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# The battle for the bid: Chicago 2016, No Games Chicago, and the lessons to be learned

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### ABSTRACT

This case provides information on the Chicago 2016 bid process and the efforts by No Games Chicago to prevent the city of Chicago from hosting the 2016 Olympics, and allows students to consider the bid process through a community development lens. After learning about the Chicago 2016 bid, students are asked to apply this information to a hypothetical bid organization, Houston 2028, and consider how to work with community organizations to maximize the chances of success for this bid. In 2009, Chicago lost the vote to host the 2016 Olympics, and after years of planning and campaigning, the loss came as a surprise and disappointment to many. One group that was not disappointed, though, was No Games Chicago, a vocal opposition group to the bid. No Games Chicago organized protests, public forums, media efforts and more in an effort to prevent the bid from being successful. After learning about the Chicago 2016 bid, students are asked to apply this information to a hypothetical bid organization, Houston 2028, and consider how to work with community organizations to maximize the chances of success for this bid.

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## Teaching note

This case provides information on the Chicago 2016 bid and No Games Chicago, a vocal opposition group, and allows undergraduate students to consider a mega-event bid from a community development perspective by having them apply the lessons from the Chicago 2016 bid to a hypothetical bid by Houston for the 2028 Olympics (“Houston 2028”). Instructors can use this case when covering social responsibility, community development, or event bidding topics in event management or sport development classes. More information on these key theoretical points is provided. Additionally, students will be able to review information from a past bid to develop strategies for working with communities during an event bid. Suggestions for further reading and sample discussion questions and activities for undergraduate students are provided.

The case first presents a hypothetical situation about an intern for a hypothetical bid by Houston for the 2028 Olympics. In presenting this situation, a brief background of the history of the failed Boston 2024 bid to develop an understanding of the difficulty of gaining public support is provided. The intern is tasked with researching the Chicago 2016 bid because Chicago was officially a candidate city for 2016, whereas the Boston bid was withdrawn before being announced by the International

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Olympic Committee (IOC) as a candidate city. Information about the Chicago 2016 Bid and the Organizing Committee, especially the controversial issues surrounding the bid, is presented next. Next, information is offered on the background of the No Games Chicago organization and the steps this organization took to increase awareness of the bid and reasons for opposing the bid; both in the Chicago community and to the City, Chicago 2016 and IOC officials. Finally, a brief evaluation of No Games Chicago's efforts is offered, from the No Games Chicago perspective.

When discussing the case and its application, students should first identify the various stakeholders and stakeholder perspectives of the Chicago 2016 bid. Although the case focuses on two main groups of stakeholders—Chicago 2016 and No Games Chicago—students should be able to identify other stakeholders such as the City of Chicago, potential investors and sponsors, and other community members. Finally, as future sport managers, students should be able to apply these concepts to situations that they may face in a work environment. As such, students are charged with considering how they can apply the lessons learned from the Chicago 2016 bid to a hypothetical Houston bid for the 2028 Olympics. As the bidding process for the 2028 Games will officially start in 2019, and there is increased pressure around the world to produce a socially responsible Olympic Games, a potential Houston 2028 bid would need to apply the lessons learned from Chicago 2016.

## 1. Event management concepts

Social responsibility, community development, and the event bidding process are all interrelated concepts. With increasing pressure for sport organizations to be socially responsible and the impact of events on local communities, the sport organization must plan for these during the bidding process. More information on each concept is provided below and a Further Reading list for each concept is provided at the end of the Teaching Note.

Social responsibility refers to “respecting the rights of others, being a responsible citizen and avoiding violent and destructive behaviors” (Ford, Wentzel, Wood, Stevens, & Siesfield, 1989, pp. 406–407). In sport, this is often applied to an organizational setting through corporate social responsibility, which can be defined as a “company’s commitment to minimizing or eliminating any harmful effects and maximizing its long-run beneficial impact on society” (Mohr, Webb, & Harris, 2001, p. 47). For the IOC, this has become particularly important as it has faced increasing scrutiny regarding the legacy and financial impact of hosting the Olympic Games.

Students should consider what social responsibility is and how it applies to the case. One activity that students could undertake to learn more about social responsibility is to find and present examples of social responsibility in sport, either as part of an online discussion board or in class. Small group or class discussion questions about social responsibility should include:

- How would you define social responsibility?
- How can sport organizations be socially responsible?
- Identify examples of social responsibility in sport. How do these examples impact your view of the organization?
- Why do you think there is increased pressure to be socially responsible?
- In what ways was Chicago 2016 acting in a socially responsible manner? In what ways could Chicago 2016 have improved their overall social responsibility?

Students should also consider the community development perspective. Community development refers to the process of improving the quality of a community, where a community can be a place, a set of relationships, or a collective political power (Chavis & Wandersman, 1990). In the past, mega-events such as the Olympics have developed a poor reputation when it comes to community development. The Games has been a mechanism used to prompt large-scale urban improvements to transportation, utilities, landscaping, hotels, and more (Chalkley & Essex, 1999). These efforts to improve infrastructure, however, often come at a cost to many members of those communities. As one example, in Atlanta, the implementation of the 1996 Olympics resulted in frustrated residents as low-income residents were relocated and revitalization efforts failed in other neighborhoods (Newman, 1999). Additionally, Olympic hosts, including Atlanta, have been left with under-utilized facilities and major debts (Chalkley & Essex, 1999). The history of the Olympics' impact on a city's development draws attention to the need for more thorough dialog with all stakeholders. For example, both the city of Chicago and No Games Chicago were stakeholders with an interest in improving the quality of the community, but had different tactics to go about improving the community. No Games Chicago felt its needs were not being met by Chicago 2016's plan in part because Chicago 2016 did not initiate community discussion until after No Games Chicago's efforts had become problematic for Chicago 2016.

Using stakeholder theory, students can analyze the various stakeholders' affected by Chicago 2016's plans. Stakeholders are the organization itself (in this case Chicago 2016) and any group or person that might be affected by that organization's decisions (Freeman, 1984). Stakeholder analysis is the formal process of identifying the various groups affected, identifying their potential impact, and developing strategies appropriate to anticipated stakeholder impact (Thoma & Chalip, 1996). In planning an event, organizing committees, such as Chicago 2016, must first identify specific stakeholder groups. This can be done through identifying generic categories (such as employees, clients, and competitors) or examining past Olympic bid campaigns. Organizing committees must then consider the power, legitimacy, and urgency of the stakeholder groups (Mitchell, Agle, & Wood, 1997; Parent, 2008). Power refers to the ability of the stakeholder to affect the outcome, legitimacy refers to the validity of the relationship between the organization and stakeholder, and urgency refers to the magnitude of

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