AUSSIE SPORT—問題点の検討—

AUSSIE SPORT — EXAMINATION OF ITS QUESTIONABLE EFFECTIVENESS —

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Introduction

AUSSIE SPORTS was introduced in 1986 as an initiative of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC), operating to reinforce an ethos of ‘sport for all’ and ‘fair play’. Since its implementation fifteen years ago, an abundance of questions and issues has been raised by numerous vested interest groups. The original objectives and nature of the AUSSIE SPORT program have transformed somewhat in an attempt to cater for these changing demands. This paper aims to briefly describe the circumstances leading to the development of the AUSSIE SPORT program, to outline its ideals and to address the most significant arguments that have supported and questioned the success of its implementation.

A realisation that something was drastically lacking on the Australian sporting front occurred in 1976. Tragedy struck at the 21st Olympiad. This nation, Australia, which had always prided it as boasting strong sporting traditions, had for the first time in the history of the Modern Olympic Games, failed to secure a single gold medal. Understandably, the Australian public were outraged and sought answers from the federal government.

Understandably, the Australian public were outraged and sought answers from the federal government. The head coach of the Australian track and field team, John Daily (1990), wrote from Montreal an open letter to the sporting community appealing for a more professional approach.

... Australia needs a restructured system of national sport modelled on Canada and Europe, which seeks out the meagre talent of the country, cultivates and encourages it then provides opportunities for its development in international arenas preparatory to the Olympic Games... If Australia wishes her athletes simple to participate regardless of the results, then there must be no regrets if there are no medals. If success is demanded then Australia must pick up the bill.

As s result, the Australian Institute of Sport (AIS) was born in late 1981, where the talents of Australia’s sporting elite could be truly nurtured. The long-held belief that top Australian athletes would simply emerge naturally had been proven untrue (Brown, 1986). As Daily appealed above, Professional moves had to be made to identify, develop and support the potential of our sports men and women. At the same time, concern was expressed that the AIS, although extremely valuable, really was
only a ‘here and now’ solution, merely band-aiding the effect of the 1976 Olympic disaster. It became apparent that a broad-based sport participation program should be developed to counteract a number of rising concerns.

The answer from the federal government was the establishment of the Australian Sports Commission (ASC) to attempt to unite all efforts to salvage Australia’s sporting grace. The ASC became the Australian government’s principal authority responsible for increasing the co-ordination and effectiveness of sport development policies and programs (including participation programs) in September of 1984.2

From the beginning, ASC has placed development of youth sports in the most important policy and developed a ‘Children in Sport Committee’ to handle proceedings. Because it was felt that talent identification should begin earlier and researches about the sports activities and fitness of young Australians reinforced the need to improve the quantity and quality of youth participation in physical activity. (Orlick and Botterill, 1975. Parkin, 1980. Watson and Gibson, 1981. Robertson, 1981. Brown, 1986). Moreover, the increasing emergence of undesirable trends in both school and club support had been noted. Many children undergoing the transition from primary to secondary education were generally deficient in basic motor skills, or possessed only sports-specific skills. Something had to be done to improve the quality of Australian children’s total sport experience. Similarly, sporting attitudes needed to be rectified, as too often a ‘win-at-all-costs’ philosophy was surfacing in children’s sport - a reflection of adult tendencies.

The ASC’s Children in Sport Committee was responsible for attending to these matters and their efforts culminated in the launching of the national AUSSIE SPORTS program in April, 1986.

What is AUSSIE SPORT? 3

The AUSSIE SPORTS program focuses on children in their last three years of primary school. Existing adult sports are modified so as the rules, equipment and playing areas are more suited to the developmental equalities of the child. Importantly, the program also targets coaches and teachers responsible for the organisation and running of school and community sport.

Increased government funding for sport in Australia in 1989 enabled extension of the AUSSIE SPORTS program to deal with sport of 13 to 18 years old. This new approach was known as AUSSIE SPORT, which upheld the motto of ‘sport for all’ and strove to promote equal opportunity - something believed to be lacking in the existing school sport profile.

