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**EXPLORING ATHLETE ADVOCACY THROUGH CANADIAN SPORT
POLICIES, INTERNATIONAL MULTI-SPORT EVENTS, AND ATHLETE
EXPERIENCES**

BY

Aaron Lowe

**A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through Human Kinetics
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Human
Kinetics at the University of Windsor**

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the ways that elite amateur athletes can have a more effective voice within the Canadian Sport System by looking at select Canadian sport policies, athlete involvement in the organization of International multi-sport events held in Canada, and athlete requirements to be an effective advocate. A document analysis of 23 federal sport policy documents from 1961-2004 explored patterns in rationale, recommended solutions, rules and resources. Interviews were conducted with six athletes and six organizers involved in three different International multi-sport events (1988 Winter Olympics, 1994 Commonwealth Games, and the 1999 Pan-American Games) to identify the involvement athletes had in the organization of these events, as well as their advice for athletes to become better advocates in the Canadian Sport System. Sport policy documents highlighted the need for a new athlete policy clarifying the roles for athletes and organizers. Athlete involvement in multi-sport events progressed from an informal to a formal involvement, in areas including village and transportation issues. Key advocate qualities included knowledge of personal, sport, and broader societal issues impacting on sport.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my family and all the elite amateur athletes out there who feel neglected or feel that their voices are not being heard in the Canadian Sport System. My hope is that this research contributes to the overall increased involvement of elite amateur athletes in the decision-making processes in Canada, at all levels.

To my mom, thanks for always supporting me through the ups and downs of sport and education. Your constant reassurance that school is important has allowed me to become a better person and more prepared for life after sport.

To Megan, together hopefully we have made a difference in the lives of the future generations of athletes. Our strong relationship has made writing this thesis possible, especially on those long, hard days in front of the computer.....it was all worth it!

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To my mom and Megan, the two biggest supporters in my life, I love you both.

Sincerely,

Aaron Lowe

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Athlete Assistance Program	AAP
Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport	CCES
Canadian Olympic Association	COA
Canadian Olympic Committee	COC
Canadian Sport Centre	CSC
Chief Executive Officer	CEO
Coaching Association of Canada	CAC
Commonwealth Games Canada	CGC
International Olympic Committee	IOC
International Skating Union	ISU
International Sport Federation	ISF
Multi-Sport Organization	MSO
National Olympic Committee	NOC
National Sport Organization	NSO
Own the Podium	OTP
Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada	SDRCC
World Anti-Doping Agency	WADA

**EXPLORING ATHLETE ADVOCACY THROUGH CANADIAN SPORT
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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Sports' main participants – the athletes – have not been integral partners in the decision-making processes of the Canadian Sport System¹ that influence their own involvement in sport. Sport bureaucrats, executives, and event organizers have not always included athletes in the decision-making process due to reasons such as economics, political advancement, and outright disregard for the needs of elite amateur athletes. After the 2000 Sydney and 2002 Salt Lake City Olympics, there was a general concern in Canada about elite amateur athletes' dismal results at international sporting events. Athletes, current policy makers, and the public should have a basic understanding of how sport has been organized in the past to help them understand why athletes need to be a part of the decision-making process in their own sporting experience.

For elite amateur athletes, making a Commonwealth, Pan-American or Olympic Team is an achievement that marks the pinnacle of their careers. Prior to 1974, the Olympic Charter, which is one of the most influential documents concerning eligibility status for international competition, only recognized athletes who participate, and have always participated in sport 'without material gain' (Beamish & Borowy, 1988; Senn,

¹ The Canadian Sport System is defined as the municipal, provincial, and national amateur sport organizations that organize and set policies for the stakeholders involved in sport (Sport Canada, 2003).

1999). After 1974, the International Olympic Committee (IOC) changed the eligibility rule to allow athletes to accept training and competitive allowances and prizes won in competition within the rules established by the International Sport Federations (ISF). With this change, Canadian athletes started expressing their need for better financial support leading up to the Summer Olympic Games held in Montreal, Quebec. The provision of government funding for elite amateur athletes was largely due to the demanding voices of two former athletes, Abby Hoffman² and Bruce Kidd³, during preparations for the 1976 Olympics (Beamish & Borowy, 1988).

These two individuals petitioned the then Canadian Olympic Association (COA) for payments consistent with the IOC's regulation that covered expenses for time lost at work to train for sport (Macintosh & Whitson, 1990). Hoffman and Kidd realized that amateur high performance sport in Canada was a full-time job, which needed to be recognized by the government if improved results were going to be accomplished (Beamish & Borowy, 1988). The expansion of government-funded sport spawned a new sport bureaucracy. Athletes had administrators to help with the day-to-

² An outstanding middle-distance runner for more than 15 years, Abby Hoffman won eight Canadian championships in 800m, held the national record in 800m from 1962-75, the Canadian record in 440yds from 1963-76 and represented Canada internationally from 1962-76. She is among the University of Toronto's most honoured and successful international competitors, having competed at four Olympic Games (1964-76) where she was a finalist in 800m in 1968 and 1972. In addition to her competitive success, Hoffman was a leader in efforts to gain recognition for women's high performance athletics at the university, national and international levels. She was the first woman elected to the Executive of the Canadian Olympic Association and served for several years as Director General of Sport Canada (Ferguson, 1977).

³ Dr. Bruce Kidd was an athlete who competed in the 1962 Commonwealth Games and won the six-mile championship. In that same year, Kidd was awarded the Lou Marsh Trophy and the Canadian Press Male Athlete of the Year poll. Dr. Kidd has written extensively about the history and political economy of the Olympic movement and Canadian sport. His 1996 book, "The Struggle for Canadian Sport", won the Book Prize of the North American Society for Sport History in 1997. Kidd has been an important advocate for athletes' rights and has gone on to become a member of the Canadian Sports Hall of Fame, Dean of the School of Physical Education at the University of Toronto, and an honorary member of AthletesCAN (Ferguson, 1977; Sport Canada, 2001).

day activities of the organization such as sponsor agreements, competition scheduling, and team selection.

Full-time executive directors, technical directors and national coaches began to make decisions once made by volunteers. To set the guidelines for these activities, however, administrators could have consulted with athletes to ensure dialogue was taking place and both parties would understand the full scope of responsibilities. Due to the new government allowances for the hiring of professionals, administrators were put under great pressure to produce winners. They sought to extend their control over athletes' lives by issuing a stream of directives, rules, and contracts. Kidd and Eberts (1982) showed that within the new sport system in Canada, athletes felt too much pressure to win because of the stress administrators placed on athletes to succeed, or else risk not receiving government funding. According to research done by Ekos Research (1992a), National Sport Organizations (NSOs) did not consider money to be an important intrinsic motivator for athletes. However, evidence showed more than 60% of athletes surveyed considered money to be an important factor limiting participation in sport, with only minor differences in athletes that were carded and athletes that were not carded.

The response by NSOs seemed typical of the early 1980's because it was a time when increased government involvement meant increased dollars into amateur sport; more money for the organizations to spend as they pleased. For sport organizations to be eligible for funding, the new government requirements could have required NSOs to allow athletes to make it to the decision-making table. There was a widespread acknowledgement among national and provincial sports governing body decision-

makers that athletes enjoyed few, if any rights (Kidd & Eberts, 1982). Amateur athletes had come to accept the denial of their rights. They had been encouraged to believe that the concept of rights was incompatible with the pursuit of excellence. The government had placed guidelines on the way NSOs distributed their funds to ensure the media, public, or coaches were not encouraging administrators to use the grants for expenditures not directly related to the betterment of the specific sport (Macintosh et al, 1988), but athlete involvement was not included in those guidelines. To change the way the government administers sport, athletes would need to come together as a collective group to make changes within the Canadian Sport System. An important change in the Canadian Sport System happened in the early 1990's. The focus on administrative and bureaucratic aspects of sport delivery shifted to one of technical development of high performance athletes, which has been coined 'athlete-centred' (Thibault & Babiak, 2003). Resources were now invested directly into high performance athlete funds rather than into administrative operations of NSOs.

Athletes believe back-room politics is a factor that potentially shortens their careers. They are tired of what they call the 'very ignorant decisions that are made without any consideration of the athletes' perspectives (Ekos Research, 1992b). One elite amateur athlete says that she used to think that the fastest swimmers won. Now she believes politics can change that. Athletes feel there should be a board they could approach with their grievances (Ekos Research, 1992b). Since this 1992 research, many organizations and centres have been created such as AthletesCAN, and the Sport Dispute Resolution Centre of Canada (SDRCC). This gives the athletes a chance to air

their grievances without fear of repercussions towards their standings within their specific sports.

The athletes are also disturbed when non-athletes make decisions that affect their training and competitions. Several participants mentioned association meetings where financial affairs are discussed with no input from the athletes (Ekos Research, 1992b). When there is an athlete representative in the room during a meeting, administrators in power positions⁴ are not always willing to listen and take what the athlete is saying as quality advice. They think of the association's financial status rather than what is good for the athlete. Every organization experiences turnover of staff and when this takes place, athletes could either benefit or suffer from the change. If the new people coming in are very athlete-centred, then the potential for athletes to be heard can improve. If the new people coming in are more organization-centred, then the athletes will need to work harder through the channels of the organization to be heard during the decision-making processes. So how do athletes become better leaders and advocates for their own rights? This question will be explored throughout this thesis, which will help answer the broader research question.

Main Question: How can athletes be more effective advocates within the Canadian Sport System?

⁴ Power is a key concept in politics. The term power refers to an ability to influence others and achieve goals, even in the face of opposition from others (Coakley & Donnelly, 2004, p.404).

This question was addressed through three sub-problems, which were explored through different methods:

Sub-Problem #1: How have selected federal sport documents and reports addressed the issue of Elite Amateur Athlete conditions within the Canadian Sport System?

Sub-Problem #2: How have athletes been involved in the organization of select Multi-Sport Events in Canada?

Sub-Problem #3: What structures are in place and needed to allow athletes to become better Athlete Advocates?

After completing my literature review, I have found that having a presence on decision-making committees is a key element to ensure all athletes have input into policy development in the Canadian Sport System. The stakeholders within the Canadian Sport System include athletes, coaches, administrators, politicians, and the general public who all have an interest in Canadian Sport. My research should add a different perspective to the current literature on the topic of athlete advocacy, since I am an athlete currently living within the sport system. Many times, research is conducted by former athletes, administrators or academics who all have different perspectives towards their work. I do not claim to have the definitive answer on how athletes can become better advocates but I do hope to propose ideas on how it can improve in the future.

In chapter one, I include an operational definition of 'athlete-centred' followed by a section explaining in detail the assumptions behind the framework of this thesis. Following the assumptions is a section describing the theoretical and practical

justification that supports the reasoning for this particular research. In chapter two, I begin to provide the body of the research, starting with sub-problem one. Having an understanding of historical federal documents and how they have shaped sport organizations can help athletes in their pursuit of a more 'athlete-centred' sport system. Therefore, this section provides a brief preliminary history of the federal government's relationship with elite amateur athletes. The methodology is explained, which identifies and compares the legitimations and rationales within the various documents. A discussion involving the comparisons concludes this sub-problem.

The same format is used for chapters three and four, which explain sub-problems two and three. Chapter five is an overall discussion of the results of each sub-problem as they help to answer the broader research question. Chapter six provides a brief summary of what I set out to do and how I developed the framework for this thesis, followed by key conclusions and future recommendations for researchers, athletes and organizers in their quest for an athlete-centred sport system.

Operational Definition of Athlete-Centred

In this thesis, 'elite amateur athlete' is defined as any individual currently on a National Team within the Canadian Sport System. In an athlete-centred sport system, athletes are assumed to be the 'raison d'être' of the sport system. Therefore, in order to maintain the integrity and value of sport, it is critical that the sport experience be positive for athletes (Sport Canada, 2003). The primary focus of sport should be to contribute to the all-around development of athletes as whole, healthy people through sport. Sport provides athletes with opportunities for physical expression and mastery of technical skills. Through athletic performance, athletes pursue and demonstrate

excellence and experience the enjoyment of achievement. Along with these opportunities come certain responsibilities for athletes to play fair and compete in the spirit of sport. Athlete-centred sport should help to develop in athletes the qualities of citizenship, ethical conduct and sportsmanship. Those responsible for leadership and decision-making in sport must include the athlete in both defining the needs and goals and in determining how to meet them. The athlete should be the active subject in, not the object of, sporting programs (Sport Canada, 2003).

Assumptions

a) Athletes need to be a part of the decision-making process.

With the implementation of various government guidelines concerning amateur athletes, awareness of the need for athletes to be a part of the decision-making process has never been greater. Decisions that are left solely to the bureaucrats will lead to the subordination of athletes. Having athletes as part of the process can enrich an athlete's life, empowering him/her to have a better sense of control and ultimately a better life experience through both the mental and physical aspects of sport. However, if athletes are not elected by their peers, tokenism or subordination can take place. For example, to distract reporters and politicians from the reality that IOC members would have to retire at the age of seventy, IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch made an announcement that there would be athlete members on the IOC. Samaranch had some athletes in mind who did not have any real political concerns or personal agendas, therefore, not having any detrimental repercussions on the IOC. He appointed them immediately and, as intended, this tactic captured most of the headlines (Sambrook & Jennings, 2000).

Sport Canada has provided athletes with monthly stipends as income without the need to pay tax on those contributions. However, this is conditional on the athlete signing a formal agreement that sets out rights and obligations that are not always negotiated. Features such as: athletes must follow a training and competitive program planned by the NSO; submit to disciplinary authority and cooperate with the association's commercial activities would lead some to believe that elite amateur athletes are in a relationship of full-time work. As a result of these conditions, athletes should be able to claim the rights of employment status (Barnes, 1996; Bedeck, 1971). As employees, athletes could engage in collective bargaining and benefit from the laws relating to employment standards, workers compensation, and protection against wrongful dismissal. Having athletes as a part of the decision-making process would mean involving individuals "on the margins", who are required to live within the guidelines and rules being implemented by sport administrators.

b) Sport Canada is using Elite Amateur Sport for political advancement

Canada's sport governing agency, Sport Canada, is funding elite amateur sport. This funding reverberates down to the grassroots level because of the effect winning international medals has on the population as a whole. Canadian success internationally will help build a stronger Canadian identity, enhance participation by all segments of society, and create more committed collaboration and communication amongst all sporting stakeholders (Sport Canada, 2001a). Canadian government involvement in sport was originally an attempt to control a particular segment of the population, thus creating conditions favourable to capital accumulation (Joyce, 1999). Sport was used to create a return on the government's investment, which insinuated

sport governing officials into sporting life and laid the cornerstone for contemporary Canadian state-sport relations. The popularity and highly public nature of international sport has allowed it to become a major form of cultural exchange between recognized governments and a strong weapon in international bargaining (Barnes, 1983). For example, the Canadian government discouraged and progressively restricted all sports contacts with South Africa in protest against the country's racial policy of apartheid. As well, the Canadian government boycotted the 1980 Moscow Olympics, along with the United States of America (USA), to protest Russia's invasion of Afghanistan (Barnes, 1983).

c) Sport Organizations are using Elite Amateur Athletes to receive government funding

Due to turbulent conditions, organizations become highly interdependent with others in unexpected but consequential ways. Numerous accounts of economic, social, and political trends point to the rapidly changing character of our global environment and to the increased interconnections among organizational actions (Gray, 1989). Currently, in order for NSOs to receive a certain level of government funding there must be an athlete on decision-making committees within the organization. However, when athletes are appointed, tokenism can occur in order for NSOs to receive their funding.

Through the eleven years that I have been attending the annual AthletesCAN forums, I have seen a huge improvement in the Canadian Sport System. When I first started learning about athlete advocacy, I was amazed by the amount of commitment demonstrated by retired athletes and the information available for all athletes in Canada. The biggest problem for a sport organization seems to be communication with

its members, especially when starting to deliver its services to the public. AthletesCAN uses its relationship with the federal government, Sport Canada, and its athlete representatives to help disseminate athlete information. The achievement of athlete-centred sport models throughout the Canadian Sport System is AthletesCAN's main goal. Athlete-centred goals deal with accountability on the part of athletes and associations, dual respect, empowerment, equity and fairness, excellence, extended and mutual responsibility, health, informed participation, mutual support, and athletes' rights (Peel, 1999). AthletesCAN has been able to force change by working together with the federal government to put into place accountability measures on NSOs. Instead of having an adversarial relationship between athletes and administrators, a more collaborative approach is now being taken to ensure the outcome of decisions are satisfactory to all parties involved (Gray, 1989).

Sport Canada has set minimum standards of 'athlete-centred management' for NSOs in the Accountability Agreement of the Sport Funding Accountability Framework. Two characteristics of an athlete-centred system include accountability and dual respect. Accountability refers to a sport system that is responsible to its consumers - the athletes and the membership. To the extent that public funds are used, all who participate and engage in sport are accountable to the public to uphold the values that Canadians hold, such as fair play and ethical behaviour, within the spirit of sport (Sport Canada, 2003). Dual respect is derived from a term used in child development theory that fosters self-respect. Athletes learn to value and respect themselves when they are treated with respect and are given the opportunity to exercise control over their own actions and lives. As they mature, athletes respect others (in

diverse roles and for their different contributions) who have treated them with respect (Sport Canada, 2003).

The system-wide goal for AthletesCAN in 2001 was to have all key NSO committees where program and policy decisions related to high performance sport are made contain 20% athlete representation.⁵ This may include committees such as high performance, working groups, task forces and board of directors (Peel, 1999).

Skate Canada, the governing body for figure skating, has been an active participant in always pushing for the need to comply with Sport Canada goals and make the association more 'athlete-centred'. Since my first AthletesCAN meeting in 1995, Skate Canada has put athletes on every major decision-making committee concerning Junior and Senior National Teams ranging from the board of directors to Tests and Programs working groups. I have been the athlete representative for Skate Canada at various AthletesCAN meetings, Canadian Olympic Committee (COC) Athletes Council meetings, and International Skating Union (ISU) congresses for the past twelve years. At my first council meeting twelve years ago, I largely reproduced aspects of NSO dominance over its athletes because of my inexperience at voicing my opinions. With time, however, I have become an agent of change because of my acquired abilities to question decisions, educate myself on current issues, and be informed on policies that may negatively affect an athlete's rights. I have gathered a lot of information that has to be shared with my team members and association on a regular basis to continue the flow of mutual understanding.

⁵ On November 1st, 2006, I made a phone call to AthletesCAN to inquire about whether or not the organization has achieved its goal of 20% representation of athletes on all decision-making committees. The response was that further research was needed and that they would look into the situation.

d) Major Multi-Sport Events have been organized for monetary profit rather than to benefit Elite Amateur Athletes.

National Olympic Committees (NOCs) represent the basic building blocks in the structure of the Olympic Games. They recruit, supervise, and certify the athletes. Without certification from an NOC, no athlete can compete. The IOC has deviated from its policy not to allow individual athletes to compete, but then, the IOC can change its own rules at will. For example, the IOC has changed its own internal retirement age from 70 to 75 just to allow Mr. Samaranch to reign as president for a longer amount of time. Individual IOC members may on occasion speak of the Games existing for the athletes, but in practice the Games rest on the political agenda that the IOC has recognized as a priority (Senn, 1999). The IOC has the financial resources to organize multi-sport events; due to the apparent power position of sport administrators over athletes, the main focus of an event for IOC officials would be financial security instead of a collaborative effort to include athletes on key decision-making committees (Gray, 1989).

According to Kidd and Eberts (1982), committees formed with politicians, sport executives, and event planners have an enormous amount of discretionary power. Without athletes on committees, an athlete's rights are jeopardized and small technical needs may be overlooked that could make all the difference in an athlete's experience at a multi-sport event. For example, athletes did receive more individual attention from media during the 1980's due to the spreading out of events by IOC officials, but it also made for better ticket sales because of the greater public anticipation of upcoming events (King, 1991). According to Sport Canada's Hosting Policy (1996), economic

benefits include job creation, particularly in small and medium-sized business sectors, regional development, increased tourism, increased exports, enhanced infrastructure and increased tax revenues. All these items mainly benefit governments and businesses without any feedback or input from the athletes. Espy (1979) notes that business and economic circles saw potential monetary benefits from involvement in sport.

Politicians saw a means of reinforcing national identity while academics saw physical education as a valuable tool for the inculcation of normative values. All these forces were operative in the revival of the Olympic Games and have played an increasing role in sport in general.

Multi-sport events were meant to be a forum for youth of the world to unite in peaceful competition through sport (Espy, 1979). By 1976 the individual, the athlete, and the youth of the world played a role of secondary importance. Multi-sport events had become a vehicle for the achievement of ulterior interests (Espy, 1979). The original ideal of the Olympic Games was prevented from the outset by its very structure by identifying athletes with their respective countries; each athlete was subordinated to the country as its contestant. Olympic officials were therefore responsible for the make-up of the current way Games are portrayed with economics and politics first, and athletes second.

e) Elite Amateur Athletes have a stronger presence within the Canadian Sport System since the creation of AthletesCAN in 1992.

Before 1992 and the creation of AthletesCAN, there were not many resources with which athletes could improve their ability to advocate for and learn about the Canadian Sport System. AthletesCAN, along with other prominent athletes such as

Bruce Kidd and Abby Hoffman, have influenced the federal government to make a financial investment in Canadian athletes by funding athlete organizations. Sport Canada has helped fund AthletesCAN, Canadian Sport Centres (CSCs), and various athlete programs to help athletes become better educated about their place within the Canadian Sport System. Athletes can now receive a variety of services through the CSCs such as career counselling, psychological counselling, and presentation skills workshops. Initiatives like these, created by government funded agencies, were sparked by athlete advocates like Bruce Kidd struggling for athletes' rights back in the 1970's. Meetings and forums like the ones held by AthletesCAN are ways to revitalize and motivate athletes to continue advocating for their rights and issues within the Canadian Sport System.

Theoretical and Practical Justification

Allowing athletes to voice their concerns and opinions by being on important decision-making committees can improve the sporting experience of current and future athletes. I feel that there is a direct correlation between a person's commitment towards being involved at the decision-making level and their effectiveness as an athlete advocate. Athletes today have many demands on their time, including training, sponsor appearances, work and school. Athletes can feel that becoming an athlete representative takes too much time, becomes too stressful, involves too much work, and thus they would rather just focus on their sport performances (Peel, 1999). Athletes also have a major fear of being reprimanded, especially during any decision-making processes (Misener, 2001).

NSOs, such as Rowing Canada and Track and Field Canada, were forced to have athletes sit on committees and be part of the decision-making process to be eligible for government funding as of 1996. This has been very positive for athletes in Canada. However, athletes need some type of assurance that their ability to speak up will not be hindered due to their fear of punishment, especially in sports that are judged or when teams are being selected. There is an enormous amount of time, energy and resources needed to be an effective athlete representative. The demands of an athlete representative involve travel, meetings, and readings to stay up-to-date with information, telephone calls, emails, and follow-ups with every other national team athlete to ensure effective communication of pertinent information. Athlete leaders must be willing to be a part of the system and affect change by attending meetings, speaking up on issues that are not fully understood, and being confident where they are knowledgeable. This ability comes from living the sport system, not just understanding how it is supposed to work. An effective athlete advocate can evolve from being the association's link between other organizations and its athletes to being a leader that helps guide the association's direction towards an athlete-centred model in the implementation of policies and programs.

As Gray (1989) explains, in a strictly pluralistic model, where some stakeholders (administrators) can exercise substantial power over the others, the weaker party (athletes) must first develop their capacity as stakeholders. Athletes need to establish some form of countervailing power that would create a more collaborative exchange of information and decision-making process. However, old practices do not change overnight. People in administrative roles resist change for several reasons: they

do not like the uncertainty associated with change; they feel insecure or afraid of expected consequences of the change; they have an investment in the status quo; or they do not understand or agree with the consequences of the proposed changes (Gray, 1989). Allowing athletes to voice their opinions during organizational meetings could hinder the objectives set out by the administrators, thereby having a detrimental effect through the eyes of the organizers but quite possibly a positive outcome for athletes involved in a multi-sport event.

The outcomes and recommendations from this research can serve as a starting point for new national team athletes to learn about relevant organizations and how they can effectively advocate for their rights. The time I lost in my advocating efforts (see appendix A), due to my limited knowledge about athlete's rights and organizational responsibilities, will hopefully decrease for future athletes who have a chance to read this thesis. Event organizers, executive sport directors, and people in charge of NSOs could all benefit from reading this thesis by applying the recommendations to their daily functions and tasks to help improve athletes' effectiveness in the decision-making process. Academically, there seem to have been only a handful of people who have made significant contributions to research on athlete's rights and athlete leadership. The research I am conducting adds to the knowledge on athlete leadership and advocacy. Thibault & Babiak's (2003) organizational approach to explain 'athlete-centeredness' in the Canadian Sport System could benefit from having my insider perspective on 'athlete-centred' sport. My research would be a natural extension of Thibault & Babiak's (2003) work and their conclusion that the Canadian Sport community will now focus their energies on the business core (i.e., athletes), since the

administrative and bureaucratic elements of the sport system have been fully developed.

Ekos Research Associates Inc. (1992a) has done surveys on high performance athlete issues for Sport Canada; their findings may have been shaped by the very people funding their work – Sport Canada. My research will represent another perspective – that of an athlete living in the Canadian Sport System – which has been shaped by my own experiences, adding to the variety of literature on athlete issues.

CHAPTER 2: CANADIAN SPORT POLICY ANALYSIS

Sub-Problem #1: How have selected federal sport documents and reports addressed the issue of Elite Amateur Athlete conditions within the Canadian Sport System?

Introduction

Sport policies and reports shape the way governments, NSOs, and sport administrators develop and organize sport for the masses. Well intentioned sport policies may have a lag between creation and implementation. Outright violation of the policies can also leave athletes in the unfortunate position of having to advocate against the very people supposedly working to help athletes – the administrators, politicians, and bureaucrats. I have included a preliminary history of the federal government's relationship with elite amateur athletes, which I believe is important for future athlete advocates to understand so they can voice their concerns effectively within the Canadian Sport System.

Preliminary History of the Federal Government's Relationship with Elite Amateur Athletes

1961: Bill C-131

The 1961 Fitness and Amateur Sport Act was created in part because of the country's need to improve its elite amateur athletes' international performances and in part as a response to comments made by Prince Phillip, the Duke of Edinburgh. After receiving a copy of the Canadian Sport Advisory Council's report prior to his honorary

presidential address to the Canadian Medical Association, Prince Phillip accused Canadians of being in a state of sub-health (Paraschak, 1978). Prince Phillip went on to recommend that proper physical education, adequate recreation facilities for all, extended youth organization activities, and organized publicity for sport and recreational activities be implemented (Paraschak, 1978).

Implementation of Bill C-131 in 1961, the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act, enabled the Canadian government to enter into cost-sharing agreements with the provinces and support existing sport agencies and organizations. In the period from 1964 to 1967, for example, Federal/Provincial cost-sharing agreements involved up to one million dollars in the form of scholarships, staff support, community grants, recreational leadership courses, and sport clinics (Butts & Grushkin, 1985). Sport policies flowing from Bill C-131 strongly reflected the government's intent to disseminate current state-of-the-art sports medicine concepts and practices to various target populations, such as athletes, coaches, and trainers (Butts & Grushkin, 1985). Government involvement in amateur sports eventually became a way to entice corporations, sponsors, and related organizations to help amateur sport produce profits along with amateur athletes. Wanting better results from their nation's athletes, the government increased its focus on sports medicine, sports nutrition, and sport psychology, which became a benefit for athletes pursuing their athletic dreams but did not involve any input from the athletes (Macintosh et al, 1988).

In 1968, Pierre Elliot Trudeau won a majority government and was elected Prime Minister of Canada. One promise he made if he won was to set up a Task Force on amateur sport in Canada. Trudeau appointed three members to this Task Force to

investigate the effects of professional and amateur sport on Canadians, the role of the federal government in increasing sport participation throughout Canada, and how to increase elite amateur sport performances internationally (Macintosh et al, 1988). The task force sent out a questionnaire to all NSOs for input on these topics, but at no time were athletes a part of this decision-making process.

