of several thousand players, several dozen volunteer coaches, full-time staff, several hundred thousand dollars in revenues and expenses, and physical plants consisting of multiple outdoor fields and indoor complexes. In some cases sport clubs provide a social outlet for both players and their parents and are integral parts of the local community.

In the past, the majority of educational opportunities and materials have addressed coaching. Professional development opportunities directed at the people who manage and lead the organizations has been limited. It has become evident that sport clubs that adhere to sound business practices, provide qualified coaches and excellent facilities, offer a variety of experiences for players on the field and off, and demonstrate success in terms of victories and players moving on to higher levels of play thrive, whereas clubs that do not meet the needs of their members and do not contribute to the growth of players and the sport do not.

Sport Club Management intends to fill that void of knowledge for those working in this area. We hope this book will be on the shelf of club managers around the world and serve as a resource for those aspiring to club manager positions.



This book addresses issues ranging from developing more effective sponsorship proposals to developing a comprehensive facility assessment plan to writing clear job descriptions for employees.

Drawing on my experiences within the club environment and my research in the area of sport management, I have included theories, concepts, insights, and examples on how to manage a club so that it excels on the field and off. I have also enlisted professionals in the areas of player development, parent relations, club structure, and facility design to develop a comprehensive text on leading a sport club. The book addresses the following:

- ▶ Structuring a club (chapter 1). Should a club be structured as a nonprofit organization or a limited liability corporation?
- ▶ Developing effective club leadership (chapter 2). What forms of power are best suited for an individual club manager's leadership style?
- ▶ Practicing sound human resources strategies (chapter 3). What are the best questions to ask when interviewing a potential job candidate?
- ▶ Appreciating the importance of parental relations (chapter 4). Why is parental involvement in a club so important?
- ▶ Understanding the legal aspects of running a club (chapter 5). When is a club liable for the actions of its employees?
- ▶ Using effective business and marketing strategies (chapter 6). How do club managers use the five Ps of sport marketing to market their clubs effectively?
- ▶ Growing sponsorship and fund-raising opportunities (chapter 7). What are the benefits to a corporation from partnership with a club?
- ▶ Developing facility design and management plans (chapter 8). Who should be included on a design team, and what is each person's role?
- ▶ Implementing a long-term athlete development plan (chapter 9). What is the best strategy for developing a well-rounded athlete?
- ▶ Practicing ethics in sport club management (chapter 10). To what ethical theory does a club adhere, and why is it important to hire people with the same ethics?

The book will also offer perspectives on the future of club sports.

People in leadership positions in sport clubs often have a firm grasp of the sport but do not have a strong foundation in areas such as business operations, strategic planning, management, marketing, public relations, risk management, liability, facility management, and player development. *Sport Club Management* provides information and practical examples that are essential for ensuring the success of the club and ultimately the members of that club so that the club will continue to fulfill and expand its roles in offering participation opportunities, developing the talent of players, and growing the sport.

Each chapter includes an opening and closing scenario related to the content of the chapter. The opening scenario presents a problem, which is resolved in the closing scenario using the theories and concepts presented in the chapter. Each

chapter also offers examples of models, documents, and forms that you can replicate for your own use. Successful Strategy sidebars present real-life stories that highlight the need for sound planning; a few of the sidebars show how a lack of sound planning can lead to an unsuccessful outcome. Finally, each chapter offers a running glossary of terms related to the concepts and theories presented in the chapter.

In the past, the prerequisite for leading a sport club was having been either a successful player or a coach. In today's environment, such experience is not enough to lead what in some cases are close to million-dollar businesses. By the same token an all-volunteer organization is unlikely to be adequate for providing the desired services to its members. Meeting the responsibilities of club management requires a knowledge and understanding of sound business practices rather than coaching knowledge, and these responsibilities cannot be met in an organization staffed solely by volunteers. *Sport Club Management* is a source of information for those in the sport club environment. In the end, all those involved with sport and sport clubs will benefit.

