



ELSEVIER

Contents lists available at [ScienceDirect](#)

Sport Management Review

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/smr



An unacceptable status quo: A sport development case study of swimming and drownings

Brennan K. Berg^{a,*}, Carol C. Irwin^b, Paul M. Wright^c, Richard L. Irwin^d,
Michael Hutchinson^e

^a Sport and Leisure Management Program, Department of Health and Sport Sciences, The University of Memphis, Elma Roane Fieldhouse 206, Memphis, TN 38152, United States

^b Physical Education Teacher Education Program, Department of Health and Sport Sciences, The University of Memphis, Elma Roane Fieldhouse 106, Memphis, TN 38152, United States

^c Pedagogy Program, Department of Kinesiology and Physical Education, Northern Illinois University, Anderson Hall 221, DeKalb, IL 60115, United States

^d Provost Office, Administration Building 231, The University of Memphis, Memphis, TN 38152, United States

^e Sport and Leisure Management Program, Department of Health and Sport Sciences, The University of Memphis, Elma Roane Fieldhouse 204, Memphis, TN 38152, United States

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 1 October 2014

Received in revised form 11 September 2015

Accepted 20 November 2015

Available online xxx

Keywords:

Sport development

Swimming

Drowning

Sport policy

Public health

ABSTRACT

This case study illustrates the complexity of sport development decision-making and specifically highlights the public health concern of drowning disparities in the United States. Using sport development research to demonstrate the linkage between empirical study and practice, students must consider various factors for the most effective approach to attract and retain participants involved in a local swimming program. The parks and recreation department director, Bob Shell, is tasked with determining the best program structure based on the sets of sport development proposals he received from a member of the management staff. To further ensure students are presented with a realistic scenario, this case offers a combination of fictional and real life events from an innovative swimming program in Memphis, Tennessee. Students must critically evaluate not only sport development practices and the merits of the swimming program, but other organizational partnerships that may be formed in the community. Therefore, students are placed in a decision-making role that is common to managers in many sport contexts beyond swimming. This case study is appropriate for both undergraduate and graduate sport management courses, with specific application to sport development, policy and governance, strategic management, and recreation or leisure topics.

© 2015 Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Teaching note

Sport development decisions can affect sport participation in both positive and negative ways, whether those decisions are made by a government, sport governing body, or sport managers operating a program. Selecting an effective sport

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 901 678 2462; fax: +1 901 678 3591.

E-mail addresses: bberg@memphis.edu (B.K. Berg), cirwin@memphis.edu (C.C. Irwin), pwright@niu.edu (P.M. Wright), rirwin@memphis.edu (R.L. Irwin), mdhtchns@memphis.edu (M. Hutchinson).

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.smr.2015.11.002>

1441-3523/© 2015 Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

development approach often requires the consideration of multiple, and sometimes conflicting, factors and stakeholder groups. Interacting with the sociocultural context, such decisions may impact opportunities for individuals to experience the possible benefits of sport participation. Sport development programs can also help diversify the participants in an activity and contribute to the equitable provision of participation opportunities that may not have been available to segments of the population previously (Green, 2008; Taylor, Floyd, Whitt-Glover, & Brooks, 2007). This has been particularly true for the sport of swimming in the United States (USA).

Amidst evidence of significant racial disparities in drowning fatalities and the ability to swim, some communities in the USA (e.g., Cincinnati, Ohio; Charleston, South Carolina; Detroit, Michigan; Novato, California) have formulated and implemented innovative swimming programs specifically designed to teach this life skill to the disadvantaged segments of the local populations. In order to fulfill this purpose, it is critical that program leaders incorporate emerging sport development principles in the attraction and retention of the participants. In many cases, it is difficult for a single entity to effectively address such a social challenge on its own, which often requires the coordination of multiple organizations within a community. Such collaborations between sport and non-sport entities are also more likely to be sustainable (Green, 2008). As opposed to one-time events, sustainable community programs have a greater potential to significantly contribute to the development of the local population (Skinner, Zakus, & Cowell, 2008). Against the backdrop of complicated sociopolitical environments and vital public needs that must be addressed, this case study is designed to illustrate the complexity of sport development decision making at the local level and the considerations for attracting and retaining the participants meant to be served by community sport programs.

Bob Shell is the director of the parks and recreation department in Memphis, Tennessee, one of the 25 largest cities in the USA that must create its own swimming program. After recent tragedies in Memphis, Bob is tasked with designing a program that will help alleviate the problem of drowning and teach more non-White residents how to swim. To help him in this endeavor, Bob selects one of his senior managers, Brenda, to conduct research and generate viable approaches that will address this social challenge. Brenda must offer the most effective solutions to recruit participants for swimming and then keep them involved in the Memphis program. While several alternatives may exist, the case presents a set of proposals that would shape the new swimming program, Memphis Swims Now.

This case study is appropriate for both undergraduate and graduate sport management courses, with specific application to sport development, policy and governance, strategic management, and recreation or leisure topics. The application of sport development frameworks offered by Sotiriadou, Shilbury, and Quick (2008) demonstrates to students how empirical research can inform the practical challenges that sport managers and policymakers recurrently face from an organizational perspective. While the case has a specific context of community sport programs in the USA, it presents challenges that are encountered in a variety of settings worldwide, such as competitive sport (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2008; MacPhail & Kirk, 2006), elite sport (Green, 2005; Stevenson, 1990), and community sport elsewhere (Green, 2008; Hartmann, 2003; Skinner et al., 2008). This case offers students the opportunity to critically evaluate different courses of action and then select the best sport development approach for the local community. Although the individuals presented are fictional and some realities have been altered, the case utilizes facts and data from the actual Memphis swimming program. Thus, students are provided a realistic scenario to contemplate the most appropriate solution to the presented situation and are tasked with managing similar issues that were recently deliberated by policymakers.

1. A guide from sport development

Sport development primarily focuses on understanding the factors that facilitate sport participation and the most effective methods to promote the opportunities and benefits of participation (Shilbury, Sotiriadou, & Green, 2008). It is now common for governments, sport governing bodies, and other policymaking sources worldwide to consider sport development options in order to achieve broader policy goals. This can be seen in the two central branches of sport development. One branch is the development of sport, which has often been depicted in pyramid models of sport development. In such models, policymakers and sport managers focus on increasing the number of sport participants shown at the bottom of the pyramid, which serves as a foundation from which to develop participants' talent and channel them up toward elite levels of competition, represented at the top of the pyramid (Green, 2005). The desired outcomes of this branch include enhanced economic benefits from a healthier population and a larger pool to select talented athletes for elite competition, which may generate prestige and pride among the population. As Shilbury et al. noted, even though the vast majority of sport participants will never reach the top level of the pyramid as elite athletes, increasing the number of participants encourages a lifelong involvement in the sport through the spectating of sport events and purchasing equipment or memberships for recreational participation. In order for the development of sport to be effective, decisions will have to be made on how to attract participants to try the sport and then retain them to facilitate regular participation opportunities. As Sotiriadou et al. (2008) explained, these sport development processes are interrelated, and will significantly influence individual experiences in sport and how effectively a program meets its objectives.

