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Covid-19's impact on sport organizations

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Abstract.

The Covid-19 pandemic, emerging in early 2020, unleashed unprecedented disruptions across the globe, significantly affecting various sectors, including the world of sports. The sudden halt of normal life in March 2020 led to the cancellation or postponement of numerous sports events, deeply impacting competitions and sports entities worldwide. This thesis explores the profound consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic on sports organizations, delving into the financial strains, operational challenges, and the shift in fan engagement practices necessitated by the pandemic. The investigation is anchored in a blend of personal sporting experiences spanning over two decades and a rigorous analysis of reliable sources. This thesis outlines the financial turmoil experienced by sports clubs, which faced a daunting task of managing expenses, including players' salaries and administrative costs, against a backdrop of dwindling income. Moreover, the health and safety of athletes and stakeholders emerged as paramount, prompting a reevaluation of traditional sporting events and the adoption of measures to curb the spread of the virus, significantly altering the sports landscape.

Amid these challenges, sports organizations embarked on creative and strategic pathways to navigate through the crisis. This thesis highlights the innovative approaches, such as virtual competitions and altered competition calendars, adopted by organizations to sustain operations and maintain fan engagement. The resilience and adaptability demonstrated by sports entities in ensuring player safety, managing financial health, and innovating fan interaction stand as a testament to the indomitable spirit of the sports industry.

Furthermore, the thesis delves into the broader implications of the pandemic on sports, including its impact on youth sports and community-based programs, emphasizing the socio-economic disparities worsened by the crisis. The role of digitalization and esports as pivotal elements in the transformation and continuity of sports during and beyond the pandemic era is also examined, underscoring the potential for enduring changes in the global sports industry.

This comprehensive analysis seeks to provide insights into the challenges and opportunities presented by the Covid-19 pandemic to sports organizations. By reflecting on the strategic responses and adaptations, the thesis aims to contribute to the understanding of resilience and innovation in the face of adversity, offering perspectives on preparing sports organizations for future uncertainties.

Key words: Covid-19, sports organizations, financial impact, safety measures, fan engagement, esports, digital transformation, resilience.

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Abstrakti.

Vuoden 2020 alussa puhjennut Covid-19-pandemia aiheutti ennennäkemättömiä häiriöitä kaikkialla maailmassa ja vaikutti merkittävästi eri aloihin kuten myös urheilumaailmaan. Normaalin elämän äkillinen pysähtyminen maaliskuussa 2020 johti lukuisten urheilutapahtumien peruuntumiseen tai lykkäämiseen, mikä vaikutti syvästi kilpailuihin ja urheiluyksiköihin maailmanlaajuisesti. Tässä tutkielmassa tarkastellaan Covid-19-pandemian syvällisiä seurauksia urheiluorganisaatioille ja syvennyttään pandemian aiheuttamiin taloudellisiin rasituksiin, toiminnallisiin haasteisiin ja fanien sitouttamiskäytäntöjen muuttumiseen. Tutkimus perustuu yli kahden vuosikymmenen aikana saatuihin henkilökohtaisiin urheilukokemuksiin ja luotettavien lähteiden tarkkaan analyysiin. Tutkielmassa käydään läpi urheiluseurojen kokemaa taloudellista myllerrystä, sillä urheiluseuroilla oli edessään haastava tehtävä hallita menoja, kuten pelaajien palkkoja ja hallintokuluja, kun tulot vähenivät. Lisäksi urheilijoiden ja sidosryhmien terveys ja turvallisuus nousivat ensisijaisen tärkeiksi, mikä johti perinteisten urheilutapahtumien uudelleenarviointiin ja toimenpiteisiin viruksen leviämisen hillitsemiseksi, mikä muutti urheilun maisemaa merkittävästi.