The objectives of AUSSIE SPORT are:

To provide leadership and encourage increased quality and enjoyable sport participation at the school and community level, especially among young Australians, by contributing to:
* The promotion of the importance of sport as an option for an active life-style
* The improvement of the place of sports education in the education curriculum
* An improved and integrated structure/organisation of sport for young people
* Development of appropriate levels of sport competition and fair play attitudes
* Greater local community responsibility for enhancing sports delivery
* The development of participants’ sports-related skills
* Greater equality of opportunity and access to sports activities
* The development of leadership opportunities through sport
* Increased numbers of educated sports instructors
* The enhancement of volunteerism in sports

(ASC, 1985a)

According to ASC (1986b),

AUSSIE SPORTS is a program of sports education developed by the commission. It focuses especially on children in their last three years of primary school, but has immediate applications for children of other age groups, parents, teachers and coaches.

The two major aims of the program are stated by Hon. John Brown (1986), Minister for Sport, Recreation and Tourism, at the April 22, 1986, launch of AUSSIE SPORTS, are as follow:

This program will play its important part in building a pool of talented, skilled and dedicated young people who have the determination to go on and do us proud... If we are to do something about the sad fitness statistics, if we are to really get this nation fit, we must start with our children... I believe the AUSSIE SPORTS program has the capacity to get on and do something about both those challenges.

It seems the government priority of talent identification, prominent in 1986, has been omitted from the official objectives written after the increase in funding in 1989. (ASC, 1996) Have the priorities changed, or is it hoped this will be an unstated outcome?

Although the ideals advocated by AUSSIE SPORT have been accepted and praised by many, a great deal of scepticism regarding its success has also been voiced.

Discussion — The questionable effectiveness of AUSSIE SPORT

To put the whole issue of AUSSIE SPORT’s achievements into an ordered perspective, it is necessary to address the problems encountered within school PE in the past and to evaluate the measures adopted to correct these.

Options of sport and PE as ‘worthwhile knowledge’ have characteristically wavered throughout time. The place of sport and PE within the education curriculum has traditionally been the source of much controversy. It would appear, however, that PE and sport have finally cemented a stable position within the curriculum, even if it
is assigned a lower status than traditionally more academic subjects. This matter of diminished status is held responsible for the inherent problems of the subject area.

An unfavourable PE specialist to pupil ratio is the point of greatest concern and a stimulus of career pressures reported by the specialist. A ratio of one specialist to one thousand pupils existed in the early eighties. (Kirk, et al., 1988)

Many specialist physical educators are itinerant in nature, working a network of schools and not really belonging to anyone in particular. This circumstance necessitates reliance upon untrained generalist teachers to administer supplementary lessons in the absence of the specialist. Additional work is therefore necessary on the part of the specialist to supply resources for these generalists and to avail themselves in a consultatory role.

The most condemning discovery, however, was the allocation of responsibilities between generalists and specialists. As aptly reported by these researchers:

There are important historical and organisational constraints built into any social situation that will inevitably affect the implementation of new practices and ideas. (Kirk, et al., 1988)

These constraints to which Kirk, et al. (1988) refer are the perceptions and fulfilment of teaching roles. The consultatory role assigned to the PE specialist is made almost impossible by the shared demands of his/her school network and the unreasonable dependence of generalist staff on his/her expertise.

Hesitation of generalist to take responsibility for skills instruction has ultimately resulted in an ineffective program and unsatisfactory attainment of goals. This hesitation stems from a lack of confidence, competence, and unfavourable or absence of, personal experience in physical education. This too often manifests itself in an expression of outright distaste for teaching this subject area.

According to Munroe and Hastie (1989), AUSSIE SPORT has experienced similar trends. Concern over failure to gain the full benefit from the program’s potential has been attributed to lack of background knowledge and direction of the generalist.

A particular teacher reflects common feeling by stating:

... the program offers limited advantages at the moment, mainly because we are not trained in the games. It is difficult to take hockey and soccer if you know nothing about them. (Munroe and Hastie, 1989)

The end result is a lack of continuity in education for both teachers and pupils, and poor distribution of expertise and attention.

For reasons unknown, PE has had problems with sexist and elitist overtones, where males and students displaying talent receive overt favouritism. Given the circumstances, one can appreciate that the school physical experience of many students is an unpleasant one and has deterred many from voluntarily pursuing sport. As mentioned earlier, the physical fitness of Australian youth has provided
cause enough for concern without their educational experience in the physical realm 
operating to deteriorate the situation further.

In the hope of creating a more enjoyable physical experience, improving student 
fitness and skill, and relieving pressure on the PE specialist, the Daily 15/30 PE 
program was promoted by the Queensland Education Department in the early 
eighties. Like AUSSIE SPORT, Daily 15/30 is a generalist-based program, with the PE 
specialist mainly playing the role of a co-ordinator. The objectives and benefits of this 
program can be found in Appendix 1.

