Chapter 15

Driving Tourism Through Sport Event in the Lipno Region: First Summer Olympic Park in the Czech Republic

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ABSTRACT

Olympic Games have already been the top worldwide followed sporting event for 120 years. Until recently the Olympic Games were in terms of tourism associated exclusively with visitors’ passive follow up. That status started to change with the emergence of an entirely new phenomenon called the Olympic parks. Based on this phenomenon is a research focusing on establishing an Olympic Park 2016 in Lipno nad Vltavou, Czech Republic. Part of the research was to analyze the impact of the Olympic Park it had on the region and the authors evaluated both positive and negative effects. The result of this research was to determine the main impacts of the Olympic Park on the destination, in the short and long terms. The authors concluded that the construction of the Olympic Park was a major impulse for the development of tourism in the area.

INTRODUCTION

The importance of tourism has increased in recent years and tourism activities have become an integral part of human life. Millions of people travel every year for the thrill of discovery, to relax, to take part in various sports and intellectual activities, to establish new contacts, or for personal fulfilment by at least short-term change in living environment and lifestyle. With the growth of population living standards and a simultaneous increase in leisure time, the tourism is one of the fastest growing sectors of the world economy. One of the forms of tourism is a sports-oriented tourism.

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Sport and sports activities are increasingly becoming the way to spend free time of both individuals and groups of people. One of the reasons being people are more concerned about their health and want to be fit or want to relax actively. Here, sport is the best option to achieve not only composure but also a good physical condition. “We often talk about an approach called by English terms health and wellbeing” (Plzáková, 2015, p. 197). Sport, according to the European Sports Charter (2010) refers to all forms of physical activity, which aim, by casual or organized participation, at expressing or improving physical fitness and mental composure, and developing social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels.

**Background**

Standeven and De Knop (1999) state that “the relationship between sports and travel is symbiotic in the modern world. It is not so that the sport promotes tourism by offering an ever-increasing amount of valuable viewing experiences; tourism also helps sports” (p. 12). Tourism based on sporting activities is one of the specific forms of travel. Sports tourism is dynamically developing and has become a phenomenon of our time. The study of Hobza and Dohnal (2008) notes that, the focus of tourism motivated by sports is considered by professionals as one of the most promising developments. The primary reason for this statement is a demonstrable change in consumer habits, subject to long-lasting changes in lifestyle. Tourism motivated sport is an innovative product that offers to adapt existing products and services to new arising conditions for companies and entire regions, thus attracting new prospective clients (Preuss, 2004).

The Olympic Games, as the world’s most prestigious sporting event, have since its inception in 1896 presented strong motivating factor for participation in tourism (Malfas, 2004). Olympic Games first took place in Ancient Greece in 776 BC. N. L. In modern history, the first Olympic Games were held in 1896. In 1924, the first Winter Olympic Games were organized. Until 1992, the Winter and Summer Olympics were held the same year after a four-year interval. Since 1994, the Summer and Winter Olympic Games alternate by a two-year period. Interest in the Olympics, was particularly accelerated with the development of communication technology and transport infrastructure. Passive participation in watching the Olympic Games in their place of venue or through the mass media undoubtedly contributed to increased motivation for active sports. The idea of direct connection of passive watching the Olympic Games with active sporting resulted in creation of so-called Olympic parks. This brought undoubtedly a shift in increased interest in sports especially among children, families with children and youth. Olympic Parks (KPMG, 2015) are a completely new phenomenon based on the combination of sports and tourism. Investigating this phenomenon and its implications in terms of regional development and destination management brings a whole set of interesting findings and experiences.

**METHODOLOGY**

The authors concluded that the construction of the Olympic Park was a major impulse for the development of tourism in the area, contributing to the building of primary and secondary infrastructure and that it could help mitigate regional disparities (Ogilvie, 1933). At the same time, it is necessary to recognize and eventually eliminate negative impacts that the construction of the Olympic Park might have.