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Managing a Sport Organization

The Impact of Recruiting, Selecting, and Retaining Elite Level Coaches in Sport

Jonathon Edwards
Marvin Washington

Abstract

Hockey clubs in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada are a fascinating setting to study as they merge issues related to youth sport participation and volunteerism with elite level sport development. We examine the management of elite level hockey clubs, through interviews, to understand how the organizations develop and implement processes that enable them to obtain and maintain a positive reputation through the development of elite level hockey players. The results of our analyses show that hockey clubs view the coach as a vital part of creating and maintaining a successful organizational reputation. This study makes two contributions to the sport management literature; first we extend the literature on recruitment, selecting, and retention to the sport setting by understanding how hockey clubs acquire and retain the services of the most successful and qualified volunteer hockey coaches. Second, we provide a foundation for sport managers, working in a volunteer sport participation environment, to understand how they can compete for a limited pool of successful and qualified coaches.

Keywords: *Sport volunteerism, coaching, recruitment processes, selection process, retention process, sport management, elite level sport*

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Canadian amateur youth nonprofit sport organizations are managed by volunteers who serve as members, executive board members, and, most importantly, coaches. Coaches are considered to be the lifeblood of a youth sport organization (Bouchet & Lehe, 2010), and are pivotal in the administration and management of athlete development programs (Green, 2005; Sotiriadou, Shilbury, & Quick, 2008; Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). A critical task facing nonprofit youth sport organizations is recruiting, selecting, and retaining the most successful and qualified volunteer coaches. This has a particular significance at the high performance or elite level of sport.

One of the challenges that Stier, Schnieder, Kampf, Wilding, and Haines (2006) noted was that “the major hurdle in finding the right people has moved away from patiently sifting through dozens of resumes and slowly arriving at the right candidate through a deliberate process, to creating efficient and effective models to identify recruit, and hire [select] top candidates” (p. 101). Bouchet and Lehe (2010) indicated that a challenge with volunteer based organizations is the “budget, marketing, volunteer recruitment and retention, fundraising” (p. 21). Based on the above quotes and Gilbert, Cote, and Mallet (2006), we suggest that volunteer-based sport organizations are faced with the challenge seeking the most successful and qualified coaches to represent their organization.

While there might be many parents willing to volunteer as a coach, sport organizations are concerned that the so called “parent/coach” might not have the skills necessary to develop elite-level athletes, along with the potential issue of “favoritism” associated with a parent who is coaching his or her child. Unskilled coaches can have a negative impact on elite athlete development and the club’s success (Cuskelly, Taylor, Hoye, & Darcy, 2006; Paiement, 2007). This is becoming a fundamental issue for Canadians and amateur sport. In a report given to the Department of Canadian Heritage (the federal department tasked with the responsibility of sport within Canada) regarding the state of amateur coaching in Canada, Kofmel (2013, April 2) bluntly said, “Canada is suffering from a shortage of qualified coaches for amateur sport...” (n-page).

Coaches (i.e., volunteers) play a particularly important role as “coaches are broadly viewed as critical in helping young athletes earlier in their development so they have a chance to excel and perhaps, become elite” (Kofmel, 2013, April 2, n-page). As a result, extensive research has been conducted in that area of coaching (e.g., Barcelona & Young, 2010; Cushion, Armour, & Jones, 2003; Mallet, Trudel, Lyle, & Rynne, 2009; Misener & Danylchuk, 2009; Wiersma & Sherman, 2005). Thus, the purpose of this research is to explore how management of youth elite level sport organizations recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coaches in Canada and the impact that those coaches can have on the organization. Through this exploration we are developing an understanding of how coaching is used by management of these types of sport organizations to attract potential players and parents.

Barber (1998) stated that recruitment is “those practices and activities carried on by the organization with the primary purpose of identifying and attracting potential employees” (p. 5). Taylor, Doherty, and McGraw (2008) indicate that the selection processes occurs with sport organizations once there is a pool of applicants in an effort to select the most successful and qualified applicant (i.e., coach) to represent the organization. Retention can be understood first in terms of the factors that motivate an individual to continue their involvement in the sport (Green, 2005) or in the case of this study to continue in coaching. Retention also addresses practices that the management of club hockey organization creates to ensure that a coach remains within the club hockey organization.

To better understand how management of sport organizations recruit, select and retain successful coaches, we take a case study approach and explore local elite club hockey organizations (also identified as club hockey organizations) in the Edmonton region of Alberta, Canada (henceforth, Edmonton region). “The underlying principal of the club system is that organizations at all levels compliment, rather than compete with one another, in order to allow players to advance through the developmental process and compete at the highest possible level appropriate to their ability” (Hockey Canada [HC], 2012, p. 7; HC is also the governing body for all hockey in Canada). Club hockey organizations are the primary pathway for Canadian minor hockey players (also identified as players, or hockey players) to reach higher levels of competition, such as the National Hockey League (NHL) or the Canadian Hockey League (CHL), as indicated by HC (2012).

Teams within club hockey organizations compete at two levels of competition in the Edmonton region: AAA (the highest level; henceforth, Triple A) and AA (henceforth, Double A). Double A is a feeder league for Triple A level (Hockey Alberta, 2012). As indicated by Hockey Alberta (2013) “Elite Hockey’ means those Divisions and Categories considered as high performance (Major Junior, Junior A, Midget AAA, Minor Midget AAA, and Bantam AAA)” (p. 5). Club level hockey for most organizations in the Edmonton region starts at the Bantam (13 to 14 years old) and continues to the Midget (15 to 17 years old) level. These categories are considered pivotal for players as they represent the age ranges where players are able to advance to a higher level of competition (e.g., the CHL).

Prior to Bantam, minor hockey players in the Edmonton region will compete in an inclusive house league-based program within a community based organization. At this point, the player decides either to try out for a club level hockey organization or to continue playing for a community-based organization. An athlete playing at the club level entails more of a serious commitment, a higher financial cost, and a substantial time commitment than an athlete playing at the community level. Based on the critical nature associated with coaching boys at a level where their next stop might be professional hockey, our first research question is: What processes are used by management of local club hockey organizations to recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coaches?

Coaches are the “public face” of the organization. Their actions and experiences as coaches can be influential for players and parents when they decide to compete in elite sport and shape, enhance, and maintain the reputation of the organization. By reputation, we mean a “generalized expectation about a firm’s future behaviour or performance based on collective perceptions (either direct or, more often, vicarious) of past behaviour or performance” (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008, p. 60). A positive reputation helps sport organizations to attract and retain elite level athletes within a sport development system, and can be formed through a coach’s ability to develop hockey players. Because of the importance of organizational reputation in the Canadian hockey system, we pose our second research question: How do the recruitment, selection, and retention processes of most successful and qualified coaches impact the reputation of the organization? This study begins with an examination of the theoretical framework used for this study. Next, we outline the methods used to gather data. Our findings are presented that answer the first research question; while our discussion addresses the second research question. The study concludes with contributions along with suggestions for future research.

