
Introduction

John Beech*

Applied Research Centre in Sustainable Regeneration (SURGE),
Coventry University, 5 Priory Street,
Coventry CV1 5FB, UK
E-mail: j.beech@coventry.ac.uk

*Corresponding author

Simon Chadwick

Department of Strategy and Applied Management,
Coventry University,
5 Priory Street, Coventry CV1 5FB, UK
E-mail: s.chadwick@coventry.ac.uk

Biographical notes: John Beech is the Head of Sport and Tourism Applied Research at SURGE, Coventry University's Applied Research Centre in Sustainable Regeneration. He was previously the Head of Strategy and Applied Management, the Head of Leisure, Sport and Tourism Management and an Acting Head of Marketing and Leisure. He has researched and published widely in the areas of both sport management and tourism management, and is, with Simon Chadwick, co-editor of *The Business of Sport Management*, *The Marketing of Sport* and *The Business of Tourism Management* (all published by FT Prentice Hall).

Simon Chadwick is Professor of Sport Business Strategy and Marketing at Coventry University. He is an Editor of the *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship* and also the Founder and Leader of the Academy of Marketing's Sport Marketing Special Interest Group. He has researched, published and consulted extensively in the area of sports marketing and is co-editor, with John Beech, of *The Business of Sport Management*, *The Marketing of Sport* and *The Business of Tourism Management* (all published by FT Prentice Hall).

It may seem bland, almost meaningless, to say that the world is a complex place and that contemporary sport reflects this fact. Consider the recent soccer World Cup in Germany. Following a bidding process, itself no straightforward matter, Germany was selected as the host nation. The fact that the country was actually split into East and West when the latter last held the World Cup (in 1974) raised the important issue of where matches would be staged this time. As it turns out, for economic, social and financial reasons, only one stadium (Leipzig) in the old East Germany was used. Such is the scale of the tournament, however, that it was a truly global event witnessed both live and via various forms of media by billions of people from different nations, cultures and time zones.

How games were watched is significant with some live games available through the normal television channels but also, for the first time, on the internet. Added to this, for the first time blogs and podcasts had a major impact on the way a major sporting event was presented, consumed and discussed. Otherwise, the tournament was held by many to have been the most commercial ever, with commercial partners, sponsors, merchandisers and the like each spending substantial sums of money to maximise the benefits of being associated with the event. Indeed, the attempts of ambushers to gain access to stadiums resulted in some fans having to watch games 'undressed' following confiscation of their clothing that was provided by an ingenious ambusher. Inside the stadiums, demand for tickets was huge and many games were sell-outs, despite problems encountered when FIFA initially tried to auction tickets on the internet. Outside the stadiums, 'fan parks' became the norm and some were so well staged, so exciting, so popular, that some fans actually sold their tickets for a game so they could watch in city centres along with the majority of other people.

This may only be a limited number of observations about one event run over four weeks in the summer of 2006. However, it exemplifies how sport is changing the challenges that sport managers increasingly face, and some of the responses they are taking. It also serves to highlight how important the sporting environment is and so this special edition of the *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing* sets out to explore a variety of topics which illustrate the range of challenges facing sport businesses that arise from the complexity of the business environments in which they operate. The call for papers initially suggested that prospective authors might want to submit in the following areas: the challenges and strategies for risk managers in sport; managing a sport business in an international context; reconciling the multiple financial considerations in a 21st century sport business; managing opportunities created by the proliferation and convergence in the televised sports market; commercialisation and fair play: whether profit and sport can coexist; ethical and governance challenges for sport managers; meeting customer expectations and managing service quality; and practitioner views of the environmental challenges facing sport managers. In the end, the papers actually submitted covered two themes – organisation and strategy and marketing and media. This is a particularly interesting split which suggests that some organisations in sport are adopting a more outward-looking, market-driven approach to their operations, whilst other sport organisations remain concerned about their culture, structure and, hence, their ability to respond to environmental change. It is clear nevertheless that sport organisations increasingly realise the importance of adaptation, responsiveness and flexibility. Within the organisational theme, four papers appear in this edition and examine: governance and stakeholders in soccer (Senaux); strategic change at Country Racing Victoria (Nicholson and Hoye); organisational culture and the American Triple-A Baseball League (Choi and Scott); and takeover and turnaround at Celtic soccer club (Donnelly, Donnelly and Donnelly). In the marketing and media theme, three papers appear: branding, ambushing, advertising clutter and the Olympic Games (Seguin and O'Reilly); sport new media (Santomier and Shuart); and experiential marketing and the Olympic Games (Davou, Thwaites and Chadwick). The Special Issue concludes with a review of the book *Marketing and Football* (edited by Desbordes), a text appropriate to both themes of this Special Issue, particularly the second. Authors and subjects are thus from North America, Europe, Asia and Australia, reflecting the complexity that the international dimension of sport generates.

Some commentators have described the world we live in as 'chaotic', others believe it is characterised as having an 'accelerated culture'. However we describe it, the fact is that sport and sport managers are not immune to complexity and change. It is therefore hoped that this special edition makes a contribution at this time to understanding how operating environments are changing, what the outcomes of this are, and how managers need to think about and respond to what is happening around them.