

RESEARCH SUMMARY

Sport4Me: A people focused approach to engaging Australian's in sport



PROF ROCHELLE EIME, PROF HANS WESTERBEEK,
DR SHANE PILL, DR LINDSEY REECE

Frontiers in Sports and Active Living, 2023

DOI:

https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fspor.2022.1087182/full?trk=public_post_main-feed-card_feed-article-content





Background

Traditional model of community club-based sport is fine for those, particularly children and youth, who enjoy the competitive focus and have the skills and commitment to play.

Societal preferences during leisure time have changed dramatically over recent decades. However, sports organisations have made limited progress in response to these changes in providing ways in which children and youth can participate outside the traditional competitive structures and environments.

Methods

In this paper the context of community club-based structures is reviewed, leading into an assessment of the associated impact of these structures on sport participation.

Children and youth's current motivations to play sport including what makes sport fun to play, are considered.

It is then demonstrated that the associations between motivations to play sport and the factors that contribute to fun and enjoyment, are often misaligned for many individuals, with a primary focus on competition-based structures to deliver community club sport.

Sport4Me is about flexible, inclusive, equitable sporting opportunities that focus on friends, fun, physical literacy and play

Sport4Me

Figure 1: Sport structures, motivations and what makes playing fun



Discussion

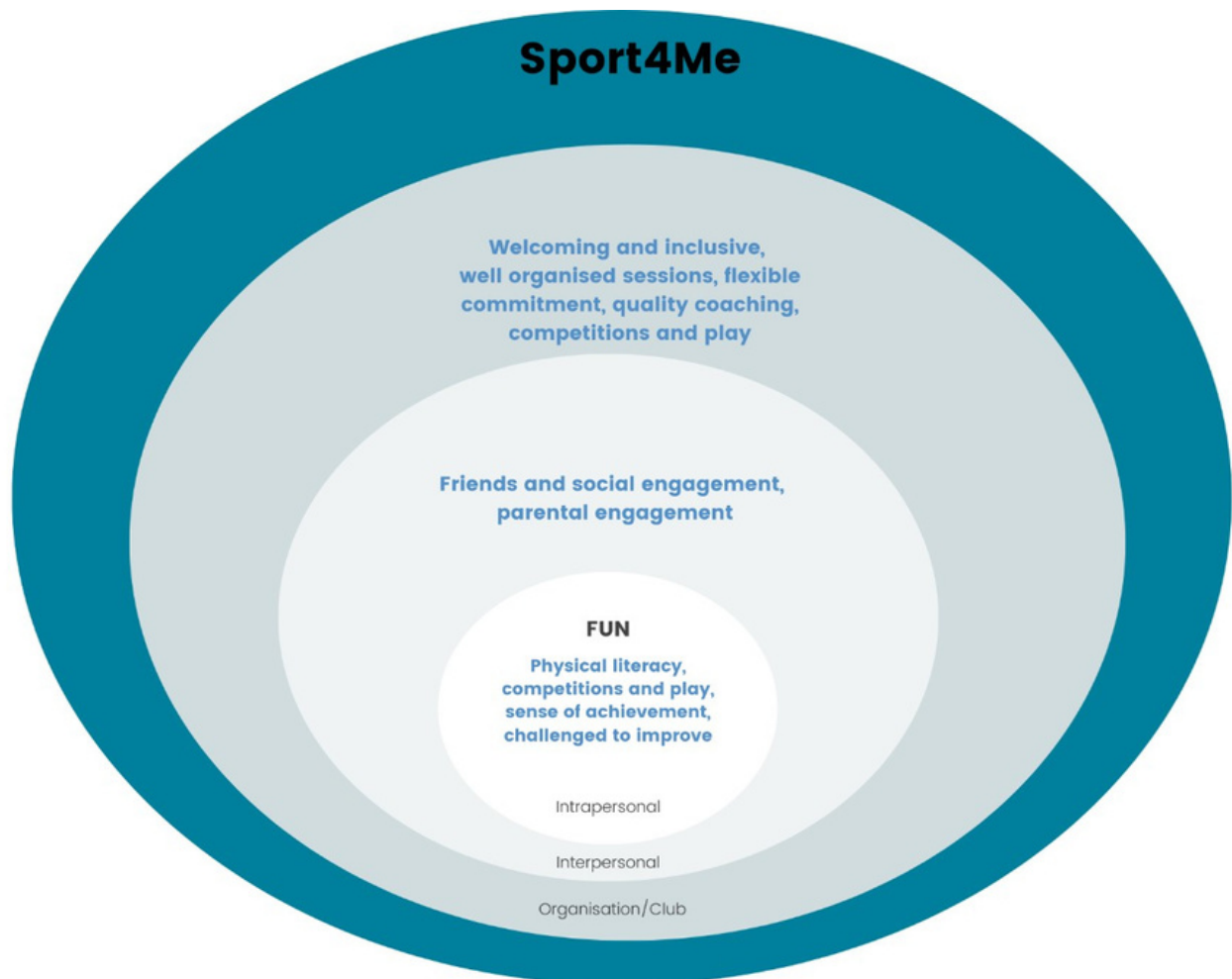
The Sport4Me model would complement the traditional competitive club-based model and afford participants more choice whilst fostering an environment that promotes lifelong involvement in sport.

The model will require structural and cultural changes to the sporting environment and include coaching practices.

Sport4Me is an evidence-based model, but it is not radical in its conceptualisation but rather, builds on previously proposed approaches, considers the needs and wants of potential sport participants and widens the scope of sport delivery.

Sport4Me conceptual model

Figure 2: Sport4Me conceptual model



Conclusion

A shift from extrinsic motivations and drivers such as winning, to intrinsic factors of fun and enjoyment has the potential to assist with not only participation and retention, but also has the potential to improve individual wellbeing.

The Sport4Me conceptual model has underlying principles that sports and/or community organisations can utilise in the development of participation, retention and re-engagement strategies and the implementation and delivery of a wider range of sport formats.