

**PROFESSIONALIZATION OF THE FINNISH VOLUNTARY SPORTS SECTOR**  
**CASE STUDY OF THE TENNIS CLUB OF JYVÄSKYLÄ 1993-2016**

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Case Study of The Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016

## **ABSTRACT**

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Professionalization of sports is an on-going phenomenon. Voluntary sports clubs have been based on the values of amateurism. Recently, the trend of professionalization has had effects on the voluntary sports sector. The main aim of the thesis is to explore, describe, understand, and highlight the development, changes, and challenges of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä (JTS) while moving towards professionalism from 1993 to 2016. At the end, the goal of the study is to enhance our understanding of the voluntary sports club's operational environment.

Qualitative research method, a case study, was used in this study. The data of the study was collected through semi-structured interviews with five interviewees. Interviewees represent the club's management from the whole study period starting from 1993. Archive materials, financial sheets and annual reports, of the club were also utilized in order to get a comprehensive outline of the research topic.

Results of the study indicate clear changes and developments of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä. Developments and signs of professionalism occurred especially through changed mentality, human resources, and operational environment. The results show that 1993-2002 was the time of amateurism and after that the club clearly moved towards professionalism. The change started in the late 1990s and early 2000s when the management of the club stated their willingness to move towards more professionalized activities. After that the club has put efforts in human resources and they managed to hire their first full-time employee in 2009. Also, the club has made improvements on training facilities since 2005 in a close cooperation with a limited company, the Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus. At the end, the interviewees of the study highlighted that they see the future of the club bright and positive, and they believed that the positive development trend will continue.

In the future, the researchers should continue to explore the Finnish voluntary sports sector from the sports club's perspective. The sector has leaned on the values of amateurism but obviously there are signs of professionalism as well. Since this study focuses on the management perspective, it would also be important to study the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä from different perspectives. Also, it would be beneficial to explore the Finnish Tennis Association in order to understand what is the mindset of the federation.

**Keywords:** Professionalism, Voluntary Sport Sector, Non-profit Sport Club, Tennis, Case Study

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

*"In the course of societal development towards modernization and rationalization, environmental pressures have pushed organizations to adapt their structures and practises to new standards notably to demonstrate modernity, rationality and accountability."*

*(Ruoranen, Klenk, Schlesinger, Bayle, Clausen, Galuque, & Nagel 2016, 55.)*

Recently, Finnish sports sectors have faced many challenges and problems which they need to figure out to continue their actions. Lately, media and influencers from the sports field have expressed issues on the difficulties, even bankruptcies, that sports clubs are facing on their operations. Finnish sports sector consists of three different sectors: public, private and voluntary sector. All of these sectors have their own valuable share in the Finnish sports culture.

The first Finnish sports club, a sailing club, was founded in 1856 (Itkonen 2002, 35). Since, Finnish sports culture has leaned and trusted on the values of amateurism. Sports clubs have operated and are still much operating on the voluntary basis which has its benefits and disadvantages. In recent years, professionalism and business-minded thinking have become reality in the voluntary sports sector as well. People are more and more demanding towards voluntary sports clubs and they expect to have good and professional service. Voluntary sports clubs are the backbone of the whole Finnish sports and physical activity culture. Therefore, it is very important to understand what has happened and what might happen in the future.

One might argue that the Finnish sports and physical activity culture started to really grow in the early 1900s. But it is important to understand that the development process started way before that. In Finland, sports and physical activity culture has a strong linkage to the society and to the civil movement (Itkonen 2000, 12). What happens outside of the sports sector shapes and guides the processes of the sports field. The rise of the Finnish civil activities go back to the late 18th century (Itkonen 2000, 13).

At the moment, the professionalization of sports is an on-going phenomenon. Are there recognizable factors in the voluntary sports sector which could explain the recent situation? And, are these symptoms pushing voluntary sports clubs towards professionalism?

## **1.1 Personal Interest**

Personally, I have been part of the Finnish voluntary sports sector in many roles. I have played, coached, volunteered and worked in many sports clubs. Recently, I have worked in marketing and management operations of a tennis club and a basketball club. In these roles, I have been able to witness operational demandings, changes, and challenges of the voluntary sports sector.

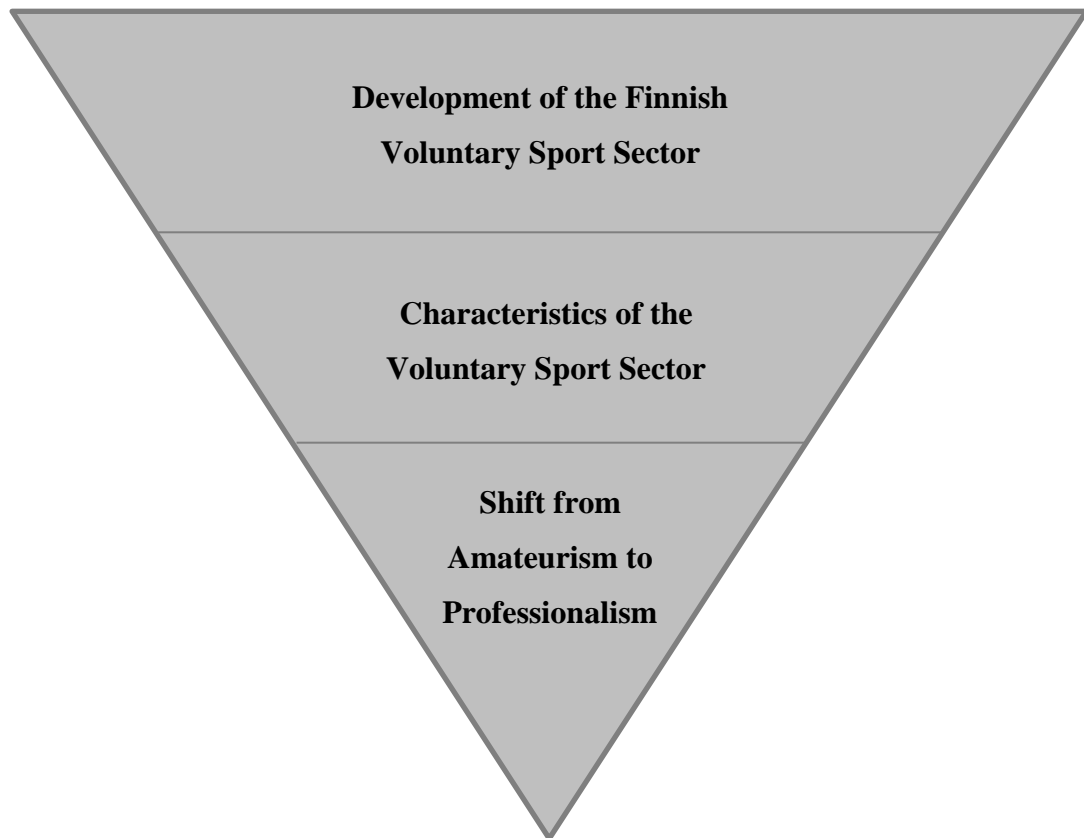
The main reason for choosing the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä as a research object is that I have been part of the club since 2011. I have been able to coach, volunteer, and work in the club. As a marketing coordinator of the club since 2015, I have recognized issues that indicate positive development of the club. Through that and my studies at the Sports Faculty of the University of Jyväskylä, I became interested in the different phases of the Finnish sports and physical activity culture, and professionalism.

In my opinion, professionalism is a strong trend in the Finnish voluntary sports sector at the moment. Finnish tennis field has not been studied that much and not at all regarding professionalism. The aim of the thesis is to explore, understand, and highlight changes and challenges of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä while moving towards professionalism from 1993 to 2016. At the end, the goal is that the study will enhance our understanding of the voluntary sports club's operational environment. Also, it will bring useful information for various stakeholders – at least for the Finnish tennis clubs and Finnish Tennis Association, academics, and voluntary sports sector as a whole.

## 1.2 Outline of the Thesis

The thesis consists of five major parts: introduction, research tasks and methodology, literature review, results, and conclusions.

The literature review will deepen the understanding of the characteristics and development of the Finnish voluntary sports sector, and professionalism. The literature review consists of the following parts: 1) Development of the Finnish Voluntary Sport Sector, 2) Characteristics of the Voluntary Sport Sector, and 3) Shift from Amateurism to Professionalism. The literature review will emphasize the Finnish voluntary sports sector comprehensively.



**Figure 1.** The structure of the literature review

The first part of the study will have a look on the different development stages of the Finnish physical activity and sports culture. The section starts with a brief overlook on the rise of the Finnish civil movement. It is crucial to understand that Finnish citizens have been and still are active in voluntary movements, like sports clubs. After that will be presented the most vital ages of the development of Finnish voluntary physical activity and sports movement. Itkonen (2002) has studied and recognized four different ages that are in the core of this section. The ages of Itkonen are combined with the most crucial development stages of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä in order to help readers understand the sociological and historical linkages of the club's activities and the societal actions.

Secondly, characteristics of the voluntary sports sector are presented. This research focuses on a voluntary-based sports club. Therefore, it is pivotal to understand what are the main characteristics of the voluntary sports sector and sports clubs. In order to get the comprehensive picture of the Finnish sports sector are two other sectors, public and private sports sector, presented. At the end of this section, the idea of using sports as a tool for different purposes, such as professionalism, is presented.

The final part of the literature review includes definitions of professionalism and factors that would indicate aspects of professional activities in a sports club setting. In this section, the theoretical framework and guideline of this study is also presented. Ruoranen, Klenk, Schlesinger, Bayle, Clausen, Giauque and Nagel (2016) studied professionalization on a federation level and they created a conceptual model to analyze professionalization in federations. Their model will be presented and it has been adapted in this study to describe and analyze professionalization of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä.

The leading thought of the literature review is to enhance readers' understanding of the development of the Finnish voluntary sports sector and its characteristics, and to provide specific information on professionalism. As these aspects are in the central role of this thesis. After the literature review, results and conclusions of the study are presented. Also, suggestions for future researches and limitations of the study are presented at the end.



## **2 RESEARCH TASK AND METHODOLOGY**

In this chapter, research task and methodology are presented. The section starts with the main aim and purpose of the study. Then qualitative research design and implementation of the study are presented. At the end, tennis as a research object will be discussed – through that readers are able to create a better knowledge of the sport before moving to the literature review.

### **2.1 Aim and Purpose of the Study**

The main aim of the thesis is to explore, describe, understand, and highlight the development, changes, and challenges of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä while moving towards professionalism from 1993 to 2016. At the end, the goal of the study is to enhance our understanding of the voluntary sports club's operational environment.

The Tennis Club of Jyväskylä, founded in 1932, is a traditional sports club in the city of Jyväskylä. During its existence it has faced many different situations that have shaped its actions and guided its development. In general, many sports clubs confront changes in their operational environment and they are forced to answer them. This study explores the development, changes, and challenges of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä from the management perspective. A case study of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016 will provide an in-depth analysis of the topic. The topic was narrowed down to this time period because of the interest of the researcher, earlier studies, and the accessibility of data. But it also highlights all the major turning points that have happened during the club's existence.

The following research questions are considered in order to reach the aim:

- 1) What kind of changes and challenges have occurred while moving towards professionalism in the club's operational environment in 1993-2016?

- 2) What kind of operations towards professionalism has the management of the club done during 1993-2016?

There is a need to understand the on-going change in the Finnish voluntary sports sector. This study provides valuable information for the whole Finnish voluntary sports sector, especially for the Finnish tennis field.

Through exploring a single specific case study, the research will provide valuable information for various stakeholders:

- The Tennis Club of Jyväskylä
- Finnish tennis field: Finnish Tennis Association and its member clubs
- Other voluntary sports organizations, especially sports clubs
- Academics

## 2.2 Qualitative Research

There are many different qualitative research approaches. One of the first steps for researchers is to decide which approach to utilize. Hancock, Ockleford, and Windridge (2007) list potential qualitative approaches, such as: ethnography, grounded theory, discourse analysis, conversation analysis, content analysis, and narrative analysis.

Qualitative research method, a case study, was used in this thesis. The purpose of the case study is to describe and explore, look for explanations, and gain deeper understanding of the phenomenon.

*“A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.” (Farquhar 2012, 5.)*

A case study research aims at enhancing understanding of a specific case or phenomenon, digging deep, and looking for explanations (Farquhar 2012, 8). In addition, Farquhar (2012) points out factors of a case study:

- 1) small number of units, sometimes only one
- 2) data collection and analysing on large and not predetermined factors
- 3) emphasis on naturally occurring features
- 4) data can be quantitative, qualitative, or both
- 5) understanding and theorizing through enfolding literature

All of the above mentioned factors are fulfilled in this study. Qualitative methods can describe and present different perspectives from participants to leaders. This factor is also important in this study, because interviews will be conducted from different stakeholders. A qualitative method, a case study, also enables research to engage interviewees in a detailed way in the process, it is flexible, and it represents and comprises different interests and values. In this case, interviewees were asked to express their own observations regarding changes and challenges in the club's operational environment in order to understand the phenomenon. (Farquhar 2012, 3-14 ; Simons 2009, 12-27.)

It was a rational choice to use a case study as the research approach in this study because the main aim of the paper is to explore and describe changes and challenges that would indicate professionalism in the operational environment of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016. My goal is to create a comprehensive outlook of the development of the club during the study period and a case study –approach fits nicely in this goal.

From a research point of view, Farquhar (2012) points out a valid issue regarding stakeholders of the study. In any research, there are lots of decisions to be made and a researcher is the one who has all the decision-making power. Therefore, the researcher should have self-confidence, trust on the research design, and on the whole study in general. But, the researcher should also identify the context and other stakeholders

influencing the study. According to Farquhar (2012), at least following stakeholders should be considered:

- audience
  - family
  - supervisory team
  - friends
  - cases
  - university
  - fellow students
  - employers/funders
- (Farquhar 2012, 2-3.)

The most important stakeholders in this research are the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä with its representatives (cases and employer), supervisory team, and the researcher.

Strengths of a case study approach are undisputed, but there are also limitations. Simons (2009) expresses potential weaknesses: data might be difficult to process, reports might end up too long and hard to understand, uncontrolled nature, and personal involvement of the researcher. These concerns need to be taken into account.

## **2.3 Implementation of the Study**

The Master's thesis process started in autumn 2016. Then the research topic was formed and through that the whole process started to develop. The following sections will highlight the data collection and analysis process, and the research process in general.

### **2.3.1 Data Collection and Analysis**

First, from the research point of view, it is very important to maintain consistency. Farquhar (2012) writes that consistency can be reached through using same vocabulary

and terms. Research objectives, data collection methods, analysis, and results presentation need to be stated clearly and in a systematic manner. Then readers are able to follow and understand the study and not to get confused.

There are different ways of doing the data collection. Hancock et al. (2007) and Farquhar (2012) list interviews, focus groups, observations, collection of documented materials, collection of narrative, and open-ended questions in questionnaires as the main methods. Selected method should be in harmony with the research objectives and it should provide the opportunity to get the needed information.

The data of this research was collected through semi-structured interviews and collection of documented materials. These data collection methods were selected because they provide opportunity to get in-depth information and they nicely support each other as well.

