

Transcription details:

Date: 08-Feb-2016
Input sound file: 187_Huffines_Sports_Med_Walker

Transcription results:

- S1 00:00 Hi, this is Tim Lightfoot, the director of the Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance. I am so excited to let you know that the Huffines Institute now has apps for your smartphones and your tablets. We have apps for the Apple products and for Android products. You can go to iTunes or go to Google Play, either one. Download those Huffines apps and you can pull in our content every week. Now onto the podcast.
- S2 00:26 Welcome to the sports medicine podcast brought to you by the Sydney and J.L Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance in the Department of Health and Kinesiology at Texas A&M University. At the Huffines Institute, we're always working to facilitate, apply and bring you the most up-to-date coverage of the wide world that is sports medicine and human performance, all in a language you can understand and share with your friends. And now here is our host, the director of the Huffines Institute, Dr. Tim Lightfoot.
- S1 00:56 Hello and welcome to the weekly edition of the Huffines Institute for Sports Medicine and Human Performance podcast. I'm your host, Tim Lightfoot. And I'm so grateful that you took the time to download and that you're listening to us today. This week we have another interesting person in the world of sports medicine and human performance and the extended world of human performance. With us today is Dr. Matt Walker from here at Texas A&M. Welcome to the podcast, Matt.
- S3 01:19 Thank you for having me, Tim.
- S1 01:20 It was about time. You've been here a couple of years and--
- S3 01:21 Yeah, likewise.
- S1 01:22 --you're just right down the hall. We should have you a long time ago. We're going to take a few minutes, I'm going to tell the audience about why you're here.
- S3 01:28 Wonderful.
- S1 01:28 And then we'll just jump into some conversation. Dr. Walker is an associate professor and the chair of our division of sports management. He is also the associate head of the Department of Health and Kinesiology here at Texas A&M. He has a BS in Education, a Masters in Sports Management from Mississippi State, and a PhD in Sports Management from Florida State. He's quite a well-known author in the area of sports management, with 52 publications. He is also a research fellow in the North American Society for Sports Management. He's a consultant. Being in the sport management world, he does a lot of consulting. He's a consultant for many companies that most of you will have heard of. Companies like Nike, NASCAR, the Atlanta Falcons, the US Archery, and a variety of others, including the Leinchester Rugby Club in England.
- S3 02:14 Leinster. Dublin.
- S1 02:15 Leinster, yeah. So he's quite well represented there. His research is primarily on the social and environmental responsibilities of sport for development and philanthropic practices of organizations. So again, welcome to the podcast today, Matt.
- S3 02:32 Thank you for having me.
- S1 02:33 Tell us a little bit how sports management is related to sports and where it sits in the rubric.
- S3 02:40 Well, we're a bit of an anomaly in the department here, because we are really looking at the attitudinal and behavioral social side of sport, if you will. Kinesiology is down the hall, health is also down the hall, we view them as mostly hard sciences. They look at how the body interacts in supporting environments. Like kinesiology looks at how the force of a foot might affect a soccer ball, whereas we look at how the force of one's attitude might encourage them to purchase that soccer ball or support a soccer club. So we look at forces in different ways. Social science variables are very tied to attitude and behaviors, and perceptions of the sport product that yield beneficial outcomes for everyone involved in the sport game.
- S1 03:19 And sports management really has grown though over the last 30 years, hasn't it?
- S3 03:21 Oh, yeah, significantly. Even here at Texas A&M, we've been in business in sports management 27 years here at Texas A&M, one of the longest running programs in the country. I think there's something in the neighborhood of 350 or 400 programs nationwide. Now, not all of them are quality programs but there's certainly exponential growth in the past couple of year. Very hot discipline across the country, students love being attached and connected to the sport product. They want all to go work for the NFL and major league baseball, but that's not typically the case. So, we're concerned with all sorts of sides of the sport project-- property, excuse me. From sales and marketing, to sponsorships, to all sort of gamuts that students can go into.
- S1 04:02 They often think superficially of sport as just a game. I'll often hear people say, "Well, that's just a game, why are you worried about it?" It's not just a game, it's a business. Even in college, even in high school, it's business.

