Managing and Developing Community Sport

Can sport and physical activity (PA) be used to improve the communities we live in? How do community groups manage facilities that provide sport and PA? How can managers ensure the services they deliver meet the needs of their community? What role should community sport schemes play in society? Answer these questions and more in this, the first textbook to focus on the theory and practice of community-level sport management and development.

Bringing together academics and practitioners with expertise in sport management, sport development, the sociology of sport, PA programming and community coaching, this book outlines best practice and explores contemporary issues relating to:

- Community enhancement through sport and PA
- Leadership, enterprise and innovation
- Budgeting and decision making
- Event and facility management
- Corporate social responsibility (CSR)
- Monitoring and evaluation.

The book is divided into three sections: Part I provides an introduction to developing and managing community sport; Part II outlines the key issues and challenges that face those working in the sector; and Part III examines the leadership and management qualities needed to effectively manage and develop community sport.

Insightful and user-friendly, Managing and Developing Community Sport is written in an easy to read style and is a vital resource for sport management practitioners or students hoping to work in community-level sport.

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Chris Platts is a senior lecturer at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), UK. His PhD in the sociology of sport and exercise examined the education and welfare provisions for young footballers undertaking a scholarship in professional football academies. Before undertaking his doctoral study, Chris completed an MSc in the sociology of sport and a BSc in sport and exercise science, both at the University of Chester, UK. Chris has used this research to contribute to publications on the work of young athletes and the application of qualitative research methods.
Managing and Developing Community Sport

Edited by
Rob Wilson and Chris Platts
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Contributors

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On completion of his PhD in data collection, David joined Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in 2007 and is now Senior Lecturer in Physical Activity, Health and Exercise Science and a Postgraduate Research Tutor for Sport. He previously worked for the British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity and Health at the same time as he was completing a Masters in Physical Activity and Health. David has a broad interest in the benefits of PA for health but has examined the effects of exercise on appetite and appetite-related hormones, and has been involved in the development, monitoring and evaluation of a childhood obesity intervention.

Jim Cherrington
Jim joined the Academy of Sport and Physical Activity at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in September 2010, having been a Postgraduate Researcher at Leeds Metropolitan University where he undertook a visual ethnography of identity, the body and everyday life in basketball. Jim is currently investigating the relationship between mountain biking and the ‘wilderness’, with a specific focus on the dynamic between sport, nature and place. He is interested in methodological innovation, both in his work on visual methodologies and in terms of the promotion of creative forms of representation. He is an active researcher in the Academy of Sport, contributing regularly to work around the social impact of sport and leisure.

Chris Cutforth
Before joining Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), Chris enjoyed a successful 20-year career in the sport and leisure industry where he worked for three local authorities and Sport England at local, regional and national levels. During his time at Sport England, Chris was responsible for the management of programmes for Physical Education, school sport and young people, as well as contributing to the design and development of several national sport development initiatives. In 2006, Chris was seconded to the London Organising Committee of the Olympic and Paralympic Games, where he contributed to the development of the London 2012 Games Maker programme. Chris is currently studying for a doctorate in Higher Education at the SHU.

Andrew Finney
Having worked as a freelancer designer since his late teens with a core personal value of supporting local social enterprises and charities, Andrew started supporting the next generation of start-ups by joining the Enterprise Team at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU)
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Stuart Flint
Currently at Leeds Beckett University, Stuart has a specific interest in the psychosocial effects of obesity; in particular, obesity stigmatisation and discrimination, conscious and unconscious attitudes, body image, attitude and behaviour change and factors that influence exercise participation. Stuart conducts research in the area of obesity and public health, and his primary area of focus examines weight stigmatisation and discrimination. His research also examines the effectiveness of interventions to reduce stigma, and he continues to research in this area with current areas of interest including obesity discrimination in the workplace. Stuart also conducts research examining unhealthy food and drink consumption, and his current work in this area includes unhealthy food and drink marketing and nudging to improve food and drink choice.

Maxine Gregory
With over ten years of experience working within research, consultancy and practice, Maxine is an evaluation expert focusing on PA, school sport and outdoor recreation, helping to measure impact and assess ‘what works?’ Maxine established and is Chair of the Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) Outdoor Recreation Research Group and Vice-Chair of the European Network of Outdoor Sport. Maxine is a graduate in Recreation Management (BSc) and Research Methods (MA) from SHU.

Melissa Jacobi
With a background in facility operations and management, both in terms of local authority sports centres and private sector leisure venues, Melissa also has extensive experience in contributing to the delivery and provision of voluntary sector sports clubs. With regard to research, Melissa has written a series of academic case studies focussing on initiatives such as parkrun that are utilised in teaching and is joint author on a research project aimed at establishing students’ expectations and perceptions of ‘feedback’. Melissa joined Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in 2006, having completed her Masters in Sport Management at the institution.

Pippa Jones
A Great Britain international in both swimming and water polo, Pippa graduated in Physical Education and History from Warwick University. Her career started in Coventry where she was involved in setting up the Coventry Sports Trust and managing a Youth Training Scheme before progressing to sport development roles in a local authority, the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and Sports Coach United Kingdom. Prior to joining Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), Pippa worked for Derbyshire Sport between 2003 and 2007. Pippa is also a member of the ASA Sport Board.

Jude Langdon
Having worked in the sport, leisure and education industry for about 12 years before joining Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in 2014, Jude is currently undertaking her masters,
her main areas of interest include enterprise in sport coaching and development, sport event management, marketing for sport development, developing school sport and the development of professional skills. Prior to joining SHU, Jude worked for Team Activ as an operations manager and as a competition manager for both School Sport Partnerships in Barnsley.

Jo Marsden-Heathcote
After 12 years’ experience of working in the sport, leisure and health industry, Jo joined Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in 2010 and has recently completed her MBA. Her research for this examined the role of employability in Higher Education curriculum. Her main areas of interest include Enterprise in Sport and Physical Activity, Sport Event Management, Management Applications and Physical Activity Development. Her background within the sport and PA sector allows for a practical application of underpinning theories and models utilising both the commercial and public sector.

