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The Little League World Series

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**CONCORDIA UNIVERSITY, ST. PAUL: ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA
DEPARTMENT OF KINESIOLOGY AND HEALTH SCIENCES**

The Little League World Series

**A GRADUATE PROJECT
SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Master of Arts Degree in Sport Management**

**by
Richard White
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Dedications

This paper is dedicated to all my peers and professors from cohort 298.

Abstract

This is a comprehensive study assessing Little League Baseball and the Little League World Series. Founded in 1939, Little League Baseball has become the world's largest organized youth sports program. In the span of 60 years, Little League Baseball has grown from three teams to nearly 200,000 teams, covering all 50 U.S. states and more than 80 countries. Despite being a non-profit organization, Little League Baseball must still place a high priority on generating revenue. The more revenue Little League Baseball can produce, the more affordable they can make programs to participants. Keeping these program costs low will aid in increased participation around the world. This paper covered strategies regarding marketing, volunteer retention, risk management, and ethical situations involved in increasing participation in Little League Baseball.

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Chapter One: Organization Introduction

Baseball Before Little League

Long before Little League Baseball founder Carl Stotz had the idea to form a baseball league for the youth of his hometown, the idea of baseball extended well back into the 18th century. The earliest forms of baseball are said to have been played during the American Revolution where soldiers of the Continental Army played ball to pass the time at Valley Forge (Little League Baseball, 2015a). In the 1840s New Yorker Alexander Cartwright and his friends regularly gathered to play a game they called baseball that was very similar to the game we know today. To this day, baseball historians still question who is ultimately responsible for naming and inventing the game (FOXSports, 2015). However, they are certain that these gatherings led to a contest that many consider the first baseball game ever played. On June 19, 1846, Cartwright's New York Knickerbocker Baseball Club was defeated by the New York Baseball Club, 23-1, in four innings (Little League Baseball, 2015a). The 1850s provided little development for the game of baseball, and with the Civil War beginning in 1861, it was not until the late 1860s that baseball really began to take off. In 1869, the Cincinnati Red Stockings became the first openly professional baseball team. As early as the 1880s, leagues were formed for pre-teen children in New York, but they were affiliated with adult "club" teams and did not flourish because they were overshadowed by the adult leagues.

The Beginning of Little League

Though these pre-teen leagues did not catch on in popularity, they paved the way for future youth leagues that would revolutionize youth sport. In the 1920s, the American Legion

formed a baseball program for teenage boys that is still widely popular in America today (Little League Baseball, 2015a). American high schools also started baseball programs, but there was still a void for elementary and middle school boys who wanted to play in organized games. Finally, in 1938, local lumberyard worker Carl Stotz acted upon the idea he got for an organized baseball league while playing catch with his two nephews in his lumber yard. His objective was to provide a wholesome program of baseball for the pre-teen boys of Williamsport as a way to instill the ideals of sportsmanship, fair play and teamwork (Little League Baseball, 2015a). This objective later formed the basis for the mission that Little League Baseball created and continues to carry out today. Their mission is as follows,

To promote, develop, supervise, and voluntarily assist in all lawful ways, the interest of those who will participate in Little League Baseball and Softball. Through proper guidance and exemplary leadership, the Little League program assists children in developing the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork and physical well-being. By espousing the virtues of character, courage and loyalty, the Little League Baseball and Softball programs were designed to develop superior citizens rather than superior athletes (Little League Baseball, 2015a, para.1&2).

Soon after his initial game of catch with his nephews, Stotz recruited several of the neighborhood children and experimented with different types of equipment and varying field dimensions over that summer. Despite some success, the program still did not have a name, and no games were played. In 1939, Stotz and his wife decided to take his idea to the next level, enlisting the help of his brothers and their wives. Carl and his two brothers were the managers of the first three teams: Lycoming Dairy, Lundy Lumber, and Jumbo Pretzel (Little League

Baseball, 2015a). With the addition of two more friends, these eight volunteers made up the very first Little League board of directors. The first order of business was to give this league a name, and shortly thereafter, “Little League Baseball” was born. On June 6, 1939, in the very first Little League game ever played, Lundy Lumber defeated Lycoming Dairy, 23-8 (Little League Baseball, 2015a).

From those humble beginnings, Little League Baseball has become the world’s largest organized youth sports program (Little League Baseball, 2015a). In the span of 60 years, Little League Baseball has grown from three teams to nearly 200,000 teams, covering all 50 U.S. states and more than 80 countries (Little League Baseball, 2015a). Just as Stotz had hoped, the basic goal of Little League remains the same as it did in 1939, to give the children of the world a pastime that provides fundamental principles that can be used later in life to become positively contributing members of society.

Chapter Two: Event Introduction

Event Description

In 1947, the board of directors decided to organize a tournament for all known Little League programs called the Little League Baseball World Series (LLWS) (Little League Baseball, 2015b). More than 2,500 spectators were in attendance at the inaugural championship game, and the resulting success of the event happened to be printed in newspapers around the country. This exposure helped advance Little League across the country, and shortly thereafter, Little League programs were in every state and eventually spreading all over the world (Little League Baseball, 2015b). Currently, the qualification process for the Little League World Series begins months before the tournament. During this time, each local Little League program puts together an all-star team within its league. These all-star teams go on to compete in district, sectional and state tournaments, most of which use a double-elimination style bracket. Each state sends two state champions to go on to regional competition. Regional competitions are broken up into eight regions that consist of the following groups of states (ESPN, 2013a):

- New England (CT, ME, MA, NH, RI, VT)
- Mid-Atlantic (DE, DC, MD, NJ, NY, PA)
- Southeast (AL, FL, GA, NC, SC, TN, VA, WV)
- Great Lakes (IN, IL, KY, MI, OH, WI)
- Midwest (IA, KS, MN, MO, ND/SD, NE)
- Northwest (AK, ID, OR, MT, WA, WY)
- Southwest (AR, CO, LA, MI, NM, OK, East TX, West TX)
- West (AZ, Northern CA, Southern CA, HI, NV, UT)

There are also eight regions in the international bracket consisting of Canada, Mexico, Caribbean, Latin America, Japan, Asia-Pacific, Europe-Middle East-Africa and Trans-Atlantic. Worldwide, more than 7,000 teams participate in the tournament with 6,500 of them eliminated within the first three weeks (ESPN, 2013a).

The Little League World Series consists of 16 teams: the eight U.S. regional champions and eight international region champions. The two brackets, U.S. and international, are divided into two four team pools. The winner of each pool goes on to a single-elimination championship game within their side of the bracket. After a champion is crowned on each side of the bracket, the U.S. and international champions compete for the World Series title in the world championship game. There is also a consolation bracket, and eventual champion, between the four teams that lose both of their games in pool play on each side of the bracket (ESPN, 2013a). (See Appendix A for tournament bracket)

Howard J. Lamade Stadium

Howard J. Lamade Stadium is located in South Williamsport, Pennsylvania (P.A.). It has played host to the Little League Baseball World Series every year since 1959. The field replaced Brown Memorial Park in Williamsport as the tournament site, which hosted the event from 1947 to 1958, and is named after the late vice president of Grit Publishing who was a member of the Little League board of directors in the 1950s (ESPN, 2013b). The field at Howard J. Lamade Stadium is roughly two-thirds the size of a major league field. The pitching rubber is 46 feet from home plate, while base paths are 60 feet in length. The distance from home plate to all outfield fences at Lamade Stadium is 225 feet. These are all dimensions that are set in place by Little League Baseball to ensure a uniform playing surface across the world.

The original building plans for the field were born as a result of a student project at Pennsylvania State University, with the labor and equipment being supplied by the Williamsport Technical Institute. When the original wood and steel stands were replaced with a concrete stadium in 1968, it was renamed Howard J. Lamade Stadium. Additional seating was then added in 1972 and a state-of-the-art lighting system was added in 1992, to accommodate further expansion of the tournament in which round robin play was added requiring additional games (ESPN, 2013b). The most recent renovations took place in 2006, when the outfield fences were moved back from 205 feet to 225 feet due to increased homerun production. The covered section of seating was also extended over the majority of the bench seating down both lines, and more than 900 individual seats with backs were added to replace bleachers in order to accommodate for increased volume of spectators (ESPN, 2013b).

It is estimated that more than 40,000 fans could be held to watch games at Lamade Stadium, in large part due to the hill beyond the outfield fence (ESPN, 2013b). The actual stadium seats between 8,000 and 10,000 fans, but the exact total capacity is not known as admission is free and most of the seating during the Little League World Series is on a first-come, first-served basis (ESPN, 2013b). The total attendance for the 32 games played in the 2014 Little League World Series tournament was nearly 413,000 people. Of those 413,000 people, nearly 30,000 people were present for the championship game (Beauge, 2014).

