?Business Ethics and Sports Governance

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Sport is increasingly big business that involves billions of dollars and the question of ethics and governance has never been so vital.

A new IBE Briefing looks at the role of sporting governing bodies in embedding the sport's core values, both at national and international level. It also analyses how appropriate governance structures can enable them to protect the integrity of sport.

The dramatic changes which have occurred in the sports sector over the last 20 years such as increased commercialisation, geographical spread and engagement of the public, lead to the need for sporting governing bodies to operate in a more business-like manner, following similar principles of good governance to prevent ethical lapses, examples of which are described in the IBE Briefing.

However, the practical application of their core values still poses some challenges. Sound governance frameworks are an important tool for sporting governing bodies to be able to address those challenges and influence the ethical culture within their organisation.

This briefing highlights some key points that need to be considered and enhanced, including:

- **Accountability** Establishing clear accountability for key decisions is important to promote the right ‘tone from the top’ and prevent a culture of impunity at the top of sporting organisations.
- **Openness with information** Practical improvements in this directions are needed to prove that ethical values inform decision-making at all levels, from bidding processes to sponsorship contracts.

- **Teamwork and inclusivity** As sport brings together a number of different stakeholder groups, it is important that governing bodies include in their governance framework tools that allow them to engage with people and that decisions are made in a participative way, consulting with those that will be most affected.

- **Integrity and controls** It is important that there are mechanisms in place to ensure that key decisions are taken in the sole interest of sport, independently from improper influence. This includes ethical due diligence to check that partners and third parties can be relied upon to live up to the same ethical standards.

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