Semi-structured interviews use open-ended questions and the interviewer has a chance to react and create in-depth discussions according to the situation - through that it enables more flexibility in the interview situation (Farquhar 2012, 10-12). This was also the main reason why semi-structured interviews were used in this study. It was crucial to get in-depth information from the interviewees. Other critical and vital points of the semi-structured interviews were also considered before, during, and after the interviews – these vital points include:

- Make sure your questions are related to your research objectives
  - Create interview guide in order to ask questions logically
  - Follow basic ethical principles – your behaviour in the interview situation is important so that trust can be reached between interviewer and interviewee
  - Use understandable language
  - Make notes on the interview situation: who, when, where, how long?
  - Write down highlights of the interview immediately when the interview is over.
- This is the first step to the analysis part of the study

(Farquhar 2012, 11-12.)

Semi-structured interviews are supported by archive materials of the club. Like Farquhar (2012) points out, it is quite usual that a qualitative study uses both qualitative and quantitative data. Financial statements, annual reports, and other club's statistics from 1993-2016 were utilized in order to create a better understanding of the development of the club. Materials also support the data collected through interviews.

The actual data collection took place in autumn 2017. The archive materials were collected in August and five semi-structured interviews were done between 31.8.-27.9.2017. Interviewees of the study were selected prior to their assumed usefulness for the study and their positions at the club during the study period 1993-2016. This kind of pre-selection based on certain criteria is called criterion/quota sampling (Hancock et al. 2007, 21). In order to understand and get the full picture of the happened changes in the operational environment of the club, it was rational to choose all three chairmen (Petri Pykälämäki, Jukka-Pekka Nieminen, and Ilkka Nyman) of the club during the study period. In addition, two other active members of the club (Jari Sarpola, member of the board 2004-2010 and co-founder of the tennis facility Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus Oy; Henri Bruun, coach at the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä from the early 2000's and the first full-time head coach of the club since 2009)) were selected so that the whole study period was covered and all needed information gathered – like Farquhar (2012) pointed out, make sure that your interviewees are able to provide required information. Below is presented the background information of the interviewees:

- **Petri Pykälämäki:** chairman 1993-2000 (member of the board already in the 1980s, coach on a voluntary basis in the 1990s, head coach of the club 2003-2007)
- **Jukka-Pekka Nieminen:** chairman 2001-2007 (member of the board 1997-2001)
- **Ilkka Nyman:** chairman 2008-present (member of the board 2004-2008)
- **Jari Sarpola:** member of the board 2004-2010 and co-founder of the Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus (tennis facility) 2005

- **Henri Bruun:** head coach 2009-present (member of the board 2007-2010, coaching from the early 2000s)

Four of the interviews were done at the Jyväskylän Tenniskeskus (Tennis Center of Jyväskylä), in a closed and quiet room. The interview of Jukka-Pekka Nieminen was conducted in the interviewee's office at the center of Jyväskylä because of his request. The interview structure (see appendices 1 and 2 for interview frameworks in Finnish and English) was same for everyone. The interview structure consisted of five parts: 1) Background and Motivation, 2) People and Positions, 3) Strategies and Activities, 4) Operational Environment, and 5) Conclusion. These themes were structured before hand and they were adapted from the Ruoranen et al. (2016) conceptual model to analyze professionalization in federations.

The interviews took one hour to hour and half. Before the interviews, interviewees were asked to read and sign consent form (appendix 1.) of the study in order to provide enough information of the research. The interviews were audio-recorded and the researcher made notes simultaneously. After the interviews, researcher highlighted the most important assets of the interview prior to that knowledge, and uploaded the recordings to the computer in order to transcribe and analyze them. The researcher also informed interviewees that they can be in contact at any time if they wish to add or cancel something related to the interviews.

Transcribing of the interviews started straight after the interviews were done. Transcribing is a process where the interviews are transformed into a text-format that can be seen as a script of a interview (Hancock et al. 2007, 25). There are differences in transcription procedures. Some researches focus purely on the content, not on the interviewee's way of communicating or voice (Hancock et al. 2007, 25). Valid for this research is the content and therefore "umms" and "eehh" were not included in the transcripts – but naturally, all words were written down.

All of the interviews were translated into a written form by 15.10.2017. In total, the interviews covered 83 A4-pages (Times New Roman 12, spacing 1.5). After the transcription was done, the material was categorized into the pre-determined themes. Then, the researcher read the interviews through and started to make notes and collect interesting citations that are valid to the outcome of the study. During this process, and in addition to the 83 A4-pages of transcription, the researcher formed two other text-formats: one that covers 23 A4-pages of interesting citations and one 20 A4-pages document that covers the most interesting citations by themes. Archive materials, financial sheets and annual reports, from 1993-2016 were simultaneously categorized into files by years in order to have easy access on all of the data.

There are many approaches to analyze the data in the qualitative research. Lacey and Luff (2007) point out two approaches as often used: 1) grounded theory and 2) framework analysis. It is very important for the researcher to always evaluate the aims and objectives of the analysis because through that the best analysis method will be found (Lacey & Luff 2007, 9).

The aim of this research is not to create any new theories, but to enhance understanding of the happenings regarding professionalism of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016. For this aim, framework analysis was chosen as the analysis method.

Before framework analysis, it was meaningful to use constant comparison process from the grounded theory (Lacey.& Luff 2007, 10). Through constant comparison it was easy to create linkages and relationships between different sections of the interviews. Especially, this method helped during and straight after the interviews to create the first overall impression of the data – the saturation was reached, meaning that the information started to repeat itself and no new information was emerging.

Through framework analysis, the researcher can gain specific information, and provide and present outcomes and possible recommendations (Lacey & Luff 2007, 13). Lacey and Luff (2007) highlight the key stages in the framework analysis: 1) familiarisation, 2)



identifying a thematic framework, 3) indexing, 4) charting, and 5) mapping and interpretation. Familiarization means transcribing and reading through the data. Identifying a thematic framework is the process of creating a coding framework. It is done through pre-determined important issues of the study and issues that arised from interviews. The thematic framework can be redefined during the analysis. Then, indexing refers to the actual implementation of the created framework. In this part, it is important to identify and categorize the most important data to differing themes by textual or numerical codes. This stage is followed by charting where the researcher creates charts of the data so that it is easily readable and understandable. Finally, mapping and interpretation indicates to searching for associations, patterns, and explanations in your data. All of the stages were conducted in this study.

### 2.3.2 Timeline of the Research Process

It was crucial to have a proper plan to execute this Master's thesis. Timeline of the research process is presented in the table 1. The timeline is offered in order to provide a comprehensive picture of the whole thesis process.

**Table 1.** Timeline of the Research Process

Action	Time
Defining the research topic	Autumn 2016
Structuring the Thesis	November-December 2016
Reading literature and writing the first version of the literature review	January-April 2017
Research plan	April-May 2017
Designing and testing the interview framework	May-August 2017
Data collection: interviews and archive materials	August-September 2017
Data analysis and finishing literature review	October-December 2017
Results and Conclusions	December 2017-January 2018
Strengthening and finalizing the Thesis	January 2018

### **2.3.3 Reliability and Validity of the Study**

Scientific researches should always take into consideration reliability and validity issues of the study. Overall quality of the study can be found out through examining and evaluating reliability and validity. In this study, reliability and validity issues were taken into consideration in order to ensure high-quality of the study.

Questions and discussions on trust and objectivity of the study are among the first handled issues when evaluating the research in general and its methods. Reliability and validity of the study are the concepts seen in the research literature. Reliability refers to the repeatability of the results and validity looks at if the research has studied what has been stated and promised. Concepts of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability are in the center when evaluating the reliability and validity of the study. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 134-139.)

Tuomi and Sarajärvi (2009) also highlight that there are not any unambiguous instructions on how to evaluate the reliability and validity of the qualitative research. There exists variation in opinions among researchers. But, it is good to remember that coherence in the study is very important factor. Researcher should make sure that the whole study follows a systematic and coherent form. It is important that different parts of the study are clearly linked to each other and every aspect of the study is well argued and presented. Reliability, validity, and coherence of the study can be ensured through thinking of the aim and purpose of your study, the commitment of the researcher and the employer, methods of data collection and analysis, the timeline of the study, ethical aspects, and reporting the results. And, these components should be well argued and in harmony with each other. (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009, 140-141.)

In this research, reliability and validity of the study were ensured through the whole process: planning, implementation, and evaluation stage. At the planning stage of the Thesis, it was crucial to come up with a good research topic and research plan. Especially, the research plan helped to form a coherent and valid study in which the researcher fully

committed. Objectivity of the researcher was also taken care of during the whole process by constant evaluation of the aims and role of the researcher. All data of the study, archive materials and interviews, were collected and handled in a careful and repeatable manner. In the interview process, reliability and validity was ensured through testing and modifying the interview framework, and by giving the interviewees as detailed information and preparation as possible through consent form. Also, data analysis was done through methods of constant comparison and framework analysis so that the repeatability and credibility of the results were ensured.

Careful and thorough planning of different parts of the study are in a vital role of ensuring the reliability and validity of this study. Through this the implementation and evaluation parts of the study were well supported, proper arguments for different decisions were easily made, and it helped to implement the study efficiently.

## **2.4 Tennis as a Research Object**

Tennis has very long traditions even in Finland. Hoppu (2002) mentioned that ball games were relatively new in Finland in the early 1900s, but for example tennis was played already back then along gentry. The birth of the game played nowadays is thought to have taken place in Europe, in England, in the 19th century – Hämäläinen (2012) stated that tennis came to Finland in the late 19th century. However, there are recognizable signs of games that were very close to tennis much earlier. One recognized relative to tennis occurred already in the 11th century in France. Monks had a game called "jeu de paume" that was played in a monastery courtyard. (Olympics and Tennis 2017.)

Tennis became very popular in the Victorian England. Actually, it surpassed croquet in popularity in the late 19th century. The high interest and demand for tennis in England led to building more tennis courts in the nation. The development of modern tennis started arguably during that time. Tennis was played also outside of England and the discipline started to gain more awareness and grace. It was not before late 19th century when tennis arrived to Finland. (Olympics and Tennis 2017.)

The International Lawn Tennis Federation (ILTF) was founded in 1913. Tennis developed rapidly all over the world in the early 20th century. Many National Tennis Associations already existed and it was only natural that they came together to form a combining international association. The current organizing federation is called International Tennis Federation (ITF) – the title was changed in 1977. In the middle of the 20th century, the ILTF had problems regarding divergence of sport. The game changed in 1968 when "The Open Era" of tennis started. From this year on all of the biggest tournaments were unified and open for everyone. Also, governing bodies of men's and women's tennis were founded: The Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) for men was founded in 1972, and Women's Tennis Association (WTA) was established in 1973. (ITF history 2017; ATP history 2017; WTA history 2017.)

Tennis and the modern Olympic Games have a multidimensional and complex relationship. Tennis was included in the Olympic programme from the beginning of the modern Olympics. The first appearance was in Athens in 1896, but then the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Tennis Federation (ITF) started to have various disagreements. Disputes ended up in tennis being removed from the Olympic programme in 1928. The comeback to the official Olympic programme took place not until 1988 in Seoul. (History of Tennis at the Olympics 2017.)

Tennis landed to Finland in the late 19th century and early 20th century (Hoppu 2002, 27; Hämäläinen 2012, 9). The Finnish Tennis Association was founded two years before ITF, the official establishment date was 22.4.1911. Five Finnish tennis clubs from Viipuri, Turku, Helsinki, Hanko, and Tampere were the founding members of the Finnish Tennis Association (Suomen Tennisliitto ry 2017). In its current strategy, the Finnish Tennis Association (2017) says:

- Mission: "Develop and advance the sport as a lifelong hobby in clubs in every levels."
- Vision: "We want to create miscellaneous experiences through competitions and recreation within the sports"

Working together, joy of play, successfulness, and caring are the core values of the association which still guide the actions of the association (Suomen Tennisliitto Strategia 2017).

The origins of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä (in Finnish Jyväskylän Tenniseura, JTS) are in the early 20th century. The mayor of the city of Jyväskylä, Matti Soini, was the one who called in a constitutive meeting of the Netball Club of Jyväskylä (in Finnish Jyväskylän Verkkopalloseura, JVS) in 1932. The recent name of the club was introduced in 1955 because of the following reason:

*"Netball Club does not really correspond to the meaning of the game. Netball is not used as a term either, people are using the word tennis. Earlier, Finnish Tennis Association dropped out the word netball. Due to these issues, the board of JVS made a proposition of changing the name of the club to the Jyväskylän Tenniseura, JTS (the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä)." (Hämäläinen 2012, 28.)*

Tennis came to Finland mainly because of the major timber industry corporations in the late 19th century. Like it landed to Central Finland and to Jyväskylä. The game reached a good and stable status in Jyväskylä way before the establishment of the club. Therefore, the starting point was favourable for tennis. The club was established by nine founding members and the number of members reached over 100 already in 1940. (Hämäläinen 2012, 9;104.)

Nowadays, the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä has over 400 members. The club operates all year around and it provides services for all, from children to adults. The club did not have its own facilities until 2005. Then, a limited company *Kiinteistö Oy Killlerin Tenniskeskus* was founded by six individuals and JTS. A tennis hall was built to Killeri in 2005 and it was renewed in 2016. The aim of the club is to develop and maintain tennis circumstances in Jyväskylä, and to provide tennis practises to children and adults. (Jyväskylän Tenniseura 2017.)

From the research perspective, tennis in Finland is not much studied area. There are few studies concerning tennis, but they handle mainly discipline specific issues related to training of the sport (e.g. Kaspi 2017; Husa & Mattila 2011; Nurminen 2010; Manner 2009; Lehto & Zitting 2009). From the management perspective, there are couple studies on the club's memberships and satisfaction (e.g. Ekblad 2017; Patinen 2016; Forsman 2013). But there are not done any similar study compared to this research. This research looks at the professionalism of the the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016 – changes, challenges, and operations of the management of the club while moving towards professionalism provide an unique study. Like the development of tennis has shown, there are obvious signs and steps towards professionalism, such as establishment of the modern tennis with women's and men's central associations. Like argued at the beginning of this research, professionalism is an on-going phenomenon. It is very important for Finnish voluntary sports clubs, like the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä, to understand the recent operational environment where they operate.

### **3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE FINNISH VOLUNTARY SPORTS SECTOR**

Voluntary sports sector has an important role in the Finnish sports and physical activity culture. The voluntary sports sector has gone through some clear development stages that have shaped the sector to its recent situation. In order to understand the current situation comprehensively, it is vital to know the crucial development phases of the field.

#### **3.1 The Rise of the Finnish Civil Movement**

Civil movement in Finland has long traditions. The rise of the civil movement started way before the independency of Finland. Grassroots sports clubs which often are voluntary based are build on the basis of civil movement. Values of amauterism and free will of working ("talkootyöt" in Finnish) are the cornerstones of the activities in sports clubs. Therefore, it is crucial to understand the roots of Finnish voluntary sports sector that are heavily influenced by the civil movement.

Different associations and clubs were a channel for Finns to make a difference in society already in the late 17th century when Finland was under Sweden's authority (Itkonen & Salmikangas 2015, 546). Itkonen (2000) argue that Finnish society has been influenced by the actions and activity of the civil movement. Voluntary based actions and cooperation are considered as very important factors, even vital, to the democratic political system.

What comes to the sports sector, Itkonen (2000) state that activities in physical activity and sports in Finland are linked to the civil movement probably more than any elsewhere in the world. Kokkonen (2015) also expressed that modern physical activity culture started to form in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century by integrating as a part of the Finnish society and civil movement. This is exactly the reason why it is crucial to understand and present the actions and development of the Finnish civil movement. In the history of Finland, the voluntary organizations in sports and other sectors have been trusted by many societal

tasks and through this they have established a clear and valuable role in the society (Itkonen 2000, 12-13).

