ABSTRACT

Recreational Sports in a university setting refer to intramural, extramural and sport club programmes. As opposed to highly organised sports programmes like interscholastic and intercollegiate, recreational sports are for everyone in the university community. There is therefore likely to be a high correlation between a properly managed recreational sports programme and the development of university Sports as more people are involved. This paper discusses some policies that, if followed, will enable university sports administrators properly organise and manage recreational sports, thereby leading to the eventual development of sports at university level in Kenya.

KEY WORDS: Sports policy, Academic programmes, Talent

INTRODUCTION

Management is crucial in any sports programme as it needs to be well implemented for the programme to be effective and meaningful. Bucher and Krotee (1993) assert that management involves interaction between those who administer and those who participate in the sport processes. But a cursory look at public universities in Kenya reveal that those who participate in sports are just a selected few who are varsity athletes, that is those who represent the university. This therefore falls within the realm of interscholastic and intercollegiate sports programme. Most administrators of sports, especially at university level, give more attention and publicity to this phase of sports than most other aspects of the sports continuum. The reason is not far-fetched. Since this group represent the most talented and skillful, it is a quick and easier way to getting results and perhaps justifying the huge amount spent on sports. The sole reliance on intercollegiate and interscholastic sports as the panacea for success has brought the following problems in management of sports at university level.

1. Sports at university level has become for a selected few as most students are relegated to the role of spectator rather than active participants.
2. The development of skills is now restricted to a few or "elite" athletes. Consequently, coaches have a smaller pool to draw seasoned athletes from.
3. Nonsense is made of the "pay-to-play" policy. This policy requires that if students pay activity fee then they have a right to play (Parkhouse, 1984). Off course, too, the fees...
have to be used solely to cover the cost of the operation of the sports programme (Bucher and Krotee 1993).

4. Most sports administrators become "managerially lazy", since they deal with a handful of students. So there are no imposed demands on their intelligence, initiative and drive.

Recreational sports on the other hand are for everyone. According to Bucher (1979) they provide "opportunities for all students to employ their skills and strategies in games and contests that are usually competitive." They therefore according to Broyles and Hay (1979) serve as a "unifying and cohesive force" for an institution to provide cooperative links among "diverse groups within the organisations." Furthermore recreational sports contribute to the furtherance of good physical, social and emotional health, skills and psychosocial development (Bucher and Krotee, 1993). In summary Bucher (1979); Voltmer and Esslinger (1976), Broyles and Hay (1979) and Bucher and Krotee (1993) assert that recreational sports serve the following purposes;

1. To provide the students with opportunities for fun, enjoyment and fellowship through participation in sports.

2. To serve as an extension of the instructional period, especially for those in physical education.

3. To provide the students with opportunities that can be conducive to their health and physical fitness.

4. To encourage mass participation instead of a selected few.

5. To provide a forum for common interest.

6. To encourage the growth of interest in beneficial recreational activities.

7. To provide the opportunity for practising good citizenship and the fulfilment of the slogan "everybody for sports, sports for everybody."

8. They have the potential for developing fuller cooperation between the home and the school.

9. They help to develop the give and take attitude that is so essential to good sportsmanship.

10. They provide additional informal contact of teachers and students, hence provides a basis for more effective counselling.

With all these benefits to be derived, it is apt to look at and discuss the constituents of recreational sports.
RECREATIONAL SPORTS

Recreational sports are a collective term for intramural, extramural and sports club programmes. They offer an avenue for participation in various types of physical activities by individuals of all levels of skill and abilities. Basically they consist of "voluntary participation in games, sports and other activities" (Bucher and Krotee 1993).

SPORTS CLUBS PROGRAMME

This type of programme is one that endears itself to a lot of students. Based on a particular sports or activity, students come together to form clubs, which can compete within their own rank as well as with other outside clubs. Thus it encourages students and others to participate to the best of their abilities voluntarily. Usually, sports clubs are managed by the students themselves, but with inputs from the sports and games departments in terms of materials, personnel for coaching and instruction etc. This way students are guided through the practical process of sports management and leadership traits.

Extramural and Intramural Programmes

Extramural can be regarded as a contest between selected individuals or team representing two or more schools organised and controlled by school authorities. This should not be mistaken for highly competitive sports, as the overriding factor in extramural sports is recreational. This is why Bucher and Krotee (1993) asserted that extramural activities are basically recreational sports days that bring together participants from several institutions.