The comprehensive 1987 study undertaken by Kirk, Colquhoun and Gore 
uncovered findings regarding Daily 15/30 that caused one to question the success of 
such generalist-based programs as this and AUSSIE SPORTS.

As an aside, the lobbying of Daily 15/30 that supporters for physical activity on a 
daily basis in schools was not widely accepted - a further reflection of the general 
perception of many that physical activity is not of educational value in itself. (Kirk, et 
al., 1988)

In this particular case study it was usual practice for the specialist to supply an 
extensive resource kit for the generalist’s utilisation, yet from such reports one could 
deduce this is not adequate.

In the light of continued reports of this type, and despite efforts of the ASC to 
make the generalist’s role easier by publications of resources such as activity manuals; 
‘AUSSIE SPORTS Action’, ‘Modified Sport’ and ‘Sport It’, one could guess the lack 
of knowledge expressed is an unjustified excuse. Harsh, maybe. Damaging 
statements by generalists such as “it [AUSSIE SPORT] is not another curriculum 
area I want responsibility for!” (Munroe and Hastie, 1989), do little to render the above 
assumption untrue.

The conclusion of Kirk, et al., following their 1989 analysis of Daily 15/30 can 
likewise be applied to the AUSSIE SPORT program:

Once located in a particular organisational setting, in this case, the Queensland 
educational system, even the quality of the materials does not guarantee that they alone 
can bring about good practice. (Kirk, et al., 1989a)

Improved access to PE specialist for assistance seems imperative. Conferences 
have been held every year since 1989, to discuss moves to improve the specialist to 
pupil ratio in Australian primary schools. Although the recommendation for a PE 
specialist in every school was enthusiastically accepted, further action is still 
impending.

It is disturbing to read opposing arguments of the likes of Ron Burns’ comments 
in the Winter 1992 Sport Report. Burns, a former assistant principal and past president 
of the Australian Primary School Association, strongly rejects this recommendation, 
referring to it as “sacred nonsense”, an unwelcome disruption to the “holistic” 
delivery of primary education and unrealistic due to the associated expense. (Burns, 
1992)
It is with regard to this subject of expense that many find the most legitimate
grounds on which to question the effective of AUSSIE SPORT.

Substantial financial outlay has been necessary to formulate, implement and
promote the AUSSIE SPORT program. To quote the informal figure disclosed by Mr.
Jeff Wood, Queensland State Co-ordinator of AUSSIE SPORT, $14 million has been
allocated to AUSSIE SPORT during the last three years period to 1992. Many feel
these funds would have been more efficiently utilised by improving the existing
system of PE, modifying the Daily 15/30 program and improving the approach to
specialist classes.5 The answer to this will never be revealed and opinion on the
subject will remain just that - an unproven opinion.

Nevertheless, those upholding this point of view have criticised AUSSIE SPORT’s
marketing strategy, believing it was and is rather extravagant. The ASC promoted the
program through an upbeat television advertising campaign targeting Australian
youth and a vast array of attractive brochures made broad, simple and practical, in an
attempt to dispel the fear of the generalist teacher. Success has been granted as far as
recruiting participants, but as the earlier discussion indicated, generalists’ perceptions
are not as healthy as desired.

Considerable funds have in turn been concentrated on solving this dilemma.
Level 0, non-accredited coaching courses, have been introduced to encourage
generalists to attain greater insight into the field of PE and enhance their physical
competence. Attendance of in-service days has been advised to further supplement
the generalists’ skills. The success of these endeavours can also be viewed with some
doubt.

The ASC’s personal analysts, Clough and Trail, although very optimistic in
outlook, report disturbing statistics pertaining to attendance at the preparatory
courses. Interviews were conducted with 5745 teachers from Australian primary
schools at the end of 1991. Results revealed that only 12.75% of the generalist
teachers possessed at minimum a Level 0 coaching certificate, and just as alarmingly,
a mere 13.6% had attended in-service education in the previous 12 months, in the 1991
school year (Clough and Trail, 1992).6

Additionally, state co-ordinators receive an average salary of $10,706.45 per
annum, with a total yearly outlay of $74,945. These figures quoted are based on the
1986 ASC report presented to Parliament.7 Many consider this expense clearly
unnecessary and are feeling the position itself would be uncalled for if the approach
to improve the compatibility between the current system and the newfound needs
had been adopted. With the glossy exterior removed, do these improvements in the PE
system truly warrant the associated financial expenditure on AUSSIE SPORT? Again
the answer to this question remains a personal opinion.