Itkonen (2002) points out five key stages of the rise of the civil movement that highlight the overall development of the movement:

- 1) The rise of the civil society as a broad movement dates back to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.
- 2) Class-Finland civil society. Civil society organizes its actions by class in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century (~1900-1940), bourgeoisie and workers.
- 3) Party-dominated civil society organized itself on the basis of political parties in the middle 20<sup>th</sup> century (after the war years ~1945-1980).
- 4) Welfare-state civil society around 1970-1980.
- 5) Fragmented civil society 1990- onwards.

Through the rise of the civil movement, the voluntary based organizations and associations have been in a central role for creating and maintaining the communality of the state and the citizens (Itkonen 2000, 12). Sport and physical activity culture have been in central role in the Finnish education and it is thought to have had a positive effect on enhancing important societal values – such as briskness and patriotism (Kokkonen 2015, 338-339). The development of the civil society is clearly recognizable. As a summary of the five development stages of civil society, Itkonen (2002) says that the Finnish civil society is broader than ever.

The changes and development of the civil movement have had an influence also on the development of the voluntary sports sector (Itkonen 2000, 13). Itkonen (2002) provides a comprehensive outlook of the different ages in the Finnish sport and physical activity culture: the age of organizational culture 1906-1930, the age of hobby-competition 1930-1960, the age of intense competition 1960-1980, and the age of divergent activity 1980-present. It highlights the importance and role of the voluntary sports sector, and significant turning points during the 20th century. In the next sections these ages are



examined more closely and they are linked to the most important dates and issues of the research topic, the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä.

### **3.2 The Age of Organizational Culture 1906-1930 and the Age of Hobby-Competition 1930-1960**

During the 19th century, many associations and sports clubs were established in Finland. These associations were founded mainly by gentry. Hentilä (1993) points out that modern sports and physical activity culture with clubs and rules started to spread in Finland already in the late 19th century. Associations provided a great channel for people to make a difference and to get to feel social cohesion. As a continuum to the rise of the civil movement, Itkonen (2002) recognizes that the roots of the organized physical activity and sports culture date back to the activities and bodily culture of the countryside. The first Finnish sports club was established in 1856. From that moment on, the number of voluntary sports clubs started to grow. (Itkonen 2002, 35-36.)

*”In the formation of all of civil society physical training and sport achieved a significant position of its own.” (Itkonen 2002, 37.)*

The age of organizational culture is a stage when the Finnish sports and physical activity culture started to organize its actions more rapidly. During this age sports were able to find a place in the Finnish society. Gymnastics and sports clubs were active around the 19th century, but also non-sports associations took physical activity into their programmes (Hentilä 1993, 24). The number of sports clubs did not grow rapidly in the late 19th century, but steadily instead. In 1906, when the age of organizational culture has seen started, there were only 70 sports clubs. But step by step, the appreciation towards sports and physical activity culture raised in the minds of citizens. This can be seen in the number of member clubs of the Finnish National Central Sports Federation – in 1906 there were 70 clubs; in 1908 – 148; and in 1917 – 637. (Itkonen 2002, 35-37.)

Itkonen (2002) points out that the age of organizational culture highlights the rise of the popular physical activity and sports culture. Also, one specific and miserable conflict, the civil war of Finland in 1918, shaped and effected the young country on many societal levels. It also heavily influenced and shaped the sports sector. As a result of the bloody civil war, also the Finnish sports sector split off into the federations of bourgeois and workers: the Finnish National Central Sports Federation and Finnish Workers' Sports Federation (Itkonen 2002, 36-37). Sports clubs' affiliation to societal groups and politics was characteristics for that time.

The age of organizational culture turned into the age of hobby-competition around 1930s. Itkonen (2002) points out that the age of organizational culture reached its limits. Physical activity culture had been created and it reached characteristics of a popular mass movement:

- 1) a high number of members in various locations
  - 2) common values and a systematic programme based on them
  - 3) long-term orientation
  - 4) independent actor in the society
  - 5) sense of togetherness
  - 6) democratic nature in the decision-making processes of the organization
- (Itkonen 2002, 39.)

*"The eroding of the age of organizational culture started in the late 1930s, which brought the importance of individual sports and their increasing competitive goals to the fore."*  
(Itkonen 2002, 39.)

At the turn of the ages from organizational culture to the age of hobby-competition, the establishment process of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä started. The club was established in 1932, but the discipline had managed to reach a stable position in the Jyväskylä region before the official establishment of the club. Like mentioned earlier, Hämäläinen (2012) presents that tennis came to Finland and also to Jyväskylä mainly by the big timber

industry corporations and through the contacts of the influential persons in the late 19th century and early 20th century. Tennis courts were built by the factories for their executives and employees in Jyväskylä, Äänekoski, Mänttä, and Jämsänkoski (Hämäläinen 2012, 9). One of the biggest reasons for the establishment of the club was to introduce tennis for broader audience – not only for the executives of the timber industry (Hämäläinen 2012, 9). So, we can argue that the club was founded at the very last stages of the age of organizational culture because the times are somewhat directional. Otherwise closer insights and happenings of the club have happened during the following ages.

Now that Finnish voluntary sports sector had been created, it was time for differentiation and competitiveness. The age of hobby-competition brought up the increasing competitive nature and individual sports (Itkonen 2002, 39-40). The amount of different sports associations in the central federations express well the differentiation: the amount of special associations raised from 11 to 17 between 1930-1959 in the Finnish National Central Sports Federation and similar rise was noticed in the Worker's Sports Federation where 21 different sports were represented in 1939 (Itkonen 2002, 40). Tennis as an individual sport and the establishment of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä fit quite nicely into this classification.

After the establishment of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä, the club managed to gain good visibility in the local newspaper, its activities developed and grew, and the number of members also reached over one hundred by the year 1940 (Hämäläinen 2012, 9-13). Hämäläinen (2012) points out the year 1938 as one of the most essential years for the club's early development. Then, Kalle Heinonen built a tennishall as a part of Are's commercial house. Before this, tennis was mainly played outdoors. Are's Tennishall became the center for the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä and it gained a high reputation on the national level as well. As a part of the age of hobby-competition, Itkonen (2002) also recognizes the increase in the number of sports facilities in the general level (public resources were guided to the building of sports facilities) which meant more and better availability to do sports in Finland. At the end, this also lead to higher level of competition between different sports (Itkonen 2002, 41).

Itkonen (2002) says that the age of hobby-competition continued over the insecure times of the Second World War. Obviously, the war had its major and long-lasting impacts on the societal level in Finland. Hämäläinen (2012) presents that during the war years, the activities of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä also stopped for over a four years period. In the annual meeting of the club in 1945, few active persons started to reorganize and restart the activities of the club. Characteristics for the post-war times were lack of resources and the process of restarting the club's activities (Hämäläinen 2012, 17-20). But step by step from 1950's to 1960's, the club managed to develop and reorganize its activities, and it also succeeded to balance its finances (Hämäläinen 2012, 28-29). Though, this was not seen in the number of members that declined from 114 in 1940 to 65 in 1970 (Hämäläinen 2012, 104). Also, in 1955 the name of the club was changed from *Jyväskylän Verkkopalloseura* / *the Netball Club of Jyväskylä* to its recent form *Jyväskylän Tennisseura* / *the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä* (Hämäläinen 2012, 28).

Itkonen (2002) examines that the age of hobby-competition started to turn to the age of intense competition around 1960s. This was mainly because of the high level of competition that clearly shaped the overall physical activity and sports culture in Finland.

### **3.3 The Age of Intense Competition 1960-1980 and the Age of Divergent Activity 1980-present**

The increased involvement of state and municipalities continued from the age of hobby-competition to the age of intense competition which dates to the years 1960-1980. At that time, many sports facilities were built. However, even more characteristic for this period is the high level of competition. Itkonen (2002) highlights that sports had taken a place in the various level of society so strongly that many operators were competing against each other. The competitive nature could be seen in the club level, municipality level, and state level. (Itkonen 2002, 42-44.)

*"The effects of planning and increased information also emerged in club practices. Increased information led to the sectorization and professionalization of coaching." (Itkonen 2002, 43.)*

The increased level of competition is also highlighted by Hämäläinen (2012) regarding the activities of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä from the late 1950s through the age of intense competition. The club organized more and more events and competitions for its members, and the rationalization of coaching activities were in the main focus as well – especially matches between different clubs and cities were popular at that time. (Hämäläinen 2012, 29-41.)

As Itkonen (2002) points out, during the age of intense competition many sports facilities were built by the public sector. Ilmanen (2015) supports this by recognizing that increased interest towards sports and physical activity pushed municipalities to establish a new administrative level – administration of sports. Also, the tennis field of Jyväskylä expressed the building of tennis circumstances in 1973-1982. At that time, tennis courts were built to the areas of Hippos, Viitaniemi, and Kortepohja. Also, indoor halls of schools were utilized in the club's activities (Hämäläinen 2012, 43-44).

*"The field of physical training expanded in the 1980s both organizationally and content-wise." (Itkonen 2002, 44.)*

The latest age that Itkonen (2002) points out is the age of divergent activity which started around 1980s. The culture and sports movement changed quite significantly. It became more specialized, new sports clubs and associations were established. Traditional sports, such as skiing and athletics, were taken over by team sports, internationality, and skill. As an end result, the number of specified sports clubs increased. Heikkala (2000) emphasize that 1980s was the decade of growth and institutionalisation in the Finnish sports culture. Koski (2012), and Itkonen and Salmikangas (2015) also discuss changes in the Finnish society after 1980. They emphasize individualism, differentiation, and specialization. The age of divergent activity was labelled by strong fragmentation –

Itkonen (2002) presented that this specialization trend is still going on in the Finnish sports culture. As a basis, the physical activity and sports culture was divided into two lines: 1) sports and performance oriented, and 2) socio-culturally oriented (Itkonen 2002, 45-46).

The fragmentation of the physical activity and sports culture can also be seen in the activities of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä at least to some extent. The activities of the club covered both the sports and performance, and socio-culturally oriented activities. Specialization and early signs of professionalization can be pointed out in the early 1990s through a new management model of the club. The main focus was on the specific job descriptions. Though, all of the activities were mainly carried out by the basis of voluntarism (Hämäläinen 2012, 57-60).

In the results of this thesis, the years of 1993-2016 will be covered in details. As a summary, the characteristics of the four ages presented by Itkonen (2002) and the main guidelines and phases of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä are quite well linked to each other. Obviously, there are differences but clearly the main issues can be seen and linked to each other.

## 4 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE VOLUNTARY SPORT SECTOR

There are three different sectors in the Finnish sports field: public, private, and voluntary sector. All of the sectors have their own characteristics. Therefore, it is important to understand the differences between them before going deeper in the settings of the voluntary sports sector. After exploring the characteristics of different sectors, this chapter will have a look on the sport management aspects from the sports club's perspective.

### 4.1 Sport Sectors in Finland

When talking about public sector in sport, it includes governmental actors from national to local level. These institutions are involved in developing and maintaining sport policies and the sport and physical culture itself (Smith 2008, 15-17). Smith (2008) points out that governments get interested and engaged in sports mainly because of its potential in creating positive economic, social, and political benefits. In addition, Masterman (2004) and Preuss (2007) recognize benefits regarding infrastructure, sport itself, and environment. JTS is in a close cooperation with the public sector, especially with the city of Jyväskylä. The club receives support for its activities on a yearly basis and it also takes care of the outdoor courts in Hippos during the summer times. Also, JTS has applied and received financial support straight from the government as well. It is good to realize that a sports club is linked to the public sector on a local, regional, and national level.

Private sector is commercialized, and business- and market-oriented where corporations main aim is to make profit. This sector includes corporations that are financially interested in sports. Professional clubs and leagues, major events, and equipment manufacturers are examples of the operators in the private sector (Smith 2008, 16). The Tennis Club of Jyväskylä is also linked to this sector through the management company, *Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus*, that is in charge of the tennis hall in Killeri where the JTS operates. In addition, as a voluntary-based sports club, JTS is connected to the private sector also through sponsorship agreements.

Voluntary sector, also known as a civic or non-profit sector, consists of clubs, associations, governing organizations, and federations. All of the sport products cannot be taken care by government or private sector – voluntary sports sector fills this gap - the non-profit sector is filling the gap that other sectors cannot or do not want to fulfill (Smith 2008, 17).

*”Non-profit sport organisations are therefore concerned with the public good rather than making money. [...] Non-profit sport organisations develop communities, social networks and local groups through the provision of specialised sport products and services.”* (Smith 2008, 17.)

As Itkonen (2002) pointed out, Finnish voluntary sports sector has long traditions and the development of the sector started way before the independency of Finland. Characteristics for the voluntary sports clubs are the focus on public good, based on voluntary actions and goodwill, not administrated by government, independency, and specialization. (Smith 2008, 15-18.)

All of the above mentioned sports sectors are linked to each other: activities of these sectors intersect – therefore they operate in a close cooperation and without the cooperation the sports sector would not work properly (Smith 2008, 16). Especially, the voluntary sports clubs are operating in a mixed environment where it needs to adapt characteristics of public and private sector. In general, voluntary associations are formed by its members with different ambitions, values, and goals. Therefore, the direction of the club can vary a lot depending on the persons who are running the association – for example whether the club is based on volunteers or hired professionals (Heikkala & Koski 2000, 108).



## 4.2 Unique Aspects of Sport Management

Sport management is a highly discussed and researched area. What makes sports sector unique and what kind of management is needed? Managers of a sports property need to be aware of certain specific characteristics of sports. There are many different elements that differentiate sports from other fields:

- Unpredictability – level of play varies
- Emotions
- Highly competitive
- On- and off-the-field operations and success
- Cooperation between teams that compete against each other
- High level of loyalty
- Identification
- Optimism

(Smith 2008, 20-26.)

These specific aspects of sports might make it challenging for sport managers to do specific strategies and plans. Managers need to be aware of different attributes in order to be able to manage a sport property. But, if these aspects are fully understood and the sports property has plans to take the advantage out of them, then it is possible to create positive impacts. In the sports management literature, quite often sports marketing is seen as a potential way of creating positive impacts. Smith (2008) defines sports marketing as follows:

*”Sport marketing is the application of marketing concepts to sport products and services, and the marketing of non-sport products through an association to sport.” (Smith 2008, 3.)*

In the voluntary sports clubs, where actions are based on voluntary work and amateurism – it is very hard to find a proper management style that would take into account all of the

different aspects of sports. The study of Thiel and Mayer (2009) supports the argument that non-profit organizations do not always have clear objectives which make it very hard to develop the actions of the club.

But, in order to move from voluntary actions and amateurism into a more professionalized operator, it is crucial to have comprehensive knowledge of the sports sector. To be able to develop actions of a voluntary sports club, it is vital for managers to have at least good level of knowledge of the past and understanding of the unique aspects of the sports sector. Itkonen's (2002) categorization of the Finnish physical activity and sports culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> century and Smith's (2008) presentation of unique aspects of sports for management provide good and thoroughful insights into these topics.

Next section will introduce sports and sports clubs as a tool for creating value and meaningfulness for different purposes. It highlights many possibilities that sports operators have in their actions and it can be used as a tool to enhance the level of professionalism in the sports club.