Theoretical Framework

Since coaches represent the club hockey organization in the public’s perception, this study employed the theoretical construct of *reputation* to understand the importance of recruitment, selecting, and retention of the most qualified coaches by club hockey organizations. The perception of an organization has been found to have an impact on the attraction of constituents, stakeholders, and/or customers within the management research (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Pfarrer, Pollock, & Rindova, 2010; Rindova, Williamson, Petkova, & Sever, 2005; Washington & Zajac, 2005). Building off of previous work, we argue that an organization’s reputation can be used as a signal for assessment or evaluation (e.g., Deephouse, 2000; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Rao, 1994). However, what is not fully developed from an empirical research within the management literature is how organizational reputation can be a signal to constituents, stakeholders, and/or customers through the recruitment, selection, and retention of volunteer for an organization.

This study maintains that the more qualified the coach, the better the reputation of a club hockey organization. Furthermore, “reputation is a comparison of organizations to determine their relative standing” (Deephouse & Carter, 2005, p. 331), as evaluated by constituents, stakeholders, or in the case of this study parents and potential players. Fischer and Reuber (2007) stated that, “Reputational “stickiness” means that evaluations (positive or negative) become entrenched such that they have an ongoing impact on the firm’s performance” (p. 67). To the extent that coaches contribute to a positive reputation, organizations have better chances of finding themselves with the players they need to both fill roster positions and attract the most talented hockey players.

Rindova et al. (2005) suggested that organizational reputation is influenced by an exchange of information between parties as well as social influences such as the media, politics, economic environment, and third party stakeholders. There are two dimensions of organizational reputation: the perceived quality of an organization's product and the prominence of an organization (Rindova et al., 2005). The perceived quality of a product is recognizable, distinguishable, and "wanted" by the customers or members internally and externally. Thus, the quality of a product produced is assessed by the potential constituents, stakeholders, and/or customers and based on that assessment or value the organization gains or maintains a positive or negative reputation relative to other companies. Within the context of this research setting, the product (i.e., elite level hockey player) being produced or developed is based on the organization's ability to train elite level hockey players. The second dimension is prominence, which captures "the degree to which an organization receives large-scale collective recognition in its organizational field" (Rindova et al., 2005, p. 1035). This can be accomplished through achievements, success, and organizational decisions, and is assessed by constituents, stakeholders, and/or customers.

Based on other reputational literature (e.g., Deephouse, 2000; Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Washington & Zajac, 2005), we understand that outside of the sporting environment there are typically a number of options for future employment within the economy and organizations act strategically (e.g., decision making, goals of the organization) to acquire and retain the most qualified applicants. However, we believe this not to always be the case, we argue that just like there is a shortage of talent for a great banker, or a professor of a university, there is also a shortage of qualified and successful coaches. This is even a bigger issue for volunteer based organizations who cannot use high salaries as a way of attracting the best personnel. For the club hockey organization this enhances the challenge for management within these types of organizations. In fact, the Greater Toronto Hockey League (GTHL) is the only league in Canada where paid coaches exist. For the remainder of the leagues who do not pay coaches, finding the most qualified and successful coach can pose a significant challenge for management; however, finding a coach can have a significant impact on attracting potential players and parents.

The Coaching and Hockey Literature as it Pertains to This Study

Previous coaching research has specifically focused on areas that included coaching certification and education (Carter & Bloom, 2009; Mallet et al., 2009; Misener & Danylchuk, 2009), evaluating high performance coaches (Mallet & Côté, 2006), coach development (Gillbert et al., 2006), coach reputation (Manley, Greenlees, Thelwell, & Smith, 2010), coach motivation (Busser & Carruthers, 2010; Cumming, Smoll, Smith, & Grossbard, 2007), coach hiring (Friend & LeUnes, 1989), coach retention processes (Bouchet & Lehe, 2010; Dixon & Warner, 2010), and volunteerism (Cuskelly, 2004; Cuskelly et al., 2006). Existing research, howev-

er, “has almost exclusively focused on the HRM [Human Resource Management] of employees working in large for-profit organizations, with non-profit and volunteer-dependent organizations receiving scant attention” (Cuskelly et al., 2006, p. 142). Conversely, this coaching research has taken a sport management approach to understanding recruitment, selection, and the retention of coaches, which contributes to the coaching and sport management literature.

Although there has been extensive research on the sport of hockey (Curtis & Birch, 1987; Elliot & Maguire, 2008; Gruneau & Whitson, 1993; Holman, 2007; Mason, 2002; Mason, Buist, Edwards, & Duquette, 2007; Stevens, 2006), only a few studies have focused on hockey organizations at the grassroots elite level. The fact that more than 500,000 young players each year participate in hockey organizations across Canada (HC, 2011a) conveys the popularity of the sport in Canada, and its importance within Canadian culture (Gruneau & Whitson, 1993). This research extends the hockey research by exploring grassroots local club hockey organizations and coaching, and provides a new perspective on the role of the volunteer coach within an elite level hockey setting.

Methods

Case studies constitute a commonly used research design in qualitative research (Eisenhardt, 1989; Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007; Stake, 2000; Yin, 2003). This study used qualitative case study methodology to develop an understanding of the real-life accounts pertaining to management of a club hockey organization's recruitment, selecting, and retention processes of coaches. Case study methodology is used for “empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident” (Yin, 2003, p. 13). Eisenhardt (1989) suggested that case study research could build theory, which will lead to the recognition of patterns of relationships within their underlying logical arguments (Eisenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

For this study, participants were recruited from six club hockey organizations located in the Edmonton region of Alberta, Canada, and three governing hockey bodies. The governing hockey bodies were Edmonton Minor Hockey Association (EMHA), Hockey Alberta (HA), and Hockey Canada (HC). This sample was a combination of a convenience and purposeful sampling. We selected these club hockey organizations because of their success with respect to player development; both CHL and NHL franchises draft their players from this region on a consistent basis. The second reason was that we (the researchers) resided in the Edmonton region and had access to the organizations.

Prior the start of the interview process we conducted a pilot study that involved 10 interviews from the Edmonton region and throughout Canada. This interview data was not used for the purpose of this study. The purpose of the pilot study was to gain an understanding of the different hockey systems throughout

Canada and the Edmonton region; along with determining the appropriate contacts within a club hockey organization, and testing the questions that will be used within the overall study. What was found during the interviews was that recruitment, selection, and retention of qualified and successful coaches was an issue that needed to have some questions to address in during the interview process. This was a valuable process and added validity to the overall data collection process.

Semistructured interviews with 13 interviewees were conducted and audio recorded. The interviewees' professional identifications included hockey director, vice president, president, scout, team manager, and executive board manager, as well as upper level management from each of the club hockey organizations and the three governing bodies. Building on Yin's (2003) description of case study research, the selected sample for this study allows for the researchers' to draw on the interviewee's firsthand knowledge, experience, and employment within the club hockey system in the Edmonton region.