Intramural sports (intramural) has been defined by most authors as organised sports that take place within the four walls of an institution or establishment. Means (1963) regards intramural as the diversified sports activities designed for students and members of single schools only. Therefore only bonafide members of that school can take part in the sports organised by the institution. Intramural is also an established part of the total physical education programme, but it allows, according to Scott (1971) and Daughtrey and Woods (1976) the largest possible number of participants. This is why Akpata (1989) refers to intramural as more of a mass participation which include a wide range of school activities enjoyed by students. Writing in the same vein Bucher (1979) asserted that intramural must be geared toward the "skills and abilities of the entire students body." In this concept, just as Akpata (1989) suggests, intramural should be more of mass participation which aims at catering for the largest possible number of voluntary participants.

Thus intramural is hinged principally on the concept of mass participation. Akpata (1989) asserted that intramural provide students of various abilities the opportunities for the satisfaction and enjoyment to be derived in competitive sports and in physical recreational activities. In fact Rokosz (1975) lists the following as the major values derivable from participation in intramural:
1. There is improvement in an individual's mental, health, physical fitness and social awareness.

2. The participants experience the "ups and downs" of victory and defeat, and hopefully learn to live with both.

3. Friends and acquaintances can be made through participation in intramural. This is especially important to an individual who is in an unfamiliar environment.

Voltmer, et al. (1979) list the following as some values derivable from participation in intramural:

1. It provides an opportunity for the participation in activities which might not be available from any other source.

2. Fun and enjoyment are got while participating in intramural.

3. There is release of tension.

4. There is an attainment of a high level of skill which can be used throughout life.

All these values are congruent with the general benefits derivable from recreational sports. These values of intramural-recreational sports are indeed the basis for its inclusion in educational institutions and establishment curriculum. Also, in the institutions that teach physical education, intramural is of immense value by acting as a laboratory for physical education. What has been done so far is an overview of the aspects of recreational sports, especially intramural, culminating in the extensive values derivable from participation. As has been pointed out, these values derivable from participation have been the basis for the inclusion of recreational sports in educational institutions, especially universities. Due to this great appeal, recreational sports is actually a microcosm of sports in society, so its proper handling and management at institutional level, especially the universities, is bound to rub-off on the success and development of sports in the larger society. After all, higher institutions, especially universities are supposed to be the breeding ground for the future leaders of our society, in all aspects including sports. Therefore, for proper management of recreational sports at university level in Kenya, the following policies and procedures should be developed and pursued in the following direction.

1. Manpower Available

Public universities, and indeed all universities in Kenya, have a separate department in charge of sports, usually headed by a Director. The Director should have other well trained personnel charged with the responsibility of managing sport. It is the assumption of the author here, that all the heads of the sports department are graduates of physical education, sports and recreation. That is, the right person in the right niche. If this is not so, the management of sports in such a university would be faulty. In fact it will be tantamount to putting people who can see in a bus and giving the key to a blind person to drive! The
consequences are better imagined. So the first step in process of managing sports properly in the universities is to have qualified leaders manning the sports and games department. Added to that is the availability of a number of trained coaches and other supporting staff. Each sport should be manned by professional or auxiliary coaches, so that when students come out for practise, they have people waiting to receive them and impart knowledge.

2. Student Managers

As much as possible students should share the responsibility in the planning, development, and management of the sports programme and participate actively in establishing policies, rules and procedures, by representing members at various committees. At the end of the day, the sport is for the students, so they should take a major role in determining how they want to play it. To Akpata (1994) when a student is not allowed to decide "what he wants to play, how he wants to play and when he wants to play, then it is no longer play." And recreational sport is basically play. In any case, good management demands that if a person is to be bound by a decision, he must in one way or the other take part in making that decision.

3. Activities

The type of activities that should abound for recreational sports should represent a balance between team and individual sports; purely recreational activities and very active and less active sports. In other words, activities selected should meet the interests and needs of the students. In most universities, the range of activities is very limited, so that students are therefore forced to take part in the activities available. This is wrong. Several different activities should be available at all times, so as to cater for individual differences. In fact Voltmer and Esslinger (1976) suggest that the motto for any sports department, especially in a university should be "something for everyone all the time."

