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SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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SIR KEITH MILLS
on the progress made towards London 2012 legacy promises

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The Sports and Play Construction Association
THE OFFICIAL MAGAZINE OF SAPCA

RUGBY LEAGUE
gearing up for the summer switch

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S&C Slatter sets a new performance standard with their delivery of sports facilities for St Bartholomew's School.

Staff and pupils of St Bart's are relishing playing and training on their new sports facilities, including a sand dressed Artificial Turf Pitch and 4 x court Multi-Use Games Area. S&C Slatter delivered the new facilities for market leading major contractor Willmott Dixon in record time. Not only was the speed of construction impressive, S&C Slatter also performed exceptionally well in ensuring works were delivered safely.

Willmott Dixon's Building Manager, Luke Brindley: 'S&C Slatter have delivered on what they said they would do. They have been hard working and impeccable in their approach; they have worked with us at every step of the way. Health and Safety is incredibly important to Willmott Dixon and we impress on our subcontractors the need to operate to the letter of the law. We have been very impressed with S&C's approach and they have achieved some of the highest scores in Health and Safety across all Willmott Dixon sites during this package of works.'

S&C Slatter secured this prestigious contract in the face of fierce competition. The company's constructive approach to project delivery, their ability to provide synthetic turf system solutions in line with the clients' specified requirements, and extensive in-house construction capabilities all contributed to place the company ahead.

Working with the client, S&C Slatter embarked on an extensive market research exercise to match the client's prescriptive sporting requirements with the best possible surface system solution. Following play testing of facilities, the school's Heads of Sport selected the exceptional GreenFields HT MF 18 sand dressed system for their Artificial Turf Pitch. This market leading surface system comprises heavy weight monofilament texturised yarns offering performance standards to suit an array of sporting disciplines.

Record Time

As the final phase of works on a prestigious £30m contract to rebuild St Bartholomew's School, the external sports facilities were to be delivered in a tight timescale. Typically, new build synthetic turf pitch facilities require a works programme of some 12-14 weeks. Due to the project's extensive scope of works for the main contractor, the external sports facilities programme stipulated an 8-week period to deliver both the full size Artificial Turf Pitch and an adjacent 4 x court Multi-Use Games Area. This presented logistical and planning challenges which were managed carefully and efficiently between the client, Willmott Dixon and S&C Slatter.

Technical Fact File:

- *High performance monofilament texturised sand dressed artificial turf pitch*
- *Tennis and Netball courts to AENA and Sport England standards*
- *Floodlighting system installed to stringent flood spill performance standards*
- *Acoustic fencing to ATP and MUGA perimeter*

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EDITOR'S LETTER

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Team GB's Nina Heglund at the Women's Handball Euro 2012 Qualifier

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Rethinking women's sport

A blistering new report from the Commission on the Future of Women's Sport – *Big Deal: the case for commercial investment in women's sport* – argues for a complete shake-up in the way sponsors and the industry view commercial opportunities presented by women's sport.

The report presents research showing high levels of interest by the public in watching and engaging with top female athletes and contrasts this with the lamentable levels of sponsorship currently being generated. It also highlights the low levels of TV airtime being devoted to broadcasting women's events and proposes that this mismatch is undermining the growth of women's sport and its corresponding impact on the health of women and girls who are lacking role models and inspiration in taking up sport.

In the foreword, Commission chair, Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson says: "Investment in women's sport really matters: it affects elite development, the promotion of female sporting role models and the provision of opportunities at grassroots level; all of which directly impact the health and wellbeing of the nation."

The report shows that between January 2010 and August 2011 women's sport received just 0.5 per cent of all UK sports sponsorship. During the same period, men's sport received 61.1 per cent. These figures, however, do not tell the true story of what women's sport is really worth according to *Big Deal*, which argues that commercial investment fails to reflect the value of the market. Consumer research indicates 64 per cent of the public think "top individual sportswomen are as exciting to watch as top sportsmen" and

Lack of investment largely accounts for the absence of a female sporting culture in the UK: its competitors are not being presented as fit, healthy role models to inspire women and girls to be active

61 per cent want "more women's sport on television". The report says "the case for increased investment in women's sport is based not on notions of equality or fairness, but on a sound commercial rationale."

So why are things this way? *Big Deal* says anecdotally, the reasons for the current situation appear to be historical and the result of inertia and resistance to change in the industry: "All the research shows that the traditional excuses, 'it's always been this way', 'women's sport isn't as good as men's' and 'no one wants to watch it' have no commercial basis and should be consigned to a bygone era."

The report says low levels of commercial investment are undermining the potential for women's sport at a time when 80 per cent of women and girls – half the UK population – aren't playing enough sport or doing enough exercise for it to have a positive benefit on their health. In addition, forecasters believe that in 20 years, the majority of women in the UK will be overweight.

Big Deal says commercial funding creates opportunities for grassroots participation, which feeds the top end of the game and that "lack of investment accounts for the absence of a female sporting culture in the UK: women's sport is not widely promoted and its competitors are not being publicly presented as fit, healthy, sporting role models to inspire women and girls to be physically active."

In highlighting the opportunity, the report says women's sport offers sponsors almost virgin territory with a big up-side in the audiences which can be reached through both traditional and new/social media. It also gives the top 10 reasons why sponsors should invest in women's sport now.

In concluding, it says: "A nation of active women represents a significant health, social and economic prize, both for the nation and for those whose money could make a difference."

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the leisure media company publishes

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SAPCA
Sports Management is the official magazine of the Sports and Play Construction Association (SAPCA), the trade body for the UK's sports facility construction industry. *Sports Management* and SAPCA work in partnership to promote high standards in the design, construction and maintenance of UK sports facilities.

LETTERS

Do you have a strong opinion about your industry? Where are things going wrong, or right?

Sports Management would love to hear from you.
Email: sm@leisuremedia.com

What are the benefits of hosting overseas squads in 2012?

With less than one year left to the 2012 Olympic Games in London, the scramble by British cities to host overseas squad training camps is set to intensify.

Already we know that China will initially be based in Leeds, while Jamaica will set up in Birmingham. The kudos for cities in attracting squads is obvious. As such, it is safe to assume there will be some economic benefits accrued to cities, no matter how intangible they might be.

Yet two questions remain: what will be the tangible economic benefits of hosting and will there be a net economic benefit to the cities fortunate enough to play host to an overseas squad?

It's difficult to see there being huge tangible economic benefits as squads will only be in town for a short period of time, will probably bring their own supplies, and it is unlikely that team members deep in pre-Games training will be spending time shopping and socialising where they are based.

Birmingham to host Usain Bolt's team mates

PHOTO: ©AZWEGERS

One also has to consider the cost of squad hosting; for instance, security sweeping and policing and there's likely to be disruption to local communities.

Given the paucity of economic benefits, such costs must challenge the benefits.

Professor Simon Chadwick, chair: Sport Business Strategy and Marketing, Coventry University Business School

A more play-based curriculum needed

The Association of Play Industries (API) supports the recent recommendations made by the 'Erosion of Childhood' letter, published by *The Telegraph* and signed by more than 200 academics, authors and children's charities – encouraging a more play-based curriculum for children.

More needs to be done to link education about healthy eating and obesity with better opportunities for play.

In response to the letter, Children's Minister, Sarah Teather, said: "Government can only do so much. As a society, we all have a stake in making sure there's time for family life and children are free to cherish their childhoods." There was no mention of play.

A recent report by UNICEF into the culture of materialism in the UK found that our children are still some of the unhappiest in Europe and have the lowest wellbeing overall of the 21 developed nations surveyed.

The report found that children wanted to spend more of their time outdoors and recommended that play facilities be made an active priority of both local and central government.

API chair, John Croasdale, said: "The UNICEF report and current obesity figures suggest that children want more time and better facilities to play outdoors. We need to further the learning links between childhood obesity and play – particularly in deprived communities where the need is greatest."

The API has produced several articles warning of the links between a low standard of health education, particularly for communities deprived of play facilities and where there is a high prevalence of obesity. For more details go to www.api-play.org.

Deborah Holt, association manager Association of Play Industries (API)

John Goodbody reports on

Promoting fair play in sport

The sentencing of three disgraced Pakistani cricketers for cheating during the Test Match against England in August 2010 has been a reminder of the potential for sports events to be fixed for corrupt betting reasons. Had it not been for the journalistic enterprise of the now defunct *News of the World* in exposing the practice, the cricketers might have continued to take part in similar criminal activity for years to come.

It's very well for Sir Ronnie Flanagan, the head of the anti-corruption unit of the International Cricket Council, to say that he didn't believe that corruption was commonplace in the game. Since his staff had been unaware of the malpractice before the exposé, one wonders how he knows this?

Given the fact that Interpol estimates that the market for illegal gambling is US$500bn (£312bn) in Asia alone, the temptation for individuals to succumb to corruption is enormous, particularly when, as is the case with the Pakistani cricketers, they are not that well paid.

It's no wonder that Dr Jacques Rogge, the president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), regards the potential of corruption through betting to be as big a threat to the integrity of sport as drugs. Whereas competitors take drugs to win, some sportsmen and perhaps women are being approached to be paid to lose or to influence the integrity of the event.

Although the targeted sports are the leading professional ones, such as football and horseracing, the staging of an event of the magnitude of the Olympics will create a market because of the international interest in so many sports.

At least in the UK, early steps have been taken following a government-commissioned report into sports betting integrity. A Sports Betting Group has been set up under the chairmanship of Tim Lamb, the chief executive of the Sport and Recreation Alliance. Among its members are Paul Scotney, who heads the Intelligence Unit of the British Horseracing Authority, and Simon Barker of the Professional Footballers' Association.

Pakistan's Mohammad Asif (second from right) received a one-year sentence for corruption

> **The IOC regards the potential of corruption through betting to be as big a threat to the integrity of sport as drugs**

As Lamb says: "If we are to tackle this effectively, then working hand-in-hand with players is absolutely essential.

"Educating sportsmen and women of the dangers of the seemingly innocuous approaches from individuals for information, even about weather conditions or the form of players, is crucial to attempts to stamp out corruption."

Many national governing bodies (NGBs) may believe that they are not at risk because they are not aware of any betting taking place on their sport. The Sports Betting Group has therefore conducted an audit of about 40 NGBs to help them with correct practice, with Lamb admitting that "some are more ahead of the game than others".

The group has also successfully lobbied the government to require off-shore betting companies to be subject to the same high standards as those operating in the UK: such as companies sharing any information about suspicious betting patterns with the Gambling Commission.

The government has recently announced plans to strengthen the 2005 Gambling Act to allow the commission to pass onto the IOC information it receives from law enforcement agencies during the Games. Yet, the government is reluctant to fund the Sports Betting Group in the same way that it does with UK Anti-Doping, to which it gives £7m a year.

Instead, Hugh Robertson, the Minister for Sport, says: "You need to break down the barriers between the organisations responsible for dealing with this."

However, money is needed and an alternative method of funding would be for there to be a small levy on bets placed in Britain to allow the group to have the necessary financial support. After all, the industry is worth £36bn in this country and could afford it. As Lamb says: "This is an issue that is not going to go away." ●

John Goodbody has covered 11 successive Olympic Games for the Sunday Times

NEWS UPDATE

Spurs to increase new stadium capacity?

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club (THFC) is investigating the possibility of increasing the capacity of its proposed multi-million pound stadium development in north London. According to *The Telegraph*, the Premier League club is looking at building a 60,355-seat venue as part of its Northumberland Development Project (NDP), instead of 56,250. The newspaper said that THFC aims to achieve the capacity increase without having to alter its plans, which have been drawn up by KSS Group, or apply for fresh planning consent.

New development stance for sports halls

Five sports in bid to secure facilities legacy

Five sports have joined forces with funding agency Sport England in a bid to improve sports hall provision and secure a lasting facilities legacy across the country.

New guidance called *Developing the Right Sports Hall* has been produced alongside the national governing bodies of badminton, basketball, cricket, netball and volleyball.

It is hoped the document will result in a more efficient and flexible approach to constructing new or upgrading existing facilities, while ensuring the right specification and location.

BOA signs new agreement with Russian NOC

The British Olympic Association (BOA) has signed a new Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with its Russian counterpart to identify areas of strategic partnership. It is intended that the new agreement will help the two organisations work together ahead of the London 2012 Games and the Sochi 2014 Winter Games to share best practice. Information relating to the organisation of the events and the respective "sporting landscape" of both countries will also be made available under the terms of the MoU.

