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*Dedicated to
prof. dr. Jakob Bednarik
and dr. Janez Kocijančič*

prof. dr. Rado Bohinc, *President of EMUNI*

Sport has become one of the most complex subsystems of contemporary society, transcending the boundaries of competition, play, and physical activity. It increasingly functions as a key social, economic, and political phenomenon of the 21st century. Its influence extends from individual lifestyle and national identity to global economic flows, technological innovations, and the formulation of public policies. Within this context, the field of sport management has evolved as a distinct scientific and professional discipline, characterized by its interdisciplinary nature that integrates social, economic, legal, organizational, and psychological dimensions of sport.

The book *Contemporary Sport Management, Theory and Application* is the result of a collaborative effort among numerous national and international authors. It provides a comprehensive and structured overview of the theoretical, applicative, and operational dimensions of sport management, offering both conceptual foundations and practical approaches. The publication is divided into three major parts, each addressing a specific layer of the sport management framework.

The first part, *Basic Theoretical Concepts in Sport Management*, presents the fundamental definitions, principles, and paradigms of sport management. The authors discuss the sport market, the definition of the discipline, educational challenges and contemporary trends (Kolar, Biloslavo, Pišot & Robnik Verdnik); the structure and functions of sport organizations (Kolar & Mammadov); the knowledge and competence profile of sport managers (Robnik Verdnik & Kolar); the decision-making process in sport management (Kolar, Biloslavo, Veličković & Tušak); and the principles of good governance in sport (Begović, Mammadov & Kolar). This section establishes the theoretical foundations for further discussions on professionalism, ethics, and responsibility in sport management.

The second part, *Applicative Aspects of Sport Management*, focuses on practical models, processes, and methods that enable efficient and sustainable functioning of sport organizations. The chapters explore strategic and project management (Kolar, Mammadov, Biloslavo; Kolar, Biloslavo, Stare), human resource management (Tušak, Kolar & Tušak), sport marketing (Pavli), and the legal framework of sport management (Igličar & Prezelj). These contributions highlight the growing professionalization of sport organizations, which increasingly face a dual challenge: balancing their social mission with economic efficiency. Sport organizations are thus evolving toward business entities, structured similarly to profit-oriented corporations, raising questions about governance, transparency, and the ethical dimensions of management decisions.

The third part, *Operational Aspects of Sport Management*, concludes the volume by examining the operational processes and contemporary developments in the field. It addresses the management of sport events (Kolar, Mammadov & Robnik Verdnik),

dual career management for athletes (Robnik Verdnik & Kolar), sport tourism and leisure (Špindler, Kolar & Robnik Verdnik), public sport policies (Kolar, Mammadov, Pišot, Biloslavo & Begović), and the impact of artificial intelligence and modern technologies on sport management (Biloslavo & Kolar). Special attention is devoted to the ethical implications of digitalization and data-driven decision-making processes, which increasingly shape modern sport environments.

Beyond its analytical and managerial scope, the book opens new avenues for interdisciplinary research and critical reflection on sport as a social phenomenon. Several issues are identified as particularly relevant for future investigation from sociological, legal, and political perspectives:

- elite professionalism in sport as an ethical challenge, raising questions about the boundaries of acceptable conduct, integrity, and the social responsibility of stakeholders;
- the transformation of sport organizations into business-oriented entities, necessitating a careful balance between profit-making motives and their social and cultural functions;
- the mass participation in sport, emphasizing the public health and social cohesion benefits while simultaneously questioning the accessibility and equity of sport infrastructure and public policies;
- the development of sport talents in light of socio-economic inequalities, highlighting the increasing role of parents' financial capacities in enabling young athletes' access to high-quality training environments, thus posing significant questions of equality of opportunity and social justice in sport.

The book *Contemporary Sport Management, Theory and Application* therefore serve not only as a systematic presentation of contemporary concepts and practices but also as an intellectual contribution to the further development of sport management as a scientific discipline. By combining theoretical insights, empirical findings, and practical applications, it encourages critical reflection on the future of sport, its societal role, and the ethical responsibilities of those who lead and govern it.

