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**AUTHOR** Zarebski, John; Moriarty, Dick  
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**ABSTRACT**

The trends and changes occurring in Windsor District 5 Little League Baseball between 1971 and 1978 were closely monitored in order for researchers to discern the results of Sports Institute for Research/Change Agent Research (SIR/CAR) intervention in these programs. Comparisons of the 1972, 1976, and 1978 studies reveal that the values focus of the Windsor group significantly shifted away from competitive emphasis and towards an attitude stressing the social aspects of sports. A tentative conclusion may be drawn that through the use of SIR/CAR research methodology, and with the collaboration of universities and colleges, youth sports personnel can realistically reevaluate their avowed goals and update their operational programs to better facilitate their goal achievement.  
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**A SIR/CAR SYSTEMS ANALYSIS  
OF THE LONGITUDINAL CHANGES IN LITTLE LEAGUE BASEBALL  
COMPARING WINDSOR WITH THE REST OF ONTARIO AND CANADA**

by

**John Zarebski**

and

**Dick Moriarty**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
EDUCATION & WELFARE  
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF  
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Amateur sport has been the subject of careful scrutiny by researchers and scholars investigating the effects and implications of competitive sport on children and youth. In particular, Windsor District 5 Little League Baseball has been monitored and studied intensely between 1971 and 1978 by the Sports Institute for Research through Change Agent Research (SIR/CAR)\*. The results of these studies and their implications for amateur sport provide the Little League practitioners (coaches, executives, umpires, etc.) with the trends and changes that have occurred in District 5 as a result of SIR/CAR intervention during 1972. Although this paper is directed mainly toward those involved in Little League Baseball in the Windsor area, it does provide practitioners from other sport-related areas with valuable information and insight into the problems that confront many amateur sport organizations. The remainder of this paper provides the reader with (1) a short synopsis of SIR/CAR, (2) distinguishes between Professional Athletics and Amateur Sport, (3) recounts studies investigating District 5 Little League Baseball and (4) details the implications that these studies have for Little League Baseball.

#### What is SIR?

The Sports Institute for Research (SIR) is an interdisciplinary, public profession study/action group which brings together theoreticians and practitioners to investigate topics of vital interest to sport or athletic organizations.<sup>1</sup>

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\*SIR/CAR is the registered trademark for the Sports Institute for Research/Change Agent Research (SIR/CAR) which is housed in the University of Windsor Faculty of Human Kinetics. SIR/CAR would like to acknowledge the financial support of Canada Council, Ontario Ministry of Education, Ontario Royal Commission on Violence in the Communications Industry, Canadian National Centre for Sport and Recreation, the American NAPECW/NCPEAM Scholarly Directions Research Committee and the University of Windsor.

SIR brings together theoreticians (scholars and scientists) and practitioners (educators, community experts, technicians and civic leaders) capable of contributing to (1) community sport/athletic consulting service, (2) discovery of new sport/athletic related knowledge and (3) dissemination of that knowledge.<sup>2</sup>

The fundamental theory underlying the organization of SIR is that the combination of theoreticians and practitioners increases the probability of seeing the world as it actually does exist rather than as we would like to see it exist.<sup>3</sup> This thesis is based on the realization that just as theoreticians have a great deal to tell practitioners, practitioners have a great deal to tell theoreticians.<sup>4</sup>

The fundamental thesis investigated by SIR is that many sport/athletic organizations lose effectiveness and efficiency from the tendency to equate and evaluate amateur or educational sport (and their supporting mutual benefit or service organizations) with the goals and methods of professional or quasi-amateur athletics (and their supporting business or commonweal organizations).<sup>5</sup> SIR maintains that the majority of problems experienced by amateur sport and professional athletics arise not at the technical skills level but from organizational structure and mismanagement which projects a false image to the public and participants.<sup>6</sup> SIR hypothesizes that when members of any organization compare their avowed goals with their actual behavior, they acquire an awareness of dysfunctional conflict in the organization. Studies have shown that less dysfunctional conflict exists in organizations when the avowed goals and actual behavior are equal as compared with organizations where the avowed goals and actual behavior are dissimilar.<sup>7</sup> When evaluating a sport/athletic organization, SIR, through the use of the SIR Model, assists the organization

