Developing a High Performance Programme in a Small Federation
Today’s operating environment for the National Governing Body of a sport

Rowing Ireland
British Rowing
Dansk Forening for Rosport
Deutscher Ruderverband e.V.
Veslaška zveza Slovenije
……..
National Governing Body

= National Federation

= Non Profit Sports Organisation
Internal Characteristics of a Federation

* Not driven by financial motives, may have imprecise objectives; difficult to monitor performance
* Accountable to many stakeholders; members, government, sponsors, volunteers, staff
* Organisational structures can be complex
* Organisations rely heavily on volunteers
* Non-profit sports organisations created & maintained on the basis of a set of values about the service the organisation provides
* Relationship between board and paid staff potentially difficult if uncertainty remains about who is in control of organisation

Fishel (2003)
Motivations for Sport Volunteers

- Altruism – Helping others
- Personal Development – Personal growth, new skills, new experiences
- Community Concern – Obligation to community
- Ego enhancement – Positive self feeling
- Social Adjustment – Relationships with other people

Government Sport Policy

* Shaped by:
  * Government Departments
  * National Governing Bodies
  * Olympic Councils
  * Specific Sports Agencies
Government Interest in Sport

Two Key Policy Motives

* Health through participation
* Elite sport
Relationship With Government

* Co-operative: Goals & Means are similar (Elite Sport)
* Complementary: Same Goals, Different Means
* Co-optive: Dissimilar Goals, Similar Means
* Confrontational: Goals and Means are both dissimilar

Najam 2000
Stakeholders

- Board, Staff, Volunteers
- Participants and Members
- Education providers and local government
- Regional Sports Boards and Agencies
- Commercial partners, sponsors, broadcasters
- Other NGBs and ISFs
- Multi-sport bodies such as the IOC
- Sports Councils
- Central Government

UK Sport 2003
The changes that have occurred as a result of hiring paid professional staff.

- Initially an increased pattern of centralisation
- Then a decreased pattern of centralisation, often to a point lower than before the appointment of the professional staff member

Thibault et al., 1991:95
Alters the role of the voluntary board members. Relationship between volunteers and paid staff has evolved and requires negotiation to define boundaries.

Increased potential for conflict over who has real power and influence in decision making

Conditions have been created for ‘Dual Leadership’ with board chairs and executives assuming various elements of leadership role.

Hoye and Ciskelly (2003a, 2003b)
Ethical Principles That Underpin Corporate Governance

- Accountability – to shareholders and stakeholders
- Transparency – provision of information to interested parties excluding that which would infringe the privacy or intellectual property of individuals or is not in the national interest
- Fairness and balance – in the use of organisational power
- Honesty – in the provision of information to internal and external stakeholders
- Dignity – upholding the right to human dignity in all dealings
- Legal – exhibit full compliance with the law and adhere to conventional codes of behaviour
- Goodwill – in the conduct of all organisational activities

Standards Australia 2003
England won the World Cup . . . because we had an outstanding group of players . . . the most intense preparation . . . [and] a powerful team spirit both on and off the pitch. Most importantly, we had a strong, dynamic organisational culture that fully supported our new approach. Without it, our systems would have been built on a foundation of sand and wouldn’t have weathered the mildest of storms.

Woodward, 2004, p.6
Performance Management & Leadership in Elite Sport

- 13 National Performance Directors (11M/2F)
- Age Range 42-54
- Elite Sport experience 4-35 years
- 24 Medals at Beijing
- $264m USD of Public Investment
4 General Dimensions of Performance Leadership

* Vision
* Operations
* People
* Culture

Fletcher, D. & Arnold, R. (2011)
The vision for the organization needs to be clear, and specific to what you want to achieve, where you want to go . . . it’s got to be stretched, though at the same time remain realistic and achievable . . . and, I think, ultimately targets and goals need to be owned by everyone who is working towards that vision . . . that way, people will buy into what you are trying to do.

Fletcher, D. & Arnold, R. (Participant 10) (2011)
Vision Themes

Vision Development

Influences on the Vision

Sharing the Vision

Vision Themes
“Managing expectation is vital across far more than just performance—it relates to what we’re trying to achieve and where we’re aiming to be . . . I think it will be a big issue in the build up to [the] 2012 [Olympic Games] because, well . . . expectation of [nation] results . . . will need managing . . . get it wrong and you are in trouble . . . So you can’t just publicize the vision—you need to manage people’s interpretation of it and their expectations too. “
Operation Themes

- Financial Management
- Strategic competition & training planning
- Athlete selection for competition
- Upholding rules & regulations
I think it’s crucial that you inspire and encourage them [staff] in their jobs, you have also got to empower them to do it. That shouldn’t be mistaken for not communicating with them regularly; I just try not to be constantly looking over their shoulder . . . We also try where possible with administrative staff to make sure that they travel once with the team, so that they get a feel for what it’s like on the receiving end of what they do, and at the same time it’s recognition for the work they have done.
People Themes

- Staff Management
- Lines of Communication
- Feedback Mechanisms
We have immersed [name of external assessment program] into our own reporting structures so we don’t have a separate recording structure . . . we have been able to tailor it to our needs and it is part of our process now. That is important to me since the last thing I want is another reporting structure . . . Though I can see why some NPDs might find it a pain in the a**, but we don’t because we are already doing it; it’s engaged and integrated into our procedures.
Culture Themes

- Establishing Role Awareness
- Organisational & team atmosphere
We have annual ‘world class days’ where we bring everyone on the program together. . . . When they [the staff] join us their role is made clear through extensive induction sessions, job descriptions, and contracts. However, one way I particularly like to make people aware of their role is through team circulars and, whether you are a team leader, assistant team leader, doctor or whatever you are, your role is summarized in that circular . . . [including] who you are managed by, to whom you are accountable, and where the buck stops.
Culture Themes

- Establishing Role Awareness
- Organisational & team atmosphere
Creating a Team Atmosphere

We have two major camps each year which everyone goes to, and everyone coming together then kind of builds up a team atmosphere. . . We have tended to also have a reception before we have gone away, and when we go to major events we will start off with a meeting for everyone. . . where we establish certain rules, like (unless they are competing the next day) we require them to come to the venue, in their tracksuits, to support the other athletes. . . We go as a team, come back as a team.
Summary

* Professionalisation driven/funded by Sports Agencies & the search for improved performance is changing the structure/dynamics of NGBs
* Continuous articulation of vision is important
* Clear vision must be underpinned by aligned performance & process goals at organisational, team, and individual level
Management and Operations within a team

Financial Management

Strategic Competition & Training Planning

Athlete selection process for competition

Upholding Rules & Regulations

Strategic investment in elite sport is a critical factor in achieving success at the highest level

(De Bosscher, Bingham, Shibli, van Bottenburg, & DeKnop, 2008; Green & Houlihan, 2005; Houlihan & Green, 2008)
References #3

* Hoye, R. & Cuskelly, G. (2003b) Board-executive relationships within voluntary sport organizations, Sport Management Review, 10(1), 77-100