CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION, PROBLEM, AIM AND METHODOLOGY OF THE STUDY

1.1 ORIENTATION

The success that sport organizations can achieve is largely dependent on the ability and competence of their human resources. Sport and recreation organizations are involved in the production of services. One of the most popular is offering instruction or coaching. This distinction identifies the clients and customers of sport organizations as human resources (Chelladurai, 1999). Furthermore, the paid employees as well as the volunteers are also the human resources of a sport organization. Amongst the paid professional employees in sport is the professional coach who has received relatively little academic enquiry since commercial and professional sport flourished in the 21st century.

Sports coaching has never been an easy task, especially in South Africa. Fewer jobs in sport, particularly professional sport, possess the pressures inherent in coaching (Singh, 2001). Coaches are faced with distinct pressures like stress situations, conflict situations, media pressures and intrusions into family life, seldom found in other occupations. The proliferation of international sport competitions has drawn considerable attention to coaching (Singh, 2001) which enjoys the mystique of a profession with special rights, privileges and obligations. It also embodies authority, knowledge, technical skills and a norm of professional autonomy.

In South Africa three major sporting codes, namely soccer, rugby and cricket have been making headlines for happenings off the playing field (Kriek, 2002). One of the reasons for them making headlines concerns coaches. The Springbok rugby coach, Harry Viljoen resigned in January 2002 leaving South Africa with the eighth coach in ten years, with most of them leaving through direct or indirect pressure from management (Kriek, 2002). The current (2003) national soccer
coach, Shakes Mashaba, is the seventh in ten years. According to Kriek (2002), it seems that there is a tendency to focus at field level (players and coaches) when thinking about performance and success in sport, while neglecting management aspects such as administration and leadership. In soccer the post of the national coach has always been in disarray, with coaches being constantly shuffled and reshuffled.

In order to understand the reasons for the problems and challenges regarding professional sports coaches at sport organizations in South Africa, it is important to understand how sport evolved in South Africa.

**Early origins**

For many centuries the various ‘Black’ peoples showed very little interest in the organised sports codes of the White man. They found their recreation in traditional activities such as hunting and tribal dancing (Anon, 1981) while the Whites engaged in target shooting, dancing, horseracing, music, card and clay games (Singh, 2000). It was the White nation with its European background that played the established sports and began to participate internationally with a remarkable degree of success. During this period the people that wielded the political power were the Whites.

**Politics and sport**

During the apartheid era, sport in South Africa was governed under a dichotomous system. This was comprised of a white establishment side and a black non-establishment side. As a result many sports movements, for example the South African Council on Sport (SACOS), the South African Sports Association (SASA) and the South African Non-racial Olympic Committee (SANROC), parallel to the government-supported structures, evolved. This led to a clear demarcation between so-called “establishment” sport (also called “racist”
or “white sport”) and “non-establishment sport” (COSAS Activity Report, 1991-1993). Whilst the establishment side had sporting links with the apartheid government and had access to modern facilities, opportunities and sophisticated training methods, the non-establishment side had to be content with make-shift facilities and virtually no training opportunities (Goslin, 1996a). This had a profound impact and influence on opportunities for both coaches and athletes. The makeshift-facilities diminished the scope for development amongst coaches and athletes. Participation by South Africans of colour at various levels of competition posed a problem. During this period, virtually all codes of sport were organized for Whites only (Anon, 1981). However, White sport was “amateur” driven on a volunteer basis with no formal training structures in place. As a result within “white sport” the situation with regard to human resources training was also lacking. Furthermore, the 1950’s were characterized by the increasing insistence of non-white sports people on national and international participation. This gave rise to various pressure groups (Gouws, 1999). In the late 1950’s the South African Non Racial Olympic Committee (SANROC) was formed. Its aim was to take up the struggle against apartheid in Olympic sports. With international support, it succeeded in eventually isolating South Africa from international participation (Singh, 2002). This had a negative impact on the education and training of coaches, administrators and officials. Since there was no international competition, there was no need for high-level coaching. This could possibly be the reason for the dearth of professional sports coaches amongst both the advantaged and disadvantaged groups in South Africa. Another factor that could have contributed to the scarcity of professional sports coaches, is the geographic location of individuals from the disadvantaged groups.

As a result of the several different sporting bodies that controlled sport, many of the functions that a single body could fulfill were duplicated. As a result most of the resources, especially the human resources were inefficiently utilised and in most cases wasted. Given the history of sport in South Africa, it is evident that
the divergent sport organizations concentrated their efforts on survival in the face of adversity, (especially the apartheid government) and isolation from international competition. This was to the detriment of human resources, which were sadly neglected. Obstacles such as the dire lack of facilities and trained personnel at sport organizations also contributed to the poor status that South African sport had in the international sport arena.

