

# Strategic surveillance and the rational model of strategic planning: lessons for business from Rugby Union

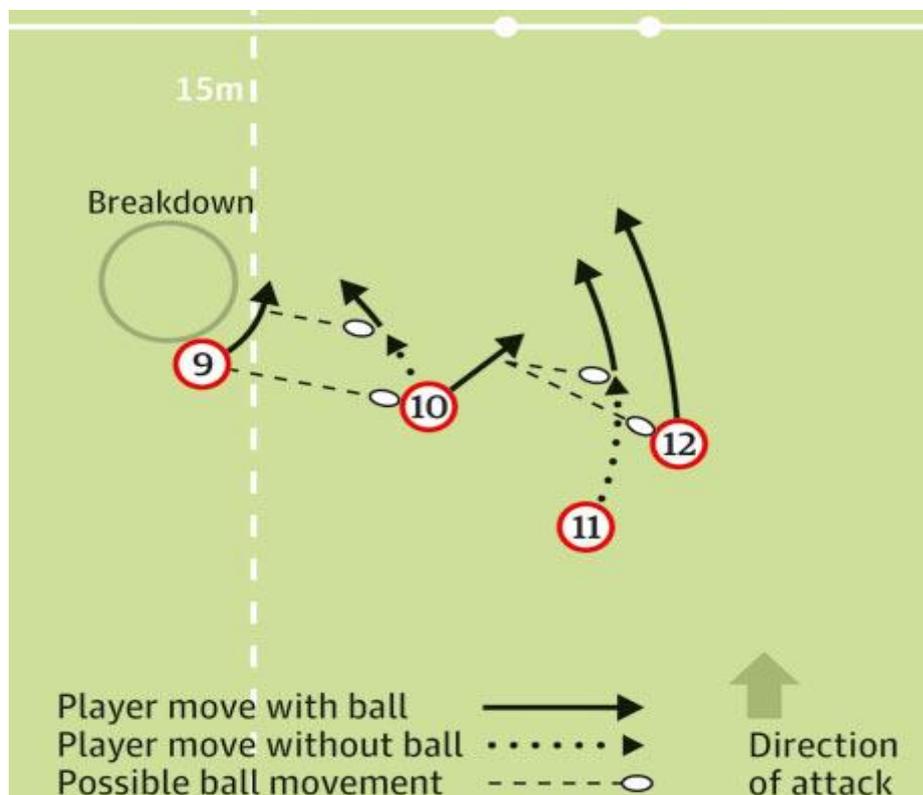
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## Abstract

Business and Rugby Union have the element of competition in common. Change in the competitive environment is constant and accelerating and a rugby match epitomises an extremely dynamic and fast-paced contest. Applying the rational model of strategic planning in rugby exposes opportunities to enhance the model for use in highly dynamic environments. Adopting the rugby union perspective on tactics as a response to environmental opportunities and threats that fleetingly occur during strategy implementation, allows for the incorporation of tactical options in support of strategic choices. It exposes the fallacy of management participation in implementation of tactics but emphasises its critical role in supporting the creation of an institutional tactical repository, training and coaching employees in preparation for tactical choice and implementation, and possibly supporting awareness through strategic surveillance. The research uncovered that the rational model is ideally suited for strategic planning in rugby. It is evident that it has the potential to guide and direct the strategic planning process and bring structure to strategizing by rugby franchises. If there is implementation and customisation of the rational model in rugby union teams, this will prove to offer the ideal framework within which they could conduct their strategic planning.

