

20

Sport Events

In this chapter you will cover:

- Overview of the sports events' perspective
- The life cycle of sports event
- Mega sports events
- Economic perspective of sports events
- Sport events marketing
- Politics and sport events
- Legacy of sporting events

The world of sport events has changed over the last two decades with major sporting events being moved around the globe. From mega-events such as the Olympic Games to community-level competitions, sports events can be complex and pose a particular set of managerial challenges. Sport events explain the close relationship between different stakeholders on the economic, political and marketing perspectives in developing long term sustainability and legacy. The Covid-19 impact on the sporting industry has been significant with numerous challenges faced by different stakeholders from governments, sports bodies, organisers, players, spectators and media organisations to deal with the pandemic.

Overview of the sports events perspective

Sports events have been dramatically increasing in the last two decades and researchers and practitioners are debating and researching on several aspects from planning, marketing, volunteering, their impact on economy and legacy. Numerous academic and practitioner articles, journals and books have been written on the subject from the perspective of mega-events to community level competitions.

Various terms have been used to define sporting events and festivals such as mega-event, hallmark event, major sporting events, large scale sporting event and special events and quite often these terms have been used interchangeably. How these terms can be classified depends on a different combination of size, geography, economic return, length of event and the identification of location.

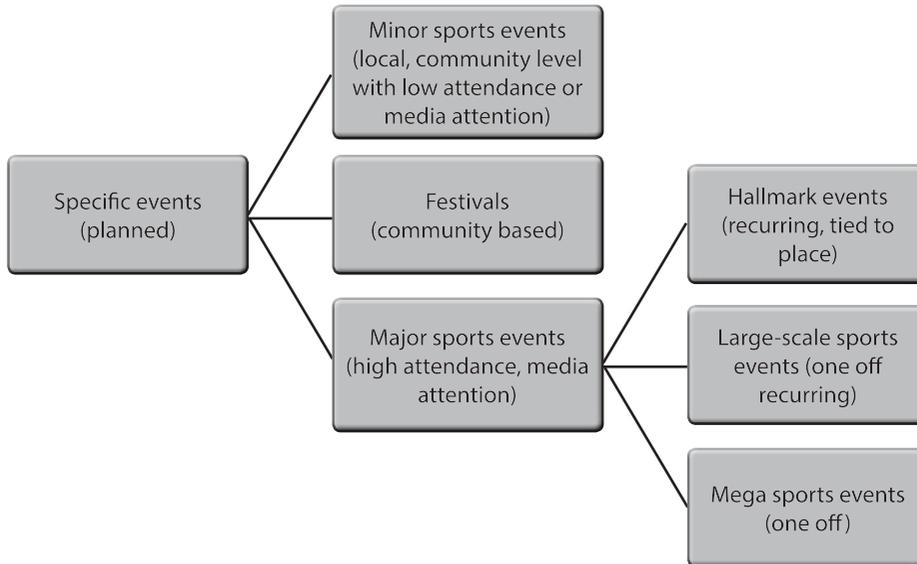


Figure 20.1: Typology of sports events. *Source:* Parent and Smith-Swan, 2017, p.4

The sport events represent a variety of sports and therefore not one single type of event has an influence on the industry. Rather a combination of several key stakeholders, for example sport federations, sponsors and broadcasters as well as professional associations, have a great influence on the industry.

If we consider international sports then the International Olympic Committee (IOC), have a major influence on Olympic Games and Winter Games. The IOC determines the rules and regulations for the type of sports to be included in the games and accreditation for the various contributors, as well as overseeing the general preparations for each Olympic Games through its coordination commissions. The International Paralympic committee (IPC) carries out the same responsibilities as the IOC for the Paralympics games. The Olympic and Paralympic Games are two different events but are awarded the same host city and organised by the same committee. Both the IOC and IPC are non-profit organisations and represented in each country by their respective national Olympic (NOC) and Paralympic (NPC) committees.

Furthermore, the IOC is responsible for the creation of the Pan American games, the Asian Games and the All Africa Games to promote sport in those parts of the world and generate excellence in athletics. Although the IOC and IPC are the custodians of the right to hold the Olympic and Paralympic Games, it is the International Sports Federation (IFS) which determines an athlete's worthiness to participate in the Olympic and Paralympic Games. Aside from these international, regional and continental sport federations there are a variety of international sport

federations and organisations, for example the world anti-doping agency which coordinates action against the use of performance enhancing drugs in sport. The Court of Arbitration for sports is the primary tribunal for resolving sport related disputes.

Therefore, the international sports event establishment comprises a variety of single-sport and multi-sport organisations, assemblies, associations and federations. Many of these bodies can be and sometimes are influenced by external stakeholders such as politics, sponsored media and the general public.

