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Article

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Editorial

Editorial: Special Issue “Risk in Sports and Challenges for Sports Organizations”

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Most people will agree that skiing down the Streif—one of the world’s most dangerous alpine downhill ski slopes—at nearly 90 miles per hour is quite a risky business. However, what about the risk-taking behavior of people organizing sports events, such as the aforementioned ski races, or those managing the respective sports organizations? Or what about political decision makers involved in Olympic bids and referendums? Individual risk-taking behavior is omnipresent in sports management and has therefore become a central topic of research in sports science and sports economics. However, the effects of individual risk-taking behavior on the organization of sports in general—and on the design of sports organizations and the behavior of their members in particular—have been little studied so far. This Special Issue attempts to fill these gaps by providing a collection of articles on risk taking in sports. “Risk Taking in Sports and Challenges for Sports Organizations” covers a wide range of topics, which can be subdivided into three main categories: (1) risk taking in elite sports, (2) risk taking in organizing sports events, and (3) risk through exogenous shocks.

The first set of contributions deals with *risk taking in elite sports*. In this context, [Morales and Schubert \(2022\)](#) examined the principles of good governance in North American professional sports leagues. They explored the need for reforms that leagues must undertake to comply with core governance dimensions in order to reduce the risk of being unprepared for ethically sensitive issues. This Issue also encompasses three articles on various risks in professional soccer. [Barth et al. \(2022\)](#) analyzed the key retirement transition and adjustment outcomes of former professional players from a social science and long-term perspective. By examining risk relationships in the first division of French men’s soccer, [Scelles and Llorca \(2021\)](#) examined the impact of president longevity and owner geographic orientation on a team’s performance and on the effectiveness of dismissing a leader. Finally, [Hamsund and Scelles \(2021\)](#) investigated how fans perceived the video assistant referee in the English Premier League and found differences between various fan groups, especially in respect to different age groups.

Two articles in this Special Issue are dedicated to a topic that is not only relevant to individual risk-taking behavior but also represents a potential risk for sports organizations: doping and anti-doping regulations in sports. In an explorative study, [Blank et al. \(2021\)](#) interviewed Austrian athletes and their coaches to gain insights into their knowledge and perception of existing (legal) anti-doping rule violations. Doping is also the topic of [Pitsch’s \(2022\)](#) contribution; however, unlike the article mentioned above, he focused on recreational sports. Referring to Stigler and Becker’s theory of rational addiction in general—and more specifically to its central element of consumer capital—[Pitsch \(2022\)](#) asked whether a doping decision could be based on the desire to increase the benefits of



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competing, to secure a benefit that had already been achieved in the past, and to prevent diminished benefits; in other words, he examined whether doping could be understood as a technique to minimize the risk of losing one's benefits gained from consuming sports.

The articles of Könecke and de Könecke and de Nooij (2022), Newham et al. (2022), and Lintumäki et al. (2022) can be included in the topic of *risk-taking in organizing sports events*. Könecke and de Könecke and de Nooij (2022) analyzed the individual risk management that politicians have to contend with due to their involvement in Olympic bids and referenda. Newham et al. (2022) showed a risk in e-sports in the context of the possibility that players might switch from a buy-to-play to a free-to-play model, taking the game Overwatch as an example. When it comes to the link between sports and risk, the COVID-19 pandemic and its consequences must also be taken into consideration. In this regard, Lintumäki et al. (2022) showed the power of fans in risk management; they found that soccer fans were willing to support their favorite teams by helping them to overcome the financial difficulties caused by this unforeseen operational risk.

The remaining three articles of this Special Issue fall into the category of *risks through exogenous shocks*. Bazzanella et al. (2021) showed how organizers of sporting events, particularly cycling competitions, dealt with the COVID-19 pandemic. Using data from three different German professional sports leagues, Huth and Kurscheidt (2022) developed a model for ticket pricing and discussed their results in terms of risk management issues related to the COVID-19 pandemic. Finally, Yamamura (2022) examined how people's childhood experiences with team sports helped them develop non-cognitive skills that later led them to make charitable donations to disaster victims.

Indeed, the broad range of topics covered in this Special Issue demonstrate the many aspects through which sports and risk (management) are linked. At the same time, the articles highlight the necessity of a differentiated view on sports and risks and thus warn against the unjustified extrapolations of results. Such extrapolations might be seen as a central risk for sports science (which is still a relatively new field) and sports economics research—a challenge which might also, however, open up interesting lines of inquiry for future research.

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