**Keywords:** Strategic planning, dynamic environment, strategy implementation, tactics, strategic surveillance



Source: <http://i.guim.co.uk/static/w-620/h--/q-95/sys-images/Sport/Pix/pictures/2012/2/3/1328296320484/rugby-graphic-C-001.jpg>

## Introduction

It is conspicuous how much the sport of rugby and business tend to have in common. Fierce competition – evoking images of battlefields with opponents engaged in mortal combat – has resulted in both rugby and business being likened to war. Although business analogies to war are abundant, the Prussian military general, Carl von Clausewitz, conversely depicted war as emulating business. In his book; “On War” (1831) he states: “Rather than comparing [war] to art we could more accurately compare it to commerce, which is also a conflict of human interests and activities” (Clausewitz.org, 2002: 1). Similarly, a rugby match has been described as; “... a picture of great men winning through in what looks like the most terrifying and scarcely survivable of situations. Its function for us, spectators in the Colosseum, is to mimic war.” (Nicolson, 2003: 1). Kobus Wiese, the lock forward for the victorious 1995 World Cup Springboks said in an interview; “Rugby is war. It’s a battle of skills, it’s a battle of guts, it’s a battle of who’s mentally the strongest, who wants it the most. Very much like life.” (Troy University, 2013: 1).

Charnay (1994) reflects on the origins of strategy and tactics as follows; strategy can be traced back to two Greek words, ‘*stratos*’ (army) and ‘*agein*’ (to lead). Confusion was introduced at the creation of strategy as a field of study when the Greek seminal writers, such as Polybius, Aeneas Tacticus and Aelianus Tacticus (*Taktike Theoria*, AD106), rather referred to the art of war as ‘*taktika*’ (from ‘*techne*’, the art of arranging, of putting into position). Subsequent writings by scholars from the Roman period such as Publius Flavius Vegetius Renatus (*Epitoma rei militaris*, BCE384) refer to tactics, but the Byzantine Greek Emperor Maurice, although also showing preference for using the term tactics, called his work, *Strategikon* (AD602). In the current business environment, Ghanbari (2014), provides for a clear distinction; strategy is the organisation’s approach to persuade the customers to buy the products or services - how, not what – and tactics are

actions or tools an organisation takes to achieve the objectives associated to a strategy - the ‘whats’, not ‘hows’.

The principles of strategy and tactics, which have its foundations in warfare, have been easily transposed onto business. The two words are closely connected and unfortunately, used interchangeably. Yet, in business terminology, the terms strategy and tactics refer to separate business functions and practices. A number of models have been developed to explain the strategic and tactical processes in business (Mintzberg, 1994). Tactics are the specific actions you take in implementing<sup>1</sup> your strategy. These actions comprise what is to be done, in what order, using which tools and resources. You may employ a number of tactics and involve many different departments and people in this effort to reach a common goal. Tactics typically requires the involvement of the organization as a whole. The terms tactical and strategic are fundamental to an understanding of the different responsibilities attached to management and governance of any rugby team or business.

Considering the fact that war, business and rugby are all about competing and winning, and strategy is aimed at achieving victory, business strategy models may plausibly, to a varying extent, be applicable to rugby strategy. Ancient writings on war strategy, such as Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* from about 500BC, are still included in business strategy studies. Adcroft and Teckman (2008: 601) similarly conclude, after studying the literature; “There is, therefore, a reasonably well established link between the activity of sport and the theory and practise of management”. They successfully applied the performance orientation, competition orientation matrix used in business to the Rugby World Cup. It is likewise possible that rugby could profit from evaluating game plan strategy using business

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<sup>1</sup> Author subscribes to the view that implementation is both getting the organisation ready for the strategy, and actioning the strategy (competing).

strategy models, and that business strategy models could potentially be enhanced through its application in an extreme environment such as a rugby match. This will be evaluated employing a conceptual-analytical approach

### Strategic planning in business

Competing successfully in the business environment is about achieving a competitive advantage. Unlike in war and rugby, success in business is not a zero-sum game. In war and rugby it is either win or lose, but in business there are often many winners. If everybody makes a profit, there may be no losers. Mintzberg (1987: 11) portrays five different perspectives on strategy – five P’s – in an attempt to explain the complexity of the concept, which can “help practitioners and researchers alike to manoeuvre through this difficult field”. Strategy as Plan emphasises the development and evaluation of alternatives, selecting one or more, and implementation in a structured, sequential and formalised approach employing consciously developed actions. Strategy as Ploy relates to the manoeuvring of oneself in relation to the opponent so as to leverage one’s strengths or attack a perceived weakness, setting oneself up for victory. Strategy as Pattern hints at the existence of a series of discernible outcomes resulting from strategic actions. These patterns vary in

