Sport is a growing industry with enormous numbers of people now involved in the management and administration of sports, fitness and exercise. Whether voluntary, public or commercial sectors, all can benefit by improving the practice and delivery of the management of sport and its organizations. This text is designed to help all those delivering sport to deliver it better and includes:

- What’s different and special about sports management?
- The voluntary sector
- Event management and marketing
- Marketing, fundraising and sponsorship
- Managing staff and volunteers
- Organizational management principles
- Legal issues including health and safety
- Case studies—both local and national

Full of practical examples, this book reveals sports management in action, showing how good management helps us to deliver better sports participation, at all levels.

This book is a must for undergraduates as well as an invaluable tool for professionals in sports management and administration in the private, public and voluntary sectors.

David C. Watt has worked in sports administration for over 35 years, in both the private and voluntary sectors. He is a director of sports and leisure consultancy Organising Leisure, and also of Leisuretraining.com.
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About the author

David C. Watt has over 35 years’ experience in sports administration, having started as a willing volunteer even before leaving school and having continued that commitment in a variety of voluntary and public organizations, within a number of different sporting organizations right up to the present day.

He has held a number of different posts in a range of bodies, including six years as president of one national governing body, two as chairman of another and two and a half as an employee of a third.

Like many others, he became involved in sports organization and administration as a volunteer who was identified as having some ability (or at least being willing) and then had an increasing number of tasks piled upon him. Also, like others, he had no formal training in sports administration or management, although he has a background in physical education, enhanced by a degree in social sciences and an advanced diploma in educational management.

Ten years ago, he established his own business in sports and leisure, specializing in staff training and general consultancy, particularly in event organization, organizational management and strategic reviews. This work has allowed him to take a wider look at provision in the field of sports management and to get involved in programmes such as Running Sport, which focus on training for sports administrators and managers.

With this background and experience he felt that a book dealing with some of the practical issues would be of benefit to others interested in the field of sports management and administration—so this text was written, hopefully, to assist others involved and raise the standard of sports organizations to match the growing standards of participant performance and coach education.

David is a Fellow of the Institute of Leisure and Amenity Management and the British Institute of Sports Administrators.

His latest venture—leisuretraining.com—is a members’ website devised to support the professional development of those working in sport and leisure, paid or unpaid. It develops many of the ideas featured in this book about management and leadership in the sports setting.
Introduction

Sport, like so many other areas of life and business, changes radically and very quickly in this modern age. Since the first edition of this book, many of the structures and organizations governing sport in the UK have altered quite significantly in terms of structure and delivery mechanisms.

The Sydney Olympics have had a major impact on the profile of sport worldwide, and have left a massive ‘feelgood’ factor which has influenced governments worldwide.

In the UK, the government has had much more impact on the delivery of sport through various initiatives and guidance like how lottery and other funding should be focused and delivered. There is a massive new emphasis on sport in schools, and the government has begun to see sport as a tool in tackling social problems.

These changes can often seem remote to people operating at local level, but in truth they have a major impact across all levels of sports delivery in the country. A change in focus for the lottery, for example, can mean that access to sports funding at a local level can change quite radically.

This new edition reflects on all such changes and has a new section to include website addresses as well as an extended bibliography to reflect the sizeable growth in relevant information and publications on sport and its delivery. Sports management and administration is truly a growth business.

The text also looks at specific current issues, including Best Value and technological developments, and includes a larger section on sports development planning and the input of volunteers.

The contents reflect the current trends in the growing and dynamic sport scene in the UK, and provide information to help the practitioner and the student understand the key issues more clearly, and ultimately deliver improved sports management and administration.

Now is an exciting time to be involved in sport and the future looks just as promising—if not more so!
Background

Sport is the unalienable right of every person.

*European Sports Conference*

Sport is the most precious commodity we can hand on to the next generation.

*Ron Pickering (1930–91), BBC commentator and sports coach*

The level of participation and degree of excellence attained within a given sport is dependent, at least in part, on how that sport is organized. Sport has traditionally been organized in an *ad hoc* way, relying on volunteers who are committed to their particular sport. It is now clear that to encourage higher levels of participation and international excellence, new ideas about organizing need to be diffused to those involved in the management of sport.

*Newell and Swan (1995)*

It is to be emphasized in this introduction and throughout the book that this text is written from a practitioner’s point of view. The contents are meant to be of assistance to the student and practitioner of the business of sports administration and management—it is to be hoped that all practitioners continue to be students of their business as well.

The contents cover a number of areas selected by the author from his considerable experience in sport. They are a personal selection of issues thought to be important and relevant to sports administration and management—it is to be hoped that all practitioners continue to be students of their business as well.