The other sport development branch is development *through* sport. Development through sport uses sport participation as a means to contribute toward individual and societal progress (Lyras & Peachey, 2011). Globally, sport managers have attempted to use this branch of sport development to address challenges in various community settings, such as the social diversion of underrepresented groups, intergroup exchanges and conflict resolution, academic achievement, and the promotion of healthier lifestyles (Chalip, 2006; Green, 2008; Hartmann, 2003; Skinner et al., 2008). In an Australian context,

Light (2010) highlighted the social development possible through swimming programs. As Shilbury et al. (2008) explained, while having different focuses, the two branches of sport development are not entirely separate from each other. In order for policymakers and sport managers to alleviate a social problem through sport participation, they will need to deliberate the best methods to attract and retain program participants.

Attraction, which may also be labeled as recruitment, entrance, or introduction, refers to the ways individuals begin playing a particular sport (Green, 2005; Sotiriadou et al., 2008). Given the myriad of choices available in most communities for how to use discretionary time, empirical research has revealed several significant factors for why an individual may select a particular sport over other options. The support of valued social influences is often an important encouragement to become a sport participant (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2008). Significant social influences vary for each person, but examples include parents, siblings, spouses, friends, and coaches. Next, the potential for new or stronger relationships is often critical to both potential participants and even their social influences (Green, 2005). Sotiriadou, Wicker, and Quick (2014) noted that the social aspects of sport participation may often be overlooked by program leaders, who instead focus on promoting the sport itself. While seemingly obvious, accessible opportunities to play the sport are crucial to participants selecting sport over other uses of their time (Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005). If the sport can only be played in a location where safety is a concern or long travel is required, the participant is less likely to be recruited into that sport (Gillard & Witt, 2008). Furthermore, a prospective participant needs to perceive opportunities to experience the enjoyable aspects of the sport. For example, some youth athletic programs have been shown to provide little opportunities to play the sport due to participants standing around waiting for their turn to get involved (Bergeron, 2007; Leek et al., 2011). In such contexts, there was an inadequate level of staffing in relation to the number of participants, or an overemphasis on winning resulted in excessive amounts of time spent discussing game strategies rather than simply playing the sport.

The successful attraction of participants into a sport then facilitates the retention process (Sotiriadou et al., 2008). Retention refers to an individual moving from mere sampling of a sport to a committed, regular participant. Given high rates of inactivity and withdrawal from sport (Butcher, Lindner, & Johns, 2002), attraction by itself is inadequate to ensure permanent participation. In order to continue a sport, participants must value the benefits possible through their involvement in the activity, and those values must be constantly emphasized and experienced while in a program (Green, 2005). In various contexts, the benefits of social interaction, skill development, hedonic rewards, positive relationships with coaches, and play have consistently appealed to sport participants of diverse backgrounds (Berg, Warner, & Das, 2015; Chalip, Schwab, & Dustin, 2010; Gillard & Witt, 2008; Green, 2008; Wankel, 1997). As Green (2005) further highlighted, since motivations for sport involvement are different for each individual, programs must emphasize multiple benefits from participation in order to enhance the likelihood of retaining a larger portion of participants. If this is practiced, participants are less likely to be drawn away from the sport into other activities. As part of retention, it is also critical that sport managers understand the socialization taking place, in which the individual confirms his or her identity with the program. This is why highlighting skill development, continued affirmation from important social influences, rewards and recognition for exceptional attendance and effort, team social functions, and mentoring are some of the activities that need to be intentionally structured into the program (Fraser-Thomas et al., 2005, 2008; Gillard & Witt, 2008; MacPhail & Kirk, 2006; Sotiriadou et al., 2014; Wankel, 1997). If applied, the participants' identity with the sport program will be enhanced and their retention more likely.

While the abovementioned sport development principles are relevant to participants worldwide, this case study specifically focuses on Blacks in the United States and the historical challenges of attracting and retaining them to the sport of swimming. Therefore, additional considerations need to be taken into account for sport programs attempting to attract and retain underrepresented segments of the population. It is fundamentally critical to avoid placing blame on the underprivileged group and recognize that social, cultural, economic, and environmental inequalities often significantly contribute to low participation rates (Taylor & Toohey, 1999; Taylor et al., 2007). Initially, attraction may be challenging if cultural roles or expectations create the common perception that only certain racial groups participate in a sport or limit an individual's ability to find friends willing to try the activity (Schwartz & Corkery, 2011). These considerations may also eventually impact retention efforts.

In addition to universal benefits sought through sport participation, disadvantaged groups may commonly pursue other benefits distinct from the rest of the population. For instance, Stodolska, Sharaievskaya, Tainsky, and Ryan (2014) observed that given the higher prevalence of single-parent Black families in the United States, some Black youth may be particularly attracted to sport as a means to meet their need for bonds with positive role models (e.g., coaches, mentors). Instead of concerns regarding crime causing some individuals to not participate in sport programs, Stodolska et al. also found that safety was among the most important motivations for minority youth beginning and committing to regular participation. Safety may not simply pertain to a fear of crime, but also a desire for predictable routines that are free from uncertainty and protect underprivileged participants against the allure to deviant behavior, which sport programs can provide (Fuller, Percy, Bruening, & Cotrufo, 2013). As Pharr and Lough (2014) noted, while Blacks may traditionally participate more in some sports, program leaders should not narrowly restrict the activities offered given that Blacks often enjoy continued participation in sports that are novel to them, which Fuller et al. also found. Overall, sport leaders must demonstrate intentionality and flexibility in how they structure a culturally relevant program and then attract and retain underrepresented participants for that program (Olushola, Floyd Jones, Dixon, & Green, 2013).

2. The disparities in swimming

As the third leading cause of unintentional death worldwide, drowning results in more than 372,000 fatalities per year around the globe (World Health Organization [WHO], 2014). Research has revealed a variety of risk factors that collectively lead to an increase in drowning rates globally, including demographic characteristics (e.g., younger individuals, male gendered, ethnic minority status), extent of education and supervision (e.g., swimming competence, lower socioeconomic status, children left alone around water), likelihood of natural disasters (e.g., hurricane, tsunami), and more frequent use of or reliance on water transportation (e.g., sport and recreation, water travel) (Brenner et al., 2009; WHO, 2014; Yang, Nong, Li, Feng, & Lo, 2007). While international figures are believed to be substantially underestimated, drowning fatalities are much more likely to occur in low- and middle-income countries (Peden & McGee, 2003). In Bangladesh, for example, drowning accounts for 43% of the deaths among children aged one to four years (WHO, 2014). However, even in many affluent countries, drowning is a public health concern. It has been noted in many developed countries (e.g., Australia, Germany, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada) that the easy access to water, the promotion of aquatic recreation, and the high numbers of immigrants relocating from countries without a culture of water safety have all increased the risk of drowning (International Life Saving Federation [ILSF], 2007).

Amidst this global concern, total drowning deaths each year are among the highest in the USA when compared to other developed countries. For example, in 2010, there were 3782 drowning deaths in the USA, or approximately 10 such deaths per day (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [CDC], 2013). Importantly, drowning is a common cause of death for children aged one to 19 years, and serving as the second leading cause of death for children aged one to four years (CDC, 2012). Furthermore, there continues to be noticeable racial disparities in drownings each year, with Blacks significantly more likely to drown than other groups in the USA. For instance, Black children ages five to 14 are three times more likely to fatally drown than White children in the same age range (Laosee, Gilchrist, & Rudd, 2012).

