

# A CASE OF INNOVATION IN COMMUNITY SPORT

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Canadian  
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# Background

- Community sport clubs are a foundation of the Canadian sport system
- Grassroots programs support physical literacy through athletic excellence, for life
- Pressures from members, community stakeholders, and social policy mean a challenging and ever-changing environment facing community sport clubs
- Innovation may be an avenue for sustainability, revitalization, growth that supports nurturing excellence



# Innovation in Sport Organizations

- Innovation – any initiative that is perceived as “new” to the organization; essential to compete and survive (Crossan & Apaydin, 2010)
- Innovation in sport (e.g., equipment, rules...)
- Research on innovation in nonprofit, voluntary community sport clubs (Frankish et al., 2012; Hoeber et al., 2015; Hoeber & Hoeber, 2012)
  - *Attributes/types of innovation, determinants, outcomes*
  - *How does the process unfold? What can we learn from it? What are the implications for innovation in community sport?*

# Examining the Innovation Process in Community Sport

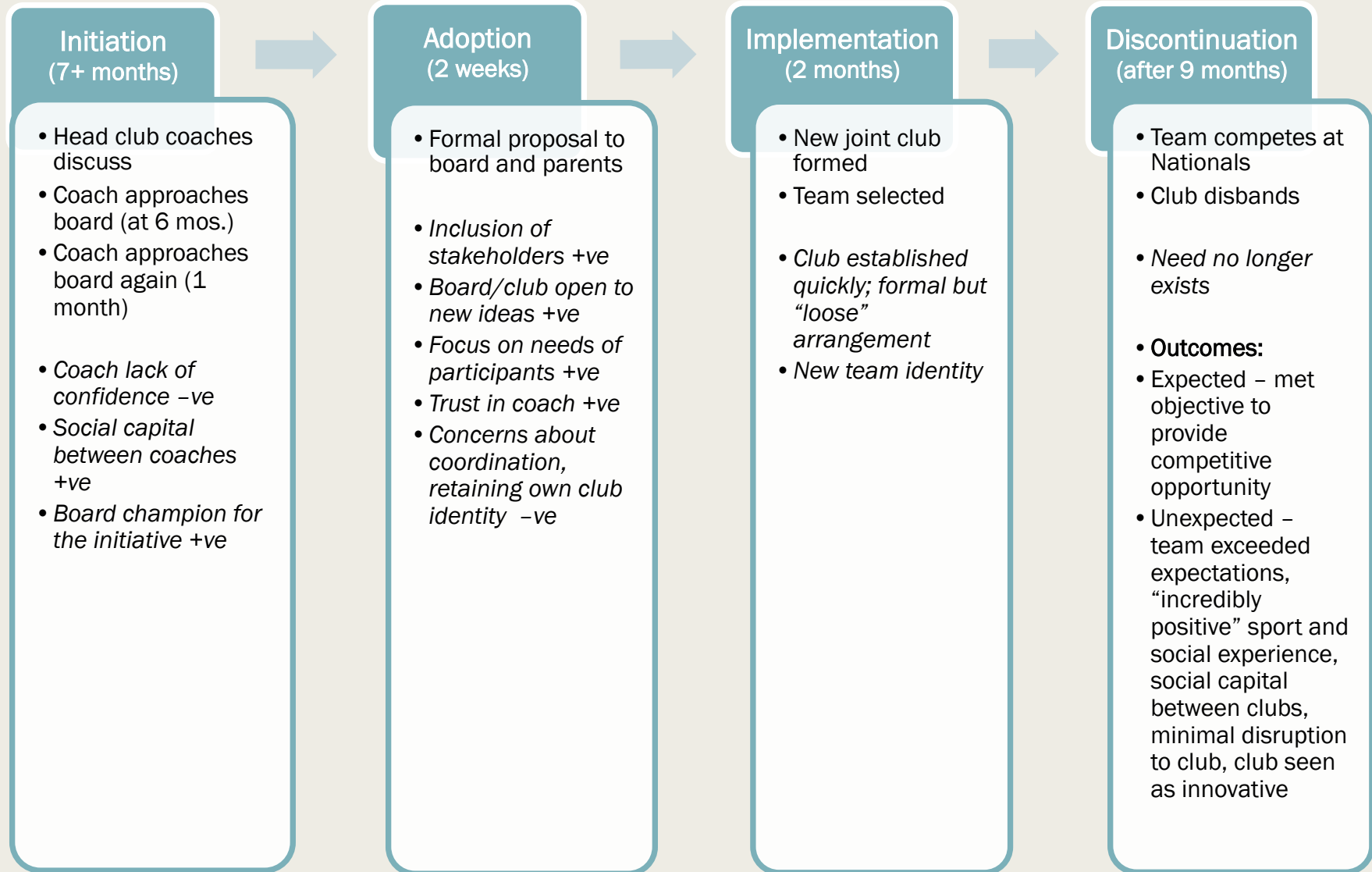
- Case study – in-depth investigation of two clubs
- Longitudinal design – real-time investigation as phenomenon unfolds (18 months)
- Data collection and analysis
  - *Multiple personal sources (personal interviews, focus groups)*
  - *Media sources (websites, press clippings, social media)*
  - *Factors affecting the process of innovation adoption and implementation considered*