One can’t help wondering what sort of condition school physical education would
be in if efforts were originally united under on program, channelling funding and
resources in a single direction.

All financial considerations aside, one has to acknowledge the positive
achievements of the AUSSIE SPORT program. Much has been done to determine the
expectations and needs of the child and to optimise these by implementing compatible sporting programs. Roles other than the once all-important ‘participation’ have been highlighted. A prime example is the CAPS sub-program that encourages youth to pursue other avenues such as coaching. Co-ordination of the school-community link for youth sport has been greatly improved through the efforts of AUSSIE SPORT personnel.

Regardless of whether one considers AUSSIE SPORT to be conducive to a worthwhile school physical education experience, it is high time priority is given to the welfare of the child - not promoting the interests of sport or any other sectional group in Australian society.

Appendix 1.
WHAT IS 15/30 PHYSICAL EDUCATION?

Daily physical education is fitness and skill based activity program. The fitness section of fifteen minutes each day involves vigorous activity and is designed to increase the child’s cardio-respiratory efficiency. The skill section of thirty minutes each day is designed to give experience in a variety of physical activities, which may include gymnastics, athletics, ball handling, swimming, or skills selected by the class teacher. The program is known in Queensland as the Daily 15/30 program.

The program aims to fulfil the objective of physical education as outlined by the Queensland Health and Physical Education for Primary Schools Curriculum Guide. These being
- To develop physical fitness
- To develop proficiency in useful and satisfying physical skills
- To develop body awareness and control
- To develop social skills
- To attitudes and practices for health living

The program aim to provide experience in fitness and healthy living and to provide children with the physical skills needed for participation in leisure time activities.

WHO CONDUCTS THE DAILY 15/30 PROGRAM?

It is important to emphasise that Daily 15/30 program is carried out by classroom teachers who are responsible for the development of the program. A co-ordinator is necessary to establish and maintain the program in schools. Physical education teachers stationed at schools may fulfil this role.
WHAT BENEFITS ARE GAINED BY DOING A DAILY 15/30 PROGRAM?

Benefits of daily physical education programs already operating in Queensland have been reported by teachers. Here is a summary of positive factors they have observed:

* Children are more eager to attempt new activities.
* Children show increased responsibility in the care of equipment.
* Children practice self-discipline skills.
* Children’s attitudes to school are improved.
* Children are less critical of the lack of ability of others and urge them on to greater efforts.
* Children develop a more personal awareness of others.
* Children gain confidence and want to become more involved in activity.
* Children with poor academic achievement gain in self-esteem.
* Children are more sociable.
* Children develop a positive attitude towards daily physical activity.
* Children participate in school Athletics carnivals to a greater extent and with few traumas.
* Teacher/pupil interaction favourably affected.

Notes

1. This is a paper I read on a monthly academic meeting held at Department of Human Movement Studies, University of Queensland in July of 1999.
2. In August 1987 the government formalised their decision to rationalise federal assistance to Australian sport and the AIS merged with the Australian Sports Commission, which was to be the agency responsible for general sports participation as well as high performance sport.
3. In 1997, Active Australia was launched and implemented to encourage all Australians, young and old, to become involved in sport and other physical activities. Therefore, AUSSIE SPORT just placed a toolbox having many junior sports programs and resources in Active Australia. AUSSIE SPORT contributes to Active Australia by promoting a range of programs and resources to teachers, parents, coaches, local council personnel and others working with young people.
4. I visited some primary schools of Brisbane to observe PE and School Sports classes. I could find generalist teachers many times that merely became silent and were watching pupils without advise about skills or tactics. I also felt strongly that they were lack of knowledge and confidence on PE and sports teaching.
5. Additionally, in 1999 ASC allocated about $13 million for Participation Development including Active Australia program. And about 101 million were allocated Elite Athlete Development. What a big difference!
6. I can’t find the latest number of the generalist teachers possessed at minimum level coaching certification. But it would be possible to guess its trend by the number
of schools joined Active Australia Schools Network. According to Annual Report, 1998–1999, 1028 schools, 12.2% of all schools in Australia, were Active Australia Schools Network members. Therefore, I can suppose that the number of generalist teachers has not changed much.

7. Frankly speaking, yearly salary of professor in Australian University was around $80,000 in 1997.

References


