

# CREATING WEALTH THROUGH PROFESSIONAL SPORTS MANAGEMENT IN NIGERIA

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## **Abstract**

Sport is one of the striking features of the twenty first century life as evidenced by the variety and popularity of sporting events in the most diverse parts of the world. Professional sports are athletic based events and games conducted for profits by entrepreneurs who pay athletes based on their popularity and regulations of competition and often are involved in regulating the salaries and working conditions of athletes. This paper has tried to x-ray the various ways through which professional sports management could create wealth in Nigeria. Key words in the topic were defined and explained. Finally, the various ways through which professional sports management could create wealth in Nigeria were highlighted and discussed. Recommendations were also proffered.

Man's quest for pleasure, enjoyment, fun, and satisfaction, has made him venture into some activities, which are wholesome and symbolic in nature. There are many avenues through which man satisfies his desires. This can be at film houses, clubs, concerts, sports ground, theatres, reading, writing and a host of others. These have been ways or avenues to meet their needs and release their pent-up energies (Fasan, 2007). Fasan further stated that, however, events and statistics in recent times have shown that a phenomenon or an endeavour or activity and avenue that capture man's interest most is sports. There is no other human experience which has a universal appeal more than sports participation. A consensus of opinion exists that such participation affords the individual additional opportunities in the attainment of high percentage of mental health, physical fitness, socialization (including making more friends and acquaintances), sports skill acquisition, important carry-over values and enjoyment. All over the world today, sports has assumed a household name for reasons that are obvious. This is because many today earn their means of livelihood on sports either as physical education teachers, coaches, athletes, others, as either sports marketers, manufacturers of sporting goods, sports equipment dealers and those in sports journalism profession. Values of sports to many diverse sectors of the world population are indeed enormous. No wonder Saba (2009), observed that sports have

gradually become one of the important ingredients of lives for many people in the world.

### **Concept of Sports**

Okeyinka (2012), defined sport as a creation of a par-time, a play, a game or activity especially one involving physical activity exercise. It is also referred to as an activity that one does for pleasure (recreation) that requires physical fitness or skill that requires physical fitness or skill that requires physical effort in a specific area and according to fixed rules. Sport is also seen, acknowledged, and viewed differently by various groups of sports practitioners. Sports to an athlete is seen and perceived as a career in which individual athlete can grow, develop and earn a living. To spectators, it connotes entertainment where individuals can show maximum support for their teams and derive maximum leisure. To the corporate organizations that support or sponsor sports events and programmes, sport is viewed as an avenue to advertise their products and make money/return from their spending or investment. Based on the genuine value of sports, corporate bodies are keenly interested in investing in the promotion and development of sports programmes. Sports to government, is a potential tool for promoting national unity, national image among comity of nations and to strengthen political ambitions.

Fasan (2004) defined sports as games or events of wide magnitude which attract an involvement of other volunteers. Mba (2009) on the other hand, saw sports as competitive physical activity utilizing specialized equipment and facilities with unique dimensions of times and space in which the quest for records is of high significance. Robertson (2008), defined sports as physical activities guided by established rules, an institutionalized physical activity in which rules are fixed externally. Sport according to Ladani (2007), is an activity that is governed by a set of values and customs and often engaged in competitively. Sports could refer to activities that involve physical and mental capabilities. It requires high level of organization and management. Games and sports are series of activities performed in a certain organized form with or without apparatus for the purpose of developing and maintaining physical fitness, recreation and, or competition. Most of the principal movements in physical education are found within games and sports. This is a large area in which knowledge is being disseminated (Darki, 2003). Sport is one of the striking features of the twenty century life as evidenced by the variety and popularity of sporting events in the diverse parts of the world. In whatever form, sport is one of the greater crowd puller events today.

There are certain basic characteristics which sports must have. They include:

1. It must be play-like in nature
2. It must involve some elements of competition
3. It must be based on physical process

4. It must involve elements of skill, strategy and chance
5. It must have an uncertain outcome.

Sport has become a global phenomenon. It spreads across the continents with enormous wealth, power and influence never experienced over the decade. It is a bonding force dismantling racial and religious barriers. Interestingly, sport has transformed its reareational role to multidimensional roles of fostering unity building friendship and a brand of creative economic ventures that cut across all areas thereby creating wealth.