Näiden haasteiden keskellä urheiluorganisaatiot ryhtyivät luoviin ja strategisiin toimiin kriisistä selviytymiseksi. Tässä tutkielmassa korostetaan innovatiivisia lähestymistapoja, kuten virtuaalisia kilpailuja ja muuttuneita kilpailukalentereita, joita organisaatiot ovat käyttäneet toimintansa ylläpitämiseksi ja fanien sitoutumisen ylläpitämiseksi. Urheiluorganisaatioiden osoittama joustavuus ja sopeutumiskyky pelaajien turvallisuuden varmistamisessa, taloudellisen terveyden hallinnassa ja fanien välisen vuorovaikutuksen innovoinnissa ovat osoitus urheilualan voittamattomasta hengestä. Lisäksi tutkielmassa tarkastellaan pandemian laajempia vaikutuksia urheiluun, mukaan lukien sen vaikutukset nuorisourheiluun ja yhteisöllisiin ohjelmiin, ja korostetaan kriisin pahentamia sosioekonomisia eroja. Lisäksi tarkastellaan digitalisaation ja esportsin roolia keskeisinä tekijöinä urheilun muutoksessa ja jatkuvuudessa pandemia-aikakaudella ja sen jälkeen, mikä korostaa mahdollisuuksia pysyviin muutoksiin globaalissa urheilualassa.

Tämä kattava analyysi pyrkii tarjoamaan näkemyksiä Covid-19-pandemian urheiluorganisaatioille asettamista haasteista ja mahdollisuuksista. Pohtimalla strategisia vastauksia ja sopeutumisia tutkielma pyrkii edistämään ymmärrystä vastoinkäymisten sietokyvystä ja innovoinnista ja tarjoamaan näkökulmia urheiluorganisaatioiden valmistautumiseen tuleviin epävarmuustekijöihin.

Avainsanat: Covid-19, urheiluorganisaatiot, taloudelliset vaikutukset, turvatoimet, fanien sitoutuminen, esports, digitaalinen muutos, joustavuus.

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1 Introduction

On March 2020 world came to halt. Numerous sporting events had to be cancelled or postponed due to the pandemic. This has affected many sports and competitions around the world. For some, the impact of Covid-19 was permanent. Covid-19 led to the loss of some leagues, events and teams. (Pedersen et. al 2020.) The cancellation of competitions has meant a huge loss of revenue for sports organizations, especially those that depend on ticket sales, advertising revenue and TV rights. Many sports clubs faced financial difficulties as revenues collapsed while running costs such as players' salaries and administrative expenses had to be paid.

The health of players and other sports players was a primary concern. Many sporting events had to be organized without spectators or cancelled altogether to contain the pandemic. Athletes around the world faced challenges in training when sports facilities were closed or training restrictions were imposed. Deviating from normal training increased injuries and was costly for organizations. (Vincent et al 2022.)

Sponsorship and marketing agreements also had to be adapted. Many sponsors and marketers had to adjust or cancel their contracts when sporting events could not take place as planned. The restructuring of sporting events has been particularly important. Some sporting organizations have had to come up with creative solutions, such as virtual competitions or changes to the competition calendar, to adapt to the situation. All this has of course been a disappointment for supporters, who were unable to attend events involving their favourite teams. This has also had an impact on the sense of community and the atmosphere in the sport. Overall, the COVID 19 pandemic posed major challenges for sporting organizations, who were faced with a rapidly changing situation in order to maintain financial stability while ensuring the safety of players, staff and fans.

I have more than two decades of sporting experience and it was difficult to witness the struggles of clubs in a difficult situation. I will talk about the creative strategies of organizations through financial and health concerns and what Covid-19 brought to organizations in terms of esports, for example. I based my information on reliable sources and used my knowledge to gather important points to this thesis. I am aiming to answer to these three questions: What were the Covid-19's financial impact on sport

around the world, what were the sport organizations financial measures to survive the difficult situation and how organizations could acquire more sustainable and resilient future.

