European Sport Management Quarterly

ISSN: 1618-4742 (Print) 1746-031X (Online) Journal homepage: http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/resm20

Taking advantage of the London 2012 Olympic Games: corporate social responsibility through sport partnerships

Mathew Dowling , Leigh Robinson & Marvin Washington

European Sport Management Quarterly, 2013
Vol. 13, No. 3, 269–292, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2013.774039

Taking advantage of the London 2012 Olympic Games: corporate social responsibility through sport partnerships

Mathew Dowling[a]*, Leigh Robinson[b] and Marvin Washington[c]

[a]*W1-34 Van Vliet Centre, Faculty of Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G2H9 Canada;* [b]*School of Sport, The University of Stirling, Stirling, FK9 4NY UK;* [c]*Alberta School of Business, University of Alberta, Business Building, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2R6 Canada*

(*Received 26 January 2011; accepted 18 January 2013*)

This research explores the ways in which corporate organisations leveraged corporate social responsibility (CSR) through a sport initiative that was conceived, implemented and mediated by the British Olympic Association (BOA) preceding the London 2012 Olympic Games. This research aimed to evaluate the initiative in order to understand the benefits, barriers and partnership working and sought to answer the question: how is CSR being leveraged through sport by corporate organisations in the lead up to mega-sporting events? The case-based methodology employed a series of semi-structured interviews that were conducted with senior directors and managers within National Governing Bodies (NGBs) and corporate organisations. Interview data were supplemented by a content analysis of documentation associated with, and about, the initiative. Findings included: corporate leveraging to achieve subtle human resourcing objectives, indirect involvement and market research into the Olympic Games and the increase of corporate capital. This research concludes that CSR relationships in sport can be innovative and creative but require objective alignment, appropriate timing and the management of expectations.

Keywords: corporate social responsibility; sport partnerships; Olympics; National Governing Bodies of Sport; London 2012

Introduction

Corporate social responsibility (henceforth CSR) is now an important concept in managerial thinking with many authors writing extensively about its emergence (Carroll, 1979, 1999; Cochran, 2007; Godfrey, 2009; Valor, 2005). Sport is arguably no exception to these broader social trends and has witnessed a paralleled growing interest in CSR (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009). Academics have concluded that CSR 'should be regarded as one of the most important components of contemporary sport management theory and practice' (Bradish & Cronin, 2009, p. 696). Although Bradish and Cronin's remarks are overstated, they do however point towards the growing significance of, and necessity to examine further, CSR within sport. Within recent years there have been notable advances in research in this field (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Bradish & Cronin, 2009; Godfrey, 2009; Levermore, 2010; Walker & Parent, 2010), with the majority of research focusing on the emergence of CSR

*Corresponding author. Email: msdowlin@ualberta.ca

phenomenon directly into sport organisations. However, few authors have written in terms of CSR *through* the medium of sport (for exceptions see Levermore, 2010; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007), with even fewer providing any empirical evidence to substantiate any of their claims. As such, little is known about how and why sport is used as a means of achieving CSR objectives.

Furthermore, whilst CSR through sport researchers have sought to delineate CSR through the potential and limitations of sport (Levermore, 2010), as well as its unique characteristics (Smith & Westerbeek, 2007), all of these studies have held relatively static conceptualisations of CSR through sport. As a result, none of these studies have considered, for example, the timing of CSR through sport initiatives. Our contention here is that, whilst we do not disagree that sport has the potential to enhance through its ubiquitous appeal or even that sport has limitations as a vehicle for change, we argue that initiative timing, context and organisational objective alignment in CSR through sport should be paramount deliberations, and not peripheral afterthoughts. Such deliberations have been subject to examination elsewhere within the sport management literature, but so far have been omitted from the CSR and sport literature (see for example Parent, 2008, 2010).

Moreover, scholarly work has often held a sharply dichotomous view in conceptualising CSR through sport as the direct opposite to sponsorship, particularly in regard to mega-sporting events. Mega-sporting events are any 'sporting, commercial or cultural occurrences whose impacts are significant for the cities, regions or countries that stage them' (Malfas, Theodoraki, & Houlihan, 2004, p. 211). On the one hand, scholars have conceptualised sponsorship arrangements which lead to direct tangible, corporate outcomes, for example, advertisement or public relation exercises (Cousens, Babiak, & Bradish, 2006; Farrelly, 2010), whilst on the other, scholars have identified alternatives to traditional sponsorship, for example 'corporate support' in the lead up to mega-sporting events (Kitchin, 2003; Séguin, Parent, & O'Reilly, 2010). In this regard, corporate organisations gain little to no return on capital employed and consider their engagement as purely altruistic, *pro bono* or good will. The exploratory case study research presented below argues that the reality can, and should be, far more nuanced, in that corporate organisations can achieve and gain from CSR through sport initiatives, without spending significant sums of money. In order to put forward this case, the following research question guided our investigation: how are CSR through sport initiatives being leveraged by corporate organisations in the lead up to mega-sporting events? To this end, the authors explore the outcomes of the Financial Times Stock Exchange–British Olympic Association (henceforth FTSE-BOA) Initiative. This initiative involved the development of 21 public–private partnerships by National Olympic Committee, the British Olympic Association (BOA), preceding the London 2012 Olympic Games. More specifically, our analysis draws upon the data collected by examining three of the FTSE-BOA partnership arrangements as part of a broader, unpublished, evaluation into the effectiveness of the FTSE-BOA Initiative.

Our analysis provides a twofold contribution to knowledge of this field. First, unlike previous studies (for example Séguin et al., 2010), our research explores CSR through sport that is not directly linked to revenue generation for the mega-sporting event in question. In this regard, the FTSE-BOA arrangements are entirely based on 'support in kind', rather than any form of direct financial exchange. Second, the partnership arrangements are unique by design in that they were conceived, arranged and implemented by a third party 'brokering' organisation (the BOA) in the lead up to an Olympic Games. Thus, this arrangement offers an insight into CSR through sport beyond the typically examined dyadic public–private relationship.

This paper will proceed as follows. First, we examine the definitional complexities of CSR. Next we examine the emergence of both CSR and partnerships within the field of sport management. Third, we present the empirical context along with our data collection and mode of analysis. Finally, conclusions and implications are then drawn, with study limitations and further avenues of research acknowledged.

Literature review

The definitional challenges and complexities of CSR

The use of the term CSR is often seen as an 'umbrella' term (Walker & Parent 2010, p. 201) incorporating a number of issues, such as environmental concerns, human rights, community development and enrichment, and eco-friendliness. It is the multifaceted, dynamic nature of CSR which makes defining it so challenging. So much so in fact that some authors posit that CSR 'is a tortured concept, both theoretically and empirically' (Godfrey, Hatch & Hansen, 2010, p. 1), with other authors devoting entire papers to its definitional pursuit (e.g. Dahlsrud, 2008; Wan-Jan, 2006). Despite its 'problematic' definition (Carroll, 1999; Dahlsrud, 2008), broadly speaking, CSR can be understood as 'the responsibility of organisations to be ethical and accountable to the needs of society as well as their stakeholders' (Bradish & Cronin, 2009, p. 692).

Through a meta-analysis using the search engine *Google*, Dahlsrud (2008) derives five dimensions of CSR: voluntariness, stakeholders, social, environmental and economical dimensions. According to Dahlsrud's (2008, p. 5) definitional analysis, 'there is a 97% probability that at least three of the dimensions [above] are used in any random definition [. . .] thus all of the dimensions are necessary in order to understand how CSR is defined'. Dahlsrud (2008) goes on to argue that these definitions do not provide any indication of optimal performance, but rather they are indicative of stakeholder expectations, which in turn, can only be understood within the specific context of the corporate organisation in question. Therefore, we should more accurately be referring to CSRs, rather than CSR. Broadly drawn from the above definitions is an understanding that CSR represents a paradigm shift in thinking by managers and society at large. As such, organisations are inextricably integrated with society and the environment resulting in responsibilities beyond the traditional 'bottom line' of profit, and further towards a 'triple bottom line' business approach (Henriques & Richardson, 2004; Sheth & Babiak, 2010).