The contents cover a number of areas selected by the author from his considerable experience in sport. They are a personal selection of issues thought to be important and relevant to sports administration and management—it is to be hoped that all practitioners continue to be students of their business as well.

The author has been involved in sport as a volunteer, an employee, a participant, a coach, a local authority official, a national governing body official, a tutor, a trainer, an official, an administrator for a national organization, an administrator for a local league, a co-ordinator for an industry training organization, a member of a professional institute—almost every conceivable role available. Such experience has led to a fairly accurate impression of what knowledge is useful to people involved in delivering sport in the UK at this time.

While it could be seen as a movable feast, certain common requirements are likely to persist over the next decade or more as sport undergoes major changes influenced by television, money and increasing professionalism, as
well as the increasing pressure on volunteers in terms of time and our societal changes in terms of job roles and commitments.

Someone else coming from a specific interest area or from an academic viewpoint might well come up with quite different contents and emphasis in a book on the same subject, but this does not invalidate this text, which offers a personal preference and rank of importance of the subjects included.

Sport has the power to change the world, the power to inspire, the power to unite people in a way that little else can.

*Nelson Mandela, in a speech at the Rugby World Cup, 1995*

As stated, this book is written by a practitioner to be of practical help to practitioners working in the field of sport and physical recreation, as well as of benefit to students of sports management and administration. It is intended to be an academic support, as well as a managers’ handbook applied to the sports management and administration business. Very little has previously been written in the UK on the subject, and many people come to the work with little prior specific knowledge and little direct guidance—merely a great deal of the essential ingredients, enthusiasm and energy, or administrative experience gained elsewhere.

It is hoped that this book will cover many of the significant issues in this enormous and varied area. However, inevitably certain items will not be covered as fully as some people (including the author) would like.

The consideration of the history and the social structural context of sport in the UK is merely to give a background to the situation in which the sports manager or administrator works. As in any practical management situation, it is essential for the practitioner to be aware of his or her environment.

Sport is a preserver of health.

*Hippocrates*

A manager who ignores this environment and the specific setting is in danger of producing unrealistic practices unsuited to the situation in which they operate. This contextual understanding is vital but need not be a theoretical concept—rather, it entails a realistic analysis of the organizational and external environment which guides good practice.

It is also to be hoped that a good manager will be able to apply the suggested practices, procedures and thinking to a variety of situations. For example, an identified weakness in the implementation of the Compulsory Competitive Tendering process within local authorities was that many operating direct services organizations saw their role as being solely to manage their facilities, while the client side was regarded as the agency which would develop sport and consequently increase the usage and
numbers using the facilities. This approach has proved to be flawed and it is clear that facility managers must allocate time to developing usage, and consequently the development of sport, if they are to see a sustained increase in user figures. It is quite wrong for sports facility managers to concern themselves only with the present and solely with facility and procedural management, forgetting about the developmental role. They must think more broadly and take a longer term strategic view if substantial progress is to be achieved and sustained.

As we move forward, there is no doubt that the base of sport is still very much in the hands of the volunteer. However, the situation must change if we are genuinely to treat our sport more like a business—in a more professional and full-time manner. This surely is the only recipe for success. The administrators and managers of sport must take it as seriously as the participants, have the same full-time commitment, and receive payment if they are to progress to the proper level of administrative support and managerial practice. This book aims to assist in this area and be a step towards the achievement of better standards in the management and administration of sport, so that the participants can benefit from effective back-up service, whoever the supplier.

A massive voluntary effort is put into sport. Its importance should not be diminished; rather, it should be boosted by a growth in the numbers of full-time professional managers supporting the effort.

On some occasions, in this text, specific reference may not be made to the voluntary sector but it is assumed and believed that the principles of good management practice can correctly be applied to the voluntary sector in sport and that, while volunteers bring their own commitments and technical expertise to the field, they will benefit hugely by following proper business practices, adopted from other industrial sectors.

This book will constantly recognize and emphasize that the ethos of sport is the fundamental background to beneficial management practice within it, and this should never be forgotten. This, however, is not a reason for not following business practices; rather an even stronger reason for grasping such ideas. If such practices are not followed then the ultimate sufferers will be the participants—who are, after all, what the business of sport is all about.

Sport is our lifeblood.

John Major

This book will also cover a range of issues related to the knowledge required for the National/Scottish Vocational qualifications and, in particular, will attempt to cover the key areas identified for the sports administration vocational qualification. The information will hopefully give some increased knowledge and understanding to those interested in proceeding with the workplace assessment required for this qualification.
The past years have seen significant growth in the area of Sports Council(s) initiatives, as well as a rapid increase in the number of local authority development officers being appointed to promote and administer sport. It is likely that the next 20 years will see a significant growth of professional sports administration, at a national and local level (this trend has already started), and that the training of these professionals, coupled (hopefully) with a constantly growing band of volunteers, will be crucial to improving the performance of our sports people throughout the world at all levels of competition.