Youth Charter urges legacy debate

Manchester-based organisation Youth Charter has launched a new e-petition calling on the House of Commons to debate the social and cultural benefits of the London 2012 Games.

The group has launched the 2012 Sport Legacy Access For All petition in order to ensure that plans for a sustainable legacy for young people are fully implemented. Youth Charter also said that it is looking to provide a response and contribute to the debate surrounding the causes and lessons learned from this summer's riots.

Youth Charter is calling for free access to sports facilities for under 18s

It follows the launch of the organisation's manifesto earlier this summer, which included a call for free access to sports and leisure facilities for all young people aged under 18.

Youth Charter executive chair Geoff Thompson said: "The 2012 Games present a huge opportunity for the sporting world to leave a lasting legacy for the young people of the UK but in order to make that happen we need to be sure of the plans that are going to be implemented. The 2012 Olympic Games can help address the ongoing social and cultural disaffection of young people."

FAW submits football centre proposals

Plans for the construction of a new training facility in Newport, Wales, have been submitted to the local authority by the Football Association of Wales (FAW).

Newport International Sports Village (NISV) has been identified as the site for the scheme, which will also involve Newport City Council and the Welsh Football Trust (WFT). A dedicated facility for all FAW and WFT representative squads is earmarked as part of the development, along with a Centre of Excellence for coach education and sports science.

Plans for the centre include training facilities for the national teams

The project will include education space, WFT football development headquarters and the provision of training facilities for international and professional teams visiting Wales.

Alterations would be made to the rear of the NISV velodrome to provide storage space, while new artificial and grass pitches will be introduced. The existing skatepark will be demolished to make way for a spectator stand.

LFC secures stadium decision extension

Liverpool Football Club (LFC) has reportedly secured more time to decide whether it wants to take up a 999-year lease at Stanley Park for the purpose of building a new stadium.

In July, the Premier League club admitted that plans for the renovation of its current Anfield home looked "increasingly unlikely" due to a number of planning obstacles.

The *Liverpool Echo* has now revealed that Liverpool City Council has granted LFC a further extension to its end-of-September deadline in which to make a decision.

Sport England to 'help cut costs'

Councils will receive guidance on how to manage budget cuts

Sport England has joined forces with a range of leisure operators and local authorities to help cut costs and relieve pressure on budgets without affecting community programmes and provision.

The agency will be running seminars outlining strategic solutions that will safeguard facility provision, while achieving up to 30 per cent savings in revenue and capital expenditure.

Surrey's Elmbridge Xcel Leisure Centre hosted the first seminar on 1 November with speakers including Sport England property director Charles Johnston.

A further seminar took place at Heywood Sports Village, Rochdale, and another is planned on 6 December at Spiceball Leisure Centre in Banbury, Oxfordshire. The events include the launch of the Affordable 25m Community Pools guide, produced by Sport England in conjunction with the Amateur Swimming Association. Under the suggested approach, building costs will be £2.1m-£4m, operating budgets will generate a surplus of £24,000 per year and pools could be opened within two years of a decision.

Glasgow 2014 preparations 'on course'

Facilities for the 2014 Commonwealth Games are taking shape

Preparations for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games are "on track and on budget" with 1,000 days until the opening ceremony, according to the latest progress report.

The Glasgow 2014 Progress Report has found that Scotland is already benefiting from hosting the Games, with 80 per cent of current contracts going to Scottish firms. Work on the Commonwealth Games Athletes' Village started in June, while the National Indoor Sports Arena and Sir Chris Hoy Velodrome are now 63 per cent complete.

Elsewhere, 2014 organisers have signed a deal with the BBC as domestic broadcast rights holder and sponsorship agreements with Harper Mcleod, Search Consultancy and Ernst and Young. Scottish minister for Commonwealth Games and sport Shona Robison said that while Glasgow 2014 was fast approaching, all venues and infrastructure were "taking shape".

London mayor boost for wheelchair basketball

London mayor Boris Johnson has announced plans to more than quadruple the number of wheelchair basketball clubs across the capital and increase participation by 7,000 people.

Less than 10 per cent of disabled Londoners are believed to participate in sport on a regular basis, with the capital having one of the lowest participation rates for wheelchair basketball.

The mayor has contributed £95,000 from the Sports Legacy Fund to the Great Britain Wheelchair Basketball Association's programme to create seven clubs in London.

Mayor: London 'ready' to host 2012 Games

London mayor Boris Johnson has told members of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) that the capital is now ready to host the 2012 Olympic Games.

IOC representatives visited London to inspect preparations for the Games, with work now complete on all of the competition venues and handed over to organisers. Major transport infrastructure improvements have either been completed or are "well on track" to be delivered, while entertainment will be available across London at special Live Sites next summer.

IMAGE: DAVID POLTEN/FLICKR

The Olympic Stadium's track has been laid down

Olympic Stadium athletics track unveiled

Pupils from London's West Ham Church Primary School have been joined by Paralympic and Olympic athletes to mark the unveiling of the 2012 stadium's new athletics track. Paralympic discus gold medallist Dan Greaves; 1,500m athlete Hannah England and British long jump record holder Chris Tomlinson all attended a special event on 3 October.

The track at the Olympic Stadium has been supplied by Mondo and was laid in August. It features a Sport FLEX system and is designed to assist athletes achieve faster times.

Hunt: 7,439 schools sign up for School Games

More than 7,400 schools have signed up to participate in the government's new School Games initiative, according to culture secretary Jeremy Hunt.

Addressing the 2011 Conservative Party Conference in Manchester, Hunt said the figure represented more than a third of all schools in England.

Earlier this year, Hunt outlined the government's plans for the School Games competition, which is designed to help promote competitive sport to young people in Olympic-style tournaments.

NEWS UPDATE

Sports Grounds Safety Authority launches

The Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA), a new organisation created in order to ensure the safety of spectators at venues across the UK, has been officially launched. SGSA will build on the work of the Football Licensing Authority, which helped improve the safety of football grounds – however, it's remit will also extend into other sports.

Sports Minister Hugh Robertson said: "The authority will take its expertise and advice into other sports and ensure that spectator safety is properly implemented at all sports grounds."

Chelsea hoped to take over ownership of the land

Chelsea defeated in stadium purchase bid

Chelsea Football Club (CFC) has failed in its bid to purchase the freehold land on which its Stamford Bridge stadium is located from Chelsea Pitch Owners (CPO). Nearly 62 per cent of the votes cast at the CPO's general meeting on 27 October backed the plan, however a 75 per cent majority was required in order for the motion to be approved.

CPO was established in 1993 to secure the future of the ground, which had come under threat and left the Premier League club at risk of being made homeless.

BBC urged to increase 'minority sport' coverage

UTV Media, part of the ITV network and owner of talkSPORT radio, has urged the BBC to increase its coverage of "minority sports" to help fulfil legacy aims from the 2012 Games. The company has made a submission to the BBC Trust in which it calls on the publicly-funded broadcaster to do more for less mainstream sports.

UTV has called on the BBC to "grasp its longer-term responsibilities to support a permanent legacy for the Olympics", while also sharing exclusive rights to events such as the Olympics.

Gymnastics scheme for Scotland

A new national initiative, devised by Scottish Gymnastics in a bid to improve health through participation in physical activity, has been unveiled in Edinburgh. GymPlay aims to develop the basic movement patterns of everyday life for children between the ages of three and five years old and is to be rolled out over the next few months.

IMAGE: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/LOSEVSKY PAVEL

The initiative is aimed at children aged between three and five years old

It is based on the principles of SPLICE: Social Physical Lingual Intellectual Creative and Educational development and will grow participation in physical activity from an early age.

Scottish minister for Commonwealth Games and sport Shona Robison said: "The GymPlay programme is a fantastic new way of introducing young children to gymnastics and the benefits of physical activity.

"Opportunities of this kind are fun for the children and encourage them to continue participating in physical activities."

The launch took place at Craiglockhart Leisure Centre, run by Edinburgh Leisure and one of the venues that delivers gymnastics coaching to local pre-school children.

St Helens receives keys to new stadium

St Helens Rugby League Football Club has been given the keys to its new 18,000-capacity stadium on the edge of the Merseyside town by developer Langtree.

The new stadium is scheduled to host its first game during January 2012

Langtree appointed Barr Construction to build the £25m venue, which has taken 14 months to complete. Arcadis UK acted as project manager on the development.

The next 10 weeks will see work carried out by the Super League club to fit out the internal areas of the stadium, including kiosks, catering outlets and turnstiles.

It is anticipated the first St Helens match will take place at the ground in late January, before a series of structured events are held to allow fans and residents to "sample" the stadium.

St Helens chair Eamonn McManus said: "A new stadium has been almost 10 years in the making and I can't begin to describe how pleased I am that we are finally at this point."

Council approves Plymouth stadium purchase

Plymouth City Council's (PCC) cabinet and full council have approved a plan to acquire the freehold of Home Park as part of efforts to support professional football in the city.

The purchase of the stadium, which is the home venue of Plymouth Argyle Football Club, is dependent on the Akkeron Group completing a planned takeover of the club.

It is expected that PCC will pay £1.6m for the land and the stadium, before leasing it back to the club for £135,000 a year. The deal will also protect the venue for football uses.

£5.5m stadium for Cumbria

An artist's impression of the new community stadium

Work is set to start on a new £5.5m community stadium in Whitehaven, Cumbria, in spring 2012 after the proposals were given the green light by the local authority.

The venue will comprise the first phase of the Pow Beck Valley mixed-use masterplan, with global management and technical consultancy WYG involved with drawing up the plans. WYG has now been appointed by Copeland Borough Council to further develop proposals for Copeland Community Stadium to allow the selection of a design and build contractor.

It is anticipated the venue will be completed in late 2012 ahead of the Rugby League World Cup in 2013 and will provide a home for Whitehaven's rugby league and football clubs. WYG regional director buildings and infrastructure John Kipling said: "It is great to see fundamental elements of the Pow Beck Valley masterplan starting to become a reality."

Bob Collins, speaking on behalf of the council, added: "The new stadium will provide a shared home for Whitehaven Rugby League Football Club and Whitehaven Amateur Football Club, as well as providing a facility for use by the wider community."

Sean Holt outlines new IMSPA goals

Holt has led the new organisation following its official launch in May

Sean Holt, the interim chief executive officer of the new Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (IMSPA), has said the body will look to draw members from a much broader cohort than its forerunners.

In an interview with *Leisure Management*, Holt said that while its core membership will still comprise those employed by operators and suppliers, the institute hopes to attract professionals working across the physical activity sector. The broadening of the net is part of IMSPA's aim to represent the whole of the active leisure sector.

IMSPA was formed following the merger of the Institute of Sport and Recreation Management (ISRM) and the Institute for Sport, Parks and Leisure (ISPAL). While IMSPA will look to expand its reach within the active leisure sector, Holt added there would be less involvement with parks – formerly a key element of ISPAL. *To read the interview go to: http://lei.sr?a=f6Z4N*

New diving facility in Soton for Olympic hopefuls

A new dry-land diving studio has been unveiled at The Quays swimming and diving centre in Southampton.

The studio features new springboards and trampolines and improved harness and landing facilities, allowing divers of all skill levels to perfect their skills alongside training in the pool. Richard Sheath, chair of the Southampton Diving Academy, said: "The opening of this new facility is an important step in maintaining Southampton and The Quays as a High Performance Centre for British Diving."

Aylesbury Vale leisure project to commence

Willmott Dixon is to start work on a £6.45m revamp of Aqua Vale Swimming and Fitness Centre in Aylesbury, Buckinghamshire, as part of wider council regeneration plans.

Aylesbury Vale District Council is to undertake the improvement programme in a bid to complement its multi-million pound vision for the town centre.

Work on the FaulknerBrowns Architects-designed development is scheduled to be completed in September next year, with the council planning to keep the facility open amid work on the phased programme.

The centre will cater for people of all skill levels

£24m National Indoor BMX Centre opens

A special opening event has taken place to mark the completion of Manchester's new £24m National Indoor BMX Centre, which has been built adjacent to the National Cycling Centre.

Sport England invested £3m in the facility as part of its multi-million pound Iconic Facilities fund, the second round of which was opened up to new applicants earlier this month. The BMX centre also received £8.5m from Manchester City Council and is to be used as a training facility for the country's elite riders ahead of the 2012 Games.