2 How Covid-19 changed the world

COVID-19, short for "coronavirus disease 2019", is a respiratory disease caused by the SARS-CoV-2 virus. The virus was first identified in December 2019 in Wuhan city, Hubei province, China. (A. Zapatero, et al. 2023)

The virus is spread primarily through respiratory droplets that are produced when an infected person speaks, coughs or sneezes. It can also spread by touching surfaces infected with the virus and then touching the face. Common symptoms of COVID-19 include fever, cough and shortness of breath. Some people may also experience fatigue, body aches, taste or smell disturbance, sore throat and other symptoms. The severity of symptoms can vary widely, from mild or asymptomatic cases to severe respiratory illness. Public health measures to control the spread of the virus include the use of masks, physical distancing, frequent hand washing and vaccination. These measures are aimed at reducing the spread of the virus in communities. (WHO.)

COVID-19 has led to a significant number of illnesses and deaths worldwide. The impact has varied from region to region, with some regions having higher infection and mortality rates than others. Many health systems faced unprecedented challenges, such as overcrowding in hospitals, shortages of medical supplies and strain on health professionals (BMA). The pandemic caused a global economic downturn, leading to recession in various countries. Interest rate cuts, travel restrictions and disruptions to supply chains contributed to the economic contraction. Job losses and income inequality increased, affecting various sectors such as tourism, hospitality and small businesses. The pandemic exacerbated existing health inequalities and disproportionately affected vulnerable populations and communities with limited access to health care. The disadvantaged struggled daily to meet their nutritional needs (WHO 2020). Measures to combat the spread of the virus, such as lockdowns and social distancing, led to social isolation, mental health challenges and disruption of social routines (WHO 2022) School closures and the shift to e-learning affected students globally and caused disparities in access to and quality of education (WHO).

The pandemic accelerated trends in teleworking, digitalisation and e-commerce, changing the way people work, communicate and use services. Smaller companies in particular are digitalising at a much higher rate than larger companies, catching up with

the competitive advantage of larger companies. Working from home became very popular and has continued since the Covid-19. (F. Jaumotte et al., 2023)

International travel suffered significant disruption. Tourism, an important sector of the global economy, is the third largest export category, accounting for 7% of world trade in 2019. Tourism plays a key role for certain countries, accounting for more than 20% of their GDP and the third largest export sector worldwide. The pandemic has led to a significant drop in tourism export earnings, which are estimated to fall from \$1.7 trillion to \$651 billion in 2020. This economic setback could have wider implications, potentially reducing world GDP by between 1.5% and 2.8%. The importance of tourism is underlined by the fact that it supports one in ten jobs worldwide and provides livelihoods for millions of people in both emerging and developed economies (UN Tourism 2022).

Interest rate caps, movement restrictions and divergent interest rate policies between countries affected global supply chains, highlighting vulnerabilities and sparking debate on the sustainability of international trade. Access to goods became more difficult and prices rose significantly (DB 2021).

The development and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines became a critical component of the pandemic response, with countries striving to achieve widespread vaccination coverage. Governments around the world took various policy measures, including movement restrictions, testing, contact tracing and vaccination campaigns, to mitigate the impact of the virus. Differences in access to vaccines, health infrastructure and financial resources highlighted global inequalities (WHO).

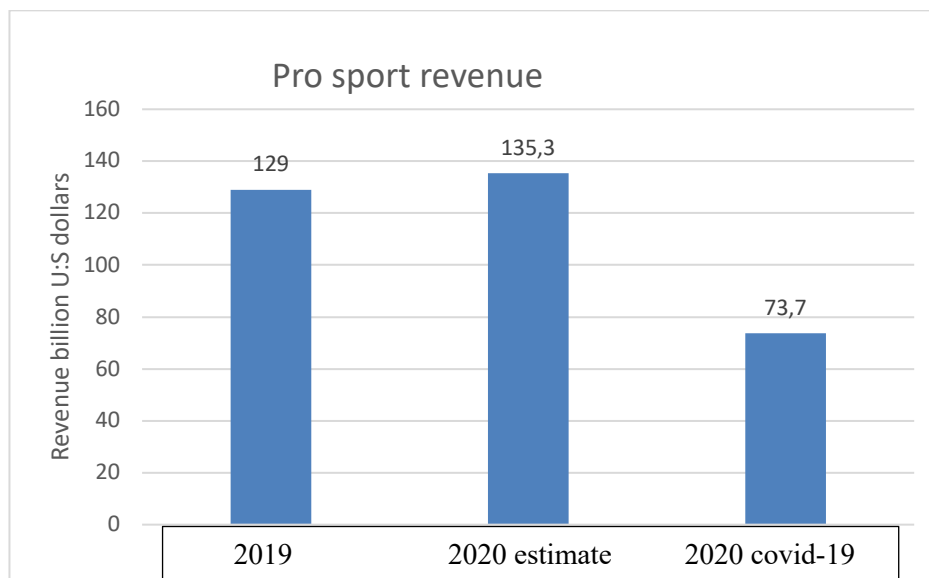
The global impact of COVID-19 is still ongoing, and its long-term consequences are only beginning to emerge. The pandemic has highlighted the interconnectedness of the world and the need for global cooperation to address complex challenges.