There is consistent historical evidence in the USA regarding constraints toward swimming for disadvantaged populations. Wiltse (2007) verified that access to swimming, as sport or recreation, was denied to underrepresented groups during the early 20th century. As discriminatory practices became common in many parts of the USA, this racial barrier continued to block disenfranchised children from learning to swim (Wiltse, 2012). Disadvantaged children in this era and ensuing years were instructed directly, and indirectly, to believe that water was treacherous and to avoid any chance of experiencing this hazard (Irwin, Ross, Irwin, & Martin, 2010; Ross, Irwin, Irwin, Martin, & Ryan, 2014). This unflinching call to steer clear of pools and other bodies of water formed a cultural norm that currently persists. While other ethnic groups now have lower drowning rates than Whites, Blacks continue to experience a statistically significant higher rate of drowning than the rest of the population (Laosee et al., 2012).

Along with significantly lower swimming participation rates, racial minority populations have been shown to possess a lower ability to swim (Irwin, Irwin, Ryan, & Drayer, 2009). In the USA, Irwin, Irwin, Martin, and Ross (2010) reported that there were five significant variables that impact a child's swimming inability: fear of drowning/injury, lack of parent/caregiver encouragement, personal appearance issues, financial shortcomings, and facility access problems. The first factor, fear of drowning/injury, was by far the most significant. The Black participants in the study reported a significantly higher fear of drowning than the White participants. Further, the Hispanic participants, along with the Black participants, also reported a significantly higher fear of injury from swimming than the White participants. Children who received parental or family support were more skilled swimmers, less worried about injury or drowning, more likely to enjoy swimming, and desired to swim more often, which supports what has been found elsewhere in the sport development literature. Furthermore, 25.4% of the study participants ($n = 1909$) who self-reported that they could not swim at all and 50.9% who could swim slightly in the shallow end only stated that they would likely swim during the upcoming summer five or more times a month. This finding is alarming as these ability groups are in danger of fatal and non-fatal drowning incidents (Brenner et al., 2009; Yang et al., 2007).

While focused on racial disparities in swimming ability in the USA, this case study is relevant to other national contexts where such problems are of annual concern (ILSF, 2007; WHO, 2014). Unlike participation in many other sport activities, the potential for fatality as a result of swimming inability should elicit increased attention from sport managers. According to Branche and Stewart (2001), approximately 85% of deaths and injuries due to drowning could be eliminated if better prevention efforts were in place. Recent programs in New Zealand, Australia, Bangladesh, China, Thailand, Vietnam, and the USA have demonstrated that teaching children swimming skills can reduce drownings (Moran & Wilcox, 2013; WHO, 2014). Consequently, there is a need to formulate and implement strategies that address the social problems highlighted in this case study.

3. The necessity of collaborations

Public aquatic facilities are frequently employed as sites that underrepresented groups use when seeking qualified swimming instruction or the opportunity to develop basic swimming competencies. However, many municipalities have either closed leisure facilities, such as pools, or reduced the number of aquatic opportunities due to budget constraints in an uncertain economic climate (Popke, 2011; Sanders, 2013). This has placed a greater demand on private or non-profit swimming organizations (e.g., Young Men's Christian Association [YMCA]) that service underprivileged populations to take on this duty. Yet, such segments of the population may not be able to access these activity programs (cf. Taylor et al., 2007),

which has likely contributed to the concerning rate of drownings previously mentioned. This has led to public-private collaborations as a new policy solution (Pisano & Callahan, 2013), which occurred in Memphis with a multiparty alliance involving government, sport, and other community organizations.

Community partnerships involving public and private stakeholders can merge existing funding and facilities to allow for costly undertakings to be possible, such as pool maintenance and personnel to staff the facilities. Such partnerships can thrive since they often operate with fewer restraints imposed by government bureaucracy and traditional sport program structures (Skinner et al., 2008). While cross-sector partnerships need to be detailed in agreement and responsibility from the outset, resulting sport programs can be more effective when tailored to local interests and led by sport or recreation professionals (Casey, Payne, & Eime, 2009). If motivation and commitment are present in the partnerships, a greater amount of human capital, such as expertise, skills, or time, may also be available (Vail, 2007). For swimming, public-private collaboration could help to not only enhance swimming ability, but to also decrease fatal and nonfatal drowning incidents.

4. The reality in Memphis

Two Black adolescent boys tragically drowned on May 31, 2008 separately in City of Memphis pools. Viewing the city government's emergency decisions as ineffective for allowing continued involvement in swimming or addressing racial disparities in swimming ability, a community partnership formed and initiated the Splash Mid-South (SMS) program. Members of the partnership included aquatics professionals from public and private recreation organizations (e.g., City of Memphis Park Services, YMCA), child safety advocates (e.g., American Red Cross, Le Bonheur Children's Hospital, 100 Black Men of Memphis), university researchers in Memphis, and the parents association of a local USA Swimming competitive club team. Donations were collected from the cross-sector partnership and the first SMS program commenced during the winter of 2009. As some SMS leaders implemented the six-week program at the pool facility, the remaining members of the partnership worked elsewhere to evaluate the effectiveness of the program, solicit additional resources through grant writing and fundraising, and secure more facilities and volunteers in anticipation of SMS expanding (Irwin & Irwin, 2012).

A publicly available and underutilized indoor pool facility in north Memphis was selected for the program site. The pool facility, operated by the local government, was ideal since it had Black lifeguards and swimming instructors on staff who wanted to be a part of the innovative program and could relate to the young Black participants. To effectively structure the pilot program, SMS leaders needed to decide how to attract and retain participants. During recruitment, many parents refused to enroll their children in the SMS program when approached by a local faith-based organization due to a persistent fear of drowning or injury. After that setback, one of the SMS program champions secured agreement from parents of the youth in her afterschool program, which was located near the selected pool facility and consistently involved in the Black community. This champion also provided transportation services to ensure the Black youth could access the program and participate without interruption.

With regard to retention, the positive relationships with the swimming coaches and experienced skill development were two of the most commonly cited reasons why participants remained in the program (Irwin & Irwin, 2012). Participants received tailored instruction based on the swimming ability displayed during the first lesson. The youth also stated that encouragement from their social influences motivated them to continue in the program. SMS leaders offered swimming gear (e.g., swim suits, goggles) to further bolster participants' identity with the program. Given the novelty of the program and well-known community organizations involved, SMS soon attracted local media coverage that countered the reporting following the double drowning. For a small number of SMS participants who desired for transition to competitive swimming, a team was formed the following year. Within two years, this team, composed of many Black youth who had participated in SMS, would win a Memphis city championship and placed fifth at the National Black Heritage Swim Meet (Irwin & Irwin, 2012). In subsequent years, SMS expanded to additional pool facilities in Memphis and has taught over 5000 underrepresented children to swim since its inception in 2009.

This case study not only presents students with a significant social issue, but also requires them to simultaneously consider both branches of sport development. These considerations are not confined to the sport of swimming. Most sports can be used as tools for community development and continue to be confronted by the challenges of attraction and retention. The proposed ideas also capture the tension encountered by policymakers in regards to an elite sport or mass participation influence when selecting a course of action. Neither set of proposals is flawless. Therefore, students could be divided in favoring one approach over the other, which may stimulate additional sport development discussions among the class. Further, while students must critically evaluate their decision by considering the realities of the Memphis program, this case has additional value due to the global relevance of swimming inability and drownings. Many communities worldwide will likely need to formulate and implement similar sport development plans in the near future.

