

sports

The Rise and Fall of Youth Sport Organizations

Anyone who becomes involved in amateur sport sees the growth and development of young athletes, and frequently also observes the decline and self-destruction of athletic organizations. Studies show three stages of sport organizations:

Stage One consists of primary recreational play - sport as play - true sport.

Stage Two consists of stable amateur sport - games - sport as work-high sport.

Stage Three is the professional athletic content - sport as career - big time sport.

In **Stage One**, people with common needs and interests form teams to provide competition for their children. In the early stages, the level of technical skill is unimportant. Coaches need not be master strategists. Kids and adults have fun and feel important regardless of skill level.

In **Stage Two**, a managerial and maintenance

subsystem is formed by the adults to serve their own needs and promote consistent performance.

The coaches, executives, parents and sponsors become identified with the success of the team. Emphasis shifts from players to coaches, managers, sponsors, or owners, and most significantly to the consumer (parents, sponsors or spectators). In this stage, those involved begin to contrast "play for fun behind the scholl" as opposed to

"working to win in the organized league athletic games". At this stage, "all-star teams" link community image with team success and divert large portions of the organization's resources to serve a limited segment of the overall membership. Emotions are mixed as resources are funnelled into athletics for the above-average stars at the expense of the average and below-average players.

Stage Three neces-

sitates a system to adjudicate conflict within the organization, the boundary problem associated with talent resources and public relations. Some adults and kids become disenchanted as more money and time are devoted to the elite athletes.

The cycle of conflict seems to go from technical problems in the initial stages to a golden era of revitalization, reorganization and growing achievement, ultimately reaching a

peak, after which the organization weakens and experiences increasing difficulties. At this point, it either dissolves, is absorbed into a super-organization, or becomes rejuvenated and starts a new cycle.

Ironically, it is the majority who convert the amateur sports organization into a professional athletics model. This usually occurs through a series of small decisions taken with good intentions without realistic assess-

ment of their implications. An annual evaluation of a sports organization's policies is essential to prevent the evolution from Stage One to Stage Three. The trends can be intercepted, though usually not without some conflict. This effort is unquestionably worthwhile as it has the best interests and welfare of the children as its ultimate objective.

Forest

Management

wins award

A film produced by the governments of Canada and Ontario on a shared programme for forest renewal, has won an Ontario Government Communications award.

The film, "Greening of the North - the Forest Management Sub-Agreement," was judged best in the under \$35,000 film and audio-visual category at the Ontario Communicator's Conference in Toronto recently.

"Greening of the North" shows the contributions made to Ontario's forest management activities by the \$71.5 million federal-provincial agreement. It was chosen from among 17 other films or audio-visual productions entered in the annual awards programme. The film was produced by M&M Film Productions of Toronto for distribution to elementary and secondary schools throughout Ontario.

"Greening of the North" has already won plaudits from the forest industry and the media. Jim Coats, executive vice-president of the Ontario Forestry Association calls it "one of the best forestry films we have ever seen." The CBC has expressed interest in showing the film, as has a Swedish television network.

"Greening of the North" focuses on the six main programmes funded under the five-year Canada/Ontario Forest Management Subsidiary Agreement. These are the construction of forest access roads, silviculture camps, tree nursery expansion, soil surveys, hardwood utilization studies and applied research and development.

The agreement is funded jointly by the federal Department of the Environment's Canadian Forestry Service and the Ontario Ministry of Northern Affairs. All work under the agreement is implemented by Ontario's Ministry of Natural Resources.

Copies of the film can be ordered in French or English from City Films, 542 Gordon Baker Road, Willowdale, Ontario, M2H 3B4. Telephone

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