4. Finance

On the basis of their educational contribution, recreational sports ought to be financed with the same stability and consistency as any phase of education, but the trend is that finance has been a major barrier. This could be due to, as Mueller and Reznick (1979) opined, the fact that most institutions regard recreational sports as purely extracurricular activities that yield no revenue. However, some institutions seem now to be more aware of the great values of a good programme in terms of reaching the total students body. Thus institutions usually vote money for recreational programme, but in most cases, students are still required to pay some activity levies. Inadequate finance has been the bane of most institutions, thus hampering their recreational sports programme. The following ways of getting supplementary funds are suggested:

(a) Students activities fees.
(b) Sports and games department budget.
(c) Endowment funds.
(d) Entry and forfeit fees.
(e) Rental income.
However, the director's prudence must still be brought to bear on the available funds. Most of the money available should be geared towards organising the recreational sports programme rather than interscholastic because of the gains already outlined.

5. **Units of Competition**

The organisational or competing units should be natural units as far as possible, for example hostels/halls, faculties, departments, year of study etc. If the competing units are not natural the cohesion or "bond" between the group will be lost whereas a unit based on a common residence or meeting place provides opportunity for group spirit. Like Mueller and Reznick (1979) stressed, unnatural units do not have strong loyalty ties and thus require more encouragement to take part in recreational sports.

6. **Institutional Sports Policy**

Sports policy varies from institution to institution. The institutional tradition or policy may make or mar a recreational sports programme, especially as to the time available. A careful consideration must thus be given to ensure proper manageability, as the selection of activities will depend on the time available to run the programme. It is suggested that the senate of all the universities should make all evening hours free. This will greatly enhance participation and consequently performance. Also supervision is at its utmost as all coaches especially belonging to other departments are available.

7. **Medical Examination, Health and Safety**

It cannot be over-emphasised that the health and safety of the participants must be a top priority for all managers and supervisors of recreational sports. It is suggested that medical examinations should be required of all students participating. As Bucher and Krotee (1994) pointed out this is to act as a safeguard to their health, as well as a legal protection for the programme or institution. After all, if students need medical examination as part of their requirement for confirmation of their admission, they definitely need one to take part in sports. Medical examination for sports should be required from students annually.

8. **Publicity**

Students need to be kept informed constantly about the sports activities, in order to arouse and maintain their interest in the program. Like Voltmer and Esslinger (1976) pointed out, continuous publicity serves to stimulate additional students to enter into the programme, as well as serving as an added incentive to those who have been participating. Also good publicity will enable the managers of sports function more efficiently, as the students will be better informed of opportunities available, playing dates, times and location, changes in dates and other pertinent information. The following are suggested as good source of recreational sports publicity.
1. Students bulletins
2. Bulletin boards
3. Posters
4. Clinics and workshops
5. Announcement at student gathering
6. Orientation talks and discussion.

These are major policies which will determine if recreational sports will thrive in a university or not. Other policies include those that border on eligibility, officiating, point system, awards, equipment and facility control etc. All these policies will make or mar recreational sports, nay, sports generally in a university setting.

CONCLUSION

This paper represents a framework that delineates the relationship between proper management of recreational sports at university level and sports development. Recreational sports encompasses intra-mural, extramural and sports club programmes. These programmes create an avenue for voluntary mass participation of students which lead to fun and enjoyment and other educational values rather than winning which is the inherent goal of competitive or interscholastic sports. And in an academic setting, where education is the priority, when the focus shifts from learning to winning, so many values are lost. I therefore agree with Toner (1991) when he said that "how you play the game isn't everything it may be the only thing". It is therefore only by understanding what recreational sports is all about, how to manage it properly, what values to be derived from proper management, can sports enthusiasts, participants, and those who wish to understand sports begin to talk of development of sports at whatever level. After all what other development or value can we expect of our people during such harsh conditions prevalent in our society, if they cannot gather to play and ease tension. Resick, Seidel and Mason (1974).

"If one can lose himself in play and thus forgets pressures and tension, he or she will be more productive when he or she will return to the task at hand, whether he or she is a student, a labourer or an executive. Thus a recreational sports programme is educationally justifiable in this age of the mentally or the suicide prone and the social deviants."

This group of persons abound in our societies, so recreational sports must be properly managed to get the desired results.

REFERENCES