With the above definitional complexities acknowledged, this paper defines CSR herein as 'a concept whereby companies integrate social and environmental concerns in their business operations and in their interactions with their stakeholders on a voluntary basis' (European Commission, 2001, COM 366). The rationale for the adoption of this definition is fourfold. First, it offers a pragmatic definition of CSR. The definition partly reflects both the authors' own views and similar views of scholars such as Dahlsrud (2008), Godfrey et al. (2010) and Kitchin (2003), who posit that CSR should be considered as context specific. Second, this paper focuses primarily on how businesses use sport organisations and, therefore, adopts a general business-oriented definition over other alternative definitions. Third, it is used due to the relative uptake of the European Communities' definition by academics and practitioners as established by Dahlsrud (2008). Finally, of paramount importance is that the organisation chooses to do this of their own volition – they 'volunteer' to integrate the above issues into their operations.

The emergence of CSR in sport

Notwithstanding the general lack of research into CSR and sport, there have been some advances in CSR research in recent years by a handful of academics (Babiak & Wolfe, 2009; Bradish & Cronin, 2009; Godfrey, 2009; Walker & Parent, 2010). These include, but are not limited to, CSR in professional sport (Babiak & Wolfe, 2006, 2009; Sheth & Babiak, 2010), the importance of CSR practices to sport fans (Walker & Kent, 2009), CSR as a media-framing tool for mega-event bidding (Carey, Mason, & Misener, 2011) and alternatives CSR models to traditional sponsorship (Séguin et al., 2010). The majority of these studies emphasise the transition of mainstream CSR practices into the field of sport management (cf. Babiak & Wolfe, 2006, 2009; Godfrey, 2009; Walker & Parent, 2010). This transition has been of such profound interest that it has warranted its own definition as a unique area of study known as 'Sport Social Responsibility' (Skinner, 2010, p. 69). Nonetheless, very little research has examined the other side of the CSR 'coin' i.e. addressing how corporate organisations achieve their CSR objectives through sport organisations. Notable exceptions that have examined CSR through sport include Smith and Westerbeek (2007) and Levermore (2010).

Smith and Westerbeek (2007), for example, used a stakeholder theory perspective to conceptually examine the role that sport can play as a potential vehicle for instrumentally achieving CSR agendas. By adopting Carroll's (1991) definition of CSR, the authors posited that sport inherently provides not only an advantageous setting for CSR, but due to sport's seven unique characteristics (mass media communication and distribution power, youth appeal, health impacts, social interaction, sustainability awareness, cultural understanding and integration and gratification), it offers a powerful bridge for achieving CSR and the aims and objectives of sport organisations. Whilst they provided a valuable contribution in highlighting the uniqueness of sport as a conduit to achieve CSR objectives, there are two major shortcomings to their analysis. First, although they outlined numerous reasons of why sport is unique as a setting for corporate organisations, they do not explicitly state the mechanisms or means by which corporates may be able to take full advantage of sport. Second, their analysis does not take into account the varying objectives of the corporate organisation as well as the timing of the CSR through sport arrangement. In other words, if sport is so 'ubiquitous' then in what ways can corporates tap into its ubiquity? Moreover, Smith and Westerbeek (2007) do not explain why, at any given time, certain corporate organisations are choosing to engage in CSR through sport and others not. This is especially relevant in situations whereby corporate organisations chose to engage in a CSR initiative that is typically beyond their 'normal' CSR engagements. Given that most world championships, and indeed the Olympic and Paralympic Games, are all based upon either a biannual or quadrennial cycle, the cyclical nature of mega-sporting events is a key unique characteristic trait, omitted by Smith and Westerbeek (2007), which may influence the decision of corporate organisations to develop CSR through sport initiatives. Thus, the FTSE-BOA Initiative offers a unique empirical context in which to examine how corporate organisations leverage a CSR initiative in the lead up to the pinnacle mega-sporting event – the Olympic Games.

Levermore (2010) examined sport as a broader medium to achieve economic and social development through CSR initiatives. In particular, the author studied a group of established partnerships as a means of CSR development. Rather than seeing sport as an entirely virtuous means to achieve CSR, the study highlighted some of the negative effects of CSR through sport. These include (1) the intensification of the north/south hemisphere relations, (2) conflicting motives and objectives leading to a lack of development substance and (3) lack of accountability and evaluation. Using the first negative effect as an example, CSR is often used as a means of northern hemisphere imposition on the southern hemisphere, in that northern hemisphere programmes, laden with post-colonial values and beliefs, are brought to and imposed upon southern hemisphere contexts. These programmes then marginalise the alternative values and beliefs that were originally held by the southern hemisphere. Thus, CSR initiatives are considered potential means by which northern hegemony is accomplished.

Furthermore, the study also brought to light the concern over the often conflicting, and in some cases contradictory, ulterior motivations of the involvement of corporate organisations in CSR initiatives. Using Ponte, Richey, & Baab's (2009) typology terminology, Levermore (2010) identified most CSR through sport initiatives as 'distant' and disengaged by nature (p. 236). As such, CSR initiatives are often created for ulterior purposes, such as public relation exercises, corporate cover-ups or even so far as corporate leverage and bribery. The outcome of which is CSR initiatives that are not in direct response to what really matters i.e. social and economic development and a lack of accountability from both sides.

Thus, from the above remarks, does this mean that profit-making objectives of corporate organisations, and the social betterment objectives of sport, are always directly incompatible? Can corporate organisations use CSR initiatives for purposes that produce a 'win-win' scenario? Moreover, is it that surprising that the development of a CSR through sport scheme, for example, with British Petroleum and the sport of football (soccer) is 'Disengaged' or 'Distant' CSR, given that British Petroleum sells oil and not football? The present study is similar to that of Levermore (2010), in that our research focuses on how corporate organisations are using CSR through sport initiatives to achieve intended objectives. Where this inquiry differs, however, is that the FTSE-BOA Initiative provides a unique situation whereby the corporate organisations are 'hand-picked' by a third-party facilitator for their specific expertise or 'core competencies' to help sport organisations develop a specific weakness within their organisational operations. As such, this research examines whether a greater alignment and compatibility of the objectives and interests of the two organisations in question leads to a better CSR outcome for both organisations.

The emergence of sport partnerships

The present study is underpinned by and incorporates notions of partnership theory. Whilst there have been a number of studies examining CSR and partnerships (Jamali

& Keshishian, 2009; Nijhof, De Bruijn, & Honder, 2008; Seitanidi & Crane, 2009), the sporting literature has rarely embraced this line of theorisation and as such has considered CSR and partnerships as relatively distinct fields of enquiry. The consequences of which have been very few studies specifically incorporating partnership theory to understand CSR through sport. Combining CSR and partnership theory is particularly insightful given the unique characteristics of sports compared to those of other sectors (Smith & Westerbeek, 2007), with corporate organisations wishing to partner with sport organisations to achieve CSR objectives. Moreover, by their very design, CSR arrangements constitute two (or more) organisations coming together to achieve an output or goal. As such, we argue here that CSR and sport partnerships are highly complementary when researching practically, theoretically and empirically.

Much of the mainstream partnership literature focuses on why organisations are motivated to engage in partnerships (Babiak, 2003; Oliver, 1990; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). The determinants and motivations for inter-organisational relationships (IORs) are well known and include: survival or necessity, asymmetry, efficiency, reciprocity, stability or uncertainty reduction, resource acquisition, legitimacy and so on (Oliver, 1990). Some attempt has been made to apply this to sport, for example, Babiak (2007) has provided an insightful application of Oliver's (1990) determinants of IORs to the Canadian Sport Center context. Specifically, Babiak (2007) found that legitimacy and reciprocity were significant motivators for corporate organisations to engage with the Canadian Sport Center. Similarly, Robson (2007) highlighted the benefits (pooling of resources and influence and resource access) and problems faced by sport partnerships (differing organisational priorities, political obstacles, initiative overload and culture clash). This paper expands on these works by exploring sport partnerships in a public–private partnership setting. Whilst this initiative can be appropriately conceived as a multiple partnership arrangement, the joint consideration of partnerships and CSR is a particularly appropriate as the FTSE-BOA partnerships were often a means to achieve CSR objectives.

