



SPORT | Issue No. 5 | *Recipe for success*

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What an amazing time of year January/early February is for sport in Australia, as sporting seasons get ever longer and as sports fight not only to win but for profile and participation and the consumer dollar.

Since the start of 2015 we have seen tennis at the Australian Open. Golf had the Aussie PGA, Jason Day won a tournament and Australians now hold the positions of four and five in the world. Cricket concluded the domestic Test Series and has started the World Cup, a four yearly event to crown the champions of one day cricket. Surfing has hosted major international events in Australia. Australia won the Asian Cup for the first time in football. Cycling had the Tour Down Under. AFL, Rugby League, Rugby Union are all playing trial games. Sportsmen are misbehaving. Netball is looking to launch its season and World Cup later this year. Triathlon, athletics, swimming, water polo, hockey, bowls, softball, baseball, basketball, gymnastics, martial arts and all other sports battle for recognition. Meanwhile in a place called the United States the Super Bowl delivered one of the most amazing finishes of all time.

All of this reminds me that the business of sport is getting bigger, tougher and, if possible, more competitive.

All of these sports in Australia are fighting for participation, attendance at matches, a TV audience and sponsorship, which relates directly to the level of support and interest.

The membership of the Queensland Federation of Sport totals 69 sports. One wonders in a nation of 25 million people whether all of these sports can continue to prosper and grow in such a competitive marketplace.

Once upon a time sporting seasons ran for about six months and sports stood aside politely to allow the other season sports to have their time in the sun. With markets and sponsors to feed and international sporting calendars, those days are gone. Presumably the law of the jungle will apply and the strong will survive and get

stronger and the weak, whilst not completely disappearing will stop growing and get weaker.

Sports administrators across the land, both in the professional and amateur game, are striving on a daily basis to ensure that their sport is one of the ones that will survive and prosper.

The Australian Sports Commission, through its governance principles, is encouraging sport to believe that the underpinning element which will determine whether they succeed or fail is the governance of their sport. I don't think it is quite as simple as that. Popularity in sport has a huge impact. A small sport with low participation and popularity, even with the best governance in the world, will struggle to prosper.

However, of those many sports I have mentioned above it is easy to point at times over the last 10 or 15 years where their sport has enjoyed good times and bad times. In many cases the governance of the sport, and by that I mean not just the board but the CEO and executive, have determined the destiny of the sport.

Sport results make a difference. If your team is winning, your stocks improve dramatically and in that respect I contrast the recent success of the Socceroos against the mixed success of the Wallabies.

To me, the recipe for success seems to be start with money (through good attendances, sponsorship and television deals), add excellent governance and management, and top it off with on-field, on-court, on-water results. That is what creates a successful Australian sport. Without any one of these elements, success will be difficult over an extended period.



John Mullins

Managing Partner

Mullins Lawyers

t +61 7 3224 0210

jmullins@mullinslaw.com.au