5. Discussion questions and exercises

The information given to students in this case study offers an opportunity to contemplate the realistically complex factors that public and private organizations face when attempting to use sport as a policy tool and address critical social issues, such as drowning disparities among the population. Amidst numerous and sometimes competing perspectives for the best sport development approaches, the following questions could guide discussion in the classroom or online. The questions

could also facilitate group assignments for determining how to attract and retain participants to specific swimming programs primarily meant to address drowning disparities in communities:

- (1) In Memphis, explain why it was important to encourage swimming for Blacks. In your location, discuss who are the underrepresented groups and how similar is the issue of swimming participation/drownings. Identify the benefits (or potential benefits) of a community partnership offering a swimming program that addresses disparities in swimming ability among segments of the population.
- (2) Discuss how do we break down the cultural and social barriers for underrepresented groups to participate in swimming.
- (3) Explain which sport development choices you believe are best for Bob Shell to select.
- (4) Beyond the sport development choices offered, devise another strategy that Bob Shell could feasibly recommend to the mayor.
- (5) Looking up websites in your community or region, analyze what publicly offered opportunities are available to assist targeted groups with learning how to swim. Evaluate what local, private organizations offer low-cost swimming programs to assist those same groups.
- (6) If you were to design a swimming program to attract and retain underrepresented groups in your community, justify how you would do it.
 - (a) Prepare two columns to list the activities that you would provide for each sport development process.
 - (b) Discuss what partnerships would be required if you were to develop a swimming program for the underrepresented group that you have chosen.
- (7) Online databases operated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (such as the WONDER online database¹ and the WISQARS online database²) are frequently utilized by policymakers and public health professionals to research various issues. In either database, be sure to select “unintentional” and “drowning” when prompted to specify the intent and mechanism of the injury. Not only can users select which state they want to examine, but they can also select options to breakdown the statistics by race, age, gender, and years. Utilizing either database, complete the following tasks to investigate the latest drowning trends in the USA. For students outside the USA, you may also find a similar database in your country if one is available and explore more local drowning trends.
 - a. Select your state and/or any other state in the USA.
 - b. After specifying that you want to see the last five years of the latest available information, analyze the trends for total number of drownings in your selected state. Explain the trend for the USA as a whole country.
 - c. Looking at the statistical information by race, discuss the differences or trends for drownings among different racial groups in your selected state.
 - d. Explore the differences or trends for drownings between genders and/or age groups.
 - e. Based on the data you have examined, discuss the potential barriers in your selected state for affected groups learning how to swim. Identify methods to address those barriers.

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the Benjamin L. Hooks Institute for Social Change at The University of Memphis as well as the director for the institute, Ms. Daphene McFerren, for supporting this research with both tangible and intangible means.

References

- Berg, B. K., Warner, S., & Das, B. M. (2015). What about sport? A public health perspective on leisure-time physical activity. *Sport Management Review*, 18, 20–31.
- Bergeron, M. F. (2007). Improving health through youth sports: Is participation enough? *New Directions for Youth Development*, 2007, 27–41.
- Branche, C. M., & Stewart, S. (Eds.). (2001). *Lifeguard effectiveness: A report of the working group*. Retrieved from www.cdc.gov/homeandrecrationalandsafety/pubs/LifeguardReport-a.pdf
- Brenner, R. A., Taneja, G. S., Haynie, D. L., Trumble, A. C., Qian, C., Klinger, R. M., et al. (2009). The association between swimming lessons and drowning in childhood: A case-control study. *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*, 163, 203–210.
- Butcher, J., Lindner, K. J., & Johns, D. P. (2002). Withdrawal from competitive youth sport: A retrospective ten-year study. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 25, 145–163.
- Casey, M. M., Payne, W. R., & Eime, R. M. (2009). Partnership and capacity-building strategies in community sports and recreation programs. *Managing Leisure*, 14, 167–176.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2012). *Protect the ones that you love: Child injuries are preventable*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdc.gov/safekid/Drowning/index.html>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013a). *WISQARS fatal injury reports, national and regional, 1999–2010*. Retrieved from http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate10_us.html
- Chalip, L. (2006a). Toward a distinctive sport management discipline. *Journal of Sport Management*, 20, 1–21.
- Chalip, L., Schwab, K., & Dustin, D. (2010). Bridging the sport and recreation divide. *Scholar*, 25, 1–10.
- Fraser-Thomas, J. L., Cote, J., & Deakin, J. (2005). Youth sport programs: An avenue to foster positive youth development. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 10, 10–40.

¹ The full web address for the WONDER database is as follows: <http://wonder.cdc.gov/mortSQL.html>.

² The full web address for the WISQARS database is as follows: http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/dataRestriction_inj.html. Users will need to click on “I Agree” to proceed to the database.

