



Creating Space, Or Just Juggling?

Quality in Community Sport

**Paul Jurbala, January 2016
S4L Summit**

Is there room for quality in community sport?

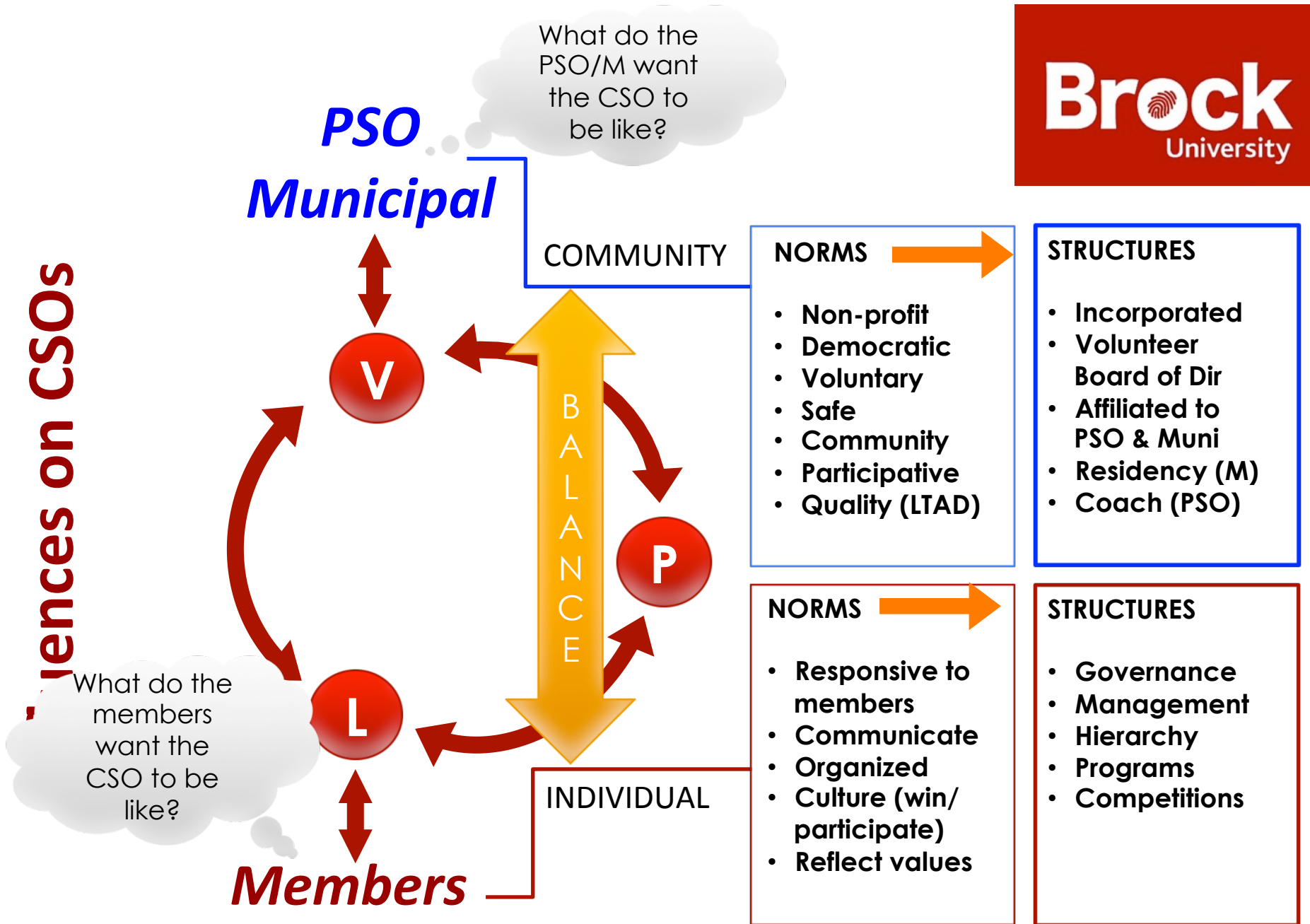


QIS programs:

- Discretionary
- Expensive
- Time consuming
- Volunteer turnover
- Limited brand recognition

A model of CSO function







Context:

CSOs employed individualist, market logic



- CSOs in the study were very concerned about member factors: growth, satisfaction, retention.
- CSOs were concerned about being disadvantaged by adopting LTAD – fear of losing members to non-compliant clubs.
- They act like competitors in a free market who are trying to appeal to members' individualist desires.
- They mention their communitarian work (e.g. sport for all, healthy participation) as justification of their importance, rather than as an operational imperative.

Context: PSO and CSO

Profile of OPDL & OPDL Clubs



Ontario Player Development League (OPDL): OSA's elite youth development league for U13 – U18

- “Standards based league” - entry based on meeting LTPD standards set by OSA
- \$9000 fee per team

OPDL Club Profile (based on 14 of the 18)