in identifying (1) ultimate goal, (2) conflict and behavior preventing achievement of this goal, (3) dissonance between events such as (a) task, (b) structure and (c) control; and (4) individuals or groups in terms of (a) traits, (b) roles and (c) behavior; (5) influence of social stress: mass media and (6) constituent strain and (7) alternative management techniques or recommended changes for short term, intermediate and long range changes by which a sport or athletic organization may reformulate (8) structure and (9) membership with an eye to (10) future change and trends.<sup>8</sup>

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Insert Fig. 1 here

SIR Model

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What is CAR?

The Sports Institute for Research has devised and operationalized an innovative systems analysis technique called Change Agent Research (CAR) which combines Organizational Analysis (OA), Organizational Development (OD), and Organizational Research (OR) in a three-phase process.

Phase I = Organizational Audit by Seeing, Asking and Written Opinionnaire plus retrieval of audio visual and written sources (SAW) followed by feedback to the organization.

Phase II = Participative Clinics, dissemination of knowledge through TV tape presentation, a group dynamics such as sensitivity sessions, role reversal and confrontation sessions all aimed at the development of Change Agents.

Phase III = Organizational Reaudit by the SAW method to identify the significant changes resulting from treatment in Phase II.<sup>9,10</sup>

CAR combines organizational analysis, organizational development and organizational research in a single system to analyze organizations. Using this system a sport/athletic organization can identify its avowed goals, assess the members' actual behavior and increase the probability of reducing the gap, if any, between avowed goals and actual behavior. Once the members of an organization are aware of a gap between what they say and write vis a vis what they actually do, they can voluntarily realign their behavior with their avowed goals (or vice versa).

Differences Between Professional  
Athletics and Amateur Sport

In terms of organization and administration growth and development, and conflict management, a pattern emerges suggesting that there are two alternative approaches in Canada to the phenomenon called alternately athletics and/or sport: (1) professional athletics vs (2) amateur sport. (See Fig. 2.)

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Insert Fig. 2 here  
Professional/Amateur Dichotomy Model

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Each approach must employ different means and organizational structure if it is to achieve its goal and fulfill its task. Amateur sport refers to an individual or group who pursue sport as a hobby. Derived from the French 'desporter' (to carry away from work for fun), sport stresses participation and enjoyment.<sup>11</sup> The structure most conducive to achieving these goals is a democratic mutual benefit or service organization where the members or those

in contact are the primary beneficiaries. An organization such as this is characterized by less structure and less precise definitions of duties, free communication, decentralized decision-making, more group process and more personalized treatment. Analogous to amateur sport, socializing sport emphasizes participation in sport for personal fun and enjoyment. Professional athletics refers to individuals or groups who pursue athletics as an avocation (as a livelihood). Derived from the Greek 'athlos/athlein' (contest for a prize), athletics stress work in order to win.<sup>12</sup> The structure most conducive to achieving this goal is the business or commonweal (government) organization where the primary beneficiaries are the owners, in the first instance, and the players in the second.<sup>13</sup> A business organization is characterized by fixed officers, specific duties, division of labour, extensive set of rules, position over persons, impersonal treatment and specialized technical skills. Analogous to professional athletics, athletic excellence emphasizes the win aspect associated with the roles of athletics and production of a product.

The Professional-Amateur Dichotomy model focuses on effectiveness (achievement) and efficiency (maintenance) and avoids the philosophic arguments associated with what is right! what is wrong! what is good! and what is bad! SIR/CAR task forces focus on open-ended change whereby the members of the organization working within the task force express their own goals and compare these with their actual behavior during Phase I, decide upon and implement as their own Change Agents appropriate policies and procedures in Phase II and in Phase III reexamine the symmetry between goals and means.