Transcribe Me!

- S3 04:13 Huge business. When you think about it in the grand scope of the domestic product of the United States, we're actually fourth behind the airline industry in terms of total industry spending.
- S1 04:22 Really?
- S3 04:22 Oh, yeah, it's large. Billion of dollars spent a year on sports. Mostly discretionary spending from consumers, but you also look at the professional side. Consider salaries of professional players, which are escalating at a, some would say, superficially rapid rate.
- S1 04:35 Just like professors.
- S3 04:35 Yeah, just like professors. Exactly.
- S1 04:37 Not really. If you're listening, it's not really [chuckles].
- S3 04:40 But, yes, the sport product is huge. Multibillion-dollar industry and it's not going anywhere anytime soon.
- S1 04:46 So there's no chance in the future that sport is going to become less important.
- S3 04:49 Well, I'd be out of a job if that happens, Tim, so I'm hoping not [chuckles].
- S1 04:53 It's obvious just to look at some of these companies like Nike and NASCAR, and see how they benefit, but how does something like USA Archery, which is an Olympic sport, how does that benefit from sports marketing?
- S3 05:06 Well, interesting--
- S1 05:06 Or sports management, I should say.
- S3 05:07 No, they've been an awesome client for me for a couple of years now. In fact, I'm engaged in another project with them recently where we're looking at the satisfaction of their membership base. They have approximately 10,000 members who pay dues nationwide. A little known fact about archery, I think it's third or maybe fourth in line for recreational sport participation nationwide--
- S1 05:26 Wow.
- S3 05:26 --behind bowling and some other very popular activities for recreation. The thing about archery is it's accessible to all people. So no matter if you're in a wheelchair, you're disabled, or you're a little bit overweight and can't participate in basketball or one of those other type of sports that sort of segments some of those kids, it's inclusive for all. And it teaches some really valuable lessons like balance and eye-hand coordination, but it also-- just aside from competitive archery, you also have hunting and target archery and some other things that they do. So, the benefits are fairly steep for them, and it's grown in leaps and bounds over the past couple of years with The Hunger Games and some of the other movies that feature archery in competition but also in terms of the Olympics where we've won some gold medals recently, so that sort of stimulates participation. So, they benefit a number of ways. Not only in membership dues, but also equipment side. They get kickbacks from other equipment providers, et cetera. They've been a really cool client. It's something that I never thought I'd be getting involved with with sport management and sport marketing. But I was approached by them to do a project a couple of years ago and it's been a really good relationship for about four years now.
- S1 06:25 One of the reasons I picked up on US Archery is we seem to have a hot bed of archery here at Texas A&M. We've got several of the national team coaches that are here on staff. And actually, if you go back in your podcast, those of you who are listening, Frank Thomas is one of the national team coaches and we've interviewed him in the past.
- S3 06:39 Yes. Correct.
- S1 06:39 So, archery is a big deal.
- S3 06:41 And they all know him. When I took the job here at A&M, they said, "Do you know Frank Thomas? He's there at Texas." I said, "I have no idea but I'll have to meet him." Turns out he's a division chair at P-Ap and we talk on a daily basis now, so it's a very small world.
- S1 06:51 Cool. One of your areas is the philanthropic practices of organizations.
- S3 06:56 Yeah.
- S1 06:57 Tell us about that. Organizations do charity work?
- S3 07:00 Oh, tons of them, yes. And especially on the sports side, too. They're really connected to issues like youth obesity and health and education. And really, this area of inquiry for me stems all the way back to my PhD days when as a brand-new PhD student you don't know what you're going to research. You kind of come in with blinders on. You have no clue what research line you're going to go down.
- S1 07:19 Just happy you're at the university.
- S3 07:20 Just happy to be there. So my major professor was pushing me year one, "What are you going to do? What are you going to