Although the Olympic Charter, the official constitution of the Olympic movement, proclaims that the Olympics are contests among individuals and not among nations, the IOC assigns to the various NOCs the task of selecting national Olympic teams. In most cases the NOCs do this by holding Olympic trials or by choosing athletes on the basis of their previous performances. From the start of the modern Olympic Games, male elite amateur athletes of every race, religion, and nationality have been eligible to participate. De Coubertin and the IOC intended from the start for the Olympics to be open only to amateurs. Amateurism was determined by adherence to the amateur rule, which was originally devised in the 19th century to prevent working-class athletes from participating in sports such as rowing and tennis (Matthew et al, 1995). The amateur rule prevented athletes from earning any pay from activities in any way related to their involvement in sport; therefore working-class athletes could not afford to make a living and train for competition at the same time.

1970's: Formalizing Government's Relationship with Elite Athletes

The Proposed Sport Policy for Canadians, released in 1970 (Munro, 1970), signalled the first time the federal government committed overt support to elite amateur athlete development through policy. The emphasis was on improved physical fitness, mental health, and involvement in a range of societal issues, including elite amateur

sport. An increase in government involvement in sport led to an increase in professionalism and bureaucratization of sport organizations, which caused a significant shift from intrinsic (self-fulfillment) to extrinsic (financial) values in sport. Although the focus of the sport policy was a top down approach, it did help create the National Sport and Recreation Centre and Participation (Macintosh et al, 1988). The kitchen table design archetype was the institutionalized mode of organizational structure up until the 1970s, with its key characteristic being organized by volunteers. The federal government began to promote a different organizational design, one characterized by full-time administration (Kikulis et al, 1995). Technical and administrative professionals, most of whom have graduate or undergraduate degrees in either kinesiology/sport sciences or sport administration, have effectively taken over the role once played by the volunteer community in the making and implementation of sport policy (Whitson & Macintosh, 1990).

The programs developed in the 1970's were based on the notion that athletes could train and compete part-time and simultaneously pursue an education or career. The size of the stipends given to athletes - which ranged from \$4,200 to \$7,800 (tax-free) - was based on the implicit assumption that athletes had other sources of financial support (e.g., parents, spouses, employment) (Beamish & Borowy, 1988). There was an assumption by government that athletes were engaging in a personal pastime mainly for their own benefit, which did not warrant pursuing increased support from the public purse. A related assumption was that an elite amateur sport career was a temporary interlude in an individual's life, and that after a brief period of time the athlete would return to a 'normal life' and earn a regular income (Ekos Research, 1992a). Sport

policies and programs in the 1970's had to allow for better training and competing conditions, such as better facilities, more competitive opportunities, and an increased amount of funding for athletes to be able to pursue training on a more full-time basis. Amidst society's growing demand for entertainment, the athletes of the 1970's began to realize the importance of their role as a segment of the entertainment industry. This realization brought an increasing uproar by athletes demanding more rights within Canada's larger social order (McLaren, 1998).

The retirement of Avery Brundage as president of the IOC at the end of the 1972 Olympics marked the beginning of the end of pretense about the Games being restricted to elite amateur athletes. Star athletes had challenged the rule in the Olympics of the 1960s, and by 1972 it was clear that Western athletes enjoyed a level of support that approached the Eastern system of state support. The new president, Lord Killanin of Ireland, announced immediately that his first priority would be to reconsider the definition of amateurism as it related to the qualification of athletes for the Games (Matthew et al, 1995). In 1974, after Communist bloc nations had been subsidizing their athletes for two decades, the Olympics ceded to athletes the right to compensation for loss of salary during training, and shortly thereafter permitted professionals in sports whose governing bodies did not object.

1980s: A Contractual Relationship

For Canadian athletes who qualified for provincial or national teams in the 1980's, opportunities were greater than before because of better coaching, better facilities, better competitive opportunities, and a slight increase in financial support. Most importantly, athletes knew that their conditions could improve by voicing their

concerns (Kidd & Eberts, 1982). There were changes in the relationship between NSOs and high performance athletes in regard to governance functions. In matters of amateurism, eligibility to compete, discipline, selection, permission to compete abroad, and access to material support, organizations basically had a free hand in exercising their power until the mid 1970's. The liberalization of amateur rules, and a general feeling that at least modest respect should be accorded in dealings with athletes, changed athletes' situations markedly in the 1980s. For many reasons, but most notably economics, relationships between NSOs and athletes took on a contractual nature. Sport Canada implemented a new obligation with the advent of NSO-athlete contracts in the early 1980's, which were intended to regularize and record the mutual commitments of athletes and sport organizations (Ekos Research, 1992a). Athletes wishing to remain eligible for their national teams had to sign contracts or risk being excluded from the team until the contract was signed – a new practice that athletes would have to learn to accept within their NSOs.

Olympic rules about amateurism have caused many controversies over the years. Questions were raised about whether an amateur could be reimbursed for travel expenses, be compensated for time lost at work, be paid for product endorsements, or be employed to teach sports. These issues were not always satisfactorily resolved by the IOC, leading to confusion about the definition of professionalism in different sports. By 1983 a majority of IOC members acknowledged that most Olympic athletes compete professionally in the sense that sports are their main activity. The IOC then asked each ISF to determine eligibility in its own sport, and over the next decade nearly

all the ISFs abolished the distinction between amateurs and professionals, accepting so-called open Games (Matthew et al, 1995).

1990s: A push for athlete's rights

At the 1990 North American Society for Sport Management Conference, the Coaching Association of Canada (CAC) presented two principles for program execution. The first principle was the holistic development of the athlete - that sport participation should result in a balance between physical, mental, and social development of the athlete (NASSM, 1990). This development was seen as the essential purpose or objective of sport involvement, overriding competitive goals. The second principle was concentration on the athlete-centred approach, emphasizing that policy and programs developed to deliver sport should be designed first and foremost to meet the needs of the athletes (NASSM, 1990).

University of Ottawa professor Luc Pelletier had done some important research on the value of an athlete-centred approach and recommended that athletes be given a greater degree of control over their programs. Giving up power was a very difficult adjustment for many coaches and sport administrators who desired a high degree of control over the athletes (NASSM, 1990). Athlete representation throughout various levels of program development, he argued, could help achieve the goals of both the athlete and government. Athlete involvement would lead to increased levels of satisfaction, fulfillment and self-determination, which in the long run would decrease dropout rates and poor international competitive performances (NASSM, 1990).

Athletes who enjoy a good combination of free time, coaching, and facilities can play longer and generally perform better than those who do not. In recognition of

this relationship, many sport bodies try to regulate resources to minimize competitive disadvantages (Kidd, 1986). The government has taken the initiative to invest heavily in the production of facilities, programs, and policies to allow athletes these types of opportunities to facilitate success at the international level in sport. This type of dedication can be seen through the work of the government branch of Sport Canada. Sport Canada's mission is to support the achievement of high performance and excellence, to develop the Canadian Sport System, and to strengthen the unique contribution that sport makes to Canadian identity, culture and society (Sport Canada, 1998). Through Sport Canada's strategic directions, there is an emphasis on elite amateur sport that filters down to the grassroots level:

Sport Canada Strategic Directions: 1) High performance athletes and coaches (GOAL: Enhance the ability of Canadian athletes to excel at the highest international levels through fair and ethical means). 2) Sport system development (GOAL: Work with key partners to enhance coordination and integration to advance the Canadian Sport System). 3) Strategic positioning of sport (GOAL: Advance the broader federal government objectives through sport, position sport in the federal government agenda and promote the contribution of sport to Canadian society). 4) Access and equity (Goal: Increase access and equity in sport for targeted under-represented groups) (Sport Canada, 1998, p. 5).

In the 1990s, Sport Canada played a key policy and program leadership role related to elite amateur sport at the inter-provincial, national and international levels. Federal funding was focused predominantly on elite amateur sport. It was characterized by programs that prepared athletes to perform at the highest levels of national and international competition (Sport Canada, 1998).

Due to the strict guidelines of the NSO/athlete agreements, many athletes' images were being used without their consent by companies profiting from such usage after the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. Skate Canada moved proactively to

ensure every athlete understood his/her athlete agreements. Athletes were given an ample amount of time to peruse the document and given advice from professionals if needed concerning their rights in relation to the media's, sponsors', and association's use of their images. Again, this is a situation that could have been avoided if athletes were not pressured into believing that their athlete agreements had to be signed to remain eligible. An athlete's position on the national team could be jeopardized for questioning the agreement's contents and not signing over his/her rights to the respective association. Athletes should be encouraged to negotiate the criteria for carding and team selection, remuneration and benefits, rules of behaviour, and specific competitions at which they will compete. In many ways, athlete agreements bear strong resemblance to contracts of employment (Kidd & Eberts, 1982). Having a contract ensures athletes are accountable for their end of the agreement, by training hard, competing at designated events, and behaving according to the codes of conduct. In addition, the agreement acts as a gauge for athletes to know what to expect from the NSO, such as funding criteria, competition notices, and support groups available to the athletes.

The economic impact and emergence of agents in sports such as figure skating and track and field helped athletes become more reluctant to sign their agreements. The potential for athletes to earn high incomes for themselves and their agents led to a more stringent examination of athlete/NSO agreements. Indirectly, then, we can say that agents have become somewhat of an athlete advocate even if only for the selfish reason of making a good income for themselves through elite amateur athletes.

Input from athletes and coaches can be very useful in developing a discipline policy - about the line between acceptable and unacceptable behaviour - and ensuring that coaches have sufficient direction so they do not have to exercise discretion in an arbitrary manner (Corbett & Findlay, 1993). Once approved by all parties, the organization could publicize the policy with all association members.

Former athletes in winter sports were more likely to have viewed their career as a job or profession (Ekos Research, 1992a). The fact that winter sport athletes considered their athletic careers to be a job or profession was probably due to the sponsorship possibilities in sports such as skiing, figure skating, and ice hockey. As a figure skater, I know that the time needed to self promote, work behind the scenes, and work with coaches, judges, officials, and sponsors is a big reason why I consider my participation at this level in sport a job. Since most NSOs deal with contracts to secure athletes to agreements, athletes must continue to speak up and advocate for their rights. There have been positive changes, such as an increase in the amount of Athlete Assistance Program (AAP) funding, tuition deferrals, and amateur consent guidelines that allow athletes to earn money while maintaining their eligibility.

Amateurism, by the 1990s, was a concept of diminished importance and one more of technical than social distinction. One of the most visible examples of the amateur status policy change came in 1992, when professional players from the National Basketball Association were permitted to play in the Summer Games in Barcelona, Spain. Professionals from the National Hockey League became eligible to participate beginning with the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan (Matthews et al, 1995).

2000: A New Era

Sport officials, coaches, reporters, and politicians placed an increased amount of pressure on the government to financially assist elite amateur athletes because of poor international results in major multi-sport events such as World Championships, Pan-American Games, Commonwealth Games, and Olympic Summer and Winter Games (Misener, 2001). At a time when athletes were feeling the pressure of performance goals and their association's expectations and getting little funding for training, why did the athletes not join together to demand changes from the government? The subjective nature of Canadian sport policies was a way for the Canadian government to manipulate the actions of athletes to attain the goals of profit-oriented sport leaders. Government involvement in elite amateur sport was a way for politicians to gain public support to remain in power in future elections. The concept of an athlete representative in NSO governance was introduced to advance a more athlete-centred approach to sport policy development and better athlete integration into the sport system (Misener, 2001). However, tokenism of athletes on committees, boards of directors, and ad-hoc groups has affected the effectiveness of athlete advocates in their ability to create a more athlete-centred sport system.

A key event involving policy development was the National Summit on Sport held in Ottawa, Ontario in April 2001. The Summit brought together more than 600 supporters of sport from a variety of amateur sporting groups, such as athletes, coaches, parents, administrators, officials, and volunteers. The Canadian Sport Policy discussion paper sought to improve the sport experience for all Canadians, reduce barriers to sport, and ensure all Canadians could enjoy a range of sport experiences. The goals of the

policy were enhanced participation, excellence, and capacity (Sport Canada, 2001a). The summit report shows that 86% of the participants involved in the process of creating a new sport policy for Canada believed in setting targets for achieving increased participation and excellence in Olympic sport (Sport Canada, 2001a). One solution towards the target of excellence was that the COC, along with Petro-Canada and Sport Canada, pool resources to create the program 'Podium 2002' that would help amateur athletes financially in their quest for medals.

The project was very subjective, in that the criteria were based on targets set by policy makers and not in conjunction with athletes, which did not ensure podium placements as hoped in the beginning of the planning process. Money was taken out of the Petro-Canada scholarship fund to give additional funding to athletes who had shown the potential to be on the podium at the Olympics. These funds had previously been reserved for developing athletes. The 'Podium 2002' allotment of \$50,000 to Jamie Sale and David Pelletier, for example, was not the most effective investment, since they were the 2001 World Champions and thus were almost guaranteed a medal due to the subjectiveness of the sport of figure skating (COC, 2001). A portion of the money given to Sale and Pelletier could have been distributed to other promising Canadian figure skaters to increase their chances of obtaining a top-five rather than a top-ten placement. Having more Canadian athletes placing in the top-five of their events reflects positively on the strength of sport in Canada. The COC proposal of providing government funding to Canadian athletes who win an Olympic medal could have served as an incentive to medal hopefuls such as Sale and Pelletier, while retaining the Petro-Canada scholarship fund for developing athletes.

The COC's vision for sport in Canada essentially intends for Canada to be one of the top ten sporting nations in the world, as measured by international podium results at the Olympic Games, Major Games, and World Cup events (COC, 2002b). With these types of goals, the COC should let every athlete know its intentions with respect to funding, bursaries, and incentives, such as the dollar amount proposed for Olympic medalists. Overall, the idea of putting a dollar amount on Olympic medals is a very objective way of allocating money to athletes from sponsors, taxpayers, and private supporters of the Olympic movement. The incentive to win can be enhanced by knowing that a significant amount of money can be won by achieving excellence on the international sporting stage. With government initiatives like the 'Podium 2002' program and Olympic medal dollar allotments, attaining the goal of being a leading nation within the Olympic structure can be realized if all participants share the same vision. Athletes, coaches, sponsors, and officials must continue to engage in events like the National Summit on Sport to continue the communication that is needed to understand the strategies, priorities, and vision intended for Canadian sport.

2003: Bill C-12

The Physical Activity and Sport Act of 2003 replaced the 1961 Fitness and Amateur Sport Act. This Act entrenched the Canadian government's strategy for improving participation levels in physical activity and sport. The new Act has several initiatives that will have an immediate effect upon the physical activity and sport system within Canada. These range from encouraging physical activity programs in schools to the creation of the SDRCC. By creating this Act, the government showed

that their interest in sport includes the development of all Canadians through new wording, and expanded mandates.

The Act institutionalizes the SDRCC, guaranteeing it is available for athletes in the future. The title of the old Fitness and Amateur Sport Act was renamed because the focus on 'fitness' was an end result, whereas 'activity' is a process emphasizing improved health for all Canadians. The removal of the word 'amateur' from the broader term 'sport' has allowed the Minister for Sport to deal with new partnerships, specifically in relation to professional teams in Canada. Developing relationships with professional sports teams could enhance elite amateur sports looking for funding from external sources other than the government. The new Act allows the Minister to deal directly with professional athletes and owners, knowing full well that these people will also be looking to receive something from the government.

The collaboration with professional sport entities would hopefully give elite amateur athletes the needed funding to help improve their training and daily living situations, which would lead to better international performances. Many elite amateur athletes now accept money in the form of prize money at competitions, appearance fees, and direct government funding to help offset training and living costs, for example Sport Canada AAP funding. The technical distinction for eligibility between elite amateur athletes and professionals is made by each NSO by issuing sanctioning fees to interested parties to allow elite amateur athletes to participate in any given activity, thus setting the criteria for what "eligible" athletes can and cannot do to remain eligible (Sport Canada, 2003).

This section has provided a brief history of government involvement in elite amateur sport. For people involved in the Canadian Sport System, it is important to know what has happened in the past to understand why and how decisions are made at present. It has only been thirty years since the government and IOC began publicly supporting elite amateur athletes by allowing the right to compensation for loss of salary during training and competition (Matthews et al, 1995). Understanding that increased financial support from the government has led to a more administratively-focused Canadian Sport System will help future athlete advocates in their quest for a more athlete-centred system. The next section further investigates Canadian sport policies and how they have shaped athletes' roles in sport in Canada.

Methodology and Directional Proposition for Sub-Problem #1

I have analyzed twenty-three Canadian sport documents from 1961 to 2004 and systematically identified elite amateur athlete conditions for sport – the rationale for them and the solutions proposed (Misener, 2001). Based on past athletes unhappiness with their situations, I initially believed that I would find a substantial shift over time towards increased references to athlete involvement in the development of the Canadian Sport System. Athletes have continually advocated for more government support and numerous public outcries for assistance have been an obvious indicator that policies are not being followed or that the policies are not sufficient in their detail concerning athletes' needs.

The Federal Sport Documents I analyzed are as follows⁶:

- 1) Bill C-131 Fitness and Amateur Sport Act (1961)
- 2) Report of the Task Force on Sport for Canadians (1969)
- 3) A Proposed Sports Policy for Canadians (1970)
- 4) Sport Canada/Recreation Canada (1971)
- 5) Toward a National Policy on Amateur Sport (1977) (Green Paper)
- 6) Partners in Pursuit of Excellence: A National Policy on Amateur Sport (1979) (White Paper)
- 7) A Challenge to the Nation: Fitness and Amateur Sport in the 80's (1981)
- 8) High Performance Athlete Development in Canada (1985)
- 9) Sport Canada Policy on Women in Sport (1986)
- 10) Toward 2000: Building Canada's Sport System (1988)
- 11) Sport Canada's Hosting Policy (1996)
- 12) Canadian Sport Centres Position Paper (1999)
- 13) National Conference on Sport & The Corporate Sector (1999)
- 14) A Win-Win Solution: Creating a National Alternate Dispute Resolution System For Amateur Sport in Canada (2000)
- 15) Expectations for Fairness in Sport: A Declaration, enacted by the Federal-Provincial/Territorial Sport Ministers (2001)
- 16) Towards a Canadian Sport Policy: Report on the National Summit on Sport (2001)
- 17) The Canadian Sport Policy (2002)
- 18) The Canadian Sport Policy: Federal-Provincial/Territorial Priorities for Collaborative Action 2002-2005 (2002)
- 19) Canadian Strategy for Ethical Conduct in Sport: Policy Framework (2002)
- 20) Bill C-12 An Act to Promote Physical Activity and Sport (2003)
- 21) National Roundtables on Future High Performance Sport Funding (2004)
- 22) Investing in Sport Participation 2004-2008 (2004)
- 23) Sport Funding and Accountability Framework (SFAF III: 2005-2010) (2004)

The twenty-three government documents analyzed pertain to topics such as the hosting of International Games, athlete-centred sport, and elite amateur sport policies for Canadians. The twenty-three documents and reports I have chosen to include in my thesis are related to sport policies that affect the sport system in Canada at all three levels of government: municipal, provincial, and national. Each document covers very

⁶ I have numbered the documents in chronological order and use those numbers when referring to the documents in my document analysis results section.

specific topics that impact elite amateur athletes, such as coaching, funding, or facility and competition creation. I explored how 'athlete-centred' documents were prior to versus after 1992, when the creation of AthletesCAN took place. I investigated whether or not AthletesCAN's national goals impacted policy making and the degree that they helped athletes take more of a leadership role within the Canadian Sport System. 'Athlete-centred' policies would include mention of the athlete's role in decision-making, organizing of events, and/or being the *raison d'être* of the sport system (Sport Canada, 2003).

Critical analysis of each federal sport policy document followed a specific procedure to ensure consistency and thus support the collection of more accurate information. The procedure used to analyze each document (see appendix B) followed these steps:

- 1) Preliminary overview of the document
 - i. Identify authors
 - ii. Identify key persons with input
 - iii. Identify general purpose of document
 - iv. Identify process underlying document
- 2) Identify specific policy(ies)/recommendation(s)/programme(s) related to:
 - a) Human resources
 - b) Financial resources
 - c) Material resources
 - d) Formal rules
 - e) Informal rules

3) Identify legitimization(s) for each policy action identified

4) Identify attribution(s) for each policy action identified

The critical method of policy analysis I am using “has been advocated as a way to clarify the parameters of policy problems and thereby improve policy formulation and implementation” (Chalip, 1995, p.1). A combination of the legitimations (rationales) critique and attributions (solutions) critique was used to examine the substance of the twenty-three federal sport policy documents (1961-2004). The legitimations critique allows for an examination of policy goals to determine the rationale underlying the development of policies. The attributions critique focuses on the presumed cause of social problems that direct policy creation, by identifying recommended actions or solutions towards addressing the problem. This analysis allowed for the systematic identification of policies/recommendations pertaining to a specific group, elite amateur athletes (Misener, 2001). Chalip (1996) argues that this type of analysis “advances social knowledge and ethical debate as a consequence of the resulting confrontation among varied interpretation” (p.312), and thus is likely to challenge dominant social and political ideologies.

Delimitations and Limitations: Canadian Sport Policy Analysis

My literature review has mainly taken place at the Leddy Library at the University of Windsor, through the internet, and through the collection of documents at each conference/forum/congress I attended in the past twelve years. I have contacted experts in the field of sport in Canada that have either completed PhD degrees or are completing degrees, athletes that have been advocates, and others directly involved in program implementation in Canada to help find relevant information. The limitation

involved here is a lack of information from a broader review of literature due to the delimitation of researching at only one library. As well, most of the participants have been naturalized into the Canadian Sport System from having worked so long in their positions, which may give them a narrow perspective on how things should and could work in the future.

Results: Canadian Sport Policy Analysis

Introduction

I initially compiled a list of topics relevant to existing Canadian Sport policy research to use while completing my preliminary overview of each document and identifying specific recommendations. For each document I identified the authors, key persons involved in creating the document, the general purpose and the process underlying the formulation of the specific document. To ensure consistency, in each document I identified rationales for sport policy, including a need for facilities (equipment), human resources, finances, and rules (formal and informal), as well as servicing underprivileged groups, promotion of sport, research, increasing participation, fostering identity, and improving team performance and athlete-centeredness (See Appendix D). Some documents did not address certain rationales or athlete issues, such as the promotion of sport or athlete-centred models for sport. Where possible, I identified documented solutions for each policy action or theme contained in the document. My main research question, “how can athletes be stronger advocates within the Canadian Sport System?” will be illuminated in how documents differed before 1992 and after 1992 due to the creation of AthletesCAN. Each of the following

sections represents a rationale for policy creation and within each section I provide solutions found within the documents.⁷

i.) Rationale: Athlete-Centred Analysis

Of the twenty-three documents I analyzed, fourteen of them (3, 5, 8, 10-14, 16-19, 21, 23) mentioned a need for athletes to be included in the decision-making process, while the athlete-centred concept was only referred to in five of the documents (8, 11, 12, 14, 16). Munro (1970) explains, in detail, how athletes should be represented within the Canadian Sport System.

There is an important non-monetary step to be taken along the lines of enhancing the collective dignity of the athlete - and the executives and administrators of the existing sports bodies are the ones who must take that step. The step is to involve the athletes as a group in the operation and policy-making structures of their organizations, at every level - board of directors, executives, executive committees, finance committees, rules committees, event committees, advisory staff, everywhere from which the power in the organization emanates (Munro, 1970, p. 42).

The 1985 document, High Performance Athlete Development in Canada, discusses the need for the Canadian Sport System to become more athlete-centred and presents a delineation of responsibilities between the provincial and federal governments (Canada, 1985). Of the fourteen documents that mention the need for athletes in the decision making process, eight of them (5, 10, 13, 17-19, 21, 23) refer to an athlete's role with no specific guidelines for how they should be involved. Those documents listed items of support more than stating clear goals of athlete-centred models for sport, such as expanding the funding for individual support for monthly

⁷ Refer to Appendix C to see how a single document was analyzed and Appendix D to see an overview of which documents contain each rationale.

living allowances, relocation expenses, school tuition, training expenses, assistance in locating work, lost-time assistance, and other assistance (Campagnolo, 1977).

However, one document (10) did mention, with no specific terms, that the Canadian Sport System should be driven by the high performance athlete development model (Task Force on National Sport Policy, 1988).

After 1985, sport policies started referring to what athletes need, but still no direct procedures were put into place to suggest how athletes could be involved in the decision-making process. The CSCs Position Paper does a good job of implementing measures to involve athletes on each individual sport centre's board of directors to help decide which services the centre should offer to be most useful (Sport Canada 1999).

The 2000 document, A Win-Win Solution, does mention that sport organizations should be involving athletes on various committees to allow for better communication. Athlete representation on the SDRCC's board of directors was also placed into policy to ensure an athlete presence at the decision-making table (Sport Canada, 2002). The number one principle listed in the Canadian Sport Policy (2002) is that sport is to be athlete/participant centred, in which case athletes/participants are at the decision-making tables, which can be seen in the guidelines for the new SFAF III 2005-2010.

This document (23) states that athletes must be on NSO board of directors to establish a certain level of government funding (Sport Canada, 2004b).

ii.) Rationale: Material Resources (facilities)

When analyzing the documents for facilities, I included references to office buildings that would house NSOs, arenas that could be used for sports teams and clubs, schools and the SDRCC, which were all mentioned at different times within the various

documents. Fifteen of the twenty-three (3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16-22) documents mention the need for facilities, with the majority of the documents referring to schools, clubs, and the SDRCC. Facilities were not mentioned in the sport documents analyzed before the 1970's. The main focus of the three documents that refer to facilities in the 1970's (3, 4, 5) was to connect the Canadian Sport System by housing all Canadian NSOs in the same building and providing adequate resources to compliment a team of full-time qualified administrative staff. Municipal halls, auditoriums, and educational institutions were all mentioned as buildings needed to help NSOs deliver their services (Munro, 1970).

An emerging theme of the 1980's (8, 10) was to create high performance centres, specialized facilities for specific sports, and improve the existing club structure (Task Force on National Sport Policy, 1988; Sport Canada, 2002). Eight of the ten documents (14, 16-22) created from 2000 on mention the need for facilities, with an emphasis on the need to get physical education back in the schools.⁸

iii.) Rationale: Human Resources (coaching)

For the analysis of human resources, I have included references to coaching development, professionals in the administrative field, and volunteers, who are all an integral part of the Canadian Sport System. Twenty-one of the twenty-three (1-14, 16-21, 23) documents mentioned the need to improve the country's coaching situation. Coaching as a profession has long been looked at as somewhat of a hobby or volunteer position, but to be competitive with the other strong sporting countries of the world,

⁸ Club structure and improving physical education in the school system have implications for needed facilities.

Canada needs to put more emphasis on this profession with support from administrative and volunteer personnel. In the 1970's, the focus on human resources was staffing NSOs with qualified people to run administrative duties (Munro, 1970). Athletes in international competition have achieved a political dimension, one that governments use to display to the rest of the world, a superior social and political structure for Canada that is achieved through its sporting accomplishments. To improve on that political possibility, the importance of coaching, volunteers and effective administration have been placed into policy to ensure those goals of cultural superiority are achieved through sport and its services (Rea et al, 1969).

In the 1970's, Canada was also losing many talented people, a term coined the "Brain Drain", to the USA because of financial opportunities (Munro, 1970). Therefore, it was suggested that coaching become more professionalized to encourage people to stay in Canada. Developing more athletes, coaches and administrators was a goal for Canada because of the upcoming 1976 Montreal Summer Olympics (Munro, 1971). The attempt to develop more coaches and administrators was working, as Campagnolo (1979) explains in the 1979 document; Canada was achieving greater success due to the implementation of full-time administrators, technical experts, and coaches. Women were specifically promoted into leadership roles during this implementation phase of increasing administrators, coaches and technical experts, through the creation of the Women and Sport Policy, to ensure equality and opportunity (Sport Canada, 1986).