To preserve the anonymity of the interviewees, the researcher used the designations P1 through to P13 and the organizations are identified as Organizations 1 through to 6. Interviews lasted 30 to 60 minutes at locations that included coffee shops, offices, and arena offices. In two cases, the interviewees requested that the interviews be conducted over the phone. The researcher used open-ended questions to facilitate dialog between interviewer and interviewee (Patton, 2002). The researcher asked 20 to 25 questions. Topics for the representatives from the club hockey organizations included coaching recruitment, selecting, and retention processes implemented by management of the different organizations. Some of the specific examples of the questions that related to coaching included: How do you recruit coaches?; How are coaches chosen?; What opportunities do you provide to coaches?; What are some things that you look for in coaches?; What does coaching mean for your organization?; and, Do you guys accept parent coaching?

For participants representing governing bodies, the topics included coaching certification, player development, coaching, the goals of the governing bodies, coaching literature, coach certification, and player development literature. These sets of questions were much more of a general nature, which is due to the fact that these organizations were governing bodies and responsible for supplying coaching literature, and coach certification to the local hockey organizations. Some of examples of questions posed for these study participants include: What programs do you offer coaches?; and What information do you provide to coaches for education/training purposes?

Yin (2003) identified that an important element of a case study approach is triangulation, which is collecting data from multiple sources. In the case of this study additional data were collected from websites of the clubs hockey organizations, the Western Hockey League (WHL; a sub-league of the CHL), and governing hockey bodies; such data included the organization's mission statement, vision statement, long-term goals, Bantam draft results of the WHL, coaching informa-

tion, coaching literature, player development literature. These data sources contributed to the richness of the dataset for this study.

Data Analysis

The research employed an interpretative approach to analyze multiple datasets to comprehend social actions, the meanings behind those actions, and the world in which the interviewees live and work (Creswell, 2003; Outhwaite, 1975). The researcher transcribed verbatim, reviewed and analyzed each interview. Member checking occurred after the transcripts were completed. Each study participant received a copy of the transcript and was able to review the discussion. At this point, the study participants were able to make comments or clarify any points within the transcript to the researchers. In all cases, the interviewees determined that they were satisfied with their comments.

This research study employed a deductive approach, which means that we the researchers went from a general data set and through the analysis moved to a more specific understanding of theoretical constructs (Trochim, 2001), such as Rindova et al. (2005) dimensions. Data analysis consisted of five stages, pursuant to the work of Edwards and Skinner (2009), and Miles and Huberman, (1994). In stage one, *familiarization*, the researcher became familiar with the data by reviewing the audio recordings of interviews, transcribing the interviews, and studying the notes taken at the time of the interview. In the second stage, *thematic framework*, the researcher examined the data, line by line, for themes. Some example of themes that were identified included coach's qualifications, word of mouth advertising, and mentorship. These themes were first identified in the number of times they appeared within the transcript. A second review than took place that correlated the themes with previous literature on recruitment, selection, and retention.

In the third stage, *indexing*, the researcher applied codes to corresponding quotes and information from all data sources. Codes originated from stage two of the data analysis; an example of a code would be WA, which stands for website advertising. The codes and themes that emerged were the basis for the conclusions discussed in this study (Trochim, 2001). In the fourth stage, *charting*, the researcher used QSR's NVivo 8, a computer software program that helped to isolate the code-quote correspondences to form a single document containing and presenting all of the interviewee responses in relation to a specific code. For example, interview data was accumulated by multiple interviewees on policies and pooled together to form one document called *Policies*.

The final stage, *interpretation*, called for the charting of results. In the interpretation stage, the researcher developed a matrix that links the interview data and thematic variables with the processes for recruiting, selecting, and retaining coaches in the club hockey system. Based on the findings, a deeper analysis was conducted to answer the second research question, which led to the use of organizational reputation as a means of theoretically interpreting the initial concepts

of coaching recruitment, selection, and retention. As discussed above, this interpretation was based on Rindova et al. (2005) dimensions, and the literature on recruitment, selection, and retention.

In addition to interviews, the researcher also collected material from the organizations' websites to validate the interviewee responses. The researchers read, analyzed, and coded each document, line by line using the same codes identified in the interview data. Also, each round of the WHL Bantam Draft, from 2010 to 2012, was reviewed and the number of players drafted from organization's 1 through to 6 was recorded in Microsoft Excel 2010 spread sheet. The time period recorded for the WHL Bantam Draft data was used because this access to player club data was not recorded prior to that time period.

Findings

The initial purpose of this study was to explore how management of youth elite level sport organizations recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coaches in Canada and the impact that those coaches can have on the organization. We posed two research questions: What processes are used by management of local club hockey organizations recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coaches?; and, How does the recruitment, selection, and retention processes of most successful and qualified coaches impact the reputation of the organization? We address the first research question within the context of this section.

Before we discuss the findings, it is important to have an understanding of what defines success within this empirical setting. As such the quality or success of a coach can be measured in the number of players that have been drafted by WHL franchises. For example, Organizations 2 (18 players drafted into the WHL since 2010), 5, and 6 (both Organizations have had 17 players drafted into the WHL since 2010) have had the highest number of drafted players in the WHL. While Organizations 1 (9 players drafted into the WHL since 2010), 3 (6 players drafted into the WHL since 2010), and 4 (4 players drafted into the WHL since 2010) have had a lower number of drafted players in the WHL.

Recruiting Processes

P13 pointed out "there are probably about 100,000 active coaches in Canada," and these coaches are needed to ensure that player development occurs within the Canadian hockey system; thus, a coach is the *lifeblood* of a club hockey organization (P13). Contrary, P2 indicated that "trying to find qualified coaches right now is a struggle," which is corroborated by P1, P9, and P10. To recruit coaches, management of club hockey organizations use the following processes: advertising on the organization's website, advertising in mass media outlets, recruiting through the internal structure of the club hockey organization, word of mouth advertising, scouting, reaching out to former players, and developing partnerships with local

public school programs. All of the organizations engage in website advertising for vacant coaching positions. Another process for recruiting applicants for coaching positions is mass media advertising: “If we run short some years we try and put in a free announcement in the *Edmonton Journal* or the *Edmonton Sun* [newspapers in the Edmonton region] and try and get the word out one way or the other; I mean the word seems to get out for the most part” (P3).

Internal recruiting involves selecting a coach from a lower level within the organizational structure and having that individual move to a different team at a higher level of competition as a head coach or assistant coach. Another means of internal recruiting can occur at lower levels within the system. This means that coaches may be recruited who are coaching in the community levels, and who are experiencing successful seasons or are looking for an opportunity to advance. All of the study interviewees indicated this to be a potential source for coach recruitment for management.