This publication will be of particular interest to researchers, university teachers, postgraduate and doctoral students, as well as sport managers, policymakers, coaches, and professionals involved in the governance and development of sport systems. It will also serve as a valuable resource for anyone interested in understanding the complex interrelations between sport, society, and management in an era defined by globalization, commercialization, and technological transformation.

Furthermore, the handbook will serve as an excellent study material for the academic program Management in Sport, developed by the Euro-Mediterranean University (EMUNI). Its comprehensive theoretical framework, practical case-based orientation, and interdisciplinary approach make it an essential educational resource for future professionals seeking to contribute to the sustainable and responsible development of sport management in the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond.

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PREFACE

Edvard Kolar & Petra Robnik Verdnik

The scientific monograph *Contemporary Sport Management: Theory and Application* offers a comprehensive and interdisciplinary exploration of sport management as both an academic field and a professional practice. It responds to the evolving demands placed on sport managers in a dynamic global environment characterised by complex governance structures, economic pressures, technological innovation, and sociocultural transformation. As sport increasingly transcends the traditional boundaries of competition and recreation to intersect with education, tourism, sustainability, media, and public health, this volume seeks to provide a critical, theory-informed, and practice-relevant contribution to the study and development of sport management.

The monograph brings together a diverse range of scholars and practitioners from across the Euro-Mediterranean region and beyond, offering both international perspectives and regional contextualisation. The contributions are structured around key thematic pillars: organisational behaviour and leadership in sport, strategic management and planning, financial and legal governance, human capital development, digital transformation, innovation, and the expanding interface between sport, tourism, and leisure. Special attention is paid to emerging global trends, such as sustainability, dual career systems, inclusive and ethical governance, and digital innovation, which are reshaping the competencies required of sport managers and redefining the strategic role of sport in society.

The inclusion of empirical case studies, policy reviews, and comparative frameworks adds methodological depth and applied relevance. Several chapters are informed by evidence generated through Erasmus+, IOC-supported programmes, and national strategic documents, thereby reinforcing the synergy between academic inquiry, policymaking, and institutional practice. The monograph also draws on validated models of knowledge and competence development, providing structured pathways for aligning sport management education with labour market and societal needs.

As sport systems adapt to shifting global and regional dynamics – including digitalisation, demographic transitions, and heightened sustainability imperatives – this monograph positions sport management as a future-oriented and socially embedded discipline. It must respond to the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), address inequalities in access and representation, and foster cross-sector collaboration to ensure long-term value creation.

Intended for academics, students, policymakers, and professionals, this publication aims to advance a critical understanding of sport as a multi-dimensional phenomenon – one that functions simultaneously as an economic sector, a field of social and cultural engagement, and a strategic tool for national and international development. It is our hope that this volume will stimulate further scholarly inquiry, inform institutional strategies, and support the development of a globally competent, ethically grounded, and innovation-ready generation of sport managers.



REVIEWS



REVIEW

prof. dr. Gregor Jurak

University of Ljubljana

Faculty of Sport

Lecturer of the course "Sports Management" in the PhD program

The first edition of *Contemporary Sport Management: Theory and Application* offer a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary compass for navigating the complex, modern waters of sports organizations.

Its principal value lies in the distinguished and diverse perspectives on sport management, blending sharp academic knowledge with practical application – a true synergy of the classroom and the sport arena.

This broad scope allows the work to extend beyond conventional management methodologies, effectively weaving essential theoretical concepts into the vibrant tapestry of practical application. It illuminates crucial areas, including organizational strategies, behavior, shrewd resource allocation, marketing, the meticulous choreography of event operations, legal and ethical considerations, modern technology applications, including use of artificial intelligence, and the intricate global policy frameworks that govern the sporting world.

Fundamentally, this treatise bridges the canyon between abstract theoretical management principles and tangible, real-world applications, furnishing a truly holistic analytical perspective – a 360-degree view of the sport industry. Consequently, the work emerges as an indispensable and timely resource, a sturdy toolkit for current and future sport managers, policy makers and industry practitioners seeking a complete and effective comprehension of contemporary sport leadership and ethical governance as they seek to shape the future of sport.