Little League Volunteer Stadium

When the Little League Baseball World Series expanded from 8 to 16 teams in 2001, Little League Volunteer Stadium was built directly behind Lamade Stadium to serve as the site for additional games required for expanded tournament play. These additional games include the

double-elimination pool play round only. All championship, elimination, consolation, and most televised games are still played at Lamade Stadium (ESPN, 2013b). Volunteer Stadium can accommodate approximately 5,000 spectators, which includes some lawn seating but not nearly to the extent of Lamade Stadium. Like Lamade Stadium, the field at Little League Volunteer Stadium is roughly two-thirds the size of a major league field. The pitching rubber is 46 feet from home plate, while base paths are 60 feet in length. The distance from home plate to all outfield fences at Little League Volunteer Stadium is 225 feet, which were expanded along with Lamade Stadium's fences in efforts to decrease homerun production (ESPN, 2013b). Together, the Lamade and Volunteer Stadiums make up what is known today as the Little League Complex. (See Appendix B for complex layout)

Amenities

There is nothing flashy about the way things are done in South Williamsport in late August. There are not any seven-story HD screens, wifi hotspots spread across the park, luxury boxes with reclining chair backs, and the complex does not have ten different restaurants to eat at throughout the concourse. Little League Baseball found a way to have this simple Little League Complex make fans forget about all the bells and whistles mentioned above. In fact, according to Wood (2015), Little League Complex is of the top sports attractions in the entire country. The food and beverage served at the complex are simple and cheap. Fans will not leave the park saying it is the best food they have ever had at a baseball game, but more importantly they can feed a family of four for less than 60 dollars. The most expensive item on the concessions menu, of which alcohol is prohibited from, is a roast beef sandwich at 8 dollars, which is the price of a beverage at most other parks. The atmosphere and fans are said to be the main attraction.

According to Wood (2015), they rival any major professional sporting event in the country. The atmosphere could be compared to that of a minor league baseball game with a lot more people. There are video game booths, skills areas, on-field entertainment, and many more attractions to give fans opportunities to get involved and have a once in a lifetime experience. Lastly the neighborhood and location are also something to highlight. Though South Williamsport is not a big town, it is safe, relatively easy to access, and the entire town is fully invested for two weeks to make the experience the best it can be for all visitors. The entire city of South Williamsport has a lot of pride in this event and it is evident from the moment you arrive (Wood, 2015).

Financials

As an incorporated, non-profit organization Little League Baseball relies heavily on donations and sponsorships to keep league costs low and provide free background checks for as many volunteers as they can. The most recent public financial information was for the 2013 fiscal year. Being the world's largest organized youth sports organization, Little League Baseball operates on a somewhat sizable budget. According to Charity Navigator (2013), Little League Baseball brought in just over 24 million dollars in revenue in 2013 (see Appendix C, D, and E for financial information). Their largest contributions came from program service revenues, gifts, and grants, while their largest expenses were supporting Little League programs and administrative salaries. A large majority of revenues get put right back into Little League programs around the country.

Despite being a non-profit organization, Little League Baseball must still place a high priority on generating revenue. The more revenue Little League Baseball can produce, the more affordable they can make programs. Keeping these program costs low will aid in increased

participation around the world. As such, if Little League Baseball plans to continue to rise in popularity, touch the lives of today's youth athletes, and help improve communities around the world, marketing efforts must remain proactive and focused.

Chapter Three: Marketing Plan

As a non-profit organization, the primary goal and purpose of Little League is to assist young athletes in establishing the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork and physical well-being. By upholding the virtues of character, courage and loyalty, the Little League Baseball program was founded to develop superior citizens as well as superior athletes (Little League Baseball, 2015a). According to Pederson, Parks, Quarterman, and Thibault (2011), sport marketing professionals develop strategic marketing plans to employ the '10 Ps' in a variety of ways depending on the mission of the organization and changes in the target market. The manipulation of these 'P's' is critical to executing a successful marketing plan.

Marketing Plan Purpose

As it stands, Little League's main marketing objectives are to promote opportunities to young athletes and local communities, not to increase organizational financial gain. Little League uses their nationally televised World Series as their largest marketing tool by making it an extremely attractive event for young baseball players to want to compete in. The mere extravagance and popularity of the event drives motivation and interest towards Little League participation all over the world. The more participation that Little League can generate, the more youth athletes they can positively impact.

There is also a strong marketing presence in attracting volunteers to Little League. There are over 1.5 million volunteers participating in Little League annually (Little League Baseball, 2015b). The grounds crew, umpires, team hosts, ushers, and concession stand workers are all volunteers that Little League relies upon to make their operations possible (Urban, 2013).

According to their mission, Little League programs are all about building a strong foundation for leadership and preparing today's youth athletes to be tomorrow's leaders, by way of the help of countless volunteers (Little League Baseball, 2015a). Without them, Little League programs across the country would cease to exist. Though the Little League World Series (LLWS) is a once in a lifetime experience and achievement for all of the athletes who earn a trip, it can be just as life changing for the volunteers who travel to work at the tournament. For example, Don Goodman has been volunteering at the LLWS for 42 years. When asked why he continues to give his time, he replied, "I keep coming back to Williamsport every year for the atmosphere, and I really enjoy the kids. The comradery that you experience here is indescribable; I feel that Little League is like a big family" (Urban, 2013, para. 6). Adhering to their strong mission statement and direct marketing plan will continue to allow Little League to positively affect young athletes and volunteers around the world.

Product Description

The product offered in this marketing plan is participation in Little League Baseball with a chance to earn a trip to the Little League World Series. Specifically, Little League Baseball is looking to get as many youth athletes to join a Little League program as possible. Along with participation, there are opportunities for equipment and facility grants as well as scholarships for players who may not be able to afford league fees. Little League is about playing for the love of the game, making memories, and learning how to face adversity along the way. Little League will always remain true to its values of character, courage, and loyalty by regulating their program to create an environment where children from any part of our world can participate. Furthermore, Little League's mission has always been to promote an environment that provides a

healthy, fun experience; never has it been about grooming tomorrow's professional stars or winning at all costs (Keener, 2005). With a detailed analysis of its current marketing strategy, Little League Baseball will be able to expand their borders and further impact the lives of children across the world.

Pick Players

Today's youth and younger population are not as interested in baseball as they once were. According to Fisher (2015), 50 percent of baseball viewers are 55 or older, up from 41 percent 10 years ago. This 55 and older population are 11 percent more likely than the overall population to voice a strong interest in baseball, whereas those in the 18 to 34 age group are 14 percent less likely to voice interest (Fisher, 2015). A decade ago, kids ages 6-17 made up 7 percent of the television audience for postseason Major League Baseball (MLB); in recent years, that figure is down to 4 percent (Fisher, 2015). Additionally, last fall's first game of the World Series was the lowest-rated ever, with 12.2 million viewers (Fisher, 2015). As Major League Baseball viewership declines, it seems that Little League participation has followed. Since it has been established, Little League Baseball's participation has declined from nearly 3 million in the 1990s to 2.4 million in 2013 (Fisher, 2015). According to Little League's Senior Vice President of Operations, there has been a decline in participation of roughly 1 to 2 percent since the 1990s (Fisher, 2015).

Despite a steady recession in participation and interest by white Americans, there is one key demographic that is demonstrating a growing interest in the game of baseball. According to Frankel (2015), ESPN Sports Poll cites data from the 2014 season showing that MLB is growing in popularity among Latinos. Of nearly 20,000 U.S. respondents who are at least 12 years old, 59

percent of Latinos are expected to be a fan of baseball (Frankel, 2015). Furthermore, across all sports, Latinos have a 10.6 percent chance of being avid fans, but that number nearly doubles to 20.4 percent in regards to MLB (Frankel, 2015). Meanwhile, recent data points from Scarborough Sports Marketing show that 43.5 percent of Latino MLB fans are between the ages of 18-34 (Frankel, 2015).

During this 2015 season, MLB will use a separate Latino-focused marketing agency to further reach Latino fans. In March 2015 they reached an agreement with LatinWorks, an agency dedicated to marketing efforts created specifically to reach Hispanic fans. To aid in promotion of MLB's new "At Bat" app, which allows fans to get live scores, statistics, pitch tracking, player cards, notifications, news, etc., LatinWorks has also partnered with production company Landia. Together, they launched a campaign that will be using ESPN Deportes and Fox Deportes to raise awareness of the app's new Spanish-language feature (Frankel, 2015). In addition, another season-long campaign will launch during the 2015 season called "Aqui". This campaign will attempt to capture the idea that Latinos in the U.S. have an opportunity for greatness 'aqui,' or here, with MLB (Frankel, 2015). As interest in MLB baseball increases for young Latinos, so will the desire to play the game themselves. In an attempt to take advantage of baseball's rise in popularity with-in these Latino communities, marketing efforts for the 2016 Little League Baseball season will be geared towards their demographic.

Project Market

If Little League Baseball wishes to continue to increase the popularity of the Little League World Series and youth baseball, they will have to evaluate the variables involved before

creating an effective marketing plan. SWOT analyses have proven to be a productive way to generate marketing plans with a clear and concise purpose. This specific analysis (see Appendix F) can be used by marketing professionals to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to an even or organization. The following is a detailed description of a SWOT analysis that Little League Baseball should utilize when creating their marketing plan for the upcoming little league season as well as the Little League World series.

Strengths. Being the largest youth sport organization in the world, Little League Baseball has a lot of strengths to draw and build upon. Perhaps their greatest strength and largest asset is their newly penned television deal with ESPN (Ourand, 2013). Not only does the deal provide Little League Baseball with 7.5 million dollars worth of annual revenue throughout the deal, it gives them a unique platform for advertising and publicity. This publicity continues to help Little League Baseball spread to all corners of the world. As was mentioned earlier, Little League Baseball is currently up and running in roughly 80 countries throughout the world (Little League Baseball, 2015a).