Coaches have become the number one priority for government funding to help improve Canada's goals of excellence, through training, professionalization, and support systems (Sport Canada, 2001a). The term, 'athlete-centred, coach-led and performance based', is the new approach the Canadian Sport System is taking to ensure both coaches' and athletes' rights are represented in policy (Canada, 2002b).

iv.) Rationale: Financial Resources

The importance of federal dollars for amateur sport is clear, as twenty-one of the twenty-three (1-14, 16-18, 20-23) documents refer to financial assistance needed for a variety of issues, such as research, athlete assistance, and quality facilities. The 1961 document was the first time the government had put in writing the need to enter into cost sharing agreements with the provinces to help financially support the promotion of sport, coaches, and recognizing amateur sport as a worthwhile endeavour (Canada, 1961). The 1977 document (5), *Toward a National Policy on Amateur Sport: A Working Paper* (Campagnolo, 1977), suggests,

To regularly review and expand the funding for the individual support of more athletes who are training hard and seeking to do well internationally. The money would provide monthly living allowances, relocation expenses, school tuition, training expenses, assistance in locating work, lost-time payments, and other assistance. The program would be administered in accordance with International Federation and Olympic Committee rules (Campagnolo, 1977).

The one document (19) that did not refer to any financial needs was the 2002 *Policy Framework for a Canadian Strategy for Ethical Conduct in Sport* (Canada, 2002a). The framework mentions many things that could insinuate a need for financial resources but does not directly refer to a need for additional funding to put this policy into place. The other twenty-one documents do have a dedicated section that discusses

the need for financial assistance or financial concerns. Each time Canada has hosted an Olympic Games, a policy has been created that addresses financial concerns to support elite amateur athletes. Each policy noted that a portion of the funding should come from the private sector because sport development that includes hosting international events takes a large amount of money (Munro, 1970). The 1999 document (13) states that the private sector is also heavily depended on because of the poor government financial support in the 1980's and early 1990's (Nieuwenhuis, 1999).

In 1988, there was recognition in policy that governments must continue to fund elite amateur sport, but that there must be a financial framework in place and direction must come from the federal leadership (Task Force on National Sport Policy, 1988). Part of that framework is realizing that hosting events can be a huge part of the economic benefits accruing to governments, such as job creation, regional development, increased tourism and exports, enhanced infrastructure, and increased tax revenue (Sport Canada, 1996). The financial framework can also ensure a closer partnership between provincial/territorial and federal governments, the private sector, and sport franchise holders (Sport Canada, 1996). An important part of hosting events is the legacy that the event bestows upon future generations of athletes and people in the community (Sport Canada, 1999).

Athletes who are training to compete in an Olympic Games in their home country have been and will continue to receive more support from the government because of the need to have a good result on home soil. The 1971 document (4), Sport Canada/Recreation Canada, the 1985 document (8) High Performance Athlete Development in Canada, and documents created after 2002 (21-23) refer to the need to

increase financial support of elite amateur athletes. The COC's Game Plan 1973 was a program developed to offer new levels of financial support to athletes training for major Games (Campagnolo, 1979). The build up of excitement for the 2010 Winter Olympics to be held in Vancouver, British Columbia has enabled funding partners, such as the COC, Sport Canada, and CSCs, to unite and put more dollars into sport research, athlete development, and coaching support. Partnership between sport organizations, governments, and the corporate sector has become a theme in the 2000's (Sport Canada, 2001a).

v.) Rationale: Promotion of Sport

The federal government has used elite amateur sport to promote the country's identity, unity, and physical capabilities. Fourteen of the twenty-three documents refer to the need to have a plan to promote sport nationally. Five of the six (1-5) 1960's and 1970's documents have a section that refers to the promotion of sport, and three of the four (7, 8, 10) 1980's documents have the same section. The dominant theme of the 1990's is that sport promotes improved health and self-esteem, decreased teen pregnancies, decreased substance abuse and crime, and improved knowledge of discipline, hard work, and teamwork (Nieuwenhuis, 1999). Health, fitness, and recreation are goals of mass participation, whereas gold medals are a consequence (Munro, 1971).

The federal government had the authority to promote sport in 1961 because of the Fitness and Amateur Sport Act, but did not use that ability until 1971 when Participation was created. The program seemed successful for the general public, but because of the poor results at the summer Olympics in Montreal, the federal

government made a suggestion to create a new 'National Sport Information and Promotion Corporation' to promote sport and increase Canada's chances for international success (Campagnolo, 1977). However, there is a sharp decline in references to the promotion of sport, with only one document (11) in the 1990's mentioning it and then very sparse references in the year 2000 and beyond (15, 17, 19, 20, 22).

vi.) Rationale: Research

Fourteen of the twenty-three (1-3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 13, 16-21) documents convey a need for the sport community to focus on scientific research to help athletes improve their performances both nationally and internationally. Interestingly, some of the documents (1, 5, 13, 16, 19, 21) only mention that research needs to be done, with no reference to what type of research should be conducted. For example, the 1979 report noted that Canadian universities should have an increased role in the provision of sport, advanced research and providing a pool of athletes to help improve the overall delivery in the Canadian Sport System (Campagnolo, 1979). The 2002-2005 Canadian Sport Policy Federal/Provincial document mentions the need for an applied sport science approach to enhancing athlete and sport system performance by having the CSCs formulating targets to achieve these goals (Canada, 2002b). Research was mentioned in some documents (1, 5, 13, 16, 19, 21) for ethical conduct, ways to promote sport, enhancing coordination among stakeholders, medical assistance, and monitoring and evaluating specific programs within the Canadian Sport System. Policy noted that research is necessary, specifically within the Canadian Sport System, to further develop

better performances from our athletes through improved coaching, training, and testing methods (Sport Canada, 2002).

vii.) Rationale: Participation

Participation has long been a federal government objective, as is indicated in seventeen of the twenty-three (2-11, 15-18, 20, 22, 23) documents. Those seventeen documents allude to the fact that more people should be participating in sport to allow for a larger pool of potential medal winners, as well as leading to social development for all Canadians through mass participation (Munro, 1970). The delineation of roles was further expressed in the High Performance Athlete Development in Canada (1985) document, which states that participation is the responsibility of the provincial government. The goal of the 2004-2008 Investing in Sport Participation document (Sport Canada, 2004a) is to have a greater proportion of Canadians from all segments of society involved in sport. Each provincial government is thus expected to develop its own goals to reach the broader goal of the Canadian Sport Policy, allowing a lot more autonomy for the creation of programs and sport investment.

Two main thrusts of increasing participation are first, focusing on the needs of underprivileged groups, such as people with disabilities and aboriginal peoples, and second, on increasing the development of physical education programs in the schools. The belief is that healthier children become healthier adults; therefore encouraging physical activity in the school system is a necessity that leads to better athletes (Sport Canada, 2004a). There was a lull in mentioning any type of participation in the late 1980's to early 1990's, but because Canada has had such a hard time bringing everyone together due to our country's huge geographic space, participation always seems to be

brought back into policy so the public knows that the government is reaching out to all Canadians (Rea et al, 1969).

viii.) Rationale: Identity

Sport has been a tool the government has used to show other nations how strong our country is both physically and financially. Canadians do not see themselves as equal fitness proponents to the USA, Russia, and Germany (5). The government has used the national identity rationale as a political tool to forge partnerships and to improve international relations (Campagnolo, 1979). Sport is therefore used to identify Canadians as a people and we show this through our sporting accomplishments. It would seem that this topic would be an important policy issue, since it is alluded to many times in the media, but only seven of the twenty-four (2, 3, 5, 10, 11, 13, 17) documents refer to the need to identify our nation through sport.

One of the main social benefits indicated in the Federal Hosting Policy (1996) is improved Canadian identity and citizenship. Other benefits mentioned in the Hosting Policy (1996) are increased youth involvement, volunteerism, and multiculturalism, which all lead to a stronger Canadian identity through sport involvement. Canada invests in sport because it helps identify the values and traditions of our country and allows us as Canadians to present ourselves proudly to the world, which is seen as an expression of our culture (Task Force on National Sport Policy, 1988).

ix.) Rationale: Team Canada Performance-Excellence

Thirteen of the twenty-three (5-7, 11, 12, 15-18, 20-23) documents refer to the need to improve Canada's excellence both nationally and internationally. Federal sport policies often refer to excellence when Canada is about to host a prestigious

international event like the Olympics in its own country. Two documents (5, 6) in the 1970's mention the need for team excellence because of the dismal performance of the Canadian Team at the 1976 Summer Olympics in Montreal, Quebec. One document (5) mentions that Canada was fourth among the free world countries, which is a sign that improvement is needed. These goals were all an attempt to improve Canadian results at the 1988 Winter Olympics that were held in Calgary, Alberta. Not surprisingly, with the improvement of athlete awareness and knowledge of how to support a team that is meant to win, eight of ten documents (15-18, 20-23) that have been written since the year 2000 mention a need to improve Team Canada's performances internationally.

Excellence cannot be attained unless the whole fabric of Canadian sport is thriving. To that end, coaches, administration, facilities, underprivileged groups, and promotion of sport must all be supported adequately in order for athletes to be successful (Campagnolo, 1979). One of the main reasons for developing the CSCs network across Canada was to provide a leading-edge holistic training environment for the development of elite amateur athletes and their coaches to enable them to achieve podium results (Sport Canada, 1999). The main thrust of the documents mentioning excellence in the year 2000 and beyond is to set targets. To enhance excellence, it is noted that Canada must professionalize the coaching function, integrate the sport system, and set performance objectives and accountability (Sport Canada, 2001a).

x.) Rationale: Underprivileged Groups

Eleven of the twenty-three (5, 7, 9-11, 16-18, 20, 22, 23) documents refer to specific policies that are needed to address the issues of underprivileged groups, such as

people with disabilities, women, and aboriginal peoples. Documents before 1977 do not directly mention a need to put into policy any type of programs for underprivileged groups. Canada created a document strictly addressing gender, the 1986 Sport Canada Policy on Women in Sport, which discusses the importance of promoting opportunities for women, increasing participation, coaches and financial resources for women.⁹

Underprivileged groups are mentioned in sport policy as a way of ensuring inclusion, accessibility, and equity among all people in Canada (Sport Canada, 2001b). Aboriginal participation, the Paralympics, and women's sport have all been strong factors in developing an equitable sport system within Canada, as seen in the creation of the Canadian Sport Policy (Sport Canada, 2002). A large part of government funding to various organizations is based on how well they achieve the goal of inclusion and access to underprivileged groups (Sport Canada, 2004a).

xi.) Rationale: Rules (Formal)

Eighteen of the twenty-three (1-11, 14, 15, 17-20, 23) documents communicate formal rules shaping the Canadian Sport System. Five documents (12, 13, 16, 21, 22) do not contain formal rules because they are discussion papers and have not yet been formalized into policy. A formal rule set in the 1960's (2) was that problems in the Canadian Sport System could be overcome with government assistance. The first formal rule that came with the creation of the 1961 Fitness and Amateur Sport Act (Canada, 1961) was the cost sharing agreement between the provincial and federal

⁹ During the writing of this thesis, a separate policy for Persons with a Disability (Policy on Sport for Persons with a Disability, June, 2006) and for Aboriginal Peoples, (Sport Canada's Policy on Aboriginal Peoples' Participation in Sport May, 2005) has been released by the federal government.

governments to enhance sporting programs in Canada. Thus, a dominant theme that came across in the documents of the late 1960's and the 1970's (2-6) concerning formal rules was to reinforce and improve the administration of amateur sport in Canada and get away from the kitchen table archetype of the era (Munro, 1970). Through the 1970 policy (4), the establishment of the National Administration Centre was created in Ottawa, where most sports housed their NSOs (Munro, 1970).

The 1977 document (5) implies that sport programs emerge in the community, so municipal and provincial authorities are in a position to carry out and nurture these pursuits rather than the federal government. The 1979 White Paper on Sport (6) defines sport as follows,

Sport is a physical activity involving large muscle groups, requiring mental preparation and strategic methods and whose outcome is determined by skill not chance. It occurs in an organized, structured and competitive environment in which a winner is declared (Campagnolo, 1979).

The 1985 document (9) identifies athletes that represent Canada internationally as the responsibility of the federal government and those athletes that aspire to that level as the provincial/territorial government's responsibility (Canada, 1985). Another role identified for the federal government was to assist, support, encourage, promote, and evaluate the development of sport in Canada, not to manage it (Regan, 1981). However, it was expected that once the national goals of the Canadian Sport System were proposed, the federal government would assume a leadership role, declaring the nature and extent of its commitment to the goals and discussing it with all of the major stakeholders (Task Force on the National Sport Policy, 1988). Another rule made by the government was to implement the SDRCC to help ensure athletes and coaches had a venue to air their grievances without fear of retribution, since litigation was deemed

inappropriate in sport (Report of Work Group to the Secretary of State (Amateur Sport), 2000; Canada, 2002b).

xii.) Rationale: Rules (Informal)

Seventeen of the twenty-three (2-4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13-17, 19-23) documents contain informal rules that are implied throughout the Canadian Sport System. The essential characteristic of sport is change, whether it is in competitive level, technical abilities, local competitions or financial needs. The government has consistently been lobbied by proponents of fitness and amateur sport to ensure that sport is accorded a higher priority; however, this is assuming that the public cares enough about sport to have it as one of the main priorities of government (Campagnolo, 1979). The 2001 document, *Expectations for Fairness in Sport*, informally directs that there be a firm and public commitment to the principle that lasting and meaningful athletic performance can only be achieved through fair means (Sport Canada, 2001b).

A dominant theme throughout the documents is that the Canadian Sport System is fragmented and there needs to be a collaborative effort to ensure all partners within the system are working together (Campagnolo, 1979). At no other time in Canadian history has there been a stronger attempt to correct this problem than now, with the creation of Own the Podium (OTP). OTP is a group of sport officials trying to coordinate the major partners in Canada, such as the COC, Sport Canada, and NSOs, to attain the goal of becoming the country that wins the medal count at the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, BC (Sport Canada, 2004b). The creation of OTP was a reaction to the feeling within the Canadian Sport System that elite amateur sport was in a time of crisis (Sport Canada, 2001a).

The first mention of a fragmented system comes from the 1979 White Paper on Sport, which proposes that the government host a congress to bring all concerned parties together and discuss the needs of each partner within the Canadian Sport System. The 2001 document, Towards a Canadian Sport Policy, explains that partnerships are an important resource needing improvement and it became a prominent theme in the document. Thus, the lack of communication, the need for collaboration, and developing policy to ensure partnerships have been dominant informal rules since the late 1960's. A related informal rule is that NSOs depend too heavily on government support, making the management of sport in Canada ineffective because administrators are constantly looking for additional funding (Munro, 1970).

Summary

Sport in Canada in the 1970's can be described as one of increasing administration and bureaucratization. Full-time employees, with degrees in business and sport administration, were taking over for volunteers. Government funds were increasingly going directly towards the administrative end of developing sport, which led to athletes feeling neglected by the administrators. Athletes began to voice their concerns and receive some incentives, such as the softening of the amateur rules. The 1980's was signified by the advent of NSO/Athlete agreements, further restricting athletes and their ability to make an income. Administrators and organizers tried to implement policies that they thought would help athletes succeed, but unless athletes are part of the decision-making process that success may never happen.

The important shift from an administrative focus on Canadian sport to one of an athlete-centred approach has started to happen in government policy creation. It has

taken the government a long time to implement a strong administrative structure for the Canadian Sport System, but perhaps there has been too much focus on administration and sight of the overall goal of producing strong athletes and people through sport has been lost. Early sport documents were very vague and broad, which was a way for government to slowly get involved in elite amateur sport. Many of the policies were continually used as a tool to help delineate the roles of responsibility in sport between the Federal and Provincial/Territorial governments. Government involvement in sport helped develop facilities that would house the administrative structure of sport in Canada. Now the shift is towards working with universities, by using their resources and expertise to help athletes succeed on an international stage. More involvement by all stakeholders in sport, such as athletes, coaches, and medical staff, is starting to take place through conferences, round-table discussions, and ad-hoc committees working towards the betterment of sport in Canada.

CHAPTER 3: ATHLETE INVOLVEMENT IN MULTI-SPORT EVENTS

Sub-Problem #2: How have athletes been involved in the organization of select Multi-Sport Events in Canada?

Introduction

Athletes need administrators, volunteers, and organizers to help manage an event so that they can focus on the job at hand, that of participating in sport. However, athletes who collaborate in organizing an event can potentially help ensure a positive experience for athletes involved in the Games, by providing specific insights into how each particular event can best be managed from an athlete's perspective.

Canada has had the privilege of hosting many major international sport competitions. Three Games examined in this thesis are the 1988 Winter Olympics held in Calgary, Alberta, the 1994 Commonwealth Games held in Victoria, British Columbia, and the 1999 Pan-American Games held in Winnipeg, Manitoba. I examined three international multi-sport events that Canada has organized to see how Canadian officials incorporated athletes into that process.

The Calgary Winter Olympics extended over a three-week time frame from February 13th-28th, 1988. The Games included 57 Nations, 1,423 athletes, 46 events, 9,498 volunteers, and 6,838 media personnel (Anonymous, 2003). The 1988 Games saw the construction of new facilities costing \$500 million, which directly benefited future Canadian athletes, as can be seen in the results of speed skaters and hockey players. As Catriona Le May Doan, Canadian Olympic Gold medalist in speed skating,

explains, "Canadian speed skaters are as good as they are because of the 1988 Games" (as cited in Anonymous, 2003).

The Victoria Commonwealth Games ran from August 18th-28th, 1994. One of the official purposes of the Commonwealth Games reads, 'for the unifying of the Empire (British) when needed on any international problems that might arise' (Bedecki, 1971). These Games included 51 Nations, 3,200 athletes, 10 official sports, and 892 officials. According to Wood (1994), George Heller, the president of the Commonwealth Games, attempted to cap the Games at \$160 million and, similarly to the Calgary Olympics, leave a legacy like the Olympic Oval in the form of a \$23 million diving and swimming pool complex plus new apartments for University of Victoria students. Victoria could also boast the historical inclusion of six official events for athletes with a disability (Proudfoot, 1994).

The Pan-American Games are a series of athletic contests patterned after the Olympic Games and supported by the countries of the western hemisphere. These Games are celebrated, usually in the summer, in the year prior to the Olympic Games (Bedecki, 1971). The Winnipeg Pan-Am Games took place from July 23rd-August 9th, 1999. In addition to over 5,000 athletes and 3,000 support staff from 42 countries, 1,500 visiting technical officials, 15,000 volunteers, and 2,000 media personnel attended the 17 day event (Bergman, 1999; Ferguson, 1998).

Multi-sport events have proved to be a very effective means of leveraging major financial commitments from federal, provincial, and municipal governments, and national and international private sectors. The economic impact for the local organizing committees has been considerable. The hosting of the 1988 Calgary Winter

Olympics created 28,000 person-years of employment and had a \$1.3 billion impact on the Canadian economy (Mills, 1998). The influx of foreign visitors also gave the city of Calgary a more international presence, since more than half of the 155,000 visitors to the city were from other countries.

Prior to the 1994 Commonwealth Games, there had not been a formal position for athletes on any of the organizing committees of major Games (AthletesCAN, 2004). In 1994, AthletesCAN, then known as the Canadian Athletes Association, worked with the Major Games organizations to establish an Athlete Advocate position for all future Games. This position was in place for the 1994 Commonwealth Games held in Victoria, BC (AthletesCAN, 2004).

According to Senn (1999), it was the athletes who made the early Olympic Games a success, so why not allow the athletes to be included in the organization of the Games? Espy (1979) explains that an individual may be a member of an organization, but if he/she has no input into that organization he/she is likely to be misrepresented. The sport organizations are not actually organizations of athletes, which they purport to be, but rather are bureaucratic administrative entities.

Methodology and Directional Proposition for Sub-Problem #2

The Calgary Olympics were known as one of the best organized Games ever, but from whose perspective? Direct athlete involvement in organizing the event seems to be limited, which would lead me to believe that there may be a distinct difference in the actual operations of these Games compared to the 1994 and 1999 Games, where athlete advocates were in attendance. Most news articles report mainly on the economic success of the 1988 Calgary Games and not on the intrinsic success felt by

the athletes, which is where I expected to find the biggest difference between the three Games being researched. The quality of the 1994 and 1999 Games should have been significantly different in the quality of execution compared to that of the 1988 Games, from an athlete's perspective, because of direct athlete involvement in the organization of the event. Through my interviews, I expected to find a difference in attitude of the organizers of the events and the athletes, with respect to how critical athlete involvement is in the organization of the Games.

Athletes

Following a pilot interview to ensure the suitability of my interview guide, I conducted interviews (see appendix E) with two Olympic, two Commonwealth, and two Pan-American athletes who were actual competitors in the Games being studied. I received confirmation from both a male and female athlete from each event willing to participate in an interview for this study. The criteria for choosing these participants included the individual's willingness to participate and participation in one of the three specific Games. The following is a list of participants:

1988 Winter Olympic Games Calgary, Alberta

A-1¹⁰ Rod Garassino - ATHLETE (Ice Dancer)

A-2 Kathy Salmon - ATHLETE (Luge)

1994 Commonwealth Games Victoria, BC

A-3 Trevino Betty - ATHLETE (Long Jump)

A-4 Stacey Galloway - ATHLETE (Gymnast)

¹⁰ I have identified each athlete with the letter A and a number to easily identify each time an athlete was included in the results on a particular topic.

1999 Pan-Am Games Winnipeg, Manitoba

A-5 Ian Bird – ATHLETE (Field Hockey)

A-6 Susane Dandenault – ATHLETE (Weight Lifting)

During the interviews, I gained a better understanding of each individual's level of athlete advocacy and their personal views on what athletes need to be better leaders, on what an appropriate athlete role in organizing the International Games they attended was and should be for future Games. Each of the athletes has also allowed their names to be used within this thesis.

Organizers

I collected data from three different events, the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics, the 1994 Victoria Commonwealth Games, and the 1999 Winnipeg Pan-American Games, therefore, this study can be referred to as a collective case study (Creswell, 1998). After completing a pilot interview to ensure the suitability of my interview guide, I conducted interviews with key players involved in each of the three Games (See appendix F). I conducted interviews with two top-level organizational figures from each of the three different Games involved in the study. The participant's experience ranged from positions of the president of operations to Vice-President of Sport for the Games. The following is a list of participants:

1988 Winter Olympic Games Calgary, Alberta

O-1¹¹ Bill France-ORGANIZER

O-2 Bill Warren-ORGANIZER

¹¹ I have identified each organizer with the letter O and a number to easily identify each time an organizer was included in the results on a particular topic.

1994 Commonwealth Games Victoria, BC

O-3 Dave Carmichael-ORGANIZER

O-4 Bruce Wasyluk-ORGANIZER

1999 Pan-Am Games Winnipeg, Manitoba

O-5 Mike Moore-ORGANIZER

O-6 Randy Anderson-ORGANIZER

I contacted each of the three different committees involved in organizing these events, the Calgary Olympic Development Association, Commonwealth Games Canada (CGC), and the CSC-Manitoba, to ascertain the information needed to contact the appropriate people. I confirmed each participant's acceptance to let his name be used in this thesis.

The data are categorized into two main units. The first unit is the concept of 'athlete-centred', which is further broken down into definitions, policies discovered in the interviews, and involvement in the Canadian Sport System. The second unit is the historical presence of athletes involved in the organization of multi-sport events. This second unit is broken down further into the athlete's involvement from 1988 to 1999, the selection process, and the benefits/problems of having athletes involved. The resulting ideas provide a new way of understanding the experience of athlete representatives within the Canadian Sport System and it is this understanding that can contribute toward the development of improved policies, programs, and structures for creating effective athlete leaders. To ensure clarity, I have italicized direct quotes from the interviewees.

Delimitations and Limitations: Athlete Involvement

For the purposes of this thesis, I have delimited the focus of research to Canadian content that includes the hosting of three international multi-sport events. The three events were held in Calgary 1988, Victoria 1994, and Winnipeg 1999. These events were organized by committees comprised of Canadian officials who were accessible for interviews. The participants I chose to interview were all directly involved in the Games being studied. I believe that the hosting of International Games is the prime example for organizing events due to the size of the event, so using the information collected from this research could help future Games developers.

Resulting limitations are the narrow focus of looking at only multi-sport events that Canada has hosted, instead of choosing to look at other events such as World Championships for specific sports. The interviewees were a sample of convenience due to my internal knowledge of the sport system. The resulting limitation is that participants' answers are not representative of all athletes throughout the sport system. As well, some answers might be skewed because of each participant's knowledge of my position concerning athlete advocacy.

Athletes

When choosing athletes for interviews, I was able to ensure both genders from various sports. I was able to secure both a male and a female from each of the Games but I was limited concerning how much knowledge each of these athletes might actually have on the topic of athlete advocacy. However, if top level athletes participating in the Olympic Games, Pan-American Games, or Commonwealth Games do not have a clear vision of athlete advocacy or involvement then how can we assume

grassroots level athletes will fare any better? Athletes come from different sports, so each person might have a different perspective on athlete advocacy since the athlete's organization may have dealt with him or her differently. Their views on athlete advocacy would have been shaped in part by how they perceived their NSOs dealt with situations directly affecting their careers.

Organizers

Having chosen three of the biggest Games Canada could host, the generalization of how to involve athletes in the decision-making process could potentially be transferred to National events, such as Canada Winter Games, Francophone Games, and Provincial Summer Games. All the organizers I interviewed are male and this limitation was due to availability, as unfortunately, there were no females holding the top position of Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Vice-President of Sport for the Games being studied. I delimited my search to top level executives with the assumption that these people would be in power positions when making decisions for athlete involvement. A resulting limitation would be the narrow focus of having the perspective of only top level males provided by my interview process, which would preclude any input from underprivileged groups, such as women and people with a disability.

Results: Athlete Involvement

Interview Analysis: Introduction

I have obtained information from six athletes and six organizers involved in international multi-sport events held in Canada. After conducting my pilot interviews with an athlete who attended both the 1988 and 1992 Summer Olympic Games, as well

as an organizer who was involved in numerous university and multi-sport Games throughout the world, I completed my anticipated twelve interviews.

The average length of each interview was 42 minutes, ranging from 26 minutes to 67 minutes. The questions were open-ended so the length of interview was based on how much information each participant could provide. In order to keep the methodology for my thesis consistent, I completed twelve telephone interviews due to limited time and my inability to travel all over Canada to set up face-to-face interviews.¹²

Subject Profile Overview

All participants in this study are Canadian citizens with one being born in Jamaica. Their average age is 45.6 years, ranging from 29 to 66 years old. All twelve participants have university degrees at the bachelor level and three participants have master's degrees (A2, O2, O5). Five participants (A5, A6, O2, O4, O6), two of whom are athletes, currently work in paid positions within the Canadian Sport System; the other seven work in various industries in Canada.

Subject Involvement Overview

1988 Winter Olympics

Bill Warren was a volunteer on the bid committee responsible for sport as well as drafting commercial agreements with sponsors, television and the three levels of government. He is now currently working as an arbitrator in Calgary, Alberta. Bill France was in the paid position of Vice-President of Sport for the Games and is

¹² My initial plan was to do face-to-face interviews but that became problematic with the interviewees' schedules and with my own athletic competitive schedule; telephone interviews were the most convenient and accessible method for interviewing.

currently the Director of Sport and Recreation at the Canada Olympic Park in Calgary. Rod Garassino was a figure skating athlete in the Ice Dance Event, but had no involvement in the organization of those Games. Rod is currently an advisor of community investments for the ENCANA Corp in Calgary, Alberta. Kathy Salmon started off working as a volunteer in the luge and race office, but then actually qualified as an athlete in the Women's Luge Event for the 1988 and 1992 Winter Olympics. Kathy is currently a teacher at the English as a Second Language (ESL) Centre of Inquiry in Calgary, Alberta.