The life cycle of sports event

There are normally three stages in the life cycle of a major international sports event, as outlined by Parent and Smith-Swan (2017). The first of these is the planning stage, and starts with the bid phase which normally lasts between one to three years, depending on the type of event. If the committee submitting the bid is successful in obtaining the right to host the event, then the bid committee transforms into the organising committee. This would probably take about 6 to 8 months. During this time a leader is appointed, who will create the overall strategic plan and the organising committee chart. This is followed by the operational plan phase. This phase highlights the responsibilities and is an extension of the terms of reference from the business plan. It provides more detail and an eye is kept on the budget. The organising committee then splits the operation plan into the divisional plan to create mini versions of the operation plan.

The second stage consists mainly of the implementation plan. The divisional plans are converted into venue plans and this phase sees the amalgamation of the different divisional plans into each of the venues. The organising committee then moves into the games-time phase which can last up to 17 days for Olympic Games or a month for a FIFA World Cup. At this stage the members shift from headquarters to the venues.

The final stage is concerned with closing ceremonies and a wrap up of the event. This stage normally lasts between 6-12 months and it is during this time members of the organising committee meet to write the final reports and consider and manage the event's legacy.

It has to be said that this is an ideal life cycle but nevertheless, it provides a guide for sport event managers.

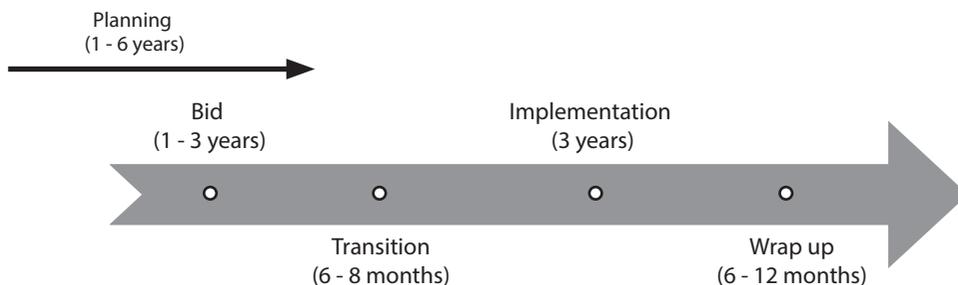


Figure 20.2: Timeline for a hypothetical Olympic Games

■ Mega sports events

Mega sporting events are large scale sports competitions which have significant international interest in a short period of time. Examples of such events include World Cups and Olympic Games, and to host these events countries have to meet specific criteria, besides just having necessary support facilities and adequate infrastructure in place.

The Olympic Games originated in ancient Greece possibly over 3000 years ago, was revived in the late 19th century and have become a permanent fixture in the sporting calendar. The first modern Olympics took place in 1896 in Athens and featured 280 participants from 13 nations competing in 43 events.

The interest of governments and corporations to organise mega sporting events has increased dramatically. This increase is related to their goal of beneficial economic, political and social impacts that result from hosting these events. However, they can also have a significant negative economic impact.

Economic perspective of sports events

Sports events can enable substantial short-term and long-term economic benefits to the hosting region and usually attract intense competition. In the short-term this could be through attracting visitor spending, the promotion of the host city; and in the long-term, by enhancing the region's image as a sport tourism destination, as well as possibly improving the quality of life in the region. Furthermore, sports events can create regional economic benefits by motivating business activity and creating jobs in the region. Staging sports events incurs up front operational expenditure through, for example, investments, staff salaries, marketing, facilities, and equipment. Moreover, the benefits are often indirect but even the direct short-term benefits are widely spread across economic sectors.

A study carried out by Mortazavi (2020) to examine the role of satisfaction in visitor spending in a sport event found that as satisfaction exceeds expectation, visitor spending increases significantly. In particular, the results suggested that on average there was 70 per cent more expenditure for those whose satisfaction level exceeded their expectation. The economic success of a sports event depends heavily on the expenditure of the event visitors. In Mortazavi's view, understanding the factors which influence visit expenditure are very important for event organisers. While some expenditures are necessary, such as food or accommodation, a large amount of spending depends on the level of satisfaction. Since satisfaction is a function of quality of services, it is imperative that the event managers and local service suppliers provide high quality service which in turn generate profits. Moreover, visitor satisfaction is important for the hosting city, and its tourism businesses, to attract revisits. As satisfaction positively influences expenditures, at the promotion stage for an event, when expectations are formed, it is crucial that visitors' expectations need to be met to enable visitors to experience satisfaction and spend more. Other findings from the study were that non-local and international visitors spend significantly more on accommodation, and high income levels and age also significantly impact expenditures (Mortazavi, 2020).