- Fraser-Thomas, J., Cote, J., & Deakin, J. (2008). Examining adolescent sport dropout and prolonged engagement from a developmental perspective. *Journal of Applied Sport Psychology*, 20, 318–333.
- Fuller, R. D., Percy, V. E., Bruening, J. E., & Cotrufo, R. J. (2013). Positive youth development: Minority male participation in a sport-based afterschool program in an urban environment. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 84, 469–482.
- Gillard, A., & Witt, P. (2008a). Recruitment and retention in youth programs. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 26, 177–188.
- Green, B. C. (2005a). Building sport programs to optimize athlete recruitment, retention, & transition: Toward a normative theory of sport development. *Journal of Sport Management*, 19, 233–253.
- Green, B. C. (2008a). Sport as an agent for social and personal change. In V. Girginov (Ed.), *Management of sport development* (pp. 129–146). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- Hartmann, D. (2003). Theorizing sport as social intervention: A view from the grassroots. *Quest*, 55, 118–140.
- International Life Saving Federation (2007). International Life Saving Federation World Drowning Report. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, 1, 381–401.
- Irwin, C. C., & Irwin, R. L. (2012a). *The Memphis story: Teaching a community to swim [Monograph]*. Retrieved from <http://splashmidsouth.org/news/memphis-research-teaching-a-community-to-swim/>
- Irwin, C. C., Irwin, R. L., Martin, N. T., & Ross, S. R. (2010). *Constraints impacting minority swimming participation: Phase II*. Retrieved from <http://www.usaswimming.org/DesktopDefault.aspx?TabId=1796&Alias=Rainbow&Lang=en>
- Irwin, C. C., Irwin, R. L., Ryan, T. D., & Drayer, J. (2009). Urban minority youth swimming (in) ability in the United States and associated demographic characteristics: Toward a drowning prevention plan. *Injury Prevention*, 15, 234–239.
- Irwin, C. C., Ross, S. R., Irwin, R. L., & Martin, N. T. (2010). *Constraints impacting minority swimming participation: Phase II, qualitative report*. Retrieved from http://www.usaswimming.org/_Rainbow/Documents/166f8575-946d-4bc2-8dd6-7ea8ad9c0f6b/2010USASwimming-MinoritySwimmingQualitative%20Report.pdf
- Laosee, O. C., Gilchrist, J., & Rudd, R. A. (2012). Drowning—United States, 2005–2009. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 61, 344–347.
- Leek, D., Carlson, J. A., Cain, K. L., Henrichson, S., Rosenberg, D., Patrick, K., et al. (2011). Physical activity during youth sports practices. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*, 165, 294–299.
- Light, R. L. (2010). Children's social and personal development through sport: A case study of an Australian swimming club. *Journal of Sport & Social Issues*, 34, 379–395.
- Lyras, A., & Peachey, J. W. (2011). Integrating sport-for-development theory and praxis. *Sport Management Review*, 14, 311–326.
- MacPhail, A., & Kirk, D. (2006). Young people's socialisation into sport: Experiencing the specialising phase. *Leisure Studies*, 25, 57–74.
- Moran, K., & Wilcox, S. (2013). Water safety practices and perceptions of “new” New Zealanders. *International Journal of Aquatic Research & Education*, 7, 136–146.
- Olushola, J. O., Floyd Jones, D., Dixon, M. A., & Green, B. C. (2013). More than basketball: Determining the sport components that lead to long-term benefits for African-American girls. *Sport Management Review*, 16, 211–225.
- Peden, M. M., & McGee, K. (2003). The epidemiology of drowning worldwide. *Injury Control and Safety Promotion*, 10, 195–199.
- Pharr, J., & Lough, N. L. (2014a). Considering sport participation as a source for physical activity among adolescents. *Journal of Physical Activity & Health*, 11, 930–941.
- Pisano, M., & Callahan, R. (2013). Creating public–private partnerships as a fiscal strategy. *The Public Manager*, 41, 53–55.
- Popke, M. (2011, May). Communities find alternatives to eliminating learn-to-swim programs. *Athletic Business* Retrieved from <http://www.athleticbusiness.com/articles/article.aspx?articleid=3738&zoneid=6>
- Ross, S., Irwin, C. C., Irwin, R. L., Martin, N. T., & Ryan, T. D. (2014). The development of swimming skills for African American youth: Parent and caregiver perceptions of barriers and motivations. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, 8, 219–239.
- Sanders, T. (2013, June). Proposed budget shows cuts to public safety, children's programs and community services. *The Florida Times Union* Retrieved from <http://jacksonville.com/news/metro/2013-06-28/story/proposed-budget-shows-cuts-public-safety-childrens-programs-and>
- Schwartz, A., & Corkery, M. R. (2011a). Barriers to participation among underrepresented populations in outdoor programs. *Recreational Sports Journal*, 35, 130–144.
- Shilbury, D., Sotiriadou, K. P., & Green, B. C. (2008). Sport development. Systems, policies and pathways: An introduction to the special issue. *Sport Management Review*, 11, 217–223.
- Skinner, J., Zakus, D. H., & Cowell, J. (2008). Development through sport: Building social capital in disadvantaged communities. *Sport Management Review*, 11, 253–275.
- Sotiriadou, K., Shilbury, D., & Quick, S. (2008). The attraction, retention/transition, and nurturing process of sport development: Some Australian evidence. *Journal of Sport Management*, 22, 247–272.
- Sotiriadou, P., Wicker, P., & Quick, S. (2014). Attracting and retaining club members in times of changing societies: The case of cycling in Australia. *Managing Leisure*, 19, 345–358.
- Stevenson, C. L. (1990). The early careers of international athletes. *Sociology of Sport Journal*, 7, 238–253.
- Stodolska, M., Sharaievska, I., Tainsky, S., & Ryan, A. (2014). Minority youth participation in an organized sport program: Needs, motivations, and facilitators. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 46, 612–634.
- Taylor, T., & Toohey, K. (1999). Sport, gender, and cultural diversity: Exploring the nexus. *Journal of Sport Management*, 13, 1–17.
- Taylor, W. C., Floyd, M. F., Whitt-Glover, M. C., & Brooks, J. (2007). Environmental justice: A framework for collaboration between the public health and parks and recreation fields to study disparities in physical activity. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 4, S50–S63.
- Vail, S. E. (2007a). Community development and sport participation. *Journal of Sport Management*, 21, 571–596.
- Wankel, L. M. (1997a). The social psychology of physical activity. In J. E. Curtis & S. J. Russell (Eds.), *Physical activity in human experience* (pp. 93–126). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Wiltse, J. (2007). *Contested waters: A social history of swimming pools*. Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press.
- Wiltse, J. (2012, October). *The deadly legacy of swimming pool discrimination*. Baltimore, MD: Paper presented at the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Annual Convention.
- World Health Organization (2014). *Global report on drowning: Preventing a leading killer* (NLM classification: WA 292) Retrieved from http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/drowning_global_report/en/
- Yang, L., Nong, Q. Q., Li, C. L., Feng, Q. M., & Lo, S. K. (2007). Risk factors for childhood drowning in rural regions of a developing country: A case control study. *Injury Prevention*, 13, 178–182.

An unacceptable status quo: A sport development case study of swimming and drownings

Case study

Bob Shell had served as the director of the parks and recreation department in Memphis, Tennessee for the past 20 years. He was proud of the fact that his department had been able to navigate different challenges each year and still help people benefit from participation in various physical activities, including the popular sport programs that were utilized by more people than any other offering. Such participation was vital since the local government in Memphis, which is one of the 25 largest cities in the USA, was annually confronted with numerous social challenges, including various issues related to the health of its citizens (Goggans, 2012). Bob had effective working relationships with the mayor, his boss, and the city council, which approved the budgetary allocation his department received each year. Despite his comfort level dealing with new challenges and city politics in Memphis, Bob felt a sense of urgency unlike any he had ever known. Three months prior, two Black adolescent boys drowned within a few hours of each other in separate public pools operated by the parks and recreation department. The tragedy of the double drowning, which occurred on the first day the city pools were opened for the summer, drew widespread media attention and created a fervent call for a solution to a preventable and deadly problem (Irwin & Irwin, 2012).

On one of the darkest days of his career, Bob took immediate action even though he was unsure if his decisions were the correct solution. The day after the double drownings, he ordered all municipal pools closed for approximately five weeks. The department began hiring additional lifeguards and requiring supplementary intensive lifeguard training at all pool sites. Due to these additional costs, which were unexpected expenditures, operating hours were reduced for all public pools (Irwin & Irwin, 2012). Also, pool cards, or photo identification registration cards, were required for any child intending to swim at a city pool. The pool cards were free of charge, but could only be obtained at a few public libraries that had the capabilities to generate a photo identification card. The parents or caregivers registering their child for a pool card had to confirm that they would supervise the child while swimming, that the child was physically able to swim, and that the child would obey the rules and regulations of that facility (Maki, 2008). These new safety rules and regulations resulted in additional obstacles to inner city children seeking swimming opportunities. Upon closing the city pool facilities for the first five weeks of the hot summer months, swimming became a forgotten pastime for many families. Once the pools were reopened, as Irwin and Irwin discussed, the reduced hours, the challenges of actually acquiring the pool cards, and the requirement for a caregiver to stay with the child resulted in greater difficulty for many families to use the city pools. Participation numbers at pool facilities in Memphis dropped significantly during this time.