Rebecca Peake
Rebecca joined Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in 2012 from Loughborough College, where she was responsible for the leadership of a suite of BA(Hons) management qualifications in collaboration with Nottingham Trent and Loughborough University. Prior to this, Rebecca studied at Loughborough University and competed as an international athlete. Rebecca is the Collaborative Course Leader for Sport courses delivered in Hong Kong. The majority of her role at SHU is focused on the delivery, management and accreditation of Undergraduate and Postgraduate courses delivered in Hong Kong. Rebecca is currently undertaking her Professional Doctorate. The aim of her research is to determine International Sporting Success factors for Paralympic Athletics in the UK.

Chris Platts
With a PhD in Sociology of Sport and Exercise, Chris’s study examined the education and welfare provisions for young footballers undertaking a scholarship in professional football academies and centres of excellence. The study included interviews with 303 players at 21 professional football clubs across England and Wales. Before undertaking his doctoral study, Chris completed an MSc in the Sociology of Sport and a BSc in Sport and Exercise Science, both at the University of Chester. Chris has used this research to contribute to publications on the work of young athletes and the application of qualitative research methods.

Daniel Plumley
Having joined the teaching team at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in 2011, Dan’s main research interests are in the finance and governance of professional team sports and his PhD focussed on measuring financial and sporting performance in English professional football. He has presented at major European Sport Management conferences in recent years and has numerous publications in the sport management field. Dan is an active researcher with the SIRC and has also contributed to numerous media pieces in recent years discussing the finances of football with local, national and international media outlets including corporations such as the British Broadcasting Company.

Val Stevenson
Over the course of her career, Val has worked with the Youth and Probation Services and worked in, and managed, indoor and outdoor facilities and service delivery in a London
Borough, a district local authority and a county. Val has also gained experience managing her own business and worked in both the public and the private sectors. In relation to community sport and PA, Val has worked at all levels of the system—from community through to national, contributing to and writing government and national body strategies. Outside of Higher Education, her last full-time role before joining Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) was as the Director of a County Sport Partnership.

**Chris Stone**
Until recently, Chris was Lead Researcher at Football Unites, Racism Divides, an anti-racist youth and community organisation based in Sheffield, for which much of his time was spent on the Big Lottery-funded research project ‘Football – A shared sense of belonging?’ Chris was previously employed by, and continues to provide teaching support for, Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) as a lecturer within the field of Sport and Cultural Studies, where he also worked as a researcher on the Football and its Communities project commissioned by the Football Foundation. As of 2017, he has taken a research role with Liverpool Hope University on a three-year project to evaluate the socio-economic benefits of Everton in the Community.

**Jayne Wilson**
Specialising in strategy development, marketing planning and project evaluation, Jayne has been recently involved in the delivery of national training programmes for Sport England in the use of the Active People and Market Segmentation Data and has led the development of a number of sport and active recreation strategies for local authority partners. Jayne also delivers a wide range of continuing professional development activity to colleagues within the sport and active recreation sector.

**Rob Wilson**
Rob joined the teaching team at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in 2002. His main research interests are in the finance, economics and governance of professional team sports, and his MPhil focused on measuring the economic impact of local sport events. He has presented at major European Sport Management conferences in recent years and has numerous publications in the sport management field. Rob is an active researcher with the SIRC and contributes regularly to media items discussing the finances of sport and football in particular with local, national and international media outlets.

**Donna Woodhouse**
Donna worked for a number of years as a community practitioner and also wrote on women’s football for Sportal, as well as being a contributor to The Guardian’s Football AllTalk website. She came to Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) in 2006 where she continues to research and publish around the social and cultural aspects of sport and leisure. Donna gained her first degree from the University of Birmingham’s Department of Cultural Studies. She then completed her MA at the Scarman Centre for the Study of Public Order at the University of Leicester before receiving funding from the Football Association and European Social Research Council to complete her doctorate at the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research, University of Leicester.
Over the past five years or so, as we have been carrying out our academic duties in the Academy of Sport & Physical Activity at Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), more and more conversations appear to be occurring between those of us who teach and research in the areas of Sport Development, Sport and Society and Sport Business Management, surrounding the increasing crossover between the disciplines. In responding to the demands of the sector, and particularly to the employers within it, the improvements and modifications that were being made to ensure the degrees on offer to students were being applied in nature were simultaneously pressuring us to explore the relationship between various sport and Physical Activity (PA) functions, benefits and challenges. Historically, for example, Sport Development had been considered more of a ‘hands-on’ role. Often, graduates would work for a National Governing Body or a Local Authority and be required to coach participants from a range of backgrounds and contribute effectively to increasing participation, particularly, but not exclusively, within groups who were under-represented in sport and PA. Project management, marketing and budget holding were less important than an ability to motivate and connect with those who were not interested in participating, let alone exploring interventions that could be of real benefit in harder to reach groups. To make gains, human nature provided solutions for quick wins or, in other words, interventions and sport and PA provision, which enabled the physically active to be, well, more physically active. Consequently, at a national level, participation in sport and PA, despite its obvious health benefits, has flatted at best or fallen at worst. This presents a significant challenge to policymakers, leaders and managers; providers of sport and PA; communities; students; and us, as academics.