predictability and consistency, some are consciously induced and some are totally unexpected and changing, new patterns emerge from competitive rivalry. Strategy as Position recognises the central position occupied by the customer and market, it is indicative of a need to evaluate strategy as the organisation and its offerings relative to the market. All the players and competitors are relevant to the extent of the success of the team. Strategy as Perspective introduces the internal organisational subjectivity, the collective experience and skills base, and an organisational culture into the strategic rationale. Chaharbaghi and Willis (1998: 1020) reduce the concept to its essence; “Strategy is what transforms ideas into reality”.

Strategic planning is the process of creating a strategy - and the implementation thereof - which has a high probability of enabling the company to compete successfully in what are often highly competitive global business environments. Although many variants of the model of strategic planning exist, the generally accepted base-line model is known as the rational model; “... a logical, step-by-step approach. It requires the organisation to analyse its existing circumstances, generate possible strategies, select the best one(s) and then implement them.” (CIMA, 2014: 7)

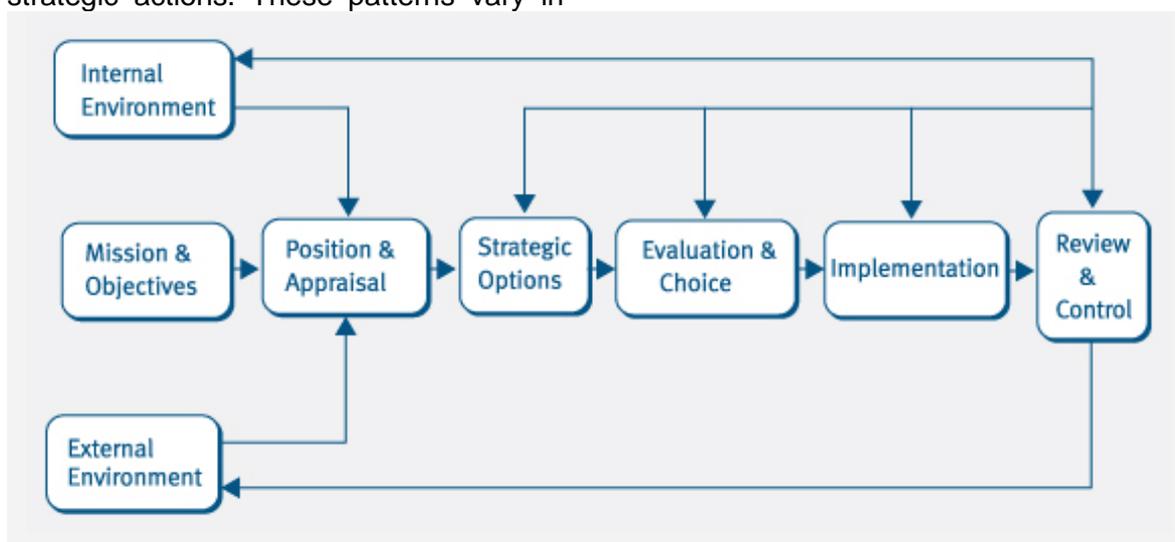


Figure 1. The rational model of strategic planning (adapted from CIMA, 2014: 7)

The staged approach proposed in the rational model has been questioned in the modern environment with its high rate of change. Mintzberg (1994) proposes an emergent approach to strategy that is evolving, continuous and incremental; "... the timing, order and distinctions between analysis, choice and implementation become blurred ....shown as a triangle rather than a straight line ...” (CIMA, 2014: 14). At the opposite end of a deliberate, staged planning approach is what is referred to as freewheeling opportunism, with no planning, identifying and taking opportunities as and when they arise. The dichotomy presented by strategy as both science (rational-deductive) and art (intuitive-creative), does not necessarily make conceptual models superfluous, but makes for interesting anomalies. Success stories of incidental and opportunistic actions are abundant and result in models and theories being regarded with some suspicion. Concepts like Porter’s Five Forces Model do suggest that there is an efficient and orderly dimension to strategy where the role of the strategist is to place different environmental forces into separate boxes and develop an understanding of the key issues.