Acknowledgments

I was made aware of the impact and potential of the sport club through my assistance in the development of the Director of Coaching (DOC) course from the National Soccer Coaches Association of America (NSCAA) in 2005. The idea for the development of that course as well as this book came from Richard Butler, who works for the South Charlotte Soccer Club and who is on the national staff of the NSCAA. Richard saw that the club programs were the ones developing many of the top players in the country, and the leaders of those clubs constituted a significant percentage of the membership of the NSCAA. Richard thought that the club directors' needs were not being met and that many soccer clubs were not being operated in the best or most professional manner. Often those who led those clubs were versed in soccer but not in the management of (in some cases) million-dollar businesses.

Initially Richard and I discussed writing a book specific to the soccer club, but in conversations with the editors at Human Kinetics and through my work with the United States Olympic Committee (USOC), we realized that there was an audience beyond soccer. Other sports, such as swimming, track and field, and volleyball, already had a strong club culture; some sports had an emerging club culture, such as basketball and lacrosse.

I met leaders of national governing bodies in the United States who expressed a need for more education of sport club leaders. I had discussions with sport leaders from other countries who provided insights into the operations of successful sport clubs. I saw that the sport club was on the rise in the United States and there was a need for a body of information on the management and leadership of those sport clubs.

I worked on the book for close to two years. On a few occasions, I was sidetracked by faculty commitments at the university and my work with the USOC and the U.S. Department of State, but I believed in the importance of the book. I do believe the future of sport in the United States is in the sport club environment. Those clubs will be instrumental in developing our Olympic and professional athletes, promote healthy lifestyles and lifetime participation in sports, and shape the moral and ethical fabric of our future leaders. For those things to happen, sport clubs must be run in a businesslike manner with a clear mission and purpose. Clubs should focus on the long-term development of the athlete and provide opportunities for all, not just the select talented few.

On a project like this, there are always people behind the scenes who help make it happen. First and foremost I have to thank my wife, Lynn, who always has let me chase my dreams. I also thank my three children, Cullen, Patrick, and Maggie. They learned that if Dad was on the back porch with his laptop,

he was working on his book and was to be left alone! I love you guys. I would like to thank Richard Butler. His recognition of the need for this book led to my approaching Human Kinetics about the project. Richard is one of the true believers. He is out in the trenches every day developing good soccer players and good people. Richard is the best at what he does, and I feel fortunate to count him as a friend. I would also like to thank the following colleagues who contributed to some of the chapters in this book:

- ▶ Dena Deglau, PhD, assistant professor in the department of health, nutrition, and exercise sciences at the University of Delaware
- ▶ Christopher A. Sgarzi, AIA, president of Sgarzi Associates, Inc.
- ▶ Richard Way, MBA, Citius Performance Corp. and Advanced Training & Performance Ltd.
- ▶ Istvan Balyi, MA, Citius Performance Corp. and Advanced Training & Performance Ltd.
- ▶ Richard Butler, director of the Charlotte Soccer Academy

I would also like to thank Myles Schrag at Human Kinetics for believing in the project and encouraging me to keep plugging along. Thanks to Amanda Ewing for all her work in the editorial stages of the book. I also thank the reviewers for their insights on the book. Finally, I thank all of the professionals in sport clubs who provide a positive experience for the athletes under their charge. They are my reason for writing this book.

I want to recognize my parents, who always supported me. I know I would not be the person I am today without their unconditional love.

