



**UNIVERSITY OF GOTHENBURG**  
**SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, ECONOMICS AND LAW**

**Capturing Value in the Sport of Floorball:  
Exploring the development of a new sport  
and the international business links with  
equipment manufacturers and retailers**

**Department of Business Administration**

**International Business**

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## **Abstract**

This thesis is about finding the different sources of value that contribute to the development of the sport and the striving towards success within the sport of floorball. Having the mindset that value is created from many different collaborating activities and using the framework about value creation as a tool, to dig in to the sport of floorball, the thesis explores what kind of values that are transferred among the economic actors. The thesis seeks to answer the questions: “How do the different economic actors in the framework contribute to the value creation within floorball?” and “Which different economic actors contribute to the development of the sport?” To be able to answer these questions, and to get a deeper understanding and to strengthen the trustworthiness, several prominent individuals within the world of floorball have been interviewed, to add their professional inputs to the output of this thesis. The thesis concludes that all the economic actors within the framework contribute to various extents, high or low, yet they are all in need of cooperation with each other. The thesis also concludes that there are some really important economic actors within the world of floorball, namely the equipment manufacturers and the retailers, who contribute largely to the development of the sport but whom not yet are presented in the framework.

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**Isaac Rosén**, floorball player.

**Jan Inge Forsberg**, managing director at Renew Group Sweden AB.

**Johan Jihde**, product manager at Unihoc.

**Johan Österman**, product and R&D manager at Renew Group Sweden AB.

**Kalle Brännberg**, product manager at Zone.

**Kristian Strande**, purchasing manager at Renew Group Sweden AB.

**Kristina Landgren Carestam**, Sports manager in Pixbo Wallenstam.

**Magnus Augustsson**, part owner of Klubbhuset.

**Magnus Söderqvist Wall**, chairman of IBF Göteborg.

**Martin Östholm**, floorball player.

**Tomas Solin**, managing director at Salming Sports.

**Torbjörn Jonsson**, vice managing director at Renew Group Sweden AB.

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## **Abbreviations and explanations**

AB – Aktiebolag (limited company)

BK – Bollklubb (ball club)

FC – Football Club

GIBF – Göteborg's innebandyförbund (Gothenburg's Floorball Federation)

IBF – Innebandyörening (floorball association)

IBK – Innebandyklubb (floorball club)

IC – Innebandyclub (floorball club)

IF – Idrottsörening (sports club)

IFF – International Floorball Federation

IOC – International Olympic Committee

IWGA – International World Games Association

KH TV – Klubbhuset television

RF – Riksidrottsförbundet (Swedish Sports Federation)

R&D – Research and Development

SEA-Games – South East Asia Games

SIBF – Svenska innebandyförbundet (Swedish Floorball Federation)

SSL – Svenska superligan (Swedish Super League)

USA – United States of America

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## **1. Introduction**

*This chapter will provide a short background followed by the purpose of the thesis and the research questions. There will also be a thesis outline in the end of the chapter.*

### **1.1 Background**

New sports often face a tough challenge of becoming established and recognized around the world. It is economically heavy to drag a new sport ashore into a new country and to spread it across the world. In the very beginning, it requires a lot of inspired and passionate people who are ready to work pro bono for the sport's development. Investigating the development of new sports is important and interesting to be able get an understanding for all the work and all the powers needed to make a progress in the development process. In addition, it helps to find the stakeholders who have an interest in the development. Examples of stakeholders to such progress might be: governing bodies who might have interests in growing bigger, manufacturers who might be able to sell more products, players who might be able to have their sport as a profession, clubs who might be able to be run like businesses to make profits and sponsors who might be able to reach out to a broader market.

Floorball is a young sport and there is very little information available in books or in other written sources. Therefore, a large part of the information within this thesis is gathered from interviews, with prominent individuals, and research that have been performed on the field by me, the author. This thesis highlights different thoughts and ideas about the value creation process and the development of the sport.

Value can be of both tangible and intangible character, which makes it even more interesting, especially if looking at the intangible part. As an example, such intangible value can be created among members in a team by simply giving positive feedback to one and other. This thesis will consider both economic value, materialistic value and emotional value of different kinds, all of which contribute to the competitive advantage of the end product.

### **1.2 Purpose and research question**

The purpose of the thesis is to explore how the value creation among the different economic actors within floorball looks like and how the framework acts as a tool to capture this value creation. The purpose is also to find which different economic actors that contributes to the

sports development. In order to fulfill the purpose, the thesis is broken down into two research questions:

- “How do the different economic actors in the framework contribute to the value creation within floorball?”
- “Which different economic actors contribute to the development of the sport?”

Using a framework developed to find the value that contribute to the competitive advantage of a team within professional team sports, the thesis will highlights how different economic actors are involved in the value capturing activities and their strategic relationships within the sport of floorball. To be able to answer the first research question every single component of the framework is analysed and compared to an equivalent part within floorball. To find the answer to the second question, the role and business of various economic actors is analysed.

### **1.3 Thesis outline**

The structure of this thesis aims to be easy to follow and easy to understand. It begins with a chapter of theories that shortly explains the theory of the value chain. Secondly, the framework about value creation, that generates competitive advantage within professional team sports, is briefly explained. Later on in the analysis chapter, the framework will be further explained by using football and floorball in order to clarify its function.

After the theory chapter follows the methodology chapter. Within the methodology chapter there will be a description of the chosen methods followed by an explanation of how and why the research was conducted in a certain way. The reliability and validity of the research will be discussed.

The next chapter explains and introduces the sport floorball, presenting its history, equipment, rules, international spread and other relevant and interesting information for the thesis. This chapter is to be seen as findings and empirical data, which will be used during the analysis.

Following the chapter about floorball there will be the analysis chapter. Out of the data and information gathered during the interviews and research, and by using the framework as a tool, parallels to the sport of floorball will be drawn. The research questions will be analysed by looking at how the different economic actors are involved in the value creation process and

the development of the sport. Then the equipment manufacturers and retailers role within the sport will be analyzed, since it became apparent that they are extremely important for the value creation and development of the sport. Arguments will be presented in order to see if they are entitled to be their own component within the framework. Lastly, different streams of value, which are being transferred back and forth between the economic actors within the framework, will be defined.

In the final chapter the research questions will be answered by summarizing the key findings in the analysis. This chapter also points out the contribution to this field of science, giving some examples about further research that could be made by others. I will also provide some thoughts about the future of the sport.

## **2. Theories and framework**

*In this chapter I will explain the theories that I am using within my thesis. I will use theories about the value chain and competitive advantage as my mindset during this thesis and I will use the framework called 'The network of value captures' to explore the value capturing process within the sport of floorball. The idea of explaining Porter's theory about the value chain is to give the reader an understanding about how the collaboration between many different activities are vital in the process of establishing competitive advantage. Meanwhile the framework of value capturers will be used as the main tool to analyze the different economic actors within floorball.*

### **2.1 Porter's value chain**

The theory about the value chain was developed by Michael E. Porter and it is a tool that is used to divide a firm's activities in the best possible strategic way, to be able to analyze the firms' competitive advantages. Value can be created in many ways and come from many directions, and to find where the competitive advantage of a single firm lays is not easy (Porter 1985). Things that create value and generate competitive advantage can be finding the most efficient supplier, being located in a cluster of knowledge or simply being lucky having the most talented workers within the firm.

A firm usually has a supplier who has their own value chain, the supplier value chain. Once the product of a firm's value chain is sold, it will end up in the buyer's value chain. In between the firm and the buyer there might also be a channel who distribute and/or market and sell the product, and they have their own value chain, the channel value chain. All of

those value chains together can be seen as a value system. To understand a firm's competitive advantage, and to sustain it, one must be able to understand all of the value chains in the whole value system (Porter 1985).

The value chain itself is built up of different components. There are nine generic categories of activities which are intertwined in certain ways depending on what kind of industry the firm competes within. The primary activities in the value chain are five to the number and are categorized as: inbound logistics, operations, outbound logistics, marketing & sales and service. Depending on industry, more or less weight is concentrated to these different activities (Porter 1985).

Following through all of the value chain are the support activities, such as: firm infrastructure, human resource management, technology development and procurement. Firm infrastructure is, unlike the other supporting activities, usually supporting the entire chain and not individual activities. The three other supporting activities are dependent, and more or less outstanding, regarding to industry and therefore more or less useful within different activities (Porter 1985).

Each of the nine generic categories can also be divided into discrete activities which will vary depending on industry. It is not easy to divide the categories in to activities, and it requires great knowledge and judgment to do so. The basic principles while distinguishing different activities are: 'different economics', 'high potential impact or differentiation' and 'if they represent a significant or growing cost'. Even though the activities are separated to build this value chain, the activities are interdependent and linked together in various ways (Porter 1985).

## **2.2 Framework - Network of value captures**

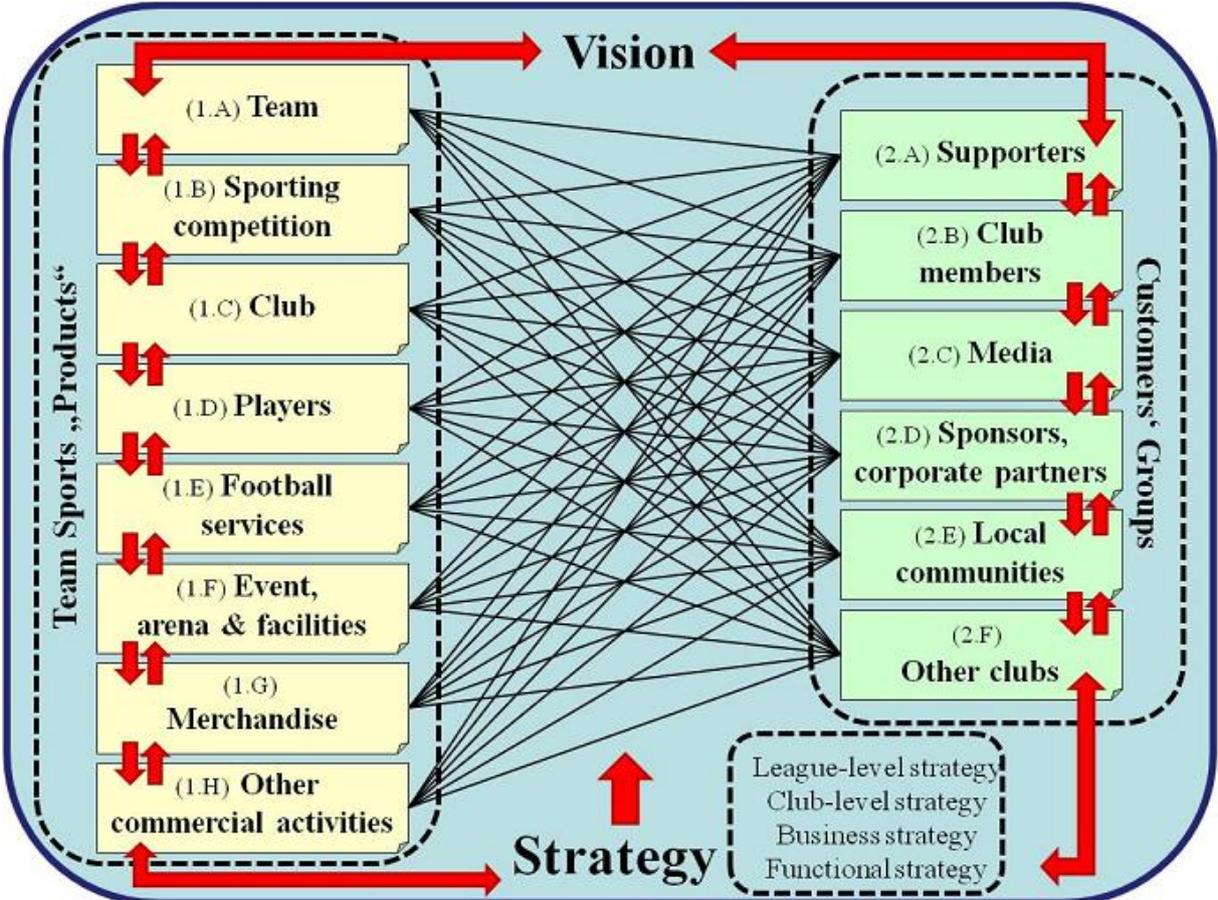
The network of value captures was developed by Harald Dolles and Sten Söderman (Dolles & Söderman 2013), it aims to provide a better understanding and overview of the value creation within professional team sports, and to develop and analyze the competitive advantages of professional teams. The framework was developed from research made on the business of football.

This framework captures different economic actors that are involved within the whole business organization of a professional team sport. It enlightens the different economic actors

and generates an understanding in what way they are interlinked with each other and how they create value for one and other, and together. As shown in the picture of the framework (Figure 1) the economic actors are divided into three dimensions, which are: (1) Team sport ‘products’, (2) customers’ groups and (3) the business process, strategic vision and intent (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

In the first dimension, team sport ‘products’, one need to consider the following components: ‘Team’, ‘Sporting competition’, ‘Club, Players’, ‘Football services’, ‘Event, arena & facilities’, ‘Merchandise’ and ‘Other commercial activities’. In the second dimension, customers’ groups, one need to consider the following components: ‘Supporters’, ‘Club members’, ‘Media’, ‘Sponsors and corporate partners’, ‘Local communities’ and ‘Other clubs’. The third dimension is about the strategy and vision that pervades the whole business within the framework (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Figure 1 - Network of value captures



Source: Dolles, H. & Söderman, S. (2013) The network of value captures in football club management: A framework to develop and analyze competitive advantage in professional team sports, in: Sten Söderman and Harald Dolles (eds): Handbook of Research on Sport and Business, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, p. 372.