Some of the interviewees indicated that if presented with the opportunity to recruit from within their organization the management are likely to do so. The rationale lies in the inherent advantage of retaining coaches who have already been trained, coached, and is familiar organizational structure or system (P1, P3, P5, P9, and P10). The interviewees assumed that a coach recruited from within the club or community organization knows the inner workings of the organization. This in turn would mean that less time is required for the organization to explain try out methods, policies, organization rules, and communication procedures.

All of the organizations employ word of mouth advertising regarding coaching positions through parents of players, executive directors, board members, and other coaches. For example, P10 indicated that management of the organization advertises “through word of mouth, and through the scouting coaches. We promote our program and try to get coaches to apply. So that is probably the biggest way that we recruit coaches and some within our own ranks as well.” P3 echoed P10’s statement by informing, “We get the word out, word of mouth, I think we’ve been fortunate that they come to us, I think the majority of the time they come to us. I think we have a bit of a reputation”.

Another way that management uses word of mouth advertising is through coaches who learn of successful teams within organizations and who actively approach parents and other representatives of the organization to inquire about the availability of positions with the club hockey organization. This was the case with Organization 2, as that organization has a reputation of winning which attracts coaches to apply for vacant positions within their organization. A major advantage of word of mouth advertising is its low cost and low demand on time (P10).

The recruiting and scouting of coaches begins at the end of November and continues into April or May, when the organization selects the coaches. P1, P3, P4, and P5 indicated that at their organizations’ games against other clubs, management and board members do not hesitate to approach the coaches of the op-

posing team and discuss the prospects of coaching for their organization. This is certainly the case when the coach and coaching staff of the opposing team are experiencing a winning season. P1 and P3 reported two important considerations for approaching a coach at the end of a hockey game: the reputation of the coach and the success of a coach in terms of wins and losses. Recruiting and scouting of coaches is conducted by current and former parents, executive board members, and employees of the organization.

Interviewees P2, P3, P4, and P7 indicated that management of club hockey organizations also recruits former players who have played for the organization and have achieved a high level of success—that is, who have played hockey at the club level or in the CHL, NCAA, Alberta Junior Hockey League (AJHL), or even the NHL. P4 also noted that former players are given roles as assistant coaches and mentored by a head coach, with the intention that the former player develops into a head coach. For example, Organization 2's head coach of a Bantam Triple A team was a former player, and had been coaching for that organization for four years. The logic that accompanies having former players become coaches is that former players will 1) have a strong knowledge base regarding components of the game of hockey, which makes it easier to train other players, and 2) will understand the structure of competing at the club level.

Management of Organization 4 has adopted a different recruiting approach by recruiting instructor/teachers from public school hockey programs. Student/players in Edmonton's public school system have the option to participate in a hockey program. Public schools with hockey programs within the geographic radius of the club can become the intentional focus for recruiting coaches, since these schools have players who could compete for the organization, and who could be influenced by their the instructors/teachers to play for a particular organization. If a club hockey organization coach is also an instructor/teacher, the coach can shape the message that student/players receive concerning a particular organization. With regard to the importance of coaches promoting the club, P1 remarked, "If you are not going to promote who you are working for, then why would you have them?"

These specialized public school programs in the Edmonton region are designed so that students can choose to have a hockey component in their education. Such components typically focus more on skill development than on team play. The instructor/teachers instruct the players during the day and then coach's them during the evenings. As a result, there is continuity between what the player is being taught during school hours and later during a player's time with the club team. Other interviewees have indicated that they do not actively pursue this strategy to the same extent as Organization 4, although some coaches are also teachers/instructors within the public school system (P1, P4, P5, P8, and P10).

Coach Selection Processes

All of the organizations indicated that the selection process starts with an interview. Upon completion of the interview process, the interviewers make recommendations to the executive board of the club hockey organization. One issue affecting coach selection issue, on which the organizations vary considerably, is whether an organization allows parents to be coaches.

Three of the six organizations do not allow parent coaching (Organizations 1, 4 and 5), and all of the organizations confirmed that parents of team members could not coach at the Midget Triple A level. In the case of Organization 2, P2 indicated that in most circumstances non parent coaches are preferred; however, there have been some situations in the past where parents coaches have been used due to the parents experiences and training. Hockey Executives and directors commented that the reason for not selecting parents as coaches is because of the thought that parents tend to favor their own children with extra ice time.

For players, ice time is a critical factor in gaining exposure to CHL scouts and scouts from other leagues. In the words of P2 of Organization 1, "The parent coach syndrome is favoritism." P2 explained that in some cases, the coach's children are given extra ice time that they did not earn or do not deserve, and that such favoritism results in animosity between other parents, other coaches, and team management. To alleviate this problem, organizations have generally come to the realization that the best course of action is to have a policy regarding parent versus nonparent coaches. Notwithstanding any such policy, management still sees the principle challenge as finding ways to attracting non-parent coaches using incentives that include fully funded elite level coaching education, and honoraria for head coaches and their coaching staff.

Coach Retention Processes

The analysis of the study's data reveals a theme relating to the retention processes of coaches. Almost all interviewees remarked on the high turnover rates among coaches. P6 indicated there is a "very high turnover in coaching. The most is three years that I've had the same coach. It really is a challenge then for the Organization to keep coaches." P9 noted, "Volunteers in general are falling out of favor; people feel that they don't have the time, or they feel that they don't want to expose themselves to the rigors of volunteerism." P10 went onto explain that keeping a coach is a challenge because of cost, availability of time, parent's and management's pressure for success, and opportunities that are available for coaches to advance to higher levels of competition.

Another particular challenge for management is the retention of non-parent coaches because a poor season or difficult social challenges leave the non-parent coach with little reason to carry on. This is less a problem in the case of parent coaches because of this coach's obvious stake in the success of his team. Those club hockey organizations that do not allow parent coaches are relatively more chal-

lenged in finding methods “to ensure that the benefits of volunteering continue to outweigh the costs” (HC, 2011b, p. 25).

Given the high rate of turnover, management has implemented a number of different activities and practices to ensure that coaches remains with the organization:

When volunteer initiatives are well managed and individuals are matched to service opportunities that are mutually beneficial to the association and the volunteer, your recruitment job becomes much easier. Satisfied volunteer coaches can be strong advocates for your organization’s mission and persuasive partners on your volunteer recruitment team. (HC, 2011b, p. 25)

The activities and practices that club hockey organizations use to retain coaches include providing coach honoraria, coach training, and opportunities for coaches to coach at higher levels.

P4 stated that “generally speaking about three years is about the average. Coaches like to move on. They like to move up.” Organizations provide coaches the opportunity to advance to higher levels of competition, which is the case for all of the interviewees who participated in this study. For example, at the Bantam Double A level, coaches look to move up to Bantam Triple A or higher. If the coach’s current organization cannot provide this opportunity, the coach may be more inclined to move between organizations (P2, P3, P8, P9, and P10). It is common to find that coaches have coached for multiple club hockey organizations, because they are looking for these opportunities to advance.