With nearly 200,000 teams worldwide, trying to employ staff to handle that volume could be a financial disaster. Thankfully, Little League Baseball chose to make a majority of their employees volunteers. There are nearly 1.25 million volunteers involved in Little League Baseball every year which not only saves Little League Baseball money, but also enhances their philanthropic image (USA TODAY, 2014).

Weaknesses. The pressure placed on some of these young athletes to succeed has brought upon issues of early specialization and overuse. According to STOP (2014) and Bach

and Schilling (2008), more than 3.5 million kids under the age of 14 receive treatment for sports injuries each year. Today, overuse injuries are responsible for nearly half of all sports injuries to middle and high schoolers. Additionally, 20 percent of kids age 8-12, and 45 percent of kids age 13-14 will have arm pain during their little league baseball season (STOP, 2014). These alarming statistics have lead parents to begin holding their children back from participation in Little League Baseball.

Recent research also suggests a decline in interest in Major League Baseball among children ages 6-17 (Fisher, 2015). That demographic only made up 4 percent of viewership during the 2014 post-season. This declining interest in Major League Baseball could result in lack of participation in Little League Baseball if marketing efforts are not handled properly.

Opportunities. This declining interest in Major League Baseball found in kids ages 6-17 creates a potential opportunity for Little League Baseball. Specifically, Little League Baseball has an opportunity to continue to expand into their current worldwide market, particularly in the inner city and Latino regions. These poor, inner-city areas have shown growth in participation numbers where other areas have not. According to Chen (2014), Taney Little League in Pennsylvania has added close to 40 teams to their league in the past ten years and there is more projected growth on the horizon. Little League Baseball's top priority is inclusion and doing everything possible to give kids the opportunity to play by keeping league fees low and offering equipment grants and scholarships (Chen, 2014). Though this is a small sample size, there is demand in markets similar to Taney. As such, Little League Baseball should take advantage of that demand.

Threats. There are two specific issues that are threatening to Little League Baseball today. First, early specialization in youth sport has drastically decreased the opportunity for kids

to play multiple sports year round. Instead of picking up a new sport with the change into a new season, youth athletes are now sticking to one sport the entire year. This new trend is forcing little league programs to compete with sports such as basketball and hockey. Bad publicity has also threatened the image of Little League Baseball. In the past decade, several teams have been caught violating age restrictions and boundary rules. Most recently, the 2015 American champion was disqualified months after winning the event because it was revealed that they added players from outside league boundaries. These mishaps collide with the mission and values set forth by Little League Baseball and create potential threats to participation numbers.

Taking into account the information presented in this SWOT analysis, Little League Baseball marketing professionals will be able effectively and efficiently increase participation in little league as well as increase attendance at the Little League World Series. Comparatively speaking, Little League Baseball presents strengths and opportunities that other youth athletics organizations around the world lack. Taking advantage of these strengths and opportunities is going to be vital in the continued success of Little League Baseball. Also, being mindful of specific weaknesses and threats will aid marketers in stunting decreased participation in parts of the world. As weaknesses and threats are diminished, Little League Baseball can capitalize on their strengths and opportunities.

Product Position

According to Lauren (2015), product positioning is a concept that summarizes what an entity should do to promote their product or service to their customers. Throughout this process, marketing professionals create a portrait of their product based on their targeted audience. In fact, a vital first step in a quality product positioning analysis is essentially gaining a comprehensive understanding of a company's target market. This target market refers to a

specific demographic that will prosper most from the use of a given company's service (Lauren, 2015). Subsequently, having knowledge of the wants, needs, and interests of a company's particular target market, it is possible to compose a positioning statement that will aid in reaching as much of the target market as possible (Lauren, 2015). With that being said, the following is a position statement provided by Little League Baseball (2015b). By adopting this position, the odds of reaching their targeted audience are sure to increase. The Little League Baseball (2015b) position statement is as follows:

Little League Baseball provides the opportunity for youth athletes and parents to take part in the International Tournament, with traveling expenses defrayed beyond the local level. There is major network television coverage provided by ESPN, and coverage in all other types of media. No other program does as much for its membership, and the international recognition of Little League is unmatched by any other youth sports organization. Furthermore, a chartered Little League is a semi-autonomous organization, operated by volunteers from within the community, with the betterment of the community as the goal. As such, it can be operated at a far lower cost to taxpayers. No other youth sports organization in the world can provide this unique of an athletic experience. (para.1)

Package

Pederson, Parks, Quarterman, and Thibault (2011) define packaging the sport product "as presenting the product in the best possible manner to entice the target market to purchase it" (p. 259). During the 2014 Little League World Series, Mo'ne Davis became the first girl to throw a shutout in Little League history as well as the first Little League Baseball player to land on the cover of Sports Illustrated. Davis' efforts have paved the way for young dream chasers all around

the world, in more ways than one. Not only is Davis the first female to leave her mark on Little League Baseball, she is also an African American from a poor inner-city little league. With the odds stacked against her, Davis battled adversity on multiple fronts and let nothing stand in the way of her achieving her dreams. This is exactly what Carl Stotz was hoping for when he founded Little League Baseball. He wanted somewhere young athletes could go to achieve their dreams and learn how to battle through adversity. Davis' performance lead to a lot of free marketing for Little League Baseball. In addition to Davis being on the cover of Sports Illustrated, there were numerous commercials created that aired during this past Major League Baseball World Series as well as a documentary created about Davis and her team (McCarthy, 2014). These commercials depict Davis as a role model for all young athletes around the world looking for a platform to achieve things they never thought possible. Mo'ne Davis not only changed Little League Baseball forever, she changed the way Little League Baseball is able to package what they truly stand for and offer to kids around the world.

Price

The price of the product will vary depending on a number of factors. However, to have an existing team become affiliated with Little League costs only \$16 per team (Little League Baseball, 2015). In order to become affiliated with Little League Baseball, team leaders must fill out electronic affiliation forms via the Little League website to receive literature on how to charter a Little League organization. Additionally, admission to all Little League World Series games is free and seating is provided on a first-come, first-served basis.

Promotion

Promotion of this product will take place through a number of different mediums. The promotions package is highlighted by numerous television spots directed towards Latino viewers

on Spanish language broadcasting channels. The following elements are the focus of the promotional plan for the upcoming Little League Baseball season.

Advertising/Publicity. Part of MLB's initiative for marketing to the Latino community for the current season is going to include commercials on ESPN Deportes (Frankel, 2015). Coincidentally enough, Little League just finalized a television contract extension with ESPN that allows them to air public service announcements on both national and local levels (Ourand, 2013). Little League Baseball will plan to run advertisements not only on ESPN, but ESPN Deportes as well encouraging Latino communities to take part in all the Little League has to offer.

As television spots will be used to reach out on a global level, a separate initiative will be set in place to help increase awareness of the Little League program locally. In January 2009, Kellogg's Frosted Flakes Earn Your Stripes program launched a national field renovation initiative to make over youth athletic fields across the country (Kellogg Company, 2009). Based on judging criteria such as the current condition of the field and the impact a renovation would have on the community, the list is narrowed down to an eventual 30 winners. Little League Baseball is aware of how crucial it is for kids to have well-kept, safe places to play. This is where they get the chance to stay active and where they learn important skills like teamwork and self-confidence. Little League Baseball will plan to run another campaign in the winter of 2016 where 15 of the 30 winning communities chosen will have Latino representation.

Kellogg Company and Little League Baseball plan to reach millions of Latino families with an announcement about Kellogg's Frosted Flakes Earn Your Stripes program and its field renovation initiative by airing an advertisement during the 2016 Super Bowl. According to the National Football League (NFL) (2015), Latino professional football viewership was up 8

percent in 2014, amounting to just under half of the 53 million Latino living in the United States. Additionally, 2014 also marked the first year that the Super Bowl was broadcast on a Spanish language channel. Due to this increase in Latino NFL viewership growth, these advertisements will reach millions of Latino families and will ideally prompt them to log on to the Frosted Flakes web site to nominate their local field for a makeover. Because nearly 25 million Latino-Americans consider themselves part of the NFL fan base, the Super Bowl provides the perfect opportunity to launch this 2016 Earn Your Stripes initiative as kids are encouraged to be more active, eat right and to work hard to achieve their goals. The ad itself will focus on the important role we all play in building stronger communities and making a difference in kids' lives. This program is about inspiring kids to be their very best and communicates to community leaders that before anyone can earn a single stripe, they have to plant a seed and help give kids places to realize their promise and potential (Kellogg Company, 2009).

Promotional activities. Though there are few promotional activities that take place during the Little League World Series, other sponsors could choose to get more involved. A large part of Little League Baseball's target market is inner-city and minority communities. One barrier for these communities getting involved with Little League is the start-up cost. Similar to Kellogg's "field makeover" campaign, other sponsors could choose to begin "fund-a-season" campaigns. These campaigns would consist of inner-city/minority little leagues applying for grants by writing sponsors letters on how their particular little league will provide a boost for their community. After a review process, sponsors will decide where there is the greatest need, and choose to reward that particular program with a fully sponsored season. Representatives from these chosen leagues will be awarded checks during the pregame festivities of the Little League World Series.