Using the SIR philosophy and the CAR approach to organizational analysis, intensive studies focusing on District 5 Little League Baseball (Windsor, Ontario, Canada) were carried out between 1971 and 1978. The results of these studies appear below.

### 1972 Study

The 1972 study,<sup>14</sup> a landmark in collaborative research effort, represented one of the first efforts to study and understand amateur sport (in this case, Little League Baseball) from an organizational and administrative perspective. The stimulus for such a study grew out of a pilot project with Windsor Sandwich East Little League in the summer of 1971. This pilot project focused on technical skills, decision-making and management of Little League Baseball. Following participative clinics the behavior of those involved was compared with the other eight leagues in Windsor District 5. A significant difference between leagues was detected resulting in District 5's request for further consultation services, study and research. The fundamental question investigated during the 1972 study focused on (1) the role and status of sport and athletics; (2) conflict arising from local, provincial, national and international organizations; (3) the significance of technical skills, public image and administrative decision-making; and (4) the effects of equating and evaluating amateur sport with the criteria for professional athletics or vice versa. In this study three leagues served as the experimental group, three leagues served as the control group and one league served as the ongoing longitudinal group (carrying over from the pilot study). The SIR/CAR method was applied, data gathered, processed and the following results were revealed.

The interview results confirmed that the majority of the experimental, control and longitudinal group members prior to treatment (Phase I) were committed to the goals of recreational play and amateur sport (i.e., participation and play, services in a democratic mutual benefit organization for the player). The experimental group members after treatment (Phase II)

and the longitudinal group after a treatment period lapse of one year demonstrated an increased commitment (75% of the organization) to the goals of recreational play and amateur sport. From the written opinionnaire data the results were clustered into three functions which Little League should serve: socialization (88% rated this variable their first choice), fun (40% rated this their second choice) and the pursuit of excellence (20% rated the variable as their third choice).

Analysis of the behavior data as observed by unobtrusive observation and TV monitoring facilitated the identification of a distinct discrepancy between the actual behavior of those involved in District 5 and the avowed goals they expressed on the opinionnaires and in the interviews. The following results emerged from the observed behavior when comparing Early Season to Late Season: (1) a decline in pre-game intra and inter team interactions, (2) a decrease in both game and post game smiles and indifferences accompanied by an increase in game and post game frowns, as well as (3) an increase in player hostility directed at opponents and umpires, (4) a sharp increase in coaches' hostility towards officials, other coaches and opposing players, (5) a decline in player and bench enthusiasm accompanied by a decline in coaches' positive statements or directed advice to the bench; (6) an increase in fan involvement, increased encouragement of own team, increased applauding of good plays accompanied by an equivalent number of disparaging remarks and actions.

Of the four divisions (T-Ball 6-8, Minor 8-10, Major 10-12 and Senior 12-15), T-Ball and Minor were identified as the most problematic areas, a highly relevant finding in view of the fact that the initial introduction of children and parents to youth sport organizations occurs at these levels.

### Conclusions of 1972 Study

The ultimate goals were found to be dissimilar from the actual behavior observed. Therefore, two action alternatives seemed plausible: (1) change the ultimate goal from recreation play or amateur sport (as endorsed by Little League Incorporated) to professional athletics or (2) change the behavior of the participants by (a) modifying the structure (reduce stress and strain with specific and directed demands) and (b) modifying the individuals and groups (increase the saliency of particular attitudes and beliefs by making contradictions apparent and providing appropriate means for moderating behavior). Only a small percentage (10%) of the participants advocated a highly competitive professional atmosphere; thus the first alternative was not recommended to the organization. On the basis of SIR/CAR's findings, the second alternative was recommended. The course of action recommended focused on (1) decreasing interest in technical skills; (2) increasing interest in administrative decision-making and public image, (3) aligning the actual behavior of the organization with their avowed goals and (4) a reevaluating of the organization after a period of time. This course of action was accompanied by ten directives which had been advocated by the people in Windsor District 5 during the participative clinics. These directives endorsed the following policies: (1) emphasize fun and socialization; (2) conduct clinics focusing on social, psychological and organizational goals of amateur sport as opposed to athletic excellence; (3) employ the mass media to communicate to society the goals of amateur sport by decreasing emphasis on scoring and standing and avoiding expectations of athletic excellence; (4) increase local control, decentralize Windsor Little League from Ottawa or Williamsport; (5) emphasize increased league competition in place of district, provincial, national or international tournaments; (6) divide players on basis of age, skill level