In order to avoid redundancy a detailed description of previously mentioned economic actors will be presented later on in the analysis. The explanations will refer to football, in accordance with Harald Dolles' and Sten Söderman's article (Dolles & Söderman 2013), and parallels will be drawn to floorball.

### **3. Methodology**

*In this chapter I will introduce the methods that I have been using during my research. I will go through and explain about why I have chosen to gather my data in a certain way, what kind of people I have been talking to and the relevance in doing so. Furthermore, I will look at the reliability, validity and the limitations of my thesis.*

#### **3.1 Qualitative data gathering**

I decided to gather data for my thesis by performing qualitative interviews. Because of the absence of previous research within the sport of floorball, there is a lack of relevant articles to find and read. Furthermore, the purpose of my thesis requires more vivid storytelling to be able to capture the intangible value that different individuals experience, and which only can be reached this way. By interviewing various individuals with different point of views, I am able to capture the possible sources behind the value creation within floorball from different perspectives. This information is easier gathered in narrative interviews than with other methods, even though it is a hard work to transcribe all of the material. If my interviews, for example, would have been set up with only closed questions instead, the answers from my interviewees would have been shorter and easier to analyze. However such material is more suitable in a quantitative research and it would not provide me with the deeper understanding that I am striving for, to be able to make my analysis and draw my conclusions (Esaiasson et al. 2012).

As mentioned before, the sport that I have chosen to look in to is floorball. Therefore prominent individuals who are involved within this sport in various ways have been interviewed. For example, I needed to interview individuals who are involved within floorball clubs to see how they work and how they make their clubs gain competitive advantage by creating value for different economic actors within the framework. Furthermore, I interviewed board members, coaches and players who can all serve as informants within the field of the sport floorball, to gain a broader perspective. Finally, to find out more about the equipment manufacturers and retailers, and to be able to argue for their role as a new component within the framework, I interviewed individuals from different companies.

Since I am, and have been, active within the sport for a long time, I have connections that make it possible for me to get ahold of individuals who can support me with relevant information for my thesis. My idea was to interview well known individuals within the sport of floorball, whom could provide relevant information for my thesis. I interviewed individuals who work at different levels at one of the biggest floorball equipment manufacturing firms in the world. I also interviewed one individual at another equipment manufacturer company to get a wider perspective. Furthermore, I interviewed a part owner to the biggest retailer, specialized on floorball products, in Sweden. If necessary I was prepared to do supplementary interviews at the end of my thesis writing period, to assure myself of that my perceptions from the interviews were correct or to gain other perspectives from new interviewees. In total I ended up with 13 interviews, and I had a few more individuals in mind, but I felt that I had reached theoretical saturation (Esaiasson et al. 2012).

To make it easier for my interviewees and to make them feel comfortable and be able to talk more freely, I decided to perform my interviews at their offices or their preferred locations. At every interview, I was asking the interviewee if they would like to remain anonymous or if I could use their professional information in my thesis. I asked questions about, in what extent I could use: their name, their position within the company, the company name and other information that could be sensitive. I also asked them if I could record the interviews, to be able to listen to it again and transcribe it afterwards. Even though I was recording the interviews I was still making a few notes, to give some space and time for consideration of the answers and to be able to figure out relevant follow up questions (Esaiasson et al. 2012).

During my qualitative interviews with these individuals, I asked open questions in order to attain as vivid answers as possible and to avoid starting off in a biased direction. My background and knowledge about the sport might provide me a biased mindset in some questions. It was therefore important to keep the questions open, and to open up my mind to get my pre-understandings either revised or proven. I was complementing those open questions with relevant follow up questions to get a complete understanding for the interviewee's answers. In the appendix the interview guides, which have been used during the interviews, can be found (Esaiasson et al. 2012).

Before my interviews, I had my pre-understandings about what kind of knowledge my interviewees had and what sort of questions they might be able to answer. These pre-

understandings of mine had me construct different interview guides for different characteristics within the sport. I ended up having three core interview guides, set up for the following groups of characteristics: 'player/coach', 'board members of a club' and 'manufacturers/retailers'. Adding to those interview guides, I used follow up questions during the interviews that suited the ongoing stories that my interviewees provided me with. In some interviews I also skipped a few questions regarding to who I was interviewing. The follow up questions will not be presented in the interview guides that are provided in the appendix.

All of my interviews were made in Swedish, since both my interviewees and I have Swedish as our native language. Every quote that might appear within this thesis has therefore been carefully translated from Swedish into English by me, the author.

### **3.2 Data collection process**

To get a hold of my interviewees, I used my connections within the world of floorball, and contacted the individuals that I wanted to interview via e-mail and telephone. I managed to get a hold of every individual that I had in mind, and booked interviews with them at different occasions. I spent two days in Mölnycke, outside of Gothenburg, interviewing individuals from Pixbo Wallenstam and Renew Group Sweden AB at their offices. Then I went around to different locations within Gothenburg to visit some of my interviewees either at their homes or at their offices. All of those interviews were conducted face-to-face and worked out smoothly. One of my interviewees is at the moment living in Switzerland, and therefore we had an interview through Skype, which can be compared to a phone interview.

I had my different interview guides for my different interviewees, and at all of my interviews I asked follow up questions that was relevant to the stories that was being told. I ended up having 13 interviews with different individuals, and the interviews lasted for a various amount of time. The shortest interview lasted 20 minutes and the longest lasted for about 65 minutes. Consequently, I ended up with nearly 500 minutes of recorded material to transcribe. The transcription process is a time stealing activity and usually it takes about 4-5 hours to transcribe one single hour of recorded material (Esaiasson et al. 2012). This transcription process took me approximately 35 hours and generated roughly 95 pages of written text for me to go through and analyze.

Besides the information that I got during my interviews, I looked for relevant and interesting information, numbers and statistics in literature and on the internet. I was in particular finding

information at the international floorball federation's (IFFs) webpage, at the Swedish floorball federation's (SIBFs) webpage, at the different equipment manufacturers' webpage's and at the retailer's webpage.

### **3.3 Sample characteristics**

In this section, I will introduce all of my interviewees and explain about their relevance within my thesis. I have interviewed individuals that can fit in to different components of the framework, to get a couple of different opinions and thoughts about the whole idea of value creation within the sport of floorball. In alphabetical order, by first name, I will shortly present all of my interviewees and explain what they can contribute with for my thesis.

#### **Interviewee number 1, David Jansson.**

Today he is the head coach for Pixbo Wallenstam IBK, in SSL, he is the national coach for Canada and he is the national coach for the Swedish student team. He is educated in coaching management, has taken all the coaching courses provided by SIBF, and do now educate people in the same courses. He has played floorball in the highest divisions in Sweden and in Denmark. He has been coaching teams in Denmark, Sweden and Switzerland and has also been instructor in floorball on a senior high school for more than ten years. Interviewing David Jansson provided me with information about value creation between the club, the players and the team. He provided knowledge about floorball in general and has a great knowledge about floorball in other countries, which gave me information with an international touch.

#### **Interviewee number 2, Isaac Rosén.**

Swedish floorball player who this last season have been playing professional floorball in Switzerland with the team SV Wiler-Ersigen. He is originally from Brandstorps IF, and was playing in Pixbo Wallenstam before he moved to Switzerland last year. He won the "Top scorer reward" and contributed largely to his Swiss team winning the gold medal last season. He also has nine matches with the Swedish national team in his repertoire. Isaac Rosén has knowledge about being a professional floorball player, and provided me with information about that. He also, thanks to his many years within the sport, gave me some interesting thoughts about value creation among the different economic actors within the framework, from a player's perspective.

**Interviewee number 3, Jan Inge Forsberg.**

He is today chairman in the SSL club Pixbo Wallenstam and managing director at Renew Group Sweden AB. He was the founder of Pixbo Innebandy in 1981, and also founder of the first specialized floorball store in the world, innebandyspecialisten, in 1993. He was a former employee at Unihoc, and is one of the founders to the floorball brand Zone and Renew Group Sweden AB that started in 2001. Jan Inge Forsberg has a lot of knowledge within floorball. He has been active from the birth of the sport and provided me information about the manufacturers' role as well as the structure and value creations within a floorball club.

**Interviewee number 4, Johan Jihde.**

Purchaser at Renew Group Sweden AB and product manager for the brand Unihoc. Former floorball player in the highest division in Sweden. Johan Jihde has a lot of knowledge about floorball as a sport, and with his position at Renew, and his eight years at the company, he provided me with useful information about the equipment manufacturers role within floorball.

**Interviewee number 5, Johan Österman.**

Product and R&D manager at Renew Group Sweden AB. He is a former floorball player in the highest division in Sweden. He has been coaching on youth and junior level for more than 20 years. In 1996 he started working at Unihoc and did so until he, together with others, started the floorball brand Zone and Renew Group Sweden AB in 2001. With his knowledge about the sport, and his position as R&D manager, he provided me with interesting information about innovations and other thoughts about value creation within floorball from the equipment manufacturer's perspective.

**Interviewee number 6, Kalle Brännberg.**

Media and marketing manager at Renew Group Sweden AB and product manager for the brand Zone. Recently played floorball in the highest division in Sweden, and has also been a professional floorball player in Switzerland. From the interview with Kalle Brännberg I gained knowledge about how Renew work with media and marketing. He also provided me with some interesting thoughts about the value creation between the equipment manufacturers, the players and the supporters.

**Interviewee number 7, Kristian Strande.**

Purchasing manager at Renew Group Sweden AB. He has been working within the floorball business for a long time, including employment at Unihoc and Göteborgs innebandyförbund

(Gothenburg's floorball federation), GIBF. He was one of the founders to the floorball brand Zone, and Renew Group Sweden AB back in 2001. He is a former player in the highest division in Sweden. Kristian Strande gave me a deeper understanding about Renew's production network, he possesses great knowledge about the sports history and contributed with interesting thoughts about the equipment manufacturers role within the sport.

**Interviewee number 8, Kristina Landgren Carestam.**

Sports manager for the SSL club Pixbo Wallenstam. She has a background of many years of studies within sports consultancy and sports science. She has taken all available courses regarding floorball provided by the SIBF. She has been a coach for over 20 years, working with teams in the highest leagues and also coaching the Swedish national teams, both men and women. Kristina Landgren Carestam has been working within the field of floorball for a very long time and possesses knowledge about everything about the sport. She provided me information about the structure of clubs, the sports penetration both national and international and she shared some interesting thoughts about value creation among different economic actors within floorball.

**Interviewee number 9, Magnus Augustsson.**

Part owner of Klubbhuset, a retail store specialized on floorball products. He is a former player in the highest division in Sweden and the Swedish national team, and he has been recognized as one of the best players in the world. He has also been a floorball instructor at a senior high school. Magnus Augustsson got a wide knowledge about floorball and sports in general. During the interview I get to know how they work at Klubbhuset as a retailer and also about their role within the sport. He also talked about their thoughts about marketing and how they could be working to create value for supporters, players and fans.

**Interviewee number 10, Magnus Söderqvist Wall.**

Chairman in IBF Göteborg, which is a team that play in the second highest division in Sweden called Allsvenskan. Magnus Söderqvist Wall has been active within floorball on a lower level than SSL for a long time. He gave me a picture of how the structure, the goals for the club, the strategies and the economy, among other things, differ from clubs in the top league.

**Interviewee number 11, Martin Östholm.**

Floorball player in Pixbo Wallenstam IBK and the Swedish national team. He is originally from Granlo BK and has also played one season in Sundsvall City. He has been titled “defender of the year” in Sweden, he got a spot in the “All-star team” during the World cup 2012, which is equivalent to be titled “defender of the year” in the whole world. He placed as number seven in the list “top ten floorball players in the world” and he was voted as number nine in the list “Gothenburg’s premier athletes, all categories” last year. Martin Östholm provided me with his thoughts about value creation from a player’s point of view. And also, thanks to his large engagement with sponsors, he gave me an idea about how they create value for each other when it comes to marketing and social media, among other things. He also takes part in projects of marketing the sport of floorball around the world, and therefore provided me with information about how big floorball is internationally.

**Interviewee number 12, Tomas Solin.**

Managing director at Salming Sports. Works a lot with the development of the company as a whole and product innovations. Tomas Solin was the founder of Warberg IC back in 1985. Tomas Solin know a lot about floorball and he gave me information about the equipment manufacturer’s role within the sport, from another perspective than the people that I have been interviewing at Renew Group Sweden AB. He also provided me with some interesting information about the international dimensions of floorball.

**Interviewee number 13, Torbjörn Jonsson.**

Vice managing director at Renew Group Sweden AB. Started working at Unihoc in 1996, in Switzerland, as on site salesman. He was one of the founders to the floorball brand Zone, and Renew Group Sweden AB back in 2001. He has been present within floorball from the birth of the sport, and has played in the highest division in Sweden and in the Swedish national team. He became the world’s first professional floorball player ever, when he moved to Switzerland in 1992. Torbjörn Jonsson knows a lot about floorball and gave me helpful information about the sport, the equipment manufacturers role and the international dimensions of the sport.

Here underneath you can see a table (Table 1) that lists all of the different interviewees provided with a number and with information about which interview guide that was used during their particular interview. The purpose with this table is to be able to look back and see what kind of interview the person took part in. If information comes from an interview or a

person is quoted later on I will make references regarding to their different interview number in the table (Interview #).