**Emergence of current sport structures**

The importance of sport as a social institution was recognized by the African National Congress (ANC) by its inclusion in the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) which was designed to improve the socio-economic conditions of the disadvantaged communities (Boshoff, 1997). The RDP recognised that the provision of sports and recreational opportunities were important components in the country’s overall development strategy (Burnett & Hollander, 1999). It claimed, amongst other things, that recreation and sport could contribute to the development of human resources by addressing the provision and management of facilities. By removing obstacles and the mobilization of resources in both public and private sectors, recreation could be promoted (Goslin, 1996a).

In 1995 the Ministry of Sport presented the government’s first attempt at a new sports policy by publishing the *White Paper on Sport.* It touched on all aspects of sport, including coaches and teachers as the focal point of development initiatives (Boshoff, 1997). According to the White Paper on Sport and Recreation for South Africa (1995) one of the ways in which the emerging development needs of sport in South Africa could be addressed was through effective and efficient human resource management. Armstrong (1992) also echoed the sentiment that a coherent human resource management framework was critical for the effective functioning of any organization. As people of different race, sex,
age, values and cultural norms enter the work arena, so the composition of the workforce in sport organisations has become more diverse.

The National Sports Council (NSC), which was the supreme non-government national sports structure to which all national sports federations had to affiliate in order to gain official recognition, attempted to implement the ideas inherent to the RDP. The NSC realized that South African athletes, managers, coaches and technical officials lagged behind their international counterparts as a result of their isolation from international participation and embarked on an intensive integrated sport education plan (figure 1.1) in 1995 (Singh, 2000). This was based on the realization that athletes, coaches, technical officials and sport managers required training and support and needed to be developed. There was also a need to achieve uniformity with respect to levels of training amongst the different sports federations so that the movement of coaches between the different federations could be facilitated easily.

**Figure 1.1 Principles of the integrated development plan (Singh, 2000)**

The NSC introduced the principles of unity, non-racialism and democracy, as well as the concept of development (COSAS – Activity Report, 1994). The NSC established eight principles for the successful long-term development of sport in South Africa. Among these, it was stated that sport would be encouraged as an important factor in human development. Furthermore, in any programme of sport development, the need for qualified personnel at all levels of administration and
technical management, leadership and coaching would be attended to (COSAS – Activity Report, 1994).

In 1999, the South African Sports Commission (SASC) was formed out of the merging of the Department of Sport and Recreation (DSR) and the National Sports Council. The SASC was established by the South African Sports Commission Act (Act 109 of 1998). Under this Act, some of its objectives were to assist, facilitate and develop various programmes. Among others, these related to human resources, administration and sport academic programmes and assisted in the promotion and development of sports education and of coaching in sport (SASC, 2002a).

Education and training

In South Africa the education and training sector in sport is found in both formal and informal structures (Hollander, 2000). Schools, universities and technikons, for example, form the formal component, which offer coaching and management courses. Sometimes the informal training of students are offered by clubs and national sport bodies. This has, however, changed with the establishment of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). The South African Qualifications Authority Act (Act 58 of 1995) provides for the development and implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) whose objective is to create an integrated national framework for learning achievements. This means that all training programmes and qualifications in South Africa will have to be registered at SAQA. Consequently, all training institutions have to fulfil certain criteria to be recognized as accredited trainers.

In order to realize the objectives of the SASC, the Education and Training sub-unit of the SASC has to work within the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) of SAQA. The SASC also has to work with the Tourism, Hospitality and Sport Education Training Authority (THETA) which is officially recognized as the
accredited Education and Training Quality Assurance body (ETQA) for sport, recreation and fitness.

The Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998) was promulgated in October 1998. The requirements were to provide: strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African workforce; for learnerships that lead to recognised occupational qualifications; for the financing of skills development by means of a levy-grant scheme; regulate employment services. Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) are part of this framework to promote skills, by identifying workplaces for practical work experience and to improve the facilitation of knowledge (Skills Development Act No. 97 of 1998).

Marketing, public relations and human resources management, are some of the many issues relating to the operation of sport organizations that are of concern to sport managers. Both SAQA and the White Paper emphasise, among other things, the development and management of human resources.