3 Economic impact on global sport

3.1 Financial impact for sport organizations

What were the immediate financial impacts? The COVID-19 pandemic, which broke out in early 2020, hit the sports sector hard. Many professional leagues around the world suspended their seasons, and hundreds of thousands of jobs were put at risk as public sporting events were cancelled around the world. Analyses suggest that sports revenues will fall below USD 74 billion in 2020 as a result of the crisis, almost half of the pre-COVID-19 estimates. Clubs' main source of revenue, paying customers, will be banned from attending sporting events. Events had to be held in empty stands, which also led to a drop in sales of fan merchandise. The atmosphere in the stadiums was also severely lacking and important games felt more like training sessions. Many series had to be suspended for financial reasons. Organising matches without fans, conducting tests and government bans were ultimately the reasons. (Hammerschmidt et al 2021.) The picture below gives an idea of the lost revenue worldwide. Revenue dropped from 129 billion dollars to 73.7 billion dollars.

Figure 1, Self made figure, COVID-19: effect on revenue from sports industry worldwide 2020 (Statista 2020)



According to a study in England, Covid-19 probably created the biggest shock to football ever. Clubs saw their finances shrink considerably and profitability fall. All match-related revenue fell to zero. Clubs at the second tier in particular suffered considerably. However, the clubs got back on their feet because of the financial

resilience. Certain possible measures to rebalance the clubs' finances were also examined. For example, selling expensive players to rival teams but this was not profitable. Some teams wanted players to take a pay cut. After all this, football has still managed to grow worldwide. (Alabi et al 2023.)

Of course, it is the smaller clubs that suffered the most, whose finances were already on shaky ground. In addition to this lost revenue, they had to return tickets and season tickets already purchased. The biggest problem for clubs was liquidity. After all, the main purpose of clubs is to win matches on the smallest possible budget, not to make as much profit as possible. There was very little financial preparation for a crisis of this kind. Clubs also feared a drop in sponsorship income. The reason was not a reluctance from sponsors but the ability of sponsors to pay interest, which also had a drastic impact outside the sport. Many clubs also moved into the world of digitalisation and, for example, took on Crypto companies as sponsors (Hammerschmidt et al 2021.)

The economic impact was not limited to professional sport. Junior sport was also severely affected. The impact was not only limited to the economy but also had psychological and developmental effects. Youth sport also has a major impact on the local economy. Local clubs and sponsors did not get the visibility and the number of customers they needed. Socio-economic status played a role in the continuation of the sport. As jobs went, poorer families had to choose between paying the rent and keeping their children in sport. Wealthier families were able to take their children to places where restrictions were looser and support self-directed exercise. (Jimmy Sanderson et al 2020.)

The economic problems also created uncertainty about long-term plans and investment decisions and related to that, Covid-19 created uncertainty about athletes' financial security and ability to provide for their families. (Huw Wiltshire et al 2022.)

