

INTRODUCTIONARY VIEW ON ISSUES CONCERNING HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT IN CROATIAN SPORTS

Alen Jerkunica, Ante Gabrić and Teo Bratinčević

College of Sports Management "Aspira", Split, Croatia

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Abstract

Management of human resources in Croatian sports has been very little observed or not observed at all, until now. Due to this fact we can only observe the last decade – first decade of 21st century – and we can see that the sports results from last few years are below general expectations, especially if we consider the psychophysical potential and talent in sports of population of this area as well as natural and infrastructural conditions for sports activities in this area. But, we can talk a lot about the underachievement of sports results in collective sports, especially on a level of team sports. The cause of this problem can be found in nonexistent strategy of management of human resources in sports' collectives. And this trend that has prevailed seems to be continuing to evolve in the future without any signs of responsible and systematic management of human resource with exact selective criterion and evaluation of overall work and results.

Key words: management of human resources, sports organization, life-long learning, personnel

Introduction

Management of human resources in every field of human activities, as well as in sports activities, presents one of those factors in which it is crucial to influence the quality of work results (sports results), optimization of relations between what has been invested in the project (expenses) and what has been achieved in terms of project income, and, of course, to influence the contribution of sport in the process of upbringing and education of youth, especially those who take part in sports activities. Also, management of human resources in sport influences the level of quality of living of the whole community in which sports collective takes part which can have positive consequences on financial income of the community as well as on creating optimistic atmosphere among the citizens – supporters and it can also influence the identification of image of social community with sports brand.

Human resources management in Croatian sports

The main resources that the organization hires are material, financial and human resources. The role of management of human resources is that through various activities like planning the personnel, recruiting (internal and external), selecting between the recruits, training and developing personnel potentials, valuation of performances and work compensation, ensures the adequate structure of employees that poses the knowledge, skills and behaviour necessary for achievement of goals. It is the human resource that with its engagement affects the development and success in the whole sports organization. It is virtually impossible to imitate human resources because "what differs it is that overall organizational, intellectual, professional and other capabilities are not the summary of individual capabilities.

New quality that, depending on other factors (overall practise and programmes of management of human resources, management style, organization culture, structure, general social relations, etc.), can be bigger or smaller" (Bahtijarević-Šiber, 1999). Special segment of human resources in sport are surely the volunteers without whom the functioning of sport that is a part of radio intensive activities, especially amateur ones, could not be possible. Also, sports manifestations like all kinds of competitions, world and European championships, Mediterranean games, Olympics, would be impossible to organize without volunteers that usually participate because of their love for sports. Sports organizations have more and more come to conclusion that the most important resources they poses are not the buildings, technology or funds, but people who are because of their unique values and capabilities competitor's advantage. The specificity of sports organizations is that "management of human resources in these organisations is aimed at two different kinds of employees: sportsmen and others" (Covell, Walker, Siciliano, Hess, according to Bartoluci and Škorić, 2009). Namely, a sports organization cannot be successful without quality sportsmen. Of course, they require special management treatment. This raises an important question: How to keep the sportsmen, who have outgrown the financial capabilities of their sports club? It is difficult to give a simple answer to this question, but surely, the sportsman in question will hardly leave the team if he feels a strong belonging to this organization, if he is satisfied with organizational culture and atmosphere, in other words, if he is satisfied with the way he is treated by those who manage the club. The question of professional staff (coaches, teachers, pedagogies) is one of the most important problems in the Croatian sport.

It seems that clubs do not have the interest to invest into long term profession, and without this none of the sports organizations can be successful because "knowledge becomes the crucial capital and the biggest competition strength of the company that transforms itself into learning organization, and this is how people, human resources, personnel become the key strategic advantage of the organization" (Buble, 2006). Insufficient education in management that does not cover enough manager's skills training as well as education of all other employees, is one of the reasons for inferiority of Croatian sports organizations in comparison to those in Europe. It is obviously necessary to improve the system of education and improving of employees in sports organizations according to conception of life-long learning that is based on the fact that knowledge rises with exponential speed, while production and technological processes become more complex but they are still no less complicated social relations. Because of the rapid dating of gained knowledge, due to the changeable demands within technological and social development, there is a need for permanent education to overcome the tasks regarding work, society, politics and sport. Sports organizations must act according to principles of contemporary management, in other words, they must consider management as "process of working with others and with help of these others to achieve the organization aims in changeable environment with effective use of limited resources" (Kreitner, 2005).

Problem and aim

In hierarchical management structures of sports collectives in Croatia it is noticeable that people are being selected in different ways to perform certain duties and these are often rambling structures of selection or wide range of non-transparent criterion of evaluation of human potentials. This is why there are often people without vision and knowledge, sometimes even without any experience in managing sports collectives, performing duties in sports organizations. This is why many times we have witnessed inexpert and incompetent governing of sports collectives that leads to insufficient level of game quality that again leads to bad results and inadequate mental and physical shape of our sportsmen on the field. This is comparable to collision of our sports collectives and sports collectives from other European countries where these organizational issues are evidently organized with better quality. Also, the consequences of insufficient competence of employees in sport on financial part of sports societies are immeasurable. This is why we are recently witnessing wide range of financial dubiousness in clubs and bankruptcy threats within famous sports clubs. All mentioned above leads to decrease of quality of sports performance, decrease of rating figures, interest of public and media for sport events, and it all directly affects the downfall of club income from tickets, marketing and TV-authorisation.