Within the UK sport context specifically, Lindsey and Houlihan (2007) provided three illustrations of partnerships, these include School Sport partnerships, County Sport Partnerships (CSPs) and New Opportunities for Physical Education and Sport Programme partnerships derived from the formerly named New Opportunities fund. In the case of CSPs, by 2008, 49 CSPs had been developed. CSPs 'are a network of agencies aiming to provide a delivery system for sport and are a direct response to the criticisms of fragmentation and initiative overload expressed in Game Plan' (Lindsey & Houlihan, 2007, p. 230). That said, it is also recognised that partnerships such as the CSPs are very much in their infancy (Lindsey & Houlihan, 2007). CSPs illustrated 10 years of New Labours underlying belief in partnership success or a 'pro-partnership bias' (Babiak, 2003, p. 3). In addition, CSPs highlight the importance placed by the Labour government on partnership working as a means of achieving objectives as determined by the state (Ling, 2002). Such thinking coincides with the general consensus amongst academics during the Labour government term (1997–2010) who posited that partnerships have become deeply rooted within sport policy and planning (cf. Babiak, 2003; Robson, 2007; Slack & Parent, 2006).

In a similar vein to CSR, due to the dynamic and often ambiguous use of the term partnership, a definition is necessary in order to operationalise it throughout this research process. Drawing upon the work of multiple authors (Oliver, 1990;

Roberts & Bradley, 1991; Spekman, Kamauff, & Myhr, 1998; Wood & Gray, 1991), Babiak (2003, 2007) provides a robust and useful definition stating that partnerships are voluntary, close, long-term, planning strategic action between two or more organisations with the objective of serving mutually beneficial purposes in a domain (Babiak, 2003, p. 6). This definition is adopted by the authors for purposes of this present study due to its successful incorporation of the complexity and multifaceted nature exhibited by the sport partnerships examined hereafter. In the next section we describe the empirical context.

Research context: the FTSE-BOA initiative

In early 2007, Britain's National Olympic Committee, the BOA, created a multiple partnership scheme entitled the 'FTSE-BOA Initiative'. The BOA partnered National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of Sport, which are 'limited by guarantee' organisations that oversee and govern the national delivery of sport programmes, with FTSE-100 corporate organisations, as defined through the Financial Times Stock Exchange (FTSE) index. The partnerships attempted to improve the effectiveness of organisational delivery and the subsequent organisational performance of Olympic NGBs (BOA, 2011) who were in the quadrennial build up to the London 2012 Olympic Games. In the words of the then BOA Chairman:

> As a unique programme worldwide, I am delighted that the Initiative is continuing to reap benefits for national governing bodies and the major companies already partnered. I continue to believe that sport and business can learn from each other and that ultimately our goals are the same: performing to the highest possible level. It therefore makes perfect sense for the best of both worlds to partner each other. (BOA/FTSE Group, 2007, p. 2)

Acting as a direct mediator, the BOA set off to directly establish partnership agreements between its member NGBs and a variety of corporate organisations. Once initial interest was expressed by corporate organisations, the partnerships were directly matched through a number of criteria including, geography, NGB needs, notable history (if applicable) and 'chemistry' between key 'boundary spanning' personnel within both organisations. Crucially, these cross-sector partnerships were not financial, but rather developed as a 'support in kind' form of partnership with emphasis on the knowledge transfer of sound business principles and practices which these FTSE companies exemplified (BOA, 2007). These arrangements were incrementally established in groups or 'waves', and by 2011 a total of 21 FTSE-BOA partnership arrangements were formally recognised by the BOA (BOA, 2011). See Table 1 for an overview of these partnerships.

Methods

Case study approach

This research adopted a case-based approach, and in embracing Yin's (1994) case study conceptualisations this research adopts an embedded, multiple-case study design. In doing so, it offers a detailed examination of a particular setting (Bryman, 2008; Yin, 1994), with emphasis on developing 'thick description' (Geertz, 1973) of

Table 1. Overview of the FTSE-BOA partnerships.

Early 2007	Late 2007	2008	2009 onwards
Corus – Triathlon	Marks & Spencer – Modern Pentathlon	Sainsbury's – Table tennis	Rolls Royce – Canoeing
British Gas – Hockey	O2 – Taekwondo	John Lewis – Equestrian	AstraZeneca – Rowing
British Airways – Snowsport GB	Accenture – Sailing	Alliance & Leicester – Swimming	RBS – Curling
Wolseley – Gymnastics	Experian – Ice Skating		Atos – Bobsleigh
Group 4 Securicor – Judo	Standard Life – Archery		
Skandia – Biathlon			
Land Securities – Volleyball			
SAB Miller – Fencing			
Home Retail Group – Badminton			

highly complex and contemporary phenomena (Yin, 1994). The strength of this methodology lies in its ability to incorporate data from a number of sources within the boundaries of a given case (Bryman, 2008). Case study research is therefore important in allowing the researcher to discover and investigate variables that may appear insignificant over a population or a sample, but have major significance within the case under study. This is important for description and essential for understanding. The decision to adopt a case study approach has a twofold rationale. First, due to the contemporary and on-going nature of the FTSE-BOA Initiative, a case study approach is particularly 'appropriate for exploratory analysis when investigating a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context' (Edwards & Skinner, 2009, p. 211). Second, case study research provides the opportunity to 'analytically generalise' rather than 'statistically generalise' (Flyvbjerg, 2006; Yin, 1994), in that it provides the opportunity to expand and generate theory rather than to simply enumerate frequencies. It is the intention of this exploratory case study research to contribute to the former, rather than the latter and thus to theoretically contribute to understanding of CSR through sport. To this end, a case study approach is particularly well suited for this research (Eisenhardt, 1989; Einsenhardt & Graebner, 2007).

Sampling and procedure

Sampling

The data presented here were collected as part of a broader evaluation conducted on behalf of the BOA between 2009 and 2010. The purpose of this broader evaluation was to evaluate the effectiveness of the FTSE-BOA Initiative. During the data collection CSR was not our initial focal interest, however, through the process of analysis it became clear that much of the evaluation data and subsequent findings provided a novel insight into, and therefore potential to contribute towards, the CSR and sport literature. Thus, in line with Eisenhardt's (1989, p. 539) remark that, 'if a new line of thinking emerges during the research, it makes sense to take advantage [...] to provide a new theoretical insight' the FTSE-BOA Initiative partnership arrangements elicited an opportunity to provide new theoretical insights into CSR and sport, in particular the use of CSR through sport initiatives.

During the initial evaluation, of the 11 partnerships put forward for formal evaluation by the BOA, based on random allocation, the principal researcher was involved in the analysis of three case studies. With our research question in mind, the purpose of this analysis was not to establish representativeness of these case studies to the entire FTSE-BOA Initiative, but rather 'that cases [were] selected because they [were] particularly suitable for illuminating and extending relationships and logic amongst constructs' (Einsenhardt & Graebner, 2007, p. 27). In this regard, each of the case studies individually and uniquely contributes to our understanding of CSR through sport, despite not being representative of the FTSE-BOA Initiative as a whole.

To outline the cases analysed hereafter, one partnership arrangement involved a major communications company that agreed to conduct a short-term, specific design and implementation of a Customer Relationship Management database into an NGB through a corporate secondment. A secondment refers to a temporary transfer of an employee for an agreed period of time, in this case, from a corporation to a sport organisation for just under a year. The second case study was a monthly intervention process, over roughly a 3-year span, to overhaul the entire governance structure of a smaller NGB. This was achieved through a number of committee and general membership meetings over an extended period of time. Finally, the third case study was an ongoing communication process through a secondment agreement into the foreseeable future to implement and maintain the entire portfolio of the FTSE-BOA Initiative. See Table 2 for the selected case study overview based upon commonly identified NGB and partnership characteristics (Bayle & Robinson, 2007; Theodoraki & Henry, 1994).

Procedure

Data were primarily gathered through semi-structured interviews with key partnership personnel ($n = 14$). This was then supplemented by content analysis of relevant

Table 2. Outline of case studies characteristics.

	NGB characteristics		Partnership characteristics		
	NGB type	NGB size	Communication level	Partnership lifespan	Corporate organisation
Case study 1	Team sport	Medium/ large	Seldom	Under one year	Energy industry
Case study 2	Individual sport	Small	Approx. monthly	Three years	Pharmaceutical industry/ multisport
Case study 3	Multisport	Medium	Secondment (daily)	Ongoing	Pharmaceutical industry

documentation ($n = 50$; equating to 221 pages of documentation) to validate respondent claims in order to separate the rhetoric of interviews from reality of what was really occurring within these partnership arrangements (Googins & Rochlin, 2000). Document analysis was thus used to validate and support interview data rather than a data collection strategy per se (Mayan, 2009). Documents analysed included annual reports, articles of association, agendas, strategic plans, minutes of meetings, along with more widely available virtual outputs such as websites and press releases. In addition, due to the significant role of the BOA within these partnership arrangements, an examination of any BOA documentation pertaining to the FTSE-BOA Initiative was also made. These internal documents included its strategic outlines and guides, general publications and internal presentations. Interviews were carried out with senior management personnel in both NGBs and corporate organisations, respectively. Key actors or 'boundary spanners' were purposefully selected (Mayan, 2009; Patton, 2002) using a 'key informant technique' based upon 'the specific knowledge that they possessed' of the partnership arrangement (Gratton & Jones, 2004, p. 104). Interviews lasted between 33 and 75 minutes ($M = 49$ minutes) in length, producing a total of 96 pages of data. See Table 3 for a participant overview.