The critique based on the dynamism of the environment (Chaharbaghi & Willis, 1998) emphasises the key role of environmental analysis in strategic planning; not only is it the high rate of change, but also “the complexity of the environment” and “...what the people in the organisation *do[es]*...” (Davis, 2014: 68) in the environment. Firstly, exploring the process of analyses of the environment, both how and when, is needed. Secondly, the observation that strategy is what people do, requires consideration of the implementation, and, review and control stages of strategic planning, as well as what constitutes tactics.

The rational model distinguishes between the internal environment – that which is within the organisation – and the external environment. The external environment begins with the immediate competitive arena – the industry – and stretches to the

macro-environment which is the national environment, or a collection of national environments, if the organisation competes globally. The dynamism and rate of change is highest in the competitive environment and typically recedes towards the macro-environment. The models most often employed in external environmental analysis are for the macro-environment, PESTLE – Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legal -; for industry analysis, Porter’s Five Forces – new entrant barriers, power of buyers, power of suppliers, substitutes and rivalry amongst competitors. Competitor analysis is a main focus to “provide an understanding of the company’s competitive advantage/disadvantage relative to its competitor’s position ..., to forecast competitors’ future strategies and decisions, to predict competitors’ likely reactions to a firm’s strategic initiatives, to determine how competitor behaviour can be influenced to make it more favourable to the organisation.” (CIMA 2014: 135). International competitiveness is analysed using Porters Diamond – factor conditions, demand conditions, related and supporting industry, strategy structure and rivalry, and other events such as the role of government and chance events. The unit of analysis is a country and the model is also known as the competitive advantage of nations.

The analysis of the internal environment is initiated by a resource audit which identifies the available resources as a precursor to identifying competencies. Typically resources are grouped under physical or operational resources, human resources, financial resources and intangibles Resources are combined to achieve competences; ”groups of abilities, resources or skills ...., core competences that are difficult to emulate, the basis of competitive advantage – order winners; and threshold competences that simply enable the organisation to compete – order qualifiers” (CIMA, 2014: 156). Critical success factors (CSFs) are areas in which the organisation needs to perform well to ensure success and for each a

measurement or key performance indicator (KPI) is developed to track its achievement.

The next stage is determining the organisational position and the appraisal thereof, and is done employing SWOT analysis (Strengths-Weaknesses-Opportunities-Threats). Strengths are the things being done well, those that the organisation is doing that competitors are not and major successes and form the basis of a resource-based or competence-led strategy. Weaknesses are the things being done badly, those that the organisation should be doing but is not and the major failures and are the things that deter the organisation from exploiting market opportunities. Opportunities are events or changes in the external environment that could potentially be exploited, things that are likely to go well in the future and form the basis of a market-lead or position-based strategy. Threats are events or changes in the external environment from which the organisations need to defend or protect itself and things that are likely to go badly and could potentially prevent the implementation of a competence-based strategy. Strategic options are developed and a choice is made based to the preceding analyses. So, is strategy driven by the organisation itself or by the environment in which it operates? Whilst there are theories, concepts and approaches which suggest that strategy is one thing or the other, in practice strategy is probably both.

The implementation of the strategy is directly related to what the people in the organisation do, in fact, together with the last stage of monitoring and control, it could plausibly be seen as the act of competing. Implementing the strategy means firstly getting the organisation ready, the strategy “needs to be communicated to the entire organisation and those who are tasked with implementing it needs to know exactly what is required”, “resource allocation – human resources, physical resources ... organisational structure needs to support the implementation ...” (Davis, 2014: 77). Operationalising the strategy is a term that

Davis (2014) uses to refer to functional tactics – setting short-term goals – to translate the strategy into operationalised actions. Tracking achievement reflects the extent of execution of the strategy, the next step after getting the organisation ready for implementation. The final stage is review and control and the main methodologies are premise control – reviewing the premises and assumptions made during strategy option creation, strategic surveillance – environmental scanning for unexpected occurrences and changes which activates special alert control. Implementation control or execution control comprises four steps; “set the standard, measure the actual, identify deviations and take corrective measures” (Davis, 2014: 79). The stages of strategy implementation and, monitoring and control, take place during the preparation of the organisation for the strategy and the execution of the strategy (competing). The strategy is executed via an array of functional tactics.

