Electronic Sports Management Course and Program Development in Higher Education

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Teaching/Learning - Professional Development (Other)
20-minute oral presentation (including questions)

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The study of sport management was born out of an industry need for business managers with specific education and knowledge of sport-related concepts and for managers who had studied and learned sport-specific management skills. Executives from professional leagues to amateur organizations understood that the growth of the sport industry would be facilitated by those with knowledge and skills in the business of sport management. Since the development of the first sport management program at Ohio University, the study of sport management in higher education has grown exponentially. Presently, the North American Society for Sport Management recognizes over 400 sport management programs at the undergraduate and graduate level in the United States (NASSM, 2019).

The reason sport management became an integral part of business study is due to its uniqueness and diversity as a discipline. Sport management combines and requires skills in the areas of management, marketing, accounting, communication, human resources, and finance (O'Shea 2000).

Similar to the evolution of sport management as an area of study, the subject of electronic sport management must be considered the next new business program for college institutions. The business of esports has impacted the electronic gaming industry and presents opportunities in finance, marketing, advertising, event planning, and entertainment. Esports is already a multi-million-dollar industry, that will reach $1.5 billion in revenue in the United States (Lu, 2018) and $5 billion worldwide by 2020 (Aviles, 2018).

Currently, three schools in the United States offer an Esports Management business degree. The author developed one at Caldwell University (NJ). These electronic sports major programs provide students with the knowledge, skills, and abilities needed to pursue an array of careers within the amateur, collegiate, and professional esports industries. Current and future Esports Management programs will attract students with a strong interest in esports and with a desire for a career in managing an esports organization or corporate entity that services the esports industry. Courses focusing on digital marketing, event development, facility management, entrepreneurial skills, and the sociological impact of esports will help develop students into the same type of managers needed for the esport industry as those managers sought in the 1960’s by sport organizations.

Current studies through qualitative research will help sport management and business management programs assess and make recommendations for esports management curriculum. The data will also support the development of learning objectives and course guidelines which will be used to improve courses to prepare students seeking to enter the new and rapidly-growing esports industry. Future research studies will focus on the demographic makeup of the students, and the impacts on enrollment, revenue, and retention numbers at institutions offering esports programs.