Because coaches in the Edmonton region are volunteers, club hockey organizations must provide incentives to retain coaches. P4 stated, “Well, most of the clubs give them some kind of an honorarium. And it’s starting to become that way with hockey, our honoraria are creeping up, up, and some clubs are paying . . . full salary. Not a huge salary but it’s still significant amount of money.” Honoraria ranged from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per month. Funding amounts are contingent upon the caliber of the league (i.e., Triple A versus Double A). P4 further explained, “we need to remain competitive with our honoraria with other clubs; that is also how we retain coaches”; thus, club hockey organizations corroborate with one another to insure that the club is paying similar amounts as are other clubs (P5). Similar sentiments were echoed by P2, who further explained that honoraria are provided by all of the club hockey organizations.

The challenge with using honoraria, as P13 suggested, “it’s going to get to the point where they’ll be getting paid to coach.” P13 was alluding to the fact that honoraria can lead to a coach’s being on the payroll rather than in a volunteer position. A reason for paying coaches is that:

People are willing to pay for better coaching, better instruction, and it is being seen at the Minor Hockey Association [club hockey organization] level. There's a lot of associations now that are hiring, not an administrator, but a technical director or a head coach who works with all the coaches to make all the coaches better and teach them how to teach the skills and that type of thing. So professionalism is really coming into play. (P13)

This is an apparent concern for the governing bodies, because a paid coaching staff increases the likely emphasis on winning as opposed to player development. This could mean that certain players may not play at certain times in the game because of their relative lack of skill and because of the heightened motivation on the part of team "stars" to win the game.

Club hockey organizations fund coaching development. Coaches often seek the training opportunities necessary to coach reach higher levels. Management of club hockey organizations provides incentives for the coaches to remain with the organization through the provision of funds for training coaches.

One of the things that we want to do is develop coaches. We are doing that by offering the courses for them. We always set that up, make sure they have the right qualifications and the right courses that they have taken for the level that they are coaching at so that they remain with the organization. (P10)

Coach training is often the responsibility of the individual club hockey organizations. Coaches are required by HC to take specific certification-based training for the category and age level at which they are coaching. The HC mandates such training. The basis for this training is the NCCP, which is a competency-based training program that is the "national standard for coach training and certification for 65 sports in Canada since 1974" (Misener & Danylchuk, 2009, p. 234). The NCCP is administered via through workshops. Its curriculum addresses skills at all level, "from the first-time coach to the head coach of a national team" (p. 234). Hockey Alberta and the EMHA, the two Alberta, Canada hockey governing bodies, are responsible for ensuring that coaches meet the necessary certification requirements to coach at the elite level.

With training as the first element of coach development, the second is support by the club hockey organization. Management of the club hockey organizations typically utilizes two support resources, namely, the team director and the coach mentor. Club hockey organization's management assigns team directors to a team or group of teams to act as the liaison between the team, the coach, and the organization. For example, P9 and P10 indicated that because of a lack of volunteers, one director is responsible for multiple teams. In contrast, P1 and P2 indicated that one director is assigned per team. A director who looks after multiple teams

is less likely to be able to meet the needs of all the teams. Both P9 and P10 stated that they were switching to a one director–one team approach.

Coaching mentorship strategies can be found in a document called the National Coach Mentorship Program (NCMP), which was developed by Hockey Canada (the national governing hockey body for Canada). The NCMP goal is “improved athlete development through the establishment of a national coach mentoring program” (HC, 2011c, p. 1). The NCMP describes mentorship as “a relationship between a guide (mentor) and a coach, which enables the coach to become more successful in all aspects of his/her coaching skills” (HC, 2011c, p. 1). Typically, coach mentors are former coaches who have been with a club hockey organization for a number of years as a coach, have coached at a high level (e.g., AJHL or CHL), or are former NHL players. These mentors pass on their knowledge and discuss their experiences with the head and assistant coaches of the club hockey organization’s teams as a means of providing guidance. The specific responsibilities of coach mentors are to assist the coaching staff in operations, player skill tactics, and management of their players.

Discussion

Based on the findings, management of club hockey organizations use a wide range of processes to recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coach to represent their organization. It is also apparent that management is challenged with a limited applicant pool from which to choose from (e.g., P1, P9, and P10). Due to this fact the ability of a manager to recruit, select, and then retain the most successful and qualified coach has the utmost importance for these volunteer driven elite level sport organizations. Because of the nature of this environment and the fact that these are volunteer based organizations with limit resources, hiring these individuals as an employee of the club hockey organization is not an option.

In the context of this empirical setting, the coaching pathway can be found to be in the shape of a pyramid. At the base of that pyramid there is an overabundance of coaches that are coaching at the community and less serious form of sport. These coaches are often parents seeking to help out their son/daughter’s teams (Wiersma, & Sherman, 2005). As coaches move up the pyramid the level the expectations of coaches’ increases, the level of competition, and the seriousness of the sport. At the same time, the pyramid decreases in size, which is an indication that there becomes less of an applicant pool to recruit and retain from that meet the above increases. This idea mimics the player pathway model discussed by Green (2005) where the base of the pyramid is considered mass participation, and is based on the development the athlete moves up the pyramid to more competitive levels till the athlete reaches the high performance level (the highest level of achievement). This suggests that organizational reputation plays a pivotal role within this empirical setting for two reasons. The first reason is that organizational

reputation can be used as a means of attracting and recruiting potential successful and qualified coaches to the organization. Second, having the most successful and qualified coach shapes, enhances, and maintains the organizational reputation, making the club hockey organization attractive for those Peewee players deciding whether to play club hockey or remain at the community level.

Gould, Guinan, Greenleaf, Medbery, and Peterson (1999), and Cuskelly et al. (2006) found that a successful and qualified coach is a critical factor in the perceived success of an organization. Therefore, organizational reputation is an outcome of management's ability to recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coaches within the club hockey system. This leads to our second research question: How does the recruitment, selection, and retention processes of most successful and qualified coaches impact the reputation of the organization? Based on the findings, the reputation of a club hockey organization be shaped, enhanced, and maintained through coaching in two ways: 1) the development of a quality product; and 2) the prominence of an organization.

Developing a Quality Product

Reputation is a theoretical construct that has been acknowledged by scholars as an intangible asset to an organization that can be managed by organization (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990). A club's reputation can be an important factor in the decision making process for potential players and parents. Clement (2000) suggested that considerable time is required for the completion of hiring/selecting a quality person for a vacant position. In the case of club hockey organizations, there is an emphasis on finding a successful and quality coach; however because of the competition for these coaches and the limited number of coaches, management is responsible for securing the most successful and qualified coach in a timely manner. The reason for securing a coach is because the organizations do not want to lose his/her services to another organization, which impacts the reputation of the organization.