Green light for FC United stadium plans

FC United of Manchester has been awarded planning permission for a new 5,000-capacity sports stadium at the Ronald Johnson Playing Fields in Moston, Manchester.

Manchester City Council's planning and highways committee approved the plans at its meeting on 27 October. The project has also been designed to provide facilities for the local community.

In addition to the stadium, the scheme will comprise a community club house with changing rooms, a function space and a new artificial pitch.

NEWS UPDATE

£10m Iconic Facilities funding made available

Sport England has announced that £10m worth of National Lottery funding has been made available in the latest round of the Iconic Facilities programme.

The initiative is designed to provide investment in "large scale, state-of-the-art" venues capable of catering for a number of sports and helping increase participation.

Iconic Facilities is one of three strands to run under the 'Places' element of the wider Places People Play programme. Applicants can bid for grants of between £250,000 and £3m in the second of three rounds.

A new-build element formed part of the scheme

£8.25m university facility to launch in Twickenham

Lord Coe and double Olympic medallist Rebecca Romero have helped open an £8.25m sports centre at St Mary's University College in Twickenham, London.

Former 10,000m world record holder Dave Bedford and representatives from Sport England also attended the unveiling of the facility, along with Olympians including Tim Brabants.

Work has included a new sports hall;a strength and conditioning suite and changing spaces, with a new-build element created as an extension to the existing games hall and sports block.

Cardiff leisure centre plans to be reviewed

Plans to revamp a Cardiff leisure centre will be reviewed after Cardiff Council confirmed it was seeking an "alternative option" for its schools reorganisation programme.

Cardiff Council had proposed the Eastern Leisure Centre refurbishment as part of plans to develop a new secondary school on the centre's site in Llanrumney.

However, the council said that a reduction in funding from the Welsh Assembly Government has forced the rethink, with revised proposals for the leisure centre revamp now to be drawn up.

BASIS unveiled at Emirates Stadium

A new national organisation which aims to "educate, share best practice and integrate sustainability issues" across the UK sport sector has officially launched in London.

The British Association for Sustainable Sport (BASIS) is a voluntary association of clubs, venues, national governing bodies and others involved in the sport sector that aim to improve sustainability.

It is hoped that the organisation will also encourage sports fans to become more pro-actively involved in sustainability issues by using sport to connect with people.

The launch coincided with the publication of findings for a survey by BASIS, which was distributed to more than 180 organisations and venues. Out of the responses received, it was found that 95 per cent believe it is important to manage the impact of clubs and events.

The new organisation was launched at an event in London in October

More than two thirds (68 per cent) of participants said that they had an environmental policy in place, although 80 per cent said operations took precedence over sustainability.

The launch also featured presentations from a number of groups, including a keynote speech by National Football League senior vice president of events Frank Supovitz.

Graham nets £15.3m Kirkcaldy contract

Graham Construction has secured a £15.3m contract to build a new sports and leisure complex in Kirkcaldy, which will open in summer 2013.

Fife Council and Fife Sports and Leisure Trust are leading the scheme, which will see a new building offer a 25m, six-lane pool with spectator seating for 90 people.

A training pool with moveable floor, accessible wetside changing areas, a health suite with a sauna and steamroom and a 60-station fitness suite will be among the facilities.

Elsewhere, a purpose built aerobics studio, a four-court sports hall, a children's play centre and a meeting room will also be included.

The project forms part of a wider £55m investment in new leisure facilities across the region and it is expected that the Kirkcaldy venue will attract 200,000 visits each year.

The centre is scheduled to open in 2013 and forms part of a £55m scheme

Alice Soper, chair of Fife Council's Kirkcaldy Area Committee, said: "Kirkcaldy's new sports and leisure centre will provide more than just a pool for town."

EHB launches new Rush Hockey format

England Hockey Board (EHB) has announced the launch of the new Rush Hockey format in a bid to engage with thousands of recreational players across the country.

Designed to capitalise on an anticipated surge in interest around the 2012 Games, the Rush Hockey concept aims to replicate the success of the five-a-side format in football.

Rush Hockey can be played either indoors or outdoors and in four- or five-a-side matches, with the EHB now seeking to sign up new delivery partners to help roll out the format.

Contract signed for Bridgwater

Sedgemoor District Council (SDC) and Somerset County Council (SCC) have revealed that a contract for the construction of Bridgwater's new £6.3m swimming pool has been signed. The agreement with BAM PPP, which was finalised on 13 October, now paves the way for a new venue at Trinity Sports and Leisure that will offer community swimming facilities.

Facilities at the £6.3m centre include a 25m, six-lane swimming pool

A 25m, six-lane pool, a training pool, changing rooms, spectator seating and an 'increased' leisure facility capable of accommodating a 50-station fitness suite are proposed.

Scott Brownrigg Architects have designed the large complex – which also involves Somerset Leisure, Futures for Somerset, Chilton Trinity Technology College and Bridgwater Education Trust.

SDC group manager for community development and wellbeing Teresa Harvey said: "The signing of the contract is a major milestone in the development of a new pool for the Bridgwater area. The pool will be a great community facility and we look forward to the build commencing in the coming weeks ready for opening in spring 2013."

FIA announces physical activity rebrand

The Fitness Industry Association (FIA) has announced plans to rebrand during 2012, to better reflect its role in working across the UK's physical activity sector.

Stalker revealed plans to rebrand the association last month

Speaking at the FIA Vanguard Council meeting on 25 October, chief executive officer Dave Stalker said the board had approved the plans and that a consultation period with members and key stakeholders would follow.

"The FIA now has a broader remit working across the indoor and outdoor activity space and is building new and exciting partnerships across government, sport and the Olympic legacy," said Stalker. "We will stay loyal to our vision of more people, more active, more often, but feel 2012 is an ideal time to showcase our offer to the wider market." He added that an online member consultation will take place and that key stakeholders would be interviewed during January 2012.

Wellbeing research institute for Leeds Met

A centre promoting and researching health and wellbeing will be launched at Leeds Metropolitan University in November.

The Institute for Health and Wellbeing will have six distinct research themes: healthy communities; health promotion; men's health; men, gender and wellbeing; nutrition and childhood obesity; and pain science and management.

Faculties will be housed in a single unit as part of promoting innovation and collaboration, and will research the health status of both individuals and communities.

INDUSTRY COMMENT

Safeguarding the UK's recreational spaces

Helen Griffiths

As 2011 draws to a close, Fields in Trust is gearing up for what promises to be our most exciting year yet as our legacy programme gets into full swing. The Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge will deliver grassroots benefits to communities across the UK by safeguarding all kinds of outdoor recreational spaces to mark both the Diamond Jubilee and the 2012 Olympics.

So far more than 900 spaces have been nominated for inclusion in the programme, which means we're almost halfway towards our ambitious target of 2012 Queen Elizabeth II Fields.

It's been fantastic to see the range of sites put forward from all corners of the country and the public enthusiasm for our Save a Space for Me campaign. Almost 20,000 people have visited www.qe2fields.com to show their support for local playing fields and other outdoor spaces proving just how important these are to local communities.

> "Have a Field Day is a great opportunity for all Queen Elizabeth II Fields to host a community celebration "

As well as being permanently protected for future generations we're also helping the Queen Elizabeth II Fields to get improvement funding through our partnerships with SITA Trust and Sport England's Places, People, Play Legacy Fund.

In January 2012, we'll be launching Have a Field Day, which is a great opportunity for all Queen Elizabeth II Fields to host a community celebration. The toolkit will be jam-packed with suggestions and ideas for sports days and fun activities as well as providing a helpful guide to the technicalities of event organising such as health and safety and licensing.

To find out more information visit www.qe2fields.com

Helen Griffiths is director of communications, Fields in Trust

OLC appoints new chief executive

Oldham Community Leisure (OCL) operations director Stuart Lockwood has been named as the trust's new CEO.

Lockwood will replace incumbent chief executive Ian Kendall on 1 January 2012. Kendall is stepping down after eight years with the organisation, which operates 14 facilities on behalf of Oldham Council.

With more than 20 years worth of experience in the fitness and leisure industry, Lockwood has held a number of senior management positions in both the public and private sector.

Lockwood said: "We need to position ourselves as the number one solution to improving the health of the nation."

Studd steps down from SkillsActive

Stephen Studd, chief executive of SkillsActive, has announced his decision to stand down from the role with immediate effect.

Studd held the position for eight years and is a leisure industry veteran. He began his career at the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre in 1975 before spending 21 years at the Sports Council Great Britain (now UK Sport).

Commenting on his departure, Studd says: "We've gone to considerable effort to restructure SkillsActive as a group and strengthen our engagement with employers and key stakeholders.

"I believe this new structure leaves SkillsActive in a stronger position to tackle the challenges that lie ahead."

Play England appoints a new director

Catherine Prisk has been appointed director of Play England, after Adrian Voce stepped down from the post. He received an OBE for his work on improving the lives of children and their services in June this year.

Prisk, previously Adrian's deputy, brings a background in championing children's opportunities to play, in education and early years, in skills policy and in urban and rural regeneration programmes.

Robin Sutcliffe, acting chair of the Play England Council, says: "While we are sorry to say goodbye to Adrian, we are confident that Catherine's intelligent, energetic and collaborative approach will ensure that Play

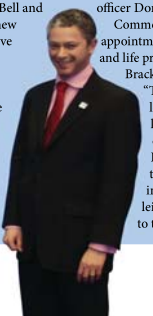
England continues to flourish. Our focus will be on meeting the challenges and harnessing the energy of our key partners and the wider play sector in the cause of children's play."

New chair and chief executive for BISL

Business in Sport and Leisure (BISL) has announced the appointment of Chris Bell and Simon Johnson as its new chair and chief executive officer respectively.

Bell is former CEO Ladbrokes and will replace David Teasdale from 1 January, with Teasdale taking up the role of vice chair.

Johnson, (pictured) is former chief operating officer of England's 2018 World Cup bid and replaces BISL's interim chief executive officer Dominic Harrison.



Commenting on the appointments, BISL founder and life president John Brackenbury said: "This combined level of experience, knowledge and expertise will add to BISL's reputation as the authoritative voice in and for sport and leisure and help it rise to the challenges ahead."

Charles Reed is new EFDS chair

Charles Reed has been named as the new chair of The English Federation of Disability Sport (EFDS), replacing Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson, who becomes honorary president.

Two other positions on the board have been filled by Gerry Kinsella and Janet Williams. They will lead the organisation into 2012 and build on the legacy for disabled people in sport.

Reed will work alongside an expanded board of trustees, made up of other member organisation representatives and business acquaintances. He was director of customer service and communications for Nationwide Building Society.

Mike Hay

The BOA's head of winter sport engagement is responsible for delivering the London 2012 preparation camp at Loughborough University for Team GB

Can you tell me about your background?

After 20 years as an athlete – having won medals at World Junior, European and World Championships – I retired in 1997 and took the post of high performance curling coach with the Scottish Institute of Sport and performance director for GB curling.

Under my programme leadership between 1998-2006 the Institute teams were successful in winning World Junior, European, World (men's and women's) and Olympic Gold medals (Salt lake 2002). Other successes included coaching Europe to a record win over North America in the 2006 Continental Cup – curling's version of Golf's Ryder Cup.

Following the Turin 2006 Olympic Winter Games, I joined the British Olympic Association (BOA) as Olympic performance manager for Winter Sports. As part of the BOA's HQ team I have attended the Beijing 2008 Olympics, Vancouver 2010 Olympic Winter Games and also European and Australian Youth Olympic Festivals. Next January I'll be the deputy chef de mission to Clive Woodward at the inaugural Winter Youth Olympic Games in Innsbruck, Austria.

What does your current role consist of?

I cover all areas of performance and governance for the seven Olympic winter sports. As part of the BOA's performance team along with Tanya Harris (head of summer sport engagement) and Dave Reddin (head of performance services) we currently report directly to Clive Woodward (director of sport).

What's involved in delivering the Preparation Camp at Loughborough University?

There are five main deliverables that we are focusing on

1. Training facilities for 23 disciplines/ teams including facility upgrades, equipment provision and venue configuration.
2. Residential accommodation for athletes, officials and other Team GB clients' groups.
3. Performance services to fully support athletes and officials.
4. Team GB Experience incorporating 'kitting out' for all team members.
5. Logistics and operational services to support sports in a safe, secure, accredited environment.