Ljubljana, 16.10.2025



REVIEW

prof. dr. Marko Ferjan

University of Maribor

Faculty of Organizational Science

Founder of the undergraduate program "Sports Management"

I am very honored that the editors invited me to review this book. I would classify the present work entitled "*Contemporary Sport Management: Theory and Application*" as a scientific monograph, where the authors deal in depth with the vast field of sports management from the perspective of theoretical concepts, applied use and operational implementation in an in-depth, comprehensive and structured manner, focused primarily on contemporary trends and needs, dictated by the modern sports-business field. The authors comprehensively connect and present the findings through scientific and professional-theoretical discussions in the chapters included in Part 1, and connect and include them in the applied areas of sports management (Part 2), which in Part 3 of the monograph are appropriately and innovatively combined at the level of implementation in various types of sports organizations, which represents a significant added value to the understanding of the field of research in the book.

The scientific monograph demonstrates the distinct interdisciplinary approach of 14 reference authors who come from different national, cultural, educational, scientific and professional backgrounds, which is reflected in their broad knowledge of both the field of sports management and border areas that significantly shape contemporary management in sports. The approach to the preparation of this work includes both the presentation of theoretical and applied concepts of understanding sport as a social, economic and media phenomenon, as well as the understanding of sport as an important segment of ensuring health, safety and shaping sustainably oriented lifestyles of people. The monograph consists of 15 chapters, evenly, structured and meaningfully distributed between the three substantive parts of the book.

In the 1st part of the monograph, the authors present various fundamental theoretical concepts and models important for understanding sports management and the role of a sports manager. This part of the monograph contains five chapters that systematically, scientifically appropriate and structured present and define sports management, sports market, education and contemporary challenges, primarily from the perspective of socio-economic aspects of current society (1st Chapter). The following (2nd Chapter) is a comprehensive presentation and definition of the organizational aspects of sports management, both from the perspective of the concepts of organizational theory, as well as from the perspective of the specificities and characteristics of national and international models of sports organization. The next two chapters (3rd and 4th Chapter) focus primarily on the sports manager, as a key person in the management of sports organizations, and present a competency framework that enables successful and efficient management of sports organizations (3rd Chapter), as well as the fundamental principles of cognitive functioning in the

decision-making processes of sports managers and the conceptual framework of decision-making in sports management (4th Chapter). In the 5th chapter, they present the principle, challenges and new perspectives of good governance in sport, which they define as an area of continuous balancing between the autonomy of sports/civil organization and the use of sport to shape effective public policies.

In the 2nd part of the monograph, the authors primarily present various aspects of the use and application of various models and concepts of the science and profession of management and law to the management of sports organizations and appropriately connect them with the topic presented in the 1st part. Thus, the models, concepts and application of strategic management (6th Chapter) and project management (7th Chapter) are extensively presented. The chapter on human resource management in sports organizations (8th) specifically highlights the present-time problem of stress and burnout in the workplace and ways to deal with these phenomena. 9th Chapter is devoted to the definition and understanding of contemporary concepts of sports marketing, especially in connection with modern social trends, and 10th Chapter is to a broad discussion of the understanding of law in sports, its limitations and guidelines in the preparation of legal and regulatory documents at the national and broader international level.

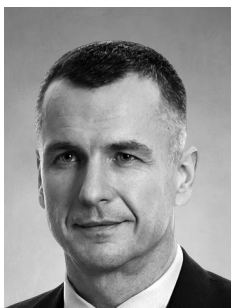
In the final 3rd part of the monograph, the authors address selected operational aspects of sports management, in connection with the work of sports managers in various types of sports organizations. Thus, 11th Chapter presents the management of sports events, which presents the broader socio-economic effects of this type of project and appropriately combines the concepts of strategic and project management, while 12th Chapter presents the concept of sustainable development of athletes' dual careers, as one of the fundamental challenges of modern sports environments in ensuring the post-career integration of athletes into the social and working environment. These two chapters primarily address the work and concerns of sports management in civil society-type sports organizations. The next chapter (13th) defines the connection and impact of sport on tourism and the understanding of the concept of sports tourism, which is one of the fastest growing global economic sectors, and is carried out primarily within the framework of private, mostly profit-oriented organizations related to sport and/or tourism. Understanding sport as a public good and the importance of its development, as well as the contextual and strategic-process aspect of its development at national and other levels, is the topic addressed in 14th Chapter. The last, 15th Chapter gives this monograph a particularly important touch of modernity, as it primarily addresses the importance of the development of modern digital tools and artificial intelligence, their impact on sports management, as well as the threats arising from uncritical use in the work of sports managers.