Thanks to Dr. Rick Carpenter for giving me my break 20 years ago at Western Maryland College. To Dr. Sam Case for pushing me to become an academic and for being a role model for me. To Pat Massa for putting up with me as a player, rival coach, colleague, and friend for over 25 years. To Jeff Tipping for bringing me back into the soccer world five years ago through the NSCAA DOC course. To Avron Abraham and Jack O'Neill for talking me into coming to the University of Delaware eight years ago (Av, you still owe me my cheesecake, and Jack, I miss you). To my past and present sport management students who amaze me on a daily basis with their accomplishments and potential. To my friends around the world who have shown me their part of it in Ireland (Karl and Debbie), Senegal (Cheikh), India (Harish, K.K. Divya, and Yuvika), and Turkey (Emir, Cem, and Tugba). To my fellow Creek Road runners whom I inspire every day with my world-class running ability, and to Carolina Bayon at the USOC and my ICECP family for making me a better person and professional through working on the ICECP project.

Finally, I want to thank Bruce Springsteen for his inspiration all of these years and for encouraging me to go explore the darkness on the edge of town, not to sell my Challenger and for not letting me settle for sleeping in the backseat of a borrowed car.

Enjoy!

GILLESPIE PARK

Home of the

BRANDYWINE YOUTH CLUB

Serving the Youth of Our Community Since 1955

By the end of the chapter, the sport club manager will be able to do the following:

- ▶ Describe the various business forms a sport club can take
- ▶ Appreciate the importance of a board of directors and its composition in achieving organizational success
- ▶ List the elements in a sport club's articles of incorporation or constitution
- ▶ Appreciate the importance of the club having a clear vision and mission
- ▶ Develop goals that support the club's mission
- ▶ Develop a strategic plan for the club
- ▶ Differentiate between a simple and a complex organization
- ▶ Recognize the types of organizational structures
- ▶ Appreciate the importance of developing policies and procedures to provide structure for the club

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CHAPTER

1

The Club

Richard Butler

Bob Armstrong achieved great success as a volleyball player. He started out in a local church-sponsored league that was organized by his father. Bob had success at the high school level and earned a college scholarship based on his athletic ability. He was named All-American his senior year. Later he represented his country in international competitions and had a 10-year professional career overseas and competed on the beach volleyball tour for a number of years. In thinking about what he wanted to do after his playing career, he considered getting into college coaching, but opted not to. His dream was to offer youths the same opportunities he had had to compete in volleyball. His first thought was to offer his services to existing volleyball clubs, but he wanted to have one of his own. Bob has name recognition, money saved from his professional career, and the desire and passion to create these opportunities for others. Bob is looking into how best to proceed. His vision has excited others who are interested in both funding and working for or with him. The next step is bringing that vision to reality. As much as Bob believes in his dream, he has many questions about how to make it happen.

In recent years there have been many changes in the youth sport environment, especially in the United States. In the past, youth sport was primarily a volunteer-based initiative. Youth sports leagues were usually affiliated with civic, church, and municipal organizations. They were nonprofit entities organized and run by boards of volunteers, some with little experience in the organization of sport, and contests were held at public parks and school facilities. The coaches were the parents of the players; some had training, but many had no experience in or knowledge of the sport. Competition remained at the local level. As the players got older, they left the local organization to compete for the high school team. The lucky few would have the opportunity to compete at the college level and perhaps earn athletic scholarships.

In recent years the model of youth sport has changed. Volunteer-initiated organizations have given way to individual and multisport clubs that have full-time staffs and six-figure and sometimes million-dollar budgets, and that service hundreds and even thousands of players a year who travel nationally and even internationally to compete and train. The reality is that sport clubs have become businesses, some nonprofit and others for profit, that are accountable to their players, members, and state and national governing bodies as well as the Internal Revenue Service. It is apparent that Bob Armstrong needs to look to the future instead of his past as he begins to chart a course for his new sport club.

Understanding why the club exists, what it aspires to be, and what goods and services it provides to its members is the foundation of the modern sport club. To thrive, a club must be able to secure and maintain human, financial, and physical plant resources. It must have realistic and measurable goals, a sound organizational structure and policies and procedures that support that structure, and a long-term plan to ensure its growth and viability. The objective of this chapter is to provide the outline for the structure of a model sport club.

The Club Plan

club plan—A written document that stipulates all aspects of a club's purpose and structure.

