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Reflecting on our Heritage and Planning our Future: 25 Years of Managing Sport and Leisure

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This year marks the 25th Anniversary of the international journal, *Managing Sport and Leisure*. In our first editorial as Editors-in-Chief we would like to outline some of our ideas for the journal and update you on some of the progress made to-date.

To conceptualise our changes and roles within the journal, it feels pertinent to direct readers to a recent editorial by Emma Bell and Todd Bridgman (2019) in the journal, *Management Learning*. Emma and Todd discuss the notion of ‘editorship-as-curatorship’, a role associated with critical diligence alongside clear passion and care. For us, the notions of a curator aligns with the en-vogue notion in sport institutions as organisations appointing a custodian (or sporting director). In sport a custodian would be responsible for overseeing the short, medium and long-term sustainability of the organisation, maintaining heritage and cultural significance. We feel it is important to state that we share these principles for the role, that is viewing editorship-as-curatorship, alongside our role as custodians for the journal in at least its short-to-mid-term future.

But, what does being a custodian mean to us? In many sport business and leisure contexts, leading practitioners will outline their intentions, “my role is to leave this place in a better shape than when I arrived”. Therefore, first and foremost, every action we undertake as editors will be with the intention of placing the journal on a path of continued improvement. In that sense you could view our role as placing the journal in an improved position than when we inherited it. This commitment to continuous improvement will be reviewed through critical analysis by our broader editorial team, contributing authors and most importantly our

readers. In this respect, we will seek and encourage ongoing dialogues with those interested in helping enhance our journal.

This does not just mean facilitating a timelier peer review process, gaining more article views, improving citations, all of which warrant critical reflections, but are not the primary drive for our involvement in the journal. For us, it means enhancing the journal experience as an editorial board member, contributor, reviewer, and reader. One aspect of our aspiration is for an approach that ensures every interaction with the journal is personal. Working with you and colleagues in our editorial team, we aspire towards ensuring your experience with the journal reflects the deep personal connection and association that we have with our research. Undoubtedly, our eyes are firmly fixed on the future, yet we have much to learn from the past and the journals heritage.

This journals journey began in 1995, as *Managing Leisure* (Taylor, 1995). In his first editorial, the founding editor Peter Taylor, outlined the desire for the journal to attract researchers and practitioners as readers and contributors (Taylor, 1995). The first round of papers covered several diverse topics including leisure management (Coalter, 2005), tourism and parks (Eagles, 1996), theme parks (Taylor & Stevens, 1995; Altman, 1995), case studies and conference reports. During the journals early years, it is important to note that Peter, would write to authors personally to keep them updated on the progress of their submission. We now live in a hyper-connected community of course where email rules. Yet the personal approach adopted by our then Editor-in-Chief, was well utilised by colleagues across the sport and leisure management field, and it comes as no surprise to many who crossed his path, that he retains his reputation as a visionary for the sector and a Godfather of our field.

The history of *Managing Sport and Leisure* means our papers are regularly downloaded to help shape new research. Leading the way on downloads is a seminal paper by Breuer et al (2011) whose paper examines the determinants of sport participation in different sports. Perhaps a reason for its impressive number of downloads is that the findings of the paper have a policy impact that can change lives. It's a paper not just for the towers of academia but for real people, solving real problems. This is something we believe is important and will be part of what we will encourage as the journal's new custodians.

Extending the reach of *Managing Sport and Leisure*, was a key objective for Peter as the journal grew in popularity through the late 1990's. Reach will remain a key part of our intentions and a part of this will be working towards new editorial board members, new

contributors and new researchers, through attending to gender inequalities in knowledge production and the range of geographies of those involved in the journal.

Gaining citations is a key metric for any journal of course and the Nicholls (2001) paper measuring accessibility and equity of public parks is the most cited paper in the journal's history. There is policy impact here, extending beyond sport and leisure and into public health, recreation and sport and leisure participation. Therefore, our intention will be to enhance the experience and range of people involved in *Managing Sport and Leisure*, to address reach and as a consequence citations. Interestingly, some of our other most downloaded articles related to events, which is no surprise given the journal's history (Gratton, Dobson & Shibli, 2000; Frawley & Cush, 2011; Misener & Mason, 2006).

We strongly believe we have a responsibility as editors and scholars within the academy to engage with the public and make a difference through our roles and research. We believe that the collective of scholars involved in *Managing Sport and Leisure* have a huge potential to contribute to this agenda, from media engagement and awareness through to more direct public engagement activities. Indeed, part of this is considering how we can help towards achieving greater public engagement is through connections between our research and mainstream media. This has been a target of the journal for some time, and something that we would encourage all authors to consider. The article by Flint et al (2014) examining the impact of managerial turnover in the English Premier League enjoyed some healthy consumption by mainstream media, being converted into an article for BBC Sport upon publication and being read by c.2 million people across the world. Our aspiration is that the work featured in *Managing Sport and Leisure* should be able to transcend our own readership and into the lives of others (including practitioners) for discussion, development and continued critical debate.