do?" And I was a big golf supporter - I used to watch golf all the time on TV - and invariably at the end of every golf telecast they'll always bring on the CFO of the company that's sponsoring the event, so Humana or whomever, Target, and the first thing they launch into is, "We've generated X number of dollars for charity this week," and it's usually in the millions. So I was thinking to myself, "Man, is there a research angle there somewhere?" and it turns out there was. So this idea of philanthropy and corporate social responsibility was in the literature for 50-plus years, but fortunately for me no-one has ever done anything on the sports side. So I dived right into it and I found out that every organization - NFL, NBA - they all have some sort of a charitable cause that they attach their spending to. So I started to research that more or less on the consumer side. How does someone like you or me react to that message of them saying, "Well, this golf tournament while we pay the winner a million five, we gave back 7 million to the community this week." How does that influence your spending? Does it influence your spending? So that was sort of the burning question I had. Over time it's transitioned now to more of looking at sport, how it develops the underprivileged. So looking at how those charitable initiatives, philanthropic initiatives, if you will, go towards helping underprivileged, marginalized populations. Sometimes domestically here, but also abroad in countries where they don't have those opportunities like we have in the US. So looking at how they engage kids that don't have the regular eight-hour school day or where obesity is an epidemic issue or where things like poverty are just a daily occurrence that they can sort of assuage through these programs and efforts. So, really it's looking at how sport can change and help society.

- S1 09:00 There's a couple of questions that pop into mind. You talk about the corporate philanthropy side of things, I think about the Allstate commercials and the Good Hands with the nets behind the goalpost during football games. Do people pay attention to those? Does Allstate get more business because they do that?
- S3 09:16 It's not really my bailiwick but what sponsorship scholars have looked at for years is this idea of sponsor recall. Traditionally the research method employed would be, you walk out of a game and somebody is there with a clipboard and they ask you, "What can you remember about the game?" The non-game elements. "Can you remember a sponsor, can you recall a sign in the stadium?" And yes, those types of things have been shown to increase brand perception and buying 50%, 60%, 75% and upwards depending on who the sponsor is, how embedded they are with the message. Anybody who watches the college football bowl season will see just the numerous myriad of advertisements broadcast not only on the field now but virtually signage around the stadium. So it influences, very heavily, consumer spending. That's why I think the last numbers that came out were in the \$14 or \$15 billion sponsorship spending. Approximately 70% to 80% of that was spent on sports. That's a huge industry. That's a huge [crosstalk].
- S1 10:10 Well, I thought of the Allstate thing because they always talk about how much money they've given back to the universities with their Good Hands program and so forth. So, do these philanthropy programs work out in the communities where they're supposed to be working? Do they actually do some good?
- S3 10:23 That's the burning question. It really is because the initial question I had was, "How does this benefit the business?" And it does. It pays back in reputation and image. The financial argument doesn't really hold true. Every organization exists to generate a profit, they're bottom line driven entities. But somewhat along the way, this idea of philanthropy and social responsibility became sort of a subcost. You do it for the greater good. Now, consumers are a little bit more savvy than they used to be about these messages because of how frequently they see them. So organizations are now trying to transition their brand of philanthropy to something more along the lines of, "How does this help society?" and showing that that payoff.
- S3 11:00 So interestingly, you didn't note this as one of my clients, but the NFL I am working with right now-- you have probably heard about it, their Play 60 project and it's engaging youth around the nation and around the world in active play for 60 minutes or more per day. The interesting thing about the NFL is if you watch Sunday, they have a game now in the UK. So they're trying to stimulate a fan base, so they are using this program as this grassroots to generate a fan base. But ultimately, the residual product is trying to assuage the issue of youth obesity in the UK and also in the United States. So it does have a twofold outcome to it. But I think the idea of changing behavior and obesity attached to sport is a very novel one. And speaking with the NFL, they really have a keen interest in doing that. But their secondary interest is obviously growing your fan base at the younger level. So it's got to work on both levels, I think, and companies like that understand it.
- S1 11:54 Given the interest that we have in activity, especially when we've talked about that a lot in the podcast, has that program worked?
- S3 11:59 Well, we're in year one of the assessment and there's three phases to it. There's a physical activity component, there is a character development component and also the marketing component. From the physical activity, it did work. It changed behavior for kids over a 10-week intervention period. Character development, not so much. I mean, to change someone's behavior, it's a tough challenge. But over time, if they re-evaluate and sort of follow up on the messages from that program, it has a chance to do that. But the physical activity component definitely came through as something noteworthy.
- S1 12:30 Along this line, what this also makes me think of is there's been a recent flare up of-- blow up, I should say, of some of Coca-Cola's philanthropic approaches and how they've supported scholarships, scholarship research in areas related to obesity and prevention of obesity. There's a lot of people saying, "Well, that's kind of hypocrisy. You provide this product that actually is one of the leading causes of type 2 diabetes and yet, here you are claiming that you are health related company."
- S3 13:01 We call that a reactionary response [chuckles] to something negative. McDonald's doing the same thing, et cetera, but they're being-- I call it proactively reactive. So they're reacting to a societal ill, but they're being proactive about how they approach it. I think it's noteworthy. As long as you're doing something, it's better than doing nothing.
- S1 13:17 Nothing. Yeah. So what do you see coming in the future?