3.2 Financial measures for the teams and organizations.

Resilience was and is the answer for difficult times. The Covid-19 pandemic and the global crisis it caused made life difficult for almost every individual and community. But it was also an opportunity to increase the resilience of businesses. Resilience measures the structural and systematic ability to withstand and respond to critical situations. Flexible adaptability has become a necessity.

In the realm of elite sports, teams often face intense pressures that can impact their performance. Some teams are able to withstand these pressures, while others struggle, leading to a growing interest in the study of psychological resilience within sport psychology. Traditionally, research has focused on the resilience of individual athletes, but there's a growing recognition that teams, as cohesive units, also face unique stressors such as group tensions, blame, and performance slumps. These stressors require an understanding of resilience at the group level, which is where recent research has started to focus. The concept of team resilience involves exploring how teams can collectively withstand, resist, and overcome stressors. Unlike individual resilience, team resilience emphasizes the dynamics and relationships within the group. This is crucial, as resilient individuals do not necessarily create a resilient team. Furthermore, team resilience is seen as a dynamic process, reflecting the ever-changing nature of teams and the pressures they encounter. The existing studies on team resilience offer a variety of definitions, with common themes highlighting the protective nature of resilience and its dynamic aspects. Given the increasing complexity and pressure in elite sports, understanding team resilience can help maintain high performance levels and guide future research to develop effective strategies for teams facing adversity. (Morgan et al. 2017.)

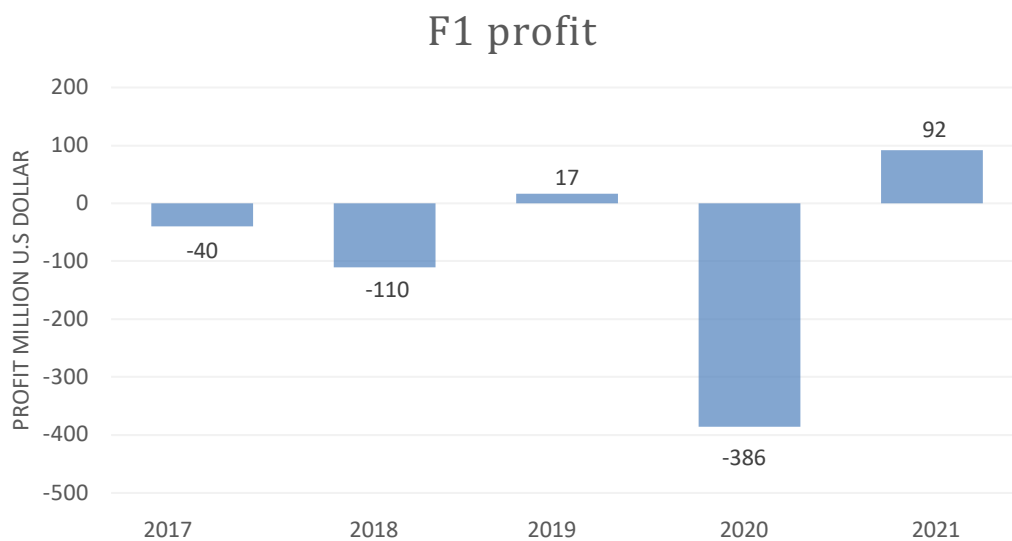
Sports organisations consist of up to hundreds of people and the cost of salaries is high. Minimising costs was critical to ensure that operations would continue beyond the pandemic. Many organisations had to lay off staff or reduce working hours. In the F1 series, core staff were still forced to keep their salaries. Despite the redundancies, all staff were still kept in remote contact to ensure team spirit and continuity of operations. In addition to salary costs, some expenses had already been pre-budgeted, such as flight and hotel costs, which fortunately could still be cancelled. In the F1 series, the long-distance races are the biggest cost item and cutting them down brought savings for the whole series (Beat Zehnder 2020.)

The F1 series lives and breathes technical progress. Car development is very expensive, which gave the teams some relief for the coming year. Major rule changes were due in 2021 but were pushed back a year. (F1 2020.)