1994 Commonwealth Games

Dave Carmichael was a paid consultant for the overall operations of the Games, dealing with its organizational structure as well as being the manager responsible for the athlete's village. Dave is currently the superintendent of aviation services for British Columbia Ambulance Services. Bruce Wasylik was in the paid position of Vice-President of Sport that dealt with technical preparations for all sports involved in the Games. He is currently working as a sport consultant with the province of British Columbia. Trevino Betty was a track and field athlete who competed internationally for Canada from 1991 to 1999. His role in 1994 was as an athlete in the long jump event of Track and Field with no involvement in the organization of those Games. Trevino is currently an associate store manager for Sears in Toronto, Ontario. Stacey Galloway was an athlete in three different gymnastics events at the 1994 Games, the floor, the vault and the bars, but had no involvement in the organization of those Games. Stacey is currently working as a sales executive for Purolator Courier in Toronto, Ontario.

1999 Pan-American Games

Mike Moore was in the paid position of co-chair of the bid committee and the sport and facilities committee. Mike is currently the regional director for the Nature Conservancy of Canada, Manitoba region. Randy Anderson was in a paid position of manager of sport technical packages liaising with all involved sports. Randy is currently the general manager of the CSC-Manitoba. Ian Bird competed for Canada internationally in the sport of Field Hockey from 1987 to 2000. In 1999 he qualified as part of the Field Hockey Team, however, he had no involvement in the organization of that event. Ian is currently the senior leader of the Sport Matters Group in Ottawa, Ontario. Susane Dandenault was an athlete in the weight lifting event. Susane was also the athlete's representative on the sport technical committee dealing directly with venue and scheduling management. Susane is currently an articling student in law at the University of Manitoba.

Results: Athlete-Centred Analysis

Introduction

The following section is divided up into three main sections: Athlete-centred analysis, policies analysis, and athlete involvement analysis. I will first describe the results of the athletes followed by the organizers in each section. The last part of each section will be an overall discussion of the concept, as well as describing the differences and similarities between the athletes and organizers.

Athlete-Centred: Athlete Results

The two athletes from the 1988 Games both noted that the Canadian Sport System seemed very limited in its resources, its vision of its operations, and the amount

of funding provided for athletes. The focus was much more on participatory involvement or the recreational level, which had been a government focus for many years, but they felt there was a definite neglect towards high performance elite amateur athletes as a theme in the 1980's. As Rod Garassino states, "*There were opportunities for more recreational participation in sport that existed parallel to a more competitive stream, which gave people all the benefits of sport participation*". Both athletes (A1, A2) stated that a truly athlete-centred sport system would empower athletes in terms of their development and participation on boards within an organization. Active athletes should be able to make a significant contribution to policy development, decision-making, and the overall direction in which the sport is going (A1).

Both athletes who participated in the 1994 Games felt that the government had done a very poor job of supporting its elite athletes, leading to poor performances internationally. High expectations from government and sport leaders cannot be realistic without proper support going to athletes, especially considering what other countries are giving to their athletes. The infrastructure needs to be developed to a point where athletes are not considered second class citizens who need to work extra jobs just to pay for their pursuit of excellence (A3). In an athlete-centred sport system, there should be athlete representation right from the grassroots level. As Trevino Betty explains, "*We should even have athletes in the political ministries that decide issues on sport and I think that is what it means to be athlete-centred is making sure you [sport organizations] follow the path of the athlete right from the beginning to the end*". Getting involved right from the start would help athletes understand the system and know who to lobby to get extra funds or make a rule into policy. Both athletes noted

that athlete-centred should mean providing enough financial stability for athletes to be able to compete well internationally and not have to worry about daily living expenses.

The two athletes from the 1999 Games have a lot more experience within the Canadian Sport System than the participants from the other Games being interviewed. Both have been involved in sport as athletes, volunteers and paid administrators on various committees and companies, which has contributed to their belief that the system is very poorly managed and operated. Susane Dandenault summarizes the way the system works as,

People in the system really don't know what everybody else does and we [sport organizations] do a lot of the same things, so a lot of repeat services that seem to be a waste, so it's not a coordinated effort, it's a web, it's just everywhere and is obviously producing some results but for the most part it is inefficient. The inefficiency could be because the system works through a variety of networks that makes communication between each group difficult.

The athletes believe an athlete-centred system must involve athletes at all levels of decision-making, right from provincial to international. As Ian Bird suggests,

An athlete-centred sport system is supporting athletes really from a rights based first perspective that needs athlete involvement in decision-making so that they are not just a recipient of programs and services but a driver of them and a partner in the development of policy.

Athletes need to have a voice within the system and organizers, administrators and officials in the system need to start making those opportunities available (A5).

Five of the six participants (A1, A2, A3, A5, A6) believe that the Canadian Sport System has become more athlete-centred. The one athlete, Stacey Galloway, who does not think the system has changed, responded:

I just see, you know, the same old thing, you have to register for the meet, money comes out of your own pocket, you have to fly yourself there and things have not changed in that way, which you would think they would of with the times moving forward since I retired in 1995.

However, five (A1, A2, A3, A5, A6) did say the system has become more athlete-centred due to several reasons, such as: the softening of the amateur rules, which has allowed athletes to stay in sport a lot longer than in the past when athletes were retiring around the age of nineteen to twenty-one; getting athletes involved at the committee and board level; and the creation of AthletesCAN and their advocacy work with the government and NSOs. Around the age of nineteen to twenty-one, athletes had to make a decision as to whether or not they would continue in sport or attend school. Rod Garassino mentioned that, "*Older athletes are not going to be willing to be pawns in a system that they are not participating in*". Since the creation of AthletesCAN and their fight for 20% representation of athletes on all boards and committees within the sports system, athletes are becoming a greater presence at all levels of sport in Canada (A5). But as Trevino Betty suggests, "*We are moving in the right direction but we cannot lose focus of the goal and we must create a program that is sustainable to not allow athletes to become disgruntled within the system that is athlete-centred*".

Athlete-Centred: Organizer Results

Three of the six organizers (O2, O5, O6) mentioned that the Canadian Sport System was very fragmented in its operations. One organizer (O3) mentioned a disconnection between people administrating sport and the people actually participating in sport. Bill France explains, "*I think we have a very fragmented Canadian Sport System, it is too bureaucratic, there are too many people involved, too many egos involved, and too many people in the system for the wrong reasons*". Many administrators lose sight of the bigger picture of putting athletes first and attaining the

ultimate goal of producing the best athlete to put out on the field. The fragmentation of the system leads to many problems, such as repetition of services, prolonged decisions due to convoluted networks, and poor programs developed without the key stakeholders in sport (O1, O2, O3, O5, O6). Sport organizations are heavily dependent on government funding, which is strongly motivated by politics. As Bill Warren states, *“Healthy people reduce health care costs so instead of throwing all of their [government] money at health costs would it not make more sense that they put their support to people who are becoming global role models for a healthier lifestyle?”* Sport and recreation are things the government can focus on to improve international sporting results and lifestyles of all Canadians, which are both goals stated in the new Canadian Sport Policy (2002).

The Canadian Sport System is heavily dependent on funding that can come from government, private sponsors and public donations. All of the organizers pointed out that the dependency on government for funding becomes very problematic. Mike Moore states,

We are badly under funded, we try to be fair and fund everybody a little bit but we give everybody an insufficient amount of funding rather than focusing in on the sports that we actually have a chance of succeeding at and give them full funding, so basically we have a sport system that works to a degree but it does not work well enough.

The abundant amount of sport agencies we have in this country leads to the problem of having too little funds for so many organizations (O4). That fear was expressed by organizers - that athletes need to be careful of not over-saturating the government with too many athlete councils and instead concentrate on using a collective voice, such as AthletesCAN to fully leverage the financial contribution received from government

sources. Having too many athlete councils or groups can dilute the message athletes are trying to convey; that they are an important part of the Canadian Sport System and need the necessary funding to become successful internationally (O4).

Five of the six organizers (O1, O3, O4, O5, O6) think that the Canadian Sport System has become more athlete-centred. The one organizer (O2) who does not believe the system has become more athlete-centred thinks that there is still too much bureaucracy and athletes are just receiving lip service from administrators. However, people like Dave Carmichael believe the system has changed because, as he states, "*I think the thing that has led to a more athlete-centred system is getting people in place who really believe in the concept*". One way these people might have been put into place, mentioned by three (O4, O5, O6) of the organizers, was by having AthletesCAN present at the decision-making table to push the idea of 'athlete-centred' and to pressure NSOs to have 20% representation of athletes on all boards and committees.

Athletes' coming together as a collective voice for the betterment of their training conditions within the sport system through AthletesCAN has been a very strong catalyst for change and improvement for athletes (O4). Also, Mike Moore describes the changes to becoming a more athlete-centred sport system as,

Unfortunately it took a number of things, I think we had a huge wake-up call after the Montreal Olympics when we bombed horribly and in 1972 when the Russians almost beat us [hockey], I think it was a wake-up call to spend more time and money on the Canadian Sport System.

At that point in history (the 1970's), the organizers agreed that athletes were too reluctant to complain, be critical, or voice their opinions because they were afraid of being reprimanded or blackballed by the administrators who they believed decided their future in the sport (O4, O6). The system has changed significantly, in that athletes

today do have an opportunity to voice their opinions during board and committee meetings that have become more commonplace. There is an appreciation by the leaders of NSOs and Multi-Sport Organizations (MSOs), like the COC, that athletes do have a role to play. Bill Warren explains, *“Often if athletes do not buy into the decisions by the board of directors you have not got anywhere and our job is to make good decisions and we make better decisions with athlete input”*.

All of the organizers noted that they envision an athlete-centred system where athletes are looked at for leadership positions on boards, committees and organizing groups. An effort from administrators, officials, and sponsors to involve athletes at all levels of decision-making would be of paramount importance in an athlete-centred sport system (O1, O4, O5, O6). Athletes need to be consulted and made to feel they have an avenue through which their concerns are heard without the fear of negative ramifications for their actions. Bill France describes an athlete-centred system as follows,

We have to deliver as an agency and to do that you have got to have some centres around the country, something that is happening, that will have everything that the athlete needs from nutrition to medicine to psychology, everything that they need to prepare themselves to get on the playing field and do the very best they can.

These centres have been referred to by all of the organizers, in that they must be fully funded in order to properly service the athlete or else they are still going to struggle to be the best in the world. One important note for the envisioned athlete-centred sport system is that athletes will also have to be held accountable and be made to take part in the hard decisions that will need to be made (O4). It is not financially feasible for the country to fund all sports the same so as Mike Moore states, *“Hard decisions have to be*

made that will allow us to centre on those athletes and those sports in which it is worth investing our time and money at the elite level". This is not to say that some athletes will be left out of the system all together; rather they will have to accept their place within the broader goals of the Canadian Sport System.

Status of Athletes: Athlete Results

The theme from both of the 1988 athletes was the commoditization of athletes. As soon as an athlete did well internationally, their status rose significantly but as soon as they failed so did their status. As Kathy Salmon states, *"I remember the expression 'you feel like a pawn in a chess game'".* Officials would constantly change their alliances as soon as an athlete performed well or poorly. At that time in sport, athletes were not in the same league as coaches, organizers or officials. The rules surrounding amateurs were still very rigid in the 1980's so neither athlete in this study from the 1988 Games felt any kind of status from their involvement in sport. As Rod Garassino states, *"I think it was a choice an athlete made to sacrifice that other part of your life for pursuit of a sport career, although there was a feeling or a sense of delaying growing up, it was a temporary thing, just something you did while you could afford it".*

Both participants from the 1994 Games believe athletes are treated well now [2006], but compared to other countries, Canada still needs to work on the level of financial support it gives to high performance athletes. All six athletes believe that athletes today enjoy a higher status than coaches because of the shift of focus to athlete-centred thinking and performance. However, with the new shift in thinking, three of the six athletes (A3, A5, A6) did mention the importance of keeping coaching as a priority as well, since they are a very important piece of the puzzle for athletes to

achieve success. Athletes are in a significantly improved position that revolves around three key issues. Ian Bird notes,

Athlete-centeredness has been a key driver for how best sports programming is developed, and it continues to show up in critical processes. Secondly, fiscal policy effort by the federal government is at an all time high that presents a legitimate opportunity for athletes to train full time due to the increase in AAP funding. And the third thing, I guess there is an emerging appreciation that the system can be more responsive further downstream with the athletes that are just developing and are not quite at the national level yet.

Trevino Betty believes that,

The biggest issues right now are a lack of infrastructure, a lack of facilities, a lack of good coaches, and then athletes come next. If I were to restructure the funding pyramid, I guess I would put facilities first, programs for coaches next, and then athlete support.

All six participants agreed that there was little difference between professional athletes and amateur athletes other than the fact that professionals make a lot more money and enjoy the media spotlight much more. The values of wanting to be the best, winning, and dedication are similar but the end result for professionals is ultimately tied to entertainment, whereas the broader society believes elite sport to be more intrinsically based for amateurs. Susane Dandenault explains,

I think professional sports have the spotlight, it takes away from amateur athletes and that is the problem. I think that is why sport is so successful in other countries is because that is the crux of their athleticism is amateur sports. They don't have the billions of dollars spent each year in various leagues.

All of the athletes thought that athletes generally, do not get compensation for their training comparable to what regular employees in society receive. Kathy Salmon states, *"Financially, well, I would say you [the elite amateur athlete] are below the standards of living, most athletes live below the established standard of living and it*

has been shown in other research". Three of the six athletes (A1, A2, A3) believe that athletes develop skills, such as being self-motivated, self-disciplined, and having an ability to look at things with a positive perspective, which make athletes better employees than the regular person. Two of the athletes (A5, A6) pointed out that athletes do not have the same job security as the regular employee, in that elite amateur athletes must qualify every year to ensure their position on the team and injuries can play into those decisions. In contrast to this, employees can sign a contract and depend on unemployment insurance if anything bad happens physically while at work.

Status of Athletes: Organizer Results

The organizers from the 1988 Games believe the athletes are at the bottom of the pecking order. An analogy was made by Bill Warren, "*Athletes in the Canadian Sport System are at a parallel to students in the education system where they are at the bottom*". Both organizers from the 1994 Games claimed that athletes are the centre of the sport system. Money guides most of the decisions within the system, and there are many organizations looking to the same source for funds, the government. However, all of these requests for funding should be based on an athlete-centred model. The allocation of money by governments is too heavily motivated by politics and not by any sort of vision for the citizens of our country (O1). Administrators constantly fighting for government funding should always keep as their focus that the reason they are constantly struggling for funds is for the athlete and their pursuit of excellence. There was an overriding feeling from these two organizers (O3, O4) that there are NSOs out there that have moved towards an honest athlete-centred way of thinking, thereby

improving conditions for athletes within their organizations. Bruce Wasylik explains why athletes have been successful,

I think when you make those tough decisions [which sports receive funding or which athlete gets selected for a particular Games] people are looking for positive news and athletes are a positive source of information and I think that is why people [the public and government] have started to listen to athletes more and why athletes have been slowly emerging as leaders in sport.

The organizers from the 1999 Games both agree that athletes have done very well for themselves due in large part to AthletesCAN. As Mike Moore explains,

I describe the status of athletes as even better than coaches, we do not recognize coaching as much of a profession in this country, so in many cases they are even a lower class citizen than an athlete because an athlete can always say I am tired of competing and go get a real job whereas for the coach, that is his real job.

These two organizers (O5, O6) believed we were pampering our athletes too much and we need to find a middle ground, which could be why the term ‘athlete-centred, coached and performance based’ was created, to ensure athlete accountability.

A theme established by all of the organizers is that elite amateur athletes differ from professional athletes in two very different ways. First, amateurs do not earn the same amount of money professionals do, which makes their lives a lot tougher, since participating in sport is not usually an amateur’s means of making a living. Secondly, amateurs do not get the same type of media exposure that professional media coverage provides, which enables more opportunities for professional athletes to benefit financially from sponsorship. Bill Warren believes, “*the media has created an aura for the professional players to benefit from financially that we have not succeeded in creating an aura around our elite amateur athletes with the exception of, for example, Catriona Le May Doan*”. The overall feeling of all six organizers was that an

amateur's life is tougher than a professional, but there is also a sense that emotionally, amateurs are a lot more passionate and dedicated to their goals than any professional. This could be tied to the way the media has portrayed professional athletes as being spoiled and highly overpaid (O1).

Four of the six organizers (O1, O2, O3, O4) believe that athletes have a far greater degree of passion towards their work than a regular employee in society. Dave Carmichael explains, "*Other workers in society could learn from the elite amateur athletes in that they have interests outside of work but their level of dedication and level of work performed day after day after day is something frankly that I admire*". Both organizers (O5, O6) from the 1999 Games believe that athletes are very poorly compensated for the amount of work and dedication they have towards their goals.

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives of 'Athlete-Centred' and Status of Athletes

The government's role in assisting a broader participatory base for all Canadians could quite possibly be the reason so many elite amateur athletes felt neglected and said they did not receive the kind of funding needed to excel on the international stage. The main similarity between the athletes and the organizers is their claim that elite amateur athletes have been badly under funded in their pursuit of excellence. However, a shift has definitely occurred that can be correlated directly to financial assistance and the average age of athletes who stay in sport, which is longer than ever before. Bill France noted that, "*Canada needs a neutral body that is not tied to government or the Canadian Olympic Committee and will make the 'hard'*

decisions".¹³ This quote is noteworthy because of the strong sentiment expressed that the Canadian Sport System is fragmented and the suggestion that having this one neutral governing body could help alleviate some of the problems. That was the main difference between the athletes and organizers: the organizers, having worked in the system, could see the disconnection of services that athletes felt but did not understand. This explains why some athletes feel so frustrated with the support they receive, because of the fragmentation of the service delivery given to athletes.

A similarity between the athletes and organizers was that AthletesCAN was mentioned as one of the main catalysts for change in the Canadian Sport System. This collective voice has been seen by both groups as being the core of an athlete-centred sport system, where athletes are consistently called upon to participate on committees, boards of directors, and important decision-making processes. There was, however, a feeling from the organizers of the 1999 Games that athletes have been pampered and should be held more accountable for their actions and results. This could be because AthletesCAN, which was created in 1992, finally made some progress in a short period of time to improve the conditions for athletes to the point where funding, competitive opportunities, and accessibility were all becoming more favourable for the athlete.

The lines between amateur and professional are becoming more and more blurred because, as Bill France states, "*There is no really true amateurism anymore*". However, there is a distinct portrayal of athletes that represent professional teams versus those athletes who are competing to represent their country in the Olympic,

¹³ Own the Podium is such an organization, which has been created due to a perceived need for success at the 2010 Winter Olympics to be held in Vancouver, BC

Commonwealth, or Pan American Games. Athletes in professional sports are more fortunate financially than elite amateur athletes. One major reason why finances are better for professionals is that the media coverage afforded to them is greater than for elite amateur athletes. Amateurs obviously struggle with finances because there just is not as much money to be made in sport for amateurs as there is for professionals (A1).

Policies: Athlete Results

Of the six athlete participants, four of them (A2, A3, A5, A6) could name a Canadian sport document that mentions the term athlete-centred. However, Rod Garassino stated, *“The term athlete-centred has been around longer than it’s actually been part of the everyday workings in sport [policy]”*. The CSCs, the COC, the CGC, and AthletesCAN were all organizations identified by interviewees as having documents that mention athlete-centred and having done a good job developing athlete councils, athlete representatives, and opportunities for athletes to sit on various committees.

The two athletes from 1999 and one athlete from 1994 (A3) mentioned AthletesCAN and their contribution to athlete-centred thinking in Canada, which would make sense since it was only created in 1992, after the retirement of the athletes involved in the 1988 Games. Due to Ian Bird’s employment with the Sport Matters Group, he was able to identify some documents that no other athletes could: *“Ann Peel was the author of the document from AthletesCAN, the early kind of flagship paper on athlete-centred thinking, the Mill’s Report, and I am pretty sure you can see it in the Canadian Sport Policy”*.

The athletes all stated that the thought of athlete-centred is more an idea rather than something that has actually been implemented. However, it does show up in a myriad of ways, such as how the CSCs design their services to meet the needs of athletes, how media knows when to leave athletes alone during a competition, and how athletes are slowly being placed on committees, which had not been done before (A6). As Trevino Betty describes, "*The government takes an idea and some information but then there is not follow-through, if there were no [concrete] recommendations then there was no follow-through*". Things are slowly changing, especially with the creation of the Canadian Sport Policy and the creation of the Physical Activity and Sport Act (2003) legislation to create a SDRCC; the gap between creation and actual implementation is closing. As Kathy Salmon states, "*A document might be in print, but it is not been acted on so I think it's still back and forth, but at least having it documented and having athletes at the table, hopefully these ideas of athlete-centeredness will continue to get pushed through*".

Policies: Organizer Results

The shift from informal (i.e. unspoken assumption) rule to formal (i.e. written) rule was a theme expressed from the organizers' perspective. A consensus from the organizers was that the CSCs, the CGC, and AthletesCAN are the three organizations that are really focusing on the athlete-centred mentality in the Canadian Sport System. The new idea that is coming into thought is that of 'athlete-centred, coach-led, and performance based'. All six organizers said they knew of documents within the Canadian Sport System that mention athlete-centred thinking, but could not name them

specifically, other than to say that it is included in the CSCs' mission statements (O2, O5, O6).

As far as implementation goes, all of the organizers believe that the policies have been used in a limited way; people could follow these guidelines much closer, but we are still working towards a better system. Bill Warren explains,

I think we have to look back to the early 1990's and compare now to then and I think we would see a significant improvement. I am not suggesting that we're there yet but if 10 is optimum we might have been a 2 or 3, we're probably at a 6 or 7 now and there is still work to be done.

There have been good intentions for implementing or creating a daily work atmosphere of athlete-centeredness, but due to the fragmentation and bureaucracy of the Canadian Sport System, some issues are dealt with first that require the attention of administrators, such as submitting forms for government funding, which distracts them from concentrating on issues that will better athlete conditions in the system (O4, O6).

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives on Policies

The two athletes from the 1999 Games (A5, A6), as well as one from the 1994 Games (A3) seemed more familiar with the actual documents and the creation of AthletesCAN than the athletes prior to 1992. Stacey Galloway, a gymnast, who did not know any documents, was very young at the time in the sport of gymnastics and states, *"being, I guess, a kid in sports you just kind of think of going to the next meet, you train hard, and go to the next meet, you do not really think of all the funding and that background stuff"*. The main similarity between the athletes and the organizers was a common unfamiliarity with the actual documents. None of the organizers could name any of the athlete-centred documents but knew they were out there because of having read them. There is a sense that these policies or initiatives get overlooked on a daily

basis when other immediate needs such as funding, personnel, and administration need to be dealt with first. It is possible, since many of the athletes and organizers are not familiar with the names of the documents, that they read the document once and never really use it as a guide in daily administration of athlete programs.

All six organizers were well aware of the concept of athlete-centred thinking, but do not believe that the term has been fully adopted into daily administration. A dominant theme among all six organizers is that the documents mentioned (Canadian Sport Policy, Mill's Report, and AthletesCAN Leadership manual) or organizations mentioned (CSC, COC, CGC, and AthletesCAN) that are really spearheading the implementation of the athlete-centred doctrine were created as a result of athlete needs or athlete-centred documentation. One main difference between the athletes and organizers was the mention of a fragmented Canadian Sport System by the organizers that the athletes did not mention. The fragmented approach seems to have some affect on the way sport is delivered in Canada, in that an athlete-centred mentality gets overlooked when establishing programs for elite amateur athletes. However, there was an overall sentiment that when athletes use their collective voice, as AthletesCAN has done, the results are clear in getting support for elite amateur athletes (O1-O6).

Involvement in Canadian Sport System: Athlete Results

All of the athletes who participated in the three Games being studied have been involved in the Canadian Sport System at various levels and positions. All of them have volunteered at one point or another, either as officials, coaches, or judges within their own sports or sometimes in multi-sport events. The athletes and Games selected in this study are a cross section of Summer and Winter sports, so although there will be

obvious differences in athlete answers, it provides insights on a broader display of problems within the whole Canadian Sport System, even though the participant base is rather small.

One of the athletes from the 1988 Games (A2) was on an athlete advisory committee, volunteered for the COC, and the 1999 Pan-American Games. Both participants from the 1994 Commonwealth Games only really started volunteering their time after their competitive careers were completed, and became volunteers within the CGC, International CGC (A3), and AthletesCAN (A3).¹⁴ The two athletes who participated in the 1999 Pan-American Games both volunteered, one during her time as an active athlete, as well as after her athletic career, and the other athlete only after he was finished competing. Both competitors (A5, A6) have been involved with the AthletesCAN organization, one as a board member (A5), and one as the Chair (A6). An emerging trend among all athletes involved in this study is that they have all been a part of the Canadian Sport System for an average of more than twenty years.

Involvement in Canadian Sport System: Organizer Results

Neither of the two organizers from the 1988 Games mentioned any athletic background at the elite level; however, both have been involved on the administrative side for more than twenty-five years, one as president of the COC for seven years (A1). These two men worked with various committees from the Olympics to National level sport events. The two organizers involved with the 1994 Games have had previous experience as athletes from university to elite level competition. One of the organizers (O4) has also had experience coaching athletes, which shapes the way he will

administer sport in Canada because of his unique perspective of having lived on the margins similarly to elite amateur athletes. Both organizers from the 1999 Pan-American Games have had athletic experience at the university and professional level. Randy Anderson played professional volleyball in Europe for two years. Volunteer coaching was also prevalent, involving four of the six participants (O2, O4, O5, O6).

Every organizer strongly recommended that athletes be included at both the bid stage and the organization stage. Bill Warren explains why,

Athletes who are involved in the bid process are there for show purposes. In the organization of the Games, I think it is a completely different situation. Athletes are there once again for the purposes of telling the guys in suits with the grey hair what this [the event] is all about. The guys in suits will factor the costs but athletes have got to be engaged in the process of defining the event from their perspective.

Athletes need to be involved, but it was pointed out that coaches should also be a part of the process to help plan travel, training, and nutritional needs of the athletes during the Games. In many cases, having these people involved will save the organizers time and money because they will benefit from the experience the athletes and coaches have had from going to many previous events or Games. The emerging theme was that people who have experienced a Games from an athletic viewpoint should definitely be involved in organizing future Games. As Dave Carmichael states, *“I would say you want to get a good spread in ages of athletes and I was lucky enough to do that. Some of the people competed years ago and some just competed in the last Olympics”*. It would be effective to have athletes at all levels of the organization to ensure everybody is working towards staging an event that is truly athlete-centred (O6).

¹⁴ Trevino Betty was recently elected the Vice-President of AthletesCAN, October 1st, 2006.

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives of Involvement in Canadian Sport System

The first similarity among both athletes and organizers is that the knowledge base of the group spans more than twenty years of experience in various different settings within sport. However, a difference is that the organizers did have more involvement, which spans over fifty years in the Canadian Sport System. An overall consensus is that the group learned about the Canadian Sport System by living within it. Their progress was mainly by trial and error, with very few having attended school with degrees directly related to sport or management. Another similarity is that all of the athletes and organizers have volunteered within the Canadian Sport System. The Canadian Sport System depends heavily on volunteers and it has only been successful because as a country we are lucky that so many people come out and give up their time for sport.

An interesting difference between the athletes and organizers was the amount of experience the organizers actually had as elite amateur athletes. Two of the organizers (O1, O2) had no experience, whereas the organizers from the 1994 Games had a little more experience and the 1999 organizers had the most, including one playing in a professional league (O6). All of the athletes interviewed obviously had experience at the elite level so their experiences would hopefully carry over into their volunteer work and facilitate using an athlete-centred approach. Experience at the elite level will definitely give volunteers, paid staff, and organizers a different perspective on what athletes need to be successful compared to those who have had no experience as an elite amateur athlete.

Results: Historical Involvement of Athletes in the Organization of Multi-Sport Events

Introduction

The following section is divided up into three main sections: historical involvement of athlete representatives in international multi-sport events from 1988-1999, selection processes, and the benefits/problems of athlete involvement. I will provide the results of the athletes followed by the organizers in each section. I will complete each section with a discussion describing the differences and similarities between the athletes and organizers, highlighting the main points made by each group.