Coding

Interviews were then transcribed verbatim and iteratively analysed using Miles and Hubermans' (1994) framework. In line with Miles and Huberman (1994), the interview transcripts were read and then reread by the principal researcher to ensure full immersion. The data were then initially subjected to a process of inductive content analysis to identify meaningful segments of information (i.e. raw data themes) specifically identifying how corporate organisations were using the FTSE-BOA Initiative as well as the outcomes of the partnership agreements. During the later part of data analysis, the data were then subjected to deductively applying codes to raw data as they emerged, whilst simultaneously allowing for any new codes to

Table 3. Outline of participants by job title.

	Participant job title
Case study 1	[NGB] Chief executive officer
	[NGB] Director of business and finance
	[NGB] Non-executive chairman
	[Corporate] Director of corporate reputation & internal communications
	[Corporate] Secondee/[NGB] project manager
Case study 2	Steering group non-executive advisor/[NGB] non-executive chairman
	[NGB] Director/[corporate] secondee
	[NGB] Chairman
	[NGB] Chief executive officer/[corporate] secondee
	[NGB] Administrator
Case study 3	[NGB] Director/[corporate] secondee[a]
	[NGB] Chief executive officer/[corporate] secondee[a]

[a]Subject to an additional follow-up interview.

emerge. Coding in this way thus required multiple rounds of iterative coding. From these two data sets, higher-order common patterns or themes were identified.

Methodological rigour

A number of steps were taken during and after the research process to ensure methodological rigour (Mayan, 2009). First, the interview guides used were adapted directly from a pilot study into the FTSE-BOA Initiative conducted previously by the second author. This ensured that the questions asked were appropriate and understood by those interviewed. Second, two of the participants initially interviewed were subject to a follow-up interview. Not only did this allow for further elaboration on the third case study, but this also acted as a form of member checking of the emerging themes across all the case studies (Johnson, 1997). This ensured that the data were both an accurate and valid reflection of their experiences within the FTSE-BOA Initiative. Third, the themes identified were also subjected to data triangulation with collected FTSE-BOA Initiative documentation. This further ensured accuracy of the interview data collected, particularly in understanding dates and timing of the arrangements examined. Finally, the emergent themes were subject to verification amongst the named authors until the final emerging themes were agreed upon (Mayan, 2009). In line with standard ethical procedures, the corporate and NGB organisations' real names are presented anonymously with [the corporate] or [the NGB] often used to protect the identity of the organisations in question and, in turn, the individuals interviewed.

Results and discussion

Leveraging of the FTSE-BOA initiative

From our analysis there are a number of ways in which the FTSE-BOA Initiative was leveraged by corporate organisations in the lead up to the London 2012 Olympic Games. These included: numerous forms of human resourcing, Olympic involvement and market research into potential markets and the increase of corporate capital. As a caveat to the presentation of our results below, it is important to note that it is not the intention here to discredit the corporate involvement within the Initiative. On the contrary, the intention is to shed light, through a contemporary and practical setting, on the multitude of ways in which CSR through the medium of sport can be used to more effectively achieve a raft of sport and corporate organisational objectives.

Human resources: employee development, motivation and restructuring

Corporate organisations were using the FTSE-BOA Initiative in order to achieve a number of human resource objectives. These included employee motivation through inspirational speakers, typically by successful ex-Olympian athletes, employee development and even workforce planning in terms of organisational restructuring. One corporate organisation benefitted from the personnel development of two employees through secondments. For example, one of the secondments stated that 'it helped me obviously, I brought learning back from it which I am taking forward in my everyday job [...] obviously it was a great opportunity for me personally' (secondee, corporate organisation). This constituted a human resources benefit because 'we could take one of our bright Informational Systems stars as it were and it was going to be a great experience for her and her career progression within [the corporate] [...] it ticked all the boxes from a HR perspective' (director, corporate organisation). Thus, the partnership arrangement was being used as a means of developing employees as well achieving CSR agendas.

In addition to employee development, the arrangement in one partnership agreement was also used as a means to downsize the corporate organisations through a process of de-layering:

> They put me into the mix as a secondment because during your redeployment you had to do some meaningful work and [you should] tailor your meaningful work to something that will benefit the company and benefit the individual, whether that is in the company or outside the company. So this role ticked those boxes. (Chief Executive Officer, NGB)

Thus, the agreement with this particular NGB, although seemingly altruistic and achieving the CSR objectives of the corporate organisation involved, was also instrumental in facilitating the redundancy of a middle-line manager in economically difficult times. This point was summarised by the interviewee who stated that it 'wasn't [the corporate organisation's] money being spent on sport, it was my department spending money on my redeployment and sport happened to be a beneficiary from that' (Chief Executive Officer, NGB).

Although the above quote suggests an element of coincidence, it was not. First, becoming the Director of the FTSE-BOA Initiative was a significant pull factor in the corporate organisation deciding to redeploy their employee within an NGB. Second, the now CEO of an NGB also had a keen interest in the management of sport organisations with the intention to move into the sport sector anyway. The corporate organisation in this case saw an opportunity to essentially 'kill two birds with one stone' in developing their Olympic portfolio, whilst dealing with more general and pressing concerns surrounding organisational restructuring.

Smith and Westerbeek (2007) identified numerous factors for why sport is inherently attractive for corporate organisations to achieve their CSR objectives. Our findings here illustrate why sport is inherently attractive for other reasons beyond that of achieving their CSR objectives. The finding of above illustrates how CSR through sport can be used to achieve CSR objectives, but as a proactive and cost-effective means to facilitate the broader structural changes necessary for corporate organisations to operate effectively in difficult economic times. In linking this to the partnership literature, this finding is congruent with Oliver (1990), and indeed Babiak (2003), in that corporate organisations wanted to be perceived as legitimate in their re-deployment of an employee by using a 'soft' redundancy approach. In particular, the use of a corporate secondment to a sport organisation is often overlooked as a way to develop corporate employees in large companies. Given their, often extensive, employee development programmes, corporate organisations can reduce costs by externally (rather than internally) developing employees and also in the process achieve their CSR objectives by benefiting sport organisations' operations. Thus, whilst Smith and Westerbeek (2007) may be right in that sport has ubiquitous appeal for corporate organisations, we build on Smith and

Westerbeek's remarks in that sport specifically has ubiquitous appeal in that it provides a unique setting whereby corporate organisations can develop employees, for example, through the use of secondments which place employees in very different work setting to that of the corporate environment.

Olympic involvement and market research

Although the FTSE-BOA Initiative specified that there were no rights to the Olympic Rings or branding associated with the Olympics, many corporate organisations leveraged the FTSE-BOA Initiative to be involved in the Olympics in some meaningful way. This was apparent in a number of responses by the corporate organisations when asked to explain their involvement with their particular project:

> To be absolutely honest with you [. . .] we don't do a huge amount of this type of thing [. . .] but we did get involved in the sponsorship of the Olympics, maybe not formally, but you have to think and bear in mind that we are primarily a UK company, we have interests in other areas, but we did want to try and support the 2012 Olympics. (Director, Corporate Organisation)

Some corporate organisations even believed that they were having a greater contribution to the Olympics than their sponsoring competitors. As one participant noted, 'one of our main competitors is an Olympic energy sponsor. We are helping Team GB and that is outside of the sponsorship thing, it's not a branding thing and that's how it is' (director, corporate organisation). Justification was made on the basis that the corporate organisations were providing a subtly different type of active support to the Olympic endeavour rather than passively offering financial input for exchange of the Olympic branding rights. This finding is particularly pertinent given that Olympic sponsorship is tightly controlled through the International Olympic Committees' The Olympic Partner Programme (TOP) which holds exclusive world-wide rights to Summer, Winter and Youth Olympic Games (International Olympic Committee, 2011). Simply put, 'from [the corporate organisations] point of view, it was an opportunity to put a toe in the water and get involved with the Olympics in an affordable way' (Chief Executive Officer, NGB). Thus the FTSE-BOA Initiative offered an alternative means of involvement in the London 2012 Olympic Games without the formality, and without the price tag.