The F1 organisation lost almost \$400 million with the interest rate. However, the deals struck in the background invested in the future. In particular, social media and appealing

to young people created a new fan base and revenue. Revenues rose from \$1.1 billion in 2020 to \$2.1 billion in 2021 (Statista 2023.) In 2021 the F1 organisation made a profit of over \$90 million, as you can see in the picture below.

Figure 2, Self made figure F1 organization profit 2017-2021 (Statista 2023)



The competitive nature of sports clubs was also raised against Covid 19. The engineers in F1 are the best in their field and after a break from their normal bread and butter work, they began to focus on breathing equipment to combat respiratory symptoms. The F1 team Mercedes-AMG F1 developed and supplied the British government with breathing equipment for Covid-19 patients. (CNN Business.)

When the COVID-19 crisis ended, companies that redesigned their business models and strengthened themselves with creative, responsible and entrepreneurial approaches are undoubtedly stronger and more sustainable than before COVID-19. Thus, the COVID-19 era offers several opportunities, such as empowering and strengthening the workforce, leveraging new technologies for international expansion, forming strategic alliances and collaborations with trading partners, shifting to e-commerce-centric business models and improving brand awareness through social responsibility.

Today's environment is changing rapidly and dramatically, and companies need to be prepared. Survival strategies were classified into four main categories. Marketing mix, financial resources, production and operations and process management.

3.2.1 Marketing mix

Marketing mix involves decisions related to product, price, place, and promotion. Marketing mix strategies could include price adjustments and changes in promotion like offering discounts on fan products and season tickets, shifting advertising efforts from traditional street advertising to online platforms, creating partnerships with clients for creative marketing campaigns and extending payment periods for fan products and season tickets to accommodate concentrated seasons.

3.2.2 Financial Resources

This encompasses managing financial assets, liabilities, and investments. Strategies related to financial resources is maintaining cash flow, capital acquisition and prioritizing important areas. This can be achieved by maintaining liquidity by selling surplus products and offering cash discounts, seeking new investors through crowdfunding or government-backed loans and halting investments in products with uncertain futures and focusing resources on essential areas.

3.2.3 Production and Operations

This involves managing the processes and activities related to producing goods or delivering services. Areas to keep in mind are risk management and inventory management and focus on supply chain management. Strategies related to production and operations are identifying and minimizing risks in the supply chain, utilizing a Just-in-Time (JIT) strategy to ensure efficient use of space and streamline product rotation and using local companies to reduce supply chain risks and support the community.

3.2.4 Process Management

This refers to optimizing internal processes and workflows to improve efficiency and effectiveness. Strategies related to process management are engaging employees in a variety of tasks to discover hidden talents and enhance productivity with employee empowerment. Ensuring communication and transparency where information about

problems flows throughout the organization to facilitate quick decision-making and problem-solving and adapting operational processes to comply with health and safety regulations, such as developing health products like masks.

By aligning specific strategies with these categories, sports organizations can effectively address the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and enhance their resilience in the face of uncertainty. (Zahra et al 2022.)

Figure 3, Self-made figure Four survival strategies for sport organizations. (Zahra et al. 2022)



3.3 Safety measures

Flexibility and proactivity are important in creating a new strategy for the new era. The Australian Institute of Sport and the National Institute Network conducted research on how to continue to play sport safely, with athletes and supporters in mind. They created a framework for organisations. After the initial lock downs, it was important to design

procedures that would allow organisations to continue working. These plans had to be considered, among other things, what exercises athletes could do at home. How potential contact situations could be minimised and how as few athletes as possible would do exercises together. More cleaning of training equipment and common areas and limited sharing of equipment were introduced. Access to hand washing was ensured and gloves were made available. It was difficult for teams to maintain team spirit as locker room life was minimal. "Get in, train and get out" was a familiar phrase that put an end to hanging out together and, for example, eating together. (David Hughes et al 2020) The risk of infection was already high for professional athletes without spectators. Athletes preparing for the Tokyo Olympics had to rebalance and reorganise their training patterns to reduce the risk of infection. The use of masks was explored as a solution, but the increased strain on the body reduced performance, mostly due to lack of oxygen. Showering was also restricted because the humidity was seen as a risk of infection. Staff quarantines were also the norm. (Ashley Ying-Ying Wong et al 2020.)

