
RISK MANAGEMENT FOR SPORTING EVENTS

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Abstract: Risk management is one of the primary responsibilities of event organizers, yet so often ignored or misunderstood, particularly by inexperienced planners, because, like my now-paranoid event-goers, one can't envision what one has not been exposed to – they don't know what they don't know. This article will show you how and why risk management is a fundamental component of event management, and introduce you to the functions of risk management within the overall field of events management and the tools you may use to perform these functions effectively. The research is underpinned by a constructivist approach that purposes scientific knowledge as a human creation made available with material and cultural resources. Research adopting this approach builds and generates theory about the phenomenon through participants' own words, allowing respondents to express their attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors in the absence of preconceived notions. Through this combination of legislative provisions, event organizers are encouraged to work with all actors involved with the event to develop a framework that facilitates the effective allocation of risk management responsibilities amongst the various actors by each actor's ability to control the activities that give rise to those risks.

Keywords: Risk Management, Sporting Events, Organizers.

INTRODUCTION

The contemporary environment of sports organizations is very turbulent, with increasingly complex and random changes and many risks with a significant impact. In professional literature, such an environment is indicated by the phrase's hypercharge, hyper competitors, and hyper-turbulence, and increasingly also as a "risky society". Such a "risky" environment is not limited only to health and environmental risks but also includes a series of interlinked changes in contemporary social life – changes in work patterns, increasingly greater insecurity of the workplace well as insecurity in daily life, a decrease of the impact of tradition and habits, the collapsing of traditional forms and family patterns, etc. All this contributes to a state of affairs in which attending sports competitions today is much riskier than earlier. Such insanity and unpredictability of changes have led to new paradigms for organizations and new management paradigms which are also radically reflected in the area of sports and sports competitions. Thus, "a new concept, new technologies, and a new lifestyle demand a new management" (Mašić, 2001, p. 2) (Ilić, Bošković, Radovanović, & Practice, 2013).

The aim of the research

This research aims to contribute to the recognition of the risks of contemporary social reality, the assessment of its possible impact on sports events, and to indicate the significance and way of application of tested functions of managing risk management in sports events.

Research Questions

1. What unique risks are associated with sports events, for organizers, participants, sponsors, guests, and the general public?
2. Describe the main elements in a health and safety plan for sports events. Include a discussion of how site capacity is important and how it can be determined.
3. Define "risk management" for sports event managers. Give examples of the special risks for sports events.
4. Outline a risk management plan including generic strategies for dealing with risks.
5. What are the main principles of alcohol risk management? What related training is needed for staff and volunteers?

Distinguish between crowd management and crowd control. Give examples.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The research is underpinned by a constructivist approach that purposes scientific knowledge as a human creation made available with material and cultural resources (Bloor, 1976; Golinski, 1998). Constructivism is based upon a relativist belief that there are multiple socially constructed truths and realities, with no rational basis for judging one perspective better than another (Fay, 1996; Rubin & Rubin, 1995). Research adopting this approach builds and generates theory

about the phenomenon through participants' own words, allowing respondents to express their attitudes, beliefs, or behaviors in the absence of preconceived notions (Golinski, 1998; Jennings, 2001) (Reid & Ritchie, 2011).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Risks are associated with sports events, for organizers, participants, sponsors, guests, and the general public

The process by which risk management is interpreted and executed by organizing committees and major stakeholders of events is becoming increasingly important, especially in one-time large-scale international sporting events, because of the increased international media coverage, higher insurance costs, and the possibility of events such as terrorist attacks (Leopkey & Parent, 2009).

Within the last 20 years, the hosting of sporting events has become an increasingly popular goal for many communities (Emery, 2001; Whitson & MacIntosh, 1996). This is due to the potential for exponential ROI (return on investment) and legacy benefits such as new facilities and improved infrastructure, increased community spirit, and national/international recognition (Ritchie, 1984). Events include cultural events and festivals such as Carabana and Mardi Gras, and sports tournaments such as the FIFA (Federation Internationale de Football Association) World Cup (Watt, 1998). For large-scale sporting events, in particular, academic and popular press books deal with many issues such as economics, tourism, and marketing (e.g., Getz, 2005;

Preuss, 2004) (Leopkey & Parent, 2009).