**Table 1 - Interviewees**

<b>Interview #</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Interview guide</b>
Interview 1	David Jansson	Player/coach
Interview 2	Isaac Rosén	Player/coach
Interview 3	Jan Inge Forsberg	Board member of a club & Manufacturers/retailers
Interview 4	Johan Jihde	Manufacturers/retailers
Interview 5	Johan Österman	Manufacturers/retailers
Interview 6	Kalle Brännberg	Manufacturers/retailers
Interview 7	Kristian Strande	Manufacturers/retailers
Interview 8	Kristina Landgren Carestam	Board member of a club
Interview 9	Magnus Augustsson	Manufacturers/retailers
Interview 10	Magnus Söderqvist Wall	Board member of a club
Interview 11	Martin Östholm	Player/coach
Interview 12	Tomas Solin	Manufacturers/retailers
Interview 13	Torbjörn Jonsson	Manufacturers/retailers

### **3.4 Reliability, Validity and Data Triangulation**

Since there is nothing written within this topic of mine, in academic journals, I have been gathering my information by interviewing prominent individuals, reading in professional literature about the sport and looking at reliable internet sources. The literature that I have been reading is written by people who have experienced the birth of the sport and its evolution, and who thereby have the best possible knowledge about the sports history. The internet sources that have used, to find statistical figures and news about the sport, are the international floorball federation's (IFFs) webpage and the Swedish floorball federation's (SIBFs) webpage.

By interviewing several individuals from different backgrounds and in various positions within the world of floorball, I hope that I will be able to validate my data and get verifications from two or more sources. As a result, I will get a so called triangulation of data (Flick 2004) and by establishing this triangulation of data and by interviewing the right individuals I will hopefully gain more reliability for the thesis.

It is always difficult translating the work on the field into relevant information that will ultimately help to answer the theoretical questions. During the process I kept asking myself if I manage to investigate the right things during my interviews, to be able to validate my data and gain validity for my work (Esaiasson et al. 2012). The validity of the thesis might be questioned in regard to the limitations of my research which I bring forward later on, in section 3.5. On the other hand the relevance of interviewing those different characteristics and by using my methods of merely open questions, asked about things related to my research questions, seems to be the best method to find the answers and get validity for my work.

### **3.5 Limitations**

The thesis is limited as I am only looking at floorball, and that I am making my research within a limited geographical area. I am looking at floorball both national and international, but the research is only made in Sweden and in particular within Gothenburg and its surroundings. Other factors such as the limited amount of time and the fact that I was working alone can also be considered as limitations.

To draw conclusions about floorball is still to be considered as relevant since the sport is well spread in Sweden and a lot of knowledge about the sport is to be gathered from individuals in the country, and especially within the area of Gothenburg, where the research was conducted. Also because Sweden is the country of origin for the sport and that the sport has gone through most of the steps in the development process toward becoming an accepted professional team sport. This makes Sweden a good benchmark to other countries within the world of floorball. Due to the focus of this thesis it might difficult to draw conclusions about other professional team sports in general. However, to some extent there are similarities among professional team sports, and comparisons could be made from my results with other team sports.

I had my concerns regarding to capture the international perspective within my thesis, but my concerns vanished once I realized that professional team sports are international in more ways than one can imagine. For example, there are players moving abroad to play in professional leagues, there are broadcasted games on the internet which are possible for anyone in the world to watch and there are equipment manufacturers producing their products in other parts of the world.

## **4. Floorball - The international dimensions and business relevance of the sport**

*To give the reader a better understanding, this chapter will give an explanation of the sport floorball. It will be about everything from the sport's history and how the sport is practiced today to in what extent the sport is represented internationally and how many active players there are in the world. The first six sections in this chapter are really basic information provided mostly for the readers who are not familiar with the sport of floorball, so that they will be able to find the rest of this thesis more interesting and to be able to understand it better.*

### **4.1 History**

Floorball is the international name of the sport innebandy that was developed in Sweden in the late 70's (Tönneheim & Sjövall 1997). Already back in the end of the 60's in Gothenburg, Sweden, there were people playing a game that later was developed into the sport which we today call floorball. Back then, it was played inside small gymnasium halls, using plastic sticks and a plastic hollow ball. The aim of the game was to score on the other team, by hitting the ball with the stick in to a small goal without any goalkeeper. The number of players in each team and the rules for the game could vary between the different locations where it was practiced. The game was mainly played at schools and by groups of friends who gathered together for a fun workout in recreational purpose, but it was also used as a warm up activity within other, already established, sports (Fasth 1996).

It was not until 1979 in Sala, Sweden, that a young man named Crister Gustafsson decided to develop the game into a sport. He wanted the game to be played on a larger playing field with bigger goals and goalkeepers. The playing field was as big as the outlining for the handball playing field, 40x20 meters, which was already drawn on the floor in the gymnasium halls. Benches were used as a board that circled the playing field (Fasth 1996).

The 21th of September in 1979, Gustafsson was taking part of the establishment of the world's first floorball club, Sala IBK. The attention of this was quickly spread throughout Sweden, and several more clubs was established. In October 1980, the first national tournament was arranged in Västerås, Sweden, and 18 teams were participating in the competition (Fasth 1996).

Later on, in November the 7th 1981, the establishment of Svenska Innebandyförbundet (Swedish Floorball Federation), SIBF, took place in the city hotel of Sala. Crister Gustafsson was voted in favor for president of the interim board of the federation. SIBF was from the start a part of the Swedish land hockey federation before they were, in November 1985, accepted as a member in Riksidrottsförbundet (Swedish Sports Federation), RF (Tönneheim & Sjövall 1997). SIBF were the 58th sport to be recognized as a member, and the first sport ever, at this time, to have been accepted on their first application. Thanks to the recognition of RF, the sport started to grow quickly, more floorball clubs were joining SIBF and a national league was started in 1989. As the sport was growing, and started to get accepted as a real sport, it began to be taken more seriously from former sceptics (Fasth 1996).

#### **4.2 The playing field**

The surface that floorball is played on is nowadays made by synthetic material, such as rubber, which make the ball bounce less than it does on a wooden floor (floorballcoach).

The rinks are 40 meters long and 20 meters wide. All the way around the playfield goes a board, which is 50 centimeters high. The corner pieces of the boarder are rounded which make the playfield, seen from above, look similar to an ice hockey rink. The goal cages are placed 3,5 meters from the boarder on each side of the playfield, facing the middle of the field. To prevent injuries, neither the boards nor the goal cages are stuck to the floor. A goalkeeper's area, measuring 4x5 meters, is surrounding each goal. There are seven face off points on the playfield, one at the center of the field, one on each side of the middle of the field, and one at each corner of the field (Fasth 1996).

#### **4.3 The equipment**

All equipment has to follow the regulations set up by the International Floorball Federation, IFF. Equipment, such as goals, the boarder, the ball and the sticks, must be approved and marked accordingly to IFF's regulations (IFF 2014).

The goal cages are made out of welded iron tubes, they weigh around 12 kilogram and they are painted red. They are 160 centimeters wide, 115 centimeters high and 65 centimeters deep. The whole back part of the goal cage are covered with a net, and there are also a drop net inside the goal cage to keep the balls from rolling back out if it enters the goal cage(floorballcoach).

The board that circles the playfield is either black or white, and usually made of laminate or polyethylene. The rink is quickly put together and assembled and it consists of several straight, two meters long, pieces and four rounded corner pieces (floorballcoach).

The ball that is used in the game of floorball are made of plastic, it is hollow and weigh only 23 grams. It has a diameter of 72 millimeters and it has 26 holes, each measuring 10 millimeters in diameter. Historically the ball has been of white color, but nowadays orange color is also common (floorballcoach).

#### **4.4 Players material**

A floorball stick, for professional use, has a shaft with a grip tape on the upper half, and a blade on the bottom edge. There are a wide range of different sticks to suit the diversity of the individual player's preferences. The shaft of the stick is made of carbon fiber, which is treated in different ways to get different qualities, and usually measures between 96 and 104 centimeters in length. For example, the variety of length and treatments gives the shaft various flexibility and weight. A floorball stick usually weighs about 200-300 grams. The blade, that is attached to the carbon fiber sticks bottom edge, are made of various plastic materials, it is shaped in various ways and, depending on players preferences, it can be hooked in a left or a right angle.

According to the rules of the game, shoes are mandatory and must be indoor shoes. All field players are required wear numbered jerseys and they have to wear shorts and knee socks. The goalkeeper must wear a face mask, a jersey and trousers (IFF 2014). Other types of paddings, such as knee padding and thin gloves, are optional. Since the goalkeeper sits down on his knees while playing floorball, knee paddings are almost always used.

#### **4.5 How to play - The rules**

The aim of the game is similar to other team sports like football, handball or ice hockey, when it comes to the competitive part. The purpose is to within a defined time and by following the rules of the game win against the other team by scoring the most goals.

Floorball is played indoors on rubber or wooden floor. And similar to ice hockey the sport is played by holding on to the stick with two hands. Also similar to ice hockey, there are different positions in floorball, namely goalkeepers, defenders, centers and forwards. The big difference from ice hockey is that, in floorball, one does not wear any paddings or skates. Neither does one play with a hard long stick hitting a puck. The players are simply running

around wearing indoor shoes, playing the game by hitting the ball with a shorter stick made out of carbon fiber and plastic.

There is always a cause as to why the rules are set out in the way that they are in sports. In general, the rules, and the knowledge about the rules, are necessary in order to compete on equal terms. In a game of floorball there are two referees judging together, to get a chance to follow the action in this intense and unpredictable sport (Fasth 1996).

A floorball game is played 3x20 minutes with a 10 minute break between the first and the second period, and a 10 minute break between the second and the third period. The game time is be effective, which implies that time should be stopped whenever the play is interrupted by the referees' whistle and started again when the ball is played (IFF 2014).

Each team is allowed to have 20 players in their team, but only six players on the rink at once. When the game starts, each team has to have one goalkeeper and five field players on the rink. The game starts with a face off in the center of the field. One field player from each team places the blade of their sticks, on opposite sides, next to the ball that is placed in the center of the field and they are not allowed to touch the ball until the referee blows the whistle. A face off at the center of the field starts the game again after goals and in the beginning of each period. Any other face off are taken at one of the other six face off points (IFF 2014).

Some typical rules within floorball, that are set out to prevent injuries, are that players are not allowed to jump up to stop the ball, and they are not allowed to raise their sticks above their waists if anyone is close enough to get hit. Furthermore, if the ball is in the air above knee height it is not allowed to be played. The most common interruptions in floorball are because of rule violations that lead to a free-hit (Fasth 1996). A free-hit is awarded to the non-offending team, when offences are committed by the offending team. The free-hit should be taken from the point of where the offence was made. If the ball leaves the rink the team that has not touched the ball last will be awarded a hit-in. The hit-in should be taken from where the ball left the rink (IFF 2014). Players in the team that do not have the free-hit or the hit-in, have to stand three meters from the ball when the opponents are about to play it, otherwise they will get a two minute penalty (IFF 2014).

Some other rule violations that lead to two minute penalties are, for example: stopping the ball with the hand, tackling an opponent over the board and or nodding the ball. Also two

minute penalties are given if a player plays the ball while lying on the floor or hits the opponents stick with their own. In floorball it is also possible to get a five minute penalty, a ten minute penalty or a red card. A red card means that the player is sent off for the rest of the game, and has to leave the arena. Still, the players are allowed to tackle in floorball, but only shoulder to shoulder (Fasth 1996). The rules of floorball are revised every fourth year, and they are all to be found at IFFs webpage. There is also an information video, in Swedish, about the latest rule changes available at YouTube which is provided by SIBF (SIBF 2014).

#### **4.6 The system of series in Sweden**

The top league of Sweden, SSL, is ranked as number one in the whole world, both for men and women. The abbreviation SSL stands for, in Swedish, “Svenska superligan”, which in English means “Swedish Super League”. Men and women compete in separate leagues and for both men and women SSL are open national leagues with 14 competing teams. Underneath SSL there are other divisions of leagues where the teams are sorted according to geographical location.

Since the leagues are open, the team or the teams that finish in the bottom of the ladder will either drop down to a lower division directly, or they might have a chance to compete for a spot in the current league through qualification games. Equivalently, teams that finish on top of the ladder in the lower divisions will either move up directly or compete for a spot in a higher division through qualification games. Theoretically, every single team has a chance of moving up in the system of series (SIBF 2014).

#### **4.7 Floorball internationally**

Sweden is world leading in the sports of floorball and holds the most world championship gold medals in the world. Sweden won the last world championship, for both men and women, which took place in Switzerland in 2012. The countries with the best chance of getting a medal in the world championship besides Sweden are Finland, Switzerland and Czech Republic (SIBF 2014).

##### **4.7.1 Professionals in the world**

According to statistics on the international floorball federation’s webpage there were, on December 31st 2013, 297 461 licensed floorball players in the world. Out of these, 118 472 were licensed in the Swedish association. (IFF 2014) This means that almost 40% of the total number of registered players are active in Sweden. The nations that are closest to Sweden, regarding percentage out of the total registered players in the world, are Finland (~17.3%),

Czech Republic (~12.7%) and Switzerland (~10.2%). The sport is also represented in other parts of the world, but not to the same extent as in Europe. For example, there are registered players in Australia, Canada, Japan and Singapore, but these nations' registered players only account for about 2.1% out of the total amount of registered players in the world.

Looking at the number of clubs per association, the ranking among the countries are about the same as the ranking regarding to registered players. The world total, as of December 31th 2013, was 4 365 registered clubs. Sweden accounts for 1 030 clubs (IFF 2014), which is about 23.6%. Finland follows closely with 888 (IFF 2014) registered clubs, which is equivalent to ~20.3%, meanwhile Czech Republic and Switzerland accounts for about 10.7% and 9.9% respectively.