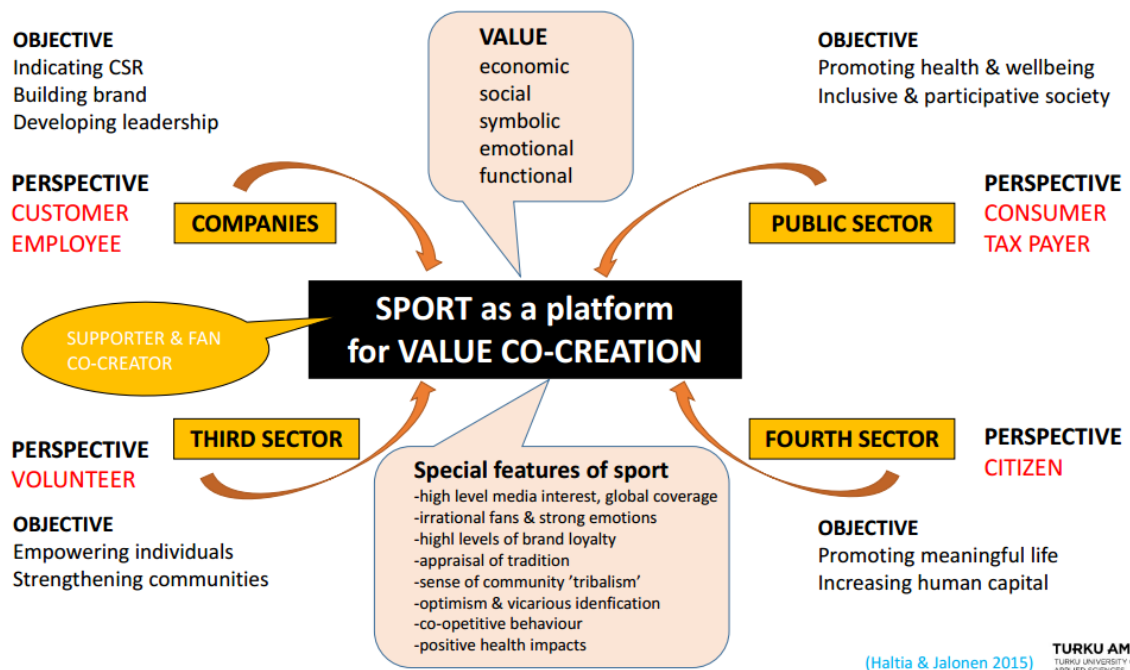
### **4.3 Voluntary Sports Club as a Tool**

Sports have been used as a tool for many purposes by nations, individuals, and different organizations. Among other things, unique aspects of sports create high potential for sports to generate positive short-term impacts and long-term legacies. It is good to define the difference between an impact and a legacy before going into details of the sports as a tool and platform. Preuss (2007) distinguishes impacts from legacies by emphasizing that impacts are always short-term effects, with no longer effectiveness. For example, impacts are impulses that are directly linked to the event, such as a consumption of spectators. It does not mean that impacts could not be effective, they can be powerful (Preuss 2007, 212-213). But sometimes it might be challenging to decide whether some effect is an impact or a legacy – that is because of there are not any common agreement within academics what is defined as short- or long-term (Masterman 2004, 68).

What are these potential effects created through sports? Preuss (2007) and Masterman (2004) recognize possible effects that can be achieved through sports:

- 1) Economic
- 2) Socio-cultural
- 3) Political
- 4) Infrastructural
- 5) Sports itself
- 6) Environmental issues

As Preuss (2007) and Masterman (2004) recognize there are various potential impacts that can be achieved through sports. Haltia and Jalonen (2015) also highlight that sports can be used as a platform to create value. Their model (figure 2) emphasizes different operators of the sports field with different objectives, special features of sports, and it also presents different values that could be achieved. In addition to possible impacts presented by Masterman (2004) and Preuss (2007), and Smith's (2008) unique aspects of sports, the model of Haltia and Jalonen (2015) adds all of the sectors together highlighting values and special features of sports.



**Figure 2.** Haltia, J. & Jalonen, H. (2015). Sport as a platform for value co-creation.

All in all, voluntary sports clubs can be used as a tool for creating impacts, even legacies, and value for different stakeholders. Through systematic actions and understanding of these characteristics, the voluntary sports clubs could make a real difference or potentially move towards professionalism. This is also recognized by Auvinen and Kuuluvainen (2017), they say that sports clubs have a great chance to establish something permanent through their actions especially on the local level because of the high potential of local identity and engagement.

## 5 SHIFT FROM AMATEURISM TO PROFESSIONALISM

Shift from amateurism to professionalization in sports, and characteristics of professionalization are widely researched areas (Dowling, Edwards & Washington 2014; Skinner, Stewart & Edwards 1999; O'Brien & Slack 2003; Ruoranen, Klenk, Schlesinger, Bayle, Clausen, Giauque & Nagel 2016). In this chapter, we will have a look on the concept of professionalization, and Ruoranen et al. (2016) professionalization framework that has been used in this study to describe and analyze the development, change, and professionalization of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä (JTS).

### 5.1 Concepts of Professionalization, Organizational Effectiveness and Performance, and Change

The concept of professionalization has been around since the early 20th century. But in the sports sector, the concept is relatively new. Professionalization has been discussed within the sport management field from late 1980s (Dowling et al. 2014). What does the concept of professionalization mean?

Sports professionalization can be divided into three categories: organizational professionalization, systemic professionalization, and occupational professionalization (Dowling et al. 2014). At the end, they defined sports professionalization as following:

*"The process by which sport organisations, systems, and the occupation of sport, transforms from a volunteer driven to an increasingly business-like phenomenon."*  
(Dowling et al. 2014.)

Koski and Heikkala (1998) also highlight that professionalization is one of the central aspects of the development of the sports culture. They look professionalization as a process where amateur-based actions and operators are replaced by the hired experts or specialists with the focus on goal-orientation and systematic actions. However, amount

or increase of hired staff do not necessarily correlate to the level of professionalism (Koski & Heikkala 1998, 120).

Professionalization, as stated above, highlights the development of sports clubs as a whole towards more business-like actions. Often, business-like activities are considered to be more efficient and systematic. So, when discussing professionalization is also meaningful to include the main characteristics of organizational performance and effectiveness in the study as well because they are to some extent linked to potential professionalization of the organization. As in the professionalization literature of sports, there are also varying opinions on the organizational effectiveness – Dawson and Walton (2001) argues that it depends on approaches and perspectives of academics and sports properties what is considered to be efficient.

Breuer, Feiler, Nowy, and Wicker (2014) present different dimensions of organizational performance: financial dimension, product dimension, customer dimension, and strategic dimension. In addition to these dimensions, Dawson and Walton (2001) present the managerial criteria of effectiveness that emphasizes different values concerning organizational effectiveness: conflict/cohesion, morale, values of human resources, training and development emphasis, flexibility, readiness, growth, evaluation by external entities, control, stability, information management, profit, productivity, planning and goal setting, and efficiency. Their model highlight internal and external issues of the organization, and also structural dilemma of flexibility and control (Walton & Dawson 2001, 176).

It is also good to point out, when talking about professionalization in the voluntary sports sector, that we are dealing with a change from voluntary-driven actions towards more professionalized actions. What is a concept of change? Slack (1997) emphasizes that sports organizations are on a constant change – it can be planned or unplanned, and the change can occur in four aspects:

- 1) Technology
- 2) Structures and systems
- 3) People
- 4) Products and services

(Slack 1997, 213.)

From the sports clubs management point of view, Slack (1997) presents one interesting issue that normally managers aim to have stability in the actions of the club but in order to develop the club would need to change. This should be also considered when examining professionalization of the voluntary sports sector.

Like Itkonen (2002) presented, the latest and on-going trend in the physical activity and sports culture is fragmented actions. However, the fragmented sports sector does not necessarily mean that the sports clubs and operators would or could not have focus on professionalization.

*”Vaikka eriytyminen seurojen toiminnassa on tosiasia, yleislinjana on pyrkimys parempaan ja rationaalisempaan toimintaan. Se merkitsee entistä tavoitteellisempaa orientaatiota, suurempaa systemaattisuutta, pätevämpiä ohjaajia, parempia olosuhteita, ajanmukaisempia välineitä jne.” (Koski 2000, 50.) / ”Eventhough, the fragmentation in the activities of the sports clubs, the main focus and idea is to move towards better and more rational actions. It means more goal-oriented focus, higher level of systemacy, more qualified instructors, better facilities, and modern equipment etc.” (Koski 2000, 50.)*

It is good to understand, while discussing professionalization in the voluntary sports sector, that because of the long traditions and cooperation between public and private sector it might be sometimes challenging for the voluntary sports sector to have a clear focus on their actions. Heikkala & Koski (2000) point out that voluntary sports sector faces the pressure of the public and private sector simultaneously, and in addition to that Slack’s (1997) presentation of the change as a paradox and matters of effectiveness are creating management challenges. In addition, Koski (2012a) expresses that the

professionalization process has put a lot pressure on the sports clubs. The pressure becomes mainly from the unbalanced situation of the high expectations and the voluntary-basis of the voluntary sports clubs. It is a matter of decision-making whether a sports club focuses and orientates its actions more on the common goods or business-like actions that would surely need more professionalized actions. Also, it is good to understand that even academics and managers of sports properties have different opinions and perspectives on these issues. Therefore, it is crucial to read through how researches have been conducted and how terms are defined before making conclusions.

## 5.2 Professionalism Levels of a Sports Organization

Slack (1997) presents different levels of a sports organization by Kikulis, Slack and Hinings (1992). They identified and defined three designs or archetypes: kitchen table, boardroom, and executive office (see table 2).

**Table 2.** Understanding Sport Organizations: the Application of Organization Theory (Adapted from Slack, T. (1997), 224).

	Kitchen Table	Boardroom	Executive office
<b>Organizational values</b>			
Orientation	Private, volunteer, nonprofit (membership & fund raising)	Private, volunteer, nonprofit (public & private funds)	Private, volunteer, nonprofit (government & corporate funds)
Domain	Broad: mass-high performance sport	Competitive sport opportunities	Narrow: high performance sport
Principles of organizing	Minimal coordination: decision making by volunteer executives	Volunteer hierarchy; professionally assisted	Formal planning; professionally led and volunteer assisted
Criteria of effectiveness	Membership preferences; quality service	Administrative efficiency & effectiveness	International success
<b>Organizational structure</b>			
Specialization	Roles based on interest & loyalty	Specialized roles & committees	Professional, technical & administrative expertise
Standardization	Few rules; little planning	Formal roles, rules & programs	Formal roles, rules & programs
Centralization	Decisions made by a few volunteers	Decisions made by the volunteer board	Decisions decentralized to the professional staff



These archetypes describe different aspects of sports organizations from two main perspectives: organizational values and organizational structure. Organizational values examine sports organizations from aspects of their orientation, domain, principles of organizing, and criteria of effectiveness. Furthermore, organizational structure –part adds information on specialization, standardization, and centralization of the sports organization. (Slack 1997, 224.)

The kitchen table archetype is the most amateur-based and the executive office has features of more professional activities. Slack (1997) presents that the model can help to map and identify the current situation of an organization. Also, it can be used as a tool for goal setting. Organizations can identify its current situation and set its future goals. Slack (1997) highlights also that organizations can have aspects from different archetypes. It can happen that an organization makes a clear transition from one archetype to another, but in the process of change it is normal to move gradually towards the next stage.

From the perspective of professionalism, the above presented model (table 2) describes the change and transformation from volunteer- and amateur-based actions towards more professionalized and business-like actions.

### **5.3 A Framework to Analyze Professionalization**

Ruoranen et al. (2016) provide a conceptual framework for professionalization in the national sport federations. Their model approaches professionalization with ”theoretically open-mind” – meaning that they have acknowledged the multidimensionality of professionalization (Ruoranen et al. 2016, 57). However, Ruoranen et al. (2016) also recognize that there is variation in research how to systemize and conceptualize professionalization. Also, they present another uncertainty: it is unclear whether the term used in literature corresponds to the understanding of the practice.

Ruoranen et al. (2016) identified three main characteristics of professionalization:

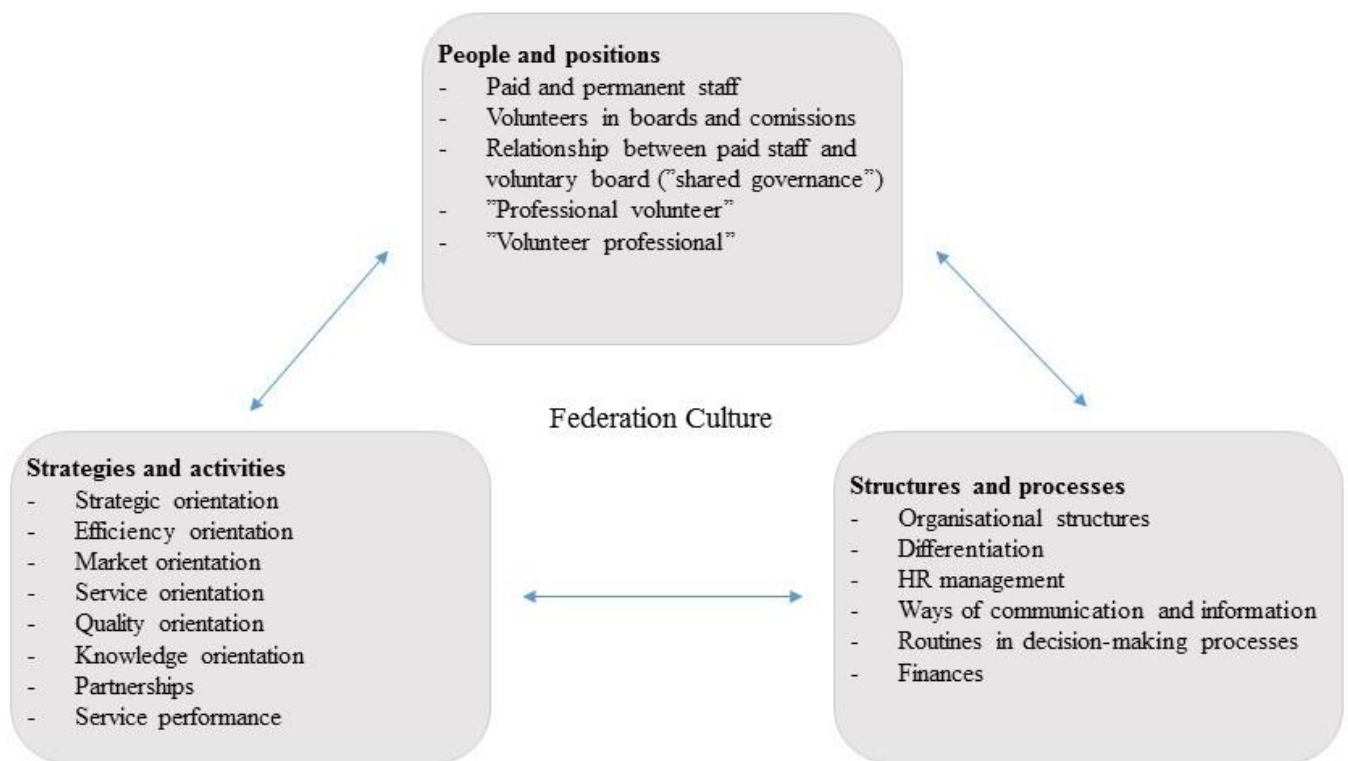
- 1) Changed management philosophy: referring to attitudes and motivation towards professionalization, for example strategic planning, and customer and service orientation.
- 2) Functional differentiation and specialization: referring to differentiation of positions and paid staff.
- 3) Application of management tools: referring to planning, measurement, and administrative tools.