What facilities does the university offer to Team GB?

Centrally located in the heart of the UK, Loughborough University is arguably the leading university in the country for its world-class sport training facilities across a number of Olympic disciplines.

It offers four-star accommodation located within the University Campus, which allows for exclusive Team GB areas, within which athletes, coaches and officials can be properly 'kitted out' during the six-week period prior to the Games.

Practitioners and service providers from the English Institute of Sport (EIS) will also be on campus and able to give the consistency and quality of elite training delivery that the Olympic sports are used to contracting.

Loughborough University offers extensive world-class training facilities for athletes

> We aim to provide the transition from the athletes' regular training, to a multi-sport environment before the Games

What lessons do you bring from Calgary and Macau?

The reason for transiting through the Team GB Preparation Camps in Macau and Calgary en-route to the Olympic Games in Beijing and Vancouver were to acclimatise the athletes to a new time zone, and adapt to a new environment and culture. Next year's 'home Games' will offer unique challenges. We aim to provide the transition from the athletes' regular home training to a multi-sport training environment before the Olympic competition, this is particularly relevant for sports with little or no multi-sport or Olympic experience.

Technical briefings at Loughborough University

The second Sport and Play Construction Association (SAPCA) Technical Meeting was held at Holywell Park, Loughborough University on Thursday 10 November. The programme focused on the design and construction of outdoor sports facilities – from site investigation and ground conditions, through drainage and base design, to surfacing systems, paints and coatings and maintenance – with special sessions on tennis surfaces and lighting.

Peter Mackey of Dow Chemicals was the keynote speaker. He talked about how advances in technology, materials, standards and techniques will shape the sports surfaces of the future.

The afternoon session included two discussions led by key industry experts. The first covered modern synthetic turf systems, trends and innovations. The second was hosted by leading maintenance practitioners, who discussed how to care for 3G synthetic sports turf systems.

SAPCA Technical Meetings are a must for sports turf owners, managers and operators

These regular SAPCA meetings are open to any interested party with delegate fees being held at last year's rates of £195 per person for SAPCA members and £295 for non-members. There is also a special "buy two, get a third place free" option. For more information contact SAPCA on +44 (0)24 7641 6316 or go to www.sapca.org.uk

Stop. Look. Listen one-day seminar

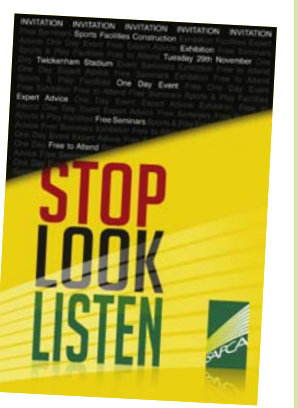
This is the theme of the next SAPCA one-day exhibition and seminar, due to be held at Twickenham Stadium on Tuesday 29 November 2011.

Aimed at anyone involved in designing, buying, specifying, operating and maintaining sports facilities, the focus of the event is very much about how to make budgets stretch that much further and maximising the value of current facilities.

Industry experts will be on hand to offer advice on facilities funding, sports surface selection, maintenance, natural turf, protection of playing fields and lighting schemes. All supported by over 40 exhibitors showcasing the latest developments, products and services.

RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) will also be in attendance with a series of seminars aimed specifically at sports facility architects and other specifiers.

Attendance at the event is free. To register, visit www.sapca.org.uk/twickenham, call 024 7641 6316, email info@sapca.org.uk



Twickenham Stadium will play host to this sports facility event

A qualified workforce is essential

Use it or lose it

SAPCA is encouraging all of its members to take advantage of the government funding that is available to cover the cost of staff undertaking the NVQ Level 2 qualification in Sport and Play Surfaces.

The NVQ has become the recognised qualification within the sport and play construction industry. It demonstrates an individual's expertise and knowledge in the industry and illustrates a level of competency equal to the task atw hand. The qualification is supported by key sports governing bodies, which increasingly expect projects that they fund to be constructed by contractors who employ qualified operatives.

For more information visit www.sapca.org.uk, email marie@sapca.org.uk

OLYMPIC STANDARD

O'BRIEN Contractors Limited

With London 2012 fast approaching, O'Brien Contractors and Eastwood School unveil their impressive new synthetic Mondo six-lane 400m IAAF track

Eastwood School's Mondo 400m athletics track delivered by O'Brien

With less than 12 months to go, the UK is counting down for what will be the largest sporting event the country has ever seen. High on the nation's agenda is the availability of quality sporting facilities. With this in mind, concept through to completion needs to be first class – ensuring every stage is carefully managed and the correct team is selected to guarantee the finished product is of the highest standard.

CIVIL ROOTS

O'Brien Contractors has its roots in civil engineering. With that comes a wealth of expertise and hi-tech techniques, which are perfectly aligned to the business of producing quality and cost-effective sports pitches for clients.

GROUND MODELLING

O'Brien Contractors offers a full range of technical services. By using ground modelling and laser levelling O'Brien can help businesses save time and money on a project, as well as reducing the carbon footprint of a development.

EASTWOOD SCHOOL, ESSEX

O'Brien Contractors was brought on board by Eastwood School to design and build a synthetic Mondo six-lane 400m IAAF and UK Athletics track with associated infield facilities.

The project involved reduced level excavation, 'cut and fill' to formation with the disposal of residual spoil, including associated drainage sub base build up and macadam civils works. Installation of long jump, triple jump, high-jump, pole vault and circle for throwing events were included, along with a FIFA compliant football pitch on the infield, which was top soiled, seeded and marked accordingly.

On top of this a Mondo Sportsflex SX, 400m running track was laid. Standing out from its competitor, it boasts a wealth of advantages, including a non-slip running surface and is recognised as one of the fastest tracks in the world.

Sportsflex SX selection as the Olympic track for London 2012 will only benefit and encourage athletes from around the globe to make Eastwood School track their number one choice of training venue.

> **"Being the world's leading sports track manufacturer we require first-class preparation for all our tracks. O'Brien did not disappoint, their work was second to none"**

The project was delivered on time and to budget and professional quality. By implementing proactive proposals O'Brien was able to offer Eastwood School reduced costs within the project and bring the contract value down, within the client's requirements, without compromising the quality of the end product.

EXCELLENT FEEDBACK

O'Brien's director, Mick O'Brien, said: "With high praise from Mondo, alongside the positive feedback from the school, we are really delighted to have been a Principal Contractor for such a prestigious client and project".

Eastwood School's Services Director, Scott Sterling, said "We were very impressed with O'Brien Contractors from start to finish. They assisted us with ideas in our design phase and were not only timely in their completion but the quality of the work was outstanding. We have had many people visit our facility and have been continually informed that our track is of a superior quality and similar to that in international stadiums".

Mondo's UK project manager, Joe Hoekstra, said: "Being the world's leading sports track manufacturer we require first-class preparation for all our tracks. O'Brien did not disappoint, their work was second to none".

SERVICES

O'Brien Contractors offers a full range of services, including:

- Total solution for sport pitches from design through to completion
- Earthworks design and ground modelling facilities, bulk earthwork and site clearance
- Fine tolerance laser levelling and 3D machine control systems
- Ground stabilisation
- Drainage, pipework and associated works
- External service yards
- Roads and sewers
- External works including block paving and slabbing.

CONTACT O'BRIEN

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SIR KEITH MILLS

Karen Maxwell talks to the deputy chair of LOCOG about winning the bid and the progress made on the ambitious London 2012 legacy promises so far

A global marketeer, Mills' earlier career was with *The Economist* and *The Financial Times*

Ask Sir Keith Mills – one of the most successful British entrepreneurs – about his greatest professional achievement and without hesitation he says: "winning the bid to host the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games".

Best known for developing, owning, managing, buying and selling loyalty schemes – such as Air Miles and the Nectar Card – throughout the world – Mills is used to taking on ambitious ventures. Which is why, although he admits he previously knew nothing about the Olympic Games, he readily accepted the call to lead the London 2012 campaign back in 2003.

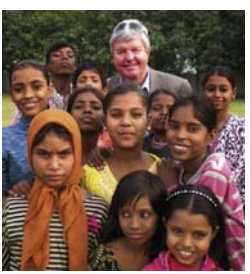
BEHIND THE BID

"The opportunity to run the bid came completely out of the blue," Mills says. "I had just launched Nectar and was getting a sailing team together for the America's Cup, when Barbara Cassani – who was asked by the government, the Mayor of London and the British Olympic Association to form a bid company for London 2012 – approached me to come and run it.

"Although I'd never actually been to an Olympic Games, this was in fact a very sophisticated marketing job. It was about building a product by selecting the venues, the transport plans and the budget in order to put a bid book together. Then marketing or selling it to sport internationally – particularly to the 150 International Olympic Committee (IOC) members who were going to vote," Mills explains.

According to him, at that time, the UK's reputation for hosting sports events was very poor. "We'd hosted very few major events over the previous 20 or 30 years and had in fact won the right to hold the World Athletic Championships, but gave it back because we couldn't build a stadium. That type of thing doesn't go down very well internationally. We were punching below our weight in the international federations so we were not in a good place," Mills says. "However, when I did a back of the envelope analysis of the other

Sir Keith Mills (right) and Seb Coe (middle) promoting Sported and how it helps young people develop life skills through sporting activity



Left: Mills was one of the crew that won the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race in 1999. Centre: Seb Coe and Keith Mills waiting for the IOC's decision on the 2012 Olympic hosts in Singapore. Right: an International Inspiration project in India

nine cities bidding for the 2012 Games I thought we had a very good chance against Paris and Madrid, which were considered to be our rivals.

"Any potential host city can enthuse about its ambience, great hotels and fantastic venues, but the one thing that no other city had previously done was to say 'we'll use the Games to inspire young people around the world to get involved in sport – using it to improve lives through education and health'."

Once the bid was won, Mills drew on his business expertise to set up the London 2012 organising committee (LOCOG) and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA). "LOCOG is essentially a commercial organisation," he says. "It had to raise more than £2bn of its own money to fund the Games. And the key to starting up any successful business is to find really good people to run it. Which is why Seb Coe and I appointed Paul Deighton from Goldman Sachs as CEO.

"A great team of people can figure out the most difficult things and make them work. Between us, we've put together an outstanding management team of people with complementary skills – everyone is dedicated to what they do, but we all have fun and enjoy what we do too."

LONDON LEGACY

Regarding the ambitious promises made in the bid, Mills says: "We're not there yet, but we're in pretty good shape.

"The transformation of east London has been exceptional. There's going to be hundreds of companies that will have created bigger and better businesses off the back of the Games and we're doing a great job in getting the Olympic values through to over 20,000 schools around the UK," he explains.

"Outside of the UK, we've created International Inspiration, a charitable foundation that I personally chair. We've already run programmes in 20 countries and engaged with more than 12 million children – that's pretty astonishing," he says.

Mills' own charitable foundation, Sported, is also gaining momentum. "We've now got more than 1,000 clubs involved in this venture across the UK. Sported provides both funding and help in the form of mentors and volunteers for tiny groups that use sport to help disadvantaged children in some of the more challenging

parts of the country," he explains. Adding that he expects the initiative to continue for decades to come.

Participation, however, is an issue that Mills admits still needs addressing, although he stresses that this issue is not unique to this country. "I was in Beijing recently, speaking at the IOC Sport For All conference, and met with many heads of country sports councils who reported the same concerns. Getting a sports infrastructure in place that can really address and deliver sport and then communicating the benefits to different audiences is really challenging.

"Putting my marketing hat on, I believe there are two things that are needed to engage the general public. The first is to set people's imagination alive and get them excited, and the second is to make sure the product is on the shelf and widely distributed. In other words, the national organisations responsible for delivering sport – whether it's local authorities, schools or clubs or facilities – all need to point in the same direction, be fit for purpose, welcoming and easy to access."

Mills says that in practice this has not necessarily always been the case. The problem being that the various elements of delivering sport are not particularly well connected or strategically aligned. "It's an issue we're working on in the merger of Sport England and UK Sport as a catalyst for change," he says.

MERGING SPORT

Chosen as a neutral individual, Mills was appointed chair of the board charged with bringing about the merger between Sport England and UK Sport, to help them think through a new vision for the sector.

"The board is made of the two sporting entities, the government, sportscotland, Sport Wales and Sport Northern Ireland, Mills says. "My job is to help them deliver a new vision and a new infrastructure that will address the core issues of sports participation – continuing from the very successful work we've done in elite sport."