- S3 13:22 For sports? Or in general?
- S1 13:22 Yeah, in general for sports--
- S3 13:23 For our program I could talk all day.
- S1 13:25 How do you see sports sponsorship, the philanthropic responses changing over the-- let's say the next five years. Do you see anything coming down the line that's going to be a difference maker for some of these companies?
- S3 13:39 Yeah, I see the idea. There's this new term in the literature called sport for development, and this is really what I was talking about earlier in developing these underprivileged populations, curing societal ills like obesity. So transitioning your brand of philanthropy to benefit your business, which is really called strategic philanthropy, which is an oxymoron in and of itself, but transitioning that brand of philanthropy to one that's really centered on curing societal ills. And the most important aspect of that is these companies have to be transparent about what they're doing and report it accordingly. So, hire people like myself and other sport management academics around the country to strategically and third-party evaluate the effectiveness of these programs but not keep that data to themselves. Publicize it widely and show how they're changing. If it's not working, show that. Be transparent about it. That's the hardest thing for companies to want to release is that sort of information. We're doing a project right now, we just got a grant for the PGA of America, as well, to evaluate-- they have educational programs around the country that teach kids how to become golf professionals. So, they've never done an evaluation of these programs. They've been in business for 25 years doing this at the college level, but they've never evaluated how effective these programs are. This is different. It's not really philanthropy, but it's graduating a qualified workforce to become golf professionals. But they never evaluated whether it's actually working. So, they've hired us recently, which is a great project for our sport management group here, a very big grant, to evaluate the effectiveness of that program. And I think that is where most sport management academics fall a bit short, in terms of this evaluation and this assessment outcome. Health professionals and kinesiology folks do it day in and day out. But we have somehow not either had access to this programs or just not thought long and hard enough about how to assess whether they are actually working.
- S1 15:20 I guess an extension of this is some of the work that's been done to help some of those social ills. I'm thinking of the Homeless Street Soccer. Organizations that are out there and some of the sponsorships that have gone on with that. So, there are people really trying to cure some of the ills of the society.
- S3 15:34 That's one of my really good friends, her name is Emma Sherry. She was hired as the as the external consultant for the street leagues soccer and she does some stuff in New Zealand, she's also done stuff in some Asian nations as well. But she's really invested in New Guinea at the moment and looking at how this Homeless World Cup and some other things have really helped transition folks from some situations of despair into some really positive outcomes. So it's really good work.
- S1 15:57 So this is really a situation where superficially sport is just a game but actually if you look at it in-depth, there are so many other things that it can accomplish now besides just the game on a Sunday.
- S3 16:07 We'd like to call sport a microcosm of society. It really has all of those aspects. It has religion, it has history, it has traditions, it has all these other nuances that make up a society but just in a smaller package. So on the field of play, you have sportsmanship, which is just lending a hand to your fellow competitor, where in the regular world you have that as well, so you're opening the door for someone. So these messages seemingly all translate across all mediums, and it's not just sport specific. It happens in all fields, in all walks of life, but we truly view sport, from the sport management perspective, as one of those, for lack of a better term, a game-changing opportunity to help society realize what these ills are now. Sometimes the negatives are perpetuated a lot stronger than the positives, but that's just the nature of competition. But I think that sometimes sends the wrong message to the youth population.
- S3 16:50 I was reading an article recently, not to get off on too much of a tangent, but you've all probably heard and seen some of the issues where you have parents beating up referees and
- it's an issue. It's an epidemic issue where in Holland the Dutch have now adopted a philosophy where the parents have to stay 25 yards away from the field of play and the referee only exists to direct the flow of the game. He doesn't call the penalties, the kids call them on themselves. And they've done research to show that these kids are more well adjusted, they approach sport in a much more fair and equitable manner, and they are longer participants in that sport for a longer period of time.
- S3 17:26 So these ideas are out there but they need to be well adopted by families. Being in Texas here, we are in a very sport-centered culture and a very family oriented sport-centered culture, too. So I think we can learn a lot from what folks do around the world and how they approach their sporting activities for the greater good and for not alienating the children and not alienating parents but making everybody come together under a common idea .
- S1 17:49 It's interesting you've talked about a lack of a referee. Playing pick up basketball for 30 years and we never had a referee. And you work it out. You call your fouls on yourself and if you don't, guess what, you don't play very much longer because people don't want you to be on their team.
- S3 18:01 And think about if you taught that message at a really young age, how much more well adjusted an adult you would be and how much more well adjusted a competitor you'd be at a later age.
- S1 18:10 Matt, thank you so much for being with us today.
- S3 18:13 It's my pleasure.