and social-psychological needs and provide equal time for everyone to participate; (7) eliminate scoring and standing from T-Ball and Minor levels and deemphasize importance of winning by eliminating all-star teams and championship tournaments; (8) increase the dignity and status of umpires by eliminating on-the-spot questioning of calls by coaches, managers and parents at the T-Ball and Minor levels; (9) the physical external environment can influence the amount of organized control, thus in potentially high conflict situations impose physical barriers (separation) between players and other participants and (10) evaluate Little League on the basis of player improvement and number of participants involved in place of standing or competitive success in championships.

#### 1976 Study

The 1976 study<sup>15</sup> reevaluated Windsor District 5 Little League Baseball four years after the initial intervention by SIR/CAR. The goal of this research study was to assess the degree and duration of change in District 5 Little League Baseball vis a vis the rest of Ontario and British Columbia.

More significant than the specific data from the initial study (1972) were the results and interpretation which showed both experimental and control groups favour socializing sport on the Audio interviews and Written opinionnaires but manifesting athletic excellence in behavior as monitored by unobtrusive observation and TV monitoring. Although the experimental groups showed significantly more commitment to socializing sport than the control group during the 1972 study, there was no significant difference in their behavior. If, therefore, the observed behavior in 1976 showed the experimental group reflecting socializing sport in their actual behavior more than the control group, it could logically be concluded that the 1972 SIR/CAR intervention

did have an effect, not only upon attitudes and beliefs but also behavior, certainly in the experimental group and perhaps in the control group.

Significant differences in behavior between the experimental and control groups in District 5, or indeed a shift of both experimental and control groups to socializing sport, could merely reflect an overall change in the attitudes, beliefs and behavior throughout Little League Canada. It was necessary in the 1976 study, therefore, to compare and contrast the 1972 experimental and control groups with District 5 and compare these results with the overall trends in Little League Canada as reflected throughout the rest of Ontario and in the province of British Columbia.

A written opinionnaire, constructed from the audio interviews employed a Modified Delphi technique to build consensus on pertinent issues confronting Little League Baseball. This opinionnaire elicits response on issues concerning the past (1972), present (1976) and future (1980) and allows respondents to indicate what is probably (actually going on), desirable (valued) and impact (significance of the issue). A highly select quota sample of elite respondents was identified from approximately 130 members of Little League Canada Board of Directors, district administrators, league executives and league presidents. Sixty-one respondents (50% of the sample) completed the opinionnaire for all three time periods.

In general, the opinionnaire results show that attitudes and beliefs in Windsor for 1976 and projections for 1980 favoured socializing sport, while the rest of Ontario favoured athletic excellence. British Columbia favoured socializing sport from 1972 to 1980. There are, of course, specific exceptions to this trend. The main one centers in Windsor's recollection of the way things were in 1972. They appeared to have been an organization