Public/Community relations. Partnering with local college and professional baseball teams will also be part of the implementation procedure. For example, the Detroit Tigers have seen great success with their local programming. Thousands of young t-ball, baseball and softball players in the greater Detroit region participate in 'Team Tigers', a free online registration and rewards program that helps strengthen and expand baseball and softball programs in our area. After joining baseball/softball teams receive special 'Team Tigers' wristbands, a resource manual provided by the Baseball Tomorrow Fund, and the opportunity to apply for youth baseball/softball equipment, Major League coaching instruction, and complimentary Tigers tickets (Detroit Tigers, 2015). Additionally, the Los Angeles Dodgers will be approached by Little League Baseball to discuss similar partnership options. The Dodgers attract more than 1 million Latinos every season accounting for just under half of their total fan base (Los Angeles Dodgers, 2015). Little League Baseball plans to partner with the Dodgers, and implement an identical plan to that of the one successfully created by the Detroit Tigers.

Media relations. In 2011, over the 31-game event, Little League Baseball averaged 911,000 viewers on ESPN's broadcast (Ourand, 2013). Thus, it is vital that Little League Baseball maintain a positive relationship with ESPN because they receive a lot of publicity during these 31 games. Little League Baseball allows ESPN to have coaches and umpires wear microphones during competition as well as during pre and post game speeches. Watching the Little League World Series on television is much different than watching a professional event. Viewers are able to hear a majority of things being said on the field, including mound meetings, dugout meetings, and coach/umpire meetings. This type of transparency allows ESPN to provide viewers with a very intimate experience and enhances viewing pleasure.

Sponsorship. Piggybacking the efforts of MLB, Little League is going capitalize on the increased awareness of baseball in Latino communities by simultaneously promoting their product to the same market. Little League Baseball has very unique partnerships with some of the largest, most influential companies in the US. These companies include, but are not limited to: Oakley, Gatorade, Russell Athletic, Honda, Subway, Kellogg's, Easton, and Dick's Sporting Goods (Little League Baseball, 2015). Due to these partnerships/sponsorships, they have an ability to reach many different people on many different fronts. These are relationships other youth organizations simply do not have.

Promise: Evaluation of Strategy and Tactics

According to Morello (2015), if marketing reach and organization is expanding, the efficacy of your plan is the probable cause. Inevitably, marketing that transmits its way into new regions either by customer recommendation or targeted promotion, indicates both a successful and popular product, and assurance of a compelling marketing directive. This concept of product expansion will be used to detect whether or not Little League Baseball marketing efforts were welcomed by their target audience. After seasons end, Little League will compile data and analyze if there was an increase in participation in Latino communities. Understanding that substantial expansion may take more than one season, viewership data of the Little League World Series will be used to detect immediate changes in interest surrounding Little League. Perhaps viewing the World Series on television, and seeing what it is all about is what is necessary to elicit expansion; in which case true expansion would not be seen for a couple years. It was mentioned earlier that Little League has seen a decline in participation of one to two percent per year since the 1990s. Although as a whole this decline may not halt immediately, it

will be important to look specifically into Latino participation to determine if the targeted marketing plan successfully increased awareness, participation, and interest.

Conclusion

With these proactive and focused marketing efforts, Little League Baseball will be able to further provide a platform for communities to get involved. It is also important that Little League Baseball, through all their marketing efforts, not lose sight of their mission and values. As was stated earlier, the primary goal and purpose of Little League is to assist young athletes in establishing the qualities of citizenship, discipline, teamwork, and physical well-being. According to Pederson, Parks, Quarterman, and Thibault (2011), “implementing a sports marketing plan within the organizations core values helps to ensure the plan will be socially responsible” (p. 266). Additionally, sport marketers who develop plans linked to the organization’s mission and core values are acting in a proactive manner. As a result, proactive marketers will achieve the promise of their marketing plan because their actions will be socially responsible, and fulfill the mission and values of their organization (Pederson, Parks, Quarterman, & Thibault, 2011, p. 266).

Chapter Four: Employee/Volunteer Planning

Introduction

Every year there are thousands of volunteers that give their time over a two-week period to make this event possible. Coaches, umpires, event staff and field crews all spend their time in Williamsport with very few getting paid. In fact, according to the USA TODAY (2014), there have been more than 1.25 million volunteers in 7,500 communities that have made each season successful. There are a lot of moving parts that need to mesh together in order for this event to run blemish-free. Having an effective leadership and management staff is vital in keeping all volunteers on the same page and motivated in order to make the event an unforgettable time in each and every attendee's life. Because of the sheer volume of employees and the magnitude of the event, there are a number of people and task-oriented behaviors that each and every manager must occupy to allow for an effective and efficient work environment (Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2008).

Relationship-Oriented Behavior

According to Bush (n.d.), a people-oriented style of leadership exists where the leader implements a more supportive role in providing a positive work environment. This environment allows workers to maximize their productivity while genuinely enjoying their labor. As was alluded to earlier, this is a unique event in that a majority of the labor is volunteer. People who work this event are there to be a part of something bigger than themselves, and promote the development of youth baseball players all over the world. However, because most labor is volunteer based, it is vital that Little League Baseball continues to provide an enjoyable environment that people look forward to giving their time. Chambel and Curral (2009) state that

there are two distinct behavioral roles of leaders that can be used as a framework to categorize the array of leadership styles. These roles include styles called consideration and initiating structure. Both managers and leaders should consider adopting these styles to enhance their ability to create an enjoyable work environment.

Consideration

One of those roles used a relationship-oriented leadership style called consideration. Consideration expresses the degree to which a leader had shown concern and respect for their followers, looked out for their welfare, and expressed appreciation and support (Chambel & Curral, 2009). Research has found that consideration had a strong positive effect on follower satisfaction and leader effectiveness, which in the case of the LLWS, should be a top priority (Chambel & Curral, 2009). It is important that managers of the event be friendly and approachable, do little things to enhance team environment, be accessible to volunteers, and inspire others to make a difference in all the participant's lives. People who go about their business as previously stated are said to be fluent in the consideration style of leadership (Bush, n.d.). Managers who can successfully operate under this style will not only continue to make the LLWS a memorable event for the athletes, coaches, and players, but will have a positive impact on volunteer retention as well.

Task-Oriented Behavior

Bush (n.d.) stated that task-oriented behaviors are those in which the leader helped subordinates figure out what is expected of them. These behaviors helped manage the daily activities of a group toward accomplishing a task. Because of the hundreds of thousands of

spectators who come from all over the world to watch this event, it is important that everyone working has a clearly explained and identified role so that order is maintained.

Initiating Structure

The second style, initiating structure, is a task-oriented behavioral role vital in managing and organizing large groups of people. Initiating structure expresses the degree to which a leader defines the roles of their followers, focuses on goal achievement, and establishes well-defined patterns of communication (Chambel & Curral, 2009). Research revealed that this specific behavioral role had a strong positive effect on leader performance, and effectiveness (Chambel & Curral, 2009). LLWS managers cannot be afraid to take charge, set expectations, and orient others. Due to the volume of spectators and number of volunteer employees, they need to be very detail-oriented, possess the ability to make fast and efficient decisions, and strategically manage the tasks of many different teams of people. The aforementioned behaviors are common in leaders who are fluent in the initiating structure style. This style will ensure a well organized and efficient work environment (Chambel & Curral, 2009). The LLWS managers who can tactfully command their employees using these behaviors have proved to be very effective in these large-scale team environments.

Conclusion

Bush (n.d.) stated that there was growing evidence that both initiating structure and consideration, were important for successfully leading teams. Initiating structure ensured that volunteers understood what was expected of them, they knew how to correspond their work with others', and they were able to comprehend how their role lead to the accomplishment of organizational goals. Consideration lead to volunteers feeling backed, accepted, and clear on

how to navigate any conflict or issue they may have had within their roles (Bush, n.d.). Both of these styles have a strong influence on group efficacy and group performance (Chambel & Curral, 2009). Leaders who focus on the definition of tasks, while maintaining open communication, help create a relational work environment, and tend to operate less from a transactional standpoint. Having dynamic leaders who have natural command over multiple forms of behavior have proven to be effective in task execution, as well as employee satisfaction. In the future, in order to maintain current and past success, it is important that Little League Baseball retains management that portrays said behaviors.

Chapter Five: Risk Management Plan

Introduction

According to Cotton and Wolohan (2010), sport is reaching epic proportions globally. In 2014 alone, the four major American sports (football, baseball, basketball, and hockey) attracted just shy of 135 million live spectators (ESPN, 2015a). This rapid increase in popularity has created a tremendous amount of risk for potential injuries and financial losses (Cotton & Wolohan, 2010). Developing risk management plans and indentifying risks involved in recreation and sport was not much of a concern to sport managers until the early 1970's (Cotton & Wolohan, 2010). However, given the current nature of our contentious society, thorough risk management has become a vital part of running a sports business. Consequently, Howard J. Lamade Stadium management must study and prepare for the potential for injury and loss as well as commit to adequately managing the boundless risk that exists in hosting the Little League World Series (LLWS).