Bob was summoned to meet with the mayor the following week. The mayor informed him that the parks and recreation department must pilot the effort to show the city government's leadership to prevent drownings and ensure that mostly empty public pools would not be the new norm in Memphis. Being direct, the mayor ordered Bob to be as creative as possible to assure evident progress was made on this issue. In six weeks, the mayor wanted to meet with Bob once again and be briefed on the department's approach. Bob immediately called an emergency meeting with his entire management staff and informed them of the critical decisions they would have to make as a department. During the meeting, Bob selected Brenda, one of his most experienced senior staff members, to research the problems associated with swimming and drownings. After several weeks to research the issue, Bob wanted her to generate the most effective solutions for how to increase interest in swimming and help individuals become more committed participants to enhance their swimming ability. After he listened to Brenda's ideas, Bob would select the best strategy and then present it to the mayor. If the mayor approved the new swimming program, Memphis Swims Now (MSN), it would then be announced and implemented immediately. MSN would offer its first swimming program to 20–25 youth twice a week for eight straight weeks. Faculty from universities in Memphis volunteered to evaluate the program for areas to improve. Once those improvements were completed, MSN would then be slowly expanded to accommodate more Memphis youth.³

1. Addressing an overlooked problem

After weeks of research, Brenda reconvened with Bob to share her results. Bob was made aware of how the double drowning represented a far larger problem than he realized. A public health concern in both developed and less developed countries, drowning served as the third leading cause of unintentional death worldwide, resulting in more than 372,000 annual fatalities around the globe (World Health Organization [WHO], 2014). Research had revealed a variety of risk factors that collectively lead to an increase in drowning rates, including demographic characteristics (e.g., younger individuals, male gendered, ethnic minority status), extent of education and supervision (e.g., swimming competence, lower socioeconomic status, children left alone around water), likelihood of natural disasters (e.g., hurricane, tsunami), and more frequent use of or reliance on water transportation (e.g., sport and recreation, water travel) (Brenner et al., 2009; WHO, 2014). Even in many

³ Information about the actual swimming program in Memphis, including its current status, can be found at the following link: <http://splashmidsouth.org/>.

affluent countries (e.g., Australia, Germany, New Zealand, United Kingdom, Canada), the increased risk of drowning often stems from the easy access to water, the promotion of aquatic recreation, and the high numbers of immigrants relocating from countries without a culture of water safety (International Life Saving Federation [ILSF], 2007).

As the meeting continued, Brenda explained that the inability to swim and drownings were relevant problems needing solutions in the USA. For example, approximately 10 people died each day from drowning, with Blacks significantly more likely to drown than the rest of the population (Centers for Disease Control & Prevention, 2013; Laosee, Gilchrist, & Rudd, 2012). Blacks and Hispanics in the USA also indicated a much higher fear of swimming or injuries from swimming than Whites (Irwin, Irwin, Martin, & Ross, 2010; Irwin, Irwin, Ryan, & Drayer, 2009). These findings were particularly relevant for the Memphis community given that within the city limits a majority of residents were Black and the Hispanic population continued to grow. Bob was alarmed at how extensive these problems were and that he had not learned of these issues earlier in his career. As a result of this information, Brenda recommended that initially the MSN program should focus on teaching Black youth how to swim.

Memphis would need a more detailed and intentional approach than Brenda had anticipated. Her research revealed the importance that recruitment and retention strategies played in sport participation programs designed to address a social challenge. The MSN program would have to be about much more than the mere provision of swimming opportunities if it was meant to teach Black youth how to swim and reduce the likelihood of drownings in Memphis. As *Vail (2007)* explained, it is often at the community level that “learn to” programs are offered and residents can experience the benefits of participating in a sport. In order to attract and retain Black residents in Memphis, the selected approach would have to be intentionally structured and culturally relevant to its targeted participants (*Olushola, Floyd Jones, Dixon, & Green, 2013*). After conducting her research, Brenda formulated two sets of proposals for how the MSN program would be structured. This enabled her to present multiple ideas that would then allow Bob to select the best proposals to meet the long-term vision of the program. Each set of proposals presented different approaches for how to attract participants into the MSN program and retain them as regular participants to develop their swimming ability.

2. Attracting new swimmers

2.1. Proposal one

Historically, in the USA, non-White citizens have had less access to quality physical activity opportunities due to various social, cultural, economic, and environmental barriers (*Taylor, Floyd, Whitt-Glover, & Brooks, 2007*). For recruitment, Brenda focused more on how to structure the MSN program to ensure that it was attractive and accessible to the new participants. The program would use the newest public pool facility in the community, located on the far west side of the city in downtown Memphis. As an indoor facility, this would be an attractive location for new participants to experience swimming for the first time and understand what elite swimmers often used to develop their swimming skills (*Sotiriadou, Shilbury, & Quick, 2008*). Accessibility is an important consideration when selecting the site of a sport program (*Fraser-Thomas, Cote, & Deakin, 2005*). Since there were many public buses that traveled through downtown Memphis, Black youth across the city would be able to reach the program site even if their parents or guardians could not bring them. Given the many well-known attractions in downtown, it was also one of the most secured areas of the city to safeguard the local tourism industry.

The parks and recreation department did not have a large staff of swimming instructors, particularly those with experience, and would have to work with other organizations in Memphis to supply critical resources, such as human capital. Brenda secured volunteer agreements from coaches of local competitive club teams to teach the new swimmers. The coaches would serve as instructors of the MSN program for one week and then a new set of coaches would take over the following week. This would ensure wider community involvement in the program and reduce the likelihood of volunteers withdrawing their expertise due to over commitment. Even though the coaches were mostly White, the opportunity to learn under highly technical coaches would be attractive and make it more realistic for participants to envision excelling in the sport. It would also allow the participants to meet different coaches each week. Several swimming club programs operated in Memphis and their coaching staffs expressed interest in working with the parks and recreation department since it would allow them an opportunity to increase membership in their recreational programs once individuals completed the MSN program.

Initially, attracting Black participants could be challenging since cultural roles or expectations can create the common perception that only certain racial groups participate in a sport or limit an individual's ability to find friends willing to try the activity (*Schwartz & Corkery, 2011*). There were widespread beliefs among many Black residents in Memphis that they should not participate in swimming or would enjoy long-term benefits from learning basic competencies (*Irwin & Irwin, 2012*). In marketing the MSN program, accomplished Black swimmers could be used as role models to promote the possibility that MSN participants could not only learn how to swim, but even develop into elite swimmers. While Blacks were considerably underrepresented in competitive swimming despite their evident overrepresentation in other sports (*Myers, 2012*), role modeling would resonate with many Black youth who may have not ever contemplated swimming as a feasible sport outlet. Role modeling is effective for drawing interest in numerous sport contexts (*Irwin, Sutton, & McCarthy, 2008*). To feature stories or messages from role models, social media would be primarily used as the promotional medium and increase the likelihood that the targeted youth would hear about the MSN program. Billboards featuring noted Black

swimmers would also be placed in Memphis neighborhoods with a high concentration of Black residents. Interested participants would then be directed to the MSN website to read more information and register for the program.

2.2. Proposal two

Brenda did not have such a competitive or elite swimming influence in the second proposal. Young people would be attracted to the MSN program to learn a basic life skill, no longer be intimidated by aquatic activities, and interact with other youth in a safe social environment. Thus, most youth participants may not be primarily interested in becoming elite swimmers (Shilbury, Sotiriadou, & Green, 2008). Furthermore, instead of concerns regarding crime causing some individuals to not participate in sport programs, safety was among the most important motivations for minority youth beginning and committing to regular participation (Stodolska, Sharaievska, Tainsky, & Ryan, 2014). Seeking safety may not simply indicate a desire to avoid crime, but also an aspiration for predictable habits that are free from uncertainty and protect underprivileged participants against the allure to destructive behavior (Fuller, Percy, Bruening, & Cotrufo, 2013). Since there were underrepresented youth across the city, a public pool facility located in the middle of Memphis would be used. A centrally located site would not place constraints on who could travel to the MSN program. Although the facility was much older than the downtown option, it was still an indoor facility located in a mostly safe area of the city that would allow the MSN program to be offered at all times of the year.