The development of vocational qualifications will mean that practitioners will be able to become qualified in sports administration as well as sports development, facility management and operations, and coaching. This will mean a considerable improvement in the potential for on-the-job training and assessment leading to a qualification. This initiative will help fuel the growth of a strong qualified profession of people employed in managing and administering sport and recreation.

This book is written at a level which will hopefully prove useful to practising managers and administrators and help them in their work—after all, there is plenty for all such personnel to do.

Sports administration will never be the highest paid occupation, and it will always require a tremendous amount of commitment and energy, but it can be very rewarding and will be done better by people given necessary training and support, as well as all the background knowledge that is available. This book is a step along the road to help the hard-pressed individuals and organizations involved in sports administration, with a view ultimately to making things more efficient and effective for the sports performer.

This text does not deal specifically with facility management in sport and recreation, although many of the principles outlined will be of value to facility managers and relate to management in almost every sporting situation, because, while the details may differ in specific instances, the principles and guidance offered will remain the same.

The emphasis of this publication is to look at the management of the sporting process in the UK, and the people, structures and practices involved in it (or at least those who should be involved in it). In particular, management of the voluntary sector is an integral part of the target market, as well as the management of professionals working within their own operation or, as often happens, in close partnership with the voluntary sector. Indeed, the management of the relationship between the paid professional and the volunteer is referred to on many occasions. The dynamic of this relationship can be fundamentally improved if everyone involved takes a professional attitude (regardless of payment) and adheres to the principles outlined in this text.

The object of this book is to encourage a rise in management and administrative standards, bringing an increased standard of facility and opportunity provision for everyone participating in sport regardless of the
context in which this provision is made. The benefits to everyone involved in sport will be enormous if serious consideration is given to the processes suggested. Ultimately everyone involved will be able to increase their enjoyment and, if they wish, their standard of participation significantly, due to improved organization.

Sport has been defined as the institutionalization of skill and prowess. Sport is also about personal development, team development, community and society development. In recent years the government has also become keen to use it as a tool for social change. Sport has further been defined (Coakley, 1994) as ‘an institutionalized competition that involves vigorous physical exertion or the use of relatively complex physical skills by individuals whose participation is motivated by a combination of intrinsic and extrinsic factors’.

Such definitions go to some lengths to distinguish sport from recreation, play and spectacle. This book does not make such a fine definition, feeling that many aspects of sports participation are for recreation, play and spectacle, and sheer fun and enjoyment often come long before any form of institutional competitive activity for performers at many levels.

Certainly sports administrators and managers (aside from team managers) should not see their role and input as limited to ‘competitive’ sport, at least in the narrow sense.

**Sport and politics**

There have been many famous examples over the years of sport being involved in politics, and of major international conflicts or controversies affecting sport. For example, the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 led to the boycott, by many countries, of the Olympic Games in Moscow in 1980. Further, and perhaps more famously, there has been the boycott of South Africa at national sporting level, even in traditional sports such as cricket and rugby, in order to influence its policy on apartheid. There can be little doubt that ultimately this, allied with sanctions, had a fundamental impact in changing South African policy. It is intriguing to venture that the white population of South Africa had such a desire for sports involvement that they would eventually cede the exclusive ‘right’ to govern their country in order to take part in sport at the highest level.

It is also quite ironic that events such as South Africa winning the World Rugby Cup in 1995 have proved to be unifying factors in identifying the soul of the new South Africa. The appearance of Nelson Mandela in a Springbok jersey was, in itself, a remarkable statement about the change in political and social attitudes in South Africa.

The recent Cricket World Cup controversy (‘should England play in Zimbabwe or not?’) is a further illustration of the strong link between politics and sport. It seems ironic that the Prime Minister could appear on the same platform as Robert Mugabe at a conference, but the cricket team couldn’t visit his country. In this case, is appeared that sport was the only weapon being used.
Many more traditional sports thinkers and participants have felt that politics should not be involved in sport because sport is about some of the more idealistic aspirations of the human race, whereas the activities of politicians and politics are less than tasteful. However, since both affect humankind so fundamentally, it is difficult to separate them. This is proved true from Olympic to local level.

The role of local authority politicians in the UK should not be underestimated in terms of the control they have over a significant spend in the support of sport, in terms of facilities, staffing and performance. Local authority funding is crucial to sport in the UK, and ultimately the decisions as to where this funding is allocated are made by local politicians for political reasons. It is naïve to believe that at a local level sport is not tied up with politics.