Stadium Manager Interview

Curtis Nachtsheim, Operations Manager at CHS Field in Saint Paul, Minnesota has provided expertise on risk management in small scale, outdoor baseball stadiums. As per daily protocol, Nachtsheim inspects all aspects of the park which include, but are not limited to, all pedestrian pathways, playing surface, elevators, seating, stadium entrances, protective netting, ceilings, mechanical and electrical components, and lighting (personal communication, October 7, 2015). The number one risk for an Operations Manager in an outdoor baseball facility is risk to the fans (C. Nachtsheim, personal communication, October 7, 2015). Unfortunately, that covers a wide range of issues and overlaps into many other departments around the ballpark.

Ultimately, the operations manager has control over making sure the ballpark itself does no harm. Building a safe ballpark is of utmost importance, and skimping on safety features is unacceptable, and will increase future likelihood of potential litigation (C. Nachtsheim, personal communication, October 7, 2015). Likewise, maintaining the park properly by cleaning up any spills, puddles, ice, and snow surrounding pedestrian pathways is vital.

Secondly, it is important to learn how to protect fans from themselves and others. Fans can be impaired in several different ways. This is where relying upon other departments such as law enforcement, janitorial staff, and food service becomes extremely helpful in avoiding injury or loss. Another major potential problem area is risk to visiting athletes. Having a grounds crew that maintains a flawless playing surface is an essential asset in keeping athletes safe (C. Nachtsheim, personal communication, October 7, 2015). One bad hop of the baseball has the potential to dramatically change an infielder's health, and as such, providing a true surface can limit potential for injury.

Finally, because of the exposure to the elements, outdoor baseball itself has inherent risks. As bad weather approaches, the safety of thousands of fans becomes the responsibility of the operations manager. At lower levels of play flexibility in game rescheduling can be very unforgiving, often forcing teams to play through some questionable weather (C. Nachtsheim, personal communication, October 7, 2015). Having a predetermined emergency evacuation plan as well as designated shelter areas is fundamental in keeping fans and athletes as safe as possible.

Facility Assessment

Operations of small scale, open air baseball stadiums have a lot of consistencies, regardless of venue (C. Nachtsheim, personal communication, October 7, 2015). However, with

new technology and building practices, newer ballparks are becoming much more self-sustaining leaving operators more time to plan for and mitigate risk to fans. Nevertheless, there will always be unpredictable, inherent risks when entering a baseball stadium as a fan. CHS Field and Lamade Stadium pose very similar threats to spectators. There are five key risks operators need to prepare for: 1) foul territory beyond the protection of mandatory netting, 2) severe weather, 3) compromised playing surface, 4) numerous pedestrian pathways, and 5) “The Hill” (at Lamade Stadium)(perhaps the biggest threat to fans). As is tradition at Lamade Stadium, fans are allowed to bring their own cardboard sleds and slide down muddy grooves in the hill out beyond the center field fence. (See Appendix G).

Standards of Practice and Care/ Recommendations

According to Cotton and Wolohan (2012), it is essential for stadium operations managers to incorporate applicable standards of practice into their risk management plans. Ultimately, they are the ones responsible for fan safety, as well as the development and execution of risk mitigation tactics. In regards to objects leaving the playing field, generally courts operate under the idea that fans assume the risk of attending a game, and that it should be obvious that balls and bats have the potential to leave the field and hit them (Augustine, 2008). In fact, only when a plaintiff introduces adequate evidence that the facility in which he or she was injured deviated from established standard of care will an inherent risk case to go to jury (Augustine, 2008). Classification of this risk is considered to be low frequency, catastrophic loss. It is fairly unlikely that a ball or bat will actually strike a fan, but when it does the physical injury it can cause is potentially catastrophic. As such, it is recommended that stadium managers must provide sufficient warning and inform fans in as many ways as possible. This could include, but is not limited to proper signage in every section with posted warnings that objects may leave the field,

signage relaying that spectators are entering the field at their own risk, providing public address announcements warning fans of objects leaving the field, and using videoboard messages to post warnings of objects leaving the field.

When it comes to inclement weather, Little League Baseball and Lamade Stadium enforce strict rules in regards to the safety of all spectators, coaches and players. This type of risk can be classified as a low frequency, catastrophic loss risk. Severe weather is rare at a sporting event, but when it does strike it has potential to take lives very quickly. Intelligently, Little League has been very proactive in partnering with the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) and providing information to league officials and umpires on protocol for threatening weather (Little League Baseball, 2015b). Little League Baseball takes this matter very seriously, and although the decision to call or postpone games is ultimately up to the umpires and coaches, everyone involved in Little League is encourage to take shelter at the first sound of thunder. Specifically at Lamade Stadium, there is not adequate room to shelter the several thousand fans that could potentially be watching a game. Knowing this, the league will suspend or postpone play well before a real threat of weather approaches to allow fans to retreat to adequate safety.

Grounds crews spend countless hours grooming and molding fields into perfect playing surfaces. Of course, aesthetics are important, but safety for the players is of utmost concern. When a baseball bat going 80-100 miles per hour meets a baseball going a similar speed, ball velocity is tremendous. As such, it is vital that the playing surface allows for smooth travel. Because of the unpredictability of this risk, it is classified as a high frequency, moderate loss risk. It is very likely to happen, but most often will not pose a life threatening physical loss. Though there is no required standard, however it is recommended that grounds crews groom

fields before, during, and after games very thoroughly. In addition, it is recommended that the infields be covered between competitions to make sure the surface is protected from the elements.

Those who have been to a baseball stadium know that spills in pedestrian pathways are common. This type of risk can be classified as a high frequency, moderate loss risk, in that it frequently happens, but usually only brings on moderate loss such as a non-life threatening physical injury (i.e. broken bone). It is recommended that facility managers have a janitorial staff that is consistently moving and checking all pathways. When spills occur, immediate warning signage needs to be put up until spill is completely cleaned and dry.

Finally, Lamade Stadium has a unique feature that poses quite the potential for physical injury to those who participate. There is a hill beyond the center field fence that fans are allowed to slide down on scraps of cardboard. (See Appendix H). This becomes an especially popular activity if there is any sort of rainfall during the two week tournament. The classification of risk of this particular activity would be considered high frequency, moderate loss. With hundreds of thousands of fans making their way through the stadium over a couple weeks, the hill gets used very frequently. There have yet to be any serious injuries on the hill, however, because of the nature of the activity there is potential for moderate, non-life threatening physical injury. With that being said, it is recommended that the stadium manager post plenty of signage around the hill stating to slide down it at the user's risk. In fact, use of the hill could be further regulated by requiring all participants to sign a liability waiver prior to sliding down it.

Treatment

The final stage of developing a risk management plan is to determine a method treatment for each risk. These methods are used to reduce, control, manage, and/or eliminate financial and physical loss (Cotton & Wolohan, 2012). Per the risk treatment matrix provided in Cotton and Wolohan (2012), all risks classified in this particular risk management assessment will be treated with methods of transfer and reduction. Transfer, as defined by Cotton and Wolohan (2012), “is the shifting of liability or responsibility for loss from the service provider to another party” (p. 282). Two important aspects of transfer include having proper insurance coverage, and using waivers. Property insurance and personal injury liability insurance would provide protection for all five risks identified. However, it is important that the manager understand how to select adequate coverage, as policies will only cover losses up to the limits of the coverage.

Reduction, the most important form of treatment, is a proactive approach to the reduction of risk (Cotton & Wolohan, 2012). The simple objective with this method of treatment is to reduce chance for injury and litigation. While every risk cannot be eliminated; the following reduction tactics can reduce the severity and frequency of loss. These tactics include, but are not limited to: proper maintenance of property and equipment, establishing emergency procedures, adequate training for all personnel, and a systematic facility inspection program (Cotton & Wolohan, 2012).

Conclusion

As little league baseball continues to increase in popularity, more and more fans will find themselves traveling to Williamsport, P.A. every fall. Because of the inherent risk that comes along with attending these events, particularly outdoor baseball, facility managers of Howard J.

Lamade Stadium today must study and prepare for potential injury and loss as well as commit to adequately managing the boundless risk that exists in hosting the LLWS. While it is unrealistic to expect a facility manager to eliminate all potential losses, by developing an extensive risk management plan, and implementing and executing said plan to the best of their ability, facility managers can diminish these boundless and dangerous risks (Cotten & Wolohan, 2012).

Chapter Six: Ethical Analysis

Introduction

The creation of many youth athletics associations was put in place to allow kids to have fun, improve skill level, and learn how to play the game correctly. Of course, proper development of these athletes lies in the hands of their coaches. Youth coaches have an astronomical amount of influence on these young athletes and it is important that their actions and decisions reflect the character they are trying to instill in them. Within youth associations around the country, there are a great deal of rules put in place to protect kids from selfish coaching and being overworked. Little League Baseball in particular, has established a number of rules in hopes to make sure each kid has a positive and influential experience. For example, to protect young arms from overuse Little League Baseball has recently enforced pitch count limits that control each pitcher's work to rest ratio (Little League Baseball, 2015b).

Along with rules to protect these kids physically, there have been rules set in place to help kids properly develop character as well. The ethical rule at hand is in regards to fair play. According to Little League Baseball policy, every player must bat at least once per game. Failure to do so will result in forfeit by the team who failed to comply (Little League Baseball, 2015b). This rule prevents coaches from avoiding playing athletes they deem as "weak", and allows these kids a chance to get playing experience early in their stages of development. While fair play should be assumed at this level of play, coaches can still get lost in the heat of competition.

