

# *Fostering a Sport Participation Legacy: The Importance of a Sport Facility*

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**Research Interests**

- Sport Participation
- Sport Experiences
- Facility Management
- Recreation Planning
- Campus Recreation



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- Management & Development
- Organizational Capacity
- Policy Development
- Sport and Social Change
- Leadership



# The purpose of this study was to understand the factors involved in fostering a post-event sport participation legacy

## Literature Review

- Legacy research tends to be conducted immediately after events with those directly involved (Gratton and Preuss, 2008; MacAloon, 2008; Orr and Inoue, 2019)
- Sport facility legacies have attracted limited interest from scholars (Thomson et al., 2019)
- Post-event sport facility utilization is generally low (Alm et al., 2016)
- Conflicting evidence surrounding sport participation legacies (e.g., Misener et al., 2015; Potwarka and Letherdale, 2016; Wicker and Frick, 2016)
- Epicentre Effect: Regional sport participation may increase when conditions are met (Potwarka & Wicker, 2021)



# Research Questions

- How does the planning and design of a facility contribute to a post-event sport participation legacy?
- How do ownership and operational structures of a facility foster a post-event sport participation legacy?
- How do the programs and services offered at a facility contribute to a post-event sport participation legacy?



# Method

Instrumental Case Study with semi-structured interviews of employees who work at a multi-use sport facility constructed for a Major Sport Event in a large Canadian city

Partnership model – municipal government, university, operator corporation & high performance training centre

Located in a low socio-economic area of the city and on University property

Utilization rates have continually grown year over year

5 years after the event had taken place



# Findings

- (1) The facility location bridged stakeholder needs
- (2) The facility design met both pre- and post-event needs
- (3) Importance of formalized pre-event communication and coordination
- (4) Importance of formalized post-event communication and coordination
- (5) Wide variety of programs and services that meet diverse community needs





# Discussion

Sport event was a catalyst to mobilize the public sector

City had identified area of city with limited recreation infrastructure capacity

University experiencing significant growth

Site selection & type of program spaces promoted post-event utilization



# Discussion

Design and functionality would have benefitted from more input from the recreation programmers responsible for planning programs and services (Davis, 2019)

Interorganizational Relationships (agreements, owner operator structure, coordination, etc.) created opportunities for sport participation & reduced duplication of services

Each organization within the facility is responsible for providing services to a different type of user

High Performance athletes training in the view of children





# Key Contributions

Sought to identify conditions that foster sustainable post-event participation legacies

Highlights the importance of physical and human resources required to manage sport participation outcomes

Effective facility management can improve capacity and diversity of sport and recreation program offerings





# Practical Implications

Practitioners feels sport facilities constructed for major sport events can contribute to sport participation

Location, design, agreements and range of programs contribute to ensuring a facility is well utilized after an event takes place

Cross-sector partners can combine resources to address common participation constraints and foster sport participation



# Questions & Discussion



# Extra Slides





## The facility location bridged stakeholder needs

“This part of [the city] was identified [as] being very, very recreation low, especially with water...we always had an interest in building [a pool] at this end of town” (Ian)

“[this area] being seeded as a [low income] neighborhood, [the city] wanted to have a state-of-the-art facility in this area” (Marie)

“[the university was in] talk[s] about building a new facility...right around the same time the Games were announced as coming to [the city].” (Dave)





## The facility design met both pre- and post-event needs

“the actual design probably came from the high-performance side” .... “If they offered me a bathtub, I would have been happy giving an introduction to water program to one child, but we had two 50 metre pools” (Ian)

“About a year to 18 months prior to the building being opened...[we were] coming across a lot of questions...why was it built like this, why was [fitness studio] three so small compared to studio two, why isn't there a divider in a gymnasium, things like that...And so one thing I think that could have helped was having the [facility management group] and city staff brought in a little bit earlier in the design process.” (Marie)

“The actual design of the building...our staff wasn't directly involved...and I think this is where there was a bit of a lost connection in having [recreation] programmers look at space a little bit more before it was designed. They were really focused more on the aesthetics and functionality for the Games as opposed to what it looked like afterwards.” (Dave)





## Formalized Pre-Event Communication and Coordination

“there are fixed line items in the budget for us, and so those fixed items are the city contribution, the university contribution, the high-performance legacy contribution, and so, yes there are fixed amounts that are coming in each year” (Mike).

The legacy agreement mandates that the legacy fund “give [the facility management group] X number of dollars per year [and they] have to provide high performance a certain number of hours, time in the facility” (Elizabeth)

The operating agreement, which “discusses what programming each [organization] will run. So, for example, [the facility management group] does not run swim lessons, that’s a city program” (Mike).



## Formalized Post-Event Coordination and Communication

“there [are] tri-party meetings at each level...from a director level, to a manager level, to a kind of programming level in place to do programming” (Mike)

“there are tri-party meetings...for the fieldhouse and gym space, for the fitness centre and studio space, and for aquatics” (Elizabeth).

“[programmers] get X amount of squares in a weekly schedule that you would need to program and the only way that you can move those squares [is to] trade one for one” (Dave).

“[programmers] sit down and they hash out exactly who gets what space and what time and then they negotiate for different times during different seasons...it’s basically just a negotiation of space that’s been distributed, so everybody gets a percentage” (Elizabeth).





## Programs and Services that Meet Diverse Community Needs

“We have city programs for kids...Then you look at the next stage, which is now the kids that are playing competitive basketball or volleyball... then you look at university age students who are coming in at their university level but now they’re participating in recreation programs and competitive sport programs and in instructional classes... Then you go on to the next level which is...high performance athletes...and then you move into the next level which is people who are now retired...”(John)

“If a person is not making much money, and they qualify for [the subsidization policy], they get about \$400 per child so they can sign up for a registered program... Of our total number of registrations in a year, about 35% of the people in this building come here on [the] policy, so they’re not even actually paying any of their own money to attend here.” (Ian)