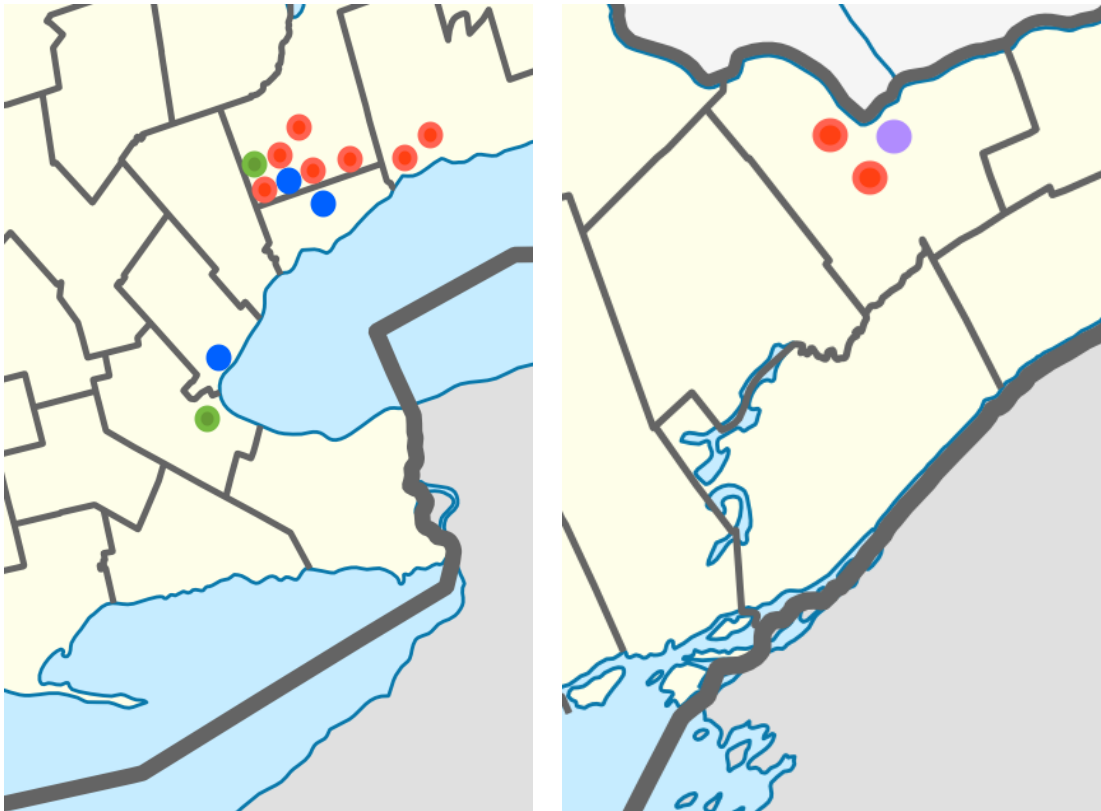
- Club annual budgets average \$1.76 M, range \$800 K to \$3.9 M
- Registration : average 4880, range 1200 to 8000
- Extensive fields, domes, technical staff, etc.

Pressures in OPDL clubs

Some themes emerging from interviews:

- Applied to OPDL to (a) maintain prestige (b) maintain competitive position (c) maintain in-house entry-to-elite pathway (d) due to belief in LTPD. ***These considerations outweighed...***
- Need to justify OPDL entry to membership (cost factors).
- Increased costs for coaches and facilities for OPDL.
- Proximity of other OPDL clubs: competition for players, coaches.
- “Poaching” of players and coaches by other OPDL clubs.
- Concern over equitable application of OSA policies.
- Uncooperative local non-OPDL clubs.

Competitive pressures in OPDL



OPDL player fees charged in 2014:

● \$2400-\$2999 ● \$3000-3999 ● \$4000-\$4999 ● \$5000

OPDL fees (n=15):

- Pre-season estimate by OSA = \$4500/player
- Average fee \$3215, range \$2400 to \$5000
- Clubs estimated break-even at ~ \$3500
- Clubs < \$3200 said they would increase to \$3100 to \$3600 in 2015+

Case study:

A community club implements LTAD

List all the steps, or things-to-do, you think are necessary for a CSO to integrate LTAD into its programs.



Case study:

A community club implements LTAD



1. Understand (or be told) why you have to do this.
2. Try to understand what LTAD is – how to do it.
3. Put someone (a volunteer) in charge of modifying the programs, venues and equipment.
4. Screw it up – make members & coaches really mad and convinced them LTAD is a bad thing.
5. Re-think.
6. Hire a part-time technical director.
7. Have the TD meet with key volunteers to re-design all the programs, venues and equipment.
8. Create a skills development curriculum for divisions from U4 to U10.
9. Set up the schedule, matching players to programs, venues and leaders.
10. Hire division head coaches (college student players) to lead the volunteer parent coaches in delivering the new curriculum.
11. Post the curriculum on line as lesson plans for the coaches to use.
12. Start the season – try it out. Is it working?
13. No- the volunteers won't read the lesson plans. Too detailed. Re-write them all.
14. Try again. Is it working? (And how do you know? Smiles? No complaints?)
15. Oh oh. Some of the paid coaches aren't working out. Meet them to clarify expectations.
16. Oh oh. Some of the parents/coaches of older kids (U8 – U10) are complaining there aren't enough games.
17. Have a big confrontation at a Board meeting. President wants to resign.
18. Modify the program, throw in more games for the older kids.
19. Is it working now?
20. The technical director is indispensable. How do we get more money to keep paying her?
21. Design a winter program, discuss raising member fees.
22. How are we going to get a new president who will work well with the technical director?
23. Recruit a new president with compatible views.
24. Get ready to do it again next year.
25. Now, how easy was that?

Consider...

- It's tough for CSOs to meet the challenge of juggling while balancing, tougher still if they need to adopt new standards.
- Raising standards to “force” CSOs into improving quality can be effective, but...
- Unintended consequences: drives CSO toward professionalization, increasing costs and potentially decreasing access.
- These CSOs were highly competitive (“market based logic”) so the possibility of gaining advantage can also drive adoption, but...
- The PSO, municipality or other powers need to signal there will be an advantage to adoption.

Thank you!