Despite this flating or reduction in participation, successive governments have, in real terms at least, cut public sector spending on sport and PA. Instead, governments are suggesting that society needs to come together to support community enterprises to deliver their own, more cost effective, solutions to engaging people in activity. Consequently, there has been a decrease in the number of people working in sport services, sport development and sport management within local authorities. Changes to the structure of organisations have also meant that those working in sport development are, now more than ever, expected to manage, lead and think strategically. Occurring simultaneously, there has been an increasing focus on the way in which commercial organisations (in the main driven by profit) can help deliver increases in participation, and, as a result, more people delivering the sport development agenda require business acumen.
Over the course of the past 40 years or so, we also must recognise that sport and PA have become increasingly commercialised, and, therefore, those with an interest in business and profit have focussed on the sector with greater intensity. Rather than being regarded as something that is done in your leisure time, the commercial value of the sport and PA sector developed quickly during the latter part of the 20th century, meaning a career in the ‘sport business’ was now a real possibility and could provide a genuine career opportunity. The areas that had been traditionally occupied by sport development programmes and schemes were not immune from this advance, and good examples that currently occupy these spaces include the exponential increase in budget gyms, private coaching companies delivering in-school and community settings and the development of social enterprise companies, all offering cost-effective provision to local community groups.

There is other evidence of the growing crossover between the areas explored in the book too. For example, a number of sport degree programmes have emerged within the UK and around the globe that have both management and development in the title, signifying that in order to be a good manager, you need to understand the ways in which sport is developed, and in order to develop people in and through sport and PA, you need to be able to manage and lead teams and individuals. From our discussions at the university, we concur, and, as noted earlier, this has been reflected in modifications we have made to our own degree programmes in recent years to benefit our own students studying in one of the largest sport departments in Europe. However, what we have yet to come across, and the reason for the development of this book, is a resource that helps a student develop his or her understanding of the synergy between these areas or a single resource that accurately provides a hands-on guide to becoming a multiskilled leader in the sport and PA sector, particularly one that provides solutions at a community level. The aim of this book, therefore, is to provide that.

**WHAT WILL YOU GET FROM THE BOOK?**

Fundamentally, this book is split into three parts. *Part I* provides the context on which this book is based. It’s broken down into three, critical chapters, each providing a unique position on how you can understand and challenge the nature of developing and managing community sport. Our introductory chapter, by Dr Chris Platts (one of the book’s editors), presents a user-friendly introduction to the study of community sport. In it, he outlines how community sport management and development have emerged. In taking a developmental approach, the chapter attempts to help you understand how the issues and topics explored in the rest of the book are the result of more long-term trends inside and outside of sport. This is followed by a chapter that examines the community sport landscape (by Chris Cutforth), complete with a series of opportunities and challenges for the sector. The final chapter of the opening section, by Drs Woodhouse and Cherriington, takes you on a journey that advocates a critical approach to community sport management that encourages you to challenge your own assumptions about ‘sport’, ‘community’ and ‘management’ in order to make informed judgements about the use–value of sport as a vehicle for social good.

In *Part II*, we outline the key issues and challenges that may face those who are expected to work in community sport through a variety of different lenses. We begin with
an often-overlooked subject in sport management and development but one that will be crucial in all community contexts: PA. In their chapter, Dr David Broom and Dr Stuart Flint explore community-based PA interventions that are designed to improve lifestyle behaviours that consequently impact health inequalities. Physical inactivity and sedentary behaviour is associated with non-communicable diseases including obesity, coronary heart disease and Type 2 diabetes. These diseases typically start during childhood and have a significant impact on the economy, both in terms of direct and indirect costs such as healthcare and lost productivity in the workplace.

Chapter 5, again by Editor Dr Chris Platts, uses case studies from a number of areas to highlight the strengths and limitations of using sport as a medium through which we can engage groups who have been traditionally seen as ‘excluded’ from mainstream society. He examines new government strategy and the likely follow-up strategies from organisations such as Sport England and UK Sport to help us understand the likely future success of sport within the wider social inclusion agenda. Next, we move onto a growing agenda, stimulated by the commercial sector for community good: CSR. Dr Daniel Plumley and Editor Rob Wilson explore the emergence and growing importance of CSR in the delivery of community sport. By demonstrating the use of CSR programmes to deliver community-based initiatives, it is also possible to examine why CSR is of importance to major companies and how community managers can engage with them to deliver programmes and services in partnership with them.

Dr Chris Stone, a former PhD student from SHU and now working in the sector, provides us with Chapter 7 and a brilliant discussion of community responsibilities in the context of professional football clubs and football’s governing bodies. Amongst all sports industries, football, as such a ubiquitous part of popular culture, has been uniquely positioned historically, politically and socially in terms of its community sport expectations. This chapter introduces you to the historical context of why this has become the case.

Chapter 8 presents an overview of the sport event industry from a community sport setting. Jo Marsden-Heathcote and Jude Langdon provide practical guidance for you to understand the planning and processes that are involved in event management and how to run successful community events that meet multiple objectives. We then move onto a robust discussion by Val Stevenson and Pippa Jones on the importance and impact of community coaching in our final chapter in Part II, Chapter 9. They explore the diverse roles of coaches who work in a variety of community populations and contexts. This includes coaching for young people, adults and ageing populations engaging in sport and PA.

These first two parts of the book will challenge you to think differently about sport and PA. In doing so, you will find that some of the things you took for granted about the ‘power’ of sport may not reflect the reality of the situation. Indeed, the first half of the book should be regarded as a critical look at sport and PA in the community. That is to say, you will find elements of Parts I and II where we are rather critical of current approaches or practices within sport and PA. This critical approach, however, is imperative if this book is to help you become a more independent and employable individual within the area of community sport and PA. These chapters will not tell you how good sport is. Rather, it will help you identify where things can be done better.