As mentioned before, in the history section, floorball started as a recreational activity and was widely played in schools and by groups of friends. This recreational use of the game is today used even more commonly. According to IFF's webpage there are a total of 1,256,030 recreational players in the world as of December 31th 2013. Among the top four nations in the world, there is a remarkable higher amount of recreational players than there are registered players. For example, in Finland, there are more than seven times as many recreational players as there are registered ones (IFF 2014).

According to Johan Jihde (Interview 4) and Kristian Strande (Interview 7), the interest of the sport is definitely growing in Asia and next year the sport will be part of the SEA-Games (South East Asia Games), which are to be considered as the "local Olympics" in South East Asia.

Underneath a table is shown (Table 2) of the top seven nations regarding registered players. There are also figures from four other countries across the world, in order to show that the sport is represented worldwide, though to a limited extent. The table also shows the countries number of clubs and recreational players, if available, as well as the world total.

**Table 2 - Floorball professionals**

Country	Registered Players	%	Clubs	%	Recreational Players
Sweden	118 472	~40%	1 030	~23.6%	400 000
Finland	51 486	~17.3%	888	~20.3%	390 000
Czech Rep.	37 804	~12.7%	467	~10.7%	150 000
Switzerland	30 299	~10.2%	431	~9.9%	150 000
Germany	10 054	~3.4%	174	~4.0%	5 000
Norway	7 398	~2.5%	298	~6.8%	N/A
Denmark	6 331	~2.1%	112	~2.6%	N/A
-	-	-	-	-	-
Japan	2 241	~0.75%	85	~1.9%	50 000
Singapore	1 652	~0.6%	45	~1.0%	N/A
Australia	1 568	~0.5%	27	~0.6%	8 000
Canada	900	~0.3%	35	~0.8%	15 000
-	-	-	-	-	-
World total	297 461	100%	4 365	100%	1 256 030

Source: IFF's webpage 2014. The numbers are found at IFF member statistics 2006-.

The percentage is calculated by dividing the country figure with the world total.

#### 4.7.2 Floorball vs. football

It is not completely fair to compare floorball to football given that it is such a young sport. Still, it provides an understanding for the sport's penetration in the world of sports.

The international floorball federation, IFF, was founded in 1986 and has today 57 member associations around the world (IFF 2014). The international football federation, called Fédération Internationale de Football Association, FIFA, was founded already back in 1904. Today, they have 209 member associations (FIFA 2014), and the nation with the largest amount of registered players is Germany who accounts for 6 308 946 registered players. Denmark, who just makes the top 30 in the list of registered football players, accounts for a total of 301 333 registered players (FIFA 2013).

As seen above, FIFA is more than 80 years older than IFF, FIFA also has over 150 more member associations than IFF. Denmark, which barely makes top 30 in the list of registered football players and holds a population of about 5.6 million people (World Population Review

2014), has more registered football players than there are registered floorball players in the whole world. Compare this to the fact that there are more registered football players in Germany than there is population in Denmark might give an idea about the size of the sport floorball.

#### 4.7.3 Foreign players in professional leagues

The first professional floorball player in the world, named Torbjörn Jonsson, moved from Sweden to Switzerland to play as a professional in 1992. That was the beginning of many other players who followed his lead. Many Swedish top players get lucrative contracts in Switzerland and move there to play floorball. There are also players going in the other direction. Today, there are foreign players from several countries who are playing in the Swedish top division, SSL. As an example, there are players from Czech Republic, Finland, Norway and Switzerland playing in the SSL.

#### 4.7.4 Floorball as a profession

Even though the top Swedish league, SSL, is considered to be the best league in the world, there are only a few players who are able to have floorball as their profession. Several of my interviewees have said that there might be around ten players in Sweden who are able to make a living out of their wages. The economy is simply not big enough within the sport of floorball yet. Therefore, the clubs cannot offer their players sufficient financial support. But the sport is developing and a lot has happened during the last two decades. As Martin Östholm said

*“I have been within this sport for 15 years now, and I have seen a development during this time. It has gone from that everybody are working full time, poor training conditions and bad conditions in general. Now people are able to work half time and some are full time professionals with really good conditions. There has been a great development only in these 15 years” (Interview 11).*

In Switzerland the outlook is a bit different and, as mentioned before, foreign players can get lucrative contracts over there. These contracts often include free accommodation and a free rental car, besides from the monetary part. Still, there are no teams in Switzerland where all the players have floorball as their profession, only a few players in each team do. As Isaac Rosén said

*“It is mostly the foreign players that have floorball as their profession over here, in Switzerland. The Swiss players are more focused on their working careers. It is a different mentality over here” (interview 2).*

#### 4.7.5 Floorball in the Olympic Games?

The first step towards becoming an Olympic sport was taken in 2008 when the International Olympic Committee, IOC, accepted floorball as a Olympic member. But to be a part of the program for the Olympic Games, there are qualitative and quantitative criteria regarding member countries and practitioners that must be fulfilled. Reaching those criteria is not an easy task and it will take time until floorball accomplish this (Gustavsson 2010).

The strategy that have been used to gain a place in the Olympic program, is to grow as a sport in the Students World Cup first and to then be selected in to the Universiade. The Universiade is an international multi-sport event for university athletes, and it has a higher status than the Students World Cup (Gustavsson 2010).

A second big step towards becoming a sport in the Olympic Games was taken on May 16th 2014, when floorball was accepted by the executive committee of the International World Games Association (IWGA) as a sport in the agenda for the World Games in Wroclaw, Poland, in 2017 (IFF 2014).

According to several of my interviewees another great step would be if the sport started to flourish in a big country like Germany. That would, in the long run, make other countries in Europe aware of the sport. Consequently, the sport would be able to grow on its own, which would help fulfill the quantitative criteria set up by the IOC. But there is a tough competition against other sports to gain a spot in the Olympic Games agenda. According to Tomas Solin (Interview 12) there are several sports that are ahead of floorball and who probably will gain a spot in the Olympics before floorball does. Tomas Solin said

*“Squash as an example, it is played in 150 countries and has been present for a while now. They have applied six times so far and have not yet made it. And then you have baseball and softball, big competitors, lots of money, USA, big interests” (Interview 12).*

Floorball has a long way to go to become an Olympic sport, and floorball is still lagging behind regarding to the players’ wages and thereby the ability of having floorball as a profession. Still, floorball is a professional team sport where organizational structure and commitment are vital.

## 4.8 Equipment manufacturers and retailers

When it comes to the production of floorball products, and sport products in general, most of it is produced in Asia. According to several of my interviewees, countries like China, Taiwan and Vietnam have for decades now had the production of such products. This in turn has generated clusters of suppliers and great knowledge within this area, which makes it more efficient to produce sport products. One reason for this is because wages in Asian countries are still lower than in the western countries. Therefore products that are labor intensive will be cheaper to produce in Asia. On the other hand, according to Johan Jihde (Interview 4) and Tomas Solin (Interview 12), the lead time is of course longer when producing overseas. The lead time is actually twice as long now compared to what it was a decade ago, due to environmental considerations. Tomas Solin said

*“Nowadays the ships are a lot bigger and they run on a so called slow stream to save the environment. These actions have increased the lead time of shipping a container, from Hong Kong to Sweden, from about four weeks to about eight weeks” (Interview 12).*

Therefore, if possible, the companies also produce some parts of their products in Sweden to reduce lead time and to have better control.

According to Tomas Solin (Interview 12), figures from the IFF showed that in the whole world there was almost 630,000 professional floorball sticks sold last year. Out of these sticks, approximately one third was of the brand named ‘Unihoc’ and one third was of the brand named ‘Salming’, the rest was divided among several other brands.

I have looked at the business of two different equipment manufacturers and one retailer, specialized on floorball material, to get an overview of what kind of products they provide and to get an understanding about their role within the sport.

Next, I will describe who the different companies are and what kind of products they provide. Regarding their role within the world of floorball, and especially within the framework, I will discuss this later on in the analysis chapter.

### 4.8.1 Renew Group Sweden AB

Renew Group Sweden AB was established back in 2001 in Mölnlycke, Sweden, along with the brand Zone. Renew is a sports-company with their main focus on floorball. This company is today the owner of three different floorball brands, namely Unihoc, Zone and Reactor. Holding three different brands makes it possible to cover the whole market of floorball

products (Renew 2014). Renew also works to make the sport bigger in the whole world by marketing the sport in various ways with help of their different brands.

#### 4.8.1.1 Unihoc

Unihoc is the oldest, still existing, floorball brand in the world and was started all the way back in 1972. The brand Unihoc is the world leading manufacturer of floorball products with customers in over 60 countries. Unihoc provides sticks, blades, grips, goalie equipment, apparel, balls, protective eyewear, stick covers, bags, jackets, track suits, caps, beanies, accessories and, besides all of those products, Unihoc also provide shoes in their own brand name. Unihoc has been a part of the Renew Group Sweden AB since 2005 (Unihoc 2014). During Unihoc's many years in the business, they have contributed with many innovations that have taken the sport to new levels. Innovations like the curved shaft of the stick made it possible for players to shoot harder and change their pattern of movement on the field, which made the game develop even further. Unihoc also contributes to the marketing of the sport around the world by being sponsor to IFF. Kristian Strande said

*"We are partners with IFF, which means that we contribute with a certain amount of sticks and other equipment that are being sent to new countries every year, in order to market the sport worldwide" (interview 7).*

#### 4.8.1.2 Zone

The brand Zone was established together with the establishment of Renew Group Sweden AB in 2001. Zone has distribution to over 40 countries around the world. The brand Zone provides sticks, blades, grips, goalie equipment, apparel, balls, protective eyewear, stick covers, bags and accessories (Zone 2014). Zone is active in spreading the sport worldwide and last year they went on an Asia-tour to market the sport internationally together with Pixbo Wallenstam (Interview 3).

#### 4.8.1.3 Reactor

The brand Reactor has for several years worked closely to Unihoc, and has gained a lot of experience about manufacturing floorball products. Reactor is more focused on the basics equipment of the sport. The brand provides sticks and blades that are not necessarily proven by IFF to be used in professional games, but still can be used in a recreational purpose at schools and universities. These products are mainly sold at new markets around the world. They also provide balls, rinks and goals (Reactor 2014).

### **4.8.2 Salming Sports**

Salming Sports is a company that is active within several sports, and one of those is floorball. Salming floorball was started back in 1997 but it was not until 2001, when new owners took over the business as a new company, that they started to grow. In 2007, Salming Sports was separated from Salming Hockey to focus more on the indoor sports. In 2008, Salming bought the floorball brand X3M which today are a low cost brand providing basic equipment which are sold to schools and at new markets, marketing themselves as X3M campus. The floorball brand Salming has been active within floorball for more than 13 years now, and are focusing on the more professional equipment used for professional purpose (Interview 12). Today, the two brands together provide sticks, shoes, blades, grips, goalie equipment, protective eyewear, bags, different types of sportswear and apparel and even goal cages. Salming also have ‘Salming Academy’, which are videos on their webpage, which provide tips and tricks. In those videos, well known Swedish floorball players show how to perform different kind of shots, feints and other skills that can be useful on the field (Salming 2014). Salming also contributes to the marketing of the sport floorball by being present in other countries and on other continents. They collaborate with Hockey Canada who helps out developing the sport in Canada and they have a similar collaboration with Hockey USA. A lot of the work to market the sport is done by retailers and distributors, whom Salming is cooperating with, worldwide (Interview 12).

### **4.8.3 Klubbhuset**

Klubbhuset, which is owned by Reichen Sport AB, is the world’s largest retailer specialized in floorball products. The stores are situated in Sweden at three different locations. The main store is located in Gothenburg and the other two stores are located in Uppsala and Karlstad. Klubbhuset provides equipment from several different floorball brands and other sport brands that can be used for floorball purposes. Furthermore, they have a wide range of floorball products and personnel with good knowledge and experience about floorball. Klubbhuset works a lot with social media and videos to reach out to their customers. The social media that they use are: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube. Still at this point they market themselves via those media in the Swedish language only (Klubbhuset 2014).

## **4.9 Summary in regards to the research questions**

Getting this far in to the thesis we have gotten through the theories, we know that value is created in multiple ways and we know who the different economic actors within the framework are. We have touched up on a few of these economic actors in the methodology chapter, in the section about different characteristics, where I introduced my interviewees.

Among the interviewees there are players, coaches, people who represent clubs, equipment manufacturers and retailers. Thereby we know that these economic actors are represented within the world of floorball, but we need to figure out how they create value for one and other and to the sport in general.

Within the chapter about floorball we gained a general understanding of the sport and got a feeling about how big the sport is in international terms. We know that floorball is a young sport that is still developing around the world and at the moment there are only a handful of countries that have reached a good level of registered players. We have seen that the equipment manufacturers are helping out with marketing of the sport in various ways and we will look even further in to their role later on in the analysis chapter. In the analysis we will also go through all of the economic actors within the framework one by one, and see how they are present within the world of floorball.

Value is created all the time and everywhere, but is perceived differently among different economic actors. In the next section we will find out where the value comes from and how it can be transferred between different economic actors within the framework. This will be done during the analysis, using the information and data gathered from the interviews and research, with help from the framework as an analysis tool.