Ethical Analysis

In 2006, two teams playing in the New England regional semi-final found themselves in an ethical nightmare revolving around this specific rule. Vermont had made the third out in the

bottom half of the fifth inning (games are final after 6 in Little League) before one of their players had a chance for his at-bat. Because they were up by a run, even if they were to retire New Hampshire in the top of the sixth without allowing them to score, they would forfeit due to not getting every player an at-bat. As Vermont made their way to the field their coach realized his mistake, and recognized that the only way they could avoid losing by forfeit was for their last player to get an at bat, which would require New Hampshire to tie the game. Vermont held a meeting at the pitcher's mound as their coach instructed them to let New Hampshire score a run by way of intentional walks and errors. This would allow them an opportunity to bat their last player and end the game due to merit, not technicality. However, the New Hampshire coach figured out what was happening and ordered his players *not* to score.

Walks and errant pitches lead to a New Hampshire player advancing to third base, but he refused to advance any further despite more wild pitches. New Hampshire's coach also told his players to strike out intentionally, preserving Vermont's lead but meaning that New Hampshire win by forfeit. Umpires ended up ejecting the Vermont coach and his pitcher, and New Hampshire won the game by forfeit. Both coaches had an opportunity to teach their kids a valuable lesson, but chose to try and manipulate the game and its rules. The question is whose conduct was unethical?

Teleology

Teleology is an ethical approach where a decision can be deemed good or bad based on its outcome or consequence alone (Malloy & Zakus, 1995). Regardless of intention, good or bad, the outcome is all that matters. For example, it does not matter how well-intentioned a surgical doctor is if everyone he operates on dies. From a teleological perspective, one could argue

neither coach was in the wrong, because both were trying to do what they could to help their team win the game, despite their intentions being manipulative and against Little League Baseball policy. Although a win for either team would mean they would have to break the rules or rely on technicality to get there, a win is a win in the eyes of the coaches. Why did they want to win despite how they would have to get there? It was because a win meant their team would advance into the Little League World Series, and would give their kids a once in a lifetime experience.

Deontology

Deontology proposes that decisions are made to follow certain principles of conduct, duties, or rules (Malloy & Zakus, 1995). In contrast to teleology, intention is all that matters to someone with a deontological mindset. For example, if someone kills a serial rapist they could argue that despite committing murder; ethically they were not in the wrong. However, the outcome, which in this case is a rapist being removed from the world, is rendered meaningless by deontological standards because the intention was to kill, regardless of whom it was that died. Using this perspective, the ethics of each coach is easily in question. An argument could be made that the Vermont coach acted unethically because although what he was trying to do was extend the game so it would not be decided by technicality, he still instructed his players to intentionally give up runs which violates the Little League Baseball ethical pledge and game rules. In similar fashion, the New Hampshire coach preferred to intentionally lose so they could win by forfeit. The outcome that both coaches had in mind was positive, but the way they were both willing to achieve victory was unethical.

Existentialism

Existentialism lies in one's ability to choose for themselves and in doing so, accept all responsibility and consequences for their actions (Malloy & Zakus, 1995). Everyone has free will in this life, and we are all responsible for our immoral behavior. With this approach in mind, one would argue the Vermont coach was at fault because he should have allowed the top of the next inning to be played out, and accepted full responsibility for his mistake of not getting everyone in the lineup. If he would have done this it would not have allowed the opportunity for the New Hampshire coach to respond in an unethical way. Vermont's coach wanted a positive outcome for his players, and it was obvious in this situation that he was not fully prepared to take responsibility for leaving a player out of the order.

Conclusion

Based on ethical analysis, it is easy to decipher who is ethically more at fault. In this particular case, based on existentialist theory, once the Vermont coach noticed his mistake he should have kept it to himself and his staff, allowed the game to be played out, and taken responsibility after the game. There was still a chance that if played out, the game could have ended in merit. Vermont's coach was well aware of the rules, and he waited too long to enter the last remaining kid in the lineup. Especially in a regional final, knowing this rule, one of the highest priorities should be to make sure everyone gets an at bat early in the game. In doing so, they have control over the situation, instead of hoping the second to last inning is extended by a few batters so they can get everyone an at-bat. As hard as it would be to see the kids lose due to an error by a coach, it would be an extremely important learning experience. Let us also not forget that these kids are 10-13 years old, and although it seemed like it at the time, the outcome

of this game is not the end of the world. In fact, at this stage in their careers learning lessons like this are exponentially more important than wins and losses.

Chapter Seven: Personal Statement

Introduction

My interest in the Sports Management program at Concordia University stemmed from seeking a Christ-centered institution that was dedicated to helping students achieve the highest levels of success, motivating students to developing practical knowledge and abilities, as well as pushing them to excel in effective decision making and leadership. Based on what I had gathered from reviews on this school, I knew Concordia University would provide me a premier opportunity. Sure enough, enrolling at Concordia was the right move. Through this program I have been given the opportunity to lay a foundation from which I can begin to build my leadership style throughout the course of my career. It has also given me the information and tools to articulate a plan on how to ultimately become the leader I aspire to be.

Why Higher Education at Concordia?

Shortly after completing my undergraduate degree I was very eager to enter the professional world, and gain as much hands-on experience as possible. I was confident that the degree and certifications I had earned up to that point had more than prepared me for the career path I wanted to venture down. Looking back, I feel that I was able to experience the things I was after. However, I felt I needed to pursue higher levels of education so that I could continue to grow and expand my career. Although I got a late start on going back to school, I truly believe that this is exactly where I am supposed to be at this point in my career. Working towards a Master's degree has always been a goal of mine. I knew that if I wanted to live out my professional dreams, graduate school was going to be a prerequisite.

I was told early in life to find a job that does not feel like work, and make it my career. It was not until I moved to Colorado for my first strength and conditioning internship that I realized coaching was exactly what I was supposed to be doing. I was working 60-70 hours a week, consistently exhausted, getting paid way under minimum wage, under appreciated by most of the staff in our building, and I loved every single minute of it. It honestly never felt like I was at work. I loved the other coaches I worked with, and I loved what I was doing. It made the rest of the things I had to deal with just minor details. I found that I would put myself through a lot just for the opportunity to help other athletes succeed. Knowing that I had a part in an athlete's development both on and off the field brought me joy and satisfaction, and it was extremely fulfilling. Since that experience, pursuing a career in sport management, more specifically in strength and conditioning, became a passion of mine and I was looking for any avenue I could to continue my learning and development.

What This Program Has Given Me

Over the last 18 months, this program has helped me gain valuable experience in effective decision making, building networks in collegiate athletic administration, leadership practice, athlete and facility resource management, and coaching in a collegiate weight room. With these experiences, I will be able to better myself professionally and personally, as well as have the tools and experiences necessary to accomplish future career goals in the field of sports management and/or strength and conditioning. Specifically, I have been fortunate to develop strengths by hands-on experiences provided by Concordia University. These strengths include successfully designing and implementing training protocol for multiple levels of athletic mastery and sport, maintaining close relationships with multiple coaching staffs, athletic trainers, front

office staff and athletic administration, and communicating daily with athletic training staff making sure athletic trainers, strength coach, and athletes were on the same page.

Regardless of the outcomes of my experiences throughout this program, I have gathered positives from every situation I have been in. When I look back I feel that some of my experiences have taught me more about what not to do than anything else. Although those situations were not always easy to handle, I realize that it is some of the most valuable experience I have obtained up until this point. Everything about this program has positively influenced my potential to succeed in the Sports Management world beyond Concordia University.

Me as a Leader Today

Being a coach by trade, I am in a position of assigned leadership. As a coach, it can be assumed that the athletes I coach automatically perceive me as a leader because of the position I hold. Of course, that does not always mean a coach is a good leader. However, coaches are usually looked to as leaders until they prove they are incapable of being one. When reflecting on the five bases of power in Northouse (2013), I find myself trying to use all types in different situations. I think it is absolutely vital for athletes to view me as knowledgeable and likable. They have to trust what I say and respect me enough to want to work hard for me. I have to have certain authority over athletes, as well as possess the capacity to provide rewards and hand down punishments.

I also love learning from people who are better than me at what I do. I covet collaboration, communication and getting input from experienced colleagues. I have holes in my knowledge base that I know other strength coaches do not have and vice versa. I have always

used the "practice what you preach" approach which makes me a natural "lead by example" type leader. I feel that in a lot of cases, I am much more effective doing than I am saying.

At the end of the day, developing people for the future and focusing on their performance improvement, both physical and mental, is something I am passionate about, and is the reason I got into coaching in the first place. I want to help people understand things I did not at that age and learn things I wish I would have known in college. Founder and CEO of Starbucks, Howard Schultz, had a father who was a delivery truck driver. One day at work he fell and was hurt on the job. To make matters worse, he did not have health insurance or worker's compensation. Because of what Schultz saw his father go through, he offers comprehensive health insurance for employees who only worked as few as 20 hours a week (Northouse, 2013). He simply wants to give something to others that he did not get early in his life. I relate to this story an incredible amount because of my desire to provide services I wish I would have had as a student athlete. Knowing this about myself, and after further assessing my leadership characteristics using assessments extracted from Northouse (2013), I have found that there are two different approaches in which I have based my leadership foundation from.