Finally, Part III examines the leadership and management functions that you need to possess to be an effective community leader and manager. The first of these ‘functions’ is detailed in Chapter 10 by Melissa Jacobi and Rebecca Peake, in their chapter on
facility management. In it, they consider how the management of sporting provision in the UK has progressed through public delivery and Compulsory Competitive Tendering to the emergence of the private sector and the introduction of Management Companies and Trusts. They place significant focus on the key opportunities and challenges faced in the operation of community sport facilities such as multi-agency working and funding constraints. Chapter 11, by Editor Rob Wilson and Daniel Plumley, provides you with a detailed and applied discussion on budgeting and financial control in community sport and PA. They take you through the use of financial information, budgeting and community funding projects, which will help you plan, make decisions and control community-based organisations. It might be unlucky for some, but Chapter 12 is an excellently crafted analysis of leadership. Rebecca Peake and Melissa Jacobi provide us with a chapter that introduces key leadership and management concepts in the area of community sport. These concepts are exemplified using real organisations. The terms management and leadership are often used interchangeably; however, it is important to understand the differences between the two areas. Within the field of ‘community sport’, practitioners are required to demonstrate characteristics of both leadership and management regardless of organisation and geographic location. There is often an assumption that individuals in management roles are leaders, yet in case.

Our final two chapters take a look at two of the emergent areas in community sport: Enterprise, and Monitoring and Evaluation. First, Jo Marsden-Heathcote provides a unique approach to the understanding of Enterprise and Innovation in Chapter 13. This chapter considers the importance of entrepreneurship and enterprise within a community sport setting together with the influence of social enterprises within the sector, contemplating how ‘being enterprising’ within sport can facilitate and develop the use of innovation to overcome emerging challenges and struggles at a local level within sport. The last chapter is arguably one of the most important. Chapter 14 by Maxine Gregory and Jayne Wilson, two researchers from the university’s world-renowned Sport Industry Research Centres, examine new approaches to the monitoring and evaluation of community projects and initiatives. The effective evaluation of community sport programmes is critical to inform our understanding of ‘what works?’ to increase sport participation for the future. A strong evidence base demonstrating ‘what works, how, for whom, and why?’ has the potential to shape planning and delivery for the future and to contribute to policy development. All community managers must engage with a policy framework and innovative practice, as outlined throughout this book. This final chapter provides you with an understanding of the importance of evaluation and the benefits of generating a strong evidence base, and it will consider different approaches to evaluation and discuss the challenges to evaluating community sport programmes. Areas of good practice are highlighted too.

**OUR FINAL THOUGHTS...**

We hope that, having begun to understand, debate and even critique some of the current approaches to sport and PA in the community, you will have developed a thirst for playing a role in improving the sector. Each of the chapters you read has been written and developed by an academic with expertise in that area. In developing the chapters, each
author has also included a number of case studies that try and link the more theoretical discussions to ‘real world’ examples. In each chapter, the case studies not only help you to understand the theoretical debates within the chapter, but they are also examples of best practice where research and critical thinking have resulted in organisations being successful. In short, they are examples we believe others should follow and highlight that constantly evaluating what we, as a sector, do can have its rewards.

This book has been an exciting project and brings together an outstanding team of academics and practitioners from SHU’s Academy of Sport and PA. It provides some challenging content in a user-friendly style and will, if engaged with as we hope, give you a unique insight into the mechanics of how to manage and develop community sport. We hope that you find the content enjoyable and engaging and that you take as much from it as the collection of authors have put into it.

— Rob and Chris
PART I

Contextualising community sport and physical activity
CHAPTER 1

Introducing community sport and physical activity

Chris Platts

SUMMARY

This chapter introduces you to some of the key terminology and fundamental debates that surround community sport and physical activity (PA). In particular, we look at what we mean by community, how community sport and PA has developed and, finally, some key issues facing the sector.

AIMS

By engaging with the remainder of this chapter, you will

• Be introduced to the debate surrounding how we define communities,
• Explore how sport and PA within a community setting has developed,
• Examine the ways in which management and development have merged within a community sport and PA setting and
• Be introduced to some of the current issues that are facing those who manage and develop sport and PA within a community setting.

WHAT IS A COMMUNITY?

On one level, asking ‘what is a community?’ may seem a rather basic question to open with in a book aimed at students working towards a degree. Indeed, it is likely to be a word you are all familiar with and feel comfortable using in conversations with people around you. However, writing in 1971, Bell and Newby identified over 90 different definitions of community, and, over the past 45 years or so, hundreds of authors have used their work to continue the debate. Given this book is concerned with the ways in which sport and PA is managed and developed within a community, it would be something of a blunder if we were not to highlight this debate and see if we can make some sense of it. After all, if we are unable to define what we mean by a community, how can we expect to successfully manage or develop sport and PA within it?
In defining what the concept of a community, Ken Roberts (2009, p. 40) argues it is ‘a group that is wider than an extended family, but whose members are bound by kin-type relationships, among whom there is a sense of belonging, and a shared identity’. In outlining exactly what he means, Roberts (2008, p. 40) goes on to claim that ‘the term is applied most frequently to territory-based “neighbourhood-communities”’. Do you agree with Roberts? If someone asked you which community you belonged to, would your first thought be the community within which you live? Although Roberts identifies geographical fields as the most obvious expression of a community, he is not arguing this is the only manifestation of a community, and this is where the complexity of defining a community begins. Sport is, in fact, a very good example of how different communities can exist without being bound together by a geographical location. A very good expression of this is the various communities of fans who may, in fact, be spread across the globe but feel the same belonging and identity Roberts outlined in his definition. Think, for example, of supporters of some of the most recognised teams in world sport: the New York Yankees, Barcelona Football Club, the Scuderia Ferrari Formula One Team, the Dallas Cowboys or Manchester United Football Club. We often call the supporters of these teams a community, joined together by their love of a team even though they may be spread far and wide geographically. The same could be applied to events such as Wimbledon, the Olympic Games, any World Cup and the Ryder or Solheim Cup where groups of people congregate because of their love of an event. When we think of a community, therefore, it is important to appreciate that it is more than simply a geographical place.