leaning towards athletics and excellence. However, these people (in 1976) also seem to feel that there has been some change occurring between 1972 and 1976, and project that even more change would occur by 1980. From an overall view of the opinionnaire results, it appears that there are several directions in which Little League Canada can proceed and the future obviously lies in its choice. The main choice appears to be in the direction that it wishes to travel, either athletic excellence or socializing sport. This direction lies in answering the question of ultimate goal - (a) elitism or (b) mass participation for fun and enjoyment - whither the choice? From the opinionnaire data it seems that the desired direction is mass participation for fun and enjoyment. There were, of course, a large number that felt excellence was desired as well. The main aim centers in the desire to improve everyone's qualifications and expand and enlarge the entire organization. The main conflict seems to be parents and a lack of expertise on the part of those in charge of the actual program. These appeared to be the major stresses and strains experienced by the three groups. The players, adult volunteers and local executives were deemed to be the most significant groups in the organization. Finally, the changes that were recommended focused on those that might help alleviate the major conflict, stresses and strains - coaching clinics and increased parental support.

From these general trends, it can be seen that changes in attitudes can and do occur. These changes, whether attributed to a natural evolution or due to some structural change, nevertheless are there. Because Windsor was subject to SIR/CAR treatment in 1972, it can be hypothesized that in the intervening years this treatment has resulted in a change in thinking. The cognitive and explicit attitudes have drawn closer together and for that reason alone the SIR/CAR treatment has been successful.

At the same time, the results of the personal observation and media monitoring of District 5 during 1976 demonstrated that most significance is shown overall where the smiling faces in the experimental exceed smiling faces in the control group. In subgroup analysis, T-Ball and Minor show a significant difference for smiling faces over smiling faces in the control. At these levels, frowning faces in the experimental also exceed frowning faces in the control. There was no significant difference at the Major level. In addition, cooperative acts increased and acts of hostility decreased in 1976 in the experimental group as compared to the control group.

#### Conclusions

1. After a lapse of four years the behavior of those involved in the 1972 experimental leagues and experimental longitudinal league in District 5 Little League Baseball is significantly higher in terms of socializing sport than the control group.
2. There is a significantly higher expression of attitude and belief for socializing sport in District 5 than in Ontario or British Columbia and as a corollary the trend towards socializing sport within District 5 as perceived from the past, assessed for the present and projected for the future was significantly higher than for the rest of Ontario and British Columbia.

1978 Study

The 1978 study<sup>16</sup> focused on comparing and contrasting data on attitudes, beliefs and behavior collected in the 1972 and 1976 studies. This study had a dual purpose: firstly, to determine the effectiveness of CAR as a method for facilitating organizational change; and secondly, to provide the practitioner in Little League Baseball with the trends and changes that have occurred in District 5 since 1972.

In this study the Modified Delphi opinionnaire was subjected to intensive and rigorous statistical analysis. The design for the analysis of the opinionnaire involved twenty-eight dependent variables. Among these dependent variables eight related to socializing sport concerns: (1) teach sportsmanship and team play, (2) running an independent Canadian organization with (3) independent regions for (4) fun and (5) team play, (6) deemphasis on winning and emphasizing (7) players' significance in (8) clinics. Ten of the variables related to athletic excellence concerns: (1) winning, (2) excellence and (3) fitness with (4) adults' significance and concern about a lack of (5) money, (6) resources and (7) expertise in dependent regions, (9) control by the president in a specialized (10) executive who do not coach.

In addition, the study focused on the analysis and comparison of the actual behavior of District 5 Little League Baseball between 1972 and 1976. There ten variables measuring the actual behavior of the organizational members were analyzed. Included were cooperative acts such as (1) on field player and (2) bench enthusiasm and (3) coach positive; confrontation acts such as player hostility to (4) umpires, (5) coaches, (6) fans and (7) self as well as coach hostility to (8) umpires, (9) opposing players and (10) coaches; and facial impressions - (11) smiling faces , (12) neutral faces , and (13) frowning faces .

### Evaluation of Results

In the past (1972) the elite group responding to the Modified Delphi opinionnaire indicated that athletic excellence was both probable and desirable in British Columbia, the rest of Ontario and even Windsor, where the general membership has expressed itself strongly for socializing sport. These groups also indicated that involvement with socializing sport was not probable in 1972, nor was it desirable in their estimation.

