

Fields of Study-Sport Management

Definition and Nature of the Field

Sport management prepares students for managerial positions in a variety of sports-related organizational settings through the development of skills in the areas of planning, organizing, directing, leading and evaluating programs. Examples of these organizations include: college/professional/amateur sports (e.g., Olympics); sport marketing and management firms; sport communications and news media firms; corporate sponsorship and advertising firms; sporting goods firms; arenas, stadiums, and civic centers; college/university intramural sports programs, community recreation sports programs; social service agency sports programs (e.g., YMCA); private club sports programs; and military sports programs. The wide range of organizational settings where sports occur means that individuals can select and pursue careers in the kind of work environment of their choice and for which they are best suited (public/private organization; profit/non-profit organization; professional/amateur sports; participation/spectator sports). Besides traditional sports, the sports industry now involves new alternative, action, and extreme sports (e.g., ice climbing, snow kayaking, ultra endurance racing, etc.) and new professional sports, especially for women. An upsurge in the numbers and variety of sports publications, sports related internet sites, and enhanced mass media presentation and exposure of sports events and activities is resulting in an increase in the need for individuals with special qualifications in sport communications/media. Likewise, growth in the number and variety of specialized sports facilities, an increase in sports tourism and adventure travel, the rapid progression of the globalization of sports, and the provision of sport related goods and services for diverse market segments, is contributing to the continued growth of the sports industry. These developments ensure that the sports industry will continue to rank among the largest and most diverse industries in the nation, thereby sustaining career opportunities for the future.

Education Requirements

Individuals pursue an academic degree program that provides them with a thorough understanding of sports administration and business/management, plus significant and meaningful practical work experiences related to managing sport organizations/events. Some of the core classes required to pursue a sports management degree include sports organization and administration, facility and event management, mass media, sociology/psychology of sport, physical and biological sciences, computer training, and legal/ethical issues in sports. In addition, correlated course work and general prerequisites can include english, algebra, statistics, public speaking, economics, principles of management, financial accounting, marketing and organizational behavior. An internship experience is normally done after all course work has been completed and a quality internship is often beneficial in establishing a career in the highly competitive sports industry. Upon graduation, students will be well acquainted with the sports industry, be highly trained in various theories and practices of management, and be able to apply critical thinking and techniques to solve real problems related to the sports profession.

Related Work Experiences

For high school students considering a sport management career, playing varsity sports, participating in school sports organizations/clubs and assisting with school sports events or clinics is highly valued since it provides individuals with strong sports backgrounds and leadership experiences. Other work experiences that individuals can obtain to strengthen their backgrounds in preparing to study sport management in college include: officiating sports competitions; coaching and/or assisting with the management and operations of sport camps/clinics, and serving as a volunteer worker with professional, college or amateur sports teams, camps, clinics, or events.

Career Opportunities

There are a variety of careers that students can pursue after completing their degree. Some common career examples include: Supervisory or management position at a sports facility (facility operations, events planner); team marketer (e.g. ticket sales, advertising, community liaison); team media relations specialist; sports promotions and event planner; sports reporting or sports broadcasting; Nutrition and fitness products sales rep; athletic department or intramural sports director; community recreation director; player or coach agent; adventure travel coordinator and/or tour guide; camp director.

[Sources: Adapted from What is a Sport Management Degree?: <http://www.sportmanagementdegreehub.com/what-is-a-sport-management-degree/> and the National Association for Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) Career-Fields of Study: <http://www.shapeamerica.org/career/fields/sport-management.cfm>]