Looking again at Roberts’s attempt to define community, there are three key words that help us explain what communities are, why they exist and why they can be so difficult to explain. These three words are relationships, belonging and identity. What Roberts suggests is that communities are, above anything else, about people. In no particular order, if we are to feel part of a community, we must be able to form relationships with others who are ‘inside’ that community, we must be able to identify with others who form that group or the thing that is of interest to that group and, finally, we must feel a sense of belonging to that group. Of course, this does not have to be sport. The most dedicated fans of the musician Justin Bieber, for example, have come to define themselves as ‘Beliebers’, identifying with each other through their excessive love of Bieber himself, his music and his shows. This community of fans regularly interact with each other via Internet chat rooms and meeting up at gigs. Helped by social media platforms, other fans have followed suit, creating communities of ‘Swifties’, ‘Directioners’, ‘KatyCats’, ‘Smilers’ and ‘Beyhives’. Away from entertainment – while this list is not exhaustive – schools, religions, occupations, gamblers and gamers are all examples of groups who may label themselves as communities, bound together by relationships, an identity and a sense of belonging. As useful as these examples are for highlighting that community is not necessarily bound to a certain place, it is also useful in shedding light on the way technological advances have helped move communities away from the physical space we inhabit. People gain belonging and identity with each other through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat, all of which show how communities exist on global levels at the same time as local levels.

So what does this mean for us who have an interest in developing and managing sport and PA in a community? The first point is to accept that a community is hard to
define and, as a result, may be viewed differentially by different people. This, of course, includes those designing, working on and evaluating any programme aimed at improving ‘the community’, and this has two major implications for us. First, when developing any programme designed to target a particular community, we **must** define what we mean by ‘the community’ for that particular programme. This has particular ramifications for those who are charged with delivering, monitoring and evaluating the programme for whom knowing who and where this programme is targeted is essential. Second, in doing this, if we accept that community is defined by the belonging, relationships and identity that people within the community feel, we must, as those aiming to develop a programme that engages those people, seek the views of the people within the community at the development stage of any programme. If you think about this logically, if community is defined by the people who constitute it, there is little point of sport development officers or sport managers who sit outside of the community designing a programme based on what they think the community is like. We explore this in greater detail in Chapter 3; however, at this stage, understanding that community is a contested term, exists in many different forms and must be considered at the start of any planning process are important lessons to remember as you progress through this book.

**DEFINING COMMUNITY SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

If defining what we mean by community is fraught with complexity, a similar fate awaits us when trying to determine what is meant by community sport and PA. Rather than the definitions of the words being the issue here – although the separate terms of sport and physical activity are often mistaken for each other and used interchangeably¹ – it is the various forms of sport and PA that exists within a community setting that makes defining it problematic. For that reason, it is worth spending a little time understanding the various areas of sport and PA that exist within any community.

Over the past 40 years or so, sport and PA has been delivered in a community setting for one, or both, of two reasons (Harris & Houlihan, 2016). The first reason is termed ‘sport-for-sport’ and relates to any approach where sport and PA is delivered within a community to benefit the sport itself. This has been, perhaps, most obviously expressed in the work of National Governing Bodies (NGBs) who work in communities to, among other things, identify talented athletes who may progress onto their performance pathway or deliver sessions to raise awareness of their sport or PA, thus increasing membership at local clubs. The second reason, labelled ‘sport-for-good’, is when sport and PA is delivered within a community in order that the participants and, in many cases, members of the wider community derive positive benefits from such participation. Think, for example, of how sport and PA has been used in certain communities to reduce crime, drug use or antisocial behaviour. Equally, programmes that use sport and PA as a tool to try and ‘bring communities together’, often referred to as social inclusion, would be referred to as ‘sport-for-good’. If you are thinking this appears simple, well, in many ways it is. However, as Harris and Houlihan (2016, p. 434) note, since the early 1970s in particular, community sport ‘has been characterised by a turbulent policy field with frequent
shifts in focus, most notably between sport for sport and sport for good’. That is to say, over the past 40 years or so, different groups of people have been responsible for writing the policies and strategies that help determine the role of community sport and PA; the problem being that different groups had different ideas about what community sport and PA should be and, in particular, what it was trying to achieve. It is perhaps because of this continuous shifting that ‘over the past 20 years, community sport policy has focussed on both the use of sport to achieve broader social outcomes [‘sport-for-good’] and traditional sport development outcomes [‘sport-for-sport’]’ (Harris & Houlihan, 2016, p. 434). The problem this can leave us with is that the objectives associated with a ‘sport-for-sport’ approach to community sport and PA are different, even contradictory, to the objectives associated with any ‘sport-for-good’ approach. Let me explain what I mean by this.

If we are to deliver sport and PA within a community setting for the good of the community, the programmes we develop have to be characterised by a number of things. For example, the activities have to be inclusionary for a diverse range of people if we are looking to reduce the number of people who are socially excluded. We may be trying to improve the health of the participants, and, so, the activities need to be set at an appropriate standard for the range of people we are looking to include. The programmes need to be organised at times when the people we are looking to attract can attend, which means schedules need to be flexible, avoid work hours as well as take into account times when childcare takes place. Programmes need to cater for different groups of people who have very different lifestyles; some will be single parents, some will work shift patterns, some will be carers, some will have large families, some will commute to and from work and so on. The picture becomes even more complicated when we try to improve issues such as crime, drug use, mental health, social isolation or integration of refugees. Any activity also needs to cater for people who are physically and mentally impaired.