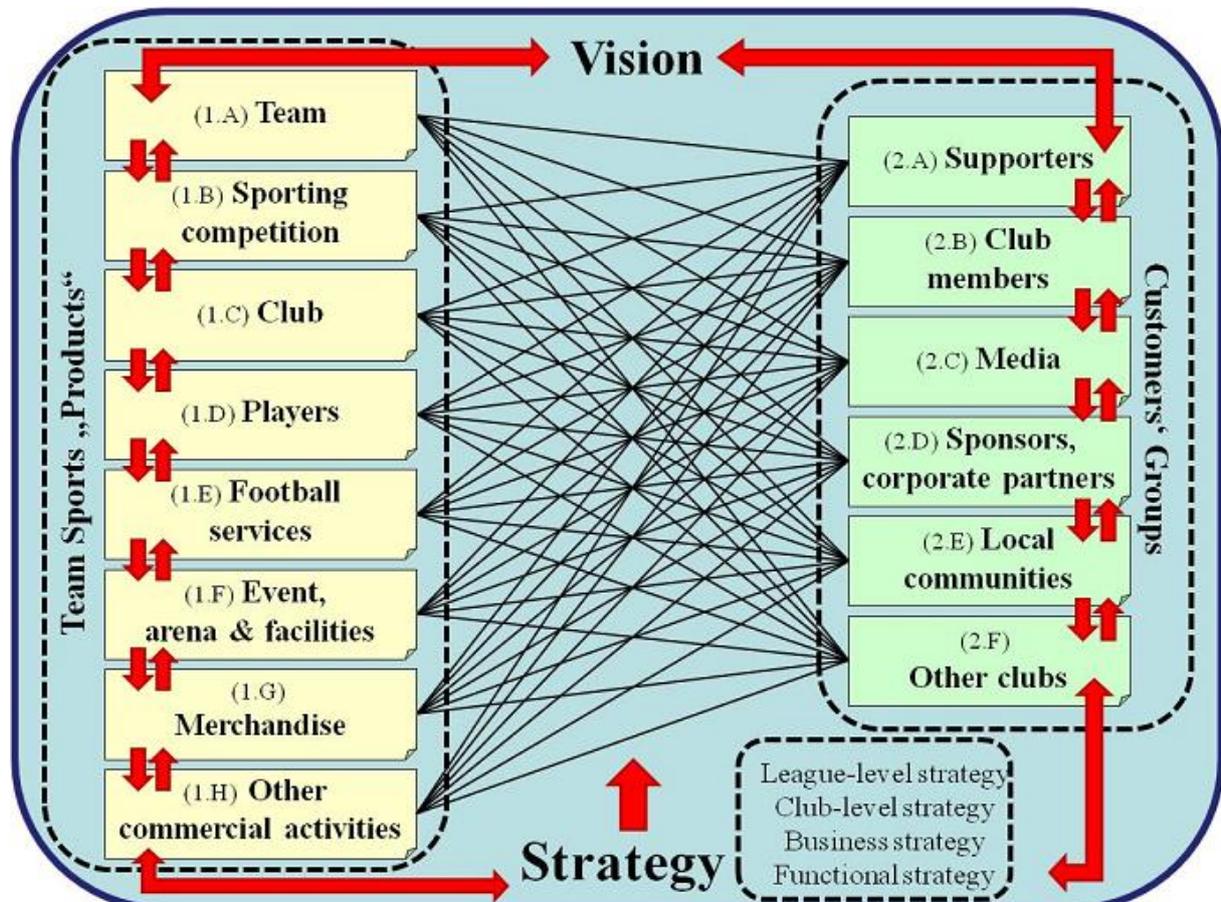
## **5. Analysis**

*This chapter will explain the different economic actors within the framework and at the same time provide information about how these economic actors are represented and create value within the sport of floorball. The chapter also shows how these economic actors might help out with the development of the sport.*

### **5.1 Applying the framework on to floorball**

I will start my analysis by going through the whole framework of value captures and explain the different economic actors as it is explained by the creators of the framework, Dolles and Söderman, using football as an example (Dolles & Söderman 2013). I will also add my own complementary part of explanation, to every economic actor, where I bring the comparison towards floorball. We will then see how the different value capturing economic actors contribute within the sport of floorball. I will also reflect about their contribution to the development of the sport.

Figure 2 - Network of value captures



Source: Dolles, H. & Söderman, S. (2013) The network of value captures in football club management: A framework to develop and analyze competitive advantage in professional team sports, in: Sten Söderman and Harald Dolles (eds): Handbook of Research on Sport and Business, Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, p. 372.

### 5.1.1 The first dimension in the framework is team sport ‘products’

There are several value offerings within this group, which are all intertwined so that they create a bundle of value captures.

#### 5.1.1.1 Value capture 1.A: Team

There is a wide range of theories that constitutes how team effectiveness is achieved within organizations. Those models are usually applicable to a certain kind of teams, depending on where the researcher gathered their data. It is important to remember that teams in sports and teams in other organizations or industries are different from each other. In team sports, it is important with a good atmosphere to achieve goals and thus create and receive value. If the dynamic of the team is poor, the results will most likely be affected (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

To achieve a good atmosphere and harmony within the team it is, according to David Jansson (Interview 1), important to find meaningfulness. In a team most of the players are striving for the same goals, which often are to win the league or similar, but there are still always a few players who do not share the same goals. To be able to make the players find their own personal meaning of practicing the sport, and to have them perform on top for the best of the team, they need to be treated in different ways. To find this meaningfulness it is therefore important to treat every single individual in their own way, a way that is most suitable to that single person. David Jansson said

*“It is important to get away from thinking that everybody works in the same way. Therefore, do not treat everybody the same. It creates value for the players to be treated differently”* (Interview 1).

In my opinion, this part of the framework does not have to be considered in any different way, regardless of what kind of team sport that being evaluated. This all comes down to human psychology and theories about how to create the best functional team. Therefore, it is always the same yet always different, since one is always working with human beings with different needs. Finding the harmony and creating a good functional group is an important piece of the puzzle towards gaining competitive advantage as a team.

This part of the framework is really important within the value creation process in the world of floorball and contributes to the value creation in a high extent. As a team they contribute to the development of the sport by getting better in working together as a group. By getting better they will be able to get more supporters. They will inspire young people to start practicing the sport which will make the sport grow quantitative. They might also contribute to the development of the sport internationally by marketing the sport in different ways, for example they can participate in international tournaments or travel around to other continents in a pure marketing purpose.

#### **5.1.1.2 Value capture 1.B: Sporting competitions**

This team sport ‘product’ relates to the importance of an organized and structured arena for the competing teams to compete within. It enlightens the essence of rules and systems that are to be followed, in order to create value for the participants (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

As explained in the floorball chapter there are rules set up for the sport of floorball that are interpreted internationally and thereby should be the same worldwide. It is also explained how

the system of series are set up in Sweden, with the open national top league and the lower leagues where there is a possibility for any single team to advance to the highest league.

Regarding this part of the framework there is not much to question about the value of this within floorball. Floorball is a structured sport with rules and organizations around it that provide the necessary stable ground for the participants to rely on. This creates value since it provides the clubs, the teams and the players with an arena of equal terms to compete within, which are of high importance for any competitor.

This is a vital part for the sports existence, without the rules and the regulatory bodies the sport would most likely cease to exist. The regulatory bodies are also contributing to the development of the sport by revising the rules every fourth year and by participating in the marketing of the sport worldwide.

#### **5.1.1.3 Value capture 1.C: Club**

Professional sport clubs are more and more run like business organizations. For example, some football clubs in the major European leagues have turned in to public limited companies, which are quoted on the stock exchange. To achieve the business goals of a team, the club must have a financial and organizational structure that provide their players with what is needed, in order to get the most out of the players and win the games. In football, great revenues from broadcasted games are generated which make it possible for clubs to raise the wages of their players (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Within floorball the professional clubs in the highest leagues are also run like businesses, but not to the same extent as in football. They have employed people within the organizations that take care of the economy, the marketing and other related organizational issues. Still, according to Jan Inge Forsberg (Interview 3), there are in Sweden no real advantages of transforming the club into a limited company, since there is rules about how much of the club that can be owned by the limited company. Jan Inge Forsberg said

*“According to the law, 51% of the club must be run as nonprofit and only 49% can be owned by a limited company. Therefore the limited company could never run the club fully” (Interview 3).*

During my interview with Martin Östholm (Interview 11), he explained that since the clubs do not make enough money to provide their players with wages that are large enough to make

a living out of, they have to find other ways to support their players and create value for them. Those other supporting actions can be about anything from helping out finding a job, finding them personal sponsors or making it possible to have training sessions during day time. It all comes down to the economic issues in the end. Martin Östholm said

*“If one compares the amount of time we spend with the compensation we receive, in economic terms, it is not really a working concept in the long run. Still, you practice the sport because you love it, and within a foreseeable future I think you will be able to have floorball as a profession” (Interview 11).*

A floorball club and a football club are comparable, yet in the world of football the economy makes the whole football business play in a higher division than the floorball business. But there are clubs within floorball, and they still do provide and receive value from the different economic actors within the framework, regardless the differences. Also within floorball they are run like businesses but to a lesser extent.

The clubs can help developing the sport in different ways. They might send out their teams to international tournaments and market the sport. They also have the possibility of making the sport grow in a more professional manner, by promoting themselves and by gaining good sponsor deals. With good sponsor deals they might be able to give their players better economic compensation and over time the sport might develop into a full-scale professional team sport. Where there are better training conditions and better economic conditions for the players. This is of course dependent of how the interest of the sport will develop in general. The size of the sponsor deals will most likely follow the development of the sport as a whole.

#### **5.1.1.4 Value capture 1.D: Players**

The development of individual players is of main concern to the managers of a sports team. Professional sport clubs send out scouts to find and contract young players. In some cases they establish youth academies, to attract young talented players who will be educated, shaped and trained to fit into the frame of the teams' squad (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

There is a big difference between football and floorball regarding the scouting and contracting of young players. According to Kristina Landgren Carestam (Interview 8) there are scouting, and within her club they have a network of people all around the country who provide them with names of talented players. And it is also a part of her job to travel and search for talents at different floorball events. But when it comes to the contracting of new players, they do not

contract too young players. Usually they are looking for to contract the players first when they finish senior high school, and only if the players have been a part of the Swedish national team for nineteen year olds.

Regarding youth academies, Pixbo Wallenstam got something called Star Camp. It is a summer camp where kids can go for a fun experience and to develop their floorball skills. Talented kids sometimes get invited for free, and also talented youths get invited as participating leaders at the camp.

In Sweden there are also senior high schools that have floorball on the agenda. There are different stages of these 'floorball high schools', and the highest level are focusing on the best and most talented players of their age in the whole country, and they are chosen on talent and suitability (SIBF 2014).

Once again there are economical differences, but also the mindset within the sports is different concerning the players. Maybe because of the whole business opportunities within football that is not yet present within the sport of floorball. Within floorball, the main purpose of the sport is to have fun, meet friends and to get some exercise. This is the common perception until the age of 15. After that the seriousness might take over, but until this point there is not a business of developing players from young age in a purpose to make a profit from sales of players. Still there are players within the sport of floorball, and these players create value and receive value from other economic actors within the framework. It is just not looked at with the same economic glasses that are used within the professional football environment.

The players are contributing to the development of the sport by becoming better and better and by acting professional. Single star players are of great value to younger players and their individual development by simply acting as a good role model and an ambassador to the sport. The players are also often the onsite ambassadors when the clubs and or the sponsors send their teams on international tournaments or marketing campaigns around the world. While talking about the development of younger players and the future, Martin Östholm said *"I am trying to show that this is the future, there is a good future within floorball. I guess that might be my biggest contribution to floorball, I am trying to develop the younger players and I am trying to develop floorball, so that coming generations will have even more, will get even better wages and be able to get even better conditions in the future"* (Interview 11).

### 5.1.1.5 Value capture 1.E: Football (Team sport) services

This part of the framework was not considered once the framework was developed for the first time, but was proposed as an adding to the framework together with ‘Value capture 2.F: Other clubs’, in an article by Harald Dolles and Roger Schweizer back in 2010. The idea to this team sport product came from the establishment of the ‘Everton Way’, by Everton FC, and their unique new way of creating a business within football by selling football services. The ‘Everton Way’ is an online service and the program includes anything from recruitment techniques, technical football coaching, fitness tips, and physiotherapy tips to sports psychology, education and welfare. This is all presented in various ways such as video clips, audio commentary, and editorial walkthroughs and diagrams (Dolles & Schweizer 2010).

Services around sport clubs are growing and are a good way of marketing the club. A service could be to have a one-stop shop who sells everything concerning the club, such things as tickets to the games or merchandizing products. Another service could be to provide a youth academy. And a third service could be to provide services on the internet, such as videos with exercises and coaching tips. Team sport services, regarding to football, is about supporting the scouting and recruitment and to spread the clubs training activities internationally (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

The team sport services within floorball are a bit different from the services within football, but still they can be considered in the value creating process of the sport. Within floorball there are the summer camps and summer schools that clubs use to market, not only their own club but also floorball as a sport. Those summer camps take place in other countries than Sweden as well. It is not unusual that Swedish players or coaches are represented at those camps, both to market the sport and to help out teaching. As the world’s best defender, Pixbo’s Martin Östholm, said

*“I have been to Czech Republic to help out with summer camps for kids and I have been to Asia to market and develop the sport over there as well” (Interview 11).*

Martin Östholm also takes part in video clips where he markets himself, his sponsors, his club and floorball in general. Videos like these are usually produced by the retailers or the equipment manufacturers, in a marketing purpose. Those videos are very popular among kids and younger players.

Another service that are provided by the clubs in the top league of Sweden is the SSL-play, which is a webcasting service where it is possible to buy the webcast of the teams matches, to be able to watch them online. This service is available worldwide and contributes to the development of the sport by creating an interest on new markets. This is a possible marketing strategy for the sport, and might be a way of developing the sport further in new countries around the world.