(Ruoranen et al., 2016.)

One of the most significant findings of Ruoranen et al. (2016), in relation to the concept and view of professionalization, was a shift in a mindset of an organization towards more professionalized and business-like activities due to the importance and focus on economics. However, they still recognize the importance of voluntarism. Also, the study points out the challenging nature of the changed management philosophy: national sports federations have many different stakeholders with many different goals and mindsets – this puts federations to follow diverse goals (Ruoranen et al. 2016, 62). Also, differentiation, specialized tasks and roles, and modern management tools (e.g. financial reporting and digitalized documentation) were mentioned as important assets in professionalization (Ruoranen et al. 2016, 62-64).

As critical aspects of professionalization, Ruoranen et al. (2016) found that professionalization does not necessarily mean positive development or more efficient activities in practice – for example, they recognized issues related to distribution of scarce resources, transition of values, and relationship between volunteers and paid staff.

At the end, Ruoranen et al. (2016) provide a theoretical model for professionalization based on previous studies and literature, and their research interviews. (Figure 3.)



**Figure 3.** A framework to analyse professionalization in sports federations (Ruoranen et al. 2016)

The model highlights three dimensions: strategies and activities, people and positions, and structures and processes. The characteristics of strategies and activities –dimension reflect to the changed management philosophy, and orientation towards business- and for-profit-like actions. In the second dimension, people and positions, professionalization is addressed through human resources. Issues concerning roles and tasks of volunteers and paid staff, and relationship between these two groups are in the center of this dimension. Third dimension, structures and processes, looks at the organizational structures, decision-making processes, communications, and finances as attributes of professionalization. (Ruoranen et al. 2016, 67-69.)

In addition to the Ruoranen et al. (2016) framework, Koski and Heikkala (1998) also recognize and support the aspects presented by stating different aspects of professionalization (see table 3).

**Table 3.** Characteristics of Professionalization (Koski & Heikkala 1998, 36-38).

Characteristics of Professionalization	Definition
Time	Professionalization means formally regulated working times. Staff has a full-time and permanent work.
Place	Professional organization has an official place/location where they work.
Resources	Professional organizations have accessibility to mental, physical, and financial resources.
Criteria of Recruitment	Professional organizations demand their staff to have proper education and competence.
Attitude and Commitment	Professional attitude and motivation indicates to staff's high level of engagement in the organization.
Knowledge	Competence and specific knowledge of the field are key words in a professional organization.
Efficiency and Quality	Efficiency and quality of production and products are key areas in professional and business-minded organizations.
Responsibility	Responsibilities, especially financial responsibility, are typical in professional organizations.
Power	Power is distributed and regulated in professional organizations.

Additionally, Ruoranen et al. (2016) point out that it is extremely important for workers in the organization to have high working moral and attitude in order to achieve results. If there is lack of motivation to do good job then it might harm the federation. This thinking can be linked to the aim of moving towards more professionalized activities, if there is no common will then it will most likely become very challenging to achieve professionalization.

The framework of Ruoranen et al. (2016) was adapted in this Master's thesis. The development and aspects of professionalization of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä were reflected through Ruoranen et al. (2016) framework.

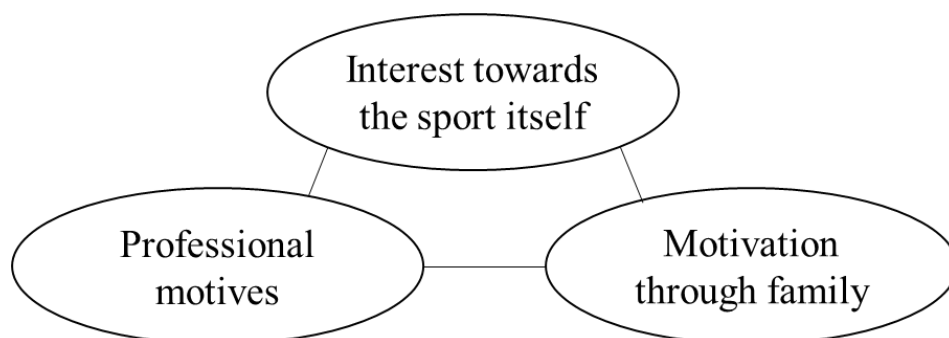
## 6 PROFESSIONALIZATION PROCESS OF THE TENNIS CLUB OF JYVÄSKYLÄ

The following chapter highlights the results of the study. It deepens and highlights understanding of the development of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä from 1993 to 2016 while moving towards professionalism. The chapter is divided to six sections that are adapted from the conceptual professionalization model of Ruoranen et al. (2016). The sections are 1) motivation to work in the voluntary sports sector, 2) people and positions, 3) structures and processes, 4) strategies and activities, 5) operational environment, and 6) future of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä (JTS).

### 6.1 Motivation to Work in the Voluntary Sports Sector

Like Ruoranen et al. (2016) recognized, it is extremely important to have motivation and willingness to do good job in order to achieve results. Voluntary sports sector is based on the values of amateurism and therefore it is crucial to understand motivational aspects of the workers in the sector.

All five interviewees of this study highlighted their own personal motivation towards tennis. Motivation raised mainly from three different areas: 1) interest towards the sport itself, 2) motivation through family, and 3) professional motives (see figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Three main aspects of motivation to work in the voluntary sports club

The first and common motivational feature was the sport itself. All of the interviewees said to have played tennis and somehow being linked to the sport before entering the organizational activities of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä.

Secondly, motivation through family was mentioned as a reason to join the activities of the club. In addition, motivation linked to family was also mentioned in different parts of the study. Especially when talking about the decision-making of the club.

Two interviewees emphasized professional motives. Henri Bruun, the current head coach of the club, and Petri Pykälämäki have a coaching background and their motivation clearly was connected to the occupation. Regarding professionalization, it is valuable to notice that Pykälämäki created a profession for himself by active working in the field of tennis. There were no paid staff in the 1990s in the club and back then Pykälämäki worked as a volunteer and he was selected as the chairman of the club in 1993. Through hardwork and motivation of Pykälämäki and the organization of that time, they managed to scale the activities of the club and through that he became the first full-time head coach of the JTS in 2003. He was not hired by the club but the club bought the coaching service from Pykälämäki's company *JklMailapelivalmennus* – so the club changed its organization model and through entrepreneurship was Pykälämäki able to create a profession for himself.

These motivational aspects are also highlighted in the upcoming sections, especially while discussing professionalism, structures, and activities of the club. Also, the decision-making of the club has been linked to the perceptions of the individuals to some extent.

## **6.2 People and Positions**

In this section, roles of the members, volunteers, board of the club, and paid staff are examined. Overall, results of the study indicate that there have been a clear change in human resources towards more professionalized activities.

The activities of the club were carried out by volunteers in the 1990s. Though, there were few exceptions: during the summer times the club hired one to two maintenance workers for the outdoor courts and there was also one paid coach.

*”Ei siis se ei ollut mitenkään ammattimaista. Se oli harrastuspohjalta. / It was not professional at all. It was completely on a voluntary basis.” – Petri Pykälämäki on the level of professionalization in the 1990s.*

Mentality of the club started to change at the end of the 1990s. Then, Pykälämäki and few other coaches decided to lift the level of coaching to the professional level (Hämäläinen 2012, 63). The mentality of the club clearly changed when Jukka-Pekka Nieminen started as the chairman of the club in 2001.

*”Tavoitteena meillä oli toiminnan ammattimaistaminen. Saada enemmän porukkaa mukaan ja tietysti rahaa. / Our goal was to make our activities more professional. To get more people involved and obviously to gain more money.” – Jukka-Pekka Nieminen on the change of the mentality of the club.*

Through the new ideology, the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä changed its organization model in 2003 and outsourced the coaching service for Pykälämäki's company *JklMailapelivalmennus*. That was clearly the start of the professionalization process of the club that is still going on. The overall change in human resources from 1993 to 2016 is presented in the table 4.

**Table 4.** The Change of the Staff 1993-2016.

<b>Time period</b>	<b>Staff</b>
1993-2002	- Voluntary basis – not paid staff*
2003-2007	- Entrepreneurship model – outsourced coaching service from JklMailapelivalmennus
2008	- Part-time coaches paid on a hourly-basis
2009-2016	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- First full-time worker in 2009, Henri Bruun, head coach</li> <li>- Apprenticeship contract 2013-2015, Loviisa Skinnari, coach and administration</li> <li>- 4-6 part-time coaches on a hourly basis per season</li> <li>- Part-time marketing coordinator 2015-, Jarno Tiusanen</li> </ul>

\* There were one paid coach and one to two outdoor court maintenance workers during summer periods

The entrepreneurship model for coaching services of the club was running from 2003 to 2007. The new board of the club in 2007 made a decision to shut down that model and to return to a basic organization model where everything was carried out by the club itself. The main reason for the change was financial issues – this change is examined in more details in the Structures and Processes –section. After a year of reconstruction, the club managed to hire their first full-time worker in 2009. From this moment onwards, the club has fully trusted on paid staff in the execution of its most important task, providing tennis opportunities for all.

Since 2009, the organization model of the club has been mainly formed by the active board based on voluntarism and the hired coaching staff. Coaching staff is led by the full-time head coach Henri Bruun with help of four to six part-time coaches. The task of the board has been to take care of the administrative work. The next development towards professionalism happened in 2015, when the club hired part-time marketing coordinator, Jarno Tiusanen, to help and develop the club's administration. Before that, Loviisa Skinnari accomplished her apprenticeship training in the club helping with coaching and administrative work.



Overall, the development of the human resources of the club was clearly highlighted by all of the interviewees. The mentality changed in the late 1990s and since it has taken big improvements towards more professionalized actions. The club is no longer trusting purely on volunteers, it has hired experts to take care of the specialized tasks, but still volunteers have an important role in the club. The next sections examine the roles of the members, volunteers, board of the club, and paid staff in more details during the study period.

### **6.2.1 Roles of the Members and Volunteers**

*”Kuluttava asiakas. Ei oikeastaan mitään muuta. / A paying customer. Basically that is it.” – Henri Bruun on the role of the members in the 21st century.*

Members of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä have been seen more or less as customers since the 1990s. Activities of the club are addressed for the members. Head coach Henri Bruun summarized well the current situation by saying that members are paying customers. This has been the case for a while now. Chairmen from 2001 to the present, Jukka-Pekka Nieminen and Ilkka Nyman, also recognized that there is a linkage between members and volunteers. Normally, volunteers are also members of the club. They also highlighted that members use the services of the club, namely participating in tennis lessons.

The interviewees did not see any changes in the role of the members during the study period 1993-2016. The main outcome was that members are paying customers and some of them take part in the voluntary actions of the club.

Number of members have significantly raised from 1990 to 2016 (see table 5). It has increased by 147 % (from 154 members to 380 members). There are some considerable variation in the membership numbers from 1995 to 2006 which need to be critically addressed. Especially, memberships in 2004-2006 are clearly higher than other years' statistics because of the different calculation system: at that time the club included participants of youth summer camps as members. Anyhow, the number of members

started to grow in the 1990s simultaneously with the changed mentality and willingness to raise the level of coaching to a professional level. There is a decrease in the memberships in 2001-2002 because of the challenges in recruiting coaches. Therefore, there were not much activities in which members would join or be interested in – the challenges of that time are also seen in the financial informations that are examined in the Structures and Processes –section.

At the end, we can argue that the number of members has increased significantly during the study period. The increased number of members can be seen as a sign of professionalism, at least as a sign of a more active club. Also, how the interviewees of the study see the role of the members is interesting and can be linked to professionalization. A professionalized organization was defined as a more business-oriented actor. By saying that members are buing customers, they make a clear connection to business terms. They reflect on a potential profit making opportunities.

**Table 5.** The Change of the Members 1932-2016 (Hämäläinen 2012, 104; annual reports of the club 1993-2016)

<b>Year</b>	<b>Members</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Members</b>
<b>1932</b>	9	<b>2003</b>	300
<b>1940</b>	114	<b>2004</b>	490*
<b>1950</b>	117	<b>2005</b>	424*
<b>1960</b>	86	<b>2006</b>	438 (*)
<b>1970</b>	65	<b>2007</b>	352
<b>1980</b>	176	<b>2008</b>	353
<b>1990</b>	154	<b>2009</b>	356
<b>1995</b>	356	<b>2010</b>	330
<b>1997</b>	289	<b>2011</b>	369
<b>1998</b>	326	<b>2012</b>	362
<b>1999</b>	294	<b>2013</b>	392
<b>2000</b>	351	<b>2014</b>	348
<b>2001</b>	212	<b>2015</b>	349
<b>2002</b>	288	<b>2016</b>	380

\*not valid, during these years the club counted participants of the youth summer camps as members

Like mentioned, few of the interviewees connected members and volunteers as the same persons. Also, Pykälämäki and Nieminen highlighted that the 1990s was a decade of amateurism and volunteers had a big role at that time. Nyman, Sarpola, and Bruun also support the importance of volunteers in the activities of the club – they especially link volunteers and board of the club as the same since they recognize that there are not too many volunteers outside of the board. Since the early 2000s, the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä started to slowly move towards paid staff. First by the entrepreneurship model from 2003 to 2007 and then in 2009 happened the crucial improvement when Bruun was hired as the head coach of the club. All of the interviewees highlighted that after the entrepreneurship model was taken into action the activities of the club and responsibilities were divided as: 1) paid staff was responsible of the coaching services, and 2) volunteers took care of the administrative work. This kind of share of tasks is still in use at the club. Though, one improvement and specialization happened in 2015 when the club hired Jarno Tiusanen as the marketing coordinator.

Regarding volunteers, the interviewees noticed that it has been very personified during the whole study period 1993-2016. This means that during different times there have been few very active persons who have been responsible for the voluntary actions.

*”Kyllähän seurassa on aina muutamat aktiiviset, jotka tekevät paljon hommia ja jotkut eivät tee sitten ollenkaan. / There are always few very active persons who do a lot of work and then there are some who do not do anything.” – Jari Sarpola on the volunteers of the club.*

As a one crucial change within volunteers, Nyman, Bruun, and Sarpola noticed that lately it has become more and more demanding to recruit volunteers.

*”Jotenkin on tässä aikojen kuluessa herännyt semmoinen kuva, että kysyttäessä ”voisitko auttaa?”, niin jo koulussa opetetaan kysymään: ”paljonko siitä maksetaan?”. Siinä mielessä tämä vapaaehtoisten saanti on haasteellista. Välillä on innokkaampia ja välillä sitten vähemmän innokkaita. / Somehow I have noticed a trend that when asking “would*

*you help?”, then already at schools they teach to ask: “how much do you pay?”. In that sense it has become challenging to recruit volunteers. Sometimes there are more eager persons and sometimes less eager to take part.” – Ilkka Nyman on the change of voluntarism.*

They found that people are not so willing to take part in the voluntary actions in the 2010s. They recognize that the number of volunteers has decreased. Bruun summarized the recent mentality as people are more willing to pay for someone to get the job done rather than doing it by yourself.

### **6.2.2 Roles of the Board of the Club and Paid Staff**

As mentioned in the volunteers part of the latest section, members of the board of the club are perceived as volunteers – maybe as the most important ones because the interviewees did not see many volunteers outside of the board. The role of the board has been very significant and there has occurred a change through increased activities and human resources.