Historical Involvement 1988-1999: Athlete Results

The two athletes from the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary were both competitors at the Games, one in figure skating and one in women's luge. The women's luger was also a volunteer for the luge association, so her knowledge of the sport would have given the organizing committee an insight from an athlete perspective.

The two athletes from the 1994 Commonwealth Games in Victoria were both involved as athletes and not at all on the organizing side of things. As Stacey Galloway put it, "*I do not think the organizing should go to the athletes per se*".

The two athletes interviewed from the 1999 Pan-American Games were athletes first and foremost, one as a field hockey player and the other as a weight lifter. The weight lifter, Susane Dandenault, was also involved as a volunteer for the sport committee and voiced her opinions when needed to ensure athlete's rights were being

heard. She worked directly with all of the different sport technical packages, dealing with issues such as equipment requirements and scheduling of events.

Historical Involvement 1988-1999: Organizer Results

The two organizers from the 1988 Winter Olympics in Calgary both used retired athletes in more time consuming roles; one of them also used some active athletes. The active athletes' role was on a consultation basis, just to ensure things were headed in the right direction because, as both men put it, active athletes were much too busy preparing for their competition to get heavily involved in the actual implementation of plans. Basically, these two organizers used athletes' feedback to help direct their work and guide the process of staging the Games.

The two organizers from the 1994 Commonwealth Games did use athletes but as one of the participants put it, athletes were used in a particular way. Dave Carmichael explains, "*Three or four times I would call up some local Olympians and ask for their opinions or advice on matters concerning the athlete's village or the transportation schedule*". At the time of implementation for the committee working groups, not many athletes were in place that had the skills necessary to articulate their opinions well enough, so the organizers just dealt with what they had (O3, O4).

The two organizers from the 1999 Pan-American Games in Winnipeg felt very strongly that the reason for the Games is the involvement of athletes and without them neither would have a job. These two individuals felt that using athletes on their committees and work groups during the organization of that event was an easy decision. As Randy Anderson states, "*Sport coordinators were the given title for the athletes being consulted with for this event and they were responsible for seven sports*

each, giving them a definite role to play in implementing a successful event". The athletes used were retired and not directly involved with competing at those Games.

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives of Historical Involvement 1988-1999

The involvement of athletes seems to have been important in all three instances with respect to the athlete's village and transportation; issues that were very relevant to the athlete's experience during the Games. Having athletes at the table is an important way to keep people focused on what athlete issues are, as Mike Moore states: "*an athlete will just make a very simple comment and bring people back on course*". The main focus of athlete involvement seems to have been isolated to these issues.

The main difference between the athlete and organizer roles was that the athletes were first and foremost participants in the Games, whereas the organizers were there to make sure the events ran smoothly. The interesting remark made by both the organizers from the 1999 Games - that athletes are the reason for the Games and without them they would be out of a job - resonates with an athlete-centred mentality.

Selection Processes: Athlete Results

Rod Garassino, an athlete from the 1988 Games, believes that "*on a broad perspective, athletes should be involved as technical advisors on the support side of organizing the Games*". Current athletes might have a conflict of interest if they are allowed a voting role, so retired athletes might be a better solution while keeping active athletes as consultants. Kathy Salmon was both an athlete and a volunteer for the 1988 Games and mentioned, "*the priority of the organizing committee was to treat every athlete like a king and queen, which was an overriding philosophy the organizing committee members used to run their operations*". That frame of mind could quite

possibly be the reason for those Olympics being known and touted in the newspapers as one of the best ever Games.

Stacey Galloway was not aware of any athlete involvement in the organization of the 1994 Commonwealth Games but thinks getting athletes involved is a great idea. She was asked to do promotional activities for the lead up to the Games, so her actions were not directly related to the organizing of the event. Trevino Betty was not involved in the organization of that event, nor was he aware of any selection processes that took place for athlete involvement.

The weight lifter, Susane Dandenault, was actually the Manitoba Athletes Association representative in 1998-99. She was appointed to consult with the sport committee by listening, observing and helping identify any red flags that arise during the meetings, but in hindsight, *“I think that it should be an athlete that was not competing at the Games because I heard all the crap and I got stressed out”*. In Ian Bird’s case he was not aware of any athlete involvement, but definitely believes that athletes should be an integral part of the development of the Games. As he states, *“my gosh, what a shift, I cannot help but think that part of the athlete-centred shift was because of athlete involvement from 1988 to 2000”*.

Selection Processes: Organizer Results

The organizers from the 1988 Winter Olympics both went to the NSOs and asked for recommendations for athletes they thought would be effective at providing feedback and advice. They both were looking for input from athletes that had lived the experience.

The organizers from 1994 used a different means of selecting athletes. Dave Carmichael explains, "*It was basically an interview process*", which ultimately led to an appointment of select athletes. Both organizers used athletes to give them suggestions and ideas to ensure a smoother running event.

The organizers from the 1999 Pan-American Games both used appointments as their method of involving athletes. They went out and solicited advice from any athletes who showed an interest in helping, whether they were currently competing or retired. Both were very careful not to intrude on the athletes' time commitments towards training and always left the communication lines open if athletes needed to voice their opinion. As Mike Moore explains, "*the process for selecting athletes was not an extremely scientific one, we just asked them if they had a willingness to contribute and we involved them*".

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives on Selection Processes

Most of the time, the simple approach of asking an athlete his/her opinion can lead to a better experience for athletes since they will feel like they contributed in other ways than striving for medals. The comment from Susane Dandenault supports the idea that the athletes involved should be retired, since they would not have to worry about the logistics of organizing while trying to focus on their competition. That statement is a dominant theme, because six out of six organizers agreed that active athletes have too much on their plate to be dealing with organizing and competing. Accordingly, the dominant selection process that each organizer used was by appointment; all six sought advice from individual NSOs to recommend athletes when

they were unaware of which athletes were good communicators, or were unclear who the representatives for their particular sport were.

It was mentioned by Rod Garassino that current athletes might face conflict with administrators if they had more than a consultative role. This was a very important point, especially with respect to judged events, such as gymnastics and figure skating. The overall theme from both athletes and organizers is that retired athletes need to be a part of the process. No one mentioned electing athlete advocates, which may be due to perceived time restrictions that may not allow such a process to take place. Appointing athletes can be seen as tokenism, but at least there has been an athlete presence. The selection process needs to be developed further so that organizers are not using the athletes being consulted in a token manner. As already noted by Bill Warren, "*Athletes that are involved at the bid process are there for show purposes*", but having athletes involved at the organizational end of the Games can keep employees consistently thinking with an athlete-centred approach.

Benefits/Problems of Athlete Involvement: Athlete Results

Having athletes involved in organizing Games can have a very positive impact because there is definitely a gap between what an active athlete sees as his/her needs compared to what an administrator believes the athletes' needs to be. Kathy Salmon explains, "*Having been a volunteer and an athlete at the 1998 Winter Olympics, I am not really sure I had any actual impact on the experience of other athletes competing in those Games, however, we were treated fantastically at those Games, you could tell it was a priority of the organizing committee*". Kathy's unsure attitude towards knowing whether or not she made a difference on the athletes' experience at the Games suggests

there was not a feedback system in place to allow athletes to know what their contribution means to sport and this could be a benefit to future athlete advocates.

Both of the athletes from the 1994 Commonwealth Games thoroughly enjoyed their experiences and were not really sure how the athletes could or would have made a difference because of their involvement. However, both fully agree and believe that athletes should be involved, as Trevino Betty states; *“at the international level, of course the Games are built for the athletes and then not to have athlete involvement, how crazy is that”?*

The two athletes from the 1999 Pan-American Games both agreed that having athletes involved in the organization of the event brings an obvious service provision that will enhance every athlete’s experience at the Games. Ian Bird states, *“Athletes will have a more immediate understanding of [] what is valued by having been involved in the organizational process”*. While organizers know most of the major technical elements involved in running an event, mistakes are made and having athletes around can help catch those mistakes because they are the ones who will be competing on the playing field.

Benefits/Problems of Athlete Involvement: Organizer Results

As Bill Warren from the 1988 Organizing committee states,

Benefits would be getting information from relevant sources to help create the optimum opportunity for athletes to perform at the highest level, and I don't think anybody can do that without the understanding from the athletes themselves to what needs to be in place.

Both organizers at the 1988 Games enjoyed the experience and thought that there were no actual problems that they could pinpoint by involving athletes in the decision-making process.

The two organizers from the 1994 Commonwealth Games felt there were huge benefits from athlete involvement, such as getting advice without actually having to pay for the service. Athletes also provided necessary information that allowed organizers to create the best technical and social environment to allow the athletes to perform at their best. The only problem noted is explained by Bruce Wasylik in that, "*Some people saw athlete involvement as an imposition on their area of expertise, so it was another layer of work, another layer of scrutiny*". Both stated that those athletes who were able to communicate effectively received what they requested from administrators, and had a good relationship with the committees involved.

Both organizers from the 1999 Pan-American Games felt that having athletes involved was only positive; if anything, both would like to have seen even more participation from retired athletes. It was noted by Randy Anderson that,

If there was a problem, it would only have been that the competitors that were involved in organizing the Games, and only some of them, felt that perhaps they should have been athletes competing in the Games and were not fully able to deal with their own retirements.

Basically, it was a positive experience having athletes helping in the organizing of the event (O5, O6).

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives on the Benefits/Problems of Athlete

Involvement

The main similarity among all those interviewed is a belief that athletes should be a part of the organizing process of multi-sport events. If an organizer is looking out for the athlete's best interest and wants to do a good job, then he/she would involve athletes in the planning process to ensure effectiveness at all levels. Administrators' fear that involving athletes in the organizing of the Games will add another layer of

scrutiny, as Bruce Wasylik stated, is actually why athletes need to be at the decision-making table, to ensure satisfaction of the customer, in this case the athlete. This is the type of thinking that has kept athletes from the decision-making table and has created tension between administrators and athletes since the early 1900's (O4).

Trevino Betty's statement suggests that athletes who are active must be focused on their own preparation that their awareness of the behind the scenes issues are not at all known. However, at the same time Kathy Salmon was not sure how her work as a volunteer had any effect on the experience of the athletes in the 1988 Olympics, which have been touted as one of the friendliest and most athlete-centred Games ever. Perhaps athletes in the 1980's did not realize the impact they can have on an organizing committee because of having been pushed aside for so many years. The culture within an organizing committee that sees athletes as its first priority facilitates the involvement of people who have either been athletes themselves, or want to help athletes achieve their goals.

Summary

One result I have found through my interviews is that the Canadian Sport System has started to become more athlete-centred, as stated by ten of the twelve interviewees. However, the sport system is still too fragmented; thus more collaboration between the different sport groups could help athletes succeed internationally. There is a sense that Canada is moving in the right direction, but there are also warnings not to be complacent and to keep pushing for a better sport system through developing partnerships with governments, private sector, and the school systems. There was a compelling sentiment that AthletesCAN has been a strong

catalyst for improving athlete conditions within the Canadian Sport System by constantly advocating for athletes' rights.

An athlete-centred sport system is seen by the interviewees as one where athletes are financially secure through government support and are looked to for their input via positions on committees and boards at all levels of the Canadian Sport System. Athletes' conditions have improved in Canada, through an increase to the Sport Canada AAP funding, increased sponsorships, and increased opportunities to compete. An athlete's current status in the Canadian Sport System was seen as higher than coaches, but lower than professional athletes, mainly due to differing financial income and media exposure. However, there is a shift happening to increase the status of coaches in Canada, with the term, "athlete-centred, coach-led, and performance based", leading the movement. It is a shift, supported by the interviewees, which will hopefully increase the status of coaches in Canada, since it is a profession that has not received a lot of respect. Many great coaches have moved to other countries over the years due to the lack of respect shown by the Canadian sport community.

Canada has depended heavily upon volunteers to help make the system run effectively, but now that is changing to one where paid employees are organizing events. Athletes need to be a part of this process to ensure all aspects of the event are developed with an athlete-centred approach. Organizers and administrators may feel that this adds to their workload by adding another layer of scrutiny, but involving athletes can make a Games that much more successful without an extra financial burden. The benefit of getting relevant information from the source - the athlete - was a

dominant theme conveyed by all of the interviewees thus, athletes should be involved in organizing a multi-sport event.

CHAPTER 4: ATHLETE STRUCTURES AND EXPERIENCES

Sub-Problem #3: What structures are in place and needed to allow athletes to become better Athlete Advocates?

Introduction

The main focus of this section is providing information from my personal history as an athlete advocate and the perspectives of interview participants on how athletes can become better leaders. My intent was to identify obstacles athletes face directly from administrators in the Canadian Sport System and organizers of multi-sport events. I hoped to find what athletes need to be better advocates and how structures in the Canadian Sport System can be improved. My operational definition of 'better' is any addition to Canadian sport policy or delivery that includes athletes in decision-making processes and event organization that is currently not in documents. I provide the perspectives of the interviewees to help develop ideas that would allow athletes to become better advocates.

Athletes are normally informed about the structures that are in place in the Canadian Sport System, but only to the extent that their specific NSO deems necessary. I feel that providing an in-depth analysis of the different structures in place and my own involvement within these structures can increase athletes' awareness of what can help them become better informed and knowledgeable about the Canadian Sport System. I also give advice on the important elements from each organizational structure that I have attended with the intent of outlining what it takes to be an effective athlete advocate. I attended AthletesCAN forums, CSC events, COC Athlete Council

meetings, and ISU Congresses, which have all provided me with useful insights as outlined below. I have divided up each section by providing a brief history of the organization, followed by my personal involvement, and advice for athlete advocates.

AthletesCAN

AthletesCAN is the association representing Canada's national team athletes. They represent athletes from all the national teams, including the North American Indigenous Games, Paralympics, Pan American Games, Olympics and Commonwealth Games. Athletes who have retired from senior national teams within the past eight years are considered eligible members of AthletesCAN. Athlete representatives from various national teams are elected by their peers to represent the sport at the forum, where all costs are borne by AthletesCAN. From the elected representatives that attend the forum, a core of individuals are elected to form the AthletesCAN board of directors, which lasts for either a two or four year term depending on the position. The mission of AthletesCAN is, "to work with their partners in leadership, advocacy, and education to ensure a fair, responsive and supportive sport system for high performance athletes in Canada" (Peel, 1999). Sponsors, sport administrators, and supporters of elite amateur sport in Canada are all invited to attend the annual forum. The vision of AthletesCAN is to have a significant positive impact on the life of every athlete by acting as the collective voice for amateur athletes in Canada. Ann Peel was the founding Chair of AthletesCAN.¹⁵ Athletes have rarely been in a position of power in

¹⁵ After a thirteen-year career on the national track team in the race-walk event, Ann practiced corporate law for several years before entering a career in child development. She is now the Executive Director of Olympic Aid, an athlete-driven humanitarian organization that uses sport and play programming to enhance child and community development (AthletesCAN, 2002).

sport, but with the influence of groups such as AthletesCAN, power relations within the Canadian Sport System have the possibility of changing (Kirby & McKenna, 1989). I believe that athletes enjoy an increased amount of decision-making power within their NSOs because of the work done by Ann Peel and others in advocating for athletes' rights in 1992 and creating AthletesCAN.

My Personal Involvement

I have been attending the annual AthletesCAN forums since 1995, when I first took over as Skate Canada's athlete representative.¹⁶ At the time, I felt as if many of the athletes involved within Skate Canada were uninformed about ways to effectively voice their concerns and bring issues to the decision-making table. I volunteered for the athlete representative position so that I could investigate further and try to better understand why so many of my team-mates felt bitter about their sporting experiences. Because I feel that the only change agents within sport are those who get involved to help advocate on behalf of other people, I decided to spend time dedicating myself to the issues pertaining to my sport by attending information-gathering sessions such as AthletesCAN Forums. At the time, I was willing to help challenge aspects of the decision-making process within Skate Canada to understand how to better my own sporting experience. The annual forum hosted by AthletesCAN was the perfect venue to learn more about Canada's sport system because it provided the opportunity to meet high performance athletes from other sports, to share ideas, and to develop leadership skills that would help me learn how to advocate for athletes' rights. The AthletesCAN

¹⁶ I was elected as the treasurer, for a two year term, to the Board of AthletesCAN in September, 2005.

annual forum is the most inclusive gathering available for Canada's national team athlete representatives. The forum features workshops, seminars, and presentations that include topics such as athlete leadership, education, athlete agreements, media relations, marketing and sponsorship, nutrition, and psychological preparation for sport and life.

Advice for Athlete Advocates

At an AthletesCAN forum held in Quebec City, Quebec from September 27th – 29th, 2002, I gathered valuable information that is instrumental in becoming an effective athlete advocate. The forum's highlights were presentations given by Charmaine Crooks¹⁷ and Lori Johnstone. The forum included topics ranging from sports nutrition to sports psychology, but the presentations by Crooks and Johnstone addressed the topic of athlete leadership and one's ability to advocate effectively within the sport system in two very different ways.

Charmaine Crooks delivered her presentation on athlete leadership with some practical tips using 'AthletesCAN' as the acronym for the basis for her talk, which stimulated my thinking about how to be a better leader for the athletes I represent within Skate Canada. Charmaine Crooks provides important messages using the AthletesCAN acronym as follows:

¹⁷ Charmaine Crooks is a member of the IOC and a five-time Olympian. She is an Olympic Silver Medalist and was the Opening Ceremonies Flag Bearer at the Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Her volunteer commitment to sport continues as the Chair of the Pan American Athletes Commission, Board member of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport (CCES), member of the COC Executive Board, and Director of International Relations for the COC (AthletesCAN, 2002).

AthletesCAN

- A= accountability** (ensuring ‘the system’ is responsive to athletes)
- T= teamwork** (Canada has the strongest athlete organization in the world)
- H= honour** (privilege of representing Canada)
- L= leadership** (using networks to lobby for athletes rights)
- E= excellence** (always present yourself in the best possible way)
- T= timing** (be strategic in your planning)
- E= education** (keep up to date in the world of sport)
- S= sport** (a passion we all share)
- C= credibility** (will help you make responsible choices)
- A= action plan** (need this to have a meaningful impact)
- N= now** (make it happen now!)

I believe that athletes working together with other leaders in sport, keeping up to date on the world of sport, and developing an action plan to make an impact now are particularly important concepts to embody. The practical tips offered by Charmaine Crooks (AthletesCAN, 2002) are an effective way to start learning how to be an effective athlete advocate, and can be a friendly reminder for veteran athlete advocates. Crooks quoted Woody Allen during her presentation by saying, ‘that 90% of the job is just showing up’. People in power positions, government positions, and decision-making positions need to see athletes and that alone can have an impact on future decisions. Crooks also believes that athletes need to learn how to use their performance abilities and when to turn them on and off to effectively lobby for athletes’ issues in positive ways. Crooks’ tips focus on athletes using their time wisely, being educated

about past and current issues, and acting now to have a positive influence on the Canadian Sport System for future generations of athletes to enjoy.

Lori Johnstone¹⁸ used an acronym to present her views on athlete leadership that support Crooks' view on athlete advocacy. Her key word was SIMPLE:

S- Strategic. Have a game plan, do the research, and be prepared.

I- Investment. Invest in yourself and in others. Know that individuals can make a difference. Prepare your toolkit, developing your personal resources, be it education, volunteer and work experience, language training, coaching or officiating, and certification.

M- Motivation. Be motivated and motivate others. Your commitment to being a change agent is crucial.

P- Political savvy. Know how to navigate your way through the political systems and how to get things accomplished. Develop and maintain a network of friends and associates.

L- Leadership. As a leader, be responsible for raising issues, seeking answers, and contributing to solutions.

E- Effect Change. This can be a long-term process. Define your desired outcomes and how you will measure success. Celebrate progress when it happens and recognize the work and cooperation that has been required to achieve success.

¹⁸ Lori Johnstone was a former AthletesCAN chair (1997-99) and National team athlete in the sport of racquetball. She has also worked as a sport advisor for the Secretary of State (Amateur Sport) Denis Coderre. She is currently working as an Executive with the Culture and Sport Secretariat of the Government of New Brunswick (CAAWS, 2006).

Johnstone (AthletesCAN, 2002) concluded her talk by posing several questions to the athletes in attendance, which could be answered on their own time. Example questions were: Do you have the tools you need? Are you willing to take the necessary action to make it happen? What do you hope to accomplish? These questions were raised to help athletes implement strategies and take immediate action after the forum by communicating with other athletes, following up with their associations, and making the commitment to sport in Canada.

Canadian Sports Centres

Athletes are becoming increasingly important at all levels of bureaucracy within Canadian NSOs. As a result, the Canadian government has provided funding for provincial sport centres throughout Canada to provide athletes with valuable medical services such as physiotherapy and personal enhancement services such as public speaking. These services, provided by the CSCs, are intended to aid athletes with the necessary skills to effectively present themselves at various functions, meetings, and public appearances. The daylong presentation skills training workshop I attended was hosted by the CSC-Ontario and conducted by Linda Cuthbert, a former national team athlete and current Canadian Broadcasting Corporation color commentator. The objectives of the workshop were to help athletes develop an attitude of professionalism for speaking engagements, build a foundation of presentation skills, improve delivery, and increase confidence and comfort level (Cuthbert, 2002).

My Personal Involvement

Two key points a presenter must think of while preparing for a speech are the audience and environment. The presenter must know who the audience will be, why

they are gathered together, what they expect, and how many will attend. Preparing for the environment involves knowing who else may be speaking on that day, who will be introducing you, how long the speech is supposed to last, how large the room is, and if there will be a microphone (Cuthbert, 2002). Many times, during a sporting career, athletes are thrown into situations where they must talk to media, sponsors, or administrators without preparation. The presentation skills training workshop was a valuable tool for athletes to learn how to prepare for a speaking engagement. Athletes can use their opportunities to speak in front of schools, businesses, and corporations that pay a fee for such engagements. Being professionally prepared gives the Canadian Sport System and the athlete credibility from all observers. Athletes, as role models, have a significant voice within society and being prepared is one way to enhance their leadership position in the Canadian Sport System.

Advice for Athlete Advocates

Five key attributes leaders possess are that they raise awareness, show direction, create results, demonstrate to others how to reach a goal, and achieve progress that benefits others, not just themselves (Bender, 1997). Leaders must develop an internal passion for fostering others' growth. An athlete advocate should encourage other athletes within sport to take advantage of opportunities provided, such as the presentation skills training workshop. Workshops, seminars, and skills training help athletes develop an awareness of themselves, focus their vision and passion, learn how to take risks, communicate effectively, and check their results. Communication refers to the conveying of ideas to other people. Effective communication takes place when you share your message with others in a manner that is clearly understood (Bender,

2000). Athletes in representative roles must develop effective communication skills that allow them to relay their messages to the NSOs in an understandable fashion to ensure all key issues are presented. The challenge in amateur sport is to capture the attention of people in administrative roles and get them to focus their concentration on the athletes' needs.

Providing athletes with the chance to learn skills, practice public speaking, mingle with other athletes to discuss current sport issues, and improve skills necessary for life during and after sport, makes the presentation skills training workshop a worthwhile endeavour of the CSC-Ontario. Athletes offered the chance to participate in this workshop should take full advantage of the opportunity to help develop greater interpersonal speaking skills. Athletes need to keep an open mind during the course of the workshop and be willing to experiment with different speaking styles to see which one works best. Peer support is an excellent gauge to see which style best suits your speaking ability. Athletes will then be better prepared to communicate to future generations about how the sports system works in Canada. The various workshops and seminars hosted by the CSC-Ontario create a positive program implemented with government support for Canadian elite amateur athletes.

Canadian Olympic Committee

In 1904, the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada created the COC to oversee Canada's participation in the 1904 Olympic Games. The COC remained under the wing of the Amateur Athletic Union of Canada for 42 years and adopted its new name, the Canadian Olympic Association (COA), in 1946 (COA, 2002). At the 2002

Congress held in Edmonton, Alberta, the COA switched its name back to the Canadian Olympic Committee, to be more in line with the European Olympic Organizations.

The COC has passed a bylaw that requires all COC Athletes' Council members (COC 'F' members) to be chosen through an election by their peers (COA, 2002).

When I was interested in becoming Skate Canada's athlete representative for the COC Athletes' Council¹⁹, the national team did not have an election because most athletes believed they were too busy to commit the time needed, which left the position open for me to be appointed by my team-mates. I felt lucky to be able to represent my fellow athletes and, as I was a rookie on the team, this gave me an invaluable learning experience. The Athletes' Council is constituted under the COC board of directors to provide a forum for Olympic and Pan American athletes to discuss issues relevant to athletes and the Olympic movement. The Athletes' Council specifically contributes to the development of policy and programs of the COC, considers and brings forward athlete related issues to the COC, and ensures that programs and policies of the COC are athlete focused (COA, 2002). The COC Athletes' Council meetings are somewhat smaller than the AthletesCAN forums because of the exclusion of certain sport groups, such as North American Indigenous Games and Commonwealth Games athletes. From the beginning of my involvement in 1996, there have been close to 40 athletes attending the annual congress of the COC. Athletes will elect up to seven of their peers to form the Executive committee of the Athletes' Council, who become full members of the COC's board of directors. Two of these members are then automatically allowed to be

¹⁹ As of 2006, the COC has a new Athlete Council structure that has reduced the number of athlete representatives from 40 to 12, in hopes of streamlining operations and making the council more effective.

a part of the COC's Executive Committee, ensuring that athletes are represented at every level of the decision-making process within the COC.

My Personal Involvement

My initial interest in the Olympic movement was as an athlete trying to qualify for the Olympics. I was a junior skater during the 1992 Canadian Championships where Penny Mann and Juan Carlos Noria qualified for the Olympics through the ISU's standards by placing second in the Senior Dance event, but did not meet the COC's criteria. The COC criteria required a top sixteen world placement. Questions of fairness regarding the qualification criteria started to crop up from the skating community, which included skaters, coaches, and sponsors. The decision did not seem fair because this team had never had the chance to secure a world ranking because they had yet to compete at a World Championship. The decision by the COC not to send this particular team would contribute to that team breaking up the following season. By 1996 my partner, Megan Wing, and I were starting to fulfill COC criteria to qualify for the 1998 Winter Olympics. To avoid the same fate as past competitors from Canada, I felt I needed to volunteer my time to be involved representing Skate Canada's athletes and to start learning more about the COC's team selection process. From 1996 to 2004, I was the athlete representative for Skate Canada, attending the annual congress of the COC's Athletes' Council. During that time I learned about athlete agreements, athlete's rights to their images, team selection, and the bureaucratic operations of the COC.

The essential role of an athlete representative is to serve as a source for athletes' opinions and advice to the COC. Attending the annual congress, communicating

concerns of the Council to all team members, representing the Athletes' Council on other COC committees, being prepared to discuss issues relevant to athletes' needs, and developing methods for ensuring the protection of athletes' rights are components of being an athlete representative. Athletes are represented on various COC committees, such as the audit committee, investment committee, by-law committee, education committee, team selection committee, and the COC legal commission for major Games. Athletes must be accountable for their actions, ready to raise issues and point fingers; we must also be prepared to work for our concerns. The COC developed an athlete-focused discussion paper in 1994 that outlines the objectives of the sport system. "Athlete-focused" refers to a concept and a process, rather than a single action. In an athlete-focused sport system, the values, programs, policies, resource allocation, and priorities of sport organizations and agencies place primary emphasis on consideration of athletes' needs in a holistic sense and performance goals within that context. Those responsible for leadership and decision-making in sport must include the athlete in both defining needs and goals and in determining how to meet them; that is, the athlete should be the active subject in, not the object of, sporting programs (COA, 2002). When a sport leader is willing to involve athletes in the decision-making process, such as being invited to attend an executive meeting of a sport organization, athletes should make themselves available to ensure their concerns are heard, thereby making athletes and administrators accountable for their actions.