Classical risk management stems from the project management research literature (Chappelet, 2001). Prior research has shown that it is possible to approach risk management in a variety of ways (cf. Wideman, 1992; Boehm, 1991). However, most researchers (e.g., Wideman, 1992; Raz & Michael, 2001) agree that risk management takes on a cyclical approach, similar (plus or minus a step) to the Project Management Body of Knowledge (PMBOK) approach (for additional information on PMBOK visit www.pmi.org), where risk management is essentially made up of four phases: identification, assessment, response, and the documentation of risk (Wideman, 1992). It is also a common assumption that risk management continues throughout the project, including the planning, execution, completion, and wrap-up of stages of the event (Raz & Michael, 2001). The overarching goal of project risk management is to identify risks and develop strategies to reduce or mitigate them (Wideman, 1992) (Leopkey & Parent, 2009).

Using stakeholder theory (see Clarkson, 1995; Freeman, 1984; Frooman, 1999; Jones, & Wicks, 1999; Logsdon, Wood, & Benson, 2000; Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997, Phillips, 2003; Wolfe, & Putler, 2002) to study risk management issues in sporting events allows for the examination of the topic from both sides of the equation, i.e., from the organizing committee's and the stakeholders' perspectives, and because it allows for the inclusion of a variety of literature. Researchers have identified many possible

stakeholders for a focal organization or organizing committee. Clarkson (1995) identified employees, shareholders, customers, suppliers, and the public as potential stakeholders of an organization. Ritchie (1984), during his research on mega-events, stated that the local populace, local government, and local businesses are all key stakeholders in events. Potential stakeholders proposed by Emery (2001) included international and national governing bodies, organizing committees, media, and sponsors. (Leopkey & Parent, 2009).

Health and safety plan for sports events & Importance of site capacity

Responsibility for health and safety starts with the event owners or board of directors and extends through all management functions. In larger events, and at event venues, a specific manager or "safety officer" might be required. This work is closely related to risk management and security (Getz, 2004).

A very useful manual ("The Event Safety Guide", revised 1999) on health and safety planning for music events has been prepared in the United Kingdom by the Health and Safety Executive of their central government. In the UK and other jurisdictions, it is a requirement of law for many events and facilities to produce a policy and plan for health and safety, and there are government inspectors to ensure compliance with all pertinent laws and regulations (Getz, 2004).

Every type of event and event setting requires such a plan, and the general elements of the planning /management process include (Getz, 2004):

- commitment at all levels to health and safety (make it part of the event mission statement).
- ongoing risk assessment (what are the threats?) .
- health a safety policy and procedures.
- management systems to implement the policy and procedures, including monitoring and enforcement mechanisms.
- evaluation and revision process Health and safety management must occur over the full "life-cycle" of the event, starting with its concept stage and ending only with the termination of the event organization. Consider the different issues that arise at each stage:
 - Concept: does the event entail specific health and safety risks? are they acceptable?
 - Long-range planning: includes risk assessment.
 - Site or facility development: construction and delivery hazards; competence of the contractors and the workforce; quality and reliability of the infrastructure; impacts on the environment and community.
 - Staffing: hiring the right people; health and safety training for staff and volunteers;
 - The event: supervision of food and beverage, sanitation, and other essential services; crowd and traffic management; security; emergency procedures; comfort and health stations and related personnel.

- Shut-down and termination: deconstruction and materials removal; residual site.
- contamination and cleanup; site security; final evaluations.

Indoor venues will have an assigned capacity, with the maximum number of persons determined in advance by fire or other authorities. For outdoor concert sites, the Health and Safety Executive (1999) suggested that 0.5 square meters be available per person. An additional technical factor is the ease of entry and exit. Flow rates for entrances and exits should be estimated, both for normal and emergency conditions, resulting in an estimate of the "minimum evacuation time". Additional consideration must be given to persons with special accessibility needs, such as those in wheelchairs or who must be carried (e.g., babies) (Getz, 2004).

Technical risk factors will lead to the designation of a safe capacity, and on this point, it is undoubtedly better to err on the side of safety than to attempt to cram more people into a venue. Beyond the technical risk considerations, organizers should also assure that the event experience is not diminished by over-crowding the site. For example, will everyone in a huge audience be able to see and hear performers? Will rubbing shoulders with other event-goers add to the atmosphere? (Getz, 2004).

Risk management for sports event managers

'Risk management is the overall process of assessing and controlling risks within an organizational setting and includes the subprocesses of risk assessment and risk mitigation. In

discussing the principles of risk management, it is necessary to define the terms used. A 'hazard' or 'risk factor' is a condition, object, or situation that may be a potential source of harm to people, and 'risk' is the probability or likelihood that a hazard will have an impact on these people (Fuller & Drawer, 2004).