Transcribe Me!

- S1 18:13 We're coming close to the end of our time here.
- S3 18:16 That was quick.
- S1 18:16 Time flies when you're having a good conversation, right? And as we do every week, we give our guests the opportunity to give us a take home message. What do you want people to remember from this podcast?
- S3 18:26 You had me think about that at the beginning, and I really didn't think about it, I guess, until now. I sort of put it off, but think about sport in a much broader sense. Not just competition, but think about how society can learn from sport and how sport should learn from society. Don't get jaded by the perspectives of these million-dollar athletes that have their own agendas. I think that--
- S1 18:45 There aren't that many of them, fortunately.
- S3 18:47 That's right. There are some really good people in sport and there's some really good things working for sport in general. I guess I'm left with the thought of-- my in-laws are not really sport fans and they always look at these high dollars and say, "It makes--" that's just a small aspect of the entire sport world. Think about all the kids that are involved and all the positive messages that sport can teach one throughout their lifespan. So I guess if there is one parting thought I would say, view sport for what it is, a pure activity to engage people in something social.
- S1 19:15 Excellent. Excellent take home message.
- S3 19:16 Thank you.
- S1 19:17 Again, thank you for being with us today.
- S3 19:18 It's my pleasure. Thanks for having me.
- S1 19:20 I've enjoyed it. And for those of you that are regular listeners, you know this is also the time of the podcast where we have a podcast question of the week. And here with our podcast question of the week is our producer, Kenneth.
- S4 19:30 What percentage of sponsorship spending by businesses is spent on sport?
- S1 19:35 Excellent podcast question. Be the first one to send us an e-mail response that has the correct answer in it to huffinespodcast@hkn.tamu.edu and you'll win one of those nifty podcast T-shirts that we give away. And don't think that you're too late, we've been known to give away bonus T-shirts as well. So reach out, talk to us, we'll talk back, actually. So again, thank you all for being here. Matt, thank you again once again.
- S3 19:58 Thank you, Tim. I appreciate it.
- S1 19:59 And we hope that all of you will join us next week when we have another interesting person in the world of sports medicine and human performance. And until then, we hope that you stay active and healthy.
- S2 20:10 This sports medicine podcast is produced by Ayland Letsinger and licensed by the Huffines Institute at Texas A&M under a Creative Commons 3.0 license. You can share this as much as you want, and you can talk or blog about it all you want. Just don't change it or charge money for it. This podcast is made possible by support from the Omar Smith family and for Sydney and J.L. Huffines family. Our music was composed, performed, and graciously provided by Dave Zeltner Productions, your source for quality music and music production since 1992. Find them at www.davidzeltner.com. Our opening and closing credits were provided by johnmilesproductions.com. If you have questions or comments, please send them to huffinespodcast@hkn.tamu.edu. From all of us at the Huffines Institute, we hope you have an active and healthy week.
- [silence]