

Foundations of sport development (Book Review)

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Sport development has become a major part of the wider sport industry in the UK and around the world. The sport development sector is a unique environment influenced by history, politics, and society, making it a dynamic sector to study and work in. In his new book, 'Foundations of Sport Development', UK based policy scholar and sociologist Chris Mackintosh introduces key pillars of the sport development subject area, profession, and processes involved in sport development in a textbook specifically aimed at first year undergraduate students.

'Foundations of Sport Development' is a well-structured text, which offers a welcome blend of theory and empirical insights from across the UK sport development sector. The book is impressive in its breadth and scope, in that it bucks the trend of many existing sport development academic textbooks written by British academics (which are often English-centric in nature) through the broad analysis of sport development in all four UK home nations (England, Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland). In addition, the book considers how the wider international political context of the UK (e.g., Brexit and devolution) is likely to affect sport development and management in the future. Mackintosh embraces the new and changing landscape of UK social policy which has seen a decline in local government sport development functions, but a notable growth in social enterprises, private sector activity in recent years. The book highlights that whilst England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are closely connected, "the countries are also highly unique socio-political sport development contexts" (p.xii), which is understandable given the devolved government expenditure in Northern Ireland, Wales and Scotland in recent times.

According to Mackintosh, sport development has, "always been about the provision, delivery, and planning of policy and practice of community sport" (p.3). However, the book does acknowledge through its chapter structure and contents that 'sport development' is much broader and complex than merely the development of sport (e.g. community and recreation based sport provision/activities). The book acknowledges that the sector also encompasses elite sport development as well as development *through* sport activities (e.g., the intended use of sport-based interventions as a tool to tackle non-sporting objectives such as health and social outcomes). The book acknowledges the breadth of sport development provision which is evident across the UK public, private, and voluntary sectors, provision, a sector which is enabled by a wide range of organisations and agencies including national governing bodies, national and local government, charities, professional sports clubs, and community sport clubs. Acknowledging the broad understanding of what 'sport development' is, Mackintosh outlines that policies and structures (whilst often changing) have been embedded in UK society with the goal of promoting participation and wider health and social outcomes for

decades. The book is presented in three user friendly sections; 1) introducing the sport development landscape; 2) agencies and organisations in delivery, policy, and practice; and 3) conclusions future directions and debates. The book offers a series of student friendly seminar questions, group activities and empirical case studies which help illustrate the issues, aid discussion, and underpin the contents covered in the nineteen chapters.

Section one comprises six chapters which are thematically and logically designed to help undergraduate students unpack the complexities, nuances, and contradictions of the UK sport development landscape. Chapter 1 provides a scene setting account of the emergence and evolution of sport development as a professional field. It also details key definitions and debate about the origins and changing understanding of sport development. Chapter 2 offers a historical and political context of 'what', 'when' and 'why' milestone decisions have happened to date in the evolution of the sport development sector in a bid to help students make sense of today's contemporary sport development landscape. Chapter 3 aims to locate and define the UK sport development sector in relation to the global landscape of community sport policy, provision, and practice. Given the book's UK focus, this chapter is a extremely wide ranging, perhaps too wide ranging in its scope. What chapter 3 does offer is a clear statement to students that it is necessary to understand the UK sport development context as part of a much broader global landscape (e.g. EU/Brexit; Global North/South debates; globalisation). The chapter suggests that the definition and understanding of sport development in each nation around the world varies based on the ideology, history, culture, traditions, political orientation of countries. Unfortunately, the chapter does not offer enough space or depth to these discussions or offer many international insights, which may have helped to bring such discussions to life. The chapter follows the themes found throughout the book and uses case studies/seminar questions and reflective tasks to encourage students to explore the chapter content in an applied setting, in this example students are encouraged to examine how global sport events seek to leverage community sport participation legacies. Chapter 4 is titled 'exploring organisations, policy, and practice' and offers practical and theoretical Insights into sports development and does so by mapping out who is doing what, when and how across the sector. Chapter 5 outlines the various ways in which sport development has been researched to date and does so by highlighting the significant role that sociological, political and business management theory has played in framing such research. In Mackintosh's own words, Chapter 6 is a 'scene setting' chapter and introduces some key terms used in the academic and professional field of sport development. Throughout section one (chapters 1-6) Mackintosh acknowledges that sport development is a contested and messy term which is unsurprising given the multi-faceted landscape which encompasses elite sport, participation sport and sport-based provision that tackles nonsporting objectives. The book draws on broad