In 1976 the Ontario group demonstrated a continued involvement with athletic excellence and the professional athletic model. While the previous study (1976) concluded that British Columbia group was involved with socializing sport in 1976, this study, using more discrete analytical methods, revealed that the British Columbia group displayed a neutral position, indicating involvement with athletic excellence and socializing sport. Overall support for one or the other could not readily be determined. The Windsor group demonstrated involvement with socializing sport as both probable and desirable in 1976. These findings indicate a change in the Windsor group between 1972 and 1976.

In forecasting for 1980 (future) the Ontario and British Columbia groups perceived involvement with athletic excellence as both probable and desirable. The Windsor group, on the other hand, perceived involvement with socializing sport and athletic excellence as probable and desirable in 1980. Again, overall support for one or the other could not be ascertained.

Monitoring of behavior by personal observation and TV monitoring included the measurements focusing on acts of cooperation (friendly) and confrontation (hostility) and feeling as manifest by facial expressions on the part of players, coaches and fans. The results of the analysis revealed some very interesting trends. All acts of cooperation in District 5 between 1972 and

1976 increased significantly. During this same period of time all acts of hostility decreased in District 5 with the exception of coach to opposing player hostility which increased significantly. Facial expressions showed that frowning faces decreased, smiling faces increased slightly and neutral faces increased significantly in District 5 between 1972 and 1976.

This data attests to a shift not only in attitudes and beliefs but also in behavior from athletic excellence to socializing sport in Windsor District 5. In addition to these findings, two interesting facts were uncovered. The British Columbia group and the Ontario group indicated that they were experiencing a lack of expertise in coaches, umpires and executives in 1976. The Windsor group, however, indicated a lack of expertise in areas other than coaching and officiating, perhaps in the organization and management of Windsor District 5 itself.

#### Conclusions

Analysis of the opinionnaire revealed that the Windsor group changed its emphasis from athletic excellence to socializing sport between 1972 and 1976 while the rest of Ontario and British Columbia remained essentially the same. This stable position in Ontario and British Columbia indicates that the change in Windsor may be attributed to SIR/CAR and not to an overall shift in goals and means of Little League Baseball throughout Canada. Therefore, CAR was effective in facilitating organizational change in an amateur sport organization. This latter conclusion should be tempered by the fact that although the Windsor group indicated they were strongly committed to socializing sport in 1976, the future focus (1980) indicated a weaker commitment to socializing sport. This suggests that although District 5 has brought goals and behavior in line, future SIR/CAR evaluation may be required for this symmetry to persist into 1980.

This comprehensive undertaking to analyze Windsor District 5 Little League Baseball provides for the practitioner an understanding of the trends and changes that have occurred in District 5 since 1972. It also provides information regarding Windsor District 5 in relation to other Little League organizations located in Ontario and British Columbia.