Mills says this will include all delivery bodies and agencies at all levels, national and local, to make sport easier and more accessible to the general public. And at the same time bring more commercial opportunities. "We've already had some very good examples of commercial partners in UK sport. Sky's partnership with cycling and British Gas' partnership with swimming are good examples of how very large, consumer-facing businesses can help sport reach consumers much more effectively. I think we can do a lot more of that if we are more connected," he says.

"I expect to issue a consultation-type document before the end of the year that will lay out a vision. I'll be asking all those in sport who have an interest in making things better, to have their views so that we can go into 2012 with a really concrete plan for the future."

A keen sailor, Mills is principal investor in Alex Thomson Racing and the Hugo Boss Open 60 team

TOTTENHAM FAN

Apart from his love of sailing, Mills is also a lifetime supporter of Tottenham Hotspur FC, and joined the club's board four years ago. "I've never been a season ticket holder, but I help the chair and management with the business and commercial aspects of the club," he says.

Regarding the club's well-publicised interest in moving to the Olympic Stadium and the expected development of White Hart Lane, Mills says it's a complex project that can only realistically be delivered with public support. "Although I'm not involved with it directly, I know the club has been negotiating and discussing with the Mayor of London and the government regarding ways in which it can help bring about the regeneration of Tottenham and Haringey, which are incredibly poor parts of the city. The reality of a project of this size in this current economic climate is that it's not possible for a club to do it on its own."

"You're talking about a £400m project, which is part of a much broader regeneration involving the rebuilding of rail stations and roads – it's a big undertaking for a football club that only makes about £20m a year profit," he says.

"If you take the Olympic Park and all the billions of pounds that have been spent in east London, three-quarters of the money that's been spent supporting the park has gone into non-sporting projects. It's gone into the sewers and underground power lines and roads and stations. If you're going to do a major regeneration, a very substantial part of this cost is not in actually building the venue it's everything around the outside and that's what Tottenham needs help with."

Mills' advice on major projects, such as this, must be in high demand, particularly now he has Olympic experience to add to his credentials. "Actually, over the past six or seven years Seb and I have spent quite a bit of time helping other countries," he says. "I draw no distinction about who we help. If somebody calls up for advice, we give it to them." ●

There are two things needed to engage the general public. The first is to set people's imagination alive and get them excited, and the second is to make sure the product is on the shelf and widely distributed

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LIMONTA
SPORT
PLAYING ON A DREAM

The recent annual International Sports Event Management (ISEM) conference provided a forum for exchange of knowledge and opinion among those in the sports event management sector. Delegate Helen Delany reports

ISEM REVIEW

On 12 and 13 October, influential sport administrators, including London 2012's Lord Sebastian Coe, Paul Deighton and Sochi 2014's Dmitry Chernyshenko took to the stage to give their progress reports on the run up to the Summer and Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games at London's annual International Sports Event Management (ISEM) conference.

Attended by around 150 delegates, the event was a platform for international industry experts to share their insight and experience on trends in the global sports event industry. Over the two days, particular focus was given to effective event management, security planning and how a host can maximise an event's commercial and legacy opportunities.

With recent high-profile international sports events as examples of best practice, delegates were also able to listen and learn from presentations on the hosting of the FIFA Women's World Cup and International Athletics' IAAF World Championships.

Combining presentations with panel discussions and formal networking sessions, some of the key event messages included emerging markets, legacy and adding to the event experience. Here follows a brief summary:

WILL LONDON DELIVER A SUCCESSFUL LEGACY?

According to pmplegacy, the hard legacy benefits relating to the regeneration of East London, new sporting venues and an enhanced transport network cannot be argued against. In terms of the soft benefits, the consensus is that it is too early to tell. Ticketing demand may indicate that we have a nation enthused by Olympic sport but whether this is converted into sustained participation remains the big question. Three years out and Sochi has already demonstrated it is possible – with increased levels of sporting participation recorded at 17 per cent nationwide and 35 per cent in the Sochi region. This shows what can be achieved through embedding legacy at the bid stage.

EMERGING MARKETS

The economic growth and development of emerging markets such as the Middle East and the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) compared with the downturn seen across Europe and Northern America, means that an increasing number of events will be hosted by emerging countries.

Emerging markets are attractive to rights holders due to their:

- Ability, through centralised government structures, to invest and commit to an increased level of funding at the bid and hosting stage.
- Ability to deliver strategic objectives of the rights holder through new facilities as well as growth, development and profile raising of the sport in new territories. The legacy impact is often far greater in these countries.

- Ability to offer robust commercial models, with greater commercial opportunities and reduced risk – given a typical underwriting of the financial model due to a keenness to host.

While this growing trend will result in an increasingly competitive events market and may limit the UK's potential to attract future events, it does provide an opportunity for event professionals in the UK to work with emerging countries and share their international experience.

IMPORTANCE OF LEGACY

Legacy is the long-term, sustainable benefit that may be created from bidding for and hosting a major sporting event.

It creeps into virtually all events-related presentations and discussions, emphasising how integral it is to event planning and delivery.

With major sports administrators in attendance (including Lord Seb Coe: top left and above) delegates were offered great networking opportunities at the event management conference

It can take many different forms, such as sporting, economic, social and environmental with hard legacy benefits relating to facilities and infrastructure and soft benefits to lifestyle and cultural changes.

It's widely accepted that any successful bid will need to demonstrate a positive legacy impact. The issue is balancing what is right for both the host city and the rights holder, i.e. managing the demands of the rights holder with the city's long-term needs. The general perception is that in Olympic and Paralympic terms only Barcelona in 1992 has successfully managed this.

EVENT PLANNING – 12 KEY STEPS

1. Eliminate as much uncertainty from bid delivery and beyond – early planning of who, what, where, when, how and why for areas such as budget, technical requirements, delivery model and operations
2. Leverage the distinct value – of the event, the city, the country, the movement or sport
3. Create an event personality not just a brand – give it a time, a place and purpose
4. Give selflessly – for event planning and management the journey is as important as the destination. Be aware that the IOC is a time-based organisation, your partners will be around significantly longer
5. Spend time on a strategy at bid stage that involves all stakeholders and has a clear plan for delivery
6. Develop a sound budget that translates to fiscal control rather than hinders front-line management
7. Put yourself in the position of all stakeholders and mentally walk through their experience
8. Get the best people – hand-pick your team and check their actual delivery experience
9. Secure support from the top – develop and build relationships so there is confidence and trust
10. Define structure and responsibilities – at both planning and in event management mode
11. Keep your hands free – ensure guidelines are in place so there is clarity on delivery and senior management can oversee and provide additional resource to address any inevitable problems
12. Work hard and enjoy!

ADDING TO THE EVENT EXPERIENCE

Adding consumer value to an event is an increasing trend. Examples included:

- Fan parks. First introduced at the 2006 FIFA World Cup. These offer commercial benefits, educational and interactive legacy and help to build-up and generate interest
- In-event opportunities. Using digital media to bring the spectator experience to life and provide a better understanding of the sport
- Sports presentation. Entertaining and educating spectators i.e. at the 2011 Daegu IAAF World Championships 'ssshhhh' sound effects prior to the gun and use of six split big screens to illustrate the technical detail of events.

Helen Delaney is a senior consultant at pmplegacy

The sweeping profile of Sochi's stadium reflects the costal and mountain location

MASTERPLANNING SOCHI 2014

JERRY ANDERSON

Much has changed in the design and delivery of major international sporting events since Russia hosted the Moscow 1980 Summer Olympics. Jerry Anderson and John Barrow explain Populous's assisting role at the 2014 Winter Games in Sochi

JOHN BARROW

When the bidding committee responsible for creating Sochi's bid for the 2014 Winter Olympics began the process of pulling it together, it had been 25 years since Russia had last hosted a major sports event – the Moscow Summer Olympics, back in 1980. In the intervening years many things had moved forward in the design and delivery of these events. The committee recognised the need for international expertise and this is where Populous was able to come alongside the bidding committee to bring Olympic standards back to Russia.

Shaping the vision

Seven cities set out to become the host of the 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Games and Populous worked with the Sochi 2014 Organising Committee from the outset to assist in its bid efforts.

A key initial part of any bid is to outline the proposed venues for the Games. As a popular coastal resort, Sochi has been a traditional summertime holiday destination for millions of Russians. One of the legacy aims behind the bid was to develop the area further. The idea was to create an Olympic park, which could act as a catalyst for this development by linking the nearby Caucasus Mountains and the coastal region with new infrastructure and facilities.

Although cluster venue parks have become standard for Summer Games, this was the first time it had been proposed for a Winter Olympics.

Populous, with experience of masterplanning for numerous major sporting events, including the Olympic Park for London 2012, was able to draw on that knowledge and bring the lessons learnt to the bid for the Winter Games.

The site for the park was selected as the Imeretin Valley, located alongside the Black Sea at the southern end of Sochi. For the remaining venues, it was a question of analysing the few facilities which already existed and deciding what needed to be built and what could be purely temporary – a balance that is crucial to creating a successful legacy. All of these challenges were met with a clear plan, which took full advantage of the stunning seaside location.

After the announcement in June 2006 that Sochi had made the shortlist, a tremendous effort went into preparing the Bid Book. Populous designed the initial assessments of all potential venue sites, helped in the selection of those sites and developed the venue design imagery.

We also worked closely with the Bid committee to develop the presentations to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) Evaluation Commission, made presentations on behalf of the Sochi Bid Committee to the commission and provided all design and graphic materials for the final presentation prior to the IOC vote.

On July 4, 2007 in Guatemala, Sochi beat both Pyeonchang, South Korea and Salzburg, Austria in a hotly contested effort to win the rights to the 2014 Winter Olympic Games.

Located on the main Olympic plaza, the transparent skin exposes the building's structural elements and allows sight-lines through to the mountains and sea

Realising dreams

After the euphoria of being announced as the host city, the hard work began again in full force. The concepts and plans outlined in the Bid Book had to be developed into both masterplans and venue plans that would allow ideas to be transformed into reality.

As a first step, the Sochi 2014 organising committee asked Populous to help prepare design briefs for each venue, prior to awarding the development to the competing contractors. We were able to draw upon the experience we have gained from working on many previous Olympic Games to help with this, as well as with design and operational reviews.

A big part of any Olympic Games is the design of the temporary support structures needed for any large event. Referred to as Olympic overlay, these facilities require as much area as the venues themselves, and often include non-permanent stadia as well. While these facilities are temporary, their design is hugely important to the functionality and experience for both athletes, media, the Olympic and Paralympic family and spectators. Populous has been engaged in developing overlay plans from the beginning. This process has included all the initial work for overlay and event venues, the Sochi venue requirements, preliminary block plans for all competition and major non-competition venues, design reviews for all venues, and delivering the overlay strategy for the detailed implementation of the work.

The brief was to design the stadium to host the opening ceremony, then expand to 45,000 seats for World Cup matches, then reduce to 25,000 legacy format

Underpinning all this has been a vision of creating temporary structures that reflect the excitement and spirit of the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The State Corporation responsible for constructing the permanent infrastructure for the Sochi 2014 Games, Olympstroy, engaged Populous to develop the Olympic Park masterplan. Working closely with the St Petersburg Institute of Urban Studies, Populous developed a refined park masterplan, establishing the location of all venues within the park. These will include five arenas, two practice ice facilities, spectator concourses and facilities, an athlete village, media centres, Games ►

An entire infrastructure for a city of 350,000 people will transform the area into a major winter destination

support facilities and an IOC hotel. A co-ordinated plan reflecting all the venue, overlay, transport, spectator concourse and ancillary support facilities was established and approved by Olympstroy and the organising committee. Alongside the operational requirements, we made the vision for establishing a gateway between the Caucasus Mountains and the Black Sea more evident on this unique site.

A lasting legacy

The next stage was the design of specific venues and in October 2009 we were delighted to be appointed as architects for the Sochi Olympic Stadium, joined in the design consortium by Russian contractor Engeocom, and Botta Management.

This is the third Olympic Stadium that Populous has designed and the first time that a Winter Olympic host city has built a stadium. The reason behind this decision was that Russia's bid for the Olympics was part of a broader goal to step back onto the world stage as hosts of major sporting events so the country would also be providing itself with a potential future venue for events such as FIFA World Cup matches, now that Russia has been awarded the 2018 competition.