A manager's or executive board members ability to recruit, select, and retain qualified coaches serves as evidence for potential players and parents as measures for the success of the development program. As indicated in the findings, one of the fundamental aspects of finding a coach is having the knowledge base and experience to train to develop players. Parents and players perceptions are created through the opportunities that exist for the advancement of players competing at the elite level by playing for the successful and qualified coach. The by-product then of enhancing or maintaining the reputation of the organization through the development of players by coaching makes the organization attractive option to players and parents who are considering entering into the club hockey system.

Coaches are teachers, managers, role models, and leaders (Coaching Association of Canada, 2012; Misener & Danylchuk, 2009). They play a critical role in the development of players, and it is the coach's training and experience that enable an

organization to produce a quality product. In this instance, the coach produces the quality product in the form of player development. The coach achieves this during the process of developing that player's skill set to the point that the player is able to play at the next level (P1, P2, P3, and P7). Having a player reach the next level is a reflection of management's ability to recruit, select, and retain the most qualified coaches, thereby enhancing and maintaining the reputation of the organization.

A coach's training is often contingent upon the organization's willingness to fund the training to new and existing coaches. Mallet et al. (2009) paraphrased Cushion et al. (2003) by indicating that, "Coach education/training and subsequent continuing coach development is considered to be essential to both sustaining and improving the quality of sports coaching" (p. 325). Furthermore, Cushion et al., (2003) suggested that, "A particular problematic yet significant element in this respect is a coach's knowledge. Although those who claim coaching an art would have us believe that good coaches are "born and not made," such a view is increasingly outmoded..." (p. 216). Carter and Bloom (2009) and Werthner and Trudel (2006) both indicated that knowledge acquisition for coaches is sought out in the form of formal education.

Arguably, the coaches that are coaching at the elite level "have a common starting point: being an athlete" (Mallet et al., 2009, p. 331), which means that in most cases that the coach draws on their athletic experience to develop athletes as opposed to a formal training method. This is important within the context of this study, because we find that there are limited processes available to retain coaches, and formal training is typically not at the "top" of the priority list for coaches. Second, the criteria that management uses in recruiting and identifying potential coaches is not solely reflective of coach education. Rather it is often a combination of education and experience. We suggest that the previous athlete experiences (i.e., playing the NHL, CHL, or NCAA) plays a much more significant role in shaping, enhancing, and maintaining the reputation of the organization, as opposed to the education credentials of the coach.

Prominence for the Organization

Management of organizations engages in activities, development strategies, or the implementation of policies and procedures in an effort to gain a desired result that shapes the reputation of the organization (Fombrun & Shanley, 1990; Rindova et al., 2005). As such, the common goal of club hockey organizations is to get the player to the next level of competition. Based on the findings, Organizations 2, 5, and 6 have consistently been producing elite level hockey players for the last three years. We suggest that this is an indication of prominence that is established through the development of hockey players. The connection between development and coach recruitment, selection, and retention is apparent by the findings as the primary goals of the club hockey organizations are to develop hockey players to the highest level they can compete. Organizations 2, 5, and 6 success can be arguably attributed management's ability to identify, recognize, and attract the

most successful and qualified coaches. Prominence is developed and maintained through management's ability to recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coach, where players are developed consistently developed to meet the expectations of players and parents.

Another reflection of coaching that emerges in the discussion around organizational reputation, recruitment, selection, retention of coaches, and prominence is the notion surrounding "winning." From a management perspective this is a means through which coaches can be measured (i.e., performance measurement). "The common notion in sports thus equates success with winning (i.e., scoring more points, runs, or goals that the opponent) and failure is losing" (Cumming et al., 2007, p. 322). The nature of hockey is such that "winning" and losing is an inherent part of the sport. Thus, a "winning" coach has a reputation for being successful which can be a reflection of the organization and enhance and maintain the prominence to the organization. However, as noted by P13, the "fear" associated with placing an emphasis on "winning" is that development will receive less of a focus. This is an important point to consider for sport managers when considering their goals and objectives of the organization, and the performance evaluation of the coach.

Organizational scholars have found that reputation is a valuable asset in reducing perceived uncertainties associated with an organization (Rindova et al., 2005; Weigelt & Camerer, 1988). The uncertainty can exist for players and parents who are looking to make a decision to invest in playing club level hockey. Thus, the processes associated with Organizations 2, 5, and 6 who have an apparent higher success rate of getting players to higher levels of competitions in comparison to Organizations 1, 3, and 4. Most of the organizations have taken on similar processes. However, the success or nonsuccess of a program in this setting is inherently linked to management's ability to recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coaches. We are further establishing that these successful and qualified coaches are establishing and enhancing a level of prominence, through a coach and player development, which resulted in an enhanced reputation that can lead to the attraction of those players transitioning from community based programs to elite level programs (i.e., club hockey organizations).

Conclusion and Contributions

The initial purpose of this research was to explore how management of youth elite level sport organizations recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coaches in Canada and the impact that those coaches can have on the organization. We explored this purpose through qualitative research methods through a case study approach. More specifically we conducted deductive research that drew on: previous coaching literature; organizational reputation literature, and recruitment, selection, and retention literature. The specific research questions posed for this study were, "What processes are used by management of local

club hockey organizations recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coaches?” and “How does the recruitment, selection, and retention processes of most successful and qualified coaches impact the reputation of the organization?”

The availability of successful and qualified coaches at the elite grassroots level is limited. This situation is of growing concern in the volunteer-driven component of the youth amateur level of the sport industry, where coaches constitute the foundations upon which player development programs are built. We found that club hockey organizations were in fierce competition for coaches, as these coaches were understood to shape, enhance, and maintain the reputation of the organization. The scarcity of successful and qualified coaches in the Edmonton region drives each organization to be as creative as possible, so that the benefits of coaching as a volunteer outweigh the associated costs (HC, 2011b). Thus, coaches have a level of importance within this empirical setting as we found coaches to be a catalyst for shaping, enhancing, and maintaining the organizations reputation, which has an impact on the attraction and retention of athletes within the competitive stream of sport.

Scholars, within the reputational literature (e.g., Deephouse & Suchman, 2008; Rindova et al., 2005; Washington & Zajac, 2005), would suggest that organizational reputation can be a source of differentiation. In this empirical setting we find that differentiation occurs between organizations when management are able to recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coach. The reputation of the organization is shaped, enhanced, and maintained through the coach's ability to produce a quality product, and create and maintain a high level of prominence.

In addition, the findings also indicate that management of club hockey organizations could reduce uncertainty regarding player development and, at the same time, enhance the reputation of the organization developing processes to recruit, select and retain coaches with a focus on managing the organization's reputation. Having a highly successful and qualified coach who can represent the organization becomes a major organizational resource for attracting and retaining players at the elite level and for maintaining organizational stability. Attracting and retaining players ensures that there is a substantial base for try outs from which the most talented players are able to be selected to represent the club hockey organization.