### **Application of strategic planning in rugby**

“Rugby, of course, is the perfect game. All the necessary elements are there. It is exceptionally difficult to play well and to make a move work, extraordinary precision and control are needed in the most hostile of circumstances. But at the same time - at the same moment as that finesse has to be put into action - it demands a boxer's depth of resolution in the service of the skills of a watchmaker.” (Nicolson, 2003: 1). Although rugby is “only a game”, it is obvious from this excerpt that a fast changing environment in which fierce competition places immense demands on players is prevalent.

In order to apply the rational model for strategic planning to rugby, the mission and objectives (first stage) need to be described in detail. The main objective of rugby is to beat the opponent, in fact, to beat all opponents, so as to be crowned the winner of the tournament/series/season. The opponent is beaten by scoring more points in a

match than they do, achieved by scoring points – offence or attack -, and preventing them from scoring – defence. The key object in rugby is the rugby ball. Possession thereof enables the scoring of points in offence, and in defence it is again a priority to regain possession from the opponents, otherwise to prevent the ball carrier from moving towards the goal line or kicking it between the goal posts.

In analysing the macro environment, **PESTLE** exposes the following <sup>2</sup>:

**Political** – Ministry of Sport and Recreation is the ultimate decision-making body of all sport, including rugby. SARFU (SA Rugby Football Union) Deputy President, Mike Stofile, political activist, Umkhonto we Sizwe. (ANC armed wing) member, and brother to former minister of sport and recreation. General political meddling in rugby affairs.

**Economic** – Emerging-economy profile. High unemployment, exaggerated low-income fraction, poor education and sport opportunities impedes rugby talent development. Currency vulnerability. Exchange rate<sup>3</sup> (South African Rand - ZAR) weakness impedes ability to compete with European (Euro 1: ZAR 13.90 and British Pound 1: ZAR 19.33), Japanese (Yen 1: ZAR 0.10) and Australian (Australian Dollar 1: ZAR 9.28) franchises on remuneration packages.

**Social** – High unemployment, exaggerated low-income fraction, poor education and sport opportunities impedes rugby talent development. Black majority, no culturally affinity for rugby. Black middle class and elite in rugby schools is emerging talent.

**Technological** – Limited access to communication media for supporter development (match broadcasting). Resource constraints limit utilisation of technological aids for coaching at grassroots level.

**Environmental** – Water-scarce country with low rainfall (winter sport in mainly summer rainfall region) constrains rugby pitch maintenance.

**Legal** - Legislated obligations of Redress (Broad Based Black Economic Empowerment – BBBEE) and specifically racial quotas in sport teams

The international competitive advantage for South African rugby<sup>4</sup> is analysed using **Porter's Diamond**:

**Factor conditions** – Human input as basic factor is positive with predominantly physically big, strong, fast and agile races. Culturally most groups are competitive and sociable (supporter traits). Although the fraction of rugby oriented inhabitants is low, in absolute terms it is on par with other nations. More than a century of rugby playing with established rugby infrastructure. As advanced factors, struggling to attain competitive advantage, economic realities of emerging economy and political redress impedes capital expenditure and thus competing for human talent in coaching and players. Racial quotas and lucrative international salaries result in haemorrhaging of white talent.

**Demand conditions** – Historically, local rugby competitions have been vibrant and the standards high, and this is still the case at school and university level. The national team (Springboks) remain competitive but the regional franchises have performed poorly in the international Super 15 competition. This bodes ill for the future with the World Cup eminent.

**Related and supporting industry** – The supply-side of rugby is a possibly contentious determination. Education is the supply industry. The foundation for a rugby player is laid during the early childhood development where big and small motor skills, ball sense, special orientation and a variety of cognitive

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<sup>2</sup> For each model, a selected few significant issues are reflected to exhibit application.