This particular finding is also congruent with that of Séguin et al. (2010), in that it highlights a number of perfectly viable alternative ways to get involved with sport events, which are arguably more effective than writing cheques for sponsorship rights. That said, our finding differs from that of Séguin et al. (2010) in that involvement does not necessarily have to require significant financial outlay, but rather only indirect resources such as time and human resources. One participant summed up this point by saying, 'you are not asking for a cash donation from a company, you are actually asking for a bit of mind space and creativity' (Director, FTSE-BOA Initiative).

Closely linked to this was the way in which the corporates used the FTSE-BOA Initiative to gather information about the London 2012 Olympics in order to make more informed decisions about their own involvement. For example, in the case of the establishment of the FTSE-BOA Initiative Director, the process of secondment came about through a scenario of:

> Opportunity meets preparation [. . .] I was in UK at the time when the letter came across the table from the Chief Executive and [the corporate] didn't know what to do in this Olympic space, so it was convenient as I was keen to take it on for a assigned period of time [. . .] I was able to build the contacts to inform [the corporate] on its decision making and positioning of that space. (Director, FTSE-BOA Initiative)

Therefore, one of the many reasons why this corporate organisation got involved with the FTSE-BOA Initiative was as a subtle form of market research into the type of markets that may be interested in the London 2012 Olympics and how sport might be used to promote its own corporate activities. As indicated above, this was primarily achieved through the use of a secondee. In effect, the secondment was established so data could be collected on potential markets and marketing opportunities for an organisation that was planning how best to get involved to the London 2012 Olympic Games. Although admittedly empirically difficult to verify, the use of the secondment was potentially a cost-saving one given that the corporate organisation was able to ensure that any resources deployed between 2006 and up to 2012, specifically for the Olympics, were maximised effectively. Clearly, the use of a CSR initiative in this way blurs the roles of CSR and marketing. In this regard, the use of the secondment highlights the potential benefits that are often overlooked by corporate organisations not only to develop employees, but also to tap into the knowledge and expertise of sports to greater understand the sporting environment.

These findings also indicate that very few corporate organisations would have been interested in the FTSE-BOA Initiative, if it were not for the upcoming Olympic Games. In other words, the FTSE-BOA Initiative would not have been anywhere near as successful without the Olympics. As one participant noted:

> I would expect that if it was not the Olympics then they wouldn't have done it. Because the Olympics' is a big enough single thing, for it to trigger a response. If it was something smaller, if it was an individual sport, an individual country, or a single world championships for a single sport then that would have been much less likely to ensure a corporate investment. (NBG Chief Executive Officer/Corporate Secondee)

Regretfully, this also suggests that the FTSE-BOA Initiative is unlikely to continue post-2012, with many participants ambivalent about the future of the FTSE-BOA Initiative. As one participant articulated, 'the Olympics' is a very powerful motivator. What would be interesting is how many companies actually stick with it after 'the Olympics' (NBG Chief Executive Officer/Corporate Secondee). The BOA was equally concerned about the partnerships' longevity, and accepted that 'if half of them [the partnership agreements] continue after 2012 then that would be a success' (Director, FTSE-BOA Initiative).

Although the future of the FTSE-BOA Initiative is unclear, it, nonetheless, contributes to our understanding of CSR through sport. It suggests that CSR initiatives should be considered more temporally, and in line with the broader environmental changes. The motivations for involvement in, and leveraging of, the FTSE-BOA Initiative are clearly episodic in nature and dependent on the presence of the corporately alluring major sporting event of the Olympic Games. Similar to Carey et al. (2011) who state that mega-event bidding criteria episodically change with new trends such as CSR, legacies and social and economic development, the leveraging of sport as a means of achieving CSR is episodic. This is an essential feature of why corporate organisations chose to be involved in the FTSE-BOA Initiative, and an essential feature as to why corporate organisations may or may not choose to use sport to achieve CSR objectives that has yet to be addressed in the CSR and sport literature.

Corporate capital

Typically, CSR practices are entrenched forms of public relations practices in order for corporate organisations to be perceived by the public as socially responsible agents. Within the FTSE-BOA Initiative, however, this was not the case. Although some organisations did some minor public relations, it certainly was not a highly prevalent practice amongst corporate organisations in the FTSE-BOA Initiative. Corporate organisations, instead, pursued a form of capital within the corporate community network by being perceived as legitimate, socially responsible agents amongst their corporate peers, a term we labelled as 'corporate capital'. Corporate capital was used here in the respect that the FTSE-BOA Initiative ensured corporate organisations were 'covering a portfolio of sport' (Chief Executive Officer, NGB) so that 'when it comes up in conversation [the corporate] can actually say well 'did you know these are the companies we are actually working with', and it gives the company a different profile' (Director, FTSE-BOA Initiative). This corporate peer pressure, or a desire to gain 'corporate capital', is not unlike the findings of Séguin et al. (2010) who identified 'corporate peer pressure' as a contributing factor in corporate organisations supporting major sporting events. Our corporate capital finding also supports Babiak's (2003) examination of corporate involvement with Canadian Sport Centres (CSC) in that legitimacy, as well as reciprocity, was a motivator for corporate involvement. The key difference between our findings and that of Séguin et al. (2010) and Babiak (2003) is in terms of whom legitimacy was sought from. Babiak (2003) suggested that legitimacy was sought from the public. Séguin et al. (2010) identified the mayor as a key actor from whom legitimacy was sought. The present case study indicates legitimacy was sought among the corporate organisations themselves. The discrepancy may be explained by the fact the Olympic Games is a significant pull factor, certainly significantly more than FINA World Championships (Séguin et al., 2010) and the Canadian Sport Centres (Babiak, 2003).

To summarise, corporates were leveraging the FTSE-BOA Initiative for a myriad of underlying objectives such as human resourcing agendas, acquisition of corporate capital, subtle market research and involvement opportunities (Table 4). What can be drawn from these findings more broadly is that CSR through sport can clearly be a useful tool for corporate organisations far beyond the conventional CSR benefits currently identified in the literature (Levermore, 2010; Séguin et al., 2010; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007). This is especially the case in financially difficult times. For most businesses, utilising CSR in financially lean times can seem rather counter-intuitive, as it is an immediate 'peripheral' activity, which can be stopped to save money and improve efficiency. Our findings concur with an array of concepts taken from the partnership and CSR literature, which suggest that other motivations such as

Table 4. Matrix of corporate motivations and inputs and NGB outcomes.

			Arrangement outcome for NGB	
Case study	Identified uses of the FTSE-BOA Initiative	Corporate inputs	Short term	Long term
Case study 1	Corporate capital Indirect Olympic involvement Employee development National pride	Human resources: (i) secondee (two years wage) (ii) managerial time: meetings, emails Ad hoc use of procurement/legal departments Media training + office space	New CRM system Much higher-grade CRM than initial budget (£150,000) allowed for Increased efficiency and scope in dealing with stakeholders	Consolidation of CRM system from 70 databases to one CRM expertise, more efficient use of resources Improved NGB profile, greater ability to communicate
Case study 2	'Soft' employee redeployment Employee development	Human resources: (i) time investment by two individuals Fees (discounted) for consultation and legal advice 50% wage of NGB chief executive officer for two years	Replacement of a representative board to a competency based board Entirely new governance structure New paid chief executive officer	Improved external legitimacy Devolvement of responsibility and accountability across the association More 'workers'; less 'criticisers', quicker working practices Now has partnership potential
Case study 3	Corporate capital Olympic involvement Market research Employee development	Human resources: (i) continual secondee as a project manager of FTSE-BOA Initiative programme (6+ years)	Development of the FTSE-BOA Initiatives estimated at £1 million per annum 21 partnerships and additional interventions Additional BOA corporate strategy work	Increase exposure of BOA & NGBs A shift in NGB thinking towards innovative resource acquisition Increased legitimacy of the BOA

resource acquisition, legitimacy, uncertainty reduction and so on all play a part within CSR through sport (Babiak, 2007; Oliver, 1990; Pfeffer & Salancik, 1978). To this end our analysis has attempted to explicitly identify a number of ways in which corporate organisations have leveraged the FTSE-BOA Initiative. In doing we sought to illustrate a number of practical ways in which corporate organisation can utilise sport organisations that do not involve direct financial outlay. In addition, FTSE-BOA Initiative ultimately offers an alternative CSR initiative approach to the typical dyadic sponsorship arrangement or 'corporate support' arrangements that have been previously identified in the literature.