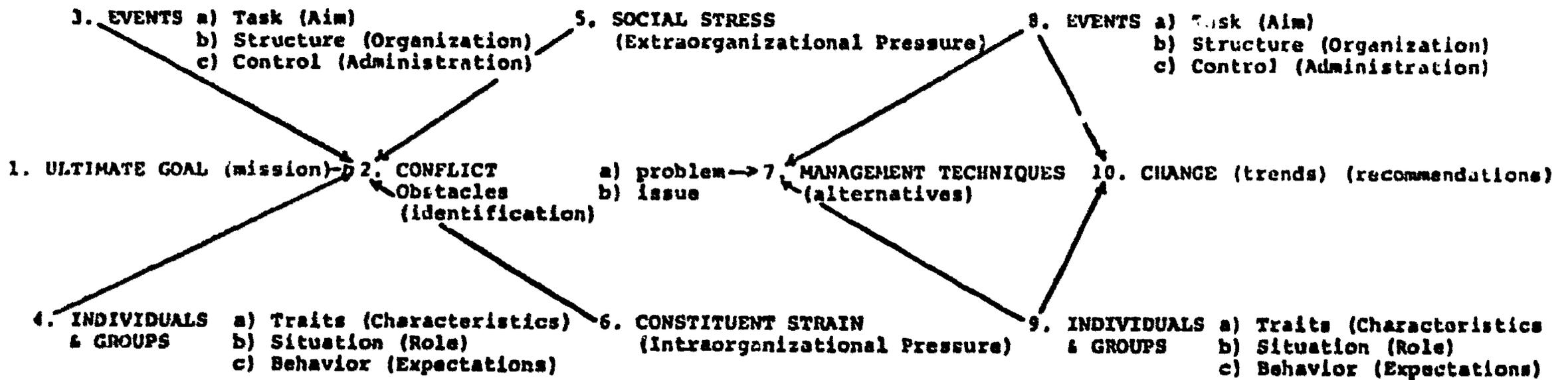
Little League Baseball is typical of sport organizations for children and youth. It involves, in addition to players, a large number of adult volunteers, all of whom are strongly committed to the values and ideals of the organization. It is not improbably that at times well meaning adults concerned for the well being of children and youth in sport are unaware that their conduct (behavior) within the organizational structure does not reflect their good intentions or the goals of the organization. A situation such as this can be detrimental to the well being of the children and youth involved in that particular amateur sport organization.

These studies also show that practitioners involved with youth sport organizations, by working cooperatively with universities and colleges, can realistically evaluate their avowed goals and compare them with their actual behavior in order to detect inconsistencies and deduce appropriate change so that they can act in the best interest for children and youth in sport.

Footnotes

1. John Dewar and Richard Moriarty, "Sport and the Law", paper presented at the 6th Commonwealth Conference on Sport, Physical Education and Recreation, University of Alberta, August 1, 1978. Proceedings to be published in the Sociology of Sport Series of the Canadian Association for Health, Physical Education and Recreation (CAHPER).
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3. Ibid., p. 3
4. Dick Moriarty and John Zarebski, "SIR/CAR Analysis Technique for Voluntary School Sport or Amateur Athletic Organizations." Paper presented at the 9th World Congress of Sociology, Uppsala, Sweden, August 11-14, 1978. Proceedings to be published by the Association for Voluntary Action Scholars.
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7. Abraham Zaleznik, G.W. Dalton and Lewis B. Barnes. Orientation and Conflict in Careers. (Boston, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974).
8. Dick Moriarty (A), "Avoiding Organizational Self Destruction in Amateur Sport or Professional Athletics by SIR/CAR," Canadian Journal of Applied Sport Sciences, I, (June, 1976): 123-31.
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10. John Dewar and Richard Moriarty, op cit, p. 6.
11. Dick Moriarty, "Systems Analysis of Comparative Administrative Structures in the University Sports Programs in Canada: Challenge, Conflict and Change," Athletic Administration, 10 (July, 1975): 22-25.
12. Peter M. Blau and Richard Scott. Formal Organizations: A Comparative Approach. (San Francisco, Calif.: Chandler Publishing Co., 1972).
13. Dick Moriarty (A), op cit
14. SIR/CAR Task Force (a)
15. SIR/CAR Task Force (b)
16. John Zarebski, "A Comparative Longitudinal Analysis of Little League Baseball after SIR/CAR Intervention," an unpublished Master of Human Kinetics thesis, The University of Windsor, 1978.