Equally, there are some ‘political issues’ that need to be considered in terms of relationships with sponsors or other funding sources. For example, certain sponsors might not be happy to be associated with a sport where drug-taking was thought to be prevalent, or where there was the potential for child abuse, or, indeed, in past days where some performers, e.g. the occasional rogue rugby player, would go and play in South Africa.

There is also a significant debate in the UK about the relationships between sports and within sports themselves. This is certainly non-party-political, but there can be major clashes between lobbies or interest groups over how sport as a whole, or particular sports, should be run.

On a number of occasions such behaviour has been seen in paid and voluntary situations to the severe detriment of the particular sport and its participants. One government minister told the author confidentially that ‘sport is more political than politics itself’—a statement born of bitter experience of trying to keep the sports fraternity in Britain happy.

Additionally, issues such as gender equality and racism are political issues in society as a whole and therefore become significant issues within sport.

Funding from the National Lottery is now being used as another weapon to encourage clubs (especially the more traditional ones, such as bowling and golf clubs) to introduce an equal opportunities policy, and not to display traditional discriminatory positions, particularly against women.

The issue of racism in sport is perhaps most clearly seen on the football pitch and on the terracing, but is often used by groups with other interests as a vehicle to display their bigotry—shouting abuse at particular individuals or devising racist chants where they feel they are hidden by the mass of the crowd.

Issues such as nationalism and patriotism can also be linked substantially to sport, sometimes positively and sometimes negatively. There can be no more classic case of negative nationalism affecting sport than the 1936 Olympics, which Hitler tried to make a vehicle for his Aryan superiority views.

Equally, as mentioned earlier, South Africa’s Rugby World Cup victory (and Scotland’s Grand Slam title in 1990) had a unifying effect. The
feelgood factor generated in Sunderland by the team’s FA Cup win in 1973 was significant for the whole community at a time of economic recession.

The role of central government in sport in the UK is principally concerned with providing the policy framework and establishing financial guidelines. It does not concern itself with direct service delivery, leaving that to the local authorities and sports bodies, with the sports councils setting the strategic direction.

The UK is one of the few countries in Europe (and indeed beyond) that does not have the full post of Minister for Sport, although there is within the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) a post for a junior minister with this title. Most other countries have this post clearly identified and given cabinet rank, perhaps linked with education, youth or culture.

The devolved governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland also have a junior minister with sport as part of their responsibility. This leaves the DCMS junior minister effectively only responsible for sport in England, and can cause some confusion in implementing policies across the UK where appropriate.

It is interesting to note that after the arrival of John Major in Downing Street, the policy involvement of the top rank of government, i.e. the Prime Minister, altered significantly. Through his personal interest in sport he had some influence on the national curriculum in schools through the Department of Education and Employment, where he felt that team games were not sufficiently included—a belief he shared with the then Minister of Sport, Ian Sproat. This led to several initiatives throughout the UK, such as the Youth Sports Trust, where significant government policy and resource direction were involved—although often no additional funding was granted, except through the National Lottery.

The election of a Labour government in May 1997 brought about significant changes in sports policy. They have continued John Major’s enthusiasm for sport and, in the year 2000, increased the allocation of money into the revenue funding of the National Sports Councils in the UK—the first significant increase for many years.

Allied to this funding increase, however, is an underlying change of policy emphasis—towards ‘sport for all’ and participation, especially through schools. The government also sees sport as an important agent in delivering some of its key policy objectives:

- social inclusion and justice
- community planning
- anti-drugs initiatives
- economic regeneration
- after-school care
- individual and community capacity-building
- its overall ‘quality of life’ agenda.
1 Sport—what it’s all about

This chapter sets out to define sport, giving it a setting in a UK environment, with afterthoughts on how this perspective guides modern-day thinking and practice. It proceeds to consider sports participation trends and costs, before moving on to assess the economic impact of sport and how spending trends are moving. Sports clubs are then examined—their operation, style and effectiveness.

Parameters and definitions

Sport was born of a man’s highest ideals and has been around for 33 centuries, which is longer than any other religion, culture or sub-culture; and must be defended and harnessed for its values.

Ron Pickering

The council of Europe’s European Sports Charter, adopted in 1992, defines sport as ‘all forms of physical activity which, through casual or organized participation, aim at expressing or improving physical activity fitness and mental wellbeing, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels’ (Council of Europe, 1992).

It is important to be clear about what is meant by the key terms used in this text. As with almost any word or concept, contrasting meanings and interpretations can be adopted by different individuals or groups on varying occasions. For the purposes of this text the following definitions and meanings will be adopted.

