In the present operational landscape, sport organizations have moved towards new, digital means by which to connect to their publics. Social media, in particular, has emerged as a beneficial platform to extend online engagement with stakeholders whether those organizations are in the non-profit (e.g., Pegoraro, Scott, & Burch, 2017) or professional sport contexts (e.g., Wang & Zhou, 2015). Indeed, with social media’s expanse into the sport organization landscape, there have also been unique challenges. First, there is great diversity in the social space with athletes (e.g., Geurin-Eagleman & Burch, 2016), sponsors (e.g., Abeza, Pegoraro, Naraine, Séguin, & O’Reilly, 2014), and fans (e.g., Phua, 2012) all maintaining a social presence. Then, there is the difficulty in navigating the “noise” from multiple conversations occurring simultaneously (Stavros, Meng, Westberg, & Farrelly, 2014). Finally, once the organization has built a social following, there are active and passive users with which they must contend (Naraine & Parent, 2016). To combat these challenges, hashtag campaigns are advanced to establish and anchor conversations, and also provide a lever to entice users to become active in the discussion.

The hashtag, one of the salient conventions in the social space, has been the topic of several discussions as it relates to sport. Indeed, scholars have looked at official, organizational driven campaigns (e.g., Blaska, Burch, Frederick, Clavio, & Walsh, 2012; Delia & Armstrong, 2015) as well as those “organic” in nature which were organizationally focused, but not organizationally driven (e.g., Frederick, Pegoraro, & Burch, 2016). Yet, despite the significance of these works, there remains a notable omission: how can organizationally driven hashtag campaigns contribute to the identification of active user groups online. Hambrick and Pegoraro (2014) introduced this idea of community formation, but it has yet to be uncovered in a professional sport context. As hashtag campaigns have become more complex such as the Chicago Cubs with #FlyTheW, the Montréal Canadiens with #GoHabsGo, and Real Madrid FC with #HalaMadrid, understanding the users and subcommunities that form as a result of the organizationally driven hashtag can assist the focal organization in identifying those users with whom they can connect, and segmented their publics into groups for continued relationship building thereafter (cf. MacIntosh, Abeza, & Lee, 2017).

As such, the purpose of this research was to illuminate the network structure and subcommunity formation as a result of an organizationally driven hashtag marketing campaign. Specifically, this study sought to elucidate the users and subgroups that manifest within the Toronto Raptors’ hashtag marketing campaign, #WeTheNorth. The campaign, launched in 2014, incorporates patriotism, geography, and ostracization (given the organization’s status as the only non-U.S. team), which are seemingly incongruent with the open-bordered, inclusive nature of social media. As a result, this study can provide meaningful results not only for the social media and sport scholarship base, but assist organizations contemplating hashtag marketing campaigns predicated on geography and patriotism understand the types of users and groups that are likely to engage.

Literature Review
There is a growing body of literature surrounding the use of social media in sports (Filo, Lock and Karg, 2015), much of the focus to date has been on the use of various forms of social media by athletes, teams and leagues (e.g., Ballouli & Hutchinson, 2010; Pegoraro, 2010). As social media use has grown marketers have come to see it as a viable medium grow brand or team awareness (Dittmore & McCarthy, 2014), which is a key component of building fan relationships for a sport organization. Social media use by sport organizations is largely driven by two key factors: the relatively inexpensive cost of SM when compared to traditional marketing tools and the ability to connect with millions of fans with ease (Dittmore & McCarthy, 2014). The interactive nature of social media platforms provides a
unique channel of communication that shifts communication from one-way broadcast (e.g., television advertisements) to a more collaborative exchange.

Research on sport organizations and social media has found that these platforms present a unique opportunity for sport organizations to communicate and foster interaction with the public (Williams & Chinn, 2010). Further, Hopkins (2013) found that each platform enables sport organizations to engage with their publics in different ways and the author suggests that Twitter is best for interaction and real-time updates.

This study is rooted in the network paradigm (Borgatti & Halgin, 2011) concurrently. Introduced to the sport management domain by Quatman and Chelladurai (2008), the network paradigm suggests that the connectivity individuals (and users) bear can produce unique outcomes including cliques (e.g., subcommunities) and centralized actors (e.g., key influences). With Hambrick and Pegoraro (2014) utilizing network features previously, and calls from scholars to identify subgroups in the social space (e.g., Lock & Funk, 2016), the network paradigm is a suitable framework to guide the study and answer the subsequent research questions:

RQ1: what subcommunities develop on the #WeTheNorth hashtag?
RQ2: how did these subcommunities evolve over time?
RQ3: what influencers emerged in the dataset?
RQ4: what content rose to prominence over time periods studied?

Methodology
Tweets utilizing #WeTheNorth were collected from May 2014 to October 2017, providing a database that spanned three complete NBA seasons including timeframes in season, out of season, and in the post season, for the purpose of identifying subcommunities and network dynamics over time. Data will be organized and subsequently exported to a network analysis software program (e.g., NodeXL, Affinio) to identify all (if any) subcommunities and key influencers in the network.

Anticipated Findings
This is a work in progress. The dataset is being prepared for analysis and all analysis will be completed for presentation at the NASSM conference. However, it is anticipated that there will be several subcommunities extending beyond the team’s home market, as well as having key influencers who are salient in their own right (e.g., elite athletes, actors). As such, it is expected that, despite the geographic and patriotic nature of the hashtag marketing campaign, #WeTheNorth is indicative of a captivating social campaign that entices users to engage and intensify their attachment to the Toronto Raptors’ social media presence.