**Sports coaching**

According to Chelladurai (1999) there are three divergent groups of people who constitute the human resources in sport organizations, namely the paid professional employees, the volunteers and the clients. Amongst the paid professional employees are the professional sports coaches, technical officials and administrators who collectively contribute towards the provision of sport services. The professional sports coach provides an important service, namely coaching. This service cannot be implemented without the participation of the clients, namely, the athletes or players. The survival of the sport organization is dependent on its clients, consequently, the effective management of coaches is essential.
Steelman (McCallister, Blinde & Weiss, 2000) regards the coach to be the most significant individual in instilling outcomes such as fair play, respect for others, cooperation, decision-making, skills development, leadership and moral development, which individuals learn through participation. He states that individuals are very accurate in their perception of coaching and readily internalise these perceptions. Because coaches are in positions of authority and influence, their values and philosophies regarding the sport experience may directly impact on the participatory experience for the sportsmen and women in their charge. An important determinant of the values and life skills that sportsmen and women learn from sport participation relates to the ability of coaches to identify and teach desirable values and behaviour. Participants are unlikely to learn selected values and life skills unless the environment is structured in such a manner by the coach, that it is conducive to the implementation of these outcomes (McCallister et al., 2000).

Most sports coaches are selected for their technical expertise and on the basis of their personality, but they are appointed with no prior guidance and formal coaching education. They are appointed on the basis of possessing the essential attributes required: enthusiasm, energy and administrative experience gained elsewhere (Watt, 1998). As a result of this, many coaches are unable to cope with situations that require more than just their technical expertise, and find themselves ill-equipped to handle conflict and to counsel their charges.

People participate in sport for a variety of reasons (Watt, 1998). Some individuals participate for social reasons, others for enjoyment and others for competition. The different types of participation may require different approaches and qualities from a coach. The demands on a coach who is coaching an amateur athlete, for instance, may differ from one who is coaching an elite athlete. Van Zijl (1984) cites the following reasons amongst others for this: the elite athlete participates for money while the amateur participates for adventure; the elite athlete has an obligation to satisfy his/her employers or sponsors while the amateur athlete
participates for self satisfaction; the elite athlete is expected to satisfy others, for example spectators, while the amateur may not have such an obligation, and the elite athlete participates to ensure economic security while the amateur participates for self development.

Although Van Zijl (1984) cites the above-mentioned reasons for the differences regarding the demands and pressures on the coach, this is not necessarily true. Both coaches experience pressures and demands, but the nature of these demands and pressures may differ. For example, the coach who coaches the elite athlete needs to ensure that the athlete can contribute towards the organization achieving its objectives, which may be to produce national athletes or to make a profit. Furthermore, the job of the coach coaching the elite athlete may be dependent on the performance of the athlete. It is therefore important for sport organizations to provide structures and opportunities to equip professional coaches to fulfil these roles. This involves providing coaching education, training, counselling, appraisal, facilities, job security and job satisfaction, to name but a few.

Research (Goslin, 1996a) has revealed that there exists a lack of quality and quantity of opportunities for skills acquisition in sport and recreation and that there is an absence of understanding regarding the coaching skills, behaviour and attitudes by coaches to deliver sport effectively. The reason for this lack of understanding, is an absence of strategy and an accredited system to encourage and support the transfer of sport skills and competencies.

Goslin (1996a) suggests that professional coaches must therefore be adequately equipped to deliver and provide the relevant sport services, or sport may lose its potential impact as a social stabilizer in South Africa. It is a matter of urgency to develop skills and attitudes to meet the challenges that face sport organizations in South Africa. This can be achieved through progressive and well established, ongoing support programmes (Watt, 1998). These support programmes may
include coaching clinics, workshops and learnerships, which will not only contribute to the development of the coach but also increase his/her marketability.

Professional sports coaches in South Africa experience problems with job security and continuity since the success of coaching is normally measured only in terms of the success achieved by the team (Van Zijl, 1984). As a result of this, fluctuating achievements may impact negatively on the professional coach. Promising professional coaches are frequently lost from sport as there is no provision made for job possibilities, job security or continuity in this direction. The emphasis on the winning factor at the cost of long term planning, impacts negatively on the quality of sport in broad terms (Van Zijl, 1984). Chelladurai (1999) suggests that an individual’s skill, experience, knowledge and other such assets that an individual brings to the job, are critical determinants when judging a coach. This implies that human resources managers need to look beyond just the win/loss record of the coach when appraising the coach.