*“Jyväskylän Tennisseuran johtokunnalla on ollut tosi iso rooli, koska se on ollut se toimiva, joka tekee asioita. Ei pelkästään vaan päättää, vaan tekee. Eli rooli on iso. Oikeastaan koko toiminta perustuu johtokunnan toimintaan. Tietysti valmennus on erikseen, mutta kaikki muu sen valmennuksen ulkopuolelta on johtokunnan käsissä. / The role of the board of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä has been very significant because it has been active. It is not just making policies and decisions but it is also the executive actor. In fact, all of the activities outside of coaching are taken care by the board.” – Henri Bruun on the importance of the board especially in the 2010s.*

Pykälämäki recognized that the club had a board in the 1990s but it was not that active – the role was more like a bureaucratic institute that an organization needed to have according to its rules. This has changed when moving to the 21st century. Through increased activities of the club and paid staff (including the entrepreneurship model), the

board has also specified its roles and become more of an executive actor. Nieminen said that they wanted to move JTS towards more professionalized club in the early 2000s by clarifying tasks within the organization. The most important innovation was the formation of the entrepreneurship model. The specialization of tasks continued in the chairman era of Nyman starting in 2008. During the last decade, the board of the club has taken care of competitions, events, finances, communications (since 2015 a part-time marketing coordinator), facilities, and sponsorships. Basically, the board has taken care of everything else except the coaching.

Increased activities, specialization, and willingness to change were the biggest assets in the early 2000s that led to the creation of the entrepreneurship model in 2003 and finally to the hiring of the first full-time worker in 2009. Paid and specialized staff is one of the most essential indicators of professionalism in the JTS. Since 2009, the club have had one full-time head coach and around four to six part-time coaches on a hourly basis. Through apprenticeship contract of Loviisa Skinnari in 2013-2015 the club had its first administrative worker. This development continued in the late 2015 when a part-time marketing coordinator, Jarno Tiusanen, was hired. Nyman pointed out that hiring of the full-time head coach and the part-time marketing coordinator have been the most essential changes in the human resources. Also, the club outsourced its accounting for a local accounting company in 2008 which Sarpola stated as one of the most important developments that made financial management of the club professionalized.

*"Mitä mä oon aina sanonutkin, että kenen vastuulla on mikäkin homma? Sehän on tavallaan vähän hullun hommaa, että jos mä teen asiat oikein hyvin ja visioin, niin sitten mun työt vain kasvaa vielä entisestään. Jos teen ja käytän enemmän aikaa siihen valmennukseen, niin mitä paremmin ja enemmän mä teen niitä asioita niin se aika vaan vähenee koko ajan. Tavallaan se tukehtuu ihan sitten. / What I have always said – who is responsible for this and who for that? In a way it is little bit crazy/stupid that if I do my job well then my workload just grows and grows. If I would do more and pay more attention to our every day coaching routines, and I would do it well, then I would run out of time."* – Henri Bruun on the challenges of being the only full-time worker.

The change was obvious when the club hired its first full-time worker. Activities of the club increased and one might argue that step towards professionalism was taken. However, the change brought some challenges as well. Ruoranen et al. (2016) also recognized that professionalization does not necessarily mean better quality. Now that the club had paid staff, it became also an employer with its responsibilities. The development of the club is inevitable through the hiring but it also brought contradictions between volunteers and paid staff. Issues regarding time management, working hours, and tasks started to emerge pretty soon. Who is responsible for what and why? These kind of questions were presented at that time.

### 6.2.3 The Most Important Stakeholders

At the end of the People and Positions –part, the interviewees were asked to list the most important assets and stakeholders of the club which are 1) City of Jyväskylä, 2) players and their families involved in the coaching, 3) staff, 4) volunteers, and 5) training facilities were mentioned as the most important ones (see figure 5).



**Figure 5.** The Most Important Assets and Stakeholders of the Club.

In addition, taking into consideration the responses regarding the importance of the board, it needs to be considered as a vital stakeholder. It might be that it was not listed because all of the interviewees have a connection to the board and therefore they did not consider that as a stakeholder.

### 6.3 Structures and Processes

In this chapter, the development of the sport club is examined by looking at the organizational structure, management of the club, and professionalism aspects.

#### 6.3.1 Organizational Structure

As a voluntary sports organization and registered association, the organization of JTS was based on voluntarism for a long time. During the first decade of the study period from 1993 to 2002, volunteers took care of the activities of the club. Pykälämäki described that especially during the 1990s everything was done by volunteers and the club had a board which was not that efficient.

*"Jos halusit saada jotain tehdyksi, niin itse tekemällä se onnistui. / If you wanted to get something done, you needed to do it by yourself.", Pykälämäki said on the mentality of the 1990s.*

Organizational structure started to develop in the early 2000s when the board of the club, Jukka-Pekka Nieminen as the chairman, decided to move towards more professionalized activities. Before, the organizational structure was a pretty basic one where the club had the legal board as the decision-making body and activities were carried out by volunteers. In 2003, the club changed its organizational structure completely. They decided to outsource the coaching service for an external operator – Nieminen described that they invented a new entrepreneurship model. Pykälämäki's company JklMailapelivalmennus was selected as the operator. The idea was to focus on high quality through qualified coaching staff. At that time, the activities and finances of the club were not big enough to recruit a coach, and therefore this entrepreneurship model was a good choice. Pykälämäki as the entrepreneur was responsible of the outcomes of the coaching and JTS did not have any financial risk which was important for the club at that time. Alongside with the entrepreneurship model, the club still had its board and volunteers. Nieminen said that willingness to voluntary actions started to decrease in the early 2000s and therefore the

entrepreneurship model was also a good choice. From the management point of view during the entrepreneurship model 2003-2007, the board of the club was more like a supervisor and "employer". Pykälämäki and his coaching staff from the JklMailapelivalmennus were the executive ones.

The entrepreneurship model was described to be working well at that time. Nieminen and his board were satisfied that they were able to create a new system that made the club more professionalized. However, the organizational structure was about to change back to its origins in the late 2007. At that time, Nieminen's chairman era was about to end and Ilkka Nyman stepped in as the new chairman in 2008. The new board made a decision to shut down the entrepreneurship model and return to the basic organizational structure. The main reasons behind the change were finances and contradictions in decision-making.

*"Kukaan ei kyseenalaistanut sitä systeemiä. / No one questioned that system." – Jari Sarpola on the entrepreneurship model.*

The club realized it could get more money out of its actions by doing it by itself. Financial management improved a lot in 2008 when the club decided to outsource its accounting. Through the new system Sarpola said that it became a lot easier to follow costs and incomes, and through that they were able to manage the club better. Regarding activities of the club after the return to a more traditional model, the emphasis was on voluntary actions at first. But it all changed in 2009 when the club managed to hire its first full-time head coach. From 2009 the club has had one full-time head coach Henri Bruun and around four to six part-time coaches on a hourly basis per season. Nyman described the most recent organizational structure and decision-making policies as:

*"Organisaatiorakenteessa puheenjohtaja ja hallitus ovat ylimpänä. Sitten tulevat päävalmentaja ja hänen allaan valmentajat. Kyllä hallitus tekee päätökset seurassa. Tietysti päävalmentaja vastaa ja tekee päätöksiä valmennuksen osalta, mutta hallitus antaa suuntaviivat ja eväät näidenkin päätösten tekemiseen. / The chairman and the*



*board are at the top of the organizational structure. After that comes the head coach and rest of the coaching staff. The board makes the decisions in the club. Of course, the head coach is responsible and makes decisions concerning coaching. But, the board gives the guidelines for that as well.”*

Notable in the organizational structure during the study period is the strong personification. Eventhough, the structures and decision-making policies have changed during the times, there have always been strong and active persons who have led the club. All of the chairmen (Pykälämäki 1993-2000, Nieminen 2001-2007, and Nyman 2008- ) described that there have not really been any working groups – instead, there have always been few active persons that have taken care of the actions. Outsourced coaching service in 2003-2007 and paid staff from 2008 onwards have taken care of the coaching but the administration of the club, namely the board, operates on a voluntary basis. There have never been paid executive director in the club. Only investments in administrative tasks have been the accounting company in 2008 and the part-time marketing coordinator in 2015.

### **6.3.2 Management of the Club**

This section highlights the interviewees’ perceptions of the importance of job descriptions and areas of responsibilities, strategies, finances, communications, and partnerships. Job descriptions and areas of responsibilities, and finances were the most emphasized areas. Also, the most important tasks of the manager of the club are presented.

The importance of human resources was highlighted by all of the interviewees. Whether it means volunteers or paid staff, the management of the club have understood the importance of it. All of the interviewees were unanimous of the high importance of job descriptions and areas of responsibility in order to have a working and sustainable organization.

*Toimenkuvat ja ajanhallinta ovat kaikkien urheiluseurojen kulmakivi, että mistä löytyvät tekijät. Seura on juuri niin aktiivinen kuin avainhenkilöt ovat aktiivisia, sillä tekemistä riittää ja aina voi keksiä uusia hyviä juttuja. / Job descriptions and areas of responsibilities are the corner stone of all sports clubs. It is the matter of finding the operators. The club is as active as its key operators, because there is always something to do and one can always come up with new good stuff.” – Petri Pykälämäki on the importance of job descriptions and areas of responsibilities.*

Also, the interviewees noticed human resources as one of the main challenges of the management of the club during the whole study period 1993-2016. Challenges have occurred within recruiting and managing volunteers, and with the management of paid staff.

Financial management has been in central role in the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä, especially in recent years because of the growth and willingness to develop tennis facilities. All of the interviewees stated that financial management and overall running of the activities of the club (activities and human resources are vital in this category) are the most important tasks for the management.

*“Jos ei pystytä pitämään taloutta plussalla, niin ei pystytä toimimaan. Lähes kaikki päätökset on tehty sen ehdoilla ja tietyllä tavalla pitääkin tehdä. / If we are not able to do positive financial results, then we are not able to operate. Almost all of the decisions are made by thinking of finances and in a way it should be done like that.” – Henri Bruun on the role of finances.*

The positive development of turnover and profits summarize well the overall growth of the club in terms of finances (see tables 6 and 7). The statistics were collected from the archive materials, annual reports and financial sheets, of the club. The monetary values from 1993 to 2000 were calculated by using 5,94573 as a multiplier ( $MK / 5,94573 = €$ ).

**Table 6.** Turnover of the club and its change in 1993-2016 (financial sheets of the club 1993-2016).

Year	Turnover (change %)	Year	Turnover (change %)
1993	344 246,05 MK = 57 898,03 €	2005	109 918,51 € (-12,28 %)
1994	321 766,05 MK = 54 117,16 € (-6,99 %)	2006	Not available
1995	Not available	2007	Not available
1996	186 871,20 MK = 31 429,48 €	2008	117 352,35 €
1997	187 267,30 MK = 31 496,10 € (+0,21 %)	2009	99 006,30 € (-18,53 %)
1998	205 256,00 MK = 34 521,58 € (+8,76 %)	2010	174 809,81 € (+43,36 %)
1999	202 707,00 MK = 34 092,87 € (-1,26 %)	2011	196 956,51 € (+11,24 %)
2000	189 287,00 MK = 31 835,79 € (-7,09 %)	2012	223 549,57 € (+11,90 %)
2001	24 053,38 € (-32,35 %)	2013	211 445,42 € (-5,72 %)
2002	22 105,29 € (-8,81 %)	2014	195 735,33 € (-8,03 %)
2003	68 595,76 € (+67,77 %)	2015	212 522,84 € (+7,90 %)
2004	123 421,79€ (+44,42 %)	2016	218 809,50€ (+2,87 %)

The financial information also support the different stages in the development of the club. The little turnovers (see table 6) in the 1990s reflect to the small scale amateur activities, the drop in the turnover in 2001-2002 reflect on the difficulties on arranging activities because of the lack of coaches, increase in turnover after the establishment of the entrepreneurship model in 2003, and significant growth in the 2010s when the most recent organizational structure has been in action with one full-time head coach, four to six part-time coaches, and part-time marketing coordinator (in 2015).

**Table 7.** Profit of the club in 1993-2016 (financial sheets of the club 1993-2016)

Year	Profit	Year	Profit
1993	-5 338,99 MK = -897,95 €	2005	403,21 €
1994	18 493,36 MK = 3 110,36 €	2006	1687,47 €
1995	Not available	2007	22 290,48 €
1996	-10 287,28 MK = -1 730,20 €	2008	12 122,40 €
1997	13 653,66 MK = 2 296,38 €	2009	27 668,17 €
1998	-17 069,24 MK = -2 870,84 €	2010	-3 962,04 €
1999	-6 433,70 MK = -1 082,07 €	2011	24 523,58 €
2000	7 175,11 MK = 1 206,77 €	2012	19 189,57 €
2001	666,08 €	2013	-660,88 €
2002	-565,51 €	2014	-3 794,82 €
2003	10 573,81 €	2015	14 685,17 €
2004	-3297,05 €	2016	21 661,91 €

The profits (see table 7) of the club indicate that the club has managed to take care of its finances. The profits from 1993 to 2002 are basically close to zero results. The clear changes have occurred simultaneously with the changes in the organizational structures in 2003 and from 2008 onwards. Through the positive outcomes, the club has managed to invest in the training facilities. Operational environment will be discussed later in more details, but good financial situation has helped and made it possible to invest in the Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus (established in 2005, and in 2010 JTS became one of the major owners of the company), outdoor tennis courts in 2010, and rebuilding a new tennis hall (Jyväskylän Tenniskeskus Janus) in 2016.

Strategies, communications, and partnerships were not considered as important as job descriptions and areas of responsibilities, and finances. The interviewees seemed to understand the potential of these aspects as well, but since the main task of the club has always been to provide and develop tennis opportunities, they did not consider these aspects that relevant in regards to the mission of the club. Lately, the importance of strategies, communications, and partnerships have also increased. The main reason for this is the increased activities of the club (e.g. strategies and partnerships are needed) and changes in the operational environment (e.g. technological development linked to communications). Especially, the role of the City of Jyväskylä as a partner was highlighted in providing circumstances.

### **6.3.3 Professionalism of the Club**

Like presented earlier, there have been several development stages during the study period 1993-2016 that can be linked to more professionalized activities. The interviewees have also noticed the development and they were asked about the level of professionalism of the club.

The interviewees of the study described and listed assets of a professional sports club: 1) paid staff, 2) professional coaching, 3) high quality of services, 4) strategical thinking and planning, 5) training facilities, and 6) financial management. They linked professionalism

as a comprehensive state of activities where the above mentioned assets have a great role. Human resources and training facilities were mentioned the most.

During the 1990s the activities of the club were purely based on voluntarism. Changed mentality of the club in the early 2000s led to the change of the organizational structure. The focus was to create a more professional sports club.

*“No se oli ammattimaisempi kuin aikaisempi. Että se oli kohti sitä. Eliikä siirryttiin vähän sieltä vapaaehtoissektorista kohti ammattimaisempaa toimintaa. / Well, it was more professional than before. It was going towards professionalism. We moved from voluntary sports sector towards more professionalized activities.” – Jukka-Pekka Nieminen on the change of organizational structure in the early 2000s.*

The entrepreneurship model had a strong linkage to a business-minded thinking with clear responsibilities and legal agreements. Also, Nieminen stated that it was easy to manage compared to volunteers who did not have any official agreements.