#### **5.1.1.6 Value capture 1.F: Event, arena and facilities**

A professional sports game is an event that involves several economic actors. For example, in football, the media have a big impact and together with the governing bodies they put pressure on the arenas to hold certain standards, to be able to generate good broadcasts of the games. This development of the arenas comes with a lot of costs regarding facilities such as water and electricity needed for every event (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Floorball is a young sport, and it is still lagging behind when it comes to great audiences at the games, the economy and, in turn, the possibility for the clubs to own their own arenas. Most of the arenas are municipally owned but operated by the clubs. There are certain demands put up regarding audience capacity, depending on at which level or division your team are represented in. As an example, Pixbo Wallenstam has to play their play-off games in a bigger arena, Lisebergshallen in Gothenburg, than their home arena, Wallenstamhallen in Mölnlycke.

Event, arena and facilities are a value capture within the framework that is to be considered in a different way within floorball compared to football. As an example, there is always a struggle of finding the time and space in the arenas to practice since there are many other indoor sports that compete for that particular time and space. Therefore it is of great value for the teams, the club members and the players when new arenas are built. This provides more opportunities to practice the sport and it gives the clubs a chance to make some money by hosting events.

This part of the framework could be of great contributor to the development of the sport, if more arenas were to be built. That would make it possible for more individuals to practice the sport. The problem with finding the time to practice the sport would decline, and the sport could develop by increasing the number of registered players. The more registered players, the bigger the sport would get and the bigger the interest around the sport would be. This

would lead to an increased amount of sponsoring revenues for the clubs, which would mean better conditions for the players. In the long run this would enhance the professional touch of the sport.

#### **5.1.1.7 Value capture 1.G: Merchandise**

As a professional sports club it is important to build a strong brand that stands for everything about the club. This brand is then communicated via merchandise such as scarves, caps, training gear, clocks etc., which are sold, but not manufactured, by the club (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Also in floorball there are merchandise sold, but not manufactured, by the clubs in the top leagues. According to Kristina Landgren Carestam (Interview 8), it is not that big and developed yet and does not create a lot of revenue. There has not been any research made on the area and therefore they might not provide the right kind of merchandise that suits the target group. The sales might improve as the sport grows bigger.

There is no question about this value capturer's contribution, however, within floorball this part is at the moment not as important as other economic actors within the framework. This part would probably flourish if the sport grew bigger since the interest of the sport would grow and more supporters would get involved. But at the moment this component has almost nothing to do with the development of the sport or the value that is being created among the economic actors in the framework.

#### **5.1.1.8 Value capture 1.H: Other commercial activities**

This team sport 'product' is about the possibility for a club to, in their stadiums or arenas, host other events than their core sporting events, to generate revenue (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Since the arenas are municipally owned, as mentioned before, the floorball clubs cannot independently decide about how to finance the operation of the arenas and thereby make revenue by hosting other events. For example, there is a new arena to be built in Mölnlycke in about two years, which will be owned by the municipal but operated by Pixbo Wallenstam. Jan Inge Forsberg said

*“We will not own the arena, but we will manage the operation of the arena. And together with the commune we will start an event company. In other words, it will be municipally owned, we will rent it, and both parties will be able to make a profit” (Interview 3).*

This value capturer is smaller within the sport of floorball, but it does still exist and is contributing to value generation. When it comes to the development of the sport, this part of the framework are closely linked with value capture 1.F, regarding event, arena and facilities. If more arenas were to be built, the clubs could together with the municipalities host events in the arenas. Consequently, by doing so they would gain more revenue. More money could develop the sport in a professional manner.

### 5.1.2 The second dimension in the framework is given by the customers' group

Customers want different offerings depending on circumstances and time. The customers' groups, which are all intertwined, can be considered as a bundle of value captures (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

#### 5.1.2.1 Value capture 2.A: Supporters

There are various types of supporters, everything from local fans to international fans. Local fans are often supporting their team because of their identification with the club in a geographic manner. It is harder to distinguish why international fans support a certain club. What all football supporters have in common is that they contribute largely to the revenue of a club because of ticket sales and merchandise sales (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Within floorball the supporters and fans tend to be local people and people who are somewhat related to the players or the clubs. Some clubs have quite an impressive supporter culture, meanwhile others have not been as successful regarding attracting fans. Storvreta IBK who had the highest average number of audience last season accounted for an average of 1 681 people at their home games during the ground series. Compared to Pixbo Wallenstam IBK, who only accounted for 531 in average at their home games (SIBF 2014).

Both Storvreta IBK and Pixbo Wallenstam IBK are popular clubs in several other countries around the world. Pixbo have been participating in Prague Open, a tournament in Czech Republic, for more than 20 years now. They have also been travelling around the world to market the sport and their team, in both Europe and in Asia. In Czech Republic, Pixbo Wallenstam has had representatives from the club who have taken part in summer camps. Last year, together with their sponsor Renew, they sent 55 people from the club to Singapore, to represent Pixbo and to market the sport of floorball in general.

*"We are really popular abroad, Pixbo. We are almost more popular abroad than we are in Sweden"* (Interview 1), David Jansson said during our interview.

The supporters are definitely to be considered as value captures within the sport of floorball. The value might not come as much in monetary terms as it does within football, regarding to sales revenue for the clubs, but more in terms of value for the players and the teams when they show up to support them during the games. Isaac Rosén said *“They are giving as it is called support, so that you know you have the backing of people who care, so that you know you have people to fight for, not only for yourself and for the team but also the people around, this helps to perform on top.”* (Interview 2)

#### **5.1.2.2 Value capture 2.B: Club members**

The members of a club can be divided into two categories, the active members and the passive members. The active members are the ones who participate in the club's different teams and play the game themselves at different levels. For example, the German football club Bayern Munich hosts 20 teams, besides their professional team, where members can be engaged. The passive members simply become members to support their favorite club (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

In both IBF Göteborg and Pixbo Wallenstam, whom I have been in contact with for my thesis, there are almost exclusively active members in the clubs. IBF Göteborg has about 500 club members and host 21 active teams. Pixbo Wallenstam has about 900 club members and host 45 active teams. None of the clubs have at the moment that many passive members. Pixbo, however, might be able to get their fans abroad to join as supporting members of their club, in the future.

Club members are to be considered in similar ways within any team sport when it comes to value capturing. They contribute with value in monetary terms in regard to their member fees and, just like supporters, when attending games they also contribute to the value that are created by their support to the team, and the players of the team.

#### **5.1.2.3 Value capture 2.C: Media**

This is one of the core sales channels, regarding income, for a professional club. In football, for instance, a large amount of money is paid for broadcasting rights in the top national leagues. Another media source that is growing remarkably is the social media, and it is important for marketers in the clubs to find the most beneficial way to use this media channel (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

According to Kristina Landgren Carestam (Interview 8), SIBF has to pay TV4 Sport to have their games broadcasted, unlike other big sports in Sweden. On the other hand, the earnings that the advertisements during the broadcasts generate will later be divided among the floorball clubs in the country. Still, there is a problem within floorball now, since all of the clubs in the highest division have their own webcasts, which means that they broadcast their games on the internet. Those webcasts generate more revenue than the broadcasts on television and they can reach out to people all over the world. The webcasts are getting better and better in quality, with features as commentators, replays and game clock, and it is gaining popularity as time goes by.

Social media is growing rapidly, and most clubs are active on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter in order to reach as many people as possible within their target group. The clubs publish news about players and other happenings concerning their clubs and teams. The biggest user of social media as a marketing strategy is the specialized retailers, such as Klubbhuset, followed by the equipment manufacturers. They market their products and create value for their consumers via different channels of social media. Magnus Augustsson said *“We are present in all of these social media, but it is important to focus on the right thing. Therefore we make a lot of videos, which has shown to be appreciated among our target group”* (Interview 9).

Media is definitely an important value capture within floorball, and especially the social media. This creates a lot of value for the sport as a whole. The players, the teams, the clubs, the equipment manufacturers and the retailers, among others, are all participating on this field and thereby create and receive value. This is also a great way of marketing the sport worldwide. By being active on social media a penetration among new markets is possible and thereby the development of the sport in other countries might be able to flourish.

#### **5.1.2.4 Value capture 2.D: Sponsors and corporate partners**

Sponsorship can be seen as a strategic tool for all involved economic actors. For corporations, sponsoring a professional sports team, especially if considering a football team in a top league that has audience worldwide, is a great way of gaining access to new international markets. Commercial sponsorship is a market communication activity that is gaining ground, and it is shown that sport teams generate a strong emotional feeling among fans, which is higher than in other sports. For the clubs to be able to create alliances with sponsors, it is important to offer something in return to their investments. Such an offer could be a large amount of

members within the club, which is a good resource when negotiating for new sponsoring contracts (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Sponsoring within floorball is no different to sponsoring within football, in the sense that it is about giving and taking. The fact that there is a huge economic difference between the two sports does make the sponsoring within floorball a bit smaller. This makes it harder for the sport to grow internationally. Torbjörn Jonsson said

*“IFF has a hard time finding sponsors. One would like to see all the ‘Champions league sponsors’ help out with this. Now as the World Cup will take place in December, it would be nice to see Mastercard support with a billion SEK, but we are yet not quite there” (Interview 13).*

Still, sponsoring is taking place, and the clubs are sponsored with players’ material and other equipment, food, flight tickets, bus rides and memberships at gyms among other things. In return, the sponsors usually get to publish advertisement on the team’s jerseys, arenas, rinks, website and other media channels that might be of interest.

Sponsoring and corporate partners are important within the world of team sport, regardless of what level it is. There is no doubt that it is easier for a professional footballs club to find sponsors than it is for a professional floorball clubs. This is mainly because of the size of the sports and the marketing value of the individual clubs. Still, sponsoring is a big contributor to the value creation within the sport of floorball. Isaac Rosén said

*”One could say that the sponsors are the foundation to everything since the clubs are mainly non-profit organizations. They kind of control in what way the club, the team and the brand will be perceived by its surroundings” (Interview 2).*

Sponsors have a quite important role when it comes to the development of the sport. The more sponsoring that is provided for the teams the more professional the clubs will be. If the clubs get more money, their players can get better conditions and the focus on floorball would be better. In order for the clubs to gain more revenues from sponsor, the sport itself must grow and increase the marketing value. A larger marketing value of the sport would make it more interesting for sponsors to enter the market of floorball.

#### **5.1.2.5 Value capture 2.E: Local communities**

The relationship between a club and their community can be seen at different angles. There are the supporters who are directly involved with the club, and there are other people or

groups who can be either directly or indirectly affected by the presence of a professional sports clubs. Usually there is a geographical band between the involved economic actors and the club, but there can also be religious or social aspects that connect them. For a club that has financial problems, the community might be able to act as a lender of last resort by pooling their resources together to save the club. Being deeply rooted and to have a good band with the community might therefore be a vital part of a clubs existence (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Floorball is today Sweden's third biggest sport when it comes to registered players (SIBF 2014). The relationship between the clubs and the local communities tend to be bigger in smaller towns, where the local citizens tend to be more involved in the clubs. David Jansson said

*“Look at Mullsjö and Dalen right now, or even Finnspång back in the days. They are small communities with large involvement from the citizens and a great supporter culture”* (Interview 1).

The value created and received regarding the local communities are of various extent of importance to different clubs within floorball. The local communities do not, to a large extent, contribute to the development of the sport, but locally they might contribute indirectly by showing their support and their interest of the sport.

#### **5.1.2.6 Value capture 2.F: Other clubs**

This component was added to the framework, together with ‘Value capture 1.E: Football services’, by Harald Dolles and Roger Schweizer back in 2010 (Dolles & Schweizer 2010), as mentioned earlier. When it comes to cooperation between clubs, the players are the prime focus. Clubs usually lend players to each other in order to develop the players' skills. Other kinds of cooperation might also be beneficial for the clubs (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Also within floorball the players are in main focus when it comes to cooperation between clubs. In the area for my research, and according to the people that I have interviewed, it seems to be a tough question to handle due to different visions and goals in the different clubs. Some of the clubs in the highest divisions have therefore started new clubs in lower divisions, to be used as a partner club. These new teams in the lower division often act as a match training arena for players from the higher division, who are struggling to gain a spot in the squad or are just working their way back from an injury. It is also used to integrate talented junior players within the senior series.

There is cooperation between clubs in floorball and the cooperation creates value in various extents regarding to how successful the cooperation is.

### 5.1.3 The third dimension in the framework is about the vision and strategy

The vision and the strategy pervade the whole framework (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

#### 5.1.3.1 3.A: Vision

The vision of a club is a description of where the club wants to be in the future and their long term goal of practicing the sport. To be able to reach their vision they need to have strategies that will help them in their work towards it (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Visions and goals within a floorball club do not differ from visions and goals within a football club. But depending on what level a team is competing at, the vision might differ and take different shapes among different teams within the same club. For example, according to Kristina Landgren Carestam (Interview 8) and Jan Inge Forsberg (Interview 3), the vision from the clubs perspective, within Pixbo Wallenstam, is that the professional teams shall place as one of the top four teams in the ladder. The teams themselves strive for the goal to win the gold. Then there are the teams in the lower divisions, where the goal is to develop the players and make them as good as they can get, to later gain a spot in the top team. Last but not least, there are the youth teams, the kid teams and the recreational teams. The goals and visions at this level of practice are to have fun, exercise and meet friends.

The differences in visions and goals are similar even for clubs that do not have a team in the highest league. For example, Magnus Söderqvist Wall said

*“Our club vision, in IBF Göteborg, is ‘an organization for all’, everybody shall have the possibility to participate, regardless of what level they are performing at, elite, width or recreational” (Interview 10).*

#### 5.1.3.2 3.B: Strategy

The strategy is the tools that should be used to reach the clubs common goals that are set up based on the vision. There can be several different strategies, within the club, for different activities. The activities can be divided into different levels. There are the functional level, the business level, the corporate level and the network level. The different levels cover the strategic needs of really specific actions within a specific area, to a more holistic strategy that is needed for managing the whole functioning of the club in regard to its surroundings. Hence,

there are different strategies since there are different needs for a single player's development compared to the needs of the development of the whole club. The management of a professional sports team enforces the ability of working across the boundaries between economic, technical, cultural and functional mindsets (Dolles & Söderman 2013).