Given the urgency in the community caused by the double drownings, several organizations in Memphis expressed interest in addressing the unacceptable status quo. To ensure the youth could travel to the pool facility and participate in all swimming sessions, a local children's hospital volunteered to pick up and take home those who did not have a consistent means of reliable transportation. This was a valuable contribution from the hospital since the parks and recreation department did not have the means to transport the youth to the pool site. Further, some parents may be hesitant about allowing their children to travel to and from the pool site by themselves or spending a large portion of their day taking the children to and from the program. For program instruction, three Black swimming instructors employed by the parks and recreation department would teach swimming fundamentals to the participants. Having the same swimming coaches each week was crucial to foster supportive relationships between coaches and participants, and to provide a sense of normalcy since the young participants would likely be nervous about learning to swim. It was also beneficial to deploy at least some coaches who were of the same race or ethnic background as the participants (Pharr & Lough, 2014; Schwartz & Corkery, 2011).

In order to locate the new participants, a local faith-based organization, Urban Sport Ministries (USM), offered to team up with the parks and recreation staff and approach parents at its sites since sport participation was a focal point of USM's operations. While some funds for traditional print and radio advertisements would be needed from the parks and recreation department, word-of-mouth promotion and referrals were particularly persuasive in marketing (Irwin et al., 2008; Sotiriadou, Wicker, and Quick, 2014). Parents or guardians would be more open to the MSN program given their established trust with USM. As the significant social influences, research from other sport contexts showed that parental support can play a critical role in an individual's willingness to try a new activity (Green, 2005). The success of recruiting participants into the MSN program would be based on the social support or potential relationships that could be formed. For instance, if a child is determining whether to play basketball for the first time, the child may be likely to enter the sport if he or she can see the potential for new or stronger friendships with other children in the program. As Green (2005) noted, the child's parents, as significant social influences, may also urge participation if they can see the potential for new or stronger relationships for themselves. Since the participants would be attracted from USM, the youth could envision such relationships given that they would already be at least familiar with the other members of the program.

Bob was pleased that Brenda was fully prepared for this meeting and presented some intriguing ideas. However, he also hoped that one set of proposals would clearly emerge as the best option. At this point, Bob recommended taking a break and enjoying lunch together at one of the many well-known Memphis barbecue restaurants. After the break, they would move on to discussing how to keep the Black youth engaged for the entire MSN program once they started.

3. Retaining the participants

3.1. Proposal one

While many people may try a sport activity, research had confirmed that withdrawal or abandonment were common in sport (Butcher, Lindner, & Johns, 2002). Bob and Brenda had also experienced this in their years in the parks and recreation department. Thus, the benefits of the MSN program needed to be intentionally emphasized to the participants (Green, 2005). As a result, the participants would be more likely to value the program and desire to be regularly involved in swimming. Research showed that skill development was particularly important to encourage commitment to a sport activity (Wankel, 1997). To further emphasize skill development, at the halfway point and conclusion of the MSN program, prizes would be awarded to the youth who improved their skills the most according to the parks and recreation staff present at each swim session. Rapid skill development would be feasible for everyone under the tutelage of expert coaches. Several local businesses agreed to support the program by providing the prizes for the swimmers (e.g., gift cards, swimming gear).

Participants would be regularly reminded of the increased energy and sense of improved health obtained through the MSN program. Experiencing such hedonic rewards are appealing to participants in various physical activity settings and may improve the likelihood of increased commitment to the sport (Berg, Warner, & Das, 2015; Chalip, 2006). To ensure that the MSN participants were frequently reminded of how much better they felt and developed socially, mentoring would be a pillar of the MSN program. Even though the same swimming coaches would not be at the pool facility each week under this proposal, all the participants would be assigned to a coach who would encourage continued involvement. The coach would contact their assigned participants, along with their families, each week to answer questions, emphasize their achieved skill development, and remind them of how much healthier they felt. Interactions with an empowering coach who is not seen only as an authority figure often facilitate positive sport experiences that encourage continued participation and social development (Green, 2008). Some of the Black youth in Memphis may come from single-parent families and look to the MSN program as a source of positive role models (e.g., coaches, mentors), which has been found among underrepresented participants in other sport contexts (Stodolska et al., 2014). Mentoring would also allow the swimming coaches to contact youth who had missed a week in the program and offer solutions to help get them back to the program. At the very least, this would allow for adjustments to be made to MSN so that other participants would not be lost due to similar issues (Gillard & Witt, 2008).

3.2. Proposal two

Brenda's other retention approach emphasized social support and interactions among the participants. The coaches would tailor the program to each swimmer based on individual assessments during the first lesson, which would result in personalized instruction. Recognition was important and an awards celebration at the midway point and conclusion of the program would still be offered. However, the recognition would be based on exceptional attendance and effort displayed, which hopefully each participant would be awarded (Gillard & Witt, 2008). The awards celebration would be an informal party with food and music provided by the parks and recreation department. Family and friends would be asked to attend and hear about the progress each participant had made, which would serve as a source of social reinforcement to continue swimming. Local journalists would also be invited to the awards celebration so that MSN could be profiled and the associations Black residents had with swimming could slowly be transformed in Memphis. While Blacks may traditionally receive recognition and participate more in some sports, program leaders should not narrowly restrict the activities offered given that Blacks often enjoy continued participation in sports that are novel to them (Pharr & Lough, 2014). To facilitate further support from social influences and coverage from the media, a monthly newsletter would be created and distributed through email and hard copy handouts. The newsletter would highlight the history of the MSN program, the skills the participants were taught, the benefits of regular swimming participation, and the coaches who worked with the youth.

Also critical to this retention strategy was established time at each swim session for play. To prevent the sessions from becoming overly planned and the participants growing weary of an excessive amount of rigidly structured swimming drills, unstructured play would be encouraged in the shallow end of the pool. Play encourages continued participation in an activity because it allows expression, creativity, hedonic rewards, and relaxed expectations for performance (Bowers & Green, 2013; Chalip, Schwab, & Dustin, 2010). While coaches would still be present, the youth could freely practice their new swimming skills or participate in random games with other participants. This would result in a greater level of enjoyment and comfort with swimming while fostering stronger friendships among the participants. Furthermore, during each awards celebration, family and friends would be invited to join the participants in the pool for additional time of unstructured play.