The venues in the park will include five arenas, two practice ice facilities, spectator concourses, an athletes village, media centres and an IOC hotel

The brief for the stadium was to design a building that could host the Olympic opening ceremony, then expand to 45,000 seats to host World Cup matches and finally reduce down to 25,000 seats in its long-term legacy format for a local football team. Populous was able to take some of the lessons learnt in the development of the London Olympic Stadium, in terms of adaptability and flexibility to transform after hosting an Olympic event.

Its sweeping form responds to both its coastal location and mountainous backdrop, while its crystalline skin engages with its surroundings by day, and provides an iconic representation of the colour and spectacle of the games when illuminated at night.

The stadium will be the focal point of the Games and the event as a whole will leave a lasting legacy for the evolution of Sochi as a domestic and international tourist destination. In fact, beyond the staging of the Games, an entire infrastructure for a city of 350,000 people will be put in place, transforming the area into a major winter sports destination that will last well beyond the 2014 Games.

Welcoming the world

A major objective for Russia over the next few years is to begin hosting major events once more. Winning the Winter Olympics has allowed the country to break back onto the world stage and the new skills and expertise that are being developed domestically during the work on the Sochi Games will help Russia raise its profile around the world.

Jerry Anderson and John Barrow are senior principals at Poplous

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Animal sculptures and artefacts made from recycled objects create a unique entrance into the Leisure and Culture Park

In the know at **Knowsley**

John Bell, former director of Leisure and Community Services for Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council takes us on a tour of the recently-opened £25m Knowsley Leisure and Culture Park

This new facility, built on the former Sir Thomas Becket school site in Huyton, Merseyside, offers something different from a traditional leisure centre. There's a giant fish sculpture outside the entrance for starters, then past reception in the vibrant foyer area there are more animal images – an owl, an eel and a zebra.

These animals link to the Knowsley Alphabet trail, inspired by Edward Lear – who wrote 'The owl and the pussy cat' rhyme during his time at nearby Knowsley Hall in the late 19th Century.

Another artisan, international artist Gordon Young, has also left his mark. He's been working with members of the local community to create artefacts made from recycled materials taken from local disused buildings. An example of this work can be found at reception, where old school bench tops have been transformed into a piece of art by some of the facility's Day Care Centre special needs users who are already making good use of the centre's arts and crafts provision and sensory room.

Combining sport and culture

The facility ticks all the boxes for the sports, cultural, community and educational needs of the local area.

Overlooked by a fully-equipped audio visual control room, the six-court, multi-purpose hall features 700 bleacher seats with room for an additional 200 for a full-house show. The first performance has already been scheduled: Hamlet, performed by the Royal Shakespeare Company touring company.

In sports mode, the hall is the home of the Mersey Tigers Basketball team and the Liverpool Futsal Brazilian football team – which has just achieved a new world record for 37 hours continuous play at the new centre. Storage for equipment within the hall has been well planned and the additional Green Room allows for visiting artists and teams to have their own shower and dressing room.

> "The cost of the sport and cultural centre was met by prudential borrowing and council reserves – to be paid back on the eventual sale of the former leisure site"

Encouraging regular physical activity in the community, a fitness suite sits on two levels within the centre, consisting of 110 stations of Life Fitness, Balance Master, Stair Master, Concept rowers, Escape Fitness and PowerPlate equipment while fully-trained instructors offer inclusive workouts for people of all abilities.

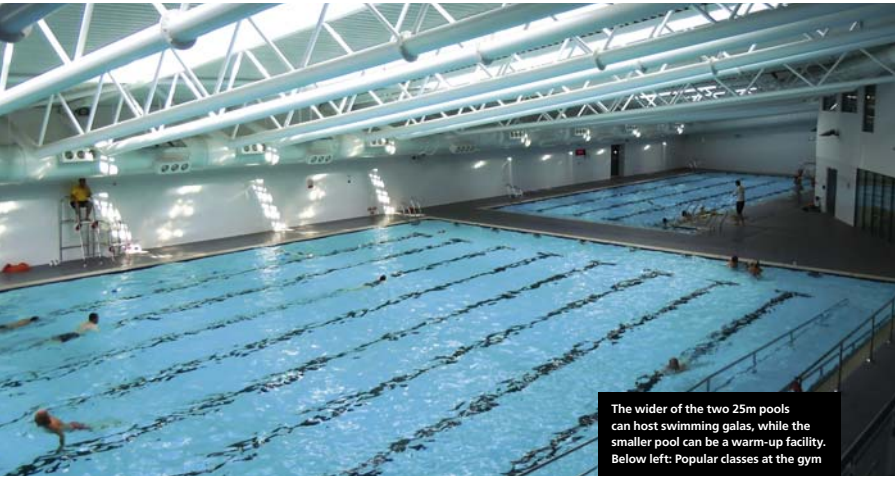
Popular classes, such as Zumba, kick fit, aqua boot camp and Aqua Zumba are also available, as well as the ever popular spin classes in a dedicated area equipped with 25 Keiser bikes.

For balancing the body and mind, the spa, located on the first floor, provides a relaxing environment with soft furnishings, low lighting and five treatment rooms; two with ensuite showers. A sauna, steam and salt room is located on the ground floor – adjacent to the facility's two swimming pools

An excellent view of the two 25m swimming pools is offered from the first floor. The wider pool is an eight-lane competition pool, which includes a ramp for disabled users (during my visit this pool was being used for aquarobics by Activity for Life GP Referrals clients. This pool can be used for swimming galas, with spectator seating for up to 300. The smaller 25m four-lane pool can be used as a warm-up facility in this instance. The pool's moveable floor allows for flexible swimming programming within the centre.

The Velodrome and BMX Track

Outside the building sits an impressive 400m-track velodrome, which features



The wider of the two 25m pools can host swimming galas, while the smaller pool can be a warm-up facility. Below left: Popular classes at the gym

an international-standard BMX track within its bowl. Currently still under construction, the structure is due to be completed in December this year.

This achieves a promise made to British Cycling to reinstate a cycling facility when Kirkby Leisure Centre – the training home of Olympic cyclist Chris Boardman – was closed some years ago. The new velodrome complements the recently-opened Indoor Cycling Centre in Manchester. It also provides a much anticipated BMX facility for local bikers and showcase BMX events.

OurPlace

With teenage needs in mind, a new OurPlace youth centre for 13- to 19-year-olds sits alongside the facility. The centre offers local children the chance to spend their free time in the media suite, dance studio, café and chill out areas.

It also features advice/counselling and skills training rooms, a multi-use games area and garden allotments.

Learning centre

On an adjacent part of the site, just beyond the velodrome, sits a new secondary school for 900 students. Sports facilities on the school site include a third generation floodlit artificial pitch, grass pitches and indoors, a small fitness suite and dance studio.

Financing the new centre

In these difficult times for public finances, the Knowsley Leisure Facilities strategy has embraced a major rationalisation of all Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council's (MBC) leisure facilities on a 'hub and spoke' principle.

The £16m cost of the sport and cultural centre was met by prudential borrowing and council reserves. This is to be paid back upon the sale of former leisure sites when the economy improves. The velodrome and BMX site cost £1.3m and was financed by grants from British Cycling's Whole Sport Plan, Sport England and Knowsley PCT. The OurPlace Youth Centre cost £5m and this was met by a Big Lottery grant.

The speed of the project build – from planning consent to virtual completion in 18 months – has been a positive. This was achieved by utilising the existing contract with Balfour Beatty, which is Knowsley MBC's PFI partner for Building Schools for the Future. However, the Leisure and Culture Park is not a PFI scheme and will be operated by the Department of Wellbeing Services in Knowsley MBC.

Key to the scheme's success will be attracting a large number of members and visitors. Knowsley card members can use an access card to enter the building. Once inside they can pay-as-you-go or buy a gold or silver membership – depending on which facilities they wish to use.

An interesting future development could be the use of the Knowsley card for travel by bus and rail. Early discussions with Merseytravel have provided encouragement for this idea which may open up the centre to 'green' travel – by bike, for example.

Conclusion

This new centre is incredibly impressive and when fully open should provide a national exemplar of best practice. It provides inclusive facilities for all ages and abilities; the whole building echoes a commitment to sports and arts. It is truly 'one building – many functions'. ●

John Bell is Honorary Secretary at CCLOA, a director of the Sport and Recreation Alliance and chair of Merseyside Sports partnership

GEN3 KINEMATICS

Chiefs benefit from Gen3 revolution

Gen3 Kinematics' partnership with Exeter Chiefs rugby club has produced a massive increase in the players' strength and conditioning gain

CLIENT:
Exeter Chiefs Rugby Club

SUPPLIER:
Gen3 Kinematics

"Using the MyoTruk and MyoThrusta in our training sessions, the team has achieved roughly a 7 per cent increase in strength and conditioning gain"

Exeter Chiefs rugby club is one of the most successful rugby clubs in the country – playing in the Aviva Premiership. Since the club was promoted in May 2010, Exeter has steadily ascended to become an established presence in the top tier of rugby. After finishing eighth in its first ever season in top-flight rugby, the success that's been achieved in a short period of time is outstanding.

Gen3 Kinematics was brought in to install its MyoQuip strength training systems, the MyoTruk and MyoThrusta in July 2010. The training programmes through which head of strength and conditioning coach Paddy Anson puts his players through uses the MyoTruk and MyoThrusta daily to increase the strength and explosiveness of his players.

One of the key aspects to the MyoTruk and MyoThrusta is the ability to do strength training efficiently and effectively due to the technology involved in the MyoQuip equipment. As Anson explains: "The MyoTruk and MyoThrusta have formed a key part of to our training programmes that have helped us tremendously since our arrival in the Premiership. Our testing scores have been excellent and the guys are fitter and stronger than ever."

The game results of Exeter Chiefs have spoken for themselves since the club was promoted. It currently lies fifth in the Premiership this year having won three out of the first six games. With a squad that possesses many of its players from its time in the league below, strength and conditioning performance has been a key part to their success. "Using the MyoTruk and MyoThrusta in our training, we have achieved roughly a 7 per cent increase in strength and conditioning gain," says Anson. "This is a massive amount at the elite level given that even a 1 per cent increase is considered to be a great result".

Injury prevention is one of the key aspects to Gen3 Kinematics' MyoQuip training systems that has benefited Exeter. The equipment's aim is to provide a safer, more efficient strength training environment for athletes in any sport. Armed with the patented Broad Biomechanical Correspondence Technology, the systems are able to deliver effective muscle fibre recruitment through a full-range of movement – from extreme flexion to full extension, with a greatly reduced risk of injury during training. This is due to the equipment design being focused on delivering training movements that have no adverse loading in the spine, hips or knees.

Andy Naisbitt, business development manager, Gen3 Kinematics, says: "We're delighted with the results that have been achieved by the guys at Exeter Chiefs.

"Their performances in the league have been brilliant and with the use of our training equipment we are proud to be a part of the club's success. Our partnership helps reinforce our ambition to help develop a new method of strength training for athletes across the board."

For more information:
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SWIMMING
STATE OF THE INDUSTRY

As London 2012 approaches and the need for investment legacies close in, evidence of what's already been achieved in terms of swimming facilities is showcased in The Leisure Database Company's latest report. By David Minton

The recently released *2011 State of the UK Swimming Industry Report* sets out to inform national and local government as well as operators and suppliers on the state of and changes to the industry's swimming pool facilities.

The report reveals swimming to be one of the most accessible sports with 84 per cent of people in the UK living within two miles of their nearest swimming pool, whether that's a public or private facility.

TYPE AND LOCATION OF POOLS

The report shows that throughout the UK a total of 4,674 swimming pools are operated across the 3,311 UK public and private sites with swimming facilities.

The UK stock is predominantly operated in the public sector with 2,769 pool facilities at public sports centres and 1,905 pool facilities at private health clubs.

In the 12 months to 31 March 2011, the increase in pool facilities on offer through the public sector sports centres offset the marginal decline in the swimming pool facilities at private health clubs.

Regional variations are apparent too. Northern Ireland and the Northeast of England have the lowest provision of pools, while the Southeast of England has the highest provision. In the public sector, Scotland shares the highest regional provision with Southeast England.