- Where the term recreation is used, it is understood that the recreation is of a physical nature.
- Recreation is seen as the physical (when related to sport and usually the allied mental) re-creating (renewing) of the body and the person.
- Sport is seen as a physically active pastime participated in at a wide variety of levels, under agreed rules; not necessarily, but often, in a competitive setting; at the very least competing against oneself.
- Activity is the specific thing which is done to exert the energy—in this text its use will be a sport of some sort.
According to Elvin (1993), sport includes:

1. elements of competition
2. physical activity
3. aspects of organization
4. the influence of outcome on quality of experience.

He further differentiates between sport and recreation by stating that in recreation:

1. the focus is on activity *per se*
2. satisfaction is gained primarily from the quality of the experience.

Such a distinction as Elvin makes may be of some interest in certain areas of operation and perhaps should be recognized, but for managers and administrators the exact definitions are not crucial. It is, however, clearly important to recognize the level of commitment, ‘seriousness’ and performance at which people are involved in their sport. Their demands may not be as high if they merely want to participate for the sake of participation and enjoyment as opposed to seeking some type of improvement in performance and some sort of specific outcome.

It is vital that the level of provision that managers and administrators provide is the same in terms of standard and consideration for everyone concerned, regardless of level. But it is helpful to understand what the participants’ perceptions and expectations are.

There may be some who think that a sports provider can lessen the quality of thought going into the process, or reduce the standard of provision, merely because it is concerned that the sports people are there to participate rather than perform to a high level. It is the job of a professional administrator to provide to the highest level at all times for all groups of customers, regardless of standard, ability or objectives.

The European Sport for All Charter (Council of Europe, 1990) gives the following classification. A great range and variety of activities is covered by the term ‘sport’, which they subdivide into four broad categories.

1. Competitive games and sports which are characterized by the acceptance of rules and a response to an opposing challenge.
2. Outdoor pursuits in which participants seek to negotiate some particular terrain (signifying in this context an area of open country, forest, mountain, stretch of water or sky). The challenges derive from the manner of negotiation adopted and are modified by the particular terrain selected and the conditions of wind and weather prevailing.
3. Aesthetic movement which includes activity in the performance of which the individual is not so much looking beyond himself and responding to man-made or natural challenges, as looking inward and
responding to the sensuous pleasure of patterned bodily movement, for example dance, figure skating, forms of rhythmic gymnastics and recre-ational swimming.

4 Conditioning activity, i.e. forms of exercise or movement undertaken less for any immediate sense of kinaesthetic pleasure than for long-term effects that the exercise may have in improving or maintaining physical working capacity and rendering subsequently a feeling of general wellbeing.

Another example is given by Rodgers (1978): ‘Ideally, all the four following elements are present in a sport, and the first two are always present. Any sport involves physical activity, it is practised for a recreational purpose, there is an element of competition and a framework of institutional organization.’

It is generally difficult to categorize sport and recreation (for the purposes of this book it is probably better to say physical recreation) definitively. To some extent, like beauty, sport is in the eye of the beholder, and in addition some of the beliefs expressed and feelings held come from the perspective of the viewer.

In essence, the theoretical definition of sport and physical recreation is not key to the administrator or manager; their concern is the support of the efficient involvement of others in their chosen activity. Some type of restrictive definition is not helpful and does not assist anyone. The aim of sports administration is to involve people efficiently, effectively and enjoyably, and to avoid excluding them through administrative bureaucracy, or indeed through any restrictive definition of the activity involved.

The history of sport

This is not the appropriate place for an in-depth study of sports history, but history in every situation is very important in guiding present and future practice—setting it in a realistic context and perspective. This is as true of sports administration and management as it is of other areas of activity.

A great deal is said about the history of sport in the UK, but there has been limited study of the area, especially in the less well-known ‘minority’ sports. There is a great deal of conjecture and supposition over sports participation and development in some quarters, without a great deal of factual information to back this up. Sports officials are famous for sweeping statements!

At the time of writing there is only one Professor of Sports History in the UK and only a relatively small band of people, around 250, who have enough interest to join the Association of Sports Historians. This band has certainly grown and there is an increasing awareness that the future of sport and its development must be soundly rooted in a knowledge and awareness of the past and the lessons it has to offer.

It is interesting, for example, to note that the current much-debated commercialization of sport first appeared a long time ago. The late
Victorian era, for example, saw 70,000–80,000 people at a race meeting and a situation where top jockeys such as Fred Archer could earn the equivalent of over £1,000,000 in today's money during their career. During the period 1906–14 there were never fewer than 100,000 spectators at a Scotland versus England soccer match, so there was a demand and a commercial aspect to many sports, especially the major ones.