When talking about professionalism, all of the interviewees linked training facilities to the discussion. The Tennis Club of Jyväskylä has put a lot of effort in maintaining, developing, and creating new training facilities. Since 2005, the training facilities have had a constant high priority in the activities of the club – before that there were desires and plans of a tennis hall. Then Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus was established by six individuals and a new tennis hall was built to Killeri. It became the center for the the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä and in 2010 the club bought 5/12 shares of the company becoming one of the major owners. Operational environment will be discussed later in more details, but it needs to be mentioned in the professionalism section since it is clearly one of the most obvious signs, alongside with the human resources, of professionalism.

Simultaneously with the emphasis on training facilities, the club understood the importance of human resources. Like mentioned, the entrepreneurship model was the first step towards more professionalized activities. The next two major developments

happened straight after returning to a more traditional organizational structure. The interviewees highlighted the vital role of outsourcing the accounting in 2008 and the biggest improvement regarding human resources took place in 2009 when the club managed to hire its first full-time head coach Henri Bruun.

The club has clearly developed its actions and moved towards professionalism, especially in regards of operational environment and human resources. The development and change have also brought some new challenges for the recent management of the club.

*“No se kasvu, jatkuva kasvu. Se vaatii lisää olosuhteita ja ammattitaitoisia valmentajia - tavallaan siinä perässä pysyminen on se haaste. / The growth, the constant growth is a challenge. It requires more and better facilities and coaches – trying to keep up with pace of the development is the challenge.” – Henri Bruun on the challenges of professionalism.*

The growth and limited resources (especially regarding facilities and human resources) together are the most recent challenge for the club to solve. How to answer to the development? In the last section of the results are presented perceptions of respondents on the future of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä.

#### **6.4 Strategies and Activities**

Strategies and activities of the club have remained pretty much the same during the study period 1993-2016 (see table 8). The reason of existence has always been to provide and develop tennis circumstances in Jyväskylä and in Central Finland. The club has organized its actions around that mission.

**Table 8.** Strategies and Activities of the Club 1993-2016.

Time period	Activities	Strategies
1993-2002	Tennis and racketlon	<p>Voluntary basis</p> <p>”Ei siis se ei ollut mitenkään ammattimaista. Se oli harrastuspohjalta. / It was not professional at all. It was completely on a voluntary basis.” – <b>Petri Pykälämäki on the level of professionalization in the 1990s</b></p> <p><u>Change in the mentality:</u></p> <p>”Nostimme valmennuksen ammattimaiselle tasolle / We lifted the level of coaching to a professional level” – <b>Petri Pykälämäki (Hämäläinen 2012, 63.)</b></p>
2003-2007	Tennis and racketlon	<p>Entrepreneurship model:</p> <p>JTS outsourced the coaching service for a company, <i>JklMailapelivalmennus</i>. Petri Pykälämäki as the executive operator.</p> <p>”No se oli ammattimaisempi kuin aikaisempi. Että se oli kohti sitä. Eliikkä siirryttiin vähän sieltä vapaaehtoisesta kohti ammattimaisempaa toimintaa. / Well, it was more professional than before. It was going towards professionalism. We moved from voluntary sports sector towards more professionalized activities.” – <b>Jukka-Pekka Nieminen on the change of organizational structure in the early 2000s.</b></p> <p>Establishment of <i>the Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus</i> in 2005 and building a tennis hall in Killeri.</p>
2008	Tennis	<p>Back to a basic organization model – ”year off”, reconstruction.</p> <p>”Niin, muutettiin ihan seuratoimintamalliksi, tavalliseksi kyllä. / Yes, we changed our organization model back to a more traditional model.” – <b>Jari Sarpola.</b></p>
2009	Tennis	The club hired the first full-time head coach Henri Bruun
2010-2016	Tennis	Time of the new organizational structure – emphasis on human resources and facilities.

The club used to have tennis and racketlon as its forms of activities. Pykälämäki told that racketlon was popular in the 1990s and in the early 2000s as well. But, it dropped out in 2008 and since that the club has specialized purely in providing tennis services. Since the 1990s, the club has offered services for both children and adults.

Regarding strategies, it seems the club has not had any in-depth and long-term strategies, except concerning the training facilities. Otherwise, the decision-making has been shortsighted and based on the perceptions of individuals of different times. There were not available or the interviewees did not remember to have had any written long-term strategies regarding club's development. Notable issue was also the answers regarding coaching policies during 2010s which were not in line within the management. This appeared through perceptions of Nyman and Sarpola who did not know or suspected that there have not been that clear coaching policies. On the other hand, the head coach Henri Bruun stated that the club has a coaching policy. Obviously, it can be seen through changes in the organizational structure that there has been strategical thinking (e.g. the entrepreneurship model, establishment of the Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus, and hiring the first full-time head coach) and willingness to development (e.g. changes in the mentality of the club) and even professionalization (especially through facilities and human resources).

As a summary of strategies and activities, the club has managed to act according to its reason of existence. But, the lack of long-term strategies (planning, implementing, and evaluating strategies and activities) is probably the clearest asset of not supporting the professionalism of the club.

## 6.5 Operational Environment

*“Me tehtiin ensin hallituksessa päätös, että pitää saada olosuhteet kuntoon. Meillä oli määrätty strategia tämän toteuttamiseksi. / First, we made a decision at the board that we need to have proper training facilities. We had a certain strategy to implement this goal.” – Jari Sarpola on the change of the operational environment.*



Professionalism of the club has appeared especially through operational environment, especially meaning training facilities. Already in the 1990s, there were desires of an own tennis hall, but it was not possible mainly because of the finances. But, the circumstances started to change and become more favourable in the early 2000s. Table 9 shows the training facilities in which the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä has operated.

**Table 9.** Training facilities: indoors and outdoors in 1993-2016.

Indoors	Outdoors
1993-2005 Hutunki (a private company)	1993-2002 Kortepohja (owned by City of Jyväskylä)
1998 Tennishall of Seppälä + Hutunki	2003-2010 Hippos (owned by City of Jyväskylä)
2005-2008 Killerin Kupla (Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus)	2010-2016 Hippos (owned by City of Jyväskylä)
2007-2009 Hutunki	
2009-2016 Killerin Kupla (Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus)	
2016- Jyväskylän Tenniskeskus Janus (Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus)	

The club's main facilities until 2005 were Hutunki (a private company) during winter times, and Kortepohja 1993-2002 (public sector, the City of Jyväskylä) and Hippos (public sector, the City of Jyväskylä) from 2003 onwards during summer times. This highlights the importance of cooperation between the three sports sectors: voluntary, public, and private. The role of the City of Jyväskylä and owners of the training facilities were emphasized by the interviewees within the whole study period.

The growth of the club and willingness to have an own tennis hall led to the crucial development in 2005. Six individuals, including Pykälämäki and Sarpola, established a limited company, *the Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus*, to create, maintain, and develop tennis facilities in 2005. During the same year, a tennis hall *Killerin Kupla*, was built to Killeri. Already back then, the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä was asked to join in as an owner, but the board decided first to join in as a customer by renting courts. The cooperation started well, but then some challenges and contradictions appeared in pricing and the club decided to tender out different possibilities. This led to an unbearable situation between the club and the limited company. The end result was that the club returned to Hutunki for a while. The situation was not ideal for anyone and after few years

of turbulence the undesirable situation expired by JTS becoming one of the major owners of the *Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus* in 2010. At that time, the club had succeeded to make some profits from earlier years (see table 7) and through that it was possible to invest in the limited company. Since, the club has governed and had power in its indoor facilities. The cooperation with the public sector continued regarding outdoor courts.

The latest improvement and investment in training facilities happened in 2016 when a new tennis hall was built in the same place as the *Killerin Kupla*. The *Jyväskylän Tenniskeskus Janus* replaced the old hall.

*“Olosuhteiden kuntoon saaminen on ollut puheenjohtajakauteni tärkein asia. Minusta ne on nyt hyvällä mallilla: meillä on riittävästi ulkokenttiä ja talviolosuhteet ovat suorastaan loistavat. / Improving the training facilities have been the most important task during my chairmanship. In my opinion, the situation is good at the moment: we have enough outdoor courts and indoor facilities are excellent.” – Ilkka Nyman on the change of the operational environment during his chairmanship that started in 2008.*

In addition to these concrete training facilities, the interviewees brought up issues that highlight the multidimensionality of the operational environment.

*“Suomessa on hyvä toimintaympäristö. Suomessahan on paljon kuitenkin tällaista järjestötoimintaa, niin meillä on selkeästi opittu seuratoimintaan mukaan tulemiseen. / The operational environment for sports clubs in Finland is good. We have a wide range of civil activities, and we have learnt and got used to join activities of a sports club.” – Henri Bruun on the operational environment on a societal level.*

Politics and societal trends were mentioned to have impacts in the operational environment. Politics were mentioned and connected to the issues related to the training facilities. The interviewees highlighted that it is important to have good relationships with the public decision-makers. From the societal trends point of view Bruun brought up the good and learnt situation to join activities of sports clubs in Finland. Also, increased

leisure time and willingness to spend money on it were mentioned as attributes of the recent positive trend in the number of participants.

As a conclusion, the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä has put a lot of effort in creating, maintaining, and developing tennis facilities since 2005. In 2010, the club became one of the major owners of *the Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus* and through that it has managed to have decision-making power and control over its indoor facilities. There have been some challenges regarding the unique cooperation between the private company and the voluntary sports organization, but after becoming the major owner the club has been able to control the situation and even grow its activities.

## **6.6 Future of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä**

At the end of the interview process, the interviewees were asked to share their thoughts on the future of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä. The interviewees who were not anymore operating in the club were asked to reflect on the thoughts they had when they left the club.

All of the interviewees were confident that the club would manage well. The positivity and confidence among all of the answers were notable. The main reasons for this were the successful developments concerning: 1) the operational environment, 2) activities of the club, and 3) human resources.

At the end of the interview, the interviewees did not see any risks or challenges for the development of the club. But earlier statements in the interviews reveal that the interviewees think that the club needs to pay attention to human resources, facilities, and strategies in order to answer the recent development and growth. The most recent chairman, Ilkka Nyman, stated that the club would need another full-time worker, an executive director, in order to keep up with positive trend. Also, the growth of the club has made the management think of where to put their effort and in which direction the club would like to develop its actions.

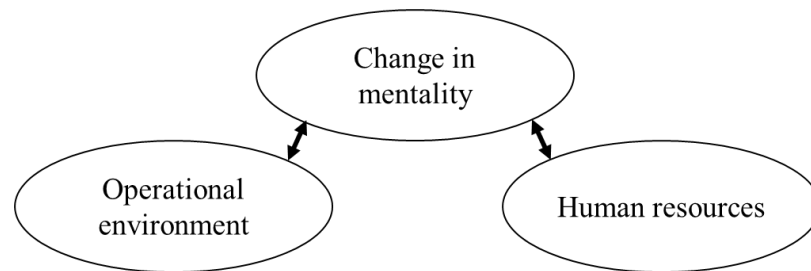
## **7 CHANGE IN MENTALITY, OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT, AND HUMAN RESOURCES AS THE MOST IMPORTANT SIGNS OF PROFESSIONALISM**

Ruoranen et al. (2016), Dowling et al. (2014), and Koski and Heikkala (1998) defined that professionalization of a sports organization means that the sports organization moves towards more business-minded actions on the different levels of the organization. Professionalization is a process which can also be seen in the case of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä.

The results of the study indicate clear changes and developments of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä. The development occurs especially through operational environment and human resources. The club has managed to create, develop, and maintain tennis facilities especially since becoming one of the major owners of the limited company, *Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus*, in 2010. Human resources have also rapidly changed from the voluntarism of the 1990s to hired experts in the 2010s. First, the club outsourced its coaching service in 2003 and then in 2009 the club managed to hire its first full-time head coach. The club also hired a part-time marketing coordinator to help and develop communications and administration of the club in 2015. It has been possible to develop human resources and operational environment through the growth of the club. The management of the club highlighted the importance of finances. At the end, the growth of the turnover and high amounts of profits (see tables 6 and 7) have enabled the development.

Also, the change in the mentality of the club's management is notable in the late 1990s and early 2000s. Then, the club's officials stated their willingness to move towards more professionalized activities. Ruoranen et al. (2016) emphasized also the importance of motivation and changed management philosophy in the process of professionalization. That mentality, willingness to improve and get better, has maintained in the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä through the whole 21<sup>st</sup> century. Since the changed mentality occurred first,

we can argue that it correlates to the later changes and developments of the operational environment and human resources (see figure 6).



**Figure 6.** Three main changes and developments of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016.

The model of Ruoranen et al. (2016) highlights three different areas of professionalization: people and positions, strategies and activities, and structures and processes. To some extent, the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä has managed to develop its actions in all of the categories. Therefore, we can argue that the development of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä indicates also the professionalization of the club. The major changes and development, which indicate also the professionalism of the club, are presented in the table 10.

**Table 10.** The major developments and changes of the club from the 1990's to present

	1990s	2000s	2010s
<b>Mentality</b>	Amateurism and voluntarism	Change in the late 1990s and early 2000s: towards more professionalized activities	
<b>Human Resources</b>	Based on voluntarism	Combination of paid and specialized staff and volunteers: Entrepreneurship model 2003-2007; first full-time worker, the head coach, of the club in 2009 + 4-6 part-time coaches on a hourly basis per season since 2008; part-time marketing coordinator 2015	
<b>Operational Environment</b>	Not own facilities	<p>Role of the board has been very important during the whole study period 1993-2016</p> <p>Increase of the memberships by 147 % from 1993 to 2016 (number of members in 2016: 380)</p> <p>The establishment of the Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus 2005</p> <p>The club became one of the major owners of the Kiinteistö Oy Killerin Tenniskeskus in 2010 – control over the indoor facilities</p> <p>Main training facilities: Hutunki 1993-2005; Killerin Kupla 2005-2008 and Hutunki 2007-2009; Killerin Kupla 2009-2016; Jyväskylän Tenniskeskus Janus 2016</p>	
<b>Finances</b>	Not in the focus, amateur-based	<p>Focus on finances, central role in the decision-making</p> <p>Outsourced accounting 2008</p> <p>Rapid growth in the turnover in the 2010s</p> <p>High amounts of profit since 2007</p>	
<b>Activities</b>		Tennis and racketlon 1993-2008	Tennis 2008-

However, there are signs that do not support the professionalization of the club. The most visible issue was the lack of long-term strategies among the activities of the club. The study of Thiel and Mayer (2009) also discovered that non-profit organizations struggle to have clear objectives and strategies which makes it very challenging to develop the actions of the club. Ruoranen et al. (2016) also highlight the importance of efficient strategies and structures.