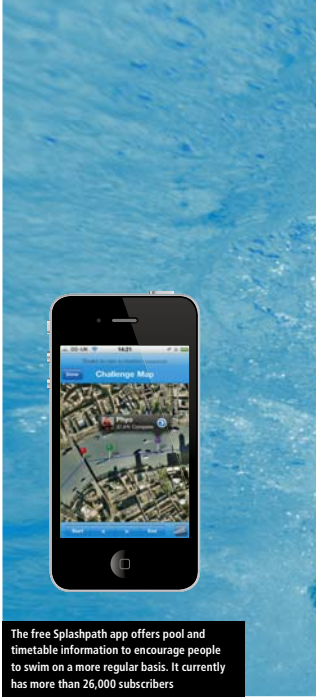
PRICING VARIATIONS

In the public sector, swimming prices vary across the regions. The average cost of a pay and play adult swim among public sector pools ranges from £2.76 in Northern Ireland (18 per cent below UK average) to £3.89 in London (15 per cent above UK average).

The top five trusts notably charge higher than the average adult pay and play fee for swims at their centres.

NATIONAL STOCK

In regard to what type of pools are in the national stock, the *Swimming Industry Report* reveals the make-up of the stock to be mainly indoor main pools (58.8 per cent). Teaching pools make up more than 25 per cent, 7 per cent are leisure pools and 7 per cent are outdoor pools.



The free Splashpath app offers pool and timetable information to encourage people to swim on a more regular basis. It currently has more than 26,000 subscribers

SECTOR DIFFERENCES

In the private health club sector, the majority of pools are found at multi-site

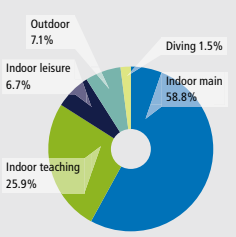
Private clubs with swimming pool facilities – regional breakdown

Region	Clubs	% Clubs
Eastern	160	10%
East Midlands	100	6%
London	191	12%
Northeast	55	3%
Northwest	195	12%
Northern Ireland	21	1%
Scotland	138	9%
Southeast	268	17%
Southwest	171	11%
Wales	62	4%
West Midlands	121	8%
Yorkshire & Humberside	101	6%
Total market		
All UK clubs	1,583	100%

Public sports centres with swimming pool facilities – regional breakdown

Region	Clubs	% Clubs
Eastern	149	9%
East Midlands	125	7%
London	143	8%
Northeast	67	4%
Northwest	188	11%
Northern Ireland	43	2%
Scotland	219	13%
Southeast	221	13%
Southwest	182	11%
Wales	130	8%
West Midlands	128	7%
Yorkshire & Humberside	133	8%
Total market		
All UK sports centres	1,728	100%

Public and private: swimming pools by facility type



PIC: ©WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/BIGBERG/LONDON

operator clubs, given the development and operational costs of pools. However, the report also shows that we are witnessing a decreasing number of pools opening in the private health club sector as club openings in that sector move towards low cost operations – many of which do not have pool facilities.

In the public sector, there has been an increase in centres with new pool openings. In the 12 months to 31 March 2011 there were 27 new pool openings. The top five trusts and leisure management contractors operate 20 per cent of the UK public pool market.

BOOSTING PARTICIPATION

The report reveals that technology will play an important role in encouraging further swimming participation.

For example Splashpath, the free mobile application, encourages more people to swim more often with readily available, real-time pool and timetable information. Already there are more than 26,000 swimmers and more than 100 operators using Splashpath to promote their pools, all of which are location-aware.

> It's good to see that the pool stock remains relatively stable but we'll want to continually monitor this situation as public sector reductions in funding could have significant impact in the future

Splashpath is now seen as an industry solution to increasing swimming participation. The application has witnessed more than 600 people per week sign up to find out where and when to swim.

INVESTMENTS IN UNDERSTANDING

Industry bodies have welcomed the report for the value it brings to the sector.

"We know that swimming remains a massive participation sport and activity, but we still need to grow the market and the numbers participating regularly," says Andy Reed, chair of Sport and Recreation Alliance and independent board member of the ASA. "Reports suggest that latent demand for swimming remains high so providing this kind of detailed information can help us all plan to meet this growth. It's good to see that the pool stock remains relatively stable but we will want to continually monitor this situation as public sector reductions in funding could have a significant impact in the future."

Sean Holt, CEO of IMSPA agrees: "These figures aid in planning and providing relevant services to the sports and leisure sectors and enable us to meet the opportunities arising from the Olympic momentum."

The report also details the age and size of swimming pool stock as well as pool facilities and recent changing room refurbishments. More details are available on www.theleisuredatabase.com or +44 (0)20 7395 6177. ●

New building standards and rising energy prices will be key issues discussed at this event

SPATEX 2012

SPATEX2012 the pool and spa show

INTERESTED IN SWIMMING POOL OPERATION, MAINTENANCE AND DESIGN? THEN BRIGHTON IS THE PLACE TO BE, FROM 4-6 FEBRUARY 2012

It's not often that you'll find the majority of the UK and European swimming pool products and hot tubs suppliers and manufacturers conveniently situated under one roof.

At SPATEX 2012 visitors are provided with an ideal opportunity to research exciting new products for the 2012 season, together with a convenient platform for those business meetings that there's little time for during the hectic pool season.

Seminar programme

Offering its support to the exhibition, the Institute of Swimming Pool Engineers (ISPE) will be organising a series of informative seminars during the event by industry leaders who are first in their field of pool expertise.

The varied seminar content will include technical product application presentations as well as business-orientated papers. Due to the fact that swimming pool running costs are likely to be at the forefront of every pool owner, operator and manager's mind – another much-debated topic will be green issues and renewable technology.

Changing standards

Current government regulation in the domestic house building market means that renewable sources of energy need to be used to enable the building to satisfy Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) requirements. These regulations will soon apply to swimming pool buildings too. In addition to this, by 2016, the government will have ruled that no new gas supplies will be allowed to new build sites.

These new standards, together with fast rising energy prices, have put pressure on pool owners to actively address energy efficiency. This also fits with the consumer's desire to buy into products and services that they perceive to be less harmful to the environment – thus reducing their own carbon footprint.

The government's new Part L Building Regulations, introduced this year, has an increased focus on reduced energy consumption, and its far-reaching effects will become more evident within the building and swimming pool industries in 2012.

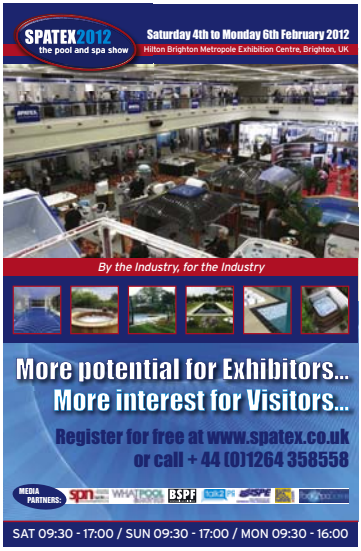
With these issues in mind, swimming pool heat retention covers, heat pumps, water circulating pumps, control of chemical dosing systems and, most importantly, energy will remain firmly in the spotlight at the show. SPATEX visitors will be able to witness some of the advances in these areas and advice will be on hand to help them meet the new standards set.

Matching with Europe

Going forward, low maintenance costs and energy efficiency will continue to be a priority at community pools throughout the UK. While heat pumps remain high on the list of 'most wanted' for such savings.

Although throughout Europe, heat pumps have been an accepted technology for well over 20 years, the UK government's target of 15 percent of energy to be derived from renewables by 2020 assumes significant growth in the use of renewable technology in order to meet this commitment.

Much can be done with existing technology, however, used as part of a proactive energy saving programme. This includes good initial design, efficient pool maintenance and good housekeeping – backed with energy-efficient products.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GROWING THE GRASSROOTS

For a sport with roots embedded in South Korean culture for anything up to 5,000 years, taekwondo has taken almost that length of time to come to the sporting consciousness of the British public. Trevor Baxter reports

TAEKWONDO

With reputable sources suggesting that 70 million people practice taekwondo in 200 countries, the sport had been a well-kept secret in the UK, until the formation of the British Taekwondo Control Board (BTCB) in 1982.

Even globally the modern form of taekwondo – literally translated as the way of the foot and the fist (tae meaning to break or attack with the foot, kwon meaning to break with the fist and do translated as the art or way) – wasn't agreed until 1955. It took another 18 years before the formation of the world governing body, the World Taekwondo Federation (WTF).

However, for an ancient martial art that struggled for nearly five millennia to find its niche in the modern world, the growth spurt in popularity in little more than a quarter of a century has been incredible.

A major catalyst came in 1994, when the WTF received International Olympic Committee (IOC) recognition. The curve upwards shows no sign of dipping – largely due to taekwondo's Games status. Alongside judo, it is one of the only two martial arts on the Olympic schedule.

The UK landscape

There are now more than 14,000 registered players in the UK, an increase of 4,000 from 2007. Including participation by other members of the taekwondo family, it's estimated there are approximately 60,000 people aligned to this particular martial art.

So, London 2012 could provide the BTCB and GB Taekwondo (the performance arm of the sport, challenged with delivering Olympics medals) with further impetus to rid itself of the 'minority sport' tag.

A demonstration event for the first time at the 1988 Games in Seoul, taekwondo was upgraded to medal status at the Sydney 2000 Olympics. Even before London, there are already encouraging signs that both base and pinnacle of the pyramid look in good shape.

A record entry of more than 450 players attended the National Championships last June. Youngsters from six upwards competed alongside world-class British stars.

In 2012, it is envisaged there will be a new exciting National Taekwondo League (NTL) with three NTL events across the country culminating in a presentation evening – in conjunction with the BTCB – where the overall winners will be crowned national champions.

The NTL concept is seen as a replacement for the Nationals, providing athletes with more regular and high-quality sparring opportunities on the big stage. With an exciting end goal for athletes, the NTL will hopefully encourage a take up in the number of people involved in the sport.

In addition, invitations will be made to train at the GB High Performance Academy in Manchester – the spiritual home of taekwondo in the UK and host city for next year's European Championships.

Football may be king in Manchester but in Newton Heath taekwondo has put down strong roots. The main training base at Ten Acres Lane isn't just home

Left: British Open champion and World silver medallist Jade Jones at GB Taekwondo Academy in Newton Heath

Above: flexible national champion Andrew Deer. Below: World Champion Sarah Stevenson coaching technique

to elite athletes. It's open and provides taster sessions and training programmes for schools, clubs and community groups. The GB administrative offices are billeted in the new East Manchester Academy.

In turn, it's hoped the presence of world class athletes on their doorstep will inspire Mancunians to take up a sport that otherwise might be alien to them.

British success

British players secured a record four medals at the World Championships in South Korea in May this year – including gold for Sarah Stevenson.

Another six medals were won at the British Open in Manchester in October, including gold for Olympic hopefuls Aaron Cook, Jade Jones, Martin Stamper and Bianca Walkden. Proof that the production line of talent is running smoothly came a week later with three medals at the European Junior Championships for Sophie Dickson, Jamie Abley and 14-year-old Beth Worthington from the South Hams club in the -44 kg weight division.

Indeed, the successes highlighted the strides being made to implement a talent pathway so athletes like Worthington can eventually progress to become members of the GB Academy set-up like Dickson and Abley.

The eight-strong GB squad comprised youngsters from the World Class Performance Programme and from leading clubs around the country.

Talent pathways

GB Taekwondo, through its partnership with and funding from Sport England, has developed a talent pathway to provide young talented athletes with the opportunity to access world-class provision and move through a logical system to maximise their taekwondo ambition.

The programme aims to make Britain the number one nation in the world at junior and cadet level through the continuation of regular contact with athletes at talent squad training, increased investment in clubs and the opening of the first National Junior Homestay programme in 2012.

"Those athletes with potential will be invited to Manchester in September 2012," explains GB Taekwondo development manager Dean Leak of the Homestay initiative.

"They will train full-time, receive a bespoke education package and stay with a host family."

The Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) and Sports Aid – again linked through Sport England – provides funding to help prospects fund international competitions, which is key to development.

The Olympics though remain the goal for any aspiring athlete and medals in London could produce untold benefits for the sport with a rise in popularity and increased participation.

But there's a determination at all levels to maximise the success and the profile already achieved by frontline British players.

Systems being introduced now are as much to produce talent for Rio 2016 and future World and European Championships as for London 2012. ►

Georgia Barnes, one of the leading juniors during a National Junior Training Camp in Manchester

Growing the grassroots

Before the Talent Pathway's introduction, the route into the GB academy was through recognition at the National Championships or International competitions. No formal scouting system existed.

