

## Exploring the Resource Base for Sport Tourism in Southern New Zealand: A Comparison of Dunedin and Queenstown.

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### Abstract

Sport and tourism share many resources and are two of the largest industries and social phenomena in the world. Despite the growth of sport related travel, researchers have claimed that the tourism benefits of sport tourism have not always been optimised because of a lack of integration of research at industry level (Glyptis 1991; Weed and Bull 1997). While many researchers have recommended the integration of sport and tourism, few have identified how to go about it. To achieve sustainable tourism benefits from sporting activities and events, the Australian Tourist Commission identified six key steps in their recently implemented sport tourism strategy (Office of Sport & Tourism Division 2000). Two of these steps were addressed in the objectives of this study. The first step was to audit all relevant infrastructure for sport and tourism. The second step was to co-ordinate the industry by recognising the synergies within the sport and tourism sectors, and to harness them to establish clear linkages and strategies at the interface between sport and tourism.

The purpose of this research was to analyse the resource base for sport tourism and explore the extent of the linkages and synergies within and between Dunedin and Queenstown. In this study, the resource base incorporated the infrastructure, linkages and synergies relevant to sport tourism. The two contrasting study areas, Dunedin in Coastal Otago, and Queenstown, in Central Otago, were selected to provide a basis for comparing the characteristics of their resource bases. Qualitative methods were utilised and carried out in two stages. The first stage involved a resource analysis and background preparation for the interview programme. The second stage involved semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders in the sport and tourism sectors to gain insights into sport tourism development. Eight interviews were carried out in Dunedin and eight in Queenstown. The resources for sport tourism in Dunedin and Queenstown were presented separately using a nine-category classification framework proposed by Standeven and De Knop (1999), then subsequently analysed and compared.

Results indicated that sport tourism in Dunedin is focused on sport, with tourism of secondary importance. Its resource base is linked closely to intellectual capital resources, constructed facilities, services and organisations. By contrast, Queenstown is an international tourism resort. Sport and leisure activities based on the spectacular natural environment are prominent features in Queenstown's image and the overall tourism product. With a high level of entrepreneurship, sport and tourism resources are closely linked and products are well packaged. These contrasts highlight the potential for Coastal and Central Otago to forge co-operative relationships to promote complementary forms of sport tourism, thus leveraging greater tourism benefits for Southern New Zealand.

Findings revealed that relationships do exist between stakeholders, however, the industry would benefit from more formal linkages, political commitment and coherent strategies. There was a lack of consensus about what sport, and a general lack of understanding and appreciation amongst

administrators in both sport and tourism, as to what each other does. The study highlighted the importance of auditing the resource base to assess the ability of a region to support and sustain a particular sporting activity or event. Critical success factors were identified, that represent the synergies between stakeholders at the interface of sport and tourism. These factors form the basis of successful tourism development that is complementary to the type and scale of the resource base. Finally, the findings acknowledged that tourism outcomes are not a priority for the sport sector therefore it is essential that government at local and national level, and their tourism agencies lead the integration of sport tourism.