<sup>3</sup> Spot rate, 3 July 2015

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<sup>4</sup> Recommended reading, Madichie (2009), for a perspective on English Premiership League football

abilities are developed. As the child develops, more sport specific skills are progressively taught, as well as an appreciation of activity and play. Finally morality is engrained as ethical behaviour, fair play and excellence. Education in general is deteriorating and lucrative earning potential poses a risk to ethical standards (e.g. performance enhancers). Dedication as a result of professionalism in rugby yields a supply of playing talent.

Strategy, structure and rivalry – rugby as school sport from age seven and national universities competitions (Varsity Cup), coupled with a long history and extensive domestic support system in the rugby playing cultures results in fierce rivalry. Professionalism in rugby affords full-time dedication and yields a supply of playing talent. The untapped potential in the remaining 90% of the population remains immense.

Other events - Government priority on black sport (soccer), but some budget allocations towards rugby development at grassroots level. Political meddling and racial quotas impedes the ability to compete internationally. Dereliction of educational responsibilities is to the detriment of rugby also. Political turmoil prior to 1994 resulted in international sport isolation. Introduction of professionalism commercialised rugby and introduced remuneration, ownership and profit-focus.

The competitive environment is analysed using a combination of Porter's Five Forces model and competitor analysis. The following emanated from **Porter's Five Forces**:

New entrants – not a direct consideration in determining the rivalry amongst competitors. Professionalism and international competitions – effectively globalisation – have indirectly resulted in extinguishing previous barriers to entry.

Power of buyers –no buyers in the narrow definition of the term exist. It could be argued the supporter is the buyer of the

victory. Losing teams forfeit custom as evidenced by empty stadiums during matches. Revenues are inextricably linked to the size of the supporter base (ticket sales, branded merchandise, sponsorships) and prize money for winning. There is a high concentration of buyers, multiple sources of supply, low switching costs and they have full information. Intense rivalry results. Citizenship may result in a captured market but escalate pressure to perform, national pride. Administrators, coaches and players get fired.

Power of suppliers –inputs are mainly in the form of physical capital and human resource. Physical capital is provided by sponsorships and custom from supporters. Players and coaches are extremely mobile, as are supporters and sponsors. Supply is limited and differentiated, switching costs are low and customers (franchises) are not significant. Intense rivalry results. Players demand playing time but opportunities are limited by the team make-up.

Substitutes – other forms of rugby; rugby league, sevens where players migrate seamlessly. Other sports where sponsors and governments could invest.

Competitive rivalry –competitors are relatively few and team sizes are identical. Performance is absolute with one winner. Rivalry is intense.

**Competitor analysis** is typically done with a three-step approach (CIMA, 2014: 136):

Identify competitors – Brand competitors (similar products to same customers), these will be the competitors actually being played against in the various competitions. Industry competitors (similar products in different segments), franchises not in the same competitions, but competing for resources (coaches, players). Form competitors (products that satisfy the same needs but technically different), rugby league is the most relevant form. Generic competitors (compete for same

income); all the various sports resort in this group.

Analyse competitors – analysis is done regarding objectives (competitor's current goals, is performance in line with goals, how are goals likely to change), strategy (how is competitor competing, where – “niche” – is competitor competing), assumptions (assumptions held by competitor about industry and self) and, resources and competencies (competitor's key strengths and weaknesses, what resources does it have and not have, what competencies does it have and not have) to make predictions (strategy changes the competitor will initiate, respond to our strategy).