There had been, in the earlier Victorian era, some significant changes in the format of some sports to bring them into line with the desires of the population and the challenges facing them. Horse races, for example, had been shortened to enhance interest and increase the number of races that could be staged on each race day. Rugby union and rugby league had split in conflict over the issue of payment, and professional sport was beginning to develop. In 1890 the players of Glasgow Celtic went on strike for more money at a time when soccer was officially an amateur game.

While this professionalism brought about some pressures in sport which led, for example, to saliva tests for drugs in 1910 and various other accompanying problems which continue to the present day, it would be wrong to suggest that there was a relaxed or happy state in such sports before they became professional. Before professionalism many sports were violent, disorganized and strongly sexist as well as unethical, with, for example, W.G. Grace—a supposed amateur—ending up as a millionaire. The real need for a study of sport’s history is to challenge these myths and relate it more closely to the social and economic history of the country. Much more could be done to examine the economic effect of sport and to look at the effects of sport on society historically. As Professor Grant Jarvie said at a talk at Stirling University in 1995, it is important that ‘we use historical evidence to modify theory and concept; realize that sport is a part of our popular culture, economic strata and political life. Sports history prevents myths from becoming facts and while doing this, study must never remove the excitement or thrill of sport.’

There are also some well-supported, if possibly flawed, arguments that, during the middle of the nineteenth century, sport was used as an instrument of social control to indoctrinate and pacify the working classes. This argument has some inherent weaknesses, since in most situations the actual exchange and interaction between the upper and lower classes is limited. While there was a significant participation of a variety of classes in sport they tended to be in different sports and, even where they did play together, this was usually limited to the playing fields and did not extend to the clubhouse—in the case, for example, of golf and cricket.

Many working-class people did take part in sport but these tended to be the more traditional sports such as quoiting, while the upper classes continued to have their own sports to participate in and dominate. If there was to be real social control then there would have had to be close contact and this, in large part, did not take place.

Any real student of sport should also be a student of sports history and be aware of the background of sport in general and specific sports in particular.
There is room for a great deal of further study in a wide variety of sporting texts (some are listed in the bibliography). Such a study would be useful to improve the guidance of present and future practice in sports administration and management as in many other areas such as sports performance and coaching. It is genuinely beneficial for everyone involved in a specific sport to have an awareness of its history and traditions, while never being a slave to either. Such knowledge allows even participants to put all their effort into perspective; to realize that others have done it before them and that there is a strong tradition of sport behind them and supporting them. It is somewhat humbling and very useful in getting our present commitment into context to examine the past of any sport and to understand that there is a background of participation, commitment and involvement that stretches back for many years—in some cases many hundreds of years.

Additionally, it helps modern-day participants and administrators put their performances in perspective when they realize that many achievements were made by their predecessors with much less suitable equipment and facilities. A historical understanding can also make many performers have more confidence in themselves when they realize that there has been a great deal of activity in their sport before them and often there is a strong history of participation. For example, gymnastics and table tennis in the UK, which now may not seem major sports, have significant past participation levels and in some cases very successful histories.

For all the participants in a competition at the grass-roots level of sport, it is inspiring to know they are joining a select band of performers who have performed successfully in a variety of arenas worldwide over many years. Such a context is meaningful for everyone involved in the sport and helps encourage a commitment for the future. Far too often sport is seen only in its modern setting and not for the considerable history it has given to the nation, the individual and many different communities.

The setting of history can also help individuals in realizing their relative unimportance in any given sports setting, perhaps bringing in a little much-needed humility and supporting the belief that no individual or team can ever be bigger than the sport itself—a key value which must underpin all successful and effective sporting participation and administration.

To ignore history is stupid but to rely on it too much is dangerous—learn from it; don’t live in it.

**Trends in sports participation**

Sports administrators must always be aware of trends in sports and the resulting effects on participation. Change can be rapid, e.g. the onset of many people retiring early; or predictable, e.g. the reduction in numbers of young people. In any such instance, sports management must react or, better still, anticipate.
Published research by Gratton and Tice (1994) indicates that ‘between 1977 and 1987 indoor sport has shown the fastest rate of increase in participation, with 60 per cent more adults taking part in at least one indoor sport compared to a 13 per cent increase in those taking part in at least one outdoor sport. The average frequency of participation is also steadily increasing.’

This published research also mentions that:

- the average age of participants increased across all activity groups
- the percentage of retired participants increased dramatically for virtually all activity groups
- the percentage of female participants increased in all activity groups except those taking part in only outdoor sport.

Part of this information was produced through study of the General Household Survey and, although this takes only a sample of the population, it gives a general indication of trends that appear to be prevalent in sport participation and the related habits of the population at that time.

The main trends identified by an analysis done by Sport England (1999) reveal that a number of sports, such as snooker and darts are on the decline while a significant number of sports, such as walking, swimming, cycling and golf are increasing in popularity and participation levels.