Just like the strategy is explained above by Dolles and Söderman, I was told during my interviews that different strategies are used at different levels of the organization and depend on the goals and visions. Visions, goals and strategies are used within all businesslike organizations, at all levels. While making important decisions, the vision and the strategy are usually a contributing factor to the final decision.

## **5.2 Summary regarding the framework**

Looking at all the different economic actors within the framework and comparing floorball towards football, since the framework was developed from research within the business of football, one can see that the main differences between the two sports are related to the economy, the professional extent and the development of the sports.

Still, while looking into the different economic actors more closely, one by one, they are all to be considered as present within the world of floorball. They all provides and receives value from one and other to various extent. Therefore, the framework is useful within floorball to find the sources behind the competitive advantage. Though, sometimes it is necessary to think a bit differently to find the equivalent economic actor within floorball, because of the big difference between the sports. As an example the media might be of great value within football regarding broadcasting revenue, meanwhile within the sport of floorball the broadcasted games are more of a cost. Within floorball the clubs actually make more money from their own webcasts and they create more value through social media. Therefore, within the media component the big value creators would be social media and webcasts, when looking at floorball, and the main focus would lay on them while investigating the value creation within the sport.

A lot of the value that contributes to competitive advantage is to be found with help of the framework. But still there are big contributors, to the value creation and to the development of the sport, which has not yet been considered since they are not in the framework. These economic actors are the equipment manufacturers and the retailers. During my research I have

found that these economic actors are important players within the world of floorball. Next, a closer analyse regarding their role will therefore be provided.

## **6. Discussing the streams of value creation within floorball**

*In this chapter I will analyze the equipment manufacturers and the retailers' role within the sport of floorball. Furthermore, I will give some examples of value streams that are being present between different economic actors within the framework.*

### **6.1 The role of manufacturers and retailers in the value creation process**

#### **6.1.1 The equipment manufacturers contribution**

The equipment manufacturers have historically had a great and important role in the development of floorball. They have from the beginning introduced new products on the market that made it possible for the game to develop, both regarding to features of the game and the interest of the sport. Going from playing with plastic sticks into playing with sticks made out of carbon fiber was one of the first big steps in the process. This made the sticks lighter and more flexible, which improved the sport since it became quicker and the players could shoot harder. Furthermore, several of the equipment manufacturers' innovations have improved the sport and still there are new ideas and innovations in progress.

Most of the people that work with the equipment manufacturing, and at the retailers, are or have been active themselves and they are really passionate about the sport. This passion for the sport is shown in their tremendous work of marketing the sport, as well national as international. The equipment manufacturers that I have spoken to are involved internationally in various ways. They work closely with organizations around the world to market the sport. For example, Salming have collaboration with Hockey Canada and Hockey USA whom help out marketing and teaching about the sport in their countries. Another example is Unihoc's sponsoring of the IFF, and how they help out by providing material in an attempt to reach new markets around the world. Last but not least there is the 'Asia-tour', which Zone together with Pixbo Wallenstam went on, to market the sport in Asia. All of those activities create value to every single component within the framework in the long run, since it will make the sport grow bigger. If they are successful in their marketing and the penetration of new markets this is of course a value to the manufacturers themselves as well, regarding to more sales.

The equipment manufacturers has an important role to play within floorball, they help out developing the sport and creates value for all the participants within the framework. Without the equipment manufacturers' hard work with marketing and developing the sport, the sport would not be what it is today. Innovations of new products create value and, as mentioned before, innovations have improved the game and helps improve the players' individual skills. When it comes to new ideas, there are sometimes cooperation between the equipment manufacturers and their sponsored players and teams, who might have some good ideas or inputs for new products. This creates value both for the sport itself, but also for the clubs, the teams, the players and the equipment manufacturers. Johan Österman said

*“We get ideas from everything and everybody almost. You look at other sports and see if there is anything that can be used within floorball. And you listen to players to find out what is in demand on the market” (Interview 5).*

The equipment manufacturers are vital in the process of developing new products, and thereby improving the sport, since they are the ones realizing the ideas. Still, cooperation with other components in the framework is necessary to the whole value creating process.

The equipment manufacturers also generate value by being present on social media and by making videos with the star players whom they are sponsoring. Those videos are about tips and tricks to help younger players develop their skills, as well as trick filmed videos that urge a discussion regarding what is possible to do within floorball. Those videos create value to the different components, within the framework, in different ways. For example, it might create value if those kids who watch these videos start talking about the videos with their friends. They might talk about the star player in the video, which in turn will make that certain player's market value rise. When that single player get more attention the products that the player use might sell more, which is in favor to the manufacturers who also in this case are the player's sponsor. The more sales and the more market value that is related to the player, the more willing and interested will the manufacturers be to extend the sponsoring of the player. The more sponsoring that is brought in to the sport of floorball the more professional will the sport get, and the more interest from the public will the sport gain. By simply using the right marketing strategy, the manufacturers might make the sport grow in regards to the total amount of registered players.

### **6.1.2 The retailers contribution**

There are different retailers who have different roles to play. There are the large sport retailers, who sell all different kind of sport products, but they only have a limited range of

products within every sport genre. Those are the retailers who put pressure on the manufacturers regarding to prices of the products, together with the demand on the market. Then there are the retailers who are specialized regarding to one single sport, and this is the kind of retailer that I have been looking more closely at during my research.

Klubbhuset, which is the specialized retailer of floorball products that I have looked closer at, generate value within the framework in different ways. Their main contribution is their way of marketing themselves and the different brands that they are selling. They have their own YouTube channel, called KH TV, where they provide video clips of different kind. They mainly talk about new sticks and innovations, but they also have videos showing the best way to attach a grip tape on to your floorball stick, instructions about how to shoot or how to make the best free-hits. Sometimes they make videos where you get to meet star players, from the top league, to get to know them more closely. They also made a video with a celebrity, a big star within the world of ice hockey, namely Peter 'Foppa' Forsberg. All of these videos are very popular among their target group, who mainly are kids and youths between 10 and 15 years of age. Klubbhuset market themselves at Facebook, Twitter and Instagram which are the social media that every other person uses today. As Magnus Augustsson said

*“At this time that we are present in, everyone in our target group are active within those social media. It is like owning a bus pass to go to school when I was young, everybody does”*  
(Interview 9).

Those videos that Klubbhuset provide, helps the star players, who are participating in the videos, to get more publicity and fans. By getting more publicity and fans the players are able to get better sponsoring deals, since they are of better value regarding to marketing. By increasing the number of fans, the players might be able to get more people to go to the games this in turn generates revenue to the club because of increased ticket sales. This also generates value to the whole team regarding to support during the games. More support, more money and better conditions for the players will again improve the professional touch of the sport.

Making those videos, and marketing the equipment and material from various manufacturers, together with the star players, generates more sales of the advertised products. This is of course in favor to both the retailers themselves and the equipment manufacturers. In this way Klubbhuset generate value to themselves, the manufacturers, the clubs, the teams, the players and the supporters. This is of value to the whole sport and the development of the sport.

Klubbhuset, together with the equipment manufacturers, have a big role regarding to sponsoring, or beneficial agreements with business partners as they like to call it. Klubbhuset's role within those agreements is that they act like an intermediary and makes it easier for the clubs and the equipment manufacturers. Usually when an equipment manufacturer is sponsoring a club, the deal is that the club gets some free equipment and they have to buy some equipment. The bigger and the better, regarding to club members and sporting achievements, the better the deal will get. If a club has many club members, the members themselves will generate more sales for the manufacturer who in turn can provide the top team of the club with a better sponsoring deal. The better the team perform the more value they generate regarding to marketing, which in the long run hopefully generate in more sales for the manufacturer. As Tomas Solin said

*“The criteria are quite simple. The bigger the club is the more interesting it is, the better the club is the more interesting it is. It is no harder than that” (Interview 12).*

## **6.2 Value transferring**

In this section I will give an example of how personal sponsoring of a player can create value among the different economic actors within the framework. And I will describe how this value can be transferred between the different economic actors, with help from the information and thoughts provided by my interviewees. This is to give the reader an idea about how value can be created everywhere in various ways, it is just a matter of thinking outside the box and to find out how the value is perceived by the different economic actors.

Personal sponsoring of a player can generate value in to many economic actors. When equipment manufacturers and retailers are sponsoring a player, they of course create value for the player who gets free material. The player usually gives value back to the sponsors by marketing their products in various ways. This marketing can be through social media, which also generate value to the player in terms of more fans and publicity. More fans might generate more supporters to the player's team. This in turn provides value for the team by the support during games and to the club in terms of ticket sales. More ticket sales generate more revenue to the club, and more revenue can be used to further professionalize the sport. The more professional the sport gets, the more sponsoring might be generated and the more developed the sport will get.

The fans might also want to use the same equipment as their idols. The fans will go to the retailers and buy the equipment which of course generates value in monetary terms for the

equipment manufacturers and retailers. More sales will make it possible for the equipment manufacturers and retailers to develop their business further and create more value to the participants within the sport by doing so. It could be value created through the making of new videos published on social media, which are very popular among the fans. It could also be new product innovations that generate value to the clubs, the teams, the players and the supporters, among others.

In the end, all of this value, which is generated from the personal sponsoring of a player, contributes to the competitive advantage of a team and also in the long run the development of the sport as a whole. This one action, by the equipment manufacturers and retailers, triggers a chain reaction of value creation which involves several economic actors within the framework in various ways.

### **6.3 The equipment manufacturers and retailers – A new component?**

In this section I will, out of the analysis made on the equipment manufacturers and retailers role within the framework which were presented in the earlier sections, evaluate the possibility and necessity of their own part within the framework.

This is a component that I want to add to the framework, looking at the picture of the framework, I imagine this value capture to be placed underneath ‘Other clubs’ in the customers’ group. I state that they have a large enough part within the value creation process in floorball, and that their contribution to the development of the sport as a whole, entitles them to be considered as a component on their own within the framework.

The equipment manufacturers and the retailers have slightly different roles within the sport of floorball. They both create value to the sport as such and for the people within the sport in their own certain ways. They also create great value for one and other, and together, since the manufacturers sell their products through the retailers and the retailers sometimes produce their own products in cooperation with the manufacturers. They also cooperate largely regarding sponsoring of clubs and teams. Therefore I would find it suitable to have them both together in a new component within the framework.

Within floorball the equipment manufacturers and the retailers make a big difference, they create value in different ways and help out developing the sport and to market the sport worldwide. Their big impact on floorball makes them a great candidate of being a component

within the framework of value captures. But maybe this component is only of interest within the sport of floorball, because of that the sport is young and the equipment manufacturers and retailers have such a big part of the development of the sport itself. Maybe their contribution is limited to the sport of floorball, or maybe it is of interest in any sport that is equipment intensive, regardless of how long the sport has been present or how well known the sport is worldwide. Looking at floorball there is not a lot of equipment needed to practice the sport if, for example, comparing to ice hockey, but still the equipment is of great importance and every individual have their own preferences. This might be the case in other sports as well, and it would be interesting to make further research about the equipment manufacturers and retailers role within other sports.

The question now is, should this be a component of its own or should it be presented as a part of the component called ‘Sponsors and corporate partners’. Do the equipment manufacturers and retailers make such a big difference that they should be considered on their own. Just as the components called ‘merchandise’ and ‘team sport services’ do not have that big impact regarding value creation or generate value in the same way, within the sport of floorball as it does within the sport of football, they are still necessary economic actors within the framework. This new component, which I suggest, might not have such a big impact in other sports as it does within floorball. In other sports it might be more suitable to place them as a part of the ‘Sponsors and corporate partners’ component. Yet, this is not to be overlooked before proven wrong by further research. Within floorball they make such a big impact on the sport as a whole, and it is not all about sponsoring, therefore it should definitely have its own part within the framework.

Looking at different sports, the different components in the framework might always have a various amount of impact regarding to the value creation. Just as the economic actors within the framework create value in different ways to different teams within the same sport, and thereby generate various amount of competitive advantage, different economic actors within the framework will also contain different factors in within various sports.

## **7. Conclusion**

*In this chapter there will first be a short recap that summarizes the vital parts that bring us towards the answers of my research questions. Then I will explain my contribution to this*

*field of science, give examples to further research and make some suggestions about how I think that the sport can continue to develop and grow globally in the future.*

### **7.1 Answering the first research question**

In this section the research questions will be answered. To answer the first question, about how the different economic actors in the framework contribute to the value creation within floorball, I looked at every component in the framework and used the information from my interviews and research. This also provides an idea about which different economic actors that contributes to the development of the sport. Consequently, this partly answers the second research question as well. The economic actors and their contribution will be summarized shortly, one by one, underneath.

1.A Team – The value that the team generates is high and of great importance. The team generate value to the players in the team by finding harmony and working together. They also generate value to the supporters, the club, the sponsors and many other economic actors in the framework. The team contributes highly to the value creation. The team is also important regarding to the development of the sport as seen in the analysis chapter. As an example they contribute to the sports spread internationally by participating in tournaments and marketing activities.

1.B Sporting competition – This is important to be able to organize the whole business around the sport, and it generates value to the participants because of the safe environment that rules and regulations provide. This contributes highly to the value creation. The regulatory bodies also develop the sport by revising the rules and by promoting the sport worldwide.