In the Epilogue, the editor of this monograph demonstrates the connection, intertwining, and complexity of the application of the knowledge presented in the previous 15 chapters and applies it to the process of preparing the present monograph. The monograph "Contemporary Sport Management: Theory and Application" is written in a systematic, transparent, understandable, terminologically consistent and interesting way, which is why I believe it will reach a wide range of readers, especially those who are involved in educational, research or professional activities in the areas

discussed or who are directly involved in various processes of management in sports.

Due to all the above, I conclude that the scientific monograph edited by prof. ddr. Edvard Kolar and doc. dr. Petra Robnik Verdnik is an extremely welcome and important work, which in a scientific and professional manner connects and explains various aspects of management in sport and offers current and innovative answers to contemporary scientific and professional questions. In this way, it represents an original work in the field under consideration, which will have a useful value in the field of development of science and the profession of sport management.

Kranj, 18.10.2025



REVIEW

prof. dr. Tomaž Čater

*University of Ljubljana
School of Economics and Business
Head of the Master's Program "Sports Management"*

The scientific monograph *Contemporary Sport Management: Theory and Application*, edited by prof. ddr. Edvard Kolar and doc. dr. Petra Robnik Verdnik, is a valuable and timely academic contribution to the evolving field of sport management. It offers a comprehensive, structured, and interdisciplinary approach to the study and practice of sport management in contemporary society, addressing both theoretical foundations and applied perspectives. The monograph's carefully designed structure – divided into three main thematic parts – ensures conceptual coherence, gradual complexity, and effective integration of academic knowledge with real-world challenges.

The first part of the monograph introduces core theoretical frameworks necessary for understanding sport management as a discipline. It addresses concepts such as sport governance, decision-making, organizational models, and competency profiles for sport managers. These chapters are of high relevance for students, scholars, and professionals who wish to develop a foundational understanding of sport management systems and their socio-economic environment.

The second part engages directly with applied domains, including strategic and project management, human resource practices, marketing, legal frameworks, and ethical considerations within sport organizations. This section demonstrates how classical management theories are adapted to the sport context, while also incorporating current themes such as employee well-being, branding in digital environments, and regulatory harmonization. Such insights are of great value in education settings, where applicability and case-based learning are essential.

The third part deepens the focus on operational realities and policy contexts, offering analytical depth into the management of sport events, dual career systems, sport tourism, national development strategies, and the transformative role of digital technologies and artificial intelligence. These chapters extend the utility of the monograph for policy makers and institutional leaders by addressing topics such as sustainable development, digital innovation, and public-private partnerships.

This monograph is both academically and practically relevant. Its interdisciplinary orientation, enriched by contributions from 14 authors of diverse backgrounds – academics, researchers, and practitioners – ensures that it captures the complex realities of sport management in a globalized, competitive, and increasingly digital world. The book presents a comprehensive and analytically robust perspective on contemporary sport management and governance.

In particular, I would highlight the monograph's contribution to curriculum development. It provides a foundation for designing or updating courses in sport management. The theoretical consistency, inclusion of current trends, and the capacity to link managerial knowledge with operational practice make this work a relevant educational resource.

In conclusion, I fully support the publication of this monograph and recommend it to academic institutions, educators, researchers, and sport management professionals. It is an academically and practically relevant work that will significantly contribute to the further development of sport management as a distinct academic and professional field.

Ljubljana, 16 October 2025