

Chapter 2

The Marketing Implications of Up-and-Coming Sports and of Official International Sports Rating Systems

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ABSTRACT

To effectively market the major international sports, those sports are identified along with their special characteristics. Further, widely available official ranking information about the best nations and individuals at those sports are located so that the special features of each ranking system can be creatively used to arouse spectator and sponsor interest. The three primary sources of recognition are identified: the International Olympic Committee, which recognizes 122 sports; SportAccord (also known as GAISF), which recognizes those plus another 21 sports; while Wikipedia lists those plus another 26 widely played sports for a total of 169. The immense popularity of the up-and-coming e-sports (electronic sports) strongly suggest opportunities for marketing. The 108 sports with ratings systems are covered in the sequence—36 object sports, 59 independent sports, 9 combat sports, and 4 mind sports—followed by the special implications that present themselves for effective marketing. Marketing guidance is then presented for the 61 sports without a rating system. Links to all 169 sports are identified, providing a wealth of individual and team information along with the official ratings. References, internet links, and definitions of all key terms are listed at the end of this chapter.

INTRODUCTION

In spite of the amount of money at risk, organizations may approach a sports competition with no marketing plan in mind, Stotlar (1993). On the other hand, effective marketing evolves when a brand actively aligns itself with a favorite team, Mitre and Ordonez de Pablos (2009), when an affinity can be

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established between a company and a sport, Bloom et al. (2006), and when fan support can be exploited as motivation to attend a sports event, Kahle and Close (2011).

The changing definition of what is a sport, Stefani (2017), and possible Olympics sports of the future, Stefani (2016), are important topics to understand if marketing strategies are to remain current. We will then identify international organizations with the cachet to decide which sports are significant, Stefani (1999, 2011). Compared to a similar study made for the last edition of this book, 13 up-and-coming sports will be identified, warranting special consideration. The various types of rating systems are identified for those sports whose governing federations publish official ratings, Stefani (1999, 2011).

This chapter then suggests strategies for the effective marketing of sports, based on the special attributes of each type of sport and based on the types of rating systems chosen by the stakeholders of recognized international sports federations. References, internet links and definitions of all key terms are listed at the end of this chapter

We begin by examining the various types of sports and the agencies recognizing them.

TYPES OF SPORTS AND THREE SOURCES OF RECOGNITION

There is literally a world of information that is free and available via the internet for purposes of marketing sports. The problem is understanding what it is out there and how it is organized.

Let's begin with understanding what types of sports exist and what organizations recognize the important sports, so our time can be focused on those sports for which marketing is worth the effort. *The Official World Encyclopedia of Sports and Games* (1979) and *Random House Encyclopedia* (1983) include many sports with various categories. There are racquet sports, stick-and-ball sports, and water sports categories, for example. A sport can be classified as being a team sport vs. being an individual sport. There is some ambiguity in separating sports into those two seemingly obvious categories. Tennis is an individual sport in singles but there is a team element in doubles. Swimmers compete individually, but placement points can be added to create team competition. Basketball is clearly a team competition. A more organized taxonomy of sports and rating systems is given in Stefani (1999) leading to a survey of recognized federations (the actual groups that organize and regulate competition) and their official ratings systems in Stefani (2011). For this chapter, the latter two studies of sports and sports rating systems are updated through April 2018, an update from November 2013 upon which the previous edition of this chapter was written.

Sports involving physical activity can be separated into the three very simple and mutually exclusive ways competitors can interact. First, a **combat sport** involves direct contact between competitors (as for boxing, wrestling and judo) in which each competitor tries to control the other. Second, an **independent sport** does not allow contact at all, or perhaps incidental contact is allowed; but too much contact will result in being disqualified (as for swimming, athletics, and golf). In effect, each competitor tries to control the competitor's own self for success. Third, in what I call an **object sport**, contact is indirect in a quest to control an object (as in basketball, football, and tennis). Those three categories are unambiguous and mutually exclusive.

Contemporary society has broadened the meaning of sport far beyond what many would have imagined only a few years ago. The term e-Sports, an abbreviation for electronic sports has become ubiquitous among a number of Asian nations. Chess, bridge and Go competitions have been referred to as "mind sports" We therefore need to be fair in our definitions of sport categories, rather than becoming provincial

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