4. The final recommendation

Exhausted from the meeting, Bob spent many days processing all the issues that had been raised. He underestimated how challenging it would be to address racial disparities in swimming and prevent drownings. However, during that time the mayor's office called and scheduled a meeting the following week so that Bob could present his recommendations to the mayor. As Bob sat in his office overlooking the Mississippi River, he reviewed Brenda's proposals. Bob saw merit in both strategies and knew that either set of ideas would represent some degree of progress compared to what had been done previously in Memphis. Bob was somewhat frustrated that the best proposal was not clear to him, which he hoped for going into the meeting with Brenda. Proposal One clearly had a competitive or elite influence and the possibilities intrigued Bob. Proposal Two was more centered on promoting swimming for swimming itself and Bob questioned if this would appeal to more participants. In different ways, Brenda had solicited contributions from community organizations for each proposal, which was critical to lessen the park and recreation department's responsibility for the provision of the program. Regardless of which ideas Bob selected, the community partners would be able to contribute resources, expertise, volunteers, and time that the parks and recreation department would be limited in sustainably providing on its own. This offered some relief to Bob in the midst of his stress.

At this point, Bob realized that for this decision and the rest of his career he would likely not be able to generate a perfect solution to every problem the city of Memphis encountered. Bob's decision was now about selecting the best sport development approach for the parks and recreation department from the ideas Brenda presented. He was unsure which proposal to select. He then contemplated the feasibility and merit of selecting components from both proposals. Bob understood that his final decision on the MSN program would impact the department for many years. More importantly,

because he understood the gravity of drownings and the social inequality in swimming, the quality of life for many Memphis residents was at stake with his decision. It was time to select the department's sport development plan for MSN and go meet with the mayor.

References

- Berg, B. K., Warner, S., & Das, B. M. (2015). What about sport? A public health perspective on leisure-time physical activity. *Sport Management Review*, 18, 20–31.
- Bowers, M. T., & Green, B. C. (2013). Reconstructing the community-based youth sport experience: How children derive meaning from unstructured and organized settings. *Journal of Sport Management*, 27, 422–438.
- Brenner, R. A., Taneja, G. S., Haynie, D. L., Trumble, A. C., Qian, C., Klinger, R. M., et al. (2009). The association between swimming lessons and drowning in childhood: A case-control study. *Archives of Pediatric Adolescent Medicine*, 163, 203–210.
- Butcher, J., Lindner, K. J., & Johns, D. P. (2002). Withdrawal from competitive youth sport: A retrospective ten-year study. *Journal of Sport Behavior*, 25, 145–163.
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2013b). *WISQARS fatal injury reports, national and regional, 1999–2010*. Retrieved from http://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/mortrate10_us.html
- Chalip, L. (2006b). Toward a distinctive sport management discipline. *Journal of Sport Management*, 20, 1–21.
- Chalip, L., Schwab, K., & Dustin, D. (2010). Bridging the sport and recreation divide. *Schole*, 25, 1–10.
- Fraser-Thomas, J. L., Cote, J., & Deakin, J. (2005). Youth sport programs: An avenue to foster positive youth development. *Physical Education and Sport Pedagogy*, 10, 10–40.
- Fuller, R. D., Percy, V. E., Bruening, J. E., & Cotrufo, R. J. (2013). Positive youth development: Minority male participation in a sport-based afterschool program in an urban environment. *Research Quarterly for Exercise and Sport*, 84, 469–482.
- Gillard, A., & Witt, P. (2008b). Recruitment and retention in youth programs. *Journal of Park and Recreation Administration*, 26, 177–188.
- Goggans, L. (2012, July). Memphis' "big" problem. *The Memphis Flyer*. Retrieved from <http://www.memphisflyer.com/memphis/memphis-big-problem/Content?oid=3228001>
- Green, B. C. (2005b). Building sport programs to optimize athlete recruitment, retention, & transition: Toward a normative theory of sport development. *Journal of Sport Management*, 19, 233–253.
- Green, B. C. (2008b). Sport as an agent for social and personal change. In V. Girginov (Ed.), *Management of sport development* (pp. 129–146). Oxford, UK: Elsevier.
- International Life Saving Federation (2007). International Life Saving Federation World Drowning Report. *International Journal of Aquatic Research and Education*, 1, 381–401.
- Irwin, C. C., & Irwin, R. L. (2012b). *The Memphis story: Teaching a community to swim [Monograph]*. Retrieved from <http://splashmidsouth.org/news/memphis-research-teaching-a-community-to-swim/>
- Irwin, C. C., Irwin, R. L., Martin, N. T., & Ross, S. R. (2010). *Constraints impacting minority swimming participation: Phase II*. Retrieved from http://www.usaswimming.org/_Rainbow/Documents/121d4497-c4be-44a6-8b28-12bf64f36036/2010%20Swim%20Report-USA%20Swimming-5-26-10.pdf
- Irwin, C. C., Irwin, R. L., Ryan, T. D., & Drayer, J. (2009). Urban minority youth swimming (in) ability in the United States and associated demographic characteristics: Toward a drowning prevention plan. *Injury Prevention*, 15, 234–239.
- Irwin, R. L., Sutton, W. A., & McCarthy, L. M. (2008). *Sport promotion and sales management* (2nd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- Laosee, O. C., Gilchrist, J., & Rudd, R. A. (2012). Drowning—United States, 2005–2009. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 61, 344–347.
- Maki, A. (2008, June). Memphis floats new rules for swimmers when city pools reopen July 2. *The Commercial Appeal* Retrieved from <http://www.commercialappeal.com/news/2008/jun/17/city-pools-reopen/>
- Myers, S. L. (2012, October). *Competitive swimming and racial disparities in drowning*. Baltimore, MD: Paper presented at the Association for Public Policy Analysis and Management Fall Research Conference.
- Olushola, J. O., Floyd Jones, D., Dixon, M. A., & Green, B. C. (2013). More than basketball: Determining the sport components that lead to long-term benefits for African-American girls. *Sport Management Review*, 16, 211–225.
- Pharr, J., & Lough, N. L. (2014b). Considering sport participation as a source for physical activity among adolescents. *Journal of Physical Activity & Health*, 11, 930–941.
- Schwartz, A., & Corkery, M. R. (2011b). Barriers to participation among underrepresented populations in outdoor programs. *Recreational Sports Journal*, 35, 130–144.
- Shilbury, D., Sotiriadou, K. P., & Green, B. C. (2008). Sport development. systems, policies and pathways: An introduction to the special issue. *Sport Management Review*, 11, 217–223.
- Sotiriadou, K., Shilbury, D., & Quick, S. (2008). The attraction, retention/transition, and nurturing process of sport development: Some Australian evidence. *Journal of Sport Management*, 22, 247–272.
- Sotiriadou, P., Wicker, P., & Quick, S. (2014). Attracting and retaining club members in times of changing societies: The case of cycling in Australia. *Managing Leisure*, 19, 345–358.
- Stodolska, M., Sharaievska, I., Tainsky, S., & Ryan, A. (2014). Minority youth participation in an organized sport program: Needs, motivations, and facilitators. *Journal of Leisure Research*, 46, 612–634.
- Taylor, W. C., Floyd, M. F., Whitt-Glover, M. C., & Brooks, J. (2007). Environmental justice: A framework for collaboration between the public health and parks and recreation fields to study disparities in physical activity. *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*, 4, S50–S63.
- Vail, S. E. (2007b). Community development and sport participation. *Journal of Sport Management*, 21, 571–596.
- Wankel, L. M. (1997b). The social psychology of physical activity. In J. E. Curtis & S. J. Russell (Eds.), *Physical activity in human experience* (pp. 93–126). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.
- World Health Organization (2014). *Global report on drowning: Preventing a leading killer* (NLM classification: WA 292) Retrieved from http://www.who.int/violence_injury_prevention/publications/drowning_global_report/en/