1.C Club – The club mainly generate value to their players, by serving them with as much as they get to offer. This creates great value and contributes directly to competitive advantage thanks to gaining satisfied players. The club also generate value to the club members and other components within the framework in various ways. This contributes highly to the value creation. The clubs help out developing the sport by sending their teams on international tournaments to market their team and the sport. By being successful in their work with gaining sponsors, the clubs are also able to make the sport develop in professional scale.

1.D Players – Depending on how great the player is, the more interlinked they are in the value creating process. A star player might generate value for as well other players, the team, the

club, the sponsors and the supporters in various ways. This contributes highly to the value creation. Star players will help out developing the sport by being good role models and by marketing the sport.

1.E Team sport services – The services provided within floorball generate value to different economic actors within the framework. As an example, webcasting a game generate value to supporters all around the world who can take part of this service. It also generates value to the clubs in monetary terms. This in turn might create value to other economic actors, depending on how the money is reinvested. The webcasts also create value for the sponsors, since they can get their advertisements shown during the webcasts. This contributes highly to the value creation. The team sport services contribute to the development of the sport since the services are available worldwide, and therefore the sport will be able to grow globally.

1.F Event, arena and facilities – This economic actor create value within floorball in various ways because of the opportunities that are generated through the construction of new arenas. The possibility of, for example, getting more time to practise, generate value to the club, the teams, the players and in turn also other components within the framework. New arenas are not built that often though and therefore this contributes to the value creation, but to a lower extent. In the same way the new arenas would develop the sport, since more floorball could be practised and the sport would grow in regards to the amount of registered players.

1.G Merchandise – There is not that much merchandise sales within floorball as there is within football. This component does not, at the moment, bring much value into the world of floorball. Therefore it contributes to the value creation, but to a lower extent. For the same reason this economic actor does not at the moment contribute to the development of the sport.

1.H Other commercial activities – The possibility for a club to host events and other activities in their arenas are not that big since they usually do not own their own arenas. Still, if the possibility appears, it might generate great value to the clubs in monetary terms, which might provide value to other economic actors within the framework in the long run. This component does at the moment contribute to the value creation and the development of the sport to a lower extent.

2.A Supporters – Supporters generate a great value to the players and the teams. The supporters might make the teams perform better, which in turn generate value to several other

economic actors within the framework. Definitely contributes to the value creation within the framework. Supporters do not directly contribute to the development of the sport, but considering the positive chain of value that they might start, by supporting their favourite team, they indirectly take part in the development of the sport as well.

2.B Club members – In floorball most of the club members are active members. Having many club members might make it easier for a club to get sponsoring. Club members indirectly generate value to many economic actors and contribute to the development of the sport by doing so.

2.C Media – Within floorball the use of social media is widely used and this generate value to many economic actors within the framework. The webcasts, which have been mentioned before, generate value in monetary terms for the clubs, which indirect positively affects the teams and players. This contributes highly to the value creation and, in the long run, also the development of the sport.

2.D Sponsors and corporate partners – Within floorball where the clubs are run as non-profit organizations, the sponsors and corporate partners are vital for the sports existence. They create value to several economic actors within the framework by sponsoring the clubs, the teams and the players. This contributes highly to the value creation and also to the development of the sport.

2.E Local communities – Local communities are of various importance to different clubs within floorball. They contribute to the value creation and the development of the sport to a lower extent.

2.F Other clubs – The cooperation among clubs are not that common in floorball and the value created from this component is therefore of limited extent. The same reasoning applies to the components contribution regarding the development of the sport.

Vision and Strategy – The visions and strategies are present in all team sports, almost regardless of the level. This part pervades the whole framework, and brings all the components together. This contributes highly to the value creation.

### 7.1.1 Summarizing an answer to the first research question

**“How do the different economic actors in the framework contribute to the value creation within floorball?”**

As shown above, all of the components are contributing to the value creation within floorball in various ways and to different extent, high or low. Even if some of them seem to be less involved in the value creation process, they all are participating in the process. If considering all the different economic actors, and finding the harmony among them with the help of the right strategies, one will be in a great spot of continuing towards the realization of a vision.

Still, the human factor and the charming unpredictability of sports are always present. Therefore the framework is just a tool that helps to understand the sources behind competitive advantage, and to explore the cooperation among the economic actors within the framework, it is not a tool that can be used to leapfrog to success. All of the components are in need of each other and, even if it seems like some of them are more vital than others, they would not be able to create the value that is needed, to gain competitive advantage, all by themselves.

### 7.2 Answering the second research question

To be able to answer the second research question I need to consider my findings regarding the equipment manufacturers and retailer's role as well as look at the different economic actors within the framework. The different economic actors have been summarized above while answering the first research question and therefore I will now provide a short explanation regarding the equipment manufacturers and retailers contribution, before summarizing the answer to the second research question.

The equipment manufacturers and retailers contribute with a lot of value within the sport of floorball and they contribute largely to the sport's development and the marketing of the sport worldwide as well. This makes them an important player within the sport and they create value for many of the economic actors within the framework. With new innovations, by sponsoring teams and players, their use of social media and other actions that they contribute with creates value in a long array between the components. Their main contribution is probably their involvement in the marketing of the sport worldwide, which are of vital importance for the sports development. By participating in the spreading of the sport worldwide, they help the sport to grow and to get closer to the goal of gaining a spot in the agenda of the Olympic Games. Gaining a spot in the Olympic Games would develop the sport

further thanks to all the sponsoring revenues that it would provide. Their role within floorball is obviously important, and I think that their own part within the framework should definitely be considered.

### 7.2.1 Summarizing an answer to the second research question

#### **“Which different economic actors contribute to the development of the sport?”**

Out of the now existing economic actors of the framework of value captures, there are a few who directly contribute to the development of the sport in various ways. Their contribution is mostly by marketing the sport worldwide, by being present physically in different countries, which contributes to the growth of the sport. Those contributors are; ‘1.A Team’, ‘1.B Sporting competition’, ‘1.C Club’, ‘1.D Players’ and ‘2.D Sponsors and corporate partners’. There are two economic actors which indirectly help out marketing the sport, and these contributors are; ‘1.E Team sport services’ and ‘2.C Media’. Furthermore there are two economic actors who indirectly contribute to the development of the sport by supporting, they are; ‘2.A Supporters’ and ‘2.B Club members’. The rest of the components are not contributing to the development of the sport to any wider extent. But still, as one can see, the development of the sport is dependent of many different economic actors’ contribution. Yet, the most active source behind the development of floorball is not one of the aforementioned. The economic actors who are contributing the most to the development of floorball are the equipment manufacturers and retailers. Their tremendous work with spreading the sport worldwide together with different federations and their continuously work with new innovations helps developing the sport to new dimensions over and over again.

### 7.3 My contribution

By doing my research I have contributed in various ways to this field. My first contribution is that by doing this research and by using the framework developed from research within the business of football, I have established that the framework is of great use even within the sport of floorball, a young sport that are not as developed as football. I have tried it within a new and unexplored area and revealed interesting dimensions of value creation within the sport of floorball.

Another contribution, which probably is my biggest contribution, is my idea of the new component within the framework. I have concluded that the equipment manufacturers and retailers are great forces that contribute to the development and value creation within floorball. By looking more closely into those economic actors and their possible role within

the framework of value creation, I have hopefully opened up to new ideas and thoughts about their role within other sports as well. This might lead to further research within the field.

A further contribution might be that I strengthen the bands between the different economic actors within floorball. When people within the world of floorball read my thesis, they will get a better understanding about what kind of contributions that is valuable to the different economic actors within the framework. This might make them more understanding towards one and other, which might make the cooperation between them work more smoothly. As I concluded, they are all in need of each other. And the better the cooperation between them, the greater competitive advantage will be reached.

#### **7.4 Further research**

The whole idea with the framework is to find the linkages between the involved economic actors. Find out how they all create value for, and receive value from, one and other. It is about finding the balance and the harmony with the right strategies to be able to realize a vision. This is not a mathematical model where success is granted if all the factors are satisfied, but rather a tool where strategies are used to harmonize the linkage between the economic actors. The framework is a tool to explore and capture all of these things that are important in order to gain competitive advantage. The interesting thing is that value are perceived differently by various people, therefore further research would always bring new interesting perspectives regarding value creation and value perception.

I think that similar research like mine, but within other sports, could bring new interesting thoughts about value creation. In other sports there might also be another jargon and mentality which will influence on the way that the sports develop and the way that value is perceived. Similar research could also bring new components into consideration which not yet has been considered within football or, like in this case, floorball.

As mentioned before, within the analysis section, regarding the equipment manufacturers and retailers, it would be interesting to look at those economic actors role within other team sports. Sports where the equipment is a central part of the game like ice hockey, bandy or field hockey might be interesting to look further into. There are sports that are more equipment intensive than floorball, and it would be interesting to see in what extent the equipment manufacturers and retailers create value within those sport.

It would be interesting to make further research within the sport of floorball as well. By looking closer at all the teams in the professional leagues around Europe, it would be possible to get a better understanding about how developed the sport really is regarding to its professional extent. Finding out about the real number of players who have the sport as their profession, finding out about what kind of sponsors that are contributing the most in monetary terms and what is needed to be able to gain those sponsors. All of this could bring further knowledge and interesting dimensions of value creation within the world of floorball. This deeper knowledge could also be beneficial for the development of the sport in the future.

### **7.5 Future outlook**

While making this research on floorball I gained a lot of interesting input and thoughts about the sport's future outlook from several different individuals within the sport. They all seem to agree on that, to be able to grow bigger internationally, the sport need to get some sort of boost in a larger arena. To make it in to the Olympics Games would be the best possible help, but that is probably several years away from happening. A more realistic way of growing as a sport right now would be to raise the interest of the sport in larger countries, like Germany. If the sport would grow in popularity in Germany, the sport would most likely spread to other European countries as well. Growing as a sport would probably raise the popularity in media and the number of sponsors would grow which in turn could help to raise the number of players who can make a living out of the sport. The fact that floorball will take part in the World Games is a great leap forward.

Furthermore, the question would be how big the sport can get. It is probably not realistic to think that the sport can grow as big as football in Europe or ice hockey in North America, at least not as it looks right now. The interest of the sport is simply not big enough at the moment, and the sport needs to grow further to gain more sponsors. Also the rules about ownerships of the clubs in Sweden takes away the opportunity of making profit from owning a club. This in turn erases the possibility of getting wealthy investors involved in the sport, as is the case in some football clubs worldwide. Anyhow, the sport might have the potential to grow as big as handball in Europe. Out of my research I have gotten the impression that the belief is that, in the future, there will be whole teams of professional players who make a living out of their floorball. But when this will happen or how to get there is still not clear.

I think that it is important to find new ways of marketing the sport, maybe through extending the use of social media and the webcasting of games even further, and grow as a sport by

marketing themselves on the internet. The clubs could work more actively with internet services, as mentioned in section 5.1.1.5 about the 'Everton Way', and build up a bigger interest of the club around the world. They could use this internet services to reach out to new potential supporters and new potential club members worldwide. This would support the clubs financially, and financing is just what this sport needs to grow even bigger. By being present online, new supporters might not only start following the sport more actively, they might also in the long run start new clubs, new teams and new leagues in other countries around the world. The growth and development of the sport would attract new sponsors since the marketing value of the sport would increase. Therefore, I believe that this would be a marketing strategy that is suitable for this young sport. Using the internet as the main market place and trying to reach out cross borders would be great for the development of the sport as a whole.

The equipment manufacturers and retailers will most likely stay in the front line regarding the marketing and development of the sport even in the future. As we have seen in this thesis, the cooperation between different economic actors is of big importance. This might be the key to further success even in this case. If the different equipment manufacturers and retailers were to collaborate, regarding spreading the sport internationally and marketing the sport worldwide, instead of competing about the new markets, the sport might have a better chance of growing globally. In the long run, more revenue would be generated and all economic actors would gain from the cooperation. It might be a win-win in the long run, to set aside the rivalry and to use a different approach towards the new markets by collaborating.

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## Appendix

### Interview guide 1 - Board members of a club

- Do you work with visions and strategies?
- How does the structure look like in your club?
- Do you have any employed people in the club?
- Do you pay your players wages and do they have contracts?
- How does sponsoring work? What do you get and what can you give in return?
- How many club members do you have? Are they active or passive club members?
- Is it important with a local content for the supporters?
- Do you own the arena? Can you use it to host other events?
- How do you get people to come to watch your games?
- Do you sell merchandise at the games?
- Does the club earn money from broadcasted games?
- How do you work with media and marketing?
- Do you have any internet services?
- Is there any cooperation with other clubs?
- How do you work with scouting and development of players?
- How do you provide value for your players within the club?
- How do the players create value for you?
- What role do the equipment manufacturers have within the sport?
- How does the international dimension of floorball look like?
- What do you think about the future of the sport floorball?

## **Interview guide 2 - Manufacturers/retailers**

- What is your role within the sport of floorball?
- Where do you produce your products?
- How many floorball sticks are sold every year?
- How do you market your products?
- How do you come up with innovations?
- How do you work with sponsoring? What do you gain and what do you give?
- Do you produce/sell everything within the sport?
- Do you sell much material to schools or similar for recreational activity?
- How do you work with different kind of media?
- Do you have any internet services?
- Are you well known/big internationally?
- What do you think about the future of floorball?

### **Interview guide 3 - Player/coach**

- How do you work with sponsors?
- How do you work with marketing? What kind of media's?
- How do you work to help developing younger players?
- How do you get people to go to floorball games?
- Can you make a living as a professional floorball player/coach?
- What is the international dimension of floorball?
- What role do the equipment manufacturers have within floorball?
- What do you think about the future of the sport floorball?
- How is value created between you and the club?
- How is value created between you and the team?
- How is value created between you and players?
- How is value created between you and supporters?
- How is value created between you and club members?