Advice for Athlete Advocates

During the 2002 COC Congress in Edmonton, I was able to learn a great deal just by listening to other athletes' concerns with their own NSOs. Many came into the

Congress with no idea of what to expect or what it was they were supposed to accomplish from the weekend's activities. I was fortunate to have leaders within my sport who held a conference call with our sports president, CEO, and 'A' Director for the COC, to establish what things to look for during the congress. I had clear goals and learning objectives set for the congress, which made my approach to the weekend more business-like, as I was accountable for gathering information for my association and the athletes I was representing. Skate Canada was seen as one of Canada's most financially successful NSOs because they have the largest number of registered members. I was made quite aware of my enviable situation in figure skating from other athletes who were raising complaints about how hard it is to even raise enough funds to attend their National Championships or to buy proper equipment. Athletes from other sports also had trouble communicating with their sport executives, which made the athlete-centred approach to sport non-existent in their eyes. Athlete-centred sport should allow for open dialogue between the athlete and sport leaders, making sure the athletes' concerns are heard and ensuring a positive sporting experience for all athletes.

Athletes attending the COC Congress should realize that there is a power struggle between Winter and Summer Olympic sports. There are many more sports that participate in the Summer Games, which is one key reason for the conflict. In regards to the 2002 Winter Olympic Games in Salt Lake City, athlete representatives should have been prepared to deal with pertinent issues, such as the figure skating judging scandal, doping problems in biathlon, and pre-Games funding allotments. Staying aware of materials provided by the COC is important if athletes want to make a meaningful contribution during the meeting. The Congress is always held between the

Summer and Winter Games; therefore athletes should keep up to date on any relevant issues dealing with both events. During the Congress, keeping an open mind, constantly conversing with other athletes, and making the effort to speak with sport leaders will make for a gratifying experience as an athlete representative.

The International Skating Union

The ISU holds a biennial Congress to allow member federations to convene and implement or discard rules and regulations for the sports of figure skating and long and short track speed skating. The 49th Congress of the ISU was held in Kyoto, Japan from June 3rd to 9th, 2002. Each country or member federation is allowed to bring five delegates, which usually includes the executive director, president, and other senior officials. I was fortunate to have an athlete-centred sport organization that included me as an athlete in the delegation which would represent Canada. Federations are encouraged to support athletes to attend the Congress but as a result of the political battles that ensue during the Congress, there were only four active athletes and two retired athletes in attendance. Costs incurred for attending the Congress are the responsibility of each member federation; therefore, many countries can only afford to bring two or three delegates. Skate Canada has a huge base of registered members, producing revenues that allow the organization to take advantage of sending a full group to attend the biennial congress.

The 2002 congress was especially interesting to attend, since the issues discussed were so fresh and relevant to the state of the sport due to the scandal that happened at the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympic Games. In both short track speed

skating and figure skating, judging scandals were at the forefront of media exposure.

As Ottavio Cinquanta reflects,

some of our sports are decided subjectively and the official that has to express a vote can count on three major elements, their skills, personality, and the technical rules as provided by the ISU, more precisely by the Congress. Unfortunately, neither the individual nor the rules can be perfect and so it happens that mistakes are made. One thing we cannot permit is misconduct and the ISU as any other sport body has the specific duty to take action to avoid the cases of improper behaviour (Cinquanta, 2002, p. 6).

This statement of the ISU's president, Mr. Ottavio Cinquanta, was the basis for much of the Congress agenda. The focus of the Congress was on the new proposed judging system, with proposals from three different countries, the elections for new council positions within the ISU, and a new operating structure for the ISU based on volunteerism.

My Personal Involvement

The judging system in place at the time was based on taking deductions from a perfect mark of 6.0, rather than accumulating points based on the merit of skills performed. With this system it was easy to see how judges from different countries could use their own preferences to subjectively rank skaters, especially since clarity of rules was an issue. For example:

Rule 322 number 4 of the special regulations for figure skating states all elements of a free skating program (the jumps, spins, step sequences and particularly the glide, footwork and the difficulty and variety of steps) must be taken into consideration in the mark for technical merit and be rewarded according to their relative merit as to difficulty. No individual element can be given predominant importance and the program must be considered as a whole. Excessive values must not be assigned to elements especially when of poor quality. When making a comparison between a well executed double jump and a well executed triple jump as well as a well executed triple jump and a well executed quadruple jump, either individually or in combination, the difference in value should be very small (from 0.1 to 0.2, depending upon the difficulty of the jump up to a maximum of 0.3 in the case of a very difficult triple or

quadruple combination). In addition, no extra credit should be given for a poorly executed triple or quadruple jump when compared with a well executed double jump (ISU, 2000).

After reading this rule, how can a judge not be confused and make mistakes while judging, since it is hard for even the coaches and skaters to understand what the technical committee is trying to achieve? I competed in the ice dancing event, which is often controversial because marking can come down to which type of performance the judges like better, for example a waltz or a rock'n'roll number. When I read rule 322 number 4 for the singles events, I was quite concerned that the rules allowed so much interpretation by the judges. I, like most general public viewers, figured that when a skater missed his/her jump sequence and the other skater completed a jump combination successfully, that the successful skater would be given due credit. However, the way the rule reads leaves room for subjective judging, which was at the forefront of the ISU Council's agenda for the Congress.

The three countries submitting a proposal for an interim judging system were Canada, the USA, and Australia. The USA's proposal was based on using the median mark of the judging panel. Their main point was that this system would not cost any money to implement because no judges would have to be retrained, it could be used at all competitions immediately, and the system had been thoroughly tested and was ready to go. I noticed immediately that, although the USA was one of the countries to bring an athlete as part of their delegation, not once was the effect this judging system would have on the athlete mentioned in their proposal. The USA proposal's main goal was financial ease of implementation and continued use of the current rules and judging practices, which I saw as the root of the problem. The Australian proposal was very

similar to the American's proposal in that it only manipulated the numbers already in place and had no effect on the rules or how the judges interpreted the skaters' performances. The Australian proposal also suggested judging the performances down to three decimal places, which was rejected by almost the whole congress, since judging to the thousandths of a point is pointless without strict criteria for judging elements.

The Canadian proposal was also more along the path of protecting judges and not the athletes. Canada proposed having fourteen judges instead of nine and having the computer randomly select nine judges' marks. Only the computer would know which marks were being used throughout the competition. Canada felt that since the judges could not know if their marks were being used, then outside influences such as federations, parents, or coaches would be less influential. The judges would thus be free to judge how they saw fit on the day of competition, which follows the value of fair play. The major problem with this proposal was the lack of accountability for judges; they could be free to do what they wanted without being held responsible for mistakes, errors, or national bias.²⁰ A great benefit of the Canadian proposal was that athletes would accumulate points based on what they did, rather than what they did not do. At the end of the congress, the Canadian proposal won over the Americans and Australians, and is now the current system in place since the 2004-2005 skating season. Having a sound understanding of the politics of a particular sport is important for an

²⁰ The ISU has implemented an Officials Assessment Committee to help monitor the judges during competition to guard against problems that may arise, such as national bias, anomalous scores, and outright cheating.

athlete when advocating on behalf of his/her peers in order to be more effective and not hamper the overall progress of 'athlete-centred' sport.

The quadrennial elections during this congress were the most interesting part of the agenda because a position on the ISU council for these delegates means a lot to their future. ISU council members enjoy many luxuries during their tenure on the council, such as travel, compensation for work time, and prestige. The first election was for president, and Mr. Ottavio Cinquanta was re-elected by acclamation, for the next four years. Speed skating and figure skating are divided into two different parts of the conference proceedings, so only figure skating members vote for the figure skating council members and speed skating members vote for speed skating council members. The position for ISU vice-president was contested by three people: two figure skating members and one speed skating member. By acclamation, the one speed skating member was re-elected and the two figure skating hopefuls went to a vote. Mr. Katsuchira Hisanaga from Japan and Mr. David Dore from Canada were the candidates running for vice-president. This is where the real show of the congress took place for me as an athlete, enabling me to learn how the ISU members work behind the lights and cameras of figure skating, which most people never get to see on television. The position of vice-president is very important, because that person oversees all of figure skating throughout the world. The prestige and responsibility of the position requires a lot of work but the pay-off is worth it. The backroom gossip, private meetings between countries, and lunchtime gatherings were all a part of the pre-election process. Every nation was trying to figure out what they could get from the candidates in return for their vote, exactly like any city council or presidential election in North America.

Watching the alliances between countries, and who was ignoring whom, became quite interesting for me as an athlete because now I know more of what is happening during a competition when ISU officials are seen courting other member dignitaries; it's all for the alliance. In the end, Mr. David Dore from Canada was able to form a stronger alliance and prevailed as the new ISU vice-president for figure skating. Having worked with Mr. Dore for ten years while he was CEO of Skate Canada, I felt his election as vice-president was a positive change for the ISU. I believe that if he can do for the ISU what he did for Skate Canada, making it the financially strongest amateur sports body in Canada, then the ISU will become an improved sport governing body.

The structure of the ISU has come into question because of the large number of people representing the ISU on the council, committees, and working groups who receive financial support. The sports within the ISU are becoming very large, and 85% of the budget is invested in the sport disciplines, either to the member federations or directly to the specific competition. The amount distributed, approximately 50 million Swiss Francs per year, demonstrates that indeed a high level of international activity is sustained directly by the ISU (Cinquanta, 2002). With more than 15% of the operating budget left for administrative concerns, the ISU initiated a change in response to decreased financial stability. The volunteers, for obvious reasons according to Mr. Cinquanta (2002), are the ones who should guarantee and uphold the true tradition of the ISU. They remain the best and vital connection with the member federations and have a limited economic impact on ISU resources. At the 2004 Congress, Mr. Cinquanta prepared a plan of action for the ISU regarding changing the system of operation now in place, to one that better serves the ISU member federations

financially. He implemented the new plan at the 2006 Congress held in Budapest, Hungary. The basis of the new change includes athlete and coach representatives on all of the technical committees involved in organizing sport for the ISU. Changing the way an international organizing body administers sport is instrumental in ensuring a more 'athlete-centred' model for sport is followed, which is why the ISU's change is important for future developing athletes and their ability to have their voices heard.

Advice for Athlete Advocates

My overall experience at the ISU congress was very eye-opening. The learning curve during that week was steep; political work, such as the elections, working the room for a vote, and mingling during coffee breaks are all invaluable in the world of figure skating. My major concern was the ability of an active athlete in attendance to really speak up and make a difference in a room full of officials mainly worried about their own positions within the ISU, rather than the interests of the athletes they are there representing. The fear of retribution within the room from judges and officials makes it very difficult for an athlete to speak candidly. However, some of the speed skating athletes did very well because there was no fear of being judged unfairly. Perhaps it would be better to bring a recently retired athlete from among the figure skating members, because athletes would be better represented by someone not afraid to speak out on important issues. Attending the congress was an invaluable learning experience for me and I gained a lot of insight into the sport and the organization. I wonder if I would have been a more effective advocate, had I been retired and thus more willing to speak up at moments when I thought I better keep quiet, since the Bulgarian judge was

sitting right behind me.²¹ Athletes filling the role of an ISU athlete representative have to be prepared to speak up and voice an opinion.

Tentative Insights

Throughout all of the meetings, congresses, and forums I attended in the past, the most important lesson I have learned is to get involved as much as possible.

Building on Charmaine Crooks' speech about athlete leadership, the following are my tentative insights:

- To rely on an executive or board member to advocate for athletes rights is not being *accountable* for making change within the Canadian Sport System.
- If there are no athletes being represented on committees, boards, or working groups then there will not be a *voice* for athlete's concerns.
- Get involved with athlete organizations such as AthletesCAN because with *teamwork*, athletes in Canada have a much more powerful, collective voice.
- It is an *honour* to represent Canada playing a sport so advocating for athletes can also be a privilege.
- Athletes have *leadership* skills that are untapped. They can use their network of friends, administrators, and sport officials to lobby for athletes' rights.
- *Excellence* on the playing field is expected of athletes from the spectators, so presenting yourself off the field in the best possible way should also be a priority for athletes hoping to influence policy makers.

²¹ I have attended two more ISU Congresses in 2004 and 2006. The format for the congress has the countries sitting alphabetically, so Bulgaria has always sat behind Canada. Through experience, I have improved my ability to speak out on topics that will directly affect skaters. At the most recent congress, I felt that it was less stressful to speak out due to being recently retired.

- Athletes should know that *timing* is a strategic process of knowing when it's right to approach people and present new ideas to make the best impact.
- Keeping up to date on the world of sport means being *educated*, which can be as easy as reading the daily sports section of a local newspaper or asking questions of administrators within a sport governing body.
- *Sport* is a passion most athletes share, so not to champion for athlete's rights would not be fair for future generations.
- Athletes need to work together to make responsible choices, which will help develop *credibility* within the eyes of sport governing officials.
- Having an *action plan* will help ensure the process of advocating is meaningful and focused.
- Athletes need to make change happen *now*; get involved and speak up!

Methodology and Directional Proposition for Sub-Problem #3

Adding to my advice for future athlete advocates, based on my experiences, I have gathered advice from each of my interviewees concerning their views on what athletes need to be effective advocates. Gaining a perspective that included advice from athletes prior to and after the creation of AthletesCAN gave me an interesting mix of perspectives on what athletes need to become better leaders in the Canadian Sport System. Having first hand advice from organizers concerning what athletes need to be better leaders also gave me needed information to help other athletes.

I have reflected on my own experiences throughout my involvement with the COC, AthletesCAN, and various sporting groups that have helped shape my understanding of the Canadian Sport System. Comparing the answers given by the

participants to what I have experienced provides valuable information from an insider perspective that could help organizers of multi-sport events run operations more smoothly and ultimately use athlete advocates more effectively. I also examined if there was an improvement in operations between 1988, 1994, and 1999, in light of the creation of AthletesCAN in 1992, and their vision of a more athlete-centred sport system. Giddens (1984) duality of structure suggests that structures not only facilitate and/or inhibit the action of agents (athletes), but those agents also act to transform and/or maintain structure. Social structures, however, are only significant to the extent that agents interact with or realize them (consciously or unconsciously). Duality of structure assumes that human beings construct their own lives (acting in manners that may initiate social change) within structural boundaries created by their predecessors (Ponic, 2000). Athletes who advocate within the various sport organizations in Canada can either challenge or reproduce dominant ideologies within the system, depending upon their level of awareness of the rules and resources available to them.

Spheres of Influence

In this section, I present information from the interviewees and develop a framework for how athletes can become better advocates for themselves and others within the Canadian Sport System. I have developed a model: The Spheres of Influence (refer to appendix G), to help explain how structures²² within the Canadian

²² Structures are boundaries within which people live their lives-boundaries that can facilitate or inhibit action (Ponic, 2000). Giddens (1984) defines structures more specifically as rules and resources. Rules refer to “tacitly understood social procedures” (Cohen, 1989, p.28); the underlying assumptions and ideologies that drive human action. They exist internally within agents and regulate the manner in which they think and perceive their own realities. Giddens views resources as the “facilities or bases of power to which the agent has access (Cohen, 1989, p.28). Resources exist in many forms; for example, structures may be material, regulatory, or interpersonal (Ponic, 2000, p. 54).

Sport System can shape and be shaped by athlete advocates. Starting at the core of the model are individual characteristics: the ingredients needed to be a good advocate. The next level/sphere contains the conditions or elements within your own sport. Athletes from various sports will all have different issues but how they deal with them links to the core of the model and the broader issues of what is needed to be a good advocate. The third level/sphere deals with conditions or elements generally within sport, which include other sports, multi-sport events and international sport organizations. Examples include the COC and AthletesCAN, which influence the direction of athlete advocates. The final level/sphere is the conditions or elements in the broader society that athletes need to be aware of, such as the media, law, employment and political issues that affect an athlete's ability to be an effective advocate within the Canadian Sport System.

Delimitations and Limitations: Athlete Structures and Experiences

Participant-as-Observer

Being a current athlete advocate will provide an interestingly unique perspective on the Canadian Sport System that should contribute toward better athlete representation in the future. While the recent sport system has shaped my views, past structures have shaped my participants' views. My direct involvement, however, should give me a better understanding of how decisions of the past were developed, leading to a better analysis of the interviews being conducted.

Limitations in this research include the small number of interviews conducted and the narrow focus on Canadian content that is assumed to give enough insight on what athletes need to be better advocates. Another limitation is the legitimacy of the

model I have created for ascertaining information for the research conducted; legitimacy could be enhanced with further testing of the model.

Results: Athlete Structures and Experiences

Individual Characteristics

Athlete Results

The dominant themes from the athletes, on developing strong athlete advocates, are the ability to effectively communicate, transfer their understanding of and commitment to sport to the working and volunteering realms, commitment and focus, willingness to speak out and to not be afraid of the consequences. All six athlete interviewees believe these are the individual qualities necessary to becoming an effective advocate. Some other ideas emerged from the participants' points of view, the first of which is the willingness to learn about the sport system (i.e., how it functions), and to understand what the people in the system are working towards (A1, A2). All of the athletes in this study believe that future advocates need to look at the bigger picture instead of just focusing on their own sport. Having the historical knowledge of why some decisions are made can lead to better plans of action, preparations, and less complaining, which is often the way administrators see the way athletes advocate - as complainers. Kathy Salmon explains, "*Athletes need to look beyond themselves, look at the big picture, look at things objectively and not subjectively, and understand why decisions are made before lashing out*". Doing the necessary research, reading materials, and keeping up-to-date with sporting events will help in becoming a better athlete advocate (A3, A5, A6).

All of the athletes in this study believe that training should be done for advocates, with various opinions expressed on who should be responsible, such as NSOs, CSCs, or AthletesCAN. All the athletes explain that they learned about the system by being a part of the system as competitors and did not really fully understand issues until it was near their time to retire. Four of the athletes (A1, A2, A3, A6) suggested that AthletesCAN, the CSCs, the COC, and the individual NSOs should be responsible for the training of future athlete advocates. However, two athletes (A3, A5) did mention that athletes should be taking responsibility to get informed and educate themselves. As Trevino Betty states, "*As athletes, we have to start being more accountable by reading documents and staying informed*". The two way communication between the athlete and the administrator needs to be present to ensure both parties are accountable for their actions. Athletes need to make sure they read the materials sent to them and, on the other hand, the NSOs need to make sure athletes have all the relevant information needed to be successful (A3).

Organizer Results

All six organizers agreed that athletes need to have the ability to get up in front of a crowd and speak effectively. Having a good command of the English or French language to get clear and concise points across to the audience is imperative (O5). Athletes need to be knowledgeable about the sport system, which basically stems back to being prepared for the situation when speaking out on a specific topic. As Bill France states, "*I think you should surround yourself with and use the tools that are available to you to become a more well-rounded athlete*". There are institutions out there to help provide for the athletes, such as the CSCs and AthletesCAN (O6).

Athletes also need to have a passion for speaking out on behalf of other athletes; it is not something that should be imposed upon athletes but rather it should be an intrinsic desire to help other athletes (O1, O4). As Bill Warren states, "*You must temper that passion by knowing the issues to provide credibility when speaking out*". All of the organizers agreed that athletes should really do their homework and know both sides of the argument before going out to represent other competitors. This might include being diligent about talking to other athletes in your sport or other sports, talking to officials within the sport system, and reading up on issues concerning your requests for action.

Five of the six organizers (O1, O3-O6) do not believe athletes receive the kind of training necessary to be effective advocates. The one organizer (O2) who did not offer a firm opinion stated that athletes should not be forced into the training, but should want to be trained and at least be notified that there is some training available to them. Again, the overall consensus was that AthletesCAN, the COC, and the CSCs should be taking the initiative to support these types of leadership development courses. As Randy Anderson states, "*AthletesCAN could be taking a real catalyst role for making it happen and helping fix the fragmented approach to Canadian sport*". A country's ability to not only develop strong athletes but strong people for the future is an undeniable attribute to any society (O4, O5, O6).

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives of Individual Characteristics

Characteristics that all of the participants noted included that athletes need to be effective communicators, show a willingness to be involved, and have a broader perspective on the whole sport system rather than that of a single sport. Both athletes

and organizers see the benefit of having athletes involved in the decision-making process. However, avenues need to be explored to ensure that proper training for athletes occurs, that administrators notify athletes about the resources available to them, and that communication between athletes and administrators is the responsibility of both parties, expecting as much accountability from the athletes as from the administrators. Athletes should also never underestimate the 'soft skills' that you can develop as an athlete, such as the ability to set goals, self-motivation, and self-discipline (A3). All of these skills will help an athlete to be successful for life after sport.

Both the athletes and the organizers thought that athlete advocates should be doing necessary homework or research when preparing to speak out on a particular topic. All of the participants noted that the COC, CSCs, and AthletesCAN are the organizations that should be spearheading the training athletes need to become effective advocates. The only difference expressed by the organizers, which was not mentioned by the athletes, was the need to show a passion for advocating on other athletes' behalf. However, the need to be committed was mentioned by the athletes to ensure advocates are doing their job consistently by speaking out on issues and reporting back to their team-mates.

Sport Specific Issues

Athlete Results

Dominant themes that emerged from all six athlete interviewees were the need to know about doping issues, team selection, funding criteria, and coach-athlete relationships with respect to harassment policies. As Susane Dandenault explains,

"Each sport is going to have its uniqueness but I think ultimately you are going to have five or six topics that every athlete should understand". Athlete advocates should understand the landscape of the Canadian sporting community, from an administrative side, and understand the administrative process of getting things put into rules (A3). Other issues that were mentioned by three participants (A3, A5, A6) were that athletes should know about carding and AAP funding criteria, facility management, and what administrators are dealing with as well, such as negotiating with funding partners for more assistance so that they can filter more money down to the athletes. This also leads to a need to understand board structure and how and where athletes can be placed within the organization to maximize their effectiveness as advocates.

Three athletes (A2, A4, A6) mentioned the need for an understanding of gender issues. Especially in judged sports, such as figure skating and gymnastics, knowledge of anorexia, judging issues, power differences between male coaches and young female athletes, and knowing what other countries are doing technically within that individual sport is important because ultimately athletes are pushing their bodies to the limits more and more (A4). The ability to speak out on those issues will be essential in ensuring strong advocacy.

Organizer Results

Three of the six organizers (O1, O5, O6) mentioned the same issues the athletes did, which were funding issues, selection criteria, funding criteria, and coach-athlete relationships. There seems to be a definite sentiment that athletes in judged sports need to be careful about how they position themselves in advocacy roles because as Bill Warren states, *"You always say the right thing as figure skaters and understandably so*

because you do not want to alienate the judges and worry about future consequences”.

Within sport, athletes often feel alienated from their associations due to funding issues or team selection issues but one participant (O4) mentioned that athletes need to be aware that people are trying to improve the system but it takes time to change; it cannot happen overnight. Athletes need to know their rights and not let administrators, coaches or other athletes bully them or hinder their ability to speak up (O5).

Organizers (O3-O6) brought forward a very important fact within the Canadian Sport System: each athlete needs to understand his/her own organization. Randy Anderson states, *“Athletes need to understand their National Sport Organization (NSO), how it functions, how it is structured, how it is governed, and the inner workings of their organization”*. Many times, athletes get so focused on their own issues they forget what the main purpose is of sport in Canada - that elite amateur athletes are only a small portion of the bigger picture. However, active athletes do play a significant role in helping develop sport in Canada, as Bill France notes, *“I think athletes are a lot smarter than people give them credit for and I think they totally understand the politics of sport and how they can help sport in Canada”*. Athletes need to take a collective stance and move forward as one to achieve their goals (O4).

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives on Sport Specific Issues

Issues that advocates need to be aware of in sport, mentioned by all the interviewees, include doping regulations, team selection, funding criteria, and coach-athlete relationships with respect to harassment policies. There seemed to be a very different way advocates go about their job depending on which type of sport you compete in. For example, it seems much tougher for a gymnast to voice his/her opinion

than a track and field athlete who only has to race against the clock and not fear retribution from judges. Giving athlete advocates the right channels to voice their opinions without fear of negative consequences is something that organizations should be implementing in their policies on athletes' rights.

Board governance was another similarity in the answers of both the athletes and organizers. Athletes should be aware of the opportunities available to them to voice concerns or issues at the board level to get things placed into action. An interesting difference between the athletes and organizers was that the athletes mentioned a need for advocates to understand what sport administrators deal with on a daily basis, such as facility management, government submissions, and sponsor engagements that might affect the way athletes are dealt with. Having an understanding of what the administrators go through could help an athlete advocate prepare the way they contact or submit a suggestion on, how to do things better, with a more open ear.

Multi-Sport Organization Issues

Athlete Results

There was a dominant theme from all interviewees that athletes need to know how the funding system works within the Canadian Sport System. Athletes should know who gets money from the COC, Sport Canada, and even from the CAC. This knowledge would then lead to an understanding of how specific sports get selected into multi-sport events. There was a strong sentiment that athletes need to be aware of which organizations are out there helping to address issues directly involving women, one of which would be Canadian Association for the Advancement of Women in Sport (A2, A4, A6). Rod Garassino states, "*Athletes have to be thoughtful about what the*

needs of athletes from other sports are and have a broader perspective other than that of their own sport". He also mentions the need for athletes to understand the policies that determine how things in the Canadian Sport System are run.

All the interviewees noted that athletes should understand that many times high performance is just a bridge for organizations to help increase their participation levels at the grassroots level to ensure success in the future. However, with this in mind Ian Bird states, "*Athletes should be aware of the shift toward a more performance centred environment that will make organizations and athletes more accountable for their results and funding they receive*". There is an obvious change in perspective right now because Canada will be hosting a Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver BC in 2010, so even though participation has always been a goal of Canada, the shift to success has already begun (A5).

Organizer Results

The need for athletes to understand the selection process, is evident and noted by both organizers from the 1988 Games. The selection criteria at the time was not well written or published, and therefore not well understood by the athletes. Now there is the SDRCC that has been legislated through the new Physical Activity and Sport Act (2003), so athletes will have another resource to use if a dispute arises. Dave

Carmichael states,

Athletes need to understand where sport fits in the pecking order of government and what ministry looks after sport in British Columbia and Canada. Then how things are lobbied for and why some sports get the level of carding they do and why others don't, so they have to understand that the sport system is political.

That was a dominant theme expressed by the six organizers.

The Canadian Sport System has been described as a political institution by all organizers, so athletes need to know how to work their way through the channels of government to get their issues heard and implemented. Knowing who to talk to and who is influential within the system is instrumental in being heard. Organizations, such as AthletesCAN and the Sport Matters Group, are advocating on behalf of athletes and all sport constituents in Canada (O6). These two groups would be a great starting point for any athlete to contact if the need arises concerning governmental issues, such as carding, funding, or selection criteria. The need to understand your own NSO and who the major players are within that group is essential for athletes to work their own agendas and to get the right information to make informed decisions (O2, O5, O6). One other institution that is working on behalf of athletes and all sport participants to ensure fairness is the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA). There is a worldwide desire for all athletes to compete clean, without the use of drugs, and that is what WADA is trying to accomplish (O1).

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives on Multi-Sport Organization Issues

Similar themes coming out of these discussions were that athlete advocates need to know about the selection criteria for multi-sport events, about funding criteria for organizations, and that the Canadian Sport System is very much a political entity. The selection criteria sentiment is very strong because many times athletes deal with a selection issue that negatively affects their careers. Learning how the different agencies within the sport system connect and work together will give an advocate a better understanding of how funding filters down to the athletes, how teams are selected or not for specific Games, and who to go to when conflict arises. The interviewees in this

study think that athletes that are advocating on behalf of other athletes need to have a broader perspective than only their own sport.

The main difference between the athletes and the organizers was raised by the organizers: athletes need to be aware of the other organizations within the Canadian Sport System that are there to inform athletes on a variety of issues. Some of those organizations were the WADA, the SDRCC, and the Sport Matters Group that deals directly with Canadian sport policies and how they are implemented. I find it interesting that doping issues were mentioned many times, but the CCES was not mentioned as a resource for athletes to go to if the need arises for questions on doping issues or supplementation use.