So, as a consequence among other, of unselective personnel in sport, we come across the long year agony and/or collapse of sport collectives which have by their games and results left a permanent mark in war-booty books of home and European competitions, as well as in memories of sports lovers throughout Croatia and Europe. To elaborate the loss that community feels because of these epilogues is not necessary – they are obvious. In this and some following works we will try to give some basic guidelines for analysis of situation in management of human resources in the Croatian sport so we could, in the future, on professional level try to change equivalent solutions for improvement and criterions in management of human resources.

It is important to stress some of the common forms that exist in selection of personnel that manage the sports collectives in our country:

1. Personnel from political structures: as a consequence of the fact that sports collectives, as brands, are mostly connected to local community and are today generally registered as citizens associations, with regards to the fact that it is a matter of prestige and social image to participate in certain collectives, statues of many sports societies have made possible that representatives of local political structures govern the clubs, sometimes even with influence on state level with idea that this is the best way to enable the more quality finance of sports club activities. In reality, we have seen many times that this practise has lead to nepotism in personnel and governing professional pyramid of work in clubs, disrespect of competence, knowledge and professional qualities needed to perform responsible functions in sport, unallotted spending of funds of taxpayers and often to satisfying partial financial interests on the cost of resultant and financial interest of sport collective governed by individuals from political structures. As a final consequence, these sports collectives have fallen into serious financial dubiousness and (un)cultural behaviour of individuals has had large repercussions on sociology of social relations.

2. Businessmen personnel: it is becoming more often that leading and management of sports clubs is taken over by representatives of successful companies which are also the largest sponsors of sports activities in particular sports collective. What is seen as a problem in this model of management of human resources in sport is inadequate experience in field of sport, that is, insufficient knowledge of processes of gaining sport results, lack of time for complete professionalization of sports functions, interfering with work of professional personnel who produce the results on the sports field and lack of punishment of this kind of interference, impatience in expectations of gaining profit from invested money which results in unsystematic sports business decisions and unnecessary cuts and shifts in field of sports, and it often also leads to complete withdrawal of investing company/companies from the project after a short period.

3. Ex-sportsmen: this model showed some success in the past, especially when it was combined with the model of participation of representatives from successful companies. However, the practice has often shown that successful sportsman does not have to necessarily be successful manager, as well as successful coach or educator (with a certain number of exceptions in both cases, although there were more of them among coaches) but it still happened that these retired sportsmen manage sports collective on different levels of management, although they have never had any specific knowledge, qualifications, or even capacity for quality management work in sports.

4. Individuals from the various financial backgrounds: although by investing their money, most often under the supervision of politic structures in sports societies or certain companies – sponsors of clubs, they achieved great sports and business results, very often this would happen in short period, while on the long term, partial interests would rise above interests of sports collective, so through time, sports results would very often become inversely proportionate to the property of investor or the whole project would cease. Today's unresolved legal status of sports societies in Croatia has helped a lot these individuals to become influential managers of clubs.

Conclusion

From everything that is said here it is obvious that none of these models or combinations of models of management of human resources in sports

collectives since independency of Croatia, at least if we consider high and middle management levels, have, with few exceptions, completely satisfied general or public interest in rising the quality of sports games and sports results, as well as realised optimal governing of finance. It is evident that a completely new view of competences is needed regarding working in sports, responsibilities towards public and supporters, fair-play in behaviour towards financiers of sports projects and employees in sport, but also separation of ownership and management function in sports collective. But the most important is to set criterion of competence, knowledge and vision so that educated people can take over the sports societies and thus realize the quality step forward by sublimating all positive assumptions for work that are on disposal to our social community and individuals.

Since the quality management of human resources presupposes scholarly, expert and responsible approach in which, if we really want Croatian sport to rise in these financial inconvenient times, and in this way bring it closer to top European and world sports, there is no room for today's common patterns of behaviour like valorisation of all kinds of connections and friendship, returning favour for favour, surrendering to subjective estimations about who is good for leadership and management of sports collectives, etc. It is necessary to start almost from the beginning with different practical solution in management of human resources in our sport.

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UVODNA RAZMATRANJA O PROBLEMATICI UPRAVLJANJA LJUDSKIM RESURSIMA U HRVATSKOM SPORTU

Sažetak

Upravljanjem ljudskim resursima u hrvatskom sportu se do sada posvećivalo malo ili nedovoljno pažnje. Shodno tome, rezultati koji su ostvarivani posljednjih godina na sportskim borilištima, a fokusirati se možemo ponajviše na posljednju dekadu, odnosno vrijeme prvog desetljeća 21. stoljeća, bili su i jesu ispod razine opravdanih očekivanja javnosti i publike, imajući u vidu sav psihofizički potencijal te talent ovdašnjeg pučanstva za širok spektar sportova i sportskih igara, te uzimajući u obzir prirodne i infrastrukturne uvjete koje hrvatski sportaši imaju na dispoziciji. Napose možemo govoriti o trendu podbačaja rada i rezultata u kolektivnim sportovima, osobito na klupskoj razini, čemu je velikim dijelom kumovalo nepostojenje strategije upravljanja ljudskim resursima u sportskim kolektivima, a trend koji je prevladao čini se da se nastavlja i dalje u budućnosti, bez da je moguće primijetiti znakove da se upravljanjem ljudskim potencijalima želi pristupiti sustavno i odgovorno, rabeći egzaktnije kriterije selekcije i vrednovanja rada i rezultata.

Ključne riječi: *upravljanje ljudskim resursima, sportska organizacija, cjeloživotno učenje, kadrovi*

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Correspondence to:

Alen Jerkunica, MSc.

*Aspira – College of sports management
21000 Split, Domovinskog rata 65, Croatia
Tel: 00 385 (0)99 33 32 009
E-mail: alen.jerkunica@aspira.hr*