Develop competitor response profiles – Laid back (does not respond), plays own game, Selective (reacts to attack only in selected markets), reactive to certain strategies, Tiger (always responds aggressively), attempts to counter all of opponents strategies and Stochastic (no predictable pattern exists) varied combinations of own-play and counter-play)

In the literature regarding strategy in rugby – only introduced now to protect against bias in the preceding analysis – Mouchet (2005: 24) concludes that the boundaries between strategy and tactics are similarly blurred to what is the case in business; “... strategic and tactics aspects in team sports, with however semantic differences according to the authors”, and he then distinguishes between the two as; “Strategy covers preliminary, predictive, decision-making activity in the sports actions; it is based on elaboration and implementation of a plan or a game combination, announced without temporal pressure. Tactics corresponds to decision-making activity realized in the action course; it is revival in signals allowing to anticipate the game fleeting evolution, and to implement adaptatives regulations”<sup>5</sup> (Mouchet, 2005: 25). He also recognises the interplay between the strategy as the pre-planned actions and the tactics, as

reactive to the immediate environment; “... a double articulation strategy/tactics with an interweaving of strategic preparation announced to the partners, of tactical regulation, and return towards the strategy become again relevant” (Mouchet, 2005: 25). He notes that although tactical response to the immediate environment, as the game is being played, is an individual activity, the notion of a “common repository” of options – the result of strategic pre-planning and team training – binds “individual initiative and actions coordination”. Grehaigne and Godbout (1995: 491) refer to the strategy as “ a schema of play constitutes a pre-established program that puts forward an automatic regulation in order to economically face relatively stable situations”, and defend tactics; “In soccer, rugby, or similar sports, resorting to play schemas is rarely appropriate since as the game unfolds, disorder settles rapidly... For their part tactics relate to (a) the position taken in reaction to an adversary in a game situation (effective position), and (b) the adaptation of the team to the conditions of play (flexibility)”. All of this does not negate the requirement for the team manager to adopt a future orientation of where he sees the team in the longer term – end of season and future seasons – and to align this with the shorter-term match strategies.

Training and coaching is central to preparing the team for the match. Training includes strength training with resistance in gymnasiums, endurance training or fitness training, skills training and practising game-plays and movements (Ferrell, 2004). Although the various tactical moves are practised, training extend beyond; “A match rarely rests upon the simple application of tactical combinations learned previously during training” (Grehaigne and Godbout, 1995: 494) and the coaching in simulated match situations against opposition provides for the common repository referred to above (Mouchet, 2005). Training also focusses on enhancing visual awareness (discussed underneath); “to concentrate on improving players “visual awareness” by improving concentration, eye

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<sup>5</sup> Verbatim, including semantics

movements, focus, depth perception and head position” and “... game specific games are an important training tool for the development of visual awareness and decision making in our players. They can also be used as part of a fitness component and exposing players to game like pressure.”(Verrell, 2004: 2, 6).In addition to training and physical conditioning, players also follow scientific diets and take nutritional supplements to ensure optimal training response (muscle growth, strength and endurance increase).

The competitive environment (the match) is “... in a match, the opposition generates the unexpected, making it necessary to constantly adapt to constraints brought about by the confrontation. ... This type of approach, which puts forward ‘opposition’ and ‘disorder management’ as the basis for any progress ....” (Grehaigne and Godbout, 1995: 494) and the analysis of the competitive environment is referred to as awareness. Specifically visual awareness, as gathering of data for environmental analysis; “The visual information that is gathered by our rugby players during a game is fundamental to their spatial orientation, anticipation, timing, reactions, static and dynamic balance. The focusing of visual attention by our players on important cues during a game will lead to effective anticipation and hopefully correct decision making ... The assumption is that when the performer “looks” or fixates the eyes, information is gathered. The location, order, and duration of these fixations are assumed to reflect the perceptual decision making strategy used to extract information from the environment”. (Verrell, 2004: 2). This is similar to strategic surveillance during the review and control phase. (Davis, 2014: 79)

The performance of a team is tracked by measuring a number of performance indicators; “Coaches frequently collect great amounts of data regarding physical, technical and tactical parameters during both matches and training. A formal model of a phenomenon, utilising quantitative data, incorporating all the elements of a system, allow for constructing, reconstructing, and understanding of the

behaviour of a system as time progresses” (Lamas, Barrera, Otranto andUgrinowitsch,2014: 310). Grehaigne, Godbout and Bouthier (1997: 501) recognised the complexity of assessing individual performance in a team sport; “... related to the assessment of any complex system, that is (a) the intervening elements are not only numerous but also interacting, (b) the rapport of strength<sup>6</sup> plays an important role and may vary in different opposition situations or even during one given situation, (c) the members of a given team are interdependent, and (d) a single element (a player) must be assessed within a system (team) that has its own coherence.”