Societal Issues

Athlete Results

A dominant theme raised by all athletes is the need for elite amateur athletes to be aware of the status of their own sport within Canada. Since this country is a “hockey” nation, their own sport will not get the same level of media attention. Canada has, at least since 1961, used sport as a nation builder and because of its dominance, hockey has been supported very well (A2) (Rea et al, 1969). Knowing what your current government has in mind for sport is always an issue athletes will need to be aware of, because it can explain a lot in terms of how much money will actually be spent on sport in Canada (A2). Depending on the government’s agenda, sport could either receive a significant amount of money or very little. Sport may or may not be the government’s top priority, especially with healthcare and education being prominent on the public’s agenda (A6). Athletes are lucky right now because of the obvious attention

that will be placed on Canada due to the upcoming Winter Olympics in 2010 held in Vancouver, BC (A5).

Kathy Salmon brings up a very valid point, "*Athletes need to realize the bigger picture. You have to be aware of international policies when traveling and the role you play as an ambassador for Canada*". Athletes do not always understand the effect they have on other people from around the world. When they meet others, people form opinions very quickly about what Canada must be like due to the actions of its athletes. Ian Bird states, "*I think athletes can be better aware of their benefit over the long term to [] their contribution to Canadian society and social responsibilities they have and how that plays out in a whole bunch of different ways*". So not only could athletes get themselves into a lot of trouble because they do not understand the policies of other countries, but they can give our whole country a bad reputation because of poor behaviour.

All of the interviewees agreed that athletes need to know how to work with the media. If they want to learn how to sell themselves and reap the benefits of being an elite amateur athlete in Canada, knowing how to use the media is essential. Not only can the media help the athlete, it can also improve the image of the sport if done in a positive light. Athletes also need to realize that elite amateur sport in Canada is very much in the voluntary non-profit sector and therefore may not get the same media attention as professional sports, due to the financial needs of the broadcasting company (A5).

Organizer Results

One clear sentiment that came from all the organizers is that if you want to advocate for anything in this world, whether it be for your sport or something in your country, it takes a lot of work off the playing field. There are larger problems in the world than an athlete not being selected for a team or someone not being selected for funding. When athletes realize this, they may learn to see that they are actually privileged citizens within this country (O5). Mike Moore explains, "*Athletes certainly have to be aware of where sport fits in Canadian society in terms of importance. Let's face it, sport is not a cure for cancer so it is not going to be as important as healthcare ever, and it is not going to be as important as education either*". However, Dave Carmichael points out a very important fact about sport, "*we [sport administrators and athletes] are really lucky right now because health is a good thing and sport, fitness, and activities are being played as a way to help the healthcare system, so it is important for athletes to understand the political trends*".

All six organizers mentioned the need for an appreciation of how to work media and use it for personal, financial, and political agendas. As Randy Anderson points out, "*At the end, of the day the media people want to be talking to the athletes, they do not want to be talking to myself or bureaucrats. Lobby efforts seem to always fall back on the athlete and knowing what an important role they play*". Working with the media also goes back to earlier discussions on being able to communicate effectively and talk about the pertinent issues articulately (O1-O6).

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives on Societal Issues

The similar theme arising from the societal interview section is that advocates have to understand how sport fits into the larger spectrum of Canadian life.

Government will not always have sport as its top priority, but it is currently a priority because we will be hosting the 2010 Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver, BC. Yet, other issues, such as healthcare and education, are of greater importance because of the sheer number of people that those items affect. Advocates should be aware, however, of the importance of always trying to keep sport at the forefront of the government's attention because of the positive contribution sport participation and physical activity make towards the well-being of all Canadians. Athlete advocates need to voice their opinions on their own specific sport issues, but also for the betterment of sport in Canada in general.

The only difference between the athletes and the organizers answers to societal issues was the greater depth to which the athletes eluded to the political aspect of government and how sport will be affected by Canada's hosting of the 2010 Olympics to be held in Vancouver, BC. The country will try to avoid the same disappointment as the 1976 Olympics held in Montreal, Quebec by allocating more money to various stakeholders, such as organizations and athletes. Canada's goal for 2010 is to be number one in the medal count, so allocating more financial resources to ensure athletes are receiving what they need to compete with the best is of primary concern to policy makers and organizers in Canada. Using the media is one way suggested by all of the interviewees for achieving success both on and off the playing field. It is interesting to note that no one mentioned law or labour issues within the Canadian

Sport System as something athletes should be aware of, although some alluded to it indirectly in another section on athlete status in the Canadian Sport System.

Obstacles

Athlete Results

From the question posed: "Should athlete advocates be mandatory within the Canadian Sport System", five of the six athletes (A1-A4, A6) responded positively. Ian Bird felt that, "*athlete advocates should be fully adopted, embraced and welcomed because of the benefits that come from doing it, not making it some kind of policy*". The other five athletes all felt that having athletes at the decision-making table would ensure accountability on the part of the organization. It was suggested that perhaps, with the new funding framework in Canada, organizations that do have athlete advocates could get bonus points in their application for government funding (A6). However, this could be troublesome because of the fear of tokenism just so that organizations can receive a greater amount of funding by placing athletes in positions on boards or committees. Having athletes involved can bring in a fresh perspective, increased confidence for the committee knowing athletes have been involved, and a unified morale for the committee knowing they have facilitated athlete opinions in decision-making. It should not be done just to get funding (A4, A5).

Both athletes from the judged sports (A1, A4) mentioned the fear of retribution from judges and officials as being an obstacle current athletes would face when voicing their opinions. There is a gap in that athletes and administrators do not understand each others' daily regimen and it plays out in poor decision-making. Athletes sometimes do not understand the processes organizations have to go through to get any funding at all

from government sources (A1). The same applies for administrators in that they might not be sure what the athlete is struggling through on a daily basis. There was a strong sentiment from all the participants that although there are fewer and fewer obstacles, the theme of not being invited to the table to be a part of the discussion is still a concern for athletes. If athletes are not at the table to raise their concerns, they are not being given the optimal environment to succeed (A5). Athletes are expected to succeed, but they must be given the necessary tools. One other idea that was presented by one athlete (A3) was the need for follow-through on behalf of the athlete and retention of good athlete advocates. The sport sector is largely a voluntary sector, so along with retaining people in other positions we need to retain athletes, since they were the ones who have lived the experience on the playing field (A5).

Organizer Results

When the same question was posed to the organizers - whether or not athlete advocates should be mandatory in sport organizations - only four of the six said yes (O2-O5). However, the two (O1, O6) that said no were stating that it should not be mandatory because that can lead to resentment on behalf of the organization, but athlete involvement should be fully embraced, supported, and developed. The athletes should also want to be advocates and have a passion for the job, instead of having it forced upon them (O1). The organization should provide the opportunity and the tools to allow athletes the chance to develop their skills as advocates; then it can become a win-win situation for both sides. As Randy Anderson states,

I have a bit of a hard time when you start regulating things and my preference would be that there's a realization and an understanding by everybody that this is an important part of the fabric that makes the whole system work and if you

have to legislate that kind of thing I think it takes you back to the beginning where AthletesCAN started from as an almost confrontational entity.

As for the direct obstacles that athletes face in becoming advocates, the six organizers all agreed that time was the most pressing issue. Competitors are busy with their daily training regimens, and some may be working part-time jobs or going to school. That does not leave a lot of free time to volunteer or prepare for advocacy roles

(O5). There were other issues raised. For example, Bruce Wasylik states:

I think the athletes need better tools. I mean, we've got some examples of good training tools but I think we need better training tools and we need to create some time for athletes to actually get informed. Athletes that are not informed can be seen as an obstacle because the passion for an issue that is not fully understood can come across as whining instead of being calm and articulating your words by having done the necessary research.

Athletes that have done their homework and research will be much more accepted because they are able to contribute and articulate their concerns, whereas the athlete that comes blazing in is seen as immature and not yet ready to be an effective athlete advocate in the eyes of the administrators (O5).

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives on Obstacles

The main similarity between the athletes and organizers was that all of them believed that sport organizations should have athlete advocates on boards, committees, and work groups to ensure athletes are a part of the decision-making process. This would help ensure athletes are being heard and their opinions are at least getting across to administrators. Another theme that emerged was that the Canadian Sport System is becoming more athlete-centred; however, the single biggest issue raised by the athletes was that there is still a problem being invited to the table to be a part of the organizational process. There does seem to be a difference between sports that are

judged and sports that are timed, in how effective athlete advocates can be in voicing their opinions. Athletes in judged sports feel that their advocacy roles could lead to unfavourable results in competitive situations, whereas, athletes in timed sports only have to worry about one thing: the clock.

Another similarity mentioned was that athletes have to continue to follow-through in their actions to make sure their team-mates and colleagues are receiving the necessary information from sessions attended by the designated athlete representatives. Athletes need to be aware of their accountability back to the people they are representing. The organizers felt that time really was the biggest issue for active athletes to fulfill their duties as an athlete representative and mentioned the need to involve retired athletes more in that role as a result.

Retired Athletes

Athlete Results

AthletesCAN defines a retired athlete, who is eligible for membership in their organization, as an athlete who has stopped competing in their sport for no more than eight years (AthletesCAN, 2000). The six athletes said that retired athletes definitely have a role to play as mentors for current athletes. Retirees are the ones who have lived the experience and know how things have been done and can help active athletes understand how some decisions are made. As Rod Garassino states, "*Retired athletes can inform current athletes about the conditions that they experienced when they were competing and provide some context for the active athlete to understand the process in the administrator's decision-making*". Retired athletes are less focused on the specific

needs of their sport and will have a different perspective on things in life and that can help a current athlete understand his/her sport involvement in a broader context (A1).

Retired athletes should get involved volunteering in the sport system so that they can become mentors to current athletes and help them become successful. That was a dominant theme for all participants in this study. Retired athletes must be careful, as Ian Bird states,

So long as there is not a big disconnect between, I mean it has been five years now and I feel more and more disconnected, so the cautionary tale is that there has to be an open communication line between the retired athlete and the active athlete, otherwise you are not really there as an athlete advocate.

Retired athletes will not have the fear of retribution that current athletes have, unless they are at the table for selfish reasons and not for the good of the current athletes.

Retired athletes can essentially act as buffers between the administrators and active athletes to ensure a fair sport system (A3).

Organizer Results

The dominant theme in the group of organizers interviewed was that retired athletes almost have a duty to return their knowledge back into sport and serve a mentorship role for current athletes. All of the organizers noted that retired athletes are the closest people to current athletes and have a special knowledge of what the needs are of that particular group. Dave Carmichael suggests, *“Retired athletes, I think, have the responsibility to the sport to become involved in the periphery and they can become the doers and advocate for something. They should become conduits, door openers for athletes that are still competing”*. Retired athletes can be a huge resource of strength for current athletes and there is an immediate relationship and credibility from having just gone through what active athletes are about to experience (O6).

Mike Moore suggests, *"I think retired athletes are the number one group, that is where groups like AthletesCAN and the Canadian Sport Centres need to focus, because they are tremendous resources and they remember what it was like to be an athlete"*. Retaining retired athletes in the system is not always easy to do, due to burn out, bad feelings towards their organizations, or an overall need to just get away (O2). However, the need to keep them involved was expressed by all organizers. The money received for training, preferred medical services, and preferred facility use are all reasons why retired athletes should be aware of their responsibility to give back in sport after their own retirement, almost as a way of saying thanks and contributing back to the Canadian Sport System (O5). Mentorship roles can come in the form of coaching as well; retired athletes many times jump right into a coaching position and share their knowledge with current athletes, which can be very beneficial for those involved (O1, O2).

Discussion: Athlete and Organizer Perspectives on Retired Athletes

The main similarity between the athletes and the organizers was that retired athletes can serve a mentorship role for active athletes. Retired athletes can help active athletes understand the Canadian Sport System, help them understand why certain decisions have been made, and why certain things are done from a historical perspective, to help understand present decision-making processes. Retired athletes can come in and offer a different perspective on life, to help bring calmness to an otherwise stressful life situation. The more support athletes feel from the organization the more successful they can become, which is an obvious goal of both the organizers and athletes.

The difference between the two groups was that the organizers mentioned that retired athletes should stay involved in the sport afterwards, almost as a duty to the sport. Organizers believe that retired athletes owe it to the Canadian Sport System because of the preferential treatment they received while they were athletes, even though at times it might not have felt that way for the active athletes. Organizers also acknowledged, though, that it has become hard to retain athletes in the system to act as mentors, because some feel bitterness towards their sport or burnout from being involved in sport for so long. NSOs need to start creating new exciting opportunities for retired athletes to help retain their knowledge and experience in the Canadian Sport System; for example, Skate Canada has approached many retired athletes to become team leaders at international events.

Summary

Through my own experiences and interviews, I have been able to obtain information for athletes and organizers to consider. It is essential that athlete advocates become good communicators to effectively get their points across to administrators and organizers. Through the interview process, it was established that athlete advocates are needed and that the lines of communication between athletes and organizers should be fostered to ensure an athlete-centred approach to sport development in Canada.

Doping issues, team selection, funding, and board governance were all sport specific items that were noted that athlete advocates should be aware of, which was also a dominant theme in the multi-sport organization section. Athlete advocates should also be aware of the sport groups within Canada that have been created to help ensure a more athlete-centred system, such as AthletesCAN and Sport Matters. Overall, athlete

advocates need to have an understanding of how sport fits into Canadian society and how government ranks sport compared to other areas such as healthcare and education.

The biggest obstacle faced by athlete advocates that was noted by organizers was time and their ability to juggle training with decision-making responsibilities. Athletes from judged sports (figure skating, gymnastics) compared to time sports (track, speed skating) fare differently when advocating on others' behalf, due to the fear of retribution in their particular sport. This is where it was noted that retired athletes could play a significant role in sport, to help active athletes raise their concerns and understand their position within their respective sports better. Retired athletes could act as mentors for the current generation of athletes.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

Introduction

This section provides an overview of the previous three chapters, which when combined help to answer my main research question:

How can athletes be more effective advocates within the Canadian Sport System?

I explore the ways each sub-problem helps answer the broader research question, by examining the relationships between the sections of each sub-problem and how each sub-problem relates to the other.

Sub-Problem #1: How have selected federal sport documents and reports addressed the issue of Elite Amateur Athlete conditions within the Canadian Sport System?

According to my overview of sub-problem number one (refer to appendix D), the key rationale that increased throughout the time period studied includes: the need for an athlete-centred sport system, facility improvement, addressing the needs of underprivileged groups, increased research, and increased participation. Rationales for increased coaching and increased financial resources have been consistent within Canadian sport policies throughout the time period studied. Financial resources for example, have been mentioned consistently in relation to the delineation of responsibilities for sport between the Federal and Provincial/Territorial governments. The rationale, promotion, has been only somewhat consistent, with references more prevalent in the 1960's to 1980. Team performance-excellence has mainly been referred to in Canadian sport policies when Canada is getting ready to host an International Games, which had an emphasis in the early 1970's, the mid 1980's and

most recently leading up to the 2010 Games. The only rationale that has decreased in the time period studied is Canadian identity; this focus seems to have been replaced with increased references to Canadian team excellence and the need for Canada to be first in the medal count in 2010.

The 1960's was the first time government ventured into supporting elite amateur sport by writing into policy cost-sharing agreements between the Provincial/Territorial governments. There was little advancement with regards to sport policy until a new government was in place in 1968, and Trudeau enacted a Task Force to do a study to see how sport in Canada could be improved.

The 1970's was a time for increasing the professionalization of the administrative field in Canadian sport governance. Kikulis et al. (1995) and Macintosh & Whitson (1990) explain the system as one of increased full-time administration and one that is increasingly being taken over from the once held volunteer organizational archetype. This is further supported by Munro (1970), who explains a need to house this full-time administration in a central building through federal funding initiatives.

The 1980's saw the advent of the NSO/athlete agreements, a time when athletes would need to learn more about their accountability within the Canadian Sport System. To support this statement, retired athletes Charmaine Crooks, Lori Johnstone, and Trevino Betty have stated their concerns that athletes need to be accountable for their actions by having signed agreements, but not to forget that the NSO has an equal obligation to be accountable to the athletes' needs.

The 1990's saw an increasing athlete-centred approach to sport delivery, which is highlighted by the creation of AthletesCAN in 1992. At a 1990 NASSM conference,

it was noted that an athlete-centred approach to sport delivery emphasizes that policy and programs developed to deliver sport should be designed first and foremost to meet the needs of the athletes. To build on this athlete-centred approach to sport delivery, hosting events has become an avenue explored to provide a legacy of facilities and future sport programs for the use of future athletes. It is documented in the 1996 Federal Hosting policy that the choice of events and venues must support and maximize athlete preparation and allow future generations of athletes to benefit from the lasting legacy of the Games (Sport Canada, 1996).

Prior to the year 2000, rules in Canadian Sport Policy have been created largely to delineate the responsibilities of the Federal and Provincial/Territorial governments, as well as all partners in sport, through a framework within which to work and carry out daily activities of the organizations. The athlete-centred approach to sport delivery is improving, which can be seen from the examples of participation from all stakeholders in the Canadian Sport Policy development that took place in 2001, at the National Summit on Sport.

However, challenging the view that the Canadian Sport System has become more athlete-centred, is the gap in the implementation of policy that aligns with what Rod Garassino (A1) and Kathy Salmon (A2) said: *"unless you are successful you were not given any status, but as soon as you produced you were awarded financial status"*. The 1999 CSC's document (Sport Canada, 1999) recommends that the centres be implemented according to an outcomes-oriented business plan, meaning that athletes had to produce in order to receive funding. That has created a problem in sport delivery within the Canadian Sport System; athletes need the funding to get to the levels where

they are comfortable enough to train and attain the results targeted by the government and policy makers. Fortunately for athletes, the government is now investing large amounts of money into the Canadian Sport System, to NSOs and athletes directly, to ensure success at the Games in 2010.

Sub-Problem #2: How have athletes been involved in the organization of select Multi-Sport Events in Canada?

There was a shift from the informal mindset of athlete-centeredness of the organizers of the 1988 Games, to a more structured organizational format that included a formal athlete position for the 1994 and 1999 Games. Athletes have thus been used in a more structured way to organize international multi-sport events since the creation of AthletesCAN in 1992. Athletes were consulted in each of the Games studied, to advise on topics such as village and transportation issues. However, a great example of an athlete being involved in organizing a multi-sport event is evidenced in the interview with Susane Dandenault, who was involved in the sport technical side of organizing the event in 1999, not just for consultation purposes.

The Canadian Sport System has long been considered by people within the system as being very fragmented in its approach to sport administration and leadership (e.g., Campagnolo, 1979). People have complained about this fragmented system, as cited in an interview with Randy Anderson (2006), who voiced the need to bring people together and to work in a collaborative fashion. Both athletes and organizers feel that because so many different organizations are constantly battling against one another for government dollars, athletes have been badly under funded, leading to poor international performances.

This fragmented approach towards services for athletes, however, has not hampered Canada's ability to slowly become more athlete-centred. The results from the interview process involving the definition of this term helps to extend my operational definition of 'athlete-centred'. The results explain that an 'athlete-centred' sport system would be one where athletes are looked to for leadership positions on boards of directors and important decision-making committees. The system would also ensure that athletes are financially stable to the point where they can concentrate on their training without concerns about financial security. The Canadian Sport System's reasons for existing include many factors mentioned throughout this thesis, such as improving the health of the general public, improving Canada's identity internationally, and improving political relationships. However, in an 'athlete-centred' sport system, the athletes' well-being must be ensured regardless of other objectives (Sport Canada, 2003).

Groups such as AthletesCAN, CSCs, and Sport Matters Group have been instrumental in advocating on behalf of athletes and delivering services to help athletes succeed in sport and in life. Elite amateur athletes might not be as lucky as professional athletes because of the superior media coverage afforded to the professionals, but things are starting to move in the right direction, such as increases to AAP funding and private sector support of sport. Issues such as fear of retribution, dealing with athlete agreements, and treating sport like a job fit with the conditions faced by professional athletes, which led to them to form unions or player associations such as the National Hockey League Players Association. Unions could be an answer to Gray's (1989) suggestion that elite amateur athletes need to establish some form of countervailing

power that would allow for a more balanced exchange of information between athletes and administrators. However, none of the interviewees mentioned the formation of a union as a method for addressing athlete conditions in Canadian sport.

Results from my interviews show that Canadian sport policies may not have had as big an impact as hoped when they were first implemented. Organizers know that there are athlete-centred documents in publication, but not knowing their titles likely contributes to why athlete-centred models for sport have taken so long to take effect. When administrators or organizers are constantly looking for funding resources, athlete issues become secondary. This is why all interviewees pointed out that athletes should be a part of the decision-making process - to ensure that their needs remain central to decisions being made on their behalf. This point is further supported by fourteen of the twenty-three policy documents, which mention a need for athletes in the decision-making processes of the Canadian Sport System.

None of the interviewees learned about the Canadian Sport System from academic courses or a definitive text, but rather learned by trial and error and by living within the system. Hopefully, this thesis can help future athlete advocates and organizers learn something about the system before their next trial and error experience. The Canadian Sport System is heavily dependent on volunteers, as shown in the interviews, in that every single participant has volunteered at some level within the system. Five of the six organizers were in paid positions during their Games' involvement. However, all six believed that athletes should be a part of the organizational process because athlete input into items such as transportation and village issues is important to ensure a successful Games. The overwhelming result is

that all interviewees believed that athletes should be involved in organizing an international event, with an emphasis on choosing retired athletes because of the time commitment needed, which is too great for active athletes to manage.

Sub-Problem #3: What structures are in place and needed to allow athletes to become better Athlete Advocate?

The overriding thought behind this sub-problem was to produce an overview of how athletes can become better advocates. The following points are ways that athletes can become better advocates. Athletes need to be willing to learn about the Canadian Sport System and understand what those in the system are working towards if the system is to really become athlete-centred. There is a definite sentiment that athletes are needed in the system, but it is important that the athletes approach their advocacy role as they would their own sport endeavours. To further support this idea of accountability, I refer back to my involvement with AthletesCAN in 2002, and advice given by Crooks and Johnstone. As well, interviewees noted the need for athletes to be accountable for their actions, such as continuing their education of becoming a better advocate for their peers. However, not all of the accountability rests on the athlete becoming informed and educated about their advocacy roles. NSOs and other sport organizations must do their part in helping athletes, by providing the necessary tools to become better advocates, such as workshops, reading materials, and opportunities to attend important meetings. AthletesCAN, the COC, the CGC, and the CSCs were noted as organizations athletes should be aware of to help them utilize and develop their skills as advocates.

There are five or six sport specific items all athlete advocates should be aware of, including team selection, doping issues, funding criteria, board governance, and athlete-coach relationships with regards to harassment policies. Some of these carry over as items athletes should know about in MSOs. The team selection item at both levels will become very important, as it will determine an athlete's ability to qualify for major Games. Having knowledge about the rules for team selection can prevent negative consequences once the decisions have been made, providing everything was done fairly by the administrators.

Time and the ability to get through to the administrators were noted as obstacles preventing athlete advocates from making an impact in the Canadian Sport System. It was felt that athlete advocates should be mandatory in NSOs, but to be careful of tokenism²³, where athletes are placed in position without any real effect on the decision-making process. Administrators and organizers should provide a safe environment for athletes to raise their concerns without fear of retribution for their comments.

One way to combat the problem of having athletes fear retribution for their actions is to start doing a better job of retaining retired athletes in the system to act as

²³ Tokenism occurs when athletes are appointed to decision-making committees and do not have any effect on the administrators' decisions. For example, to distract reporters and politicians from the reality that International Olympic Committee (IOC) members would have to retire at the age of seventy, IOC president Juan Antonio Samaranch made an announcement that there would be athlete members on the IOC. Samaranch had some athletes in mind who did not have any real political concerns or personal agendas that would prove detrimental to the IOC. He appointed them immediately and, as intended, this tactic captured most of the headlines, diverting attention away from the original media focus (Sambrook & Jennings, 2000).

advocates and mentors for active elite amateur athletes. Retired athletes have a significant role to play in judged sports, where athletes much of the time feel scared to raise their concerns due to the negative consequences that could occur. Both athletes from judged sports that were interviewed (A1, A4) felt that active athletes in delicate situations where crucial decisions have to be made, are not always going to be able to make the best decision. This was not a concern for the other four athletes interviewed, because their main opponent was themselves and their own race against the clock. Retired athletes could hopefully step into those situations and ease the worry for active athletes in judged sports, knowing they are being represented by athletes that were once in their position.

CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This thesis investigated how athletes could be more effective advocates within the Canadian Sport System by looking at three sub-problems. The first sub-problem analyzed how Canadian Sport Policies addressed elite amateur athlete issues. The second sub-problem explored athlete involvement in the organization of international multi-sport events. I interviewed six athletes and six organizers involved in three different international multi-sport Games held in Canada. The third sub-problem analyzed the structures that are in place to help athletes become better advocates. Once again, I obtained advice from the twelve interviewees on what athletes need to know to be better advocates. I wanted to compile a body of information that could serve as a starting point for new national team athletes to learn about relevant organizations and how they can effectively advocate for their rights within the Canadian Sport system, instead of having to learn everything by trial and error.

In the first sub-problem, I selected twenty-three sport policies/documents from 1961 to 2004 to find out whether they have changed over time with respect to mentioning different athlete-centred issues. I followed a critical method of analysis for each document that ensured consistency and the collection of more accurate information. In the second sub-problem, I obtained information from the COC, the CGC, and the CSC-Manitoba to find out which athletes and organizers I could enlist to help with the research. After contacting each participant and getting approval to use their names in the research, I conducted, then transcribed the twelve interviews. I divided the information into two units with three sections each: 1) Athlete-Centred

i) definitions, ii) Policy analysis, and iii) Involvement in the Canadian Sport System.
 2) Historical presence of athletes in the organization of multi-sport events i) Athlete involvement 1988-1999, ii) Selection Processes, and iii) Benefits/Problems of athlete involvement.

For the third sub-problem, I developed a model to input the information I obtained from the interviewees. The Spheres of Influence was created to help organize the information into four different sections (individual characteristics, sport specific issues, MSO issues, and societal issues) to explain how the structures in the Canadian Sport System shape and can be shaped by athlete advocates.

After completing this research, I have been able to compile a list of recommendations that future athlete advocates and event organizers can use to effectively do their jobs. These recommendations should help athletes be better prepared to advocate on their colleagues' behalf; organizers should be better prepared to include athletes in the decision-making processes that affect their involvement in sport.

Conclusions

Sub-Problem #1: How have selected federal sport documents and reports addressed the issue of Elite Amateur Athlete conditions within the Canadian Sport System?

Documents created in the 1960's and 1970's focused more on the delineation of responsibilities between the Federal and Provincial/Territorial governments, which is why many policies/documents were not that athlete-centred. Prior to 1992, and the creation of AthletesCAN, primary stakeholders (i.e., the athletes) were not involved in

the process of creating sport policies/documents. However, the shift towards a more athlete-centred Canadian Sport System has started. AthletesCAN, along with other sport stakeholders, have been involved in processes that have helped create sport policies in Canada. For example, the National Summit on Sport (2001) was a gathering of all stakeholders in sport to decide on issues and concerns that involved athletes and sport issues in Canada. Post 1992, there is more mention in policy about an athlete-centred approach to sport, but more is still needed. Having groups like AthletesCAN and Sport Matters Group pushing the athlete-centred approach to sport delivery should continue to help an athlete's status in the Canadian Sport System.

The document analysis supports my initial assumption that athletes need to be a part of the decision-making process, in that fourteen of the twenty-three documents state this point. Fourteen of the twenty-three documents also allude to the fact that the government uses athletes and sport for political issues. The SFAF 2005-2010 (Sport Canada, 2004b) states that NSOs must include athletes in decision-making processes in order to receive government funding. There is a framework in policy that states that hosting events can be a huge part of the economic benefits accruing to governments, such as job creation, regional development, increased tourism and exports, enhanced infrastructure, and increased tax revenue (Sport Canada, 1996), supporting the claim that international multi-sport events are designed for achieving economic growth.²⁴

²⁴ According to Bondonio and Campaniello (2006), city politicians see hallmark events as a means of promoting economic growth, such as the 36 million dollars made at the 1988 Calgary Olympics. Promoters of events that use public funds prefer an analysis for economic growth based on added value, which generally gives more favourable results than a cost benefit-analysis that includes 'externals' such as environmental costs. The authors note that some Games profited while others did not. For example, 1980 Lake Placid, 1992 Albertville, and 2002 Salt Lake City all recorded deficits for hosting the Olympic Games while 1984 Sarajevo, 1988 Calgary, and 1998 Nagano profited (Bondonio & Campaniello, 2006).

