

## **Sports and Politics**

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### **Abstract**

Politics takes place wherever conflict exists about goals and methods of achieving those goals (Renwick, 1987). Politics is defined in terms of the actions of the government, the authoritative use of power to make rules and laws that have precedence over rules from other sources of society (Moodie, 1984). In this paper an attempt is made to focus on the process of governmental decision making and policy implementation regarding sport management. It might be unnecessary to define sport because most people already know through experience and intuition what the word means. Sport implies having fun, but it can also be work for a professional athlete, a means of employment or a business. Loy's (1968) classical definition claims that sport must have five characteristics such as be play like in nature; involve some element of competition; be based on physical prowess; involve elements of skill, strategy and character; and have an uncertain outcome. Pitts, Fielding and Miller (1994) define sport as any activity, experience or business enterprise focused on fitness, recreation, athletics, or leisure. The Olympics have since their inception been closely associated with an ideology of social and technical progress. In particular, these international sporting competitions have been used as a tool for expressing national and political agendas (Lenskyj, 2000). In addition the economic value of the Olympics has increased dramatically

overtime, especially through international broadcast rights (Barney et al 2002). For present purposes a distinction is made between politics and sport and politics in sport especially the relationships of politics to sport. For students of politics the stimulus for interest in sport was a product of two major issues in international politics namely the cold war and the campaign against apartheid in South Africa whose end was rewarded by granting of hosting of Fifa World Cup 2010, the highest ranking world event to grace the soil of Africa. Other important aspects of sport and politics include issues of equity both racial and gender involvement in matters of governance. The thrust of the paper therefore is to analyze and stimulate debate on the role and involvement of state/government in politics and sport.