Risk management is an essential element of a coach's skill set (Ferrero, 2007) and, reflecting this central role, the topic plays a small but significant part in the vast majority of coach education programs (cf. British Canoe Union, 2007). For the outdoor professional, however, risk management is a more subtle and wider-ranging skill (Collins & Collins, 2012). This distinction presents challenges for the Adventure Sports Coach (ASC) who must optimally manage the inherent risks associated with Adventure Sports (AS), such as rock climbing, mountaineering, sea kayaking, white water kayaking, canoeing, and caving, against the longer term developmental needs and shorter term stated goals of clients (Collins & Collins, 2013).

A risk management plan including generic strategies

This section outlines the risk management process and contents of a risk management plan (Getz, 2004).

1: Identification of risk fields

One of the foundations of risk management is "foreseeability", and it is a key element in determining negligence (Ammon and Fried 1998). Event and facility managers must draw on experience, the experience of others, and systematic determination of possible risks. They may occur in each of these major risk "fields":

Financial: loss of revenue sources, theft and loss of assets, including data, name, and logos; costs exceeding projections; lawsuits and other unanticipated costs.

Management: the risk of goal displacement, takeovers, or management failure.

Health and safety hazards for organizers, participants, guests, and the general public: accidents (at and outside the event), health problems, fire, crime, terrorism, social disturbances, and unanticipated emergencies.

Environmental: negative impacts on the environment, community, and economy; natural hazards (earthquakes, floods, etc.).

2: Identification of specific risks, and the consequences, within each field

The "task analysis" performed for project planning provides a starting point for managers and staff to identify and evaluate risks. Each task requires certain actions, sometimes physical and sometimes mental, which all have potential implications. As the event takes shape and more detail is added to the task breakdown and schedule, greater focus will be possible on risks.

Scenario-making is useful and can be done quite well at staff meetings. Start with known or possible problems and risks (e.g. what happened at other events?) and work backward to see how they can be avoided. This exercise will help shape the task analysis, schedule, and program. Development of a risk evaluation form or spreadsheet for each event and sub-unit is recommended.

3: Assignment of the probability of risks occurring (e.g., low, medium, high)

Evaluate the probability of occurrence. How likely is it that each risk will materialize? Group the risks into high, medium, and low probability categories, but do not assume that low probability hazards will not occur!

4: Estimation of the potential magnitude of impacts.

Not all risks will necessarily result in losses or problems, so try to anticipate the positive and negative outcomes of each potential circumstance and the magnitude of the consequence. Those with potential negative and severe consequences require special consideration. Within each risk field, major disasters could occur, and they should be ranked according to potential magnitude – from multiple perspectives. Protecting the organization and its assets might come into conflict with protecting the environment or the public, so beware of bias in this assessment.

5: Ranking of risks, from high to low priority

Which ones have to be dealt with? Combine the probability of occurrence with an evaluation of the potential severity of each, especially those for which the organizers will likely be held responsible. High-priority risks have to be dealt with at once.

6: Identification of strategic options to deal with risks; selection of appropriate strategies:

According to Berlonghi (1990), there are several generic strategies for events to follow:

Avoidance. Managers must seek to anticipate risks, determine their probability of occurrence, the severity of their impacts, and ways to avoid or reduce them. Where

risks are too great, or cannot be handled, the hazard (such as a program activity or venue) should be eliminated.

Reduction. Some hazards can be minimized or kept to an acceptable level through better management, training, or operations. In truth, most event managers live with certain risks, but this decision should not be taken without some form of ongoing assessment and reduction strategy in place.

Reduce the severity of damage or losses: Assuming that problems will occur, the manager must be prepared to cope. The event must have emergency response procedures. Thefts occur, but the number and severity can be minimized. Weather is unpredictable, so contingency plans are necessary.

Diffusion. Spreading risks among stakeholders or over time and space can be effective. For example, if sponsors or other organizations are involved, it is logical that risks should be spread among all parties, rather than being absorbed by the event organization alone. However, logic might not convince the other parties to accept a share of the risks. Vendors and suppliers can usually be required to share in the risk management process and provide their insurance.

Re-allocation. In some cases, the risks can be re-allocated completely, as where a parent body or municipality absorbs risks for specific events. Any group under contract to the event can be required to absorb their risks and take out independent or co-insurance.

Insurance. Insurance is necessary to protect against risks that materialize. Insurance companies increasingly demand

that managers demonstrate that they have a risk management strategy in place, and these companies might even give appropriate advice. Liability laws and the need for types and amounts of insurance vary widely among countries and cannot be generalized. Event managers must investigate their needs carefully, or rely on government agencies or event associations to provide advice.

7: Implementation of strategies and evaluation of results:

Implement strategies by formulating an action plan, training appropriate staff and volunteers, and rehearsing crucial operations (e.g., emergency response). Establish a formal evaluation system for the event and assign responsibilities. Aim to constantly improve the process.