- The 1996 figures for sports participation (as revealed by the General Household Survey) indicate that from 1990 there was a slight fall from 65 to 64 per cent.
- A greater proportion of men (71 per cent) than women (58 per cent) take part in sport, but since 1987 women’s participation has risen while men’s has fallen.
- There has been a significant increase in participation in the fitness-and health-related areas and sports.
- Activities such as cycling, keep fit, aerobics and walking have seen increases.
- The fact that these are individualized sports (not necessarily requiring colleagues to facilitate participation) is an interesting trend (perhaps a reflection of more independent individuals in society).
- There has been a decrease in interest in marathons and road running.
- Countryside and water recreation have seen a significant growth.
- There has been the advent of what might be called ‘trendy’ activities, e.g. mountain biking.

Interestingly, the administrative base of organized sport continues to be under national governing bodies, whereas the growth of participation centres on informal and casual sports. Activities and sports such as walking, swimming and golf have large participation levels outside any recognized
organizational base. Even where there is a significant governing body in any sport, e.g. athletics, there is only a minority of participants in formal membership of the governing body.

It is also interesting to note that while governing-body membership has remained static in recent years there continues to be a growing number of small clubs coming into existence. These clubs are still dependent on a large voluntary support basis but indicate a significant existence of sporting interest which is not allied to either local authorities or national governing bodies. This raises the issue of how such more formalized organizations relate to mass participation and involvement on the informal basis.

Another interesting trend has been the rise in overall participation by women, though just to state that would be simplistic, because, within this overall trend, there has been a continuing change towards female participation in keep fit and aerobics, which have seen a 33 per cent increase in a three-year period. Meanwhile there has been some decline in other, more traditional, outdoor activities, to the benefit of indoor sports where women appear to be participating in larger numbers. Women do seem still to be constrained by their lack of uncommitted time and money in comparison to men, and sport still seems in many situations to be dominated by men and not yet seen as a significant part of women’s role in our society.

Almost inevitably, with changing demographic trends, the fastest growing area of sports participation is that of middle-aged and older people. This ties in with the growth in activities such as walking, swimming, bowls and golf. People under 30 tend to participate in the more active and team sports where there are still some problems such as school/club gaps, leading perhaps to lower-than-desired levels of participation and poor standards in some sports. There is, however, a significant participation at an even younger age group—for example, under 16 in sports such as basketball and volleyball.

In terms of social class it would appear that there has been a narrowing of the gap between participation by unskilled manual workers and the professional group in recent years. There is still the issue that some lower social class groups remain relatively disadvantaged and have low participation rates, particularly women in the semi-skilled and unskilled groups. It is interesting to note that this variation is not true across sports as, for example, soccer reflects little difference while golf and squash do.

There also seems to be a small but noticeable difference in participation in the southern parts of Great Britain and particularly greater female participation in the most southerly parts of England—from the east Midlands down. The difference is not enormous but is noticeable, and perhaps is some reflection of the social class factors mentioned above, as well as perhaps reflecting the economic wellbeing of certain areas and the sports facilities provided.

Research such as the General Household Survey means that administrators are now better able to identify participation trends in sport in the UK, and it is important that they look at these trends on a regular basis.
Pricing of sports participation

Research by Coalter (1993) indicated that the cost of entrance into sports facilities is a relative, rather than an absolute, determinant in deciding participation.

Relatively speaking, the costs of entrance to a range of common sport-physical recreation facilities are low. This would seem to indicate that the high subsidy culture which exists in the UK is comparatively successful in supporting participation levels.

Coalter concludes by saying:

It is more useful to view the decision to participate not as a simple economic one, but as indicating an order of priorities, in which the major enabling facility and resource is not just money but time. Decisions to participate are taken within the context of the relationship between values, attitudes and lifestyle factors. It would seem that for most people the actual and perceived cost of sports participation is not simply money but time.

The economic impact of sport

Clearly sport rests on an economic foundation.

Harry Edwards in Sociology of Sport Journal, 1973

Information published by the GB Sports Council and researched by the Henley Centre indicates that sport has a significant impact on the economic activity of the UK. In 1990 the gross figure generated by sports activity was £8.27 billion, equal to 1.7 per cent of the UK gross domestic product. This indicates an increase from 1.4 per cent in 1985.

Estimates around that time suggested that just over 457,000 jobs were generated in sport-related economic activity, which is just above 2 per cent of the employment market in the UK. Such a study does not include the large number of unpaid hours put in by the voluntary people involved in sport. It was suggested that, in 1990, this input could equate to over 70 million hours.

