



On frozen ponds: The impact of climate change on hosting pond hockey tournaments



Sheranne Fairley*, Lisa Ruhanen, Hannah Lovegrove

The University of Queensland, Australia

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 7 January 2015

Received in revised form 28 February 2015

Accepted 11 March 2015

Available online 16 April 2015

Keywords:

Climate change

Event management

Sport tourism

Nostalgia

ABSTRACT

The case follows Scott Crowder, the founder of the Pond Hockey Classic, and details the challenges he confronts in organizing pond hockey tournaments. The case emphasizes the key issues of climate change and its impact on organizing an outdoor event which is reliant on arctic weather conditions that freeze large bodies of water, including lakes. The case also considers the implications and impacts of the unstable and unpredictable weather conditions on planning and managing events and on sport tourism.

© 2015 Sport Management Association of Australia and New Zealand. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

Teaching note

Established in 2009 on Lake Winnepesaukee, New Hampshire, USA, the Pond Hockey Classic is a pond hockey tournament played on a frozen lake. Since its inception, the Pond Hockey Classic has expanded to include five events spanning five different states: New Hampshire, Vermont, Montana, New York, and Philadelphia. The Pond Hockey Classic is now the largest organizer of pond hockey tournaments in North America. Although the tournament has experienced considerable growth and success, it is facing some significant challenges, which are sure to shape the future of the events.

The case follows Scott Crowder, the founder of the Pond Hockey Classic, and details the challenges he has confronted in organizing pond hockey tournaments. One of the key issues presented within this case study is the effect of climate change on the event. Three of the five tournaments are played on natural frozen lakes and frozen bodies of water, and are thus heavily dependent on arctic conditions. The lakes need to sufficiently freeze to a point on which it is safe to carve out hockey rinks and safely enable individuals to play on the ice surface. Scott has faced numerous challenges caused by the weather and has previously been forced to find alternative venues, and in some cases postpone or cancel the event. Despite the existence of several contingency plans for each tournament, these too are dependent on favorable arctic weather conditions.

Pond hockey is the foundation upon which modern day ice hockey was built. Despite the commercialization and relocation of ice hockey to indoor stadiums, pond hockey has experienced a resurgence in the past decade. In addition to the organized pond hockey events that have recently been established throughout North America, the National Hockey League (NHL) has also recognized the popularity of such events, and has consequently established its own series of outdoor hockey games. This case therefore highlights elements of nostalgia and its appeal in the sport tourism experience. The case is therefore designed for courses that cover the impacts of climate change, event management, sport tourism, and nostalgia.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +61 733460761.

E-mail address: s.fairley1@uq.edu.au (S. Fairley).

1. Climate change

Climate change has been labeled as one of the biggest challenges facing the tourism industry (UNWTO, 2008). The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) (1992), the peak international body on climate change, defines climate change as a change of climate which is attributed directly or indirectly to human activity that alters the composition of the global atmosphere and which is in addition to natural climate variability observed over comparable time periods.

The effects of climate change are well documented in terms of snow sports, such as skiing and snowboarding (Burakowski & Magnusson, 2012; Dawson & Havitz, 2011; Dawson & Scott, 2013; Scott, Dawson, & Jones, 2008). Mountainous regions in particular are expected to experience declines in snowfall, changes in water availability and loss of biodiversity (UNWTO, 2008). For many mountainous areas, recent years have seen the winters become shorter and the snow quality poorer. This is certainly the case across the Northeast U.S. where winters show the most rapid rate of warming over the past four decades (Burakowski, Wake, Braswell, & Brown, 2008), and ice-out dates on lakes across the region have been occurring earlier (Hodgkins, 2010, 2013; Hodgkins, James, & Huntington, 2002). Thus, in order to mitigate the likely effects of climate change, operators must adapt in response to the environmental changes (Gössling, Scott, Hall, Ceron, & Dubois, 2012). Some operators have taken to artificial snow making as a means of drawing skiers and snowboarders alike to their slopes. Although snowmaking is recognized as one of the most popular adaptive strategies in regard to climate change, it is not considered to be sustainable over the long term, with operators encouraged to implement more sustainable practices, such as year-round tourism activities including non-snow sports, as well as conferences and events (Pegg & Patterson, 2012; Walters & Ruhanen, 2013). While winter sports such as skiing and snowboarding are heavily reliant on snowmaking, pond hockey is dependent on colder temperatures and the ability of large bodies of water to freeze. Arguably, these factors may be difficult to address through human interventions.

Research on climate change commonly suggests that individuals, organizations and systems can adapt to, or mitigate against, climate change (Gössling et al., 2012). *Adaptation* refers to the ability of a system to adjust to a new climate normal (including climate variability and extremes), to take advantage of opportunities, or to cope with the consequences. Within the climate change literature, adaptation is linked to resilience, where resilience is defined as the capacity of a system to absorb (or adapt to) stress and reorganize and evolve to cope with the climate-related stresses that have been imposed on the system. A related concept is that of vulnerability which refers to the “degree to which geophysical, biological and socio-economic systems are susceptible to and unable to cope with, adverse impacts of climate change” (Garnaut, 2008; IPCC, 2007, p. 1). On the other hand, *mitigation* is any action taken to permanently eliminate or reduce the long-term risk and hazards of climate change to human life and property and generally refers to attempts to reduce greenhouse gases emitted into the atmosphere.

Much work has been undertaken on organizational adaptation (Linnenluecke, Griffiths, & Winn, 2011) which has considered organizational adaptation to changing industry structures or institutions, such as political, economic, regulatory, social, demographic and technological parameters (Griffiths & Zammuto, 2005). Generally, research has not considered the impact of changes in the natural environment, due to the assumption that environmental change occurs gradually and systematically (Linnenluecke et al., 2011). However, increasingly extreme weather events are resulting in large-scale changes of business conditions, resulting in large impacts on economies, industries and organizations.

Berkhout (2012) provides a useful typology of organizational adaptation strategies where he notes that the extent to which organizations implement adaptive actions is influenced by a process of perception, evaluation, enactment and learning but will be constrained by organizational capabilities, risk attitudes as well as the broader economic and institutional contexts in which the organization operates. As such Berkhout categorizes organizational adaptation strategies as:

- Do nothing (wait and see)
- Assess (risk assessment options)
- Reduce risk (manage or avoid risk)
- Share risk (offset or share risks)
- Diversify (diversification and/or expansion)

Climate adaptation strategies and mitigation efforts are both evident in the Pond Hockey case, with the sport highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. Future research on the sector is needed to ascertain just how resilient pond hockey (and its event organizers) is to the impacts of climate change. Students should be encouraged to reflect on the effects that climate change can have on weather dependent events. They can be asked to brainstorm potential strategies through which event organizers can attempt to mitigate the effects of climate change through their events, or at least ensure that the events will not be canceled. In order to do so, several questions can be directed toward the students:

1. How vulnerable is the Pond Hockey Classic to the changing weather conditions induced by climate change? How resilient is the Pond Hockey Classic to these effects?
2. Using Berkhout's (2012) typology of organizational adaptation strategies, consider and categorize the adaptive responses of Scott and the Pond Hockey Classic.
3. What adaptation options could be pursued in the case of the Pond Hockey Classic?

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/140811>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/140811>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)