Although, on the face of it, ‘sport-for-sport’ programmes would claim that its activities need to be similarly inclusive because it is a ‘sport-for-sport’ approach; if the sport (or PA) is prioritised above any additional benefits, a number of issues arise. First, competitive sport is, by its very nature, an exclusionary activity that seeks to promote and celebrate ability, where ‘ability’ is defined using a very narrow set of criteria. Selection for squads, teams, tournaments, events and races are based largely on meeting those criteria, which, unhelpfully for any attempt at increasing participation, excludes a large number of people within society who are unable to meet those criteria. Second, the judgement of whether someone meets those criteria comes from an external source to the participant. In organised clubs, this may be a coach or manager; in some places, it could be a team captain; or in certain sports, it may be a selector. Similarly, in semi-serious leagues like ‘back to netball’, ‘back to hockey’ or ‘five-a-side football’, selection could be done by the organiser, but emphasis is still placed on the better athletes playing ahead of those who are deemed not good enough. Third, and perhaps most importantly, research has shown that competitive sport is not particularly useful in deriving outcomes that a ‘sport-for-good’ approach aims for. That is to say, there is growing evidence that using a ‘sport-for-sport’ approach and expecting to achieve some ‘sport-for-good’ outcomes is somewhat irrational. Indeed, there is not only evidence to suggest that community sport and PA cannot improve the health of the nation (Weed, 2016), but also, in fact, that participation in competitive sport can have adverse effects on health through issues such as injury, overuse (Roderick, 2006)
and drug use (Waddington, 2000; Waddington & Smith, 2009). Similarly, competitive sport is not necessarily good for bringing the community together and, in places, actually reinforces divides between groups. It appears that, contrary to popular belief, competitive sport and PA may have a number of negative consequences for mental health, particularly at the elite level of competition (Malcolm & Scott, 2012).

While defining what we mean by ‘sport-for-good’ and ‘sport-for-sport’ may be slightly easier than defining what we mean by ‘community’, in practical terms, being clear what we want from any sport and PA programme in a community and how we might achieve it is rather more difficult to understand. As we have noted, those who have worked in these settings have continually grappled with these issues. We may suggest, of course, that the answer to how we approach sport and PA in a community is simply a matter of following the ambitions of the powerful groups who fund community sport. However, as the next section will highlight, that course of action has its own issues.

**HOW HAS COMMUNITY SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY DEVELOPED?**

In order for us to understand in greater detail how difficult it is to develop and manage community sport and PA programmes, it is worth us briefly exploring the ways in which this area has developed. There are three points to highlight. First, long-term planning within this area has, historically, been particularly difficult. Second, this stems from the context within which the area of community sport and PA operates, which can be rather volatile. Finally, changes within society more generally can have a significant impact on the way in which sport and PA within a community operates.

In order to understand how sport and PA has developed within community settings, we must highlight the central role played by successive governments in shaping and re-shaping community sport and PA. The current situation with regard to government and community sport and PA is examined in greater detail in Chapter 2 of this book; however, it is widely accepted that governments have played a substantial role in determining the direction of community sport and PA from as far back as the 1960s (Coalter, 2007). Indeed, over the course of the 1960s, a number of developments would occur that are key to understanding where we are today. Perhaps the most significant of these developments was the commissioning of the Wolfenden Report by a lobbying group under the name of the Central Council for Sport and Physical Recreation (CCPR). In recent years, it has become rather common to discuss evidence regarding community sport and PA; however, the Wolfenden Report represented a rare insight into the ‘state of play’ regarding sport and recreation provision in the UK. Interestingly, given the topic of this book, the issues the Wolfenden Report sought to gather evidence on included sporting opportunities for young people, community sports facilities and coaching, the contribution sport could make to the wider society, the intrinsic value of sport and the ways in which sport could be organised and administered. These are all things you will come across in this book and remain aspects of community sport and PA today, which perhaps gives us all an indication into how successful (or not) we have been as a sector over the past half a century or so.
The publication of the Wolfenden Report caused something of a ripple effect culminating in, among other things, the appointment of the first Minister for Sport in 1964 and the establishment of the Sport Development Advisory Council. These are, perhaps, the first signs that community sport and PA is being viewed as something government should be involved with, and by 1972, the CCPR was granted funding powers and was known thereafter as the Great Britain Sports Council (GBSC). Although they were still operating at ‘arm’s length’ from central government, during this period, the focus of the GBSC was largely on a ‘Sport for All’ agenda that aimed to create new opportunities for people from all sections of society to participate in sport, and over the course of the late 1970s and early 1980s, in partnership with Local Authorities (LAs) (another important group of organisations that you will learn more about in Chapter 2), an increasing emphasis was placed on facility development – mainly sports and leisure centres, swimming pools and artificial outdoor sports pitches.

1980s and 1990s

It was noted at the start of this chapter that issues and changes within wider society have played, and continue to play, a prominent role in shaping the way community sport and PA develops. This has always been the case, and it always will be – whatever country you are living and working in – because community sport and PA does not exist in isolation from the society of which it is a part. The 1980s (in the UK) is a particularly good decade for highlighting this process, as changes in government, unrest within society and strategic economic plans paved the way for a number of developments that impacted community sport and PA. The place to start, perhaps, is with Margaret Thatcher, who was prime minister in the UK between 1979 and 1990. According to Bloyce and Smith (2009, p. 38), ‘Thatcher did not particularly like sport, and in terms of her political position her view was bolstered by the perceived problem that football hooliganism posed for her government’. During the course of the 1980s, however, a number of urban riots occurred in places such as Bradford, Bristol, Birmingham, Liverpool and London, and this placed pressure on Thatcher and her government to act (Houlihan, 2002). Despite her negativity towards sport more broadly, ‘Thatcher and her government still perceived sport as a potential solution to the problems of social unrest in various inner-cities’ (Bloyce & Smith, 2009, p. 38), and this was brought to life through the establishment of the Action Sport programmes in 1982. While there are arguments in both ways regarding the success of these programmes, and it is certainly worth reading the work of Houlihan and White (2002), Coalter (2007) and Bloyce and Smith (2009) on this topic, what is important for us here is the way in which the urban riots of the early 1980s resulted in what many consider the first dedicated set of sport development within a community setting.