### **Concept of Professional Sports**

Sports could be amateur sport in which participants engage largely or entirely without remuneration. They are those sports in which competitors are not directly paid for their efforts. They could sometimes be sports played for fun, enjoyment, or for recreation. Sporting amateurism was a zealously guarded ideal in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially among the upper classes, but faced steady erosion through the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the continuing growth of professional sports and monetization of amateur and collegiate sports and is now strictly held as an ideal by fewer organizations governing sports, even as they maintain the word “amateur” in their titles (Naomi, 2009).

Professional sports are athletic events and games conducted for profits by entrepreneur who pay athletes based on their popularity and regulations of competition and often are involved in regulating the salary and working conditions of competitors. Professional athleticism has therefore, through a combination of developments, mass media and increased leisure, brought lager audience that sports organizations or teams can command large incomes (Andy, 1998). Professional sport is perhaps the only activity that defies the commercial norm whereby the media expect to be paid for carrying out publicity for no-media organization. In professional sports, they are expected to pay for the privilege of doing so. As a result, more sports people can afford to make athleticism their primary career, devoting the training time necessary to increase skills, physical condition, and experience to modern levels of achievement. This proficiency has also helped boost the popularity of sports (Underwood, 2009). The focal point of this paper, is therefore, on creating wealth through professional sports management. Sport as an institution is a complex structure which involves the use of complex human materials for prudent uses of the available resources hence the need for management.

Ladani (2007) states that management is the art of leading a group of people towards the attainment of objectives in an organization over the years. It could be viewed as the art or skill of directing human activities and physical resources in attainment of predetermined goals. Inherent in this definition is the implication that

management is about making decisions and this view is universally accepted. Similarly, people involved in management have also been called by many names such as director, supervisor, principal, head and general manager. Looking at these officials, however three active verbs have emerged in these roles and have been identified as administrators, managers, and supervisors. To avoid any sort of confusion in this work, it is possible and acceptable to equate them. Therefore, management is activity for directing or leading the group (the organizations) toward its goals. In general, management consists of orienting human materials and financial resources in dynamic and structure units that will attain their objectives, the satisfaction of those for whom the work is accomplished; while maintaining the search for effective ways to utilize the world's scarce resources. It can be a prime stimulant or major deterrent to the progress of a given society, depending on whether it develops to meet the requirements of that society. In view of the above, every present and future members of management should be aware of those he is to serve and his general responsibilities to the society of which he is a part.

### **Concept of Sports Management**

Sports management is primarily concerned with managing organisations that conduct sporting activities (Mba (2009)). It is a field of education concerning the business aspects of sports and recreation. In Nigerian context, sport is primarily managed by governments with little contribution from the private sector. Basically, the management of Nigerian sports is such that sports managers play active roles at ensuring that the sports policies of government are implemented fully and that is why most elite clubs in Nigerian league are owned and managed by state governments unlike their European counterparts that rely solely on the private sector to get their desired result.

Bucher (1996) defined sports management as guiding human and physical resources in sports into dynamic, hard hitting organizational unit that attains its objectives to the satisfaction of those serving, and with high degree of morale and sense of attainment on the part of those served. Sports management covers every activity or service, which is involved in sports. This includes sports programme and its contents, resources needed for running the programme, personnel, working environment and the beneficiaries who may be regarded as the client (NTI, 2000).

Sports management on the other hand, can be perceived as any combination of skills related to planning, organization, directing, controlling, budgeting, leading to evaluation within the context of an organization or department whose primary product or service is related to sports and physical activities. It could be a field of education concerning the business service aspect of sports (Denses, Kelly, Blanton and Bertel,

1990). Darki (2003) in his view stated that sports management tries to provide answers to what are managed in sports organization.

Sports management position carries a variety of job titles. Programme directors in community sports, programme marketing and promotions directors, academic services for student athletics, corporation sales director of ticketing and finance, sporting goods sales representative, intramural director of campus recreation, facilities coordinator, athletic director, compliance director, athletic business manager and fitness manager are all management titles (Richard, 2007).

Job responsibilities vary with the type of organization, area of the sport industry, and level of management. All involve business aspects of sport, and normally include 50-60 hour work weeks, including night and weekend hours of employment. Job duties may involve working with corporations in special event promotions sponsorship. It may also include accounting, ticketing and financial operations of a sporting event or programme. Additional responsibilities might include developing a risk management plan for dealing with current legal issues in sports. The sport manager may be involved in facility and media relations or the sales of sporting goods and licensed sport products (Richard 2007).

