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Guest editorial

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**Exploring the future of management – best papers from the Managing Sport
SIG at the European Academy of Management (EURAM) annual meeting in
Lisbon 2019**

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Editorial SBM Special Issue EURAM 2019 Lisbon

Exploring the future of management – Best papers from the Managing Sport SIG at the European Academy of Management (EURAM) Annual Meeting in Lisbon 2019

This edition of the EURAM Managing Sport SIG special issue covers themes that seem even more important today than they seemed to be before the world was caught in an enduring pandemic. We have selected four high quality submissions from a total of 29 papers submitted to the Managing Sport SIG in 2019. The four articles of this special issue deal with eSports, re-engaging health club members, professional football club management, and competitive intensity in sports leagues. Why are these themes more relevant than ever before?

I do not have to explain it, eSports is a rising star in the world of sport business and economy. Statista calculated the global eSports market value at just under one billion U.S. dollars. Hence, what could be better placed than a paper on eSports to open this special issue: *Predicting soccer consumption: do eSports matter? Empirical insights from a machine learning approach*. The authors Emanuele Lettieri and Carlotta Orsenigo examine the relationship between sports and eSports by studying the influence of eSports consumption on traditional sport spectacle consumption (e.g., live matches in the stadium, watching soccer matches on TV, merchandising sales) in the case of soccer. Interestingly, the authors find that there is a positive effect between the degree of playing sport-related eSports and traditional soccer consumption and there is a negative effect between the degree of playing non-sport related eSports and traditional soccer consumption.

In a world where fitness and health clubs worry about being able to keep the doors open and a significant period of closed doors during lock down periods around the globe in 2020, it is important to think about how to keep fitness goers engaged. The second paper looks at this question in “normal times” and is entitled: *Incentivising and Re-Engaging Lapsed Health Club Members*. The authors of this paper Teresa Hurley, Corinne Faure and Seamus Kelly investigate re-engagement intentions and re-engagement behaviour of lapsed health club members. The study identifies that price is the most influential incentive

for promoting re-engagement intentions while gift tokens had much lower significance to re-engage lapsed health club members.

In a moment where professional sport has to cope with significant revenue cuts because “business as usual” is not any longer possible (e.g., following the regular schedule of the competition, having spectators watching matches in the stadium), it is even more relevant to have a professional club management relying on key performance indicators. The third paper develops and evaluates a new evaluation tool for the quality of management in professional football clubs. The title of this paper is: *Management Quality of Professional Football Clubs: The Football Management (FoMa) Q-Score 2018*. The authors Henning Zülch, Moritz Palme, and Sébastien Jost establish a framework that comprehensively assesses management quality in professional management clubs. The authors identify the following four key dimensions: sporting success, financial performance, fan welfare maximisation, and leadership & governance. A longitudinal analysis of the management quality of German professional football clubs using different key performance indicators serves as test for the new framework

Finally, the fourth paper for this Special issue stays in the arena of football. While many sports leagues had to put on hold their regular competitions and big sport events had to be postponed or cancelled during the various lock downs, the question about competitive balance in the landscape of the ever growing offer of sports competitions is more than topical. The title of the last paper of this Special Issue is title *Measuring competitive intensity in sports leagues* by Fabio Wagner, Holger Preuss and Thomas Könecke. The authors decrypt the mysteries around major European football competitions and their competitive intensity by developing a new method to measure competitive intensity and applying it to the German Bundesliga. This allows organisers of sports leagues to better understand and assess the level of intensity of different major competitions and sub-competitions. I am glad to mention that this paper was the Runner-up for the Best Paper Award. Furthermore, to finalise this Special Issue, it is my pleasure to reiterate the strong bonds that the Managing Sport SIG has established with the Emerald Group Publishing and more specifically with the Sport, Business, and Management (SBM) journal. It is a

great opportunity for the SIG to be able to sponsor SIG awards and provide a platform for cutting-edge research in this annual special issue.

At the hour of writing this editorial we are preparing for the first virtual EURAM conference ever. Many other conferences, if not all, had to go virtual or be postponed or cancelled. My only closing word for this editorial is that really wish to be able to meet you, the members and friends of the Managing Sport SIG again in person next year at the EURAM conference in Montréal or elsewhere. Until then, stay safe, stay at home! And do not forget to stay tuned by following us on the social media (Facebook: [@euramsportsig](#) ; Twitter: [@sportEURAM](#)).

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