It is important that specific consideration is given to the practicalities such as the diversity that face coaches and how they are going to cope with them. Diversity (Mayikana, 2002) is defined as the mosaic of stakeholders who bring a variety of backgrounds, styles, perspectives, values and beliefs as assets to the organization with which they interact. It is important that human resources managers take cognisance of diversity, when recruiting and selecting, since this is in keeping with global trends that many progressive organizations all over the world follow to introduce multiculturalism. Diversity in the workplace can be brought about by, amongst other things, gender, sexual orientation, disability and ethnicity (Mello, 2002). In sport organizations, diversity is also brought about by the different types of employees like: administrators, managers, coaches and volunteer workers. In sport organizations in South Africa, there are both gender and ethnic imbalances. The gender imbalance has been brought about through the exploitation and oppression of women in society (Gouws, 1999) and the
ethnic imbalance as a result of the apartheid laws in South Africa. Sports coaches as well as human resources managers therefore face the challenge of understanding and accepting the “unique flavour and potential contribution of different cultures and traditions” (Mello, 2002: 29) in sport organizations. Modern day sport involves the interaction between the people of different race, gender, class, values and experiences (Potrac, Brewer, Jones, Armour & Hoff, 2000). This demands a structured human resources management approach for professional sports coaches in South Africa. Goslin (1996a) supports this by stating that the success that sport organizations can achieve is largely dependent on the ability and competence of the human resources in sport organizations.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT AND SUB-PROBLEMS

It is clear from the discussion in paragraph 1.1, that of the many issues relating to the operation of sport organizations, the management of human resources should be treated with great importance. This is because HRM involves the productive use of people in achieving the objectives of an organization (Stone, 1998). In order to understand the dynamics of human resources and the management of human resources in sport organizations, especially with regard to professional sports coaches, it is essential to understand the role that professional sports coaches play in a sport organization.

According to the literature, the success that a sport organization can achieve is dependent on the competence of its human resources. With regard to sports coaching, it is important to note that the job of a professional sports coach is unique – it is unlike any of the other jobs performed in a sport organization. Factors such as resources (facilities, equipment, assistants and athletes) that are made available to the coach, the weather and the coach’s own ability impact on the productivity of the coach. As a result, the management of professional sports coaches needs to be approached differently from the management of other employees in the sport organization. It is therefore essential to identify the
principles of HRM in relation to professional sports coaches in South Africa, to investigate the current state of affairs with regard to the management of professional sports coaches in sport organizations in South Africa and to compare them with the literature. Furthermore, it is important to identify guidelines for the management of professional sports coaches in South Africa.

1.2.1 Problem statement

In the light of the above discussion, the research problem is identified as follows: There are currently no researched guidelines towards human resources management of professional sports coaches in South Africa.

1.2.2 Sub-problems

The sub-problems or research questions emanating from the problem statement are:

• What literature exists to identify the principles of human resources management in relation to professional sports coaches in South Africa?

• What is the current state of affairs with regard to the human resources management of professional sports coaches in South Africa?

• How does the literature compare with what is currently being practiced regarding the human resources management of professional sports coaches in South Africa?

• What guidelines could be offered towards a model for the human resources management of professional sports coaches in South Africa?
Having identified the problems related to the management of professional sports coaches, the aim and objectives of the study are discussed.

1.3 AIM AND OBJECTIVES OF STUDY

Arising from the problem statement and sub-problems were certain aims and objectives.

1.3.1 Aim

To propose guidelines for a model for the human resources management of professional sports coaches in sports organizations in South Africa.

1.3.2 Objectives

In order to achieve the aim of the study, the objectives were:

- To do a literature study to ascertain what different theoretical models exist with regard to human resources management in sport organizations so that the principles of human resources management in relation to professional sport coaches can be identified.

- To measure the current state of affairs with regard to human resources management of professional sports coaches in South African sport.

- To compare the literature with the current situations in the sport industry in South Africa, with regard to the human resources management function for professional sports coaches.

- To propose guidelines for a model for the human resources management of professional sports coaches in South Africa.
In the next section the research methodology is described.

1.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The aim of the study is to propose guidelines for a model for the human resources management of professional sports coaches in sport organizations in South Africa.

In order to achieve the aim of the study, an appropriate literature study utilizing both national and international sources was conducted to investigate and elucidate the nature of human resources management in sport organizations. The literature study involved a systematic and factual description of human resources management in general and particularly with regards to sport. Documentation such as textbooks, magazines, articles, newspaper and media reports as well as information on the Internet was reviewed. This was integrated into existing data obtained, in an attempt to add to any other dimension prevalent in these resources. Furthermore, a record of reports, minutes, agendas of workshops and courses, concerning the management of coaches, the current coach education programmes and the support structures for coaches in South Africa were examined.