Now, while Action Sport was being delivered through LAs using public monies, there were other economic processes emerging during the 1980s that had consequences for the way community sport management and development operates today. First among these was the encouragement of market competition (Walters & Hamil, 2013) through, among other things, the privatisation of a number of former publically owned organisations. Why is this so important for us? As you will see later in this chapter, over the past 20 years or so in particular, community sport and PA has come to be delivered
Introducing community sport and physical activity

Increasingly by companies and organisations that sit within the private sector. This has been at the expense of LA delivery in the main. We may also argue that, as part of the process that has seen more private sector delivery of community sport and PA, there has been an increasing emphasis on the commercial side of sport and PA, which is reflected in the themes covered in the remainder of this book. Corporate social responsibility, events, finance, leadership and enterprise have all emerged from the private sector but now must be considered an integral part of community sport and PA.

In 1990, Thatcher was defeated by John Major in a contest over the leadership of the Conservative party, and, subsequently, Major went on to win the general election in 1992. In the context of this book, the key difference between these two prime ministers came in their views on sport. Major was a fanatical sportsman, with a particular passion for traditional team sports. It is perhaps unsurprising, therefore, that, in 1995, his government published ‘Sport Raising the Game’, which represented the first significant government policy statement on sport for around 20 years (Coalter, 2007). Interestingly, there was little reference to community sport in this policy and no acknowledgment whatsoever of the role of LAs; however, Major’s government had, by this point, established the National Lottery (now called Lotto), and community sport continues to benefit from this today. As well as being a game for the general public, the National Lottery was designed to raise money for ‘good causes’, one of which was sport, and this is still the case today. It is not unusual, for example, for athletes to thank the National Lottery when being interviewed after a race or match, as this funding helps support them by allowing them to be full-time athletes. Likewise, at certain facilities or programmes, you may see the National Lottery branding, highlighting that Lottery monies have helped support that venue or scheme. But who is in charge of distributing this funding to community sport and PA? By this point in time, the GBSC had been rebranded into Sport England, Sport Wales, Sport Scotland and Sport Northern Ireland, and it fell to these organisations specifically to distribute funding (you will read more about the work of Sport England in Chapter 2).

2000 onwards

It is worth noting here that since the end of the 20th century, a number of changes in wider society have significantly impacted community sport and PA. For the first part of the 21st century, for example, the strength of the New Labour political party and, in particular, the popularity of the then Prime Minister Tony Blair had profound implications for community sport and PA. Coalter (2007, p. 14), for example, argues that ‘the election of a New Labour government in the UK in 1997 placed sport more centrally on the broader social policy agenda, largely because of the presumed externalities, or benefits, associated with participation’. More specifically, starting in 1997, there was a particular emphasis on the use of sport to improve health, crime, employment and education, and, as a result, community sport and PA benefitted from funding that was designated for these areas. Within the UK, this approach saw community sport and PA gain record levels of funding with the establishment of Specialist Sports Colleges and County Sport Partnerships. In 2005, there was also the decision to bid for the 2012 Olympic Games, which was subsequently won. New Labour released more policies and strategies around sport
than had ever been the case before, and, as King (2009) argues, one consequence of this was the modernisation of LA and voluntary sector sport bodies. This is a really important point. The modernisation King refers to was, and in many cases still is, characterised by new approaches to management such as enacting corporate planning, concentrating on managerial efficiencies, working under financial constraints and operating more closely with the corporate sector (King, 2009). This is one good example of how political changes have pushed the worlds of sport development and sport management closer together.

At the same time, although the roots of this can be traced much farther back in time, we cannot ignore the acceleration in the globalisation of sport that has occurred from the 1990s onwards. While the globalisation of sport (the spread of sport around the world) may seem like an odd topic to highlight in a book dedicated to communities, it is impossible to ignore the implications that this process has had for community sport and PA. For example, there are a growing number of programmes that use sport to aid the progress of so-called ‘underdeveloped’ countries. These programmes are largely funded by the developed world and work in communities in Africa, Brazil and India, among others. Professional sports teams have been central to this process, undertaking outreach work in communities, often under the banner of corporate social responsibility. Indeed, there is a lot of debate as to the strengths and weaknesses of this happening, and the work of Lindsey (2016) is a good place to start if you want to explore this work further.

Finally, at the time of writing, it would be obtuse not to make reference in some way to the role of elite sport within community sport and PA. Indeed, since the turn of the century, and in particular from the moment London was awarded the Olympics of 2012, there has been a growing emphasis placed on elite sport and the staging of elite sporting events as a mechanism for growing and sustaining participation within the community. Increasing amounts of funding have been directed into elite sport under a façade of role model creation and the subsequent ‘trickle-down effect’ that will, supposedly, help inspire people to participate. This is one topic that is worth keeping a close eye on over the coming years. There are some suggestions from UK Sport, the organisation responsible for distributing government funding to elite sport in UK, that the recent approach to funding, which placed greater emphasis on how likely NGBs were to succeed in winning medals or tournaments, may be changing. Similarly, the latest strategy from Sport England pays little attention to the legacy of mega events. All this has occurred against a backdrop of tightening financial spending in the public sector. Recent governments within the UK have prioritised an austerity agenda as a response to high national debt and periods of recession, and this has come to impact community sport and PA participation (Widdop, King, Parnell, Cutts, & Millward, 2017).

**CURRENT ISSUES IN COMMUNITY SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

The current approach to using major sporting events as a way to help increase or sustain participation is not without its problems. First, there is little in the way of evidence that helps to support such a ‘trickle-down effect’ (Bauman, Bellew, & Craig, 2015; Reis, Frawley, Hodgetts, Thomson, & Hughes, 2017). Second, the lack of evidence has resulted
in some questioning whether the pursuit of winning medals or tournaments is an effective use of public monies. As more countries adopt more professional approaches to success, the price of winning increases and, therefore, would it represent a better investment of public monies if this funding were targeted at specific communities? Third, investment in elite sport is ignoring the fact that the trend within wider society is to participate in more recreational, leisure-based forms of PA. Data shows that, over the course of our lives, we move away from competitive sport and more towards individual forms of PA. So, are role models from elite sport simply inspiring the next generation of elite athletes and nobody else? How does elite sport inspire those who are not interested in sports? What about those who are body conscious or struggling with ill health? What about those who are unable to play competitive sport? How does elite sport work for any of these groups?