Finally, ten of thirteen documents from 1996-2004 refer to an increase in Canadian Sport System improvements, supporting my assumption that AthletesCAN has improved athlete conditions in Canada since 1992.

Sub-Problem #2: How have athletes been involved in the organization of select Multi-Sport Events in Canada?

Has athlete advocacy improved since the creation of AthletesCAN? The Canadian Sport System has become more athlete-centred, but further development is still needed. AthletesCAN has been a strong catalyst in making conditions within the Canadian Sport System more athlete-centred. Athletes were used in each of the three Games studied. The athlete involvement, however, was very minimal and for the most part appointments were used instead of the election of athlete by their peers. This can lead to tokenism, but at the same time organizers were looking to use athletes that showed interest and sometimes they had to be chosen by appointment.

There was no difference in attitude from the organizers between the three Games being studied. All of the organizers conveyed a very athlete-centred approach that they then transferred to their work staff, which made each of the Games a success, both extrinsically (financial) and intrinsically (athletes' experiences). The athlete advocate position at the 1994 and 1999 Games does not seem to have made a difference to the athletes or organizers at the Games studied, so further research is still needed on the topic. There are many issues involved in organizing an international multi-sport event, therefore, having athletes as a part of the process helps organizers and administrators spot any details that may have been overlooked that would enable the athlete to have a more positive experience.

Since the creation of AthletesCAN and their fight for 20% representation of athletes on all boards and committees within the sports system, athletes are becoming a greater presence at all levels of sport in Canada (A5). Athletes have been accepted into the daily functioning of the CGC, the COC (Athletes Council), the CSCs, and AthletesCAN, where they sit on various committees, such as the board of directors, and the technical and programs committees. Athletes are also involved in the IOC, the ISU, and various other international sport organizations. Athletes are increasingly becoming more educated about the sport system, which is evident in the answers given by the interviewees from the 1999 Games. Also, athletes like Trevino Betty are constantly improving their levels of knowledge by staying involved in athlete advocacy groups, NSO committees, and sport in Canada in general.

Sub-Problem #3: What structures are in place and needed to allow athletes to become better Athlete Advocates?

The following factors will help an athlete become a more effective advocate. Athletes need to effectively get their points across to administrators and organizers in the Canadian Sport System. Athletes generally need to take it upon themselves to become more informed about the issues facing all athletes in the Canadian Sport System. Athlete advocates should be an integral part of the Canadian Sport System and organizations should be helping foster this relationship by keeping athletes informed and helping them become more educated on the topic.

Athlete advocates need to be aware of relevant issues within their own specific sports, as well as the whole Canadian Sport System. Items such as team selection, doping issues, funding, and board governance (relating to policy decisions) are all

important to understand. Athletes need to focus on their performances, but should also be aware of their responsibilities by doing the necessary research and homework.

The biggest obstacle athletes face to becoming a better athlete advocate is time. Another major obstacle is not having the chance to be heard or invited to the decision-making table; however, if an athlete takes the time needed to be effective by doing the necessary preparation, perhaps those obstacles can be overcome. Retired athletes also play a role in helping active athletes overcome these obstacles by acting as buffers to the administrators, and as mentors on how to conduct yourself to current athletes.

Recommendations

Theoretical

Through research, I hoped to expand existing knowledge on athlete leadership and advocacy. Thibault & Babiak's (2003) organizational approach to 'athlete-centeredness' in the Canadian Sport System should benefit from my insider perspective on 'athlete-centred' sport. As suggested, the Canadian Sport System has focused very heavily on creating a strong administrative base since the 1970's, so my research is an extension of Thibault & Babiak's (2003) work. I too now believe that the Canadian Sport System has created a strong administrative base, which is supported by fifteen of the twenty-three documents (3, 4, 5, 8, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16-22) mentioning financial support for facility development, so the focus should turn to the business core: the athletes. The next step seems to have already started, where the new focus is being described as, "athlete-centred, coach-led, and performance based", which is aspiring to achieve a greater level of accountability from the coaches, athletes, and administrators (Canada, 2002b).

There have been policies written recently for underprivileged groups, including Aboriginal Peoples (2005) and people with a disability (2006). I suggest a new, updated policy be created for elite amateur athletes, which expands on the information contained in the High Performance Athlete Development in Canada (1985) document, outlining avenues athletes can take to becoming a better advocate within their specific sports. So much has been written in policy on the delineation of responsibilities for the Federal and Provincial/Territorial governments, it would be nice to see a document that delineates the responsibilities for athletes and NSOs concerning athlete representation in the Canadian Sport System. My research further extends the studies done by Ekos Research (1992a), in that not only were athletes interviewed, but organizers involved in organizing international multi-sport events and administering sport in Canada were interviewed, expanding on information about athlete-centred models for sport.

Due to the small number of participants in this research, I recommend further study be done on the effect the 'athlete advocate' position has on athletes and organizers at an international multi-sport event. I, along with those interviewed, believe that the position has benefits, but having only eight people (interviews from 1994 and 1999) to research this topic does not allow for a full understanding of the impact of this role on current and retired athletes, as well as their impact on shaping the system.

Practical

Athletes

Athletes definitely need to first and foremost work on their own speaking abilities and be accountable for their actions as advocates. There are many workshops

and courses offered through AthletesCAN and the CSCs that help with this function. Through AthletesCAN there is the Dale Carnegie Course, and through the CSCs there are workshops offered throughout the year on public speaking. There is a definite consensus among former athletes and organizers that athletes must present themselves in a positive way to have credibility with the administrators in the sport system.

Within an athlete's own sport, advocates should be aware of doping issues, team selection, funding criteria, and coach-athlete relationships with respect to harassment policies. To go about doing this, an advocate must develop his/her relationship with the NSO, CSCs, and other agencies within the Canadian Sport System to get the relevant information to make informed decisions. Staying up-to-date with readings, emails, and news within sport is necessary for advocates in understanding the system, so that they can voice their opinions wisely.

Within the broader Canadian Sport System, athletes should realize that Sport Canada, the COC, the network of CSCs, and AthletesCAN are very influential agencies in Canada that distribute a lot of the financial and information resources relied upon by NSOs. Developing a relationship with the people within these organizations will help in future discussions that deal with athlete issues. Understanding that it is not always about the individual, but rather about a broader focus on participants in Canada, will help advocates come across to decision makers as more credible.

Athlete advocates really do need to have an understanding of where sport fits into the broader spectrum of Canadian life. Government has other concerns in this world than just sport. There is healthcare, education, and social services that affect all of society, not just those involved in sport. However, advocates at all levels, not just

athletes, need to keep approaching government as a collective group to ensure sport's place in society.

Having a permanent federal position for a Minister responsible for Sport says a lot about the perceived government importance that sport and physical activity have in assuring the well-being of all Canadians. The dominant assumption throughout the last 45 years is that being physically fit can help government save money on healthcare, so the distribution of funds needs to increase in sport to encourage more people to get involved, which will increase the number of healthy people. These types of initiatives are essential if sport in Canada is to thrive.

Working through all the layers of sport organizations, multi-sport organizations, and government can be an arduous task for any athlete advocate. These are the obstacles advocates face in making sure their concerns are heard. Retired athletes can play a big role in helping active athletes achieve their goals by mentoring, advocating on behalf of, and acting as a catalyst to bring about necessary change within the Canadian Sport System. Retired athletes have lived on the margins as amateur athletes and can be the link between current athletes and administrators that will hopefully help achieve success in the future.

Through my own athlete representation at the ISU Congress, and Susane Dandenault's responses about her involvement in the organization of the 1999 Games, I recommend that retired athletes fill those roles. Retired athletes would be better suited for these roles so that active athletes would not have to worry about time commitments, other than the occasional question, and not have the fear of retribution for comments made during important meetings where judges may be in attendance. Retired athletes

who take on new roles within the Canadian Sport System, as administrators or as organizers of events, should always keep in mind what it was like for them as athletes, and try to make decisions with an 'athlete-centred' mentality. Athletes who retire and move away from the 'limelight' need to focus on the next generation of star athletes and help ensure that their experiences are positive. Following these recommendations can help guard against future athlete tokenism, since athletes that are educated and prepared to represent other athletes will have the ability to speak up effectively for their rights.

Organizers

Organizers should involve athletes at all levels of decision-making, since the athletes are the *raison d'être* in an athlete-centred sport system. Organizers and sport administrators in Canada are doing a better job right now of funding elite amateur athletes due to the hosting of the 2010 Olympics in Vancouver, BC. I recommend that the support being given right now be sustained beyond 2010, so that future generations of athletes can have the same chances of succeeding abroad as our athletes will have in Canada in 2010.

As explained in my literature review, 'Podium 2002' was created out of the government's need to see success from its athletes at the Games in Salt Lake City (COC, 2002a). Their approach – taking developmental funds and redirecting them to potential medalists - was thought to have had an immediate effect on results. However, I recommend implementing a 'bonus' or 'merit' system for medals won at Olympic, Pan-American and Commonwealth Games, to enhance the excitement and motivation

of athletes who have that chance and to increase the likelihood of an immediate result.²⁵ At the same time, however, funding agencies need to continue sufficient funding for developing athletes so that the long-term success and sustainability of the Canadian Sport System is ensured. For example, in the sport of figure skating, athletes (in the 3rd to 5th positions) who did not qualify for the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy still received a cash bursary to go towards their training needs. I wish that would have been available when I was an alternate for the Olympic Games back in 1998 and 2002. I can already see the benefits of that funding in the positive results of our Canadian Figure Skating team in the 2006 Grand Prix. Funding athletes who are on the brink of success can lead to the results suggested by the COC: being number one in the medal count at the 2010 Winter Olympics.

I recommend that sport organizations, such as the COC, the CSCs, and NSOs, start working with the government to increase incentives for the private sector to become involved with elite amateur athletes. One way would be allowing private corporations to have a better tax incentive when sponsoring a team or individual. Further, NSOs need to enhance their partnerships with the COC, CSCs, and AthletesCAN to continue to work towards a more athlete-centred system, where all the segments of the Canadian Sport System are working together cohesively. Finally, people working in the various sport organizations should refer back to sport policies/documents to ensure they are reminded of the goals and responsibilities created to foster an athlete-centred approach to sport delivery in Canada.

²⁵ Providing financial 'bonuses' for winning a medal is very similar to how employees in society are compensated for a job well done, and can also be very objective way to allot sponsorship dollars and help encourage athletes to excel.

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Appendix A

Autobiography

I am Aaron Lowe, a 32 year-old student at the University of Windsor. I was born and raised by my mother as an only child in Vancouver, British Columbia. From a very young age I participated in all kinds of sports, from figure skating to tennis. I played many high school sports, which became an important part of my high school experience. I was on the basketball, baseball, and tennis teams during high school. In my first year of high school, at thirteen years old, I was offered the chance to play tennis on the British Columbia junior team. This team traveled throughout Europe and Australia during the summer, which would have been an exciting life experience. With the guidance of my mother, I decided not to play with the British Columbia tennis team because figure skating offered opportunities closer to home. I had been skating with my Ice Dance partner, Megan Wing, for two years and was given the chance to represent British Columbia at a winter competition in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. My decision was largely due to my mother's influence. Being an only child, it was probably in my mother's best interests to see me stay home for the summer and train in figure skating rather than leaving for three months overseas without her supervision. This was a huge turning point in my life because figure skating would become my passion rather than tennis. My mother was alone bringing me up in the world; even though figure skating was a very expensive sport, she always did everything she could to ensure I had everything I needed.

When I turned seventeen, my partner and I decided we needed special help in our training that we could not get in British Columbia. We thus moved to Montreal to

train at the Ice Dance School in Boucherville, Quebec. We lived and trained in Boucherville for seven years. During our training, I attended Champlain College for two years, then transferred over to Concordia University part-time for an additional three years where I was studying Therapeutic Recreation.

In 1993, when I was nineteen, my career started to take-off. My partner and I began winning National medals and qualified for the National Team from that point on. I decided to get involved with the organizational side of our NSO after being on the team for two years, because I did not understand why so many of the veteran athletes were unhappy with our association. In 1995, I was selected to represent the figure skating athletes at various meetings throughout Canada and on boards within Skate Canada. I attended meetings for the COA's Athletes Council, the AthletesCAN advocacy group, and our organization's Skating Events Trust.

In 1999, my partner and I felt we needed another change to enhance our training to become one of the world's best ice dance teams. We decided to move from Montreal to Windsor, Ontario so we could train in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan at the Detroit Skating Club. We also transferred universities from Concordia to the University of Windsor, where I am now a student in the Faculty of Human Kinetics. I am currently completing my master's degree majoring in Sport Management, which means a chance to better understand all the volunteer work I have been doing up to this point in my life with figure skating and different sport organizations.

As of 2006, I have been representing Skate Canada and its athletes for over eleven years. In that time, I have become particularly interested in the responsibilities of athletes and their effectiveness in creating change within the Canadian Sport System.

Throughout my sporting career, I have been able to see how sport administrators promote sport to communities, business people, and the general public for the purpose of creating a positive sport environment. There has been a surge of support for athletes and their rights by ex-athletes who are taking over leadership roles within different Canadian sport organizations, such as Ann Peel who created AthletesCAN in 1992 to help advocate for increased athlete awareness among NSOs. I have been an advocate for athlete-centred models of sport and am now learning enough to really have an impact through my newly elected role in September 2005, as treasurer on the board of AthletesCAN. I have seen first hand how sport can move you up the social ladder of success. I have slowly laid the foundation for my future through my sport successes and by attaining an education. I thus approach this research topic from a concerned athlete's perspective and as one who hopes to promote thought and action toward the betterment of athletes through athlete advocacy and representation.

My Athlete Biography

Aaron Lowe: born on October 12th, 1974 in Vancouver, British Columbia. I graduated high school from Eric Hamber Secondary School in 1992. I lived and trained in Quebec for seven years, during which time my partner, Megan Wing, and I won a bronze medal in Junior Dance in 1994, and three consecutive bronze medals in Senior Dance from 1997 to 1999. In 1999, our training and competition results had reached a plateau so a change was needed. We felt Windsor offered everything we required to improve on and off the ice. We could live and study in Canada while commuting to Bloomfield Hills, Michigan for our training. The Detroit Skating Club was a popular

training site for international level competitors and coaches, which is what we thought we needed to excel at the world level of figure skating. Since our move, we have attended five World championships, placing fifteenth, twelfth, eleventh and tenth twice respectively, and maintained a top fifteen world ranking for the last six years. We have won four silver medals and six bronze medals at the Canadian Championships from the years 1997 to 2006 and have also won our third international medal, a bronze, at the 2004 Four Continents Championships in Hamilton, Ontario. Our most recent accomplishment was winning our second Grand Prix medal, a bronze, at the 2005 Cup of China held in Beijing, China as well as competing in the 2006 Winter Olympics held in Torino, Italy. As of May 2006, we have retired from eligible competition, but continue to perform in shows, conduct seminars, and coach competitive skaters across the country. In addition to our skating accomplishments, I graduated from the Faculty of Human Kinetics in June 2003 with a completion date for graduate school in December 2006.

**Appendix B
Document Analysis Form**

Document Name

Information	Rule (Formal)	Rule (Informal) Ideological	Resource (Human)	Resource (Material)	Resource (Financial)
Legitimation					
Attribution					

Author:

Key Persons:

Purpose:

Process Underlying Document:

Appendix C
Document Analysis: Document #2
Report of the Task Force on Sport for Canadians 1969

Information	Rule (Formal)	Rule (Informal) Ideological	Resource (Human)	Resource (Material)	Resource (Financial)
Legitimation	Problems in Canadian Sport System can be overcome with government assistance	Canadian Sporting constituency is fragmented with no fundamental unity	Canada huge geographical space: Hard to tie everyone together.	Improvements are needed to the club structure to help athletes improve skills (implications for facility use)	1962 Cost Sharing Agreements \$1 M
Attribution	If private sector cannot sustain national existence then government shall.	Sport was for gentlemen so no government assistance was needed.	Directorate needs an accomplished group of athletes and coaches to provide advice and guidance they require.	Improved contracts needed to delineate roles of the CAHA and the NHL.	As sport emerges there is always someone who wants to professionalize it and make a profit.
	Sport came about by a formulation of a formal code of rules, organizations of competition on a regular basis, growth of administrative bureaucracies to enforce rules and regulations.	Amateurs should be allowed to compete with professionals without the fear of forfeiting their eligibility status.	The task force recommended having an athlete on the advisory panel for the NHL but not for any amateur organizations.	22.1% of those surveyed stated that the major problem facing their sport concerned facilities.	NHL to CAHA payments to increase administration expenditures and for player talent.
	International sporting success is proof of the superior merit of a country's social and political structure	Advocate practices that foster more player development in Canadian schools/Universities instead of depending on USA Schools.	Amateur versus professional: professional being better or at least connotated as being a stronger entity (role of the hero in Canadian Identity)	CPR Railway: material resource that allowed the creation of National Championships so that players could travel across the country.	15.6 million was spent out of a possible 35 million because organizations were not well enough organized to carry out programs with public dollars, all led by politics.
	Fitness and sport needed to pass the 1961 act to show government involvement in sport however, sport was thought to be for morons (actual text in a government document)	Lacrosse too rugged, requiring too much self restraint and respect for the rules for French Canadians.	CAHA used players for information briefs but no other agencies followed their lead for amateur athletes (gap in the system)	Facilities: problems were either that there were not enough or that the facilities available were too costly: too many restrictions on usage.	This task force notices the complexity of amateur sport organizations and sees trouble with disseminating funds and information. (Trouble with Canadian Geography).

AUTHOR: W. Harold Rea, Dr. Paul Wintle DesRuisseaux, Nancy Greene.

KEY PERSONS: Same three authors, Christopher Lang, Harry Walters, John Munro (Commissioner of this Report), and government.

PURPOSE: recommendations to restructure sports activity and administration in Canada

PROCESS UNDERLYING DOCUMENT: they were looking for activities that would allow for substantial participation in Canada (i.e. National framework for competition, commercial purposes and objectives were not overriding in the activity). The rationale for commissioning this report was more a need for quickness and practicality during the intake of information for this document.

Appendix D

SUB-PROBLEM #1: Document Analysis

	Athlete Centred	Facilities	Coaches	Money	Rule-Formal	Informal	Promotion	Under Privileged	Research	Participation	Identity	Team Performance
1			X	X	X		X		X			
2			X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
3		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	
4		X	X	X	X	X	X			X		
5	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X
6			X	X	X	X			X	X		X
7			X	X	X	X	X	X		X		X
8	X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X		
9			X	X	X	X		X	X	X		
10	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
11	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X
12	X	X	X	X								X
13	X		X	X		X			X		X	
14	X	X	X	X	X	X						
15					X	X	X			X		X
16	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X		X
17	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
18	X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X
19	X	X	X		X	X	X		X			
20		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X
21	X	X	X	X		X			X			X
22		X		X		X	X	X		X		X
23	X		X	X	X	X		X		X		X

Appendix E

Outline of Interview Questions for Athletes

Athlete-Centred Sport System

1) Could you tell me about your involvement in the Canadian Sport System (e.g. athlete, organizer, volunteer)?

2) From your experience, how do you think the Canadian Sport System operates? How have you learned about this system? How would you describe the status of athletes compared to others such as coaches, organizers, sponsors, and administrators?

3) In what ways do you think that elite amateur athletes are similar to/different from professional athletes? How do elite amateur athletes compare to other employees in society?

4) The Canadian Sport System has focused on becoming more 'athlete-centred' since the 1990's. What do you think an 'athlete-centred' system would look like? Do you think the system has become more 'athlete-centred'? What led to these changes?

5) Do you know of any documents that mention an 'athlete-centred' Canadian Sport System?

6) From your experience, have these documents been put into practice in Canadian Sport?

Organization of Games-Athlete Involvement

1) Tell me about your involvement in the _____ (specific Games the interviewee was involved in)? What event(s) did you participate in? Were you involved at all in the organization of the Games?

2) Are you aware of any athletes who were involved in organizing those Games?

If so, what roles did they play?

3) Do you think athletes (current or retired) should have been involved in the organization of those Games? Why/Why not?

4) If athletes (current or retired) were involved in organizing a multi-sport event, what kind of impact do you think it would have on athlete conditions at the Games?

Athlete Advocate Requirements

1) What qualities and skills do athletes need to be effective advocates?

2) If I want to be an effective athlete advocate how can I make sure I do my job well?

3) Do you think athletes receive the kind of training needed to be effective athlete advocates? Which parties do you think should be responsible for this training?

4) What sport specific issues do athlete advocates need to be aware of?

5) What issues involving the Canadian Sport System does an athlete advocate need to be aware of?

6) What issues do athlete advocates need to be aware of in the broader society (i.e., media, law, politics etc)?

7) Should athlete advocates be mandatory in sport organizations? Why or why not?

8) Can you describe any obstacles to becoming a better athlete advocate within the Canadian Sport System?

9) Can you describe what type of role retired athletes could play to assist current athletes?

Subject Profile**Gender****Age****Formal Education****Occupation****Nationality/Cultural Heritage**

Appendix F

Outline of Interview Questions for Organizers

Organization of Games-Athlete Involvement

- 1) Can you tell me about the role you played in organizing the _____
(specific events the interviewee was involved in)?
- 2) Were any athletes involved in organizing that event? If so, could you tell me what roles they played?
- 3) Could you tell me about the process you or your team used in deciding how to use athletes in the organization of your event?
- 4) Could you tell me about the experience of involving athletes in organizing the Games? (e.g., did athletes dedicate enough time? Did they have time? Did they show interest? Were they productive in your opinion?) Can you tell me about the involvement of AthletesCAN at the 1999 Pan-Am Games? [For those involved in the 99 Games]
- 5) Could you tell me about any benefits/problems you encountered because of athlete involvement?
- 6) From your experience here and in other sport situations, would you recommend having athletes involved in the organization of future international multi-sport events?
- 7) If so, can you describe what you think the role of an athlete (current or retired) should be during the organization of an event?
- 8) When athletes (current or retired) are involved in organizing a multi-sport event, what kind of impact do you think it has on athlete conditions at the Games?

Athlete-Centred Sport System

1) Could you tell me about your involvement in the Canadian Sport System (e.g. athlete, organizer, volunteer)?

2) From your experience, how do you think the Canadian Sport System operates? How have you learned about this system? How would you describe the status of athletes compared to others such as coaches, organizers, sponsors, and administrators?

3) In what ways do you think that elite amateur athletes are similar to/different from professional athletes? How do elite amateur athletes compare to other employees in society?

4) The Canadian Sport System has focused on becoming more 'athlete-centred' since the 1990's. What do you think an 'athlete-centred' system would look like? Do you think the system has become more 'athlete-centred'? What led to these changes?

5) Do you know of any documents that mention an 'athlete-centred' Canadian Sport System?

6) From your experience, have these documents been put into practice in Canadian Sport?

Athlete Advocate Requirements

1) What qualities and skills do athletes need to be effective advocates?

2) If I want to be an effective athlete advocate how can I make sure I do my job well?

3) Do you think athletes receive the kind of training needed to be effective athlete advocates? Which parties do you think should be responsible for this training?

4) What sport specific issues do athlete advocates need to be aware of?

- 5) What issues involving the Canadian Sport System does an athlete advocate need to be aware of?
- 6) What issues do athlete advocates need to be aware of in the broader society (i.e., media, law, politics etc)?
- 7) Should athlete advocates be mandatory in sport organizations? Why or why not?
- 8) Can you describe any obstacles to becoming a better athlete advocate within the Canadian Sport System?
- 9) Can you describe what type of role retired athletes could play to assist current athletes?

Subject Profile

Gender

Age

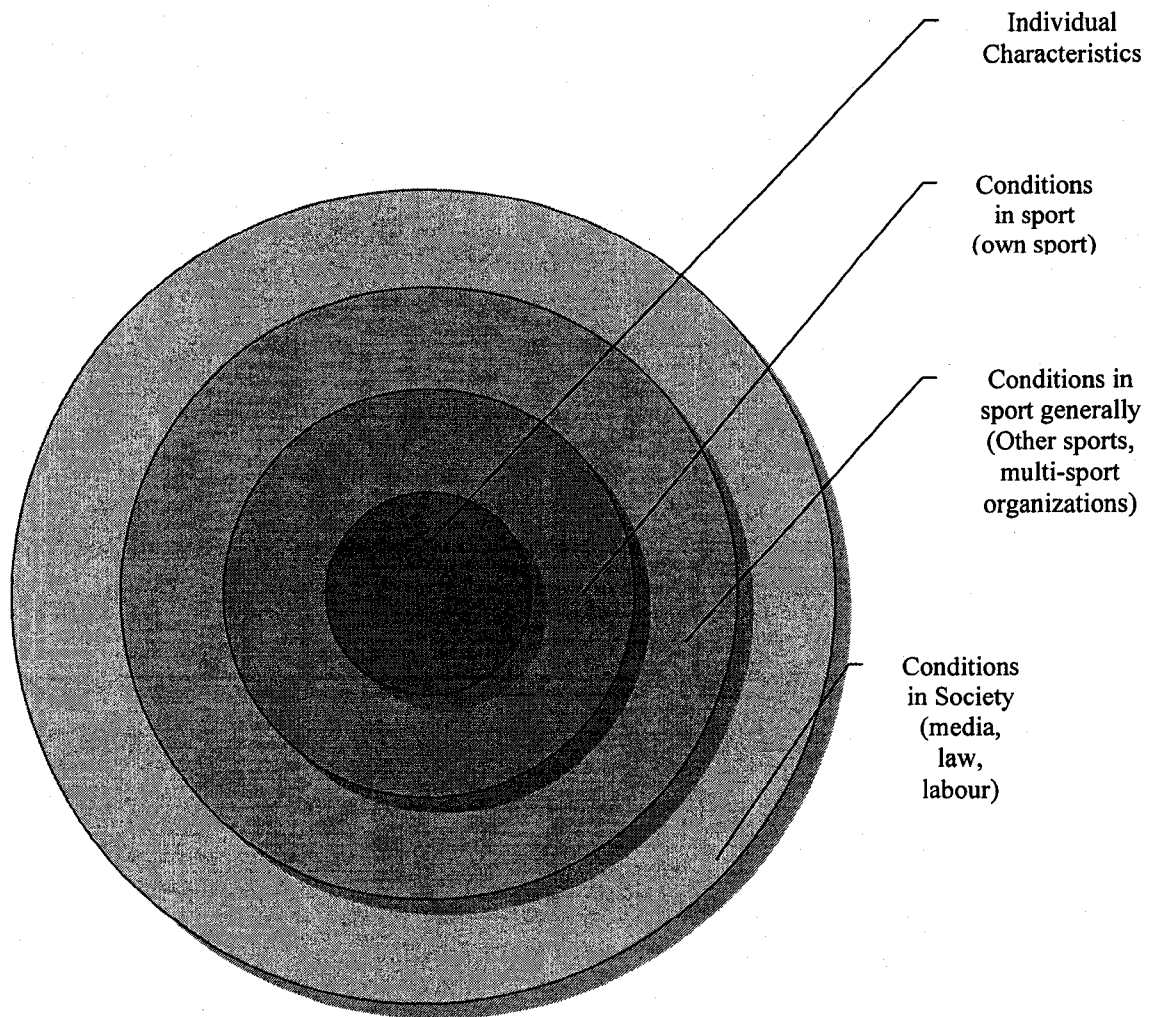
Formal Education

Occupation

Nationality/Cultural Heritage

Appendix G

Spheres of Influence: Sub-problem #3



VITA AUCTORIS

NAME: Aaron Lowe

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