The **club plan** stipulates all aspects of the club's purpose and structure (figure 1.1). It communicates the philosophy, vision, and mission of the club, and it defines the services it provides and to whom, its goals, its business and organizational structures, the revenue streams and costs of operation, and the facilities it will need. This chapter addresses business structure, mission, goals, organizational structure, and policies and procedures. Later chapters address the other aspects of the club plan.

The club's plan makes a concept concrete. It is the blueprint for the club leadership, and it will attract investors and supporters for the club. Once developed, the plan should be followed, but it is a living document and should be reviewed as the club evolves. Software packages (see page 3) can assist in developing or refining a club plan, but the main elements are a philosophy, a vision statement, a mission statement, goals, policies and procedures, organizational structure, product and services offered, market analysis, and financial plan.

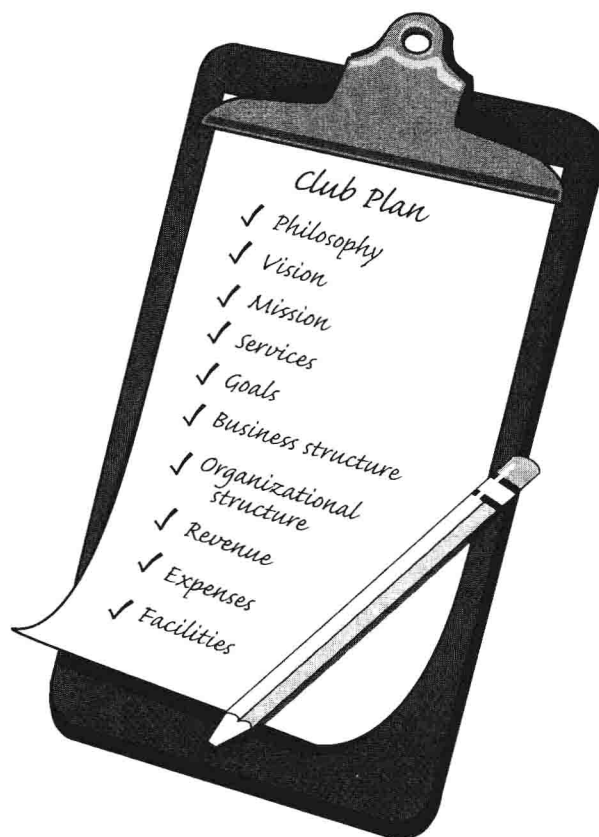


Figure 1.1 A club plan defines what the club is all about.

Developing a Business Plan

For those starting a club from scratch, the following Web sites are worth visiting to get ideas on how to develop a business plan. Also, Microsoft PowerPoint has a business plan model within the templates that can serve as a model as well.

www.sba.gov/smallbusinessplanner/index.html

www.score.org/template_gallery.html?gclid=ClAK54_G8JoCFQOaFQodFlrFJA

www.planware.org/businessplan.htm

Philosophy

The beliefs, values, and truths that define a person or organization constitute a **philosophy**. A philosophy distinguishes right from wrong and good from bad and defines success. The overall philosophy of the club has to be fashioned by the club's leadership and accepted by all staff and coaches, thereby enabling it to penetrate to the club's players and parents. Individual players and teams as a whole should know and accept the club philosophy. Bob Armstrong's coaching philosophy is shown on page 4. Club leaders creating a philosophy for a sport club can use similar language.

philosophy—The beliefs, values, and truths that define a person or organization.

Sample Coaching Philosophy

A club committed to promoting excellence in the educational, character, and physical development of adolescents by offering a rigorous and challenging athletic experience. Sport will be used to instill the qualities of leadership, teamwork, dedication, perseverance, loyalty, and fair play. These values will be tested and strengthened in the heat of competition. Participants will learn to cope with success and failure and to be humble in victory and proud in defeat, and will understand that the athletic competition is preparing them for the ultimate competition: life.