The second topic that is worth considering here is the way in which the three sectors within the UK have changed over recent years and, more specifically, how this has come to impact the way community sport and PA is funded. Prior to the 1990s, there was a clear role for LAs with regard to community sport and PA provision. However, currently, the public sector, of which LAs are a part of, has been somewhat marginalised by central government and has, therefore, had to take a different approach towards its involvement in sport and PA in community settings. After all, as you will see in Chapter 2, sport and PA is not something LAs are required to deliver, and in recent years, LAs have been placed under increasing pressure to reduce its spending. As a result, we have seen less involvement from LAs in community sport and PA than in previous decades. What this has meant is that the third sector (sometimes called the voluntary sector, although not everybody working in this sector is a volunteer) has had to take a more active role in sport and PA in the community. In addition to this, organisations in the private sector have looked to move in on some areas of sport and PA in the community. This process has also given rise to some important questions. Can private companies deliver sport and PA in the community? Should community sport and PA be something that is used to create profit, or is sport and PA something we all should have access to?

If processes that occur within wider society have come to impact sport and PA in communities in the past, then it would be wise to take note of some of the current trends that are likely to impact the sector in the future. First among these within the UK is the ageing population. This trend is not confined to the UK, but what it does mean is that for those working within community sport and PA schemes in the future, there is a need to place greater emphasis on adults and older adults. This is in contrast to the majority of the work that has been conducted over the past 40 years or so where a particular emphasis has been placed on children and young people. In this scenario, how will programmes and schemes have to change in order for them to be appropriate for adults? While we are discussing demographics, it is an inescapable fact that in many countries around the world, the communities in which we live are becoming more ethnically and culturally diverse. This, of course, will have a knock-on effect for the way in which we manage and develop through community sport and PA. Indeed, one of the more popular rationales for the need for sport and PA in the community is its power to ‘bring people together’. It is clear that those working in the sector in the future will be engaging with geographical communities made up of people from a range of backgrounds. At this juncture, it is also
worth re-emphasising the growing number of online communities, which is something of a change in the way we interact with each other. Could this have implications for the way we think about and service communities with sport and PA?

Finally in this section, at different points in time, there are a number of issues that are occurring within society that those within community sport and PA need to be aware of. A good example of this is the urban riots of the 1980s and how, in the end, this came to shape sport development within a community setting. There are other examples from around the world such as the Midnight Basketball programme rolled out across the US following concern over disaffected young males in particular or work by numerous organisations in areas of Africa that were affected by the AIDS epidemic. With this in mind, one of the issues that appears to have come to the fore over recent years is that of mental health. While it may be hard, if not impossible, to explain whether this has become an issue because more people are struggling with their mental health or simply because we know more about it, what is clear is that it is something that community sport and PA practitioners will have to engage with over the coming years. We would also place the increase in inequality as a rather new phenomenon but something that has had, and will continue to have, profound implications for working within communities. The economic and social gap between those at the top of society and those at the bottom is increasing in a number of countries around the world (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2009), and these are, simultaneously, the countries that seem to experience a high number of social problems within all its communities. The list of issues that are currently seen as a problem is, of course, endless, and we would encourage you to spend some time exploring news outlets where you will be able to find a range of issues that are likely to have implications for communities and, as a consequence, those who are aiming to work within them.

CONCLUSION

Over the course of this chapter, I have attempted to outline a number of basic discussions that form the basis for this book. First of all, it is important to outline exactly what we mean by community and accept that, despite what we might think, everybody will have a different view of what their community is. I have also tried to briefly outline the way in which community sport and PA has developed from its roots in the 1960s. While this only outlines some of the developments that have occurred within the sector, there are a number of points for us to take away. The first is that one of the major players in shaping the landscape within community sport and PA has been central government, and we might, therefore, surmise that this will be the case moving forwards. That being said, there have been times in the past when government has not shown a great deal of interest in the sector, and, in that scenario, opportunities for other organisations and companies will arise. Finally within this chapter, I have sought to outline some of the issues that those who are looking to work in a community sport and PA setting are likely to come across and have used these issues as a basis for a number of challenging questions. As you move on to the remainder of this book, it is important that you are willing to grapple with some of these difficult questions. In doing so, we will expect you to question your own thoughts and feelings towards community sport and PA and be willing to change...
them. As you will see from the first half of this book in particular, the ‘common-sense’ assumptions we often make about community sport and PA regarding the power it has to ‘do good’ are often rather misguided. The key to successfully managing and developing sport and PA in the community is accepting this in the first instance and moving forwards from a more informed and realistic base.

**REVIEW QUESTIONS**

1. What factors might explain the developments and changes in the role of government in sport in recent decades?
2. What is the difference between the ‘development of’ and the ‘management of’ community sport and PA?
3. What is the difference between sport and PA, and what are the implications of both for community schemes?

**NOTE**

1. When talking about sport, we are referencing physically exertive, competitive, rule-based activities. When using the term physical activity, we are making reference to activities that also are physically challenging, however, are not rule based and have less of an element of competition.

**FURTHER READING**


**REFERENCES**


Introducing community sport and physical activity


Including the excluded


Corporate social responsibility in community sport management


Community engagement through elite sport


Community coaching
Finance and budgeting for community sport and physical activity
For guidance on recording and reporting financial information and for more detail on performing a thorough financial health analyses, see Wilson, R. (2011). Managing Sport Finance. Routledge, Oxon.

Leadership and management in community sport organisations
Enterprise and innovation in community sport


Monitoring and evaluation