Contributions

The study contributes to the field of sport management in numerous ways. Sport managers are faced with the challenge of recruiting, selecting, and retaining qualified coaches while competing with other organizations for the same resources. This study reveals the importance that coaching positions within a volunteer-based sport organization can have in shaping the reputation of the organization at the elite level. Management of volunteer-based organizations can use the coaching

position to assist in shaping, enhancing, and maintaining the organization's reputation. By achieving such a goal, reputation is a key resource for retaining elite level hockey players at specific transition points. In addition, this study contributes to the literature on recruitment, selecting, and retention by applying these concepts to a grassroots elite level sport and to coaching. Future research can explore the US based hockey system to understand if similar issues are challenging management of elite youth sport organizations.

An inevitable outcome of the competition for the limited number of qualified coaches is the appearance of paid positions. P13 of HC indicated that this was a growing trend in Canadian hockey system. This could result in the appearance of bidding wars, with the result of coaches moving to a professionalized category at the grassroots level. This means that the coaching position within club hockey organizations at the grassroots level is moving to a paid position, which is based on the qualifications needed for coaching (e.g., training, experiences, or coaching staff), and the expectations. What is doubtful under such circumstances is whether the balance between winning and player development can be survive when there is an expectation placed on coaches to develop elite level hockey players by both the parents and management of the club hockey organizations. These researchers believe that the introduction of paid positions will increase the pressure on coaches to win to the detriment of player development. This area warrants further consideration and research.

Coaching is an underdeveloped research area of sport management. From a sport management perspective, we found that recruiting, selecting, and retaining coaches is an issue within the Canadian system. Furthermore, this study also highlights the connection that recruiting, selecting, and retaining the most successful and qualified coaches can contribute to shaping, enhancing, and maintaining the reputation of the organization. This study goes beyond simply identifying the processes associated with management's recruitment, selection, and retention of a coach to further explore the impact that coaches have on an organization.

Reputation is a valuable intangible resource that managers struggle to manage. Rindova et al. (2005) suggested that a dimension of reputation is to produce a quality product as a signal to constituents (e.g., stakeholder, customers, or in the case of this study, minor hockey players and parents) with regard to the future production of the product. In an environment where most of the organizations are similar in structure, differentiation needs to occur at some level to attract and retain highly skilled players. Hence, the organization can set itself apart from other organizations operating within the same environment through coaching. Thus, a suggestion is to incorporate reputation-based questions into the recruitment, selecting, and retention processes of a coach within a sport organization.

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Management Whitepaper

Managing a Sport Organization

The Impact of Recruiting, Selecting, and Retaining Elite Level Coaches in Sport

Jonathon Edwards and Marvin Washington

I. Research Problem

The purpose of this paper is to explore how management of youth elite level nonprofit sport organizations recruit, select, and retain the most successful and qualified coaches in Canada and the impact that those coaches can have on the organization. In 2005, it was reported that there were over 1.8 million volunteer amateur coaches in Canada (Ifedi, 2008). While this number seems large, in the case of elite level sport, there are a limited number of qualified coaches who are willing to volunteer, have the skills to coach elite sport and are willing to commit to coaching to elite level coaching because it is a volunteer position in Canada. Because of this, management of nonprofit sport organizations in Canada dedicate a substantial of time on recruiting, selecting, and retaining their most skilled and successful coaches, this paper would likely be useful to management and board members of nonprofit volunteer based community, provincial/state sport organizations, and national sport organizations. Other sport managers working in the field of both commercial and amateur sport may find this study useful.

II. Issues

Successful and qualified coaches are imperative for the development of athletes and having the most successful and qualified coach represent a sport organization can make the difference in the decision an athlete makes to compete for the particular organization at the elite level. From the broader research on human resources best practices, we know that the implementation of effective selection practices can be mutually beneficial for both the organization and the individual. The benefit gained by management from being able to recruit, select, and retain successful and qualified coaches is that it creates a source of stability for the elite level youth sport organizations in terms of participant numbers. The less time organizations have to spend on finding and keeping coaches, the more time they can spend on developing a successful athlete development program, which is an attractive feature of the organization for potential parents and athletes.

In addition, the more successful and qualified the coach is in instructing youth athletes, the greater the chance for development of that athlete to advance higher levels of competition. With regards to sports, coaches also serve as a marketing tool; coaches are the “public face” of the organization. Their actions and experiences as coaches can be influential for players and parents when they decide to compete in elite sport. Coaches are essentially the middle management of an organization where their responsibilities include player development, communicating with the parents of players, managing team functions, implementing initiatives, reporting to the executive board, and ensuring that a quality product (i.e., teams and players are achieving success) is being produced. All while shaping the perceptions of potential parents and players contemplating transitioning to higher levels of development and competition.

To examine the processes and benefits of recruiting, selecting, and retaining successful coaches, we draw upon the management concept of reputation. Reputation is understood to be a “generalized expectation about a firm’s future behaviour or performance based on collective perceptions (either direct or, more often, vicarious) of past behaviour or performance” (Deephouse & Suchman, 2008, p. 60). The basis then of organizational reputation is that potential constituents, stakeholders, members, and/or customers evaluate the previous organizational performances to determine future actions of the organization. A positive reputation helps sport organizations to attract and retain elite level athletes within a sport development system, and can be formed through a coach’s ability to develop hockey players.

To better understand how sport organizations recruit, select, and retain coaches, we explore local elite club hockey organizations (also identified as club hockey organizations) in the Edmonton region of Alberta, Canada (henceforth, Edmonton region). These club hockey organizations are an example of a specific type of a not-for-profit youth elite level sport organization in which finding the most successful and qualified coaches is an issue and is critical the organizations survival comparatively with other club hockey organizations operating in the Edmonton region. Club hockey organizations are the primary pathway for Canadian minor hockey players (also identified as players, or hockey players) to reach higher levels of competition, such as the National Hockey League (NHL) or the Canadian Hockey League (CHL).

Club hockey teams compete at two levels of competition in the Edmonton region: AAA (the highest level; henceforth, Triple A) and AA (henceforth, Double A). Double A is a feeder league for Triple A level. Club level hockey for most organizations in the Edmonton region starts at the Bantam (13 to 14 years old) and continues to the Midget (15 to 17 years old) level. These categories are considered pivotal for players as they represent the age ranges where players are able to advance to a higher level of competition, such as a CHL franchise or the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) university or college. For example, the

draft age in the Western Hockey League (WHL; a sub-league of the CHL) is 14 to 15 years old, so it becomes critical that coaches are able to train and manage the development of these elite level athletes. In Edmonton, club level hockey parents have an expectation that their son or daughter will contribute to the long list of former Edmontonians who have played in the NHL (e.g., Jay Bouwmeester, Randy Gregg, Mark Messier, Rob Brown, Geoff Sanderson, and Cam Ward). Due to this success, we think that the processes that management of the Edmonton hockey clubs use to recruit, select, and retain coaches and the impact that this process has on the club's reputation will be valuable information for other sport organizations.