In football, for example, numerous measures were also taken. Top athletes are physically fit and the coronavirus was not considered dangerous, so they tried to get through the season. In Germany, the maximum number of people allowed in the stadium during an event was 300. Balls were disinfected, there were a maximum of four ball boys, fans were changed from hugging to elbow knocking and players on the bench had to wear a mask. (Hammerschmidt et al 2021.)

According to a study carried out in Spain, Real Madrid introduced a three-point security policy. The first was to minimize contact and create bubbles and set a maximum number of people per bubble. The second was to ensure the health of the players by testing Covid-19 three times a week and to impose a mask requirement. Only a certain number of players were allowed in the training areas. Players were also asked to eat at home, for example. In the third step, once the virus had already spread, the aim was to quickly clear all close contacts and to maintain quarantine. (Mihic et al 2022.)

Ross Brawn, one of the leading figures in the F1 series, the key factor for the F1 series was to create a safe environment against Covid. Every person on the track wore a mask and on top of that you created a 'bubble' of people to work with. The bubble contained between 1 and 12 people. The stables also had to reduce their pit crew to 80 people. Coronavirus tests were done every 5 days. There were extremely few infections and

with the exception of a few drivers, everyone made it through the full season. The drivers had to live in a bubble for most of the year. (Perkes 2020.)

3.4 How the sport organizations can be more sustainable and have the needed resilience in the future?

As a result of the pandemic, fan engagement is increasingly taking place on digital media. The development of virtual experiences, such as live-streamed events, interactive fan engagement activities, and digital products, could be a sustainable strategy. Embrace innovation and technology to enhance the fan experience, optimize operations, and drive revenue growth. Invest in digital platforms, data analytics, and immersive technologies to engage fans, streamline processes, and unlock new opportunities for monetization. (Mastromartino et al 2021.)

Integrate sustainability and social responsibility into your organization's mission and operations. Implement eco-friendly practices, support community initiatives, and champion diversity and inclusion to create positive social impact and contribute to a more sustainable future. Navigating through new laws and requirements from the people will be easier if included in new strategy. (Silva et al 2022.)

Strengthen relationships with fans, sponsors, and local communities to rebuild trust and loyalty. From 10 March 2020, there was talk of suspending sport as the virus spread to well-known actors and athletes. Over the next 72 hours, many series were stopped on a rapid timetable (Brody J. Ruihley et al p.289). Sport lives and breathes on supporters. The loudness and colourfulness of the stands create a unique atmosphere, which in itself is worth seeing. It was difficult to keep supporters involved in the sport because of assembly restrictions. However, different strategies had to be adopted and created for the future. Maintaining supporters' confidence by refraining from using means for immediate financial gain, such as raising prices. Participating in non-profit and charitable events such as the distribution of free face masks. Sports equipment suppliers and providers of certain services and goods worked to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, for example by switching from the manufacture of sportswear to face masks and from sports food supplements to disinfectants. Rapid solutions were needed to manage the crisis. Where necessary, sports halls, venues and dormitories were made