The journal has grown during its journey and its internationalisation is reflected today by the geographic diversity of our editorial team, our international editorial board and reviewers, and in those who submit manuscripts to the journal, whether PhD students, early career researchers (ECRs) or more senior colleagues. Moreover, the interdisciplinary nature of the journal is something to be proud of and which we will continue to commit to. One of the first actions as editors was to discuss the current roles, expectations and intentions of our editorial team. This ongoing discussion has proven important in both sharing our aspirations for the journal and recruiting those who not only share these aspirations but have the credibility,

expertise, diversity in thought and experience, and most importantly a passion to build something together. Therefore, we are delighted to welcome our new Associate Editors and Editorial Board members, which we firmly believe will help build a solid foundation for the journal over the next 12-months and beyond.

We believe that providing opportunities for PhD students and ECRs to access valuable developmental opportunities on our editorial team a key part of our role within the journal. Yet, we appreciate the evolving nature of the journal and how our personal networks have heavily influenced the make-up of the editorial team. Drawing on relational theory and the importance of trust and communication (Granovetter, 1975; Coleman, 1973; Tilly, 1982; Uzzi, 1996; Crossley, 2011), we believe it was (and is) critically important to take this approach to establish the foundations for the future of the journal, especially during the next 12-months. In doing so, we have surrounded ourselves with colleagues who will join us in continually reflect and challenge the inequalities associated with knowledge production. This includes gender inequalities associated with citations (Czarniawska & Sevón, 2018) and editorial board membership (Metz et al. 2016).

To respond to gender and geographic inequalities we would like to do two things. Firstly, invite dialogue with scholars to help address these inequalities in knowledge production, both within our editorial team and with the broader Managing Sport and Leisure community. We are in conversation and intend take action to enhance the journal moving forward and address these inequalities. Secondly, we would like to make a call to researchers from our readership and beyond to contact us directly if you wish to join our growing collective of curators within our editorial team. Similarly, we would encourage colleagues to share this invitation onwards across your networks to ensure we find further talented and passionate researchers who want to be part of the positive changes we are making within Managing Sport and Leisure.

As Managing Sport and Leisure turns 25, we are introducing several opportunities to broaden the diversity of writing and authors contributing. Specifically, we will include commentary and short communications options. In order to foster debate and extend the scope of discussion, we have developed the commentary option to publish shorter carefully argued position statements on specific topics and / or research methods. This option has been available since 2019 (Adams, 2019) and we have featured one commentary to-date (Parnell et al. 2019). The intention of this feature is to provide a space that gives scholars, researchers and practitioners the latitude to investigate a contemporary issue in some depth with a view to

stimulate debate, interest and research into the issue under investigation (Adams, 2019). We also seek to provide opportunities for contributors to make primary research findings or shorter research studies available through the short communication option. Both submission options are to provide opportunities for comment and analysis of a contemporary issue that the authors believe is of value and ready for public consumption.

In line with broadening reach and addressing inequalities, we are also keen to encourage submissions from PhD students and ECRs. You are the future of the academy and we want to ensure *Managing Sport and Leisure* is a genuine and quality option within your publication strategy. Therefore, if you have any questions please do not hesitate to contact us. Alongside this, the journal has a rich history of interdisciplinary work. We would like to maximize the potential of the journal's commitment to interdisciplinarity and would encourage both traditional and more creative research papers for the journal.

Before we introduce the articles included within this issue, we view this editorial as the opening of a genuine conversation to help strengthen *Managing Sport and Leisure*, we want to open the idea of Love. One aspect that struck us from Bell and Bridgmans (2019) piece was the notion of love through the form of being involved in any editing or reviewing role as part of journal. Love is rarely talked about in the sport management literature, which is surprising, given the abundance of love associated with the participation and consumption of sport. We share the view that love, is an indispensable aspect of our editorship-as-curatorship of this journal (Bell & Bridgman, 2019). The process of being an editor, editing (as a curator), is a personal investment without any direct benefit. This extends to our selfless peer reviewers. As such, we will be developing a renewed focus on a love for the process and a renewed respect, kindness and care for those involved in any aspect of knowledge production with us at *Managing Sport and Leisure*.

The articles included represent the breadth of topics, geographies, sports and methods captured with *Managing Sport and Leisure*. Yenilmez et al (2019) examine the validity and reliability of the Sport Interest Inventory in Turkish football spectators, offering implications for research and practitioners. Millar and colleagues (2020), investigate the adoption of long-term athlete development in one community sport club in order to advance understanding of its actual uptake and the conditions, barriers, and facilitators that influence its adoption at the community level in the Canadian sport system using a case study approach. Shilbury et al (2019) examines how a board of a National Sport Organisation perceives collective board

leadership in order to govern collaboratively in a federated sport network of state/regional sport organisations in Australia through interviews with directors from the golf industry. Hwang and Jang (2020) examined how job characteristics affect employee satisfaction through the perceived organizational identification of the Organizing Committee for the Olympic Games (OCOG) employees. By conducting structural equation modeling and bootstrapping, the proposed model was tested with a sample of 280 full-time employees from the 2018 PyeongChang OCOG. The findings revealed the importance of highlighting the values of the Olympic Movement as a human resources management strategy in the OCOG context. Finally, Orr (2020) conducts a review examining the potential impacts of climate change on baseball and cross-country skiing identifying potential climate hazards facing both sports by 2065 and 2100. We are indebted to our contributors, the editorial team and the selfless peer reviewers who have contributed to bringing these papers to fruition in *Managing Sport and Leisure* – thank you.

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