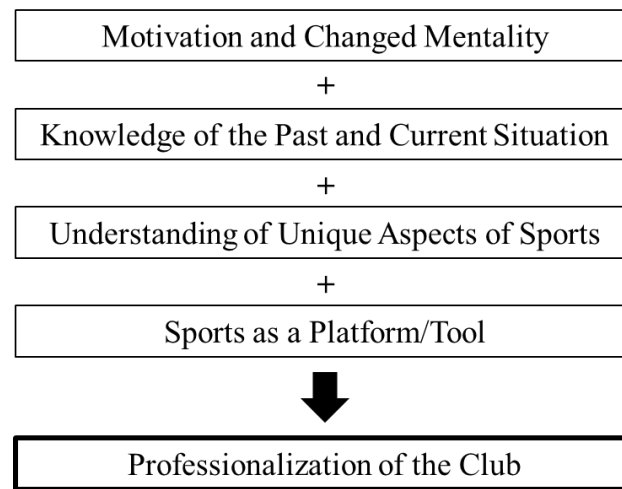
In addition, Koski and Heikkala (1998), and Ruoranen et al. (2016) point out that professionalization of the organization does not necessarily mean better quality and positive outcomes. This was also noticed in the case of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä. Challenges regarding scarce resources and growth, and human resources were mentioned as the challenges brought by the professionalization. Recently, the constant growth has been problematic for the club that operates with limited resources. Especially, this has occurred within the human resources where issues of time management and job descriptions, and relationship between paid staff and volunteers were addressed.

Like mentioned, the professionalization is a process with many different aspects. Non-profit sports organizations have long traditions in voluntarism and therefore change towards more business-like actions might be challenging. The change can also be challenging to manage – Slack (1997) pointed out the contradiction between the goals of stable and sustainable management and willingness to development that would need a change. The management of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä has also experienced the multidimensionality, benefits and negative aspects, of development or professionalization.

## **7.1 A Model of Professionalization for Voluntary Sports Clubs**

Developments of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä support the argument that professionalization is a process that takes time and dedication. The main idea of this research was to examine the development, change, and challenges of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016 while moving towards professionalism. As the thesis process

progressed, an idea of a model or process of professionalization for voluntary sports clubs was outlined (see figure 7).



**Figure 7.** A model of professionalization for voluntary sports clubs.

The idea behind the model was adapted through the development of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä and the literature of Itkonen (2002), Smith (2008), Preuss (2007), Masterman (2004), Haltia and Jalonen (2015), and Ruoranen et al. (2016). Shift from voluntary actions to professionalism starts from changed mentality that needs to be adopted to every level of the organization – Ruoranen et al. (2016) highlighted the importance of changed management philosophy in the process of professionalization. Then, management of the sports organization need to have adequate knowledge of the past and current situation, and understanding of the sports sector and its unique aspects. Itkonen (2002) presents a comprehensive outlook of the Finnish physical activity and sports culture, and Smith (2008) provides basic insights into the sports sector and unique aspects of it. Preuss (2007), Masterman (2004), and Haltia and Jalonen (2015) recognized the potential of sports as a platform or tool in creating positive impacts and values. In the professionalization process, it would be important to understand how to use sports to change the actions and impacts of the organization towards more business-like phenomenon.

If the voluntary sports club is able to combine and adapt these steps in its actions, it might be possible to move towards professionalism. Obviously, every club and situation are



different and unique – therefore, it is very hard to form a specified and applicable model that works for every situation.

## **7.2 Limitations of the Study and Future Research**

This study highlighted comprehensively the development, changes, and challenges of the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016 while moving towards professionalism from the management's perspective. In the future, it would be beneficial to continue to examine professionalism by paying attention to different ages of the club, different stakeholder's perceptions, and federation level.

Since, the club is established in 1932, it would also be beneficial to have a longer study period in order to create even more comprehensive and holistic view of the club's development. This study gives a good starting point for more in-depth evaluations of different ages of the club.

The management point of view was examined in this research, but it would be very beneficial to study professionalism from different points of views. Sports organizations have many different stakeholders whose perceptions of professionalism would be important to examine. For example, in the future it would be reasonable to study professionalism from the perspectives of volunteers, participants, and sponsors. The voluntary sports organizations operate in a close cooperation between public and private sector. It would be interesting to examine perceptions of public and private sectors who have had cooperation with a voluntary sports organization that have moved towards professionalism.

Also, this study presents the point of view of the one club, the Tennis Club of Jyväskylä. In the future, it would be important to study other tennis clubs and the Finnish Tennis Association in order to create a good overall picture of the whole Finnish tennis sector. The Finnish Tennis Association could be examined at least from two perspectives: 1)

professionalism of the Finnish Tennis Association, and 2) Finnish Tennis Association's perception of the level of professionalism of its member clubs.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1. Consent Form

#### Tiedotuskirje ja suostumuslomake haastateltavalle

Jyväskylän Yliopisto  
Liikuntatieteellinen tiedekunta  
Pro Gradu –tutkielma  
Ohjaaja: Anna-Katriina Salmikangas  
Tutkija: Jarno Tiisanen

#### Suomalaisen Urheilun Vapaaehtoissektorin Ammattimaistuminen – Tapaustutkimus: Jyväskylän Tennisseura 1993-2016 (Professionalism of the Finnish Voluntary Sports Sector - Case Study: The Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016)

Tutkimuksessa käsitellään suomalaisen urheilun vapaaehtoissektorin muutosta ja ammattimaistumista. Tutkimuksessa keskitytään Jyväskylän Tennisseuran muutokseen ja ammattimaistumiseen aikavälillä 1993-2016.

#### Osallistujan suostumus

Osallistuminen tutkimukseen on täysin vapaaehtoista. Tutkittavalla on haastattelun aikana täysi oikeus keskeyttää haastattelu ilman, että siitä aiheutuu mitään seuraamuksia. Haastateltava saa itse päättää käytetäänkö tutkielmassa hänen nimeään tai muita tunnistettavia tietoja. Haastatteluaineistoa käsitellään luottamuksellisesti ja se tulee olemaan ainoastaan tutkijan käytössä. Aineisto tuhoetaan käsittelyn jälkeen asianmukaisesti. Haastateltavalla on oikeus saada lisätietoa tutkimuksesta tutkijalta missä vaiheessa tahansa.

#### Suostun osallistumaan tutkimukseen:

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Päiväys

Osallistujan allekirjoitus ja nimenselvennys

☐ Nimeäni saa käyttää tutkimuksessa

#### Suostumuksen vastaanottaja:

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Päiväys

Tutkijan allekirjoitus ja nimenselvennys



## Appendix 2. Interview Framework in Finnish

### Interview Framework / Haastattelurunko

Professionalism of the Finnish Voluntary Sports Sector

Case Study: The Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016

### Background / Tausta

1. Nimi
2. Asema(-t) organisaatiossa ja vuodet
3. Koulutus (mainitkaa ylin koulutuksenne)
4. Mikä sai sinut lähtemään mukaan seuratoimintaan?

### People and Positions / Ihmiset ja Asemat

#### Hallitus

1. Miten kuvailisit seuran hallituksen roolia? Millainen on/oli hallituksen rooli?
2. Mitkä ovat/olivat hallituksen tärkeimmät työtehtävät?
3. Onko hallitustyöskentely muuttunut aikakaudellanne? Miten?

#### Vapaaehtoiset

4. Millainen rooli vapaaehtoisilla on/oli organisaatiossanne? (toimenkuvat, aktiivisuus)
5. Onko vapaaehtoistyöskentely muuttunut aikakaudellanne? Miten?

#### Palkattu henkilöstö

6. Mikä on/oli palkatun henkilöstön määrä organisaatiossanne?
  - a. Mitkä ovat/olivat palkatun henkilöstön työtehtävät?
7. Onko palkatun henkilöstön määrä tai toimenkuvat muuttuneet aikakaudellanne?

#### Jäsenet

8. Millainen on/oli jäsenten rooli seurassanne?
  - a. Osallistuvatko jäsenet seuratyöhön? Jos kyllä, miten paljon ja kuinka laajasti?
9. Onko jäsenten/jäsenyyden rooli muuttunut aikakaudellanne?
10. Millaisia ryhmiä organisaationne sisällä toimii? (jäsenet-hallitus-palkattu henkilöstö-vapaaehtoiset)
11. Mitkä sidosryhmät ovat/olivat tärkeimmät seuratoiminnan kannalta? Onko/oliko tässä muutoksia aikakaudellanne?

### Structures and Processes / Rakenteet ja Järjestelmät

#### Hallintorakenne

1. Mikä on/oli seuranne organisaatorakenne?
  - a. Onko/oliko seurassanne toimikuntia? Jos kyllä, minkälaisia?
  - b. Missä tapahtuu/tapahtui päätöksenteko?
2. Miten hallintorakenne on muuttunut aikakaudellanne? Miten sitä voisi kehittää?

#### Seurajohtaminen

3. Mitkä ovat/olivat tärkeimmät tehtäväsi seurajohtajana?
  - a. kuinka oleellisena ja merkittävänä osa-alueina pidätte:
    - \* toimenkuvia ja vastuualueita sekä niiden ajanhallintaa sekä laatua
    - \* seuran taloutta
    - \* strategiaa
    - \* ulkoista ja sisäistä viestintää
    - \* yhteistyökumppanuuksia

4. Mitä ominaisuuksia seurajohtajalta vaaditaan/vaadittiin?
5. Mitkä ovat/olivat suurimmat haasteet seurajohtamisessa?
6. Onko seurajohtaminen muuttunut aikakaudellanne? Miten?
7. Millainen olisi ideaaliorganisaatiorakenne seurajohtajan näkökulmasta?

#### Ammattimaistuminen

8. Kuinka kuvailet termin "ammattimainen urheiluseura"?
9. Millaiseksi arvioisit seurasi hallinnon ammattimaisuuden? (johtaminen, suunnitelmallisuus, toimintatavat, seuranta)
10. Millainen kehityskulku ammattimaistumisessa on ollut aikakaudellanne? (oliko se tavoite ja tahtotila? Onko tässä ollut muutosta?)
11. Millaisia haasteita ammattimaistuminen on tuottanut/tuotti seurajohtajalle?

#### **Strategies and Activities / Strategiat ja Aktiviteetit**

##### Seuratoiminta

1. Mitä toimintoja seuranne on järjestänyt aikakaudellasi?
  - a. Kuvaillaa lyhyesti näitä toimintoja! (Esim. kuinka monta ryhmää/osallistujaa on mukana näissä toiminnoissa? Kuinka usein he harjoittelevat? Kuinka monta kuukautta vuosittain he harjoittelevat? Mistä lähtien järjestätte näitä toimintoja?)
2. Mikä on/oli seuran missio aikanaan?
  - a. tärkein tehtävä ja olemassaolon syy?
3. Onko/Oliko seuralla selkeä visio ja mitä se sisältää?
4. Onko seurallanne seuran kehittämiseen liittyviä asiakirjoja?
  - a. Toimintasuunnitelma ja talousarvio
  - b. Toimintakäsikirja
  - c. Onko seurallanne viestintä- tai markkinointisuunnitelmaa?
  - d. Muita dokumentteja?
5. Millä tavalla seuranne strategia laaditaan?
  - a. Millä tavalla seuraatte seuran tavoitteiden toteutumista?

##### Valmennus

6. Miten valmennustoiminta on organisoitu?
  - a. Kuka on/oli vastuussa? Palkattua henkilöstöä vai vapaaehtoisia?
  - b. Onko vastuunjaossa ollut muutoksia?
7. Onko/oliko seurallanne valmennuslinjaus käytössä?
  - a. Jos on, millä tavalla se on jalkautettu?
8. Mitkä ovat/olivat valmennustoiminnan keskeisimmät haasteet?

##### Yhteistyökumppanuudet

8. Mikä on/oli yhteistyökumppanuuksien rooli ja merkittävyys toiminnassanne?
9. Onko yhteistyökumppanuuksien asema/merkittävyys muuttunut seurassa aikakaudellanne?

#### **Environment / Ympäristö ja Tilat**

1. Millaisessa toimintaympäristössä toimitte? (tilat, yhteiskunta, poliittinen ilmapiiri)
2. Minkälaisen toimintaympäristön koette hyväksi seuratoiminnalle?
3. Mitkä tekijät vaikuttavat toimintaympäristöönne?
4. Onko toimintaympäristönne muuttunut aikakaudellanne? Jos kyllä, miten?

#### **Conclusion / Päätösosa**

1. Mihin suuntaan uskot/uskoit seuran kehittyvän?
2. Muuta lisättävää haastatteluun liittyen?

## Appendix 3. Interview Framework in English

### Interview Framework

Professionalism of the Finnish Voluntary Sports Sector

Case Study: The Tennis Club of Jyväskylä 1993-2016

### Background

1. Name
2. Position(s) and years in the organization
3. Education
4. What were your motivations getting involved in the voluntary sport sector/sports club's activities?

### People and Positions

#### Board of the Club / Administration

1. How would you describe the role of the board? What is/was the role of the board?
2. What are/were the most important tasks of the board?
3. Have working methods/the role of the board changed during your era? How?

#### Volunteers

4. What kind of role volunteers have/had in your organization? (tasks, activity)
5. Have working methods/the role of the volunteers changed during your era? How?

#### Staff

6. What is/was the number of staff in your organization?
  - a. What are/were work tasks of the staff?
7. Have number of staff or their work tasks changed during your era? If yes, how?

#### Members

8. What kind of role members have/had in your organization?
  - a. Do members participate in the club's activities? If yes, how much and in what kind of tasks?
9. Have the role of members changed during your era? If yes, how?
10. Which stakeholders/groups operate in your organization? (members-board-staff-volunteers)
11. Which of the stakeholders are/were the most important ones? Have you recognized any changes regarding this during your era?

### Structures and Processes

#### Organizational Structure

1. What kind of organizational structure is/was in your organization?
  - a. Any working groups/committees? If yes, what kind of?
  - b. Where happens decision-making? Who?
2. Has organizational structure changed during your era? How it could be developed?

#### Club Management

3. As a club manager, what were the most important tasks you had?
  - a. how important you consider:
    - \* job descriptions (their time management and quality)
    - \* finance
    - \* strategy
    - \* communications (outer and inner)
    - \* partnerships

4. Which characteristics are/were needed from a good club manager?
5. What are/were the biggest challenges in the management of the club?
6. Has management of the club changed during your era? How?
7. From your point of view, what would be an ideal organizational structure?

#### Professionalism

8. How would you describe "professional sports club"?
9. How would you rate/evaluate the level of professionalism in your club's administration? (management, orderliness, working methods, evaluation)
10. Have you recognized any progression in the professionalism of the club during your era? (was professionalization an aim for you? changes?)
11. What kind of challenges have professionalization caused for the club's management?

### **Strategies and Activities**

#### Club Activities

1. What activities your club offers/offered during your era?
  - a. Describe them shortly! (E.g. how many groups/participants involved? How often they practice? How many months in a year they practise? Since when have you organized these actions?)
2. What is the mission of the club?
  - a. most important task and reason of existence?
3. Has/had your club a clear vision? If yes, what kind of?
4. Has/had your club following documents regarding development of the club?
  - a. Action plan and budget
  - b. Action guide/handbook
  - c. Communications and marketing plan?
  - d. Other documents?
5. How is the strategy of the club prepared?
  - a. How do you follow and evaluate your actions?

#### Coaching

6. How coaching is/was taken care of?
  - a. Who is/was in charge? Staff or volunteers?
  - b. Any changes during your era?
7. Has/had your club a coaching policy?
  - a. If yes, what kind of?
8. What are/were the most crucial coaching challenges?

#### Partnerships

9. What kind of role and significance partnerships have in your actions?
10. Has the role of the partnerships changed during your era? If yes, how?

### **Environment**

1. In what kind of environment the club operates? (e.g. facilities, society, politics)
2. What kind of environment is good for club activities?
3. Which factors have/had an impact on the club's working environment?
4. Has the working environment changed during your era? If yes, how?

### **Conclusion**

1. To which direction, you think the club will develop? / How you thought the club will develop after your era?
2. Would you like to add something to the interview?