Transformational Approach

Based on personal reflection and the information pulled from the assessment, it is clear to me that the transformational approach accurately describes the kind of leader I strive to be. (See Appendix H).

Transformational leadership is a process that changes and transforms people. It is concerned with emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. It includes assessing followers' motives, satisfying their needs, and treating them as full human

beings. Additionally, it involves an exceptional form of influence that moves followers to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them. (Northouse, 2013, p. 185)

I hope that parts of this definition reflect how the athletes I work with on a daily basis see me as a leader. I work hard at pushing them to accomplish more than what is usually expected of them, as well as doing my best to satisfy their physical needs so they possess the ability to achieve long-term athletic goals. Above all else, at the end of their four years with me, I want to be a part of transforming that athlete into the person they are going to become for the rest of their life.

Authentic Approach

Based off of the assessment in Appendix I and personal opinion, I also believe that a part of my style represents the authentic leadership approach. According to Northouse (2013), a score of 16 or higher in the four aforementioned categories indicates strength in the four components of authentic leadership. On a base level, the idea of authentic leadership focuses on whether a leader is genuine and real (Northouse, 2013). As easy of a concept as that may be to comprehend, scholars maintain that this approach to leadership is a much more complex process that is difficult to characterize (Northouse, 2013). However, for the purposes of this paper, understanding the simple, base level idea of authentic leadership will suffice.

First and foremost, my athletic background and upbringing are very relatable. I was not the biggest, strongest, or fastest athlete on any team I played for, which meant I had to work that much harder just to stay relevant. Because this is the case for most athletes, I am able to pull from my own personal experiences in order to relate with athletes in certain situations. I find myself using the phrases, “trust me, I’ve been there before” and, “I know exactly how that feels”

on a daily basis. From an athlete's perspective, I think my ability to relate to them reinforces my genuine intentions.

Secondly, Northouse (2013) suggests that there is a final factor related to authentic leadership, that of critical life events. Northouse (2013) simply defines these events as "major events that shape people's lives" (p. 266). Furthermore, Northouse (2013) mentions that these life events act as a catalyst for change and argues that authentic leadership rests heavily on the insights people attach to their life experiences. Throughout high school and college I was positively affected by some of my coaches to the point where I acknowledge those relationships to have shaped my life. I would consider the time I spent with those coaches as major life events that made me want to do what I do today. They taught me about personal sacrifice, passion, and how much a good coach can positively affect the life of a young athlete. I looked up to them, trusted them, and admired the way they went about their daily lives. Today, I want to be them. I want to have athletes look back on their time with me and feel the same way. I want to have a life-long influence on them and I want to inspire them to want to do the same for others. My athlete's success, in all facets of life, is what drives me to go above and beyond for them on a daily basis.

My Five Year Plan

After reflecting on my leadership experiences to date, as well as the specific approaches I have used to build my leadership foundation, I have come to two different realizations, 1) I have gotten a quality start on becoming a good leader and 2) I am nowhere near where I want and need to be as a leader. During the next five years of my career, the following actions and approach integration will allow me to become a credible, servant leader who uses his values to guide his daily life and everyday decisions.

Becoming a Servant Leader

In my opinion, servant leadership is the foremost approach used by truly great leaders and is the approach that I ultimately want to represent me as a leader. It encompasses true selflessness and puts the focus solely on the development and empowerment of the followers, which in my case are the athletes with which I work.

Servant leadership emphasizes that leaders be attentive to the concerns of their followers, empathize with them, and nurture them. Servant leaders put followers first, empower them, and help them develop their full personal capacities. Furthermore, servant leaders are ethical and lead in ways that serve the greater good of the organization, community, and society at large. (Northouse, 2013, p. 219)

This idea of servant leadership reminds me of a quote by Zig Ziglar. He stated, “If you help enough people get what they want, you will get what you want” (Ziglar, 2015, p. 1). I know that if I can help athletes succeed, reach their goals, and help them build a foundation for the rest of their lives, it will leave me fulfilled beyond my imagination.

Communication, Values, and Credibility

Communication is the foundation for any leader looking to make a true impact on the lives of followers. According to Anshel (2013), “gaining trust, loyalty, and credibility of your followers while at the same time influencing their thoughts, emotions, and performance is one of the biggest challenges of effective communication for someone in a leadership role” (p. 2). Because of the difficulty to simultaneously execute the above challenges, Anshel (2013) constructed the “Ten Commandments of Effective Communication” to help guide leaders in effective communication tactics. Through implementation of the following commandments, I

will be able to effectively communicate and build credibility with the athletes I coach on a daily basis. They are as follows: be honest, don't be defensive, be consistent, be empathetic, don't be sarcastic, praise and criticize behavior, not personality, respect the integrity of others, use positive nonverbal cues, teach skills, and interact consistently with all team members (Anshel, 2013). Moreover, making these commandments a priority will help me construct a set of values that will be vital in my maturation as a servant leader.

Conclusion

With the leadership foundation this program has provided me, it is time for me to take action and proactively further my abilities as a leader. Creating a set of values, putting others needs before mine, and constantly working to improve my communication skills will be vital in my continued development as a leader and coach. Now more than ever, athletes need a solid example of what it is like to be a servant. In this "me first" and entitled athletic world, leaders in sport need to demonstrate an emphasis on being attentive to the needs of others, the importance of empowering others, and a necessity for helping develop others' full human capacities (Northouse, 2013). This manifestation of selflessness has the power to impact the lives of every athlete I get the opportunity to work with.

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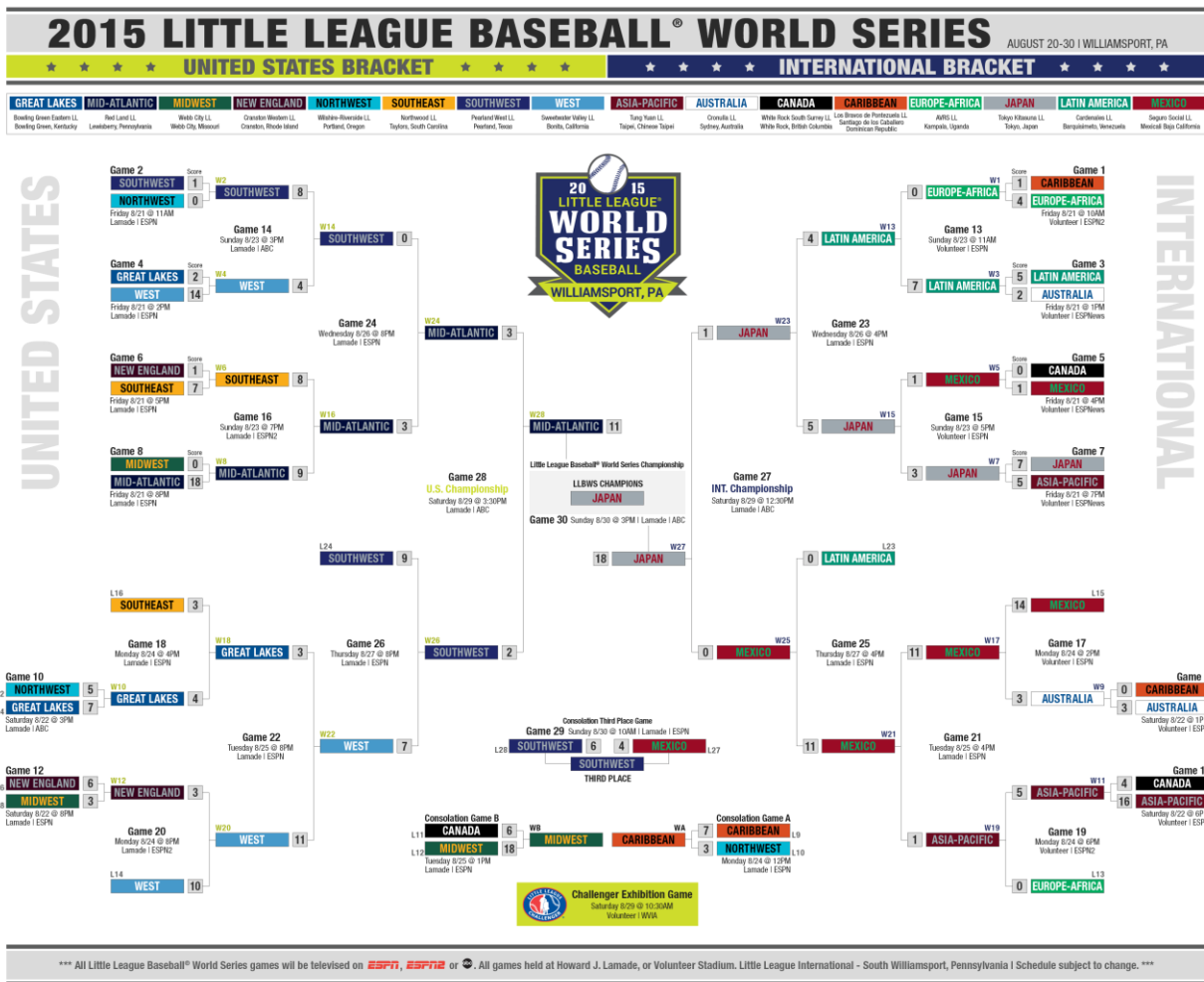
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Appendix A