### **Basic Management Functions**

Management functions refer to the functions performed by managers, be it in sports, institutions, business organizations, and recreation centers and sports clubs. There are four basic functions that every manager must carry out, whatever the work situation, the task to be completed is sacrosanct.

These include:

1. Planning (setting goals/objectives to be achieved)
  2. Organising (which includes structuring and staff in the case of sports clubs, involves recruiting and selection of players)
  3. Directing (which involves integrating)
  4. Controlling (sometimes called measuring or evaluation)
- The functions are to a large extent sequential, but they also interact and overlap. The functions are universal and since-qua-non in all managerial and supervising work. However, the methods and approaches used vary with:
- a. The purpose, aim or mission of the organisation
  - b. The style of work being done.
  - c. The level in the organisation at which the manager works
  - d. The competence of the manager
  - e. The personality of management style of the manager.
  - f. The work style of the organisation

The team manager draws up a plan of action for the season with schedules for screening, training, pitch and sports facilities. After conducting assessment, he appoints coordinators to coordinate various events organized by the club.

The team manager engages in various training of athletes in indoor and outdoor games. He ensures harmony of his team and asserts influence and authority. He encourages development of skills of members. He continues with effective evaluation of performance in training and ensures formidable teams in preparation for better performance in competitions.

### **Creating Wealth Through Professional Sports Management**

Professional sports management as a field of education concerning the business aspects of sport has a lot of inherent avenues for creating wealth, which include gate fees from national and international professional sporting engagements. These national and international professional sporting engagements yield lots of money accruing from gate fees for the national or international sporting competitions. These gate fees if properly managed create wealth for the countries or clubs engaged in such competitions. These gates fees could be ploughed back to building of stadium in the name of the various clubs concerned, thereby creating wealth for such club/clubs.

Also sponsorship from reputable companies organizations and manufacturing industries yield a lot of money for the clubs or organizations being sponsored. Such funds if prudently managed create wealth for the club/clubs and the nation as a whole. Various media commercial advertisement of various events using the names of some professional players by companies and captains of manufacturing industries to boost their sales also yield money and create wealth for the professional player (s) concerned.

Production of sporting wears such as jerseys, shirts, shorts, singlet, canvas shoes and boots also help to create wealth for such companies or industries in particular and the nation in general. Also building of hotels in and around the vicinity of various stadia and sporting arenas for professional competitions create avenues for wealth. These hotels are easy accommodation places for athletes and their coaches and thereby easy areas for creating wealth for the host countries of such international professional competitions. The hotel bills accruing from such hotels to a large extent improves the revenue earnings of such hotels (s) in particular and host nation in general.

Transportation system during any professional sports competition to the venues of the competition enriches the transporters and creates wealth for the individual as well as the nation generally. Various viewing centers are opened in various places for watching the competitions. These centres offer relaxation, and also engage in sales of

consumables, thereby increasing the financial capacity of the owners and creating wealth for the individual owner and the nation in general.

## **Conclusion**

In summary, there are various ways, too numerous to mention, through which professional sports management can help in creating wealth for any nation. All over the world today, sport has assumed a household name for reasons that are obvious. This is because many today earn their means of livelihood on sports either as physical education teachers, coaches, athletes, others as either sports marketers, manufacturers of sporting goods, sports equipment dealers, and those in sports journalism profession such as sports writers and sports commentators, to mention but a few. This paper has tried to x-ray the various ways through which professional sports management could create wealth in Nigeria. Key words in the topic were defined and explained. Finally, the various ways through which professional sports management could create wealth in Nigeria were highlighted and discussed.

## **Recommendations**

In order to reinforce the roles of professional sports management in Nigeria, the following recommendations have been proffered.

1. Prudent management of scarce resources accruing from professional sports management (both human and materials) should be encourage which could lead to improvement of wealth, in Nigeria.
2. Wealthy Nigerians with reputable companies and manufacturing industries should be encouraged to sponsor professional sports competitions. This will enhance the financial dispositions of the clubs being sponsored.
3. Clubs in Nigeria should be encouraged to build stadia for their various clubs. In so doing, they are creating wealth for their clubs in particular and Nigeria in general.
4. Nigerian businessmen should be made to establish companies and industries that can produce sporting out fits/equipment, thereby creating wealth for the businessman as well as creating wealth for Nigerian citizens in general.

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