

## 2008 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2008)

### **Sports and athletes in education: Educational leaders or managers of athletic enterprises?**

*Ronald Flowers, Eastern Michigan University*

*Robin Hughes, Indiana University*

*James Satterfield, Jr., Clemson University*

*James Barott, Eastern Michigan University*

**Management/Leadership**

**Saturday, May 31, 2008**

**Workshop/Symposium/Forum  
(75-minute)**

**Session 23**

**10:45 AM - 12:00 PM**

**Abstract 290**

While involvement in sport is a part of all societies and cultures, in no other country is the participation in sport so deeply embedded in its educational institutions as in the United States. Historically, sport has been linked to educational institutions in America under the premise that participation serves an educational function, contributing to and reinforcing the values of the academy. It has long been argued that sport contributes to the building of character and, as such, has an educative function which warrants its inclusion in our schools and universities.

Unfortunately, as Chelladurai and Reimer (1997) pointed out, the literature of sport management is rather narrowly focused on "(a) those involved in the management of the organization and (b) a limited number of constituents" (p. 134). However, the primary beneficiaries of athletic participation and the purpose of these programs, the athletes, are missing. If the educative premise upon which athletic programs are linked to our educational institutions is valid, it would seem that more attention should be paid to the impact of sport administrator decisions, practices, and policies with regard to the fulfillment of the educational mission of school and university based athletic programs. Sport administrators would therefore be seen additionally as educational leaders rather than mere managers of athletic enterprises.

Since Chelladurai and Reimer made their initial argument, the dialogue surrounding sport management has remained relatively unchanged. For example, of the 204 articles published in the *Journal of Sport Management* since Chelladurai's and Reimer's assertion only three, including their article, focus on the experience of athletes. We would argue, given that a significant number of those preparing to be sport managers/administrators will do so in a school or university setting, it would be appropriate to engage in a dialogue regarding the role sport administrators play in shaping the educational environments and experiences of student-athletes.

The proposed forum intends to provoke a conversation about the administration of athletic programs as they exist in our schools and colleges. The focus of these presentations will be intercollegiate athletics and will be guided by the following questions: What is the impact of our decisions and practices as sport managers on the athletes that participate in these programs? Do our practices and policies contribute to or detract from the educative mission of the educational organization within which we operate? How do we find a balance between the fulfillment of the educative function of these programs and the efficient management of the athletic organization? And finally, how can an examination of the relationship between the decisions and practices made by sport managers/administrators and the primary beneficiaries of the programs they lead, athletes, contribute to a deeper understanding of the efficacy of this relationship?

Forum Presentations:

We view each presentation in this forum as a brief conversation starter to prime the audience to consider the relationship between sport management decisions, practices, and policies, and the athletes for which they are implemented. Using their own work as a starting point, each presenter will address specific elements of the questions defined above.

Dr. Robin L. Hughes, an assistant professor in the department of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Higher Education Student Affairs (HESA) at Indiana University, will discuss the process of "athletisizing" (Hughes, Satterfield, and Giles, 2007), and describe the processes, people, and institutions that contribute to the athletic construction of black student athletes. She will explore how black student athletes are perceived at a research intensive, division one college campus by their peers, the institutions, and themselves. She will emphasize the role athletic administrators' play in the "athletisizing" process of black student athletes.

Dr. James W. Satterfield, Jr., is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Leadership, Counselor Education, and Human Development at Clemson University. His presentation explores the reasons male basketball players at a major Midwestern division one athletic program chose their particular institution. He will also examine the relationships between the student athlete, the athletic program, and the institution by looking at the normative, regulatory, and cognitive categories that exist

## **2008 North American Society for Sport Management Conference (NASSM 2008)**

between them. By examining the institutional choices of student athletes and the relationships student athletes, athletic departments, and institutions have to one another, athletic administrators can gain insight into their role in shaping the organizational culture of athletic departments.

Dr. Ronald D. Flowers, the Director of the Educational Leadership Internship Program in the Department of Educational Leadership, College of Education, Eastern Michigan University, he will discuss the various roles played by athletics in higher education, how athletics became an institutionalized extension of higher education's academic mission, and what this has meant for colleges and universities, and the student-athletes who participate in these athletic programs. Using organizational theory and historical analysis, he will discuss how these structures have often contributed to the marginalization of athletes from the teaching and research core of the university and how athletic administrators have played a role in the maintenance of this system.

Dr. James E. Barott, a Professor and the Coordinator of the Doctoral Program in Educational Leadership, College of Education, Eastern Michigan University, will serve as the forum discussant. His primary area of expertise is the application of organizational/institutional theory and field study research methods to the study of educational organizations.