III. Summary

To conduct our analysis of recruitment, selection, and retention processes among club hockey organizations in Edmonton, we interviewed managers with six hockey club organizations in Edmonton. Some of the managers were volunteers; while others were paid employees. We also interviewed management three hockey governing bodies: Edmonton Minor Hockey, Hockey Alberta, and Hockey Canada. In this case, the managers were all employees of the organizations. The results of the study were divided into three sections: recruitment, selection, and retention processes.

With regard to the recruiting processes used, we found that management of club hockey organizations use the following processes: advertising on the organization's website, advertising in mass media outlets, recruiting through the internal structure of the club hockey organization, word of mouth advertising, scouting, reaching out to former players, and developing partnerships with local public school programs. As one organization said, "If we run short some years, we try and put in a free announcement in the *Edmonton Journal* or the *Edmonton Sun* [newspapers in the Edmonton region] and try to get the word out one way or the other; I mean the word seems to get out for the most part." All of the organizations employ word-of-mouth advertising regarding coaching positions through parents of players, executive directors, board members, and other coaches. For example, one respondent told us, "through word of mouth, and through the scouting coaches. We promote our program and try to get coaches to apply. So that is probably the biggest way that we recruit coaches and some within our own ranks as well." Another said, "We get the word out, word of mouth, I think we've been fortunate that they come to us, I think the majority of the time they come to us. I think we have a bit of a reputation."

The results of the coach selection processes indicated that all organizations followed a standard procedure of interviewing and then having a recommendation going to the organization's board of directors. A key issue that affected the decision of management with regards coaching was whether or not parents could coach their children. This was a key issue, because of the limited amount of coaches, a fear of losing teams because of lack of coaching, and the administration of a

quality program to attract potential players moving into the club hockey system. Three of the six organizations do not allow parent coaching and all of the organizations confirmed that parents of team members could not coach at the most competitive or Midget Triple A level. The prevailing wisdom was that parents tend to favor their own children with extra ice time. For players, ice time is a critical factor in gaining exposure to CHL scouts and scouts from other leagues. As one respondent told us, "The parent coach syndrome is favoritism."

With regard to retention, we found that there was high turnover among coaches. One organization told us that the longest they have ever had one coach for the same team was 3 years. To combat this, many organizations are starting to provide honorariums to the coaches. Honoraria ranged from \$1,000 to \$2,500 per month. Funding amounts are contingent upon the caliber of the league (i.e., Triple A versus Double A). In most cases, the head coach is responsible for the allocation of funds to the remainder of the coaching staff. Club managements make the coach accountable to the coaching staff regarding the distribution of funding amounts.

IV. Analysis

The second part of our project was to examine the relationship between recruiting, selecting, and retaining the most successful and qualified coach and the organization's reputation. We found that a successful and qualified coach can be influential in determining the reputation of the club in two ways: the development of the on-ice product, and the prominence of the organization. These two ways, then, were critical elements that contribute to the attraction of potential players and parents determining whether to play elite level hockey.

Reputation is also an important factor in considering the marketing efforts of an amateur nonprofit sport organization, as it becomes critical for management and volunteers to promote the organization's program and attract potential athletes/players. A manager's or executive board members ability to recruit, select, and retain qualified coaches serves as evidence for potential players and parents as measures for the success of the development program. As indicated in the findings one of the fundamental aspects of finding a coach is having the knowledge base, and experience to train to develop players. Parents and players perceptions are created through the opportunities that exist for the advancement of players competing at the elite level by playing for the successful and qualified coach. The by-product then of enhancing or maintaining the reputation of the organization through the development of players by coaching makes the organization attractive option to players and parents who are considering entering into the club hockey system. From existing research, we know that coaches provide the connection among the organization, the athlete, and the parent.

With regard to organizational prominence, we split our 6 organizations into two groups, the ones that were successful and the ones that were not (see Table 1). As you can see from this table, three organizations had achieved more successful

in terms of placing players in the NHL than the other three. With regard to the recruitment, selection, and retention of coaches, we discovered that the successful organizations used a broader array of processes than the organizations that were less successful. For example, while both groups did not like to use parents as coaches, the successful clubs were more likely to have had parents as coaches. In addition, the successful organizations also had a broader interview process when selecting coaches that incorporated the clubs philosophies regarding player development into the coach interview process. By having similar philosophies, management have a greater opportunity to manage the reputation of the organization through coach selection and retention.

Table 1

2010-2012 WHL Bantam Draft Results for the Edmonton Region

Organization and Number	No. of players drafted 2010	No. of players drafted 2011	No. of players drafted 2012	Total No. of players drafted
Organization 1	2	2	5	9
Organization 2	4	10	4	18
Organization 3	3	1	2	6
Organization 4	2	0	2	4
Organization 5	6	4	7	17
Organization 6	9	3	5	17

V. Implications

Sport managers are faced with the challenge of recruiting, selecting, and retaining qualified coaches while competing with other organizations (i.e., other elite level organizations) for the same resources, which is the case at the elite level of sport. This study reveals the importance that coaching positions within a volunteer-based sport organization can have in shaping the reputation of the organization at the elite level. By achieving such a goal of recruiting, selecting, and retaining coaches, reputation then has been identified as a key resource for attracting and retaining elite level hockey players at specific transition points.

An inevitable outcome of the competition for the limited number of qualified coaches is the appearance of paid positions. Unfortunately, this is a growing trend in elite level youth hockey. This means that the coaching position within club hockey organizations at the grassroots level is moving to a paid position, which is based on the qualifications needed for coaching (e.g., training, experiences, or coaching staff), and the expectations. What is doubtful under such circumstances is whether the balance between winning and player development can be survive when there is an expectation placed on coaches to develop elite level

hockey players by both the parents and management of the club hockey organizations. We believe that the introduction of paid positions will increase the pressure on coaches to win to the detriment of player development; while also increasing the cost of playing sport for organizations to pay for these elite level coaches. This area warrants further consideration and reflection.

Furthermore, what is also evident from this study is that position of coach within a sport organization is essentially a middle manager where the coach is responsible for managing players and aspects of the team, producing a quality product (i.e., athlete/player development), reporting to the executive board, implementing the club hockey organizations goals, and enhancing the reputation of the organization for player retention purposes. In previous sport management research, the focus of the research has been on the volunteer executives that control the operations of the sport organization. This study brings to fruition the importance of the position of coach within a sport organizations, and then based on this recognized importance and the responsibilities of a coach as a middle manager it becomes apparent that there needs to be more research conducted on the coaching position within the field of sport management. In selecting an individual, management need to be cognizant of how the individual is going to represent the organization, can this individual be a positive signal for constituents about producing a quality product, and this individual can be a differentiating factor for organizations to utilize when recruiting, selecting, and retaining individuals to represent their organization. Thus, a suggestion is to incorporate reputation and reputation-based questions can be incorporated into the recruitment, selecting, and retention processes of an organization.