

International Sport Marketing

Australia

The Most Significant Sport Management Issue in Australia?

Melbourne Storm Rugby League franchise, owned by News Limited, has been embroiled in what has been described as the most significant sport management issue in Australian sporting history. Investigations from the National Rugby League (NRL) uncovered what has been described as systemic breaches of the salary cap system over the past five years with overpayments estimated to be in the order of \$1.7M. The NRL has detailed a wide-ranging set of penalties on the Storm:

- Their two premierships successes in 2007 and 2009 stripped and removed from the official records
- Their three minor premierships stripped
- Ordered to repay \$1.1M in prize money earned over this period
- A fine of \$500,000 for breaching the salary cap
- A loss of all competition points in 2010 (Storm were currently placed second on the premiership ladder)
- Removed the ability for Storm to earn any competition points during 2010

In what is clearly the most aggressive of penalties, Storm has been left decimated. Questions are now being raised as to:

- How these breaches avoided internal and external audits plus an audit by the NRL salary cap auditor over the five years
- Why the Board of Directors reportedly had no knowledge of the breaches
- How News Limited, as owner of the Storm and one of Australia's leading corporate companies, remained unaware of the systemic breaches
- The extent of similar behaviors at other NRL clubs and indeed within and across other sports
- Whether the penalties go too far and punish the fan and supporter base—the team and supporters now will watch Storm compete in the remaining 20 weeks of competition for no possibility of earning competition points.

Discussion over the breaches and the penalties has overtaken every sport with the traditional AFL coverage overrun with commentary and discussion on the

Storm issue. It is clear the case will continue to generate significant coverage as further investigations look certain to uncover more details. The events surrounding Melbourne Storm look certain to trigger some fundamental shifts in the governance and management of both professional and non-professional sport organizations in Australia.

Melbourne—The Ultimate Sports City

Melbourne remains the best location in the world to hold a sports event. The state capital of Victoria, destination for many annual world-class events and Commonwealth Games host in 2006, came out on top in SportBusiness's industry analysis of sports cities globally to win the 'Ultimate Sports City' award for the third time in a row. The results of the SportBusiness 'Ultimate Sports City' award were announced at the City Forum at the SportAccord Convention in Dubai. Melbourne beat new entrant Singapore in second place and London, England, which placed third. Germany's capital city Berlin took fourth place and Melbourne's Australian rival Sydney took fifth.

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Germany

2010 IIHF World Championships in Germany

Sixteen ice hockey teams competed during the 74th IIHF World Championships in May. The opening match between Germany and the US was expected to deliver record numbers with more than 76,000 spectators expected. Altogether there were 56 matches leading up to the final match on May 23.

New Revenue Records in German Football

Despite the difficult economic situation, the German Football League (DFL) announced a revenue of more than 2 billion Euro for all 36 clubs of the first and second division during the 2008-09 season. These new figures are the fifth record revenues in a row for the DFL.

Positive Summary of 12th IAAF World Championships in Athletics Berlin 2009

The organizing committee of the World Championships of Athletics in Berlin 2009 offered a positive summary of their financial statements. In addition, there was also a new record in TV ratings, as almost 10 million viewers followed the competitions on TV. The World Cup was broadcast in 190 countries and ticket revenues were

approximately 14 million Euro. The mascot “Berlino,” the media centre, and the TV stations ARD and ZDF were awarded different prizes.

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Japan

Sony 3D Experience of the FIFA World Cup

In June 2010, the FIFA World Cup will be shown in 3D by Sony and SKY Perfect JSAT, a Japanese satellite broadcasting company. Sponsored by Sony, the 3D matches will be televised via SKY Perfect JSAT’s channels. Including the most important Japan-Netherlands match and the tournament final, a total of 25 matches will be available in 3D. This campaign is called “2010 FIFA World Cup South Africa 3D.” It is expected that a package of Sony products (e.g., 3D TVs and Blue-ray players) and World Cup contents will be provided for consumers to make their 3D experiences more integrated with Sony products.

Women, Baseball, and Marketing

To attract more female consumers, Japanese professional baseball teams are running a female-friendly campaign at their stadiums. For example, the Yomiuri Giants, a professional baseball team based in Tokyo, try to fill 150 seats in the third base stands reserved only for female fans. The team offers free pink, stylish backrests, blankets, original candies, restaurant coupons, and game day programs that explain the rules of baseball and show young star players’ information including their hobbies, interests, and private photo shoots. These promotional activities targeting women are believed not only to improve female consumers’ game-day experiences, but also to fulfill their specific needs that help the team create a new market. Indeed, the female market continues to be a lucrative segment for the Japanese professional baseball league that has long been a male-dominant sports entertainment. Identifying different categories of female game experiences, apparel, accessories, food, and drinks will accelerate the pace of event innovation for women.

iPhone for Enhancing Baseball Performance

A new iPhone application for instant access to video feedback and player statistics is available only for the players of the Fukuoka Softbank Hawks, a member of the Japanese professional baseball league’s Pacific League division. The team is based in Fukuoka prefec-

ture and was bought in 2005 by Softbank Corporation, the official carrier of the iPhone for the Japanese market. Since the 2009 season, the coaches and players of the team were provided iPhone 3Gs for athletic purposes. The players have an immediate access to visual feedback on their batting performance as well as opposing teams’ pitcher performance not only in the dugout during games, but also anywhere at anytime as long as they have an iPhone. By applying the smartphone’s video analysis technology to the improvement of baseball performance, the Hawks attempt to place them in higher positions in the team standings in the 2010 season.

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New Zealand

NZ Government Rallies for Rally New Zealand

The New Zealand Government is providing \$250,000 from its Major Events Development Fund toward Rally New Zealand’s efforts to keep New Zealand on the World Rally Championship (WRC). The Federation Internationale de l’Automobile (FIA) recently reviewed the WRC schedule and New Zealand did not feature on the calendar for 2011. The extra funding is to be used to upgrade the opening and closing ceremonies, develop sections of the rally to provide better television viewing for international audiences, and provide additional support for some of the more high-profile and influential teams during their stay in New Zealand.

Rugby World Cup—Off Key and Out of Tune?

A song used to promote the 2011 Rugby World Cup is angering those who feel that a song with New Zealand origins should have been used. Instead, Rugby New Zealand 2011, the company responsible for the delivery of the 2011 Rugby World Cup, utilized a British song, albeit one covered by New Zealand band The Feelers. The song, *Right Here, Right Now*, was originally recorded by Jesus Jones in the 1990s.

Australian Football Expansion into New Zealand

The Western Bulldogs Australian Football League team in Melbourne (Australia) is planning to stage matches in Wellington (New Zealand). AFL football has been played in New Zealand, but only in exhibition pre-season matches, never as part of the actual premiership. The Bulldogs currently sell two “home games” to Darwin and Canberra, with Wellington seen as an attractive alternative to those locations. The Bulldogs

are reportedly asking for an upfront payment of A\$500,000 per game, with Wellington City Council to receive the gate receipts. Bulldogs CEO Campbell Rose has a background in event management, having served as chief executive of Melbourne Major Events Corporation when rugby's Bledisloe Cup, golf's Presidents Cup, and sailing's 1999 World Championships were brought to the Victorian capital.

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