

## **SPORTS ETHICS VS. BUSINESS AND INVESTMENT BALANCING INTEGRITY AND PROFIT**

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The rapid growth of the sports industry has brought about an urgent need to rethink and enhance the development of sports leadership. As sports become an even greater economic and cultural force, leaders within the sector must possess more than just traditional skills in law, finance, or marketing. Today, an understanding of sports science and the complexities of various athletic disciplines is a crucial requirement for effective management. The success of any sports organization increasingly depends on its leaders' ability to adapt to the specific demands of each sport, whether it be motorsports, football, e-sports, or others.

Clubs and sports federations now demand managers who not only understand the intricacies of legal frameworks and financial systems but also have a deep appreciation of the unique characteristics of the sport they manage. For example, the operational needs of managing a motorsport team differ significantly from those required in football, while managing a team in the rapidly growing field of e-sports demands an entirely different approach altogether. This divergence is not limited to the athletes or the technical aspects of the sport but also extends to marketing, sponsorship, fan engagement, and media rights. Therefore, managers must be able to tailor their strategies to suit the specific context of each sport while balancing business goals with sporting values.

Sports leadership in today's world calls for professionals who can combine technical knowledge with strategic foresight. Governance plays a key role in this. Leaders must promote transparency, integrity, and responsibility, ensuring that sports organizations adhere to international standards and ethical practices. They must also understand the power dynamics at play, particularly when navigating between commercial interests and the core values of the sport.

One of the pressing challenges in sports management is the need to integrate ethics into investment and decision-making processes. For example, while investment in elite sports generates significant financial returns, grassroots sports development is often neglected. This neglect can hinder the discovery of future talent and limit access to sports for younger generations. Ethical leadership in sports should emphasize the need for investment that nurtures young athletes and supports a strong pipeline of talent across all levels, from community sports programs to professional leagues.

Furthermore, sports leadership is not only about improving internal structures and operations but also about fostering a positive impact on society. Sports have



always had a profound role in shaping cultural and social narratives, and today, that role is more pronounced than ever. The responsibility of sports leaders extends beyond the pitch, arena, or track. They must recognize the influence of sports as a tool for social change, helping to foster values of inclusion, equality, and mutual respect. Leveraging the fame and popularity of clubs, athletes, and sports brands to serve broader societal causes is becoming an essential aspect of modern sports leadership.

This intersection between sports and social responsibility has been exemplified in various ways across the world. From charitable initiatives driven by athletes to club-led campaigns against social injustice, the role of sports in addressing societal issues such as racism, gender inequality, and poverty is clear. Sports leadership that prioritizes these efforts, blending financial objectives with ethical and social considerations, will not only enhance the reputation of the organization but also contribute to creating a more inclusive and harmonious society.

One of the most crucial areas where sports can make a lasting social impact is through the concept of "sports diplomacy." International competitions and collaborations between clubs, federations, and athletes can promote peace and mutual understanding across borders. Sports can break down barriers and foster relationships between nations, even in times of political tension. Leaders in the sports sector should harness this potential by designing initiatives that promote unity, foster international cooperation, and build cultural bridges through sports.

Another essential element is the balance between investment in sports and the social return on that investment. The financial success of sports organizations and the societal influence of sports need to go hand in hand. Investing in community sports programs, supporting educational initiatives, and ensuring fair play for all participants help establish a strong foundation for sustainable growth. The visibility and influence of athletes and sports teams must be harnessed for the greater good, promoting values such as friendship, inclusivity, and equality while discouraging harmful behaviors like extremism, racism, or partisanship.

The future of sports leadership rests on the ability to balance commercial success with the ethical, social, and cultural impact of sports. By developing leaders who are skilled not only in business management but also in sports science and social responsibility, the sports industry can continue to grow while remaining true to its core values. In this way, sports will not only be a source of entertainment or economic prosperity but a platform for positive social change and the promotion of global unity.