In-depth interviews with human resources managers as well as professional sports coaches were conducted in order to measure the current state of affairs with regard to human resources management of professional sports coaches in South African sport and was intended to support the quantitative data that was gathered.

A structured questionnaire was developed from the information obtained through the literature study and the qualitative study in order to compare the literature
with the current situation in the sporting industry in South Africa with regard to the human resources management function for professional coaches.

The unit of dissemination was professional sports coaches and human resources managers (refer to chapter 4, paragraph 4.2.4) in sport organizations affiliated to the South African Sports Commission in all provinces in South Africa by the following means: postal, e-mail or hand delivery.

The returned questionnaires were subjected to editing and coding for input into the statistical programme for the social sciences (SPSS – version 11), Frequencies, means, and standard deviations were used to report on the data. Cronbach alpha reliability tests were conducted on the data to test the reliability of the measuring instrument. Furthermore, the data was subjected to multivariate analysis, namely exploratory factor analysis, analysis of variance and multivariate analysis of variance.

The literature study, in-depth interviews, and information obtained through the questionnaires, contributed to establishing suggested guidelines for a model for the management of professional sports coaches in South Africa.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF TERMINOLOGY

1.5.1 Human resources management

Gerber, Nel and Van Dyk (1989) describe human resources management (HRM) as the managerial function that manages an organization’s inventory of employee skills, knowledge and productive skills which are available to society. Specifically, it involves the productive use of people in achieving the organization’s objectives and the satisfaction of employee needs (Stone, 1998). It implies a continuing process in the provision, maintenance and development of labour with respect to their skills, knowledge and productive capacity.
1.5.2 Professional

Merton (Chelladurai, 1999:39) summarized the essence of professionalism as the triad of values in the professions. The first value is knowing; that is, the development of a body of knowledge unique to the field and the training of members in that unique body of knowledge. The second dominant value is doing; that is, the skilled application of the theoretical knowledge to the problems of life. Third, the acquired knowledge and skill are used in helping others. Furthermore, a professional can be described as one who is engaged in a specified activity as one’s main paid occupation (Weingarten, 1980).

1.5.3 Organization

An organization (Hilgert & Ling, 1996) can be described as a group of people working together to achieve common objectives. It may be as planned and formal as a large business corporation or as informal as a fishing trip. A sport organization, regardless of the size, can be viewed as an association of individuals who are oriented towards achieving common goals (Arnold & Feldman, 1988). Furthermore, a sport organization is a social entity involved in the sport industry; it is goal-directed with a consciously structured activity system and a relatively identifiable boundary (Slack, 1997). The use of the term sport organizations in the study refers in the main to sport federations.

1.5.4 Human resources manager

According to Griffin (1990:15), human resources managers are responsible for “human resources planning, employee recruitment and selection, training and development, designing compensation and benefit systems, formulating performance appraisal systems, and dismissing low-performing and problem employees”.

Most sport organizations in SA do not have a position specifically for a human resources manager. Therefore, in the context of the present study, the human resources manager at sport organizations in SA is deemed to be that individual who is entrusted with the duty of performing the above-mentioned functions. The job-related titles of these individuals may differ from organization to organization. For example, the sport administrator at one organization may perform these duties at one organization while a head coach may perform these duties at another organization.

1.6 OUTLINE OF THE STUDY

Chapter one is an introduction to the study. It focuses on matters such as the orientation to the study, the problem to be examined, the demarcation of the field of study, the research methodology used in the study and the clarification of terminology.

Chapter two, which is part of the literature study, includes a description of the sport industry, the history of human resources management, the evolution of human resources management, the objectives of human resources management and a broad description of human resources management. Furthermore, the role of sport organizations as service providers is discussed with particular reference to human resources management.

Chapter three, which is also part of the literature study, will involve an in depth description of human resources practices in sport organizations’ environments. The information gathered through the literature study was used together with the information obtained via the in-depth interviews, as a basis for the development of questionnaires for both professional sport coaches and human resources managers.

In chapter four the research methodology used in the study is described.
An analysis and interpretation of the empirical data is discussed in chapter five.

Conclusions and recommendations arising from the empirical data will be the focus of chapter six.

1.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter an attempt was made to place the study in context, by describing the problem statement, sub-problems and the aim and objectives of the research. Furthermore, an indication of the research methodology used was discussed, followed by the clarification of certain concepts used in the study.