The FTSE-BOA initiative: a symbiotic approach to CSR through sport

Ultimately what the FTSE-BOA Initiative highlights for NGBs and other sports organisations alike is that more innovative and creative models of funding acquisition should be pursued rather than the conventional 'knocking-on-doors for large cheques' approach. As the BOA were acutely aware:

> There are all sorts of different dimensions you can bring to a sponsorship arrangement which is all around the back office partnering, the sharing of expertise and not just a cash transfer with 2012 being the key driver. (Director, BOA)

Similar to Séguin et al. (2010) we agree that financial sponsorship type arrangements can and should be continually used to fund sporting mega-events; however, the model suggested here is one that allows sports organisations to take greater advantage of mega-events in a more meaningful way. What is typically seen with traditional sponsorship strategies is that:

> sport might be grateful for the money and spend it well, or wastefully, it depends on the terms which you give the money. Then everyone will say thank you very much and move on. I think it is a much more interesting model to actually give skills, partnerships and a much more bi-directional manner. It is an undoubtedly better model. (Chief Executive Officer, NGB)

Critically, a corporate organisation's output does not have to be financial. The FTSE-BOA Initiative also highlights the numerous potential positive changes that corporate organisations can make to the sporting environment without financial outlay. In the case of the FTSE-BOA, the improvements to the sport organisations were vast and varied, from information technology support, customer relationship management systems, consultancy, marketing, training and development, policy implementation, strategic planning and improvements to governance structures. As such, the specific project-focused nature of the FTSE-BOA Initiative was particularly effective. What is unique about the FTSE-BOA project is that:

> It wasn't a case of are you going to give us a cheque for a million pounds next year, it was a case of 'can you help us with a project that is critical for us to move forward' and we will do that to the best of our ability. It was well thought through and well-structured with a good outcome. (Director, Corporation Organisation)

To give a more specific example, a secondment of an employee to the NGB from the corporate organisation provided the NGB not only with an extra employee for two years, but one of significant value, in that 'the cost of a secondment like that would be around £150,000 to £200,000 and in that sense it was pretty worthwhile' (Non-executive Chairman, NGB). The immediate benefits were cost savings, in that the price of a project manager was 'more money than we [had] available' (Director, NGB). Other obvious benefits were efficiency gains, which stemmed from the improvements. As one NGB Chief Executive Officer apologetically noted:

> I am sorry I am rambling on about [the installation of a new customer relationship management system], but I am getting quite excited about it because I think it will make such a huge difference and free up resources to do other things for developing the sport. The less time we spend handling bits of information the better.

Clearly the FTSE-BOA Initiative played a significant role in its installation by effectively brokering the acquisition of a project manager. What can also be said is that the agreement acted as a catalyst for internal development in that; 'one of the reasons it has taken so long was that really the project was too big for us particularly at that point in our evolution. So the thought of someone coming in and helping us was great' (Finance Director, NGB). The Initiative was able to speed up a necessary and significant process which might otherwise not have occurred, or at least taken a long time to implement.

Uneven benefits: huge impact

In the light of some of the improvements to sport organisations that have been stated, what should also be noted was the inherent imbalance of benefits between the corporate and sport organisations within this initiative. For example, in reference to what one NGB gave to their corporate counterpart, 'I am not sure how much they got out of it, they certainly got a secondment for one of their staff members who I think personally gained from the experience of working in a small organisation [. . .] other than that I am not sure' (Non-executive Chairman, NGB). Similarly, 'I can't think of any specific things, I think there was development opportunity [. . .] but in terms of what people did for [the corporate] I don't know' (secondee, corporate organisation). This huge difference in realised benefits was somewhat encapsulated by the one NGB CEO who remarked 'to be fair to [the corporate], they have been rather "low maintenance"'.

Although a clear imbalance of benefits was apparent, the potential for corporate firms to make a significant difference was also hugely disproportionate. To illustrate this difference, consider the organisational specifications of one partnership. In 2009, one corporate employed 34,125 people; at the time of writing, the partnered NGB employed 70 people. The NGBs turnover within 2009 was £7.4 million, whilst its corporate counter-part earned a revenue of £21.9 billion in the same tax year. Consequently, it is argued here that it was not possible to compare like for like between these organisations and to ever expect equally accrued benefits would have been naive.

This was highlighted when discussing one agreement to install a new information system with one interviewee who stated that:

> when we implemented ours even a microcosm of the database breaking down we have had 25,000 customers on a database where we transferred 75 billion bits of data, so we are talking big stuff. Clearly this one [project] with the NGB was nowhere as near as big. (Director, Corporate Organisation)

What can be drawn from this is the importance of managing expectations. This understanding is central within partnership theory (Babiak, 2003; Oliver, 1990), but one that is sparsely mentioned in the CSR and sport literature. As long as both parties are aware of the expectations that the other organisation has, agreements can be successful. The above agreement is an example of how corporate organisations provided what was perceived as relatively minimal input into the partnership arrangements. Crucially, this relatively small investment on behalf of the corporate organisation made disproportionally vast improvements to the NGBs. In this respect, corporate organisations were often 'blissfully unaware' of their own potential to use what was effectively 'loose change' to be able to considerably improve NGBs operations. Moreover, the FTSE-BOA Initiative is congruent with Smith and Westerbeek (2007) in that it illustrated the benefits sought by using NGBs over other localised projects are potentially greater. NGBs have a national reach in terms of its grass-roots membership; therefore, these CSR arrangements are likely to have a greater impact on a larger number of individuals, rather than small, discrete and local CSR projects that corporate organisations typically use within their CSR portfolio. In short, the use of higher-level governing sport organisations has a potential greater influence than that of a community based organisation.

Perception of adding value

Many corporations who got involved with the FTSE-BOA Initiative were following CSR policy that usually did not include sport. As one company admitted, 'we don't usually do many of these, but we would like to give this one a go on the basis that there was quite good value for us as well' (director, corporate organisation). One explanation of corporate interest in the scheme stemmed from the direct and immediate 'added value' it could provide to the NGBs core operations. Although appreciation for differences in working practices between the corporate and the public sector were apparent, corporate organisations were acutely aware of the potential to add real value to some of the core competencies of the NGBs despite a lack of knowledge about the industry as a whole; 'I think that had it of been done any other way we would have been less interested, we could see the value from day one and we could see that we could deliver a lot of value [the NGB]' (director, corporate organisation).

The perception of truly adding value to the core business processes of the NGBs, along with the organisations being involved for a number of reasons, as outlined in the previous section, produced a 'win-win' scenario or outcome for both corporate and sport organisations. The outcome of 'added-value' was therefore pervasive in both the corporate and the sport organisations' reflections on the success of the partnership arrangements. The implication for CSR through sport is that agreements do not have to be balanced in terms of real benefits; what matters is perception and expectation. Although sport organisations were clearly benefitting hugely from the initiative, the corporate organisations easily perceived their input added value to the operations of the NGBs. Moreover, due to their perceived minimal input, they had little to no expectations in terms of future returned added value.

Conclusions and implications

This research followed in the tradition of Levermore (2010) and Smith and Westerbeek (2007) in seeking to understand how corporate organisations are using sport organisations to achieve their objectives. Our intention was to explore how CSR through sport initiatives were being leveraged by corporate organisations in the lead up to mega-sporting events. From our examination of the FTSE-BOA Initiative, a number of leveraging tactics were identified. These include human resourcing, such as redeployment of employees and employee development, using the CSR initiatives to gain indirect Olympic involvement and a conduit for research into potential market opportunities, and as a means of gaining corporate capital. Ultimately, from a managerial perspective, the FTSE-BOA Initiative highlights a number of perfectly viable alternative ways to get involved with sport events, which are arguably more effective than purchasing sponsorship rights or providing 'corporate support' through event funding. In particular, the use of secondments between organisations was identified as a practical and cost-effective method to produce a 'win-win' scenario for both corporate and sport organisation. On the one hand, sport organisations were able to gain knowledge and expertise that they were otherwise unable to obtain, whilst on the other, corporate organisations were able to provide professional development opportunities for their employees in a new and challenging environment.