## Conclusions and recommendations

The rational model of strategic planning has shown extensive applicability in the rugby milieu. It has the potential to guide and direct the strategic planning process and bring structure to strategizing by rugby franchises. Implementation and customisation of the rational model should provide the ideal framework within which rugby union teams could do strategic planning. As is the case in business, in rugby this model does not succinctly provide for the need of the strategist to be visionary and the articulation of that vision, to be a forward thinker. Yes, the strategist needs to be able to plan, but also take an aerial view of his organisation and be highly imaginative and insightful.

The reservations expressed by Adcroft and Teckman (2008: 622) are reiterated, “We are weary of drawing any general conclusions about management from the theory and evidence contained in this paper. Most management research is context-specific, and this paper is no different”. But, in sharing Madichie’s (2009: 44) rebuttal “... that management theory can indeed be used to advance knowledge of football...”, a comparison of the results of applying the rational model

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<sup>6</sup> Two groups of players fighting for an object (rugby ball)

of strategic planning with the literature on strategy and tactics in rugby has made it possible to identify potential gaps in the model. It is mainly in the final phases of strategy implementation and, review and

control and the feedback into the other stages where lessons may be learnt. Underneath an enhanced model is proposed (figure 2):



Figure 2. The rational model of strategic planning with tactical options in response to the dynamic competitive environment included (adapted from CIMA, 2014: 7)

It remains for this perspective to be evaluated through research in the business environment.

Rugby provides insights into the complexities associated with strategy implementation in a highly dynamic competitive environment where successful strategy implementation requires tactical intervention in response to emergent and fleeting opportunities (attack) and threats (defence); “since as the game unfolds, disorder settles rapidly”(Grehaigine and Godbout, 1995: 491). This perspective on tactics is reminiscent of Mintzberg’s (1994) emergent approach to strategy, but the time frame is almost immediate in comparison.

The extent and nature of the tactical options are a combination of factors. Firstly, the collective organisational memory and experience curve, influenced by the strategic choice, are the sources of an institutional repository. Secondly, individual employees have a unique skills set, inclusive of visual awareness (analogous to strategic surveillance in business), which they leverage to attain a competitive advantage.

Lastly, two significant realisations have emerged from the practises of rugby Union. Firstly, tactics are implemented by a player during the match, he analyses the competitive environment through visual awareness and implements the tactic immediately as a response to a fleeting

threat or opportunity. The success is often dependent on the subsequent support and interplay of the rest of the team. The coach is not involved at all. Time constraints prohibit seeking his consent or direction. Even the captain on the field only supports, or at best fulfils the role as would any other player. Strategy implementation is dependent on effective tactical decisions by players. Tactical decision-making is the culmination of talent, training and possibly superior coaching from an early age. Managers add value to tactics by providing an environment conducive to the development of the institutional repository and honing individual skills. A system of visual scanning – strategic surveillance - could also possibly be put in place, provided that it is live and not filtered by management. Managers are not players, unless they are on the field and carrying the ball.

The ratio of match time – 80 minutes once a week - as compared to training, preparation and coaching time – up to 6 hours four to five days a week - is indicative of what professionalism in rugby union represents. Employees are expected to make tactical decisions in competition with comparatively little training, coaching and preparation time. In business, skills are honed and tactics trialled in match conditions, time not competing is seen as not yielding income. Is this really sensible?

The success of one the greatest national rugby teams in the world, the All Blacks of New Zealand, is a good example of carefully crafted strategy in action. It has a combination of the critical elements of vision, analysis, high order planning, tactics, implementation and re-evaluation and is replete with strategic thinking of the highest order. It is also undoubtedly focussed on how each of these elements of strategy creates a meaningful synergy that leads to ongoing success.

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