



Book Review: Managing and Developing Community Sport

Book by: Rob Wilson and Chris Platts (Edited)

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Managing and Developing Community Sport (Wilson and Platts, 2018) provides an overview of the theory and practice of community-level sports management and development. The textbook provides a historical, sociological, political and contemporary overview of community sport, and explores how the way in which sport and physical activity, which is developed and managed in the community, can meet the needs of communities.

The book is divided into three sections:

- Part I: Contextualising community sport and physical activity, which introduces the reader to this landscape.
- Part II: Contemporary issues in community sport and physical activity, which outlines the key issues and challenges faced by those who work in community sport, at various levels and contexts.
- Part III: Functions and operations in community sport and physical activity, which explores the leadership and management features that are required for effective community leadership and management.

Although the book should ideally be read in its entirety, each chapter is stand-alone. This makes it easy to read each chapter as and when one desires. Each chapter provides case studies of 'real life' examples, helping the reader to understand not only the underlying theory, but also 'best practice' in approaching sport and physical activity in the community. Each chapter includes review questions which allows the reader to reflect on their learning throughout.

Although this textbook is mainly intended for sports management practitioners or students, it can also be useful for community coaches. For example, what might be of interest is the chapter on



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community coaching, which discusses the concept of a 'community coach', considering the various contexts in which they may work with children, adolescents and adults. It explores the political ideology and policy around community sports coaching. It also examines the coaching skills, knowledge and attributes required in developing participation in various community settings, making it useful for an individual who intends to work at a community-level, as a community coach.

The authors also use case studies to illustrate contrasting environments and participants, so that the reader can understand how a 'shared philosophy' should be adopted as a community coach. This allows the reader to reflect on their own coaching practice to better understand how to develop this shared philosophy, and to be more supportive and inclusive. It considers how coaching philosophy can be adapted when coaching different groups, taking on the role of a 'social performer'.

"A coach working in several different contexts will succeed by developing a social identity that is fluid, flexible and extremely adaptable."

A second chapter of interest is around community cohesion through sport and physical activity, which may be applicable for coaches wishing to take on community development roles. It provides insight into how various approaches can be used to provide accessible and affordable opportunities for sports participation. The chapter provides the reader with an understanding of how sport and physical activity

can be used to improve community cohesion, and critiques the notion that sport and physical activity can improve social inclusion. In addition, it provides a real-life case study example of the different approaches to reducing social exclusion, including 'doorstep sports clubs' developed by Street Games.

A chapter which may be useful for managers in designing community sports programmes is 'Monitoring and Evaluation'. The chapter covers what monitoring and evaluation is, why it is needed, the type of monitoring and evaluation that should be done, and how it can benefit community sports programmes in the context of government health priorities. The chapter includes a section on developing a logic model, which would be essential for those managing community projects, as it can often be difficult to demonstrate the link between their activities and outcomes for funders. This section helps the reader to understand what and when to evaluate. Although aimed at managers, this chapter may also be of benefit to coaches who deliver community sports programmes, to demonstrate the impact of their work.

One chapter within the textbook makes several assumptions about the reader. However, overall the text is user-friendly and easy to navigate, making it an accessible resource for sports management practitioners, community-level coaches, and students who intend on working in community-level sport. Some of the theoretical concepts are repeated at times across chapters making it repetitive in parts, but it serves to embed the learning.