This philosophy statement communicates clearly Bob's belief that sport has the power to affect people and reaches beyond the playing field. These beliefs should drive all other aspects of the club. For the club to thrive, players, parents, the board of directors, coaches, and staff must buy in and live it on a daily basis.

Vision Statement

vision statement—A conceptual vision of what the club aspires to be, based on its philosophy.

A **vision statement** is a conceptual vision of what the club aspires to be, based on its philosophy. It presents the aspirations of the club and can address the size of the club in terms of participants and staff, the facilities, the programs, and the level of excellence that club leaders want to achieve. Bob Armstrong had a vision of a club that would have its own state-of-the-art facilities staffed by full-time coaches and trainers, where young athletes would train and compete at high levels but also be encouraged to grow as people away from the competition field. The vision statement ultimately communicates the aspirations toward which everybody associated with the club should be working.

Mission Statement

mission statement—A statement of intent that provides meaning, purpose, and direction to members, employees, and leaders of the club.

A club needs to know why it exists and its continuing purpose. The **mission statement** takes the beliefs and aspirations communicated in the philosophy and vision statement and turns them into a statement of intent (see the sample mission statement on page 5). The mission statement serves multiple purposes:

- ▶ It provides a snapshot of the club for potential employees and club members.
- ▶ It provides meaning, purpose, and direction to members and employees of the club.
- ▶ It provides direction for club leaders, guiding them in decision making.

As times change, the mission statement may change too.

The club sport scene is constantly evolving, and a club's purpose may change with the times. Organizational retreats are discussed in chapter 3. These annual functions offer a great opportunity for club leaders to revisit the club's mission and determine whether they are living up to the mission or need to modify it based on new opportunities and aspirations. In the end the club leadership must be clear about why the club exists, and that statement of purpose should be communicated to all who are affiliated or who wish to be affiliated with the club.

Sample Mission Statement

The mission of the Mount Jefferson Soccer Club is to provide youth soccer players ages 5 to 18 a place to play soccer and to receive quality coaching in a safe and positive environment. The club is a family-friendly organization that offers both recreational and travel team soccer as well as camps and clinics for members and the surrounding community. Players of all skill levels are encouraged to play, and the club strives to conduct all business in a professional, fair, and customer-friendly environment that puts the interest of the players first.

Scope of Club Services

The mission and vision statements are statements of purpose, intent, and aspirations. In addition to determining what the club is and should be, club leaders need to know what the club is not and should not be. Chapter 8 addresses the logistics of providing services, but before they can discuss such logistics, club leaders must know what those services will be. A sport club at its most basic level offers the opportunity to participate in sport. In chapter 6 we refer to this as the product that is offered to the consumer. But depending on the philosophy, vision, and mission, services beyond the basic service will vary from club to club. (For potential services a club can offer, see below.)

A club can consist of 12 talented basketball players who practice twice a week; play in a league; and participate in state, regional, and national tournaments. The players rent gym time at a local recreation center, and the club exists so that the players on the team can showcase their talents and earn college scholarships. Club leaders are not concerned about the academic status of the participants or about encouraging socialization among the participants and their parents.

Potential Services in the Club Sport Environment

- Competition
- Player development training
- Team training
- Free play
- Recreational play
- Sport-specific professional coaching
- Strength and conditioning coaching
- Out-of-season training and competition
- Special needs programs
- Sport psychologist
- Tournament hosting
- Tournament participation
- Camps and clinics
- Coaching education
- International travel
- Before- and after-school care programs
- Academic tutoring
- Facilities (e.g., pool, track, gymnasium)
- Multipurpose facilities (e.g., outdoor fields on which multiple sports can be played, a field house)
- Facility rentals (e.g., renting club facilities to outside groups to generate revenue)
- Social area (e.g., restaurant, pub)
- Social outings (e.g., bus trips to professional games)
- Speakers program (e.g., college coaches talking to players, coaches, or both)