This research makes a number of contributions to knowledge within this area and provides three new theoretical insights into CSR through sport. First, what the FTSE-BOA model offers is an alternative to the typical dyadic relationship between organisations (NGB and corporate) (Levermore, 2010; Séguin et al., 2010). Instead it offers more of a symbiotic relationship between multiple partners (NGB, corporation and the BOA). In this case, all three organisations gave and received 'appropriately' with the unique element of the BOA acting as a broker and facilitator, which encouraged action by both the corporate and the NGB alike. The relationship offering between the BOA and the NGB is the provision of a service, in that the BOA typically provides the necessary logistics for athletes to attend the Olympic Games. As such, the establishment of partnerships was welcomed as a service provision that was above and beyond the BOA's typical remit. Equally, the FTSE company obtains good public relations and 'corporate capital' in working with a legitimate Olympic association, whilst the BOA has the expertise and skills, mainly through the exceptional work of the BOA Directors, to leverage corporates to work with NGBs that they may otherwise be reluctant to be involved with.

In addition, by having a third-party facilitator, such as the BOA, the partnerships were arguably conceived, arranged and implemented far more effectively than without a facilitator. Consequently the FTSE-BOA Initiative provides an illustration of an innovative multiple partnership arrangement that could be adopted by similar organisations within the sport system, such as governing multi-sport agencies or other National Olympic Committees. To date, the literature (Levermore, 2010; Séguin et al., 2010 Smith & Westerbeek, 2007) has focused on dyadic CSR initiatives, rather than considering a third-party organisation that can bring with it a number of competencies and expertise to benefit the initiative.

Second, given the very cyclical nature of major sporting events, and congruent with the mega-event decision-making literature (see for example, Parent, 2008, 2010), timing and context matters, with sport being inherently more attractive in the lead up to mega-events. This research shows that that there may be better times than others for sport organisations to seek CSR and partnership arrangements – a theoretical consideration that has yet to receive any scholarly attention. To borrow from Kingdom's (1984) terminology, concerns for managers and practitioners alike are therefore how to identify when these particular 'windows of opportunity' are present in order to take full advantage of them (Sabatier, 1999). Thus, the ubiquity identified by Smith and Westerbeek (2007) should not be considered static or constant, but rather dynamically dependent broader context (Campbell, 2007; Parent, 2010).

Third, in contrast to what Levermore (2010) suggests, CSR through sport initiatives does not have to benefit one organisation at the expense of another, a point made by all involved in the research. If partnerships are selected for specific expertise and knowledge, objectives appropriately aligned and expectations effectively managed, then the outcomes can be highly beneficial for both organisations in question, even if they are unbalanced in magnitude. This research ultimately demonstrates that traditional sponsorship and corporate support approaches are not the only models that are available to managers and practitioners. If CSR initiatives are approached with a degree of sensibility of understanding, suitable level of expectation, and innovation and creativity, outcomes can be achieved for both partners.

In turning to the limitations of this study, this study examined only one particular type of partnership arrangement, a public–private arrangement. Consequently, generalisations should be made tentatively towards other types of partnership arrangements. Future research could focus on exploring other types of arrangements such as professional partnerships, sponsorship arrangements, joint ventures, acquisitions and mergers. Only then would it be possible to develop a complete picture of the use of such arrangements by corporate organisations to achieve CSR objectives. Moreover, this study is more accurately an examination of Olympic NGBs, rather than all NGBs per se. The question therefore remains as to whether there is something inherently more attractive about Olympic NGBs, as opposed to non-Olympic NGBs, to corporate organisations.

Finally, whilst this paper attempted to draw upon the partnership literature to understand CSR and sport more effectively, this paper calls for more research to ‘bridge the gap’ between CSR and the sport partnership literature which have so far been considered relatively distinct and separate areas of enquiry. Whilst our examination offers the first tentative steps towards such an academic synthesis, future studies should conceive CSR and sport as partnership arrangements. This could further enrich our understanding of CSR and sport beyond traditional stakeholder perspectives (Séguin et al., 2010; Smith & Westerbeek, 2007).

By conducting studies such as this, corporate organisations can be better informed as to how and why sport can be used to achieve a range of corporate organisations’ objectives, rather than just CSRs’ objectives. This paper illustrates, through a practical and contemporary context, how sport organisations and corporate organisations might work together to meet compatible objectives. It endeavoured to provide ‘food for thought’ for managers and practitioners alike in that, not only are CSR practices moving into sport more broadly, but that sport continues to provide a fruitful and ubiquitous setting (Smith & Westerbeek, 2007), albeit context and temporally bound, whereby broader objectives may be realised without significant cost.

References

Babiak, K. M. (2003). *Examining partnerships in amateur sport: The case of a Canadian national sport centre* (doctoral dissertation). University of British Columbia, Vancouver. Retrieved from https://circle.ubc.ca/handle/2429/15068

Babiak, K. M. (2007). Determinants of interorganizational relationships: The case of a Canadian nonprofit sport organization. *Journal of Sport Management*, *21*(3), 338–376. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/
Babiak, K., & Wolfe, R. (2006). More than just a game? Corporate social responsibility and super bowl XL. *Sport Marketing Quarterly*, *15*(4), 214–222. Retrieved from http://www.sportsphilanthropy.com/assets/174_csrandsuperbowlxlbabiakan.pdf
Babiak, K., & Wolfe, R. (2009). Determinants of corporate social responsibility in professional sport: Internal and external factors. *Journal of Sport Management*, *23*(6), 717–742. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsm-back-issues/jsm-back-issues/determinantsofcorporatesocialresponsibilityinprofessionalsportinternalandexternalfactors
Bayle, K., & Robinson, L. (2007). A framework for understanding the performance of national governing bodies of sport. *European Sport Management Quarterly*, *7*(3), 249–268. doi:10.1080/16184740701511037
Bradish, C., & Cronin, J. (2009). Corporate social responsibility in sport. *Journal of Sport Management*, *23*(6), 691–697. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsm-supplements-special-issues/jsm-volume-23-issue-6-november/CorporateSocialResponsibilityinSport
British Olympic Association. (2007). *Guide to working with national governing bodies of Olympic sports*. London: Author.
British Olympic Association. (2011). FTSE-BOA initiative. Retrieved from http://www.olympics.org.uk/contentpage.aspx?page=289
British Olympic Association/Financial Times Stock Exchange Group [BOA/FTSE Group]. (2007). Major British businesses partner further sports. Retrieved from http://www.ftse.com
Bryman, A. (2008). *Social research methods* (2nd ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Campbell, J. L. (2007). Why would corporations behave in socially responsible ways? An institutional theory of corporate social responsibility. *Academy of Management Review*, *32*(3), 946–967. doi:10.5465/AMR.2007.25275684
Carey, M., Mason, D., & Misener, L. (2011). Social responsibility and the competitive bid process for major sporting events. *Journal of Sport and Social Issue*, *35*(3), 246–263. doi:10.1177/0193723511416985
Carroll, A. B. (1979). A three-dimensional conceptual model of corporate performance. *Academy of Management Review*, *4*(4), 497–505. doi:10.2307/257850
Carroll, A. B. (1991). The pyramid of corporate social responsibility: Toward the moral management of organisational stakeholders. *Business Horizons*, *34*(4), 39–48. doi:10.1016/0007-6813(91)90005-G
Carroll, A. B. (1999). Corporate social responsibility. *Business & Society*, *38*(3), 268–295. doi:10.1177/000765039903800303
Cochran, P. L. (2007). The evolution of corporate social responsibility. *Business Horizons*, *50*(6), 449–454. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2007.06.004
Cousens, L. M., Babiak, K., & Bradish, C. (2006). Beyond sponsorship: Reframing corporate-sport relationships. *Sport Management Review*, 1–23. doi:10.1016/S1441-3523(06)70017-1
Dahlsrud, A. (2008). How corporate social responsibility is defined: An analysis of 37 definitions. *Corporate Social Responsibility and Environmental Management*, *15*(1), 1–13. doi:10.1002/csr.132
Edwards, A., & Skinner, J. (2009). *Qualitative research in sport management*. London: Butterworth-Heinnemann.
Eisenhardt, K. M. (1989). Building theories from case study research. *Academy of Management Review*, *14*(4), 532–550.
Eisenhardt, K. M., & Graebner, M. E. (2007). Theory building from cases: Opportunities and challenges. *Academy of Management Journal*, *50*(1), 25–32. doi:10.5465/AMJ.2007.24160888
European Commission. (2001). Corporate social responsibility green paper: Promoting a European framework for corporate social responsibility. COM 399. Retrieved from http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUri/Serv/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2001:0366:FIN:en:PDF
Farrelly, F. (2010). Not playing the game: Why sport sponsorship relationships breakdown. *Journal of Sport Management*, *24*, 319–337. doi:10.1177/1077800405284363
Flyvbjerg, B. (2006). Five misunderstandings about case study research. *Qualitative Inquiry*, *12*(2), 219–245. doi:10.1177/1077800405284363