ideas from the social sciences (e.g., politics, sociology, geography) to help students make sense of the messy landscape that is sport development.

Section two shines a light on the complexity of the UK sport development system and does so by outlining the multitude of frontline agencies and organisations at the heart of developing policy and governance of sport development in the UK. The section takes on the enormous task of summarising the broad landscape within which sport development 'activity' operates as well as highlighting ways in which sport and physical activity is managed. The resultant chapters - (7) central government and key national agencies; 8) National agencies and key charities; 9) Local authority sport development; 10) national governing bodies of sport; 11) sub-regional agencies: The Active Partnerships in a UK context; 12) Voluntary and third sector sport development; 13) Coaching, coaches and sport development; 14) Schools and sport development; 15) Higher Education sport development; 16) The sport for development sector: A role for social justice?; 17) The private sector) - illuminate the work of key organisations and their role in contributing to the broader UK sport development landscape. Early in section two, Mackintosh makes an important observation (p.75) that "[UK] sport development has always had a focus on exclusion, equity, and inclusion" and it is emphasised that sporting organisations and agencies are at the heart of this fight, regarding who they employ and their representativeness of their agencies. Overall, section 2 is extremely well written and is presented in neatly defined chapters. However, if there had to be a critique, it would be that the well-defined chapters did limit more holistic summary discussions and debates detailing the common ideologies/nuances of practice within the sector in tackling contemporary agendas (e.g., social welfare issues such as crime and poverty reduction, mental health) and tackling ongoing inequalities such as exclusion, equity and inclusion in sport access for under-represented groups (e.g., women and girls, LGBTQ+ communities, disabled communities, ethnic minority communities and people on low income) which Macintosh alludes to in the section's introduction.

The third and final section is devoted to conclusions, future directions, and debates. Chapter 18 tackles the 'where next for sport development in the UK' question and does so by recapping the exponential growth of the sector which emerged in the 1960s following the Wolfenden report (a key document in Britain's sporting history which recommended the creation of a sport Development council and extensive funding to develop facilities and sport provision at community level) and charts the sectors growth to the contemporary (and complex) landscape which encompasses multiple organisations/agencies operating across the public, private and voluntary sectors against backdrops of austerity, globalisation and changing public policy. The final chapter (19) reviews the policy pressure (e.g., monitoring and evaluation) and changing

1 delivery models facing agencies/organisations operating in unstable times because of the
2 global Covid-19 pandemic.
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5 Throughout the book, Mackintosh identifies the complexities, nuances and contradictions
6 rooted in the sport development sector, outlining the various agencies and organisations
7 involved in the manifestations of sport provision across the UK. The book acknowledges three
8 main areas of sport development activity; 1) elite sport development; 2) the development of
9 sport (e.g., community based, recreation, participation, infrastructure) and 3) development
10 *through* sport (sport-based interventions to tackle non-sporting objectives) and acknowledges
11 that UK sport policy regularly shifts in its understanding of the role of sport in the UK (p.240).
12 Mackintosh outlines how and why the sport development sector has evolved and diversified
13 over decades to deliver on a number of 'agendas' and respond to changing political contexts,
14 e.g. pathways for participation and elite sport; sport for all/mass participation; targeted work
15 to address issues related to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion; the role of sport for social good,
16 austerity in Britain and the modernisation of sport development systems. The book suggests
17 that we should think of who and where sport development occurs, but, also how, when and in
18 what ways focuses on the places and people involved in community sport development to
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