available for quarantine and patient care. In addition, other businesses affected by the interest rate were supported through the deferral of customer debt payments and other measures. Traditional advertising was reduced and funds were allocated to raising public awareness of the interest rate virus. The internet was also used in a new way to reach the target audience. Free guides and online courses were created for customers to better connect with them. (Sadeqi-Aranil et al. 2022) Many concrete measures were taken for the F1 series. Improving the product played a major role in the future of the F1 series. The former owner of the series, Bernie Ecclestone, had long dominated the F1 series and under his leadership the sport could no longer develop and the management needed fresh ideas. The sport had lost its following as the older generation could no longer be retained and the new generation could not be attracted due to the evolution of the sport had not gone forward (Shields 2020). The American company Liberty Media bought the rights to the series and they started a new era for the sport. Proactivity to secure the future of the sport was the most obvious change. To sum up fan engagement, organizations need to take follow action. Launch targeted marketing campaigns, community initiatives, and fan engagement activities to reconnect with audiences and demonstrate your commitment to their well-being. Loyal fans are the basement of the organizations future. (Maquire 2021.) F1 also introduces Netflix series Drive to Survive. It is a documentary series that offers an in-depth look behind the scenes of the Formula One (F1) World Championship. Produced by Netflix and first released in 2019 (2018 season), the series has gained significant popularity for providing an intimate and dramatic portrayal of the lives of Formula One teams, drivers and key personalities. (Ralston 2024) The series is aimed at audiences who have not previously followed the sport. The series has been successful in attracting new paying audiences to its events (Danne 2022). The show has been successful especially in the Americas.

Cultivate a culture of adaptability and resilience within your organization to navigate uncertainty and thrive in the face of challenges. Foster collaboration, creativity, and agility among team members to respond effectively to changing circumstances and capitalize on emerging opportunities. Be proactive! (Escamilla-Fajardo et al 2020.)

Forge strategic partnerships with other organizations, industry stakeholders, and government agencies to share resources, expertise, and best practices. Collaborate on joint initiatives, research projects, and advocacy efforts to drive innovation and collective impact in the sports industry. Regularly evaluate the effectiveness of your

strategies and initiatives through performance metrics, stakeholder feedback, and market analysis. Continuously iterate and refine your approach based on insights gained to stay agile and competitive in a rapidly evolving environment. Always search for new ways to increase income. By embracing these strategies and principles, sport organizations can navigate the challenges of the post-COVID-19 era and emerge stronger, more resilient, and better positioned for long-term success.

4 Conclusion

The financial implications of the pandemic have underscored the vulnerability of sports organizations to global crises. The significant revenue losses due to canceled events, diminished sponsorships, and reduced media rights have highlighted the need for robust financial planning and diversification of revenue streams within the sports industry. The pandemic has necessitated a rapid re-evaluation of traditional operational models within sports organizations. The successful implementation of safety measures, virtual competitions, and adjusted competition calendars exemplifies the sector's ability to adapt to changing circumstances while prioritizing the health and safety of athletes, staff, and fans. Shift towards digital platforms and esports as alternatives for fan engagement during the pandemic signifies a transformation in the relationship between sports entities and their audiences. The adoption of virtual experiences and interactive digital content has opened new avenues for maintaining fan loyalty and expanding reach. Covid-19 pandemic has magnified socio-economic disparities within sports, particularly affecting youth sports and community-based programs. The financial and psychological ramifications on lower-income families and small clubs call for a more inclusive approach to sports development and support.

The rise of digitalization and esports during the pandemic is likely to have lasting effects on the sports industry. As organizations recognize the potential of digital platforms for fan engagement and revenue generation, a more integrated approach to esports and traditional sports is anticipated. Covid-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of sustainability and social responsibility in sports. Future strategies are expected to increasingly incorporate eco-friendly practices, community support initiatives, and measures to promote diversity and inclusion. The experiences gleaned from navigating the pandemic will inform future preparedness and resilience-building within sports organizations. Emphasizing flexibility, strategic financial management, and innovation will be key to mitigating the impacts of future crises.

The global nature of the pandemic's impact suggests a need for increased collaboration and knowledge-sharing among sports organizations, governing bodies, and stakeholders worldwide. Building a more interconnected and supportive sports ecosystem can enhance collective resilience and drive positive change.

In conclusion, the Covid-19 pandemic has presented significant challenges to the sports industry, but it has also catalysed change, innovation, and a rethinking of traditional paradigms. As the world emerges from the pandemic, sports organizations are poised to navigate a transformed landscape with enhanced resilience, a deeper commitment to social responsibility, and an embrace of digital and technological advancements. The future of sports lies in leveraging the lessons learned during the pandemic to foster a more sustainable, inclusive, and dynamic industry.

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