Geertz, C. (1973). *The interpretation of cultures*. New York, NY: Basic Books.
Godfrey, P. C. (2009). Corporate social responsibility in sport: An overview and key issues. *Journal of Sport Management*, *23*, 698–716. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsm-supplements-special-issues/jsm-volume-23-issue-6-november/CorporateSocialResponsibilityinSportAnOverviewandKeyIssues
Godfrey, P. C., Hatch, N. W., & Hansen, J. M. (2010). Toward a general theory of CSRs. *Business & Society*, *49*(2), 316–344. doi:10.1177/0007650308315494
Googins, B. K., & Rochlin, S. A. (2000). Creating the partnership society: Understanding the rhetoric and reality of cross-sectoral partnerships. *Business and Society Review*, *105*(1), 127–144. doi:10.1111/0045-3609.00068
Gratton, C., & Jones, I. (2004). *Research methods for sport studies*. London: Routledge.
Henriques, A., & Richardson, J. (2004). *The triple bottom line, does it all add up? Assessing the sustainability of business and CSR*. London: Earthscan/James & James.
International Olympic Committee. (2011). Sponsorship. Retrieved from http://www.olympic.org/sponsorship?tab = The-Olympic-Partner-TOP-Programme
Jamali, D., & Keshishian, T. (2009). Uneasy alliances: Lessons learned from partnerships between businesses and NGOs in the context of CSR. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *84*(2), 277–295. doi:10.1007/s10551-008-9708-1
Johnson, B. R. (1997). Examining the validity structure of qualitative research. *Education*, *118*(3), 282–292. Retrieved from http://www.dralessandro.com/subpages/PDFfiles/Validity%20Structure.pdf
Kingdon, J. W. (1984). *Agenda, alternatives, and public policies*. New York, NY: Addison-Wesley.
Kitchin, T. (2003). Corporate social responsibility: A brand explanation. *The Journal of Brand Management*, *10*(4), 312–326. doi:10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540127
Levermore, R. (2010). CSR for development through sport: Examining its potential and limitations. *Third World Quarterly*, *31*(2), 223–241. doi:10.1080/01436591003711967
Lindsey, I., & Houlihan, B. (2007). Networks and partnerships in sports development. In V. Girginov (Ed.), *Management of sports development* (pp. 225–242). Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
Ling, T. (2002). Delivering joined–up government in the UK: Dimensions, issues and problems. *Public Administration*, *80*(4), 615–642. doi:10.1111/1467-9299.00321
Malfas, M., Theodoraki, E., & Houlihan, B. (2004). Impacts of the Olympic games as mega-events. *Proceedings of the ICE – Municipal Engineer*, *157*(3), 209–220. doi:10.1680/muen.2004.157.3.209
Mayan, M. J. (2009). *Essentials of qualitative inquiry*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press.
Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Nijhof, A., De Bruijn, T., & Honder, H. (2008). Partnerships for corporate social responsibility: A review of concepts and strategic options. *Management Decision*, *46*(1), 152–167. doi:10.1108/00251740810846798
Oliver, C. (1990). Determinants of interorganisational relationships: Integration and future directions. *Academy of Management Review*, *15*(2), 241–265. Retrieved from http://www.jstor.org/stable/258156
Parent, M. M. (2008). Evolution and issue patterns for major-sport events organizing committees and stakeholders. *Journal of Sport Management*, *22*(2), 135–164. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsm-back-issues/jsmvolume22issue2march/evolutionandissuepatternsformajorsporteventorganizingcommitteesandtheirstakeholders
Parent, M. M. (2010). Decision making in major sporting events over time: Parameters, drivers, and strategies. *Journal of Sport Management*, *24*(3), 291–318. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsm-back-issues/jsmvolume24issue3may/decisionmakinginmajorsporteventsovertimeparametersdriversandstrategies
Patton, M. Q. (2002). *Qualitative research and evaluation methods* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
Pfeffer, J., & Salancik, G. R. (1978). *The external control of organisations*. New York, NY: Harper & Row.

Ponte, S., Richey, K., & Baab, M. (2009). Bono's product (RED) initiative: Corporate social responsibility that solves the problems of 'distant others'. *Third World Quarterly*, *30*(2), 301–317. doi:10.1080/01436590802681074

Roberts, N. C., & Bradley, R. T. (1991). Stakeholder collaboration and innovation: A study of public policy initiation at the state level. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *27*(2), 209–227. doi:10.1177/0021886391272004

Robson, S. (2007). Partnerships in sport. In K. Hylton, P. Bramham, D. Jackson, & M. Nesti (Eds.), *Sport development: Policy, process and practice* (pp. 99–125). New York, NY: Routledge.

Sabatier, P. (1999). *Theories of the policy process*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press.

Seitanidi, M., & Crane, A. (2009). Implementing CSR through partnerships: Understanding the selection, design, and institutionalisation of nonprofit-business partnerships. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *85*(2), 413–429. doi:10.1007/s10551-008-9743-y

Séguin, B., Parent, M. M., & O'Reilly, N. (2010). Corporate support: A corporate social responsibility alternative to traditional event sponsorship. *International Journal of Sport Management and Marketing*, *7*, 202–222. doi:10.1504/IJSMM.2010.032551

Sheth, H., & Babiak, K. M. (2010). Beyond the game: Perceptions and practices of corporate social responsibility in the professional sport industry. *Journal of Business Ethics*, *91*(3), 433–450. doi:10.1007/s10551-009-0094-0

Skinner, J. (2010). Sport social responsibility. In M. Hopwood, J. Skinner, & P. Kitchin (Eds.), *Sport public relations and communication* (pp. 69–87). Oxford, UK: Butterworth Heinemann.

Slack, T., & Parent, M. M. (2006). *Understanding sport organisations: The application of organisation theory* (2nd ed.). Champaign, IL: Human Kinetics.

Smith, A. C. T., & Westerbeek, H. M. (2007). Sport as a vehicle for deploying corporate social responsibility. *The Journal of Corporate Citizenship*, *25*, 43–54. Retrieved from http://www.scribd.com/doc/49749502/Sport-as-a-Vehicle-for-Deploying-Corporate-Social-Responsibility

Spekman, R. E., Kamauff, J. W., Jr., & Myhr, N. (1998). An empirical investigation into supply chain management: A perspective on partnerships. *Supply Chain Management: An International Journal*, *3*(2), 53–67. doi:10.1108/13598549810215379

Theodoraki, E., & Henry, I. (1994). Organisational structures and contexts in British national governing bodies of sport. *International Review for the Sociology of Sport*, *29*(3), 243–265. doi:10.1177/101269029402900302

Valor, C. (2005). Corporate social responsibility and corporate citizenship: Towards corporate accountability. *Business and Society Review*, *110*, 191–212. doi:10.1111/j.0045-3609.2005.00011.x

Walker, M., & Kent, A. (2009). Do fans care? Assessing the influence of corporate social responsibility on consumer attitudes in the sport industry. *Journal of Sport Management*, *23*(6), 743–769. Retrieved from http://journals.humankinetics.com/jsm-supplements-special-issues/jsm-volume-23-issue-6-november/DoFansCareAssessingtheInfluenceofCorporateSocialResponsibilityonConsumerAttitudesintheSportIndustry

Walker, M., & Parent, M. M. (2010). Toward an integrated framework of corporate social responsibility, responsiveness, and citizenship in sport. *Sport Management Review*, *13*, 198–213. doi:10.1016/j.smr.2010.03.003

Wan-Jan, W. S. (2006). Defining corporate social responsibility. *Journal of Public Affairs*, *6*(3), 176–184. doi:10.1002/pa.227

Wood, D. J., & Gray, B. (1991). Toward a comprehensive theory of collaboration. *The Journal of Applied Behavioral Science*, *27*(1), 3–22.

Yin, R. (1994). *Case study research: Design and methods* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.