# Case 1 Synchro Swimming

- Need for elite competitive opportunity for girls
- Partnership to establish new club to host joint competitive team (“Burwood-Oakdale Synchro Swim Club”)
- Perspective of one club - Burwood
  - *Radical, administrative, product innovation*



# Case 1 Synchro Swimming



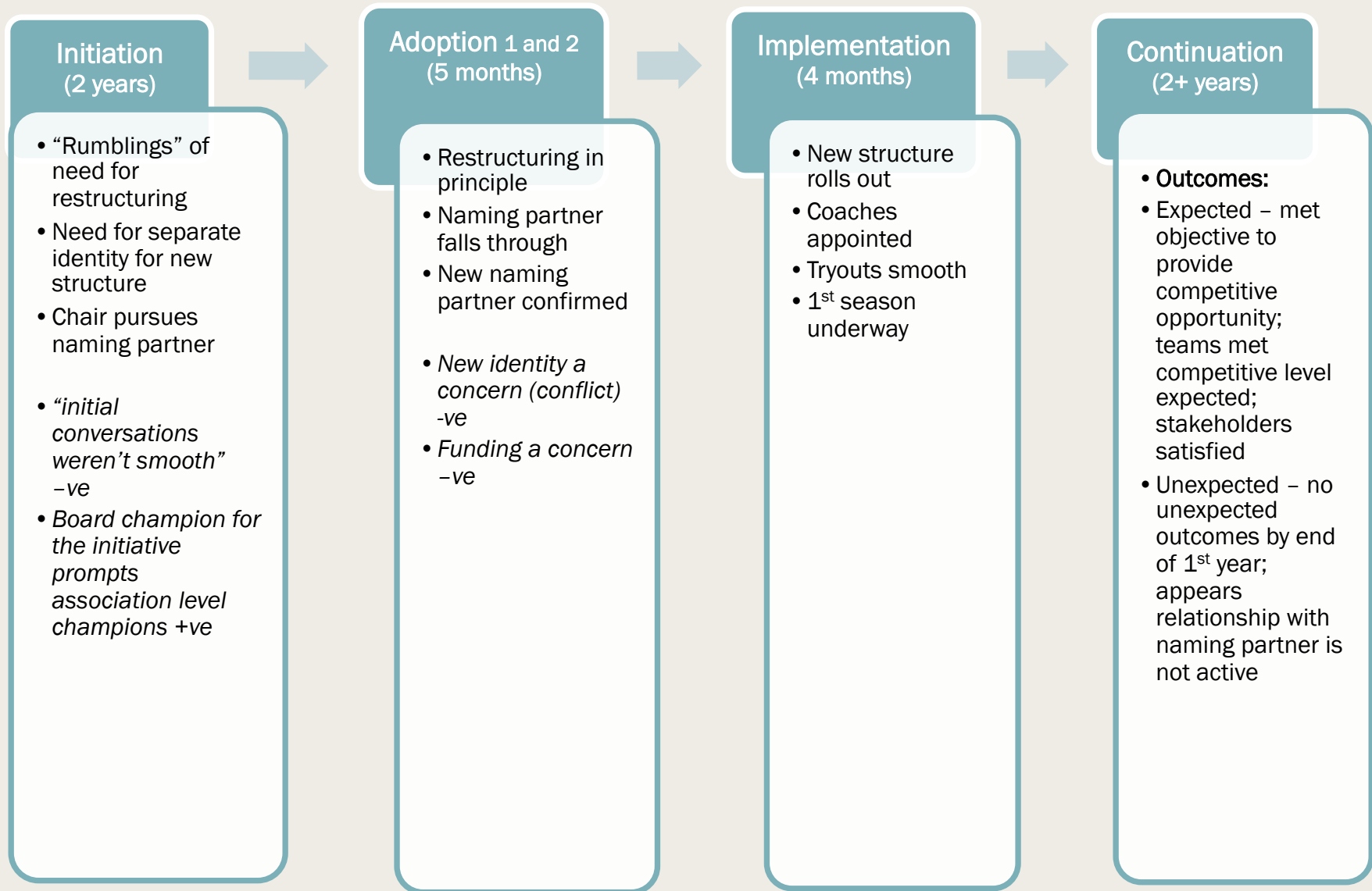


# Case 2 Hockey

- Need for competitive opportunity
- Creation of new competitive structure joining separate regional divisions (North-West, South-East)
- Naming partnership - identity
  - *Radical? administrative, product*



# Case 2 Hockey





# Discussion

- Cases of new structure to enable competitive opportunities diminished by declining participation
- Radical innovation focuses on growth; implemented quite quickly, after extended consideration
- Dependent on full support from stakeholders, openness to change, trust in “idea champions” from different levels
- Concerns about new identity
- Multifaceted innovation (innovation extensions?)

# Concluding Comments

- Innovation can be an important mechanism for increasing the capacity of community sport clubs to achieve their goals
  - *Clubs are moving beyond traditional ways of delivering sport*
- Insight into the opportunities, conditions and challenges for clubs to be innovative
  - *Implications for policy and strategy for change at the community sport level (e.g., gender equity, disability sport, LTAD, coaching development) that may be perceived as “new” and innovative to clubs*



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