Paid employment seems to be split fairly evenly between males and females, while 25.6 per cent was professional/managerial, with routine non-manual accounting for a further 26.5 per cent. The largest category is semi-skilled and unskilled work, with over one-third of the jobs, while skilled jobs account for the remaining 13.4 per cent. Overall occupational distribution is somewhat similar to the national picture, though the skill component is somewhat lower than in some industries.

In terms of gross domestic product, impact and employment the commercial sports activity sector with £1.77 billion came second to the commercial (not directly sport-related) activity, which saw a spend of £4.99
million. To clarify, this distinction is related to wages, rates, building maintenance, fitment maintenance, clothing, and personal purchases by people for the purpose of pursuing their sport. Obviously sports goods and equipment expenditure illustrate that there is a significant spend generated by sports participation, as well as by direct employment in sport.

The voluntary sector saw a spend of £0.83 billion, with local government spending £0.6 billion. The voluntary sector employed 79,000 people, with local authorities employing 48,200 people, throughout the UK.

The trend in spending indicated by the General Household Survey information suggests an increased participation in sport and implies a significant impact of spending on sport for the economy as a whole. Fashion can also have an effect; recently, for example, baseball hats have become trendy, and for many years sports trainers have been popular footwear for daily use.

Other implications are raised, e.g. the ability of local authorities to maintain their contribution to sport with the changes in their powers, the current reorganization and cutbacks in central government support for local government. The lottery, however, has seen a significant increase in spending throughout the country, particularly in the construction industry, architecture and various other project-related spin-offs to the funding raised through the lottery and spent through the Lottery Sports Fund.

The lottery trends are positive but there are threats to spending and it is interesting to set it in context; for the same period, the spending on gambling was £2.84 billion and on cigarettes £7.7 billion. Such a comparison means that sport, while a significant economic factor, has some way to go to be one of the major players in the economy. The economic impact, however, is certainly an argument in support of sport and the growth it continues to foster for the economic health of the nation.

The other key point is that such studies did not attempt to gauge or evaluate the benefits to the productivity of the nation as a whole, of a population made fitter by their participation in sport; nor, indeed, do they tend to look at the contribution of sport to the welfare of society. An investigation into both these items would be interesting and perhaps would provide another argument for central government to increase support of sport.

**Sports clubs**

Arguably the most crucial factor in the operation and survival of sport in the UK is the sports club. The nature of these clubs varies in different sports, geographical locations, facility bases and traditions, but typically they are localized, single-sport clubs organized by volunteers and living almost hand to mouth from a limited contribution of members’ subscriptions, local authority support and other income raised through the contacts or efforts of club members.
Some clubs are quite affluent due to recreational play income and relatively high fees—such as golf clubs. Some survive quite healthily through income from bars or other social activities, e.g. bowling clubs or tennis clubs. One of the most difficult areas of sport to fund is that of youth sport, especially developing talent, due to the necessity to look to many members to provide the large part of the funds to support the development of future excellence in a few.

The club base is very often made up of a group of parents, friends or experienced performers who administer the club for the benefit of the participants, which they will probably be themselves. There may be support from the local authority, local sports council or other agency. There will be some requirement to affiliate to the local sports council, join the national body to participate fully in the widest range of sports opportunities, and while this may bring some benefits—technical advice, coaching support, competitive outlets—there will also be some cost implications.

The typical model for sports clubs in the UK has very much tended to be single sport, while sports not necessarily independent (especially in facility use), e.g. many athletics clubs and swimming clubs, use a variety of facilities for their training. This model is not typical of much of western Europe, where community-based multi-sports clubs are much more common. Throughout Holland, Scandinavia, Spain, Germany and France, clubs such as hockey, football and rugby share changing and social facilities as well as playing fields, and there may also be allied indoor facilities for basketball, volleyball, handball, etc.

This type of multi-sport club is rare in the UK and is much envied by a number of clubs who would see such an amalgamation as quite healthy. It should be noted that there have been some, mostly unsuccessful, attempts at amalgamation in the UK on a local basis, but it would appear that differing histories, social traditions and expectations have caused some practical problems in drawing clubs together effectively. This is a model, however, favoured by many and it is quite likely to be pursued in the future, especially as economic demands place additional difficulties on clubs. Current lottery funding arrangements tend to favour such logical facility developments, which are often beyond the means of one club on its own.

The multi-sport club does appeal in the sense of combining all resources—not just physical or social, but also in terms of personnel and joint fundraising efforts, etc. The difficulties arise when any funds raised have to be disbursed and significant debate can take place as to how this should be done, pitting one sport against another or one group against another.

The voluntary nature of sports clubs in the UK has been their strength for many years but looking at the fast-changing sporting scene, both domestically and internationally, one has to debate whether the small club units functioning on a voluntary basis can continue to support the development of sport at a time when individual performers can aspire to be paid tens of