Principles of alcohol risk management & training for staff and volunteers

Events featuring alcohol consumption can foster a feeling among some patrons that anything goes. Even when consumption is regulated and over-indulgence is not a problem, events can still face lawsuits arising from uncontrolled underage drinking (see Emmets, 1995:67). Consequently, every event serving alcohol (or likely to attract drinkers) needs an alcohol risk management system (Getz, 2004).

In British Columbia (Ministry of Attorney General, 1992:11) a public inquiry into problems at special events revealed that alcohol was the top public-raised issue, including the operation of beer gardens, underage drinking, the transport of alcohol, inadequate fines for violators, and unruly behavior due to drinking. Inadequate site control and the checking of cars and

persons for liquor were also problems identified. Additional costs and risks associated with alcohol consumption include (Getz, 2004):

- personal injuries and criminal acts owing to drunkenness
- additional insurance costs against the possibility of lawsuits (e.g., if the event is held partially or wholly responsible for an accident, injury, or criminal act by serving alcohol)
- additional security and clean-up costs
- major financial losses arising from lawsuits
- vandalism
- image problems and resultant lost patronage
- attracting the wrong types; repelling families and other segments

Event risk managers are keenly aware of the problem of alcohol at events. The event risk manager's first line of defense against alcohol-related problems is often to meet with the event's hosts, hostesses, or sponsors before the event. During this meeting, the event risk manager should provide checklists to prospective clients. Event risk managers must develop a risk plan called a "lightning plan" (what you would do if lightning were to strike). Before an event in which alcohol is served (Tarlow, 2002):

- *Determine who is in charge of the event.* Is there an alcohol service manager? Make certain that you can identify the chain of command for the event.
- *Find out what plans are in place.* It is as important to know what plans do

not exist and what plans do exist. What has been overlooked? Who forgot what? These are essential questions.

- *Determine how similar this alcohol-related event is to other events of a similar size and demographic composition.* Having a benchmark can be an excellent predictor of future problems. Do not be afraid to consult with other event risk managers and always keep a written list of essential facts and incidents after each of your major events.
 - *Evaluate current alcohol management rules.*
 - *Review signage.* Be careful of what you write on signs or other sources of information regarding the serving of alcohol. We live in a very litigious society, and what you write may be held against you in court.
 - *Consider all risks.* Event risk managers are often as concerned about risks associated with alcohol that have a low probability of occurring but whose consequences are grave as they are about high-probability risks. First, never see each risk as unique unto itself. Instead, assume that there is an interaction between all risks. Thus, each risk that is added to the equation increases the total risk factor.
 - *Use experience with issues of intoxication.* If the situation "feels" wrong, take the time to listen to your feelings. It is never a mistake to err on the side of prudence.
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- *Learn from other events.* Alcohol problems at events tend to be similar at many different events. A college spring break, however, is very different from a banker's meeting. Keep a careful sociological profile of these events and use these profiles to help in your planning. Be careful never to use racial profiling and never assume that a person is guilty simply because he or she falls into a particular demographic grouping.
- *Gain knowledge from other sources.* For example, visit different Web sites to see what your colleagues are doing about the serving of alcohol at events.
- *Examine current insurance policies.* Insurance policies dictate what you can and cannot do at an event. Make certain that you speak to the event's insurance agent. What insurance restrictions and exclusions are enforced? What coverage do you have?
- *Use common sense.* Often the best risk management is common sense. Part of the job of event risk managers is to apply their common sense to the risk situation.
- *Don't get angry or feel superior.* It is all too easy to see a group of people having a "good time" and start to feel superior to them. Remember that your task is to help these people have a good time with the least possible amount of risk to life or property.

Event risk managers must also be aware of the dram shop laws, based

on the Supreme Court decision in *Samson v. Smith* (1989). Event risk managers should understand how these laws may impact them and should consult a professional for legal advice. The basic premise of these laws is that if person X gives too much alcohol to person Y who then, in an intoxicated state, hurts himself or another person, then X can be held liable. There are several legal points that person Y, the plaintiff, will have to prove, including that the injury was a result of Y's drinking and that the alcohol provider knew that the plaintiff was intoxicated (Tarlow, 2002).

Following are some of the methods used to contain the problem of alcohol consumption (Tarlow, 2002):

- Conduct the event at a location where there are people trained to serve alcohol.
 - Understand and implement effective crowd control.
 - Make certain that carding is coordinated by the organization's personnel.
 - Make sure that monitoring is in place so that underage people are not involved.
 - Do not have an open bar. Open bars encourage drinking; cash bars allow for greater control and often limit a person's ability to consume more than he or she should.
 - Price the alcoholic drinks expensively so that guests drink less.
 - Make certain there are designated drivers at the event.
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- Maintain a list of who is and who is not 21 years of age.