FIG. 1 SIR MODEL FOR SYSTEMS ANALYSIS

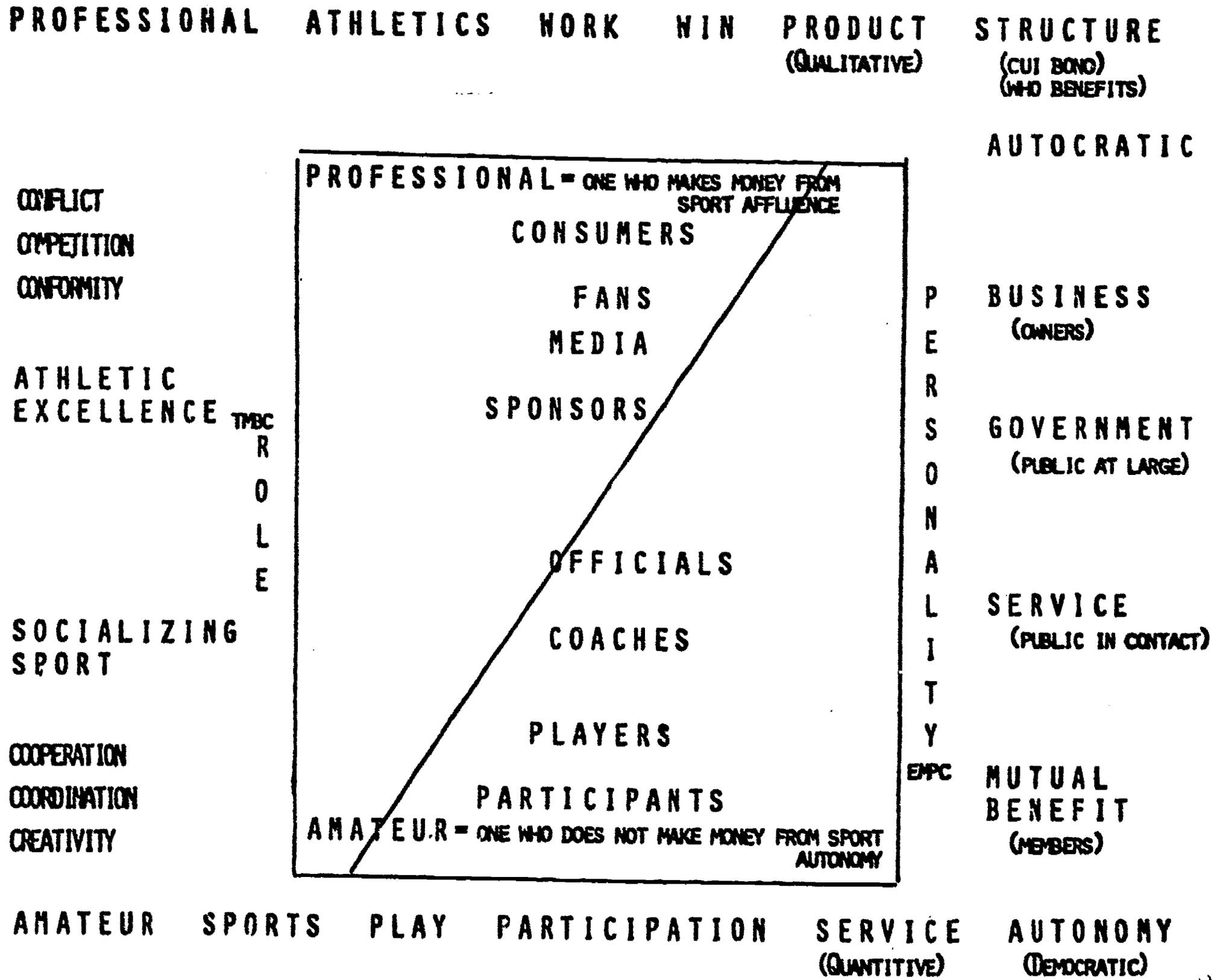


Instructions - Proceed through the model item by item, i.e., 1 then 2a then 2b then 3a, etc.

Make sure all items are covered.

Read. Numbers 1 through 6 deal with present conditions. Numbers 7 through 10 are futuristic or predictive. Once 10 is reached return to 1 and begin the cycle again.

Developed by Dick Moriarty for University of Windsor Sports Institute for Research through Change Agent Research (SIR/CAR)



**FIG. 2 PROFESSIONAL-AMATEUR DICHOTOMY**