"There has never really been a significant grassroots programme in place before," Leak says.

"In the past, the route into the World Class Programme came directly from the local club. Now GB Taekwondo, through the Sport England 'Excel' programme, has installed a pathway athletes can visibly understand and realise. We now have a great national team and are building development programmes from the top down rather than bottom upwards.

"We have the shop window and everything in place to use them as a stimulus for increased interest in the sport. If we get gold medals next year then the task is to signpost people, who are new to the sport, into clubs.

"The task for the BTCB and GB Taekwondo is to capitalise on any success at London 2012 and have the structures in place to do so," Leak says.

Adrian Tranter, chair of the British Taekwondo Control Board, says: "The club system is already well structured with systems for both the sports side and the martial art practised throughout.

"The clubs' work is to give an opportunity to learn all the basic skills and to progress at a pace that suits the individual. It doesn't matter if it's an aspiring Olympian or someone who just wants to enjoy the physical and mental challenges, the health and flexibility improvements or just to feel part of a club that offers respect and confidence building for everyone.

> "The task for the BTCB and GB Taekwondo is to capitalise on any success at London 2012 and have the structures in place to do so"

"Many schools are switching onto the huge benefits to their pupils by bringing WTF Taekwondo into their curriculum or as part of their after school clubs. Parents see the immediate positive outcomes that their children exhibit as the founding principles of WTF Taekwondo are at the core of everything taekwondo does: etiquette, modesty, perseverance, self-control and indomitable spirit.

"Every elite athlete comes through the club system and the development plans for the clubs via coach education and training are at the forefront of the funding that is soon to be brought into the BTCB through Sport England's "Grow and Sustain" pathways. Initiatives include posts for development managers, coach education through a recognised training provider plus user-friendly website tools being brought in for the first time.

"With the success it has achieved in recent years, the BTCB is convinced that this funding will result in a greater level of growth of its clubs and keep more members training for longer.

"This will ultimately help deliver the elite athletes of the future to the GB Taekwondo Academy," Tranter says.

Moving upwards

GB Taekwondo is charged with delivering the third tier of Sport England's 'Grow and Sustain' pathway known as 'Excel.'

"It's in our interest to take from the wider pool and put programmes in place to identify talent and bring them along," says Leak.

Existing WTF club members are encouraged to enter national and international competitions to gain experience and recognition from the GB coaches.

Athletes who show signs of world-class potential can come to Manchester to showcase their skills at trials for the national cadet/junior talent squad. Here, they'll be fully assessed and monitored on a continual basis to realise their performance and athletic potential. However, the NTS is not a taekwondo camp. It's an education centre which encompasses all areas of service provision to emphasise personal and sport development.

"At each tier of the pathway – from schools, cadets, juniors, homestay through to the Olympic programme – we will ensure players' access to high-performance support staff, including nutritionists and psychologists, to define what's needed at each stage of the pathway to contribute to an improved programme," Leak says. ●

Trevor Baxter is a freelance journalist

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THE BASKETBALL ARENA

Karen Maxwell talks to Wilkinson Eyre's Sam Wright about the design principles and reusable options of one of the largest-ever temporary venues built for any Olympic Games

Six of the world's top teams competed in the test event at the Basketball Arena

There's currently no British Standard for a temporary sports arena. However, the joint SKM Engineers/Wilkinson Eyre and KSS architectural design team believe that the Olympic Park's Basketball Arena, built in time and on budget for the London 2012 Games, will provide an excellent benchmark.

According to Sam Wright, head of the Wilkinson Eyre part of the design team, what may have helped the team win the competition to design the arena in the first place was the fact that they offered four basic options for a temporary sports venue: a portable frame, a dome structure, a cable net structure and a table top structure.

"After our appointment, the SKM/KSS/Wilkinson Eyre design team worked closely with the London 2012 Organising Committee (LOCOG) and the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) to whittle the options down. It was basically a process of elimination, which got us to the most efficient and pragmatic design that best suited an arena that would only be in use for a six week period," he says. .

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

According to Wright, the whole arena had to be designed around the main function of the building – the seating bowl. Designed by sports architects KSS, the challenge was to build a temporary 12,000-seat arena, while allowing for a significant transformation in terms of Olympic to Paralympic configuration.

Designing a seating bowl is a complex process when sight lines need to be International Olympic Committee (IOC)-compliant. Wright explains. "The arena will host the basketball preliminary rounds and the handball final as well as wheelchair rugby and wheelchair basketball and each of these fields of play have very specific setting out requirements. Once a functional seating bowl was devised, then it was our job to co-ordinate with KSS and dovetail everything around the bowl."

The key issue with the design of the structure, according to Wright, is that everything that went up would have to come down. "A permanent structure is typically made from concrete and includes terraces and seats. This material has an inherent fire property and allows for ground floor accommodation underneath the seats for changing rooms, plant rooms, storage and catering. It also allows for spectators to enter the structure through an upper level.

"Conversely, scaffolding was used for the seating bowl structure of this temporary arena. You can't fit much around a 3m grid and entrance into the arena was only possible from ground level." ►

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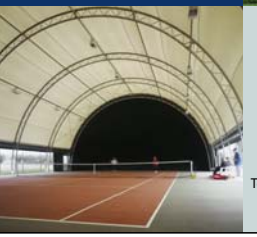

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REUSABLE OPTIONS

Located north of the Olympic Park, close to the iconic Velodrome and the BMX Track, the design brief also stated that the building should be a showcase for British engineering expertise and offer a certain 'wow' factor. However, Wright says that there was a budget to stick to and a main driver behind the choice of materials was that they could be reused after the event and not just recycled or skipped.

"Everybody knew from the outset that the brief wasn't to design a reusable building – there just isn't a reuse market for a 12,000-seat arena. If you design a temporary structure that's going to be taken down and be put up again you have to design in inherent flexibility and durability. So, for example, you'd have to factor in the strength of the hurricane season in Jamaica or snow loads in Norway and this adds a premium to anything you're doing. This truly reusable approach wasn't deemed cost-effective by the ODA," Wright says.

"Instead, we physically separated the different elements so what we've got is a 1,000-tonne steel frame structure and fabric cladding as one element and the temporary scaffold seating structure as another, which, when taken down, will go straight back in the hire market.

"The changing rooms, the Olympic family lounge and the federation offices are in the form of modular accommodation and situated outside the main structure. These are fitted out for the Games but will also go back into the hire market after the event."

Competition floors and scoreboards, to accreditation and catering were tested at the recent London Prepares event

As regards mechanical systems, Wright says there was no need for heating as the venue is designed for the Summer Games. The only cooling kit used at the venue is hired-in plant. "You just pump up the chamber created under the seats and it rolls out through where people sit," Wright says. "These are low-tech handling units that come from the hire market. The lighting system is also hired and both will go back into the market after the Games."

MATERIAL WORLD

The structure won't be leaving a footprint either as Wright says that there is barely anything in the ground that supports the building.

"The whole building is just 90m wide, 30m high and 120m long and sits on 150mm thick pad foundations onto the compacted earth foundations. The foundations are actually smaller than that of your average house," he says.

The only bit of concrete within the structure is the 60m x 30m sports floor base. With dimensions set out for the larger handball court specification, the sports flooring is a Mondo cassette floor, which was laid for the recent London Prepares test events and has now been taken up and stored before the start of next summer's Games.

"The ultimate goal was to achieve a reusable building that can break down into various components and we estimate that about 70 per cent of the building materials used will go back to market," says Wright.

Although the building may contain a simple structure, the outer façade features a signature design that is unique to London 2012.

Wright says that its purpose is to cover the seating bowl and keep everyone dry inside, while offering a broadcast-quality environment. "Broadcasters needed a blackout environment. We wanted to create an envelope to provide a lid to ►

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the bowl while the sides stop the wind load on the seating structure.

"The arena doesn't have a front door that leads into a sealed environment. The cover has a raised skirt, so it's actually open all the way around the ground floor – so the material had to be lightweight, Wright explains.

"On the outside however, there had to be a level of façade enhancement. In order to get the 'wow' factor it couldn't be plain," says Wright. "PVC was a fit for all these requirements. It was plastic enough for us to sculpt, it was lightweight and it can offer a blackout membrane for the lid. It is also an easy material to put up and put down quickly. The outer skin is simply made from 6m strips of PVC, which are stretched over a random array of radial steel arches to create a dramatic, undulating façade.

Regarding cleaning, Wright says that there is a lot of dust in the park while construction is still taking place but once washed down it'll offer a translucent quality which will be enhanced by a lighting scheme, which will be added in the run up to the Games. "The whole building will be backlit and will have a strong narrative – whether it's following the heartbeat of one of the athletes or the flow of the game, or the arena filling up and emptying, it's going to be a real centrepiece in the park," Wright says.

> The key issue with the design of the Basketball Arena structure is that everything that went up would have to come down

ADAPTING CONFIGURATION

During the Olympic Games, there will be just 22 hours to transform the venue from the basketball competition to the handball finals. This will include removing the basketball posts and installing the handball goals and field of play mat.

During the Paralympic Games, there will be just 12 hours to get ready for wheelchair rugby after the wheelchair basketball competition finishes, with similar changes needed. The seating bowl configuration during Olympic mode will offer 1 per cent wheelchair user positions (with companion seats) and this configuration will increase to 2 per cent in Paralympic mode as well as an increase in wheelchair press positions.

During this transformation, Wright says the lower half of the bowl is reconfigured to increase the number of seating positions and additional ramp access from the ground level, which won't change the dynamic shape of the bowl. "The main challenge was 'back of house' and meeting the requirements to accommodate the bigger wheelchair design used for wheelchair rugby and basketball," he says.

So how does the design of the finished product compare with that of a permanent venue? "Reuse is the key point of the whole structure. We've been honest about the materials used, for example the fact that you can see the temporary seating structures in the staircases. We've embraced, rather than shyed away from its design," says Wright.

"We are confident that there will be an afterlife for most of the arena materials," Wright says. "Who knows, we might even see some components at the next Olympic Games!" ●

KEEPING FANS CONNECTED

Stuart Hamilton, senior director, Sports and Entertainment Innovations at Cisco, looks at how technology can help transform the live fan experience

Not so long ago, there was only one way for a sports fan to see their team play; travel to the stadium, buy a ticket and watch the game live. The advent of televised sport changed that but, for many years, watching a sporting event on TV was just what you did if you couldn't be there. After all, nothing could be as good as being there live, could it?

Accelerating innovation

Today, the balance between live and televised sport has shifted. The huge increase in the number of available channels combined with the rise of high definition television (HDTV), surround sound, digital recording devices such as TiVo, video on demand and, most recently, 3D have revolutionised the viewing experience for the average armchair sports fan. In addition, more and more fans are using a second and even a third screen in the form of computers, smartphones and tablets, to complement and participate in the action via social media outlets. This influx of new technology, the so called 'red button effect' is great news for the viewing public but, for sporting organisations, teams and venues, it represents a very real threat to ticket sales, match attendances and associated revenue streams.

This is only natural, after all when fans can watch a game complete with instant replays, in-game statistics, real-time analysis and high definition from the comfort of their sofa – all at a lower cost per game and without the chance of getting rained on – the incentive to travel to the stadium and watch the game in the flesh is diminished. We are already seeing the red button effect impact on international cricket, where in many countries Test match attendances are falling rapidly, despite television audiences remaining high. In addition, with these new TV technologies becoming increasingly common across all sports, it's clear that sports organisations and venues need to step up their game if the live experience is to meet – and surpass – fan expectations and stay ahead of the competition.

Meeting this demand, a new raft of technologies are now available to provide fans in the stadium with more interactive and personalised experiences, allowing sports and entertainment properties to connect with fans in entirely new ways.

Transforming the fan experience

Large video-screens have been present in major sporting venues for a while but now. With a fully IP-based network designed to stream high volumes of media at once, it's possible to make high definition (HD) video available on hundreds and thousands of digital displays throughout the stadium, creating a more immersive experience for all. This means replays or alternate camera angles are no longer confined to big screens or scoreboards but can be shown on TV displays throughout the stands, press area, premium clubs, even in the concourse to entertain fans queuing for refreshments. ►

THE MILLENNIUM STADIUM, CARDIFF

Home of the Wales national rugby union team and the Wales national football team, the operators of Cardiff's Millennium Stadium wanted to deliver an unprecedented sporting experience for fans and visitors.