Crowd management & Crowd control

Martella et al. (2016), Williams (2013) and Rahmat et al. (2011) refer to crowd management as a technique to manage people involving seating arrangements, crowd behavior, demographical criteria of the people involved, emphasizing collaborative effort between people involved, and as well as the duration of the event. The objective of crowd management is likewise a safety concern and demands specific attention, which necessitates careful observation by the event organizer. An event manager must develop hard and soft tools that help monitor and control the individual's movement and behavior within the crowd. Two types of crowd control can be adopted: soft crowd control and hard crowd control. Soft crowd control is one of the types of crowd control that reduces the ability or effectiveness of the target's actions but does not entirely prevent them from doing them. On the other hand, hard crowd control is a type of crowd control that completely prevents the target from taking specific actions, like moving or casting abilities (Kamarudin, Abd Aziz, & Ramely, 2022).

According to Fruin (1993), crowd management and crowd control are synergistic instead of incompatible. Crowd management focuses more on practical strategies and systematic planning of movement and assembly, while crowd control focuses more on reactive strategies and restriction and

the constraint of action. Both crowd management and crowd control are influenced by time, space, information, and energy. Crowd management and control are becoming significant issues in the event industry due to this massive increase in sports events or outdoor events. Crowd management is never can be missed in the event planning process. Small mistakes in planning would change a great return into a total loss in sports events (Mapjabil et al., 2015). A study found that crowd management in sports tourism events has increased in popularity due to their unique characteristics, and therefore, it needs particularly successful planning because it will also increase the average crowd numbers. Improper crowd management also can quickly turn a peaceful event into tragedy (Martella et al., 2016). Bjelac and Radovanovic (2003) also agreed that sports events require good crowd management practices because of their special characteristics (Kamarudin et al., 2022).

In the context of crowd management, the spread of non-compliant behavior can have a severe impact on crowd safety if safety rules are not visibly enforced or crowd control is not maintained. For example, others may follow suit if the response from those controlling the crowd is slow, weak, or non-existent. The uncontrolled crowd flow may lead to overcrowding and other related hazards. In the early stages of an emergency, crowd behavior can be influenced by individuals who appear to

be experts or know what to do. An individual or group of people taking decisive action such as leaving a nearby exit and outwardly dismissing a warning as a false alarm) can trigger a widespread response among the crowd. The team members of staff might be allocated to evacuate a venue or another area (Kamarudin et al., 2022).

As early as 1995, Berlonghi has discussed eleven elements when the organizer intends to implement crowd management. They are the size of the crowd, crowd capacity, demographics of the crowd, and location of the event, day and time of operations, schedule of event activities, weather conditions, seating arrangements, and crowd movement patterns, the density of crowd in various locations as well as specific operations such as transportation, parking, ticket selling, and admission control. Other than that, Martella et al. (2016) and also opined crowd management should include thorough planning and preparation, effective communication with the whole crowd (audio and visual), coordinating and collaborative effort between all agencies involved, led by skillful and experienced personnel in crowd management, as well as leadership and guidance to initiate crowd management emergencies (Kamarudin et al., 2022).

Besides, Williams (2013) also recommended two significant steps in strategizing crowd management. These steps include early and often pre-planning meetings with all stakeholders

and performing risk-hazards analysis of the event venues. Risk-hazards analysis should consist of unique and contingency plans according to the types of events. The event organizer who intends to manage the crowd also needs to be aware of the individual's diversity and complexity. Kingshott (2014) mentioned that each individual possesses different attitudes, social, racial, religious, cultural composition, and various psychological dimensions. (Kamarudin et al., 2022).

CONCLUSIONS

Safely staging a major sporting event involves numerous actors, each with its particular role, and each reliant to some extent for the proper performance of that role, on other actors properly performing their roles and responsibilities. WHS laws address these symbiotic relationships by first imposing concurrent, overlapping, and non-delegable WHS duties on nearly every actor involved with organizing and staging the event, and then requiring the holders of these concurrent and overlapping duties to cooperate to ensure their activities are undertaken safely and without health risks. Through this combination of legislative provisions, event organizers are encouraged to work with all actors involved with the event to develop a framework that facilitates the effective allocation of risk management responsibilities amongst the various actors by each actor's ability to control the activities that give rise to those risks (Windholz, 2016).

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