Appendix B

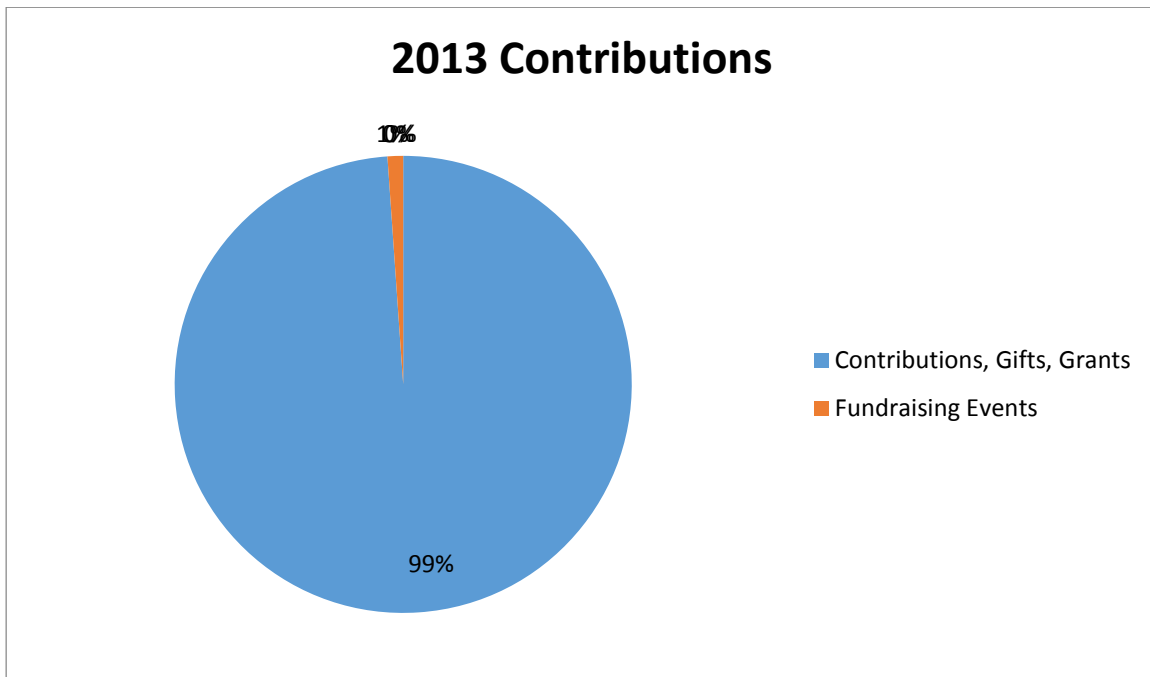


Appendix C

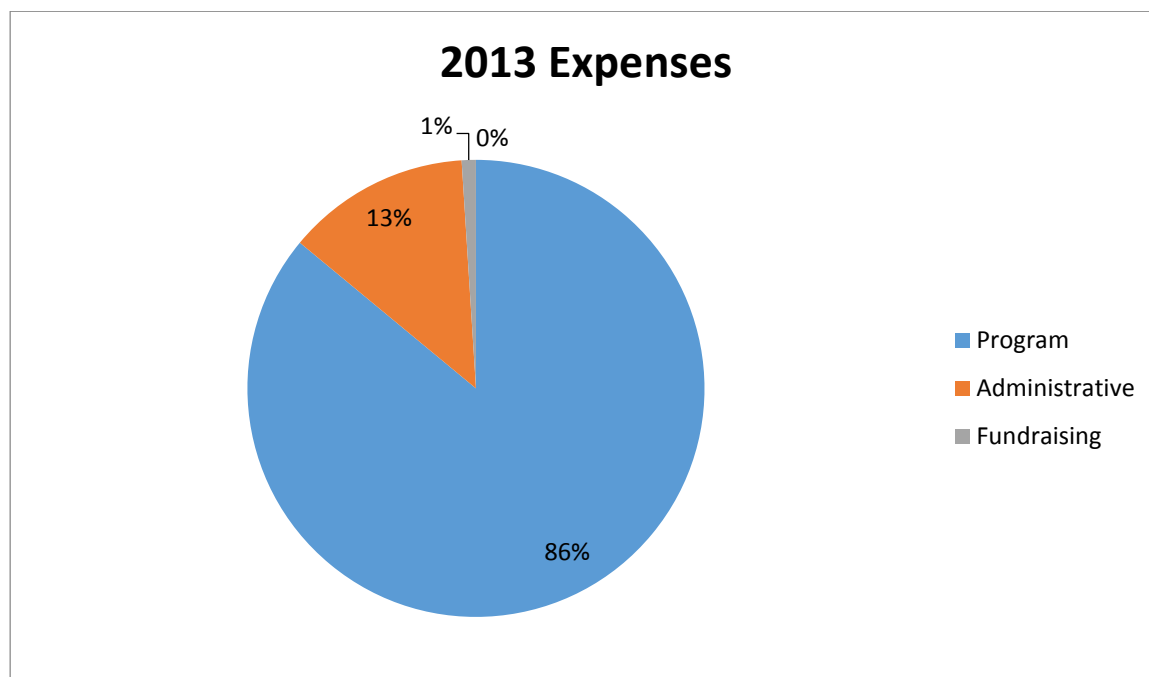
Table 1

<u>2013 Income Statement</u>	-
<u>Contributions</u>	
Contributions, gifts, grants	\$4,875,648
Federated Campaigns	\$0
Membership Dues	\$0
Fundraising Events	\$56,700
Related Organizations	\$0
Government Grants	\$0
<u>Total Contributions</u>	\$4,932,348
Program Service Revenue	\$9,962,323
<u>Total Primary Revenue</u>	\$14,894,671
Other Revenue	\$9,799,322
<u>TOTAL REVENUE</u>	\$24,693,993
<u>Expenses</u>	
Program Expenses	\$20,213,362
Administrative Expenses	\$3,044,253
Fundraising Expenses	\$240,952
<u>TOTAL FUNCTIONAL EXPENSES</u>	\$23,498,567
Payments to Affiliates	\$0
Excess (or Deficit) for the year	\$1,195,426
<u>NET ASSETS</u>	\$81,454,411

Appendix D



Appendix E



Appendix F

<u>STRENGTHS</u>	<u>WEAKNESSES</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sponsorships *(i.e. 60 million dollar TV deal with ESPN) • Worldwide participation and exposure • Strong tradition and history • Volunteer based employment • Efficient hierarchy • Core values *admirable mission statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much pressure on young athletes to win • Potential for overuse and early specialization • Map boundary restrictions *only being able to play for certain teams depending on residency • Slow game pace • Lack of youth interest in Major League Baseball *In 2014, 6-17 yr. olds only made up 4% of post-season viewership (Fisher, 2015)
<u>OPPORTUNITIES</u>	<u>THREATS</u>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expansion into current worldwide market, particularly inner city/less fortunate areas • Additional sponsorships to help a potential scholarship program for underprivileged communities • Grow the Little League Softball Program to same level as baseball • Use Little League as platform to help rejuvenate American interest in baseball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local youth associations not affiliated with Little League • Quality volunteer shortage *Volunteers who seem aimed at profit and self-satisfaction (Keener, 2005) • Bad publicity *(i.e. this year's American champion caught cheating) • Youth participation in other spring/summer sports or early specialization in other sports *(i.e. year-round basketball, golf, lacrosse, etc.)

Appendix G



Appendix H

Table 2

Transformational Approach Assessment

<i>Idealized Influence (Attributes)</i>	<i>I go beyond self-interest for the good of the group</i>	4
<i>Idealized Influence (Behaviors)</i>	<i>I consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions</i>	3
<i>Inspirational Motivation</i>	<i>I talk optimistically about the future</i>	3
<i>Intellectual Stimulation</i>	<i>I reexamine critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate</i>	3
<i>Individualized Consideration</i>	<i>I help others develop their strengths</i>	4

*Adapted from Northouse (2013)

Key: 0= not at all 1=once in a while 2=sometimes 3=fairly often 4=frequently, if not always

Appendix I

Table 3

Authentic Approach Assessment

<i>1. I can list my three greatest weaknesses</i>	4	<i>7. I listen closely to the ideas of those who disagree with me</i>	4	<i>13. I rarely represent a false front to others</i>	4
<i>2. My actions reflect my core values</i>	4	<i>8. I admit my mistakes to others</i>	4	<i>14. I accept feeling I have about myself</i>	4
<i>3. I seek others' opinion before making up my own mind</i>	4	<i>9. I let others know who I truly am as a person</i>	4	<i>15. My morals guide what I do as a leader</i>	4
<i>4. I openly share my feelings with others</i>	4	<i>10. I seek feedback as a way of understanding who I really am</i>	4	<i>16. I listen very carefully to others' ideas before making a decision</i>	4
<i>5. I can list my three greatest strengths</i>	4	<i>11. Other people know where I stand on controversial issues</i>	4		
<i>6. I do not allow group pressure to control me</i>	4	<i>12. I do not emphasize my own point of view at the expense of others</i>	4		

*Adapted from Northouse (2013)

Totals:

Self awareness score: 16

Internalized moral perspective: 16

Balanced processing: 16

Relational transparency: 16

Key: 1=Strongly disagree 2=Disagree 3=Neutral 4=Agree 5=Strongly agree