

Abstract

Title: Management of the international sport event in softball at the time of the covid pandemic

Objectives: The goal of the study is to elaborate the specific measures and recommendations how to improve in future the management of the international softball events in the Czech Republic based on the management evaluation of the Junior Women's Softball European Championship U-18 and to point out the impacts of Covid-19 on the organization of the specific international event and to find out the effective answers to them for future.

Methods: The study used the method of both qualitative and quantitative data researches. The qualitative research was conducted as a structured interview with the main organizer of the event. The quantitative research was done with use of a marketing research, namely the method of the Brady model of service evaluation, in a form of questions targeted on service evaluation of the event by the participants (primary data collection). The quantitative research of this thesis was further composed of the results of own unparticipated observation. Next, the method of the SWOT analysis was used. The secondary data collection was conducted as an analysis of the specialized texts on management and project management of the sporting event.

Results: The results of the study provide a comprehensive view both on the process and difficulties of the management of the international softball event organized during the Covid-19 pandemic. The achieved data show that Covid-19 strongly affected the Junior Women's Softball European Championship organization. The impacts of the anti-pandemic measures in sport were felt not only by the organizers of the event, but by its participants as well. The players satisfaction with the European championship organization depended on their rating of quality and importance of three areas of service assessment which, according to the Brady model, are material environment, interaction and result. The quality and technical facilities of SC Joudrs, where the main part of the tournament took place, was seen as the best part of the material environment. The worst assessment was given to the premises for pre-match preparation and relax area, which did not meet expectations of the players. The staffing of the event, including the organizers abilities, together with the quality of the play field received the highest ranking. Keeping the time schedule of the event was not felt in a negative way, but on the other hand, this was not seen as very important. The last part of the questionnaire focused on the result quality was assessed mostly positively. The quality slightly decreased at accompanying programme

which was considerably limited due to the pandemic. The interview with the main organizer of the event did not disclose any errors in the event management that would have affected its course. The results showed that the cornerstone of any successful sport event is, without doubt, a high-quality and modern site, which Svoboda park really is. This, however, must be completed with a team of capable organizers and volunteers who can guarantee a smooth course of the event. My own experience during uninvolved observation of the event proves that its organization was of the top quality which was demonstrated by many positive reactions of the players. The results of the study also showed the organization failings for which the study offers recommendations focused on elimination of the negative aspects of the event, which will enable to prevent the errors in organizing future international softball events. The European Championship had, despite the pandemic, great success which is also proven by positive messages of the junior players to the organizers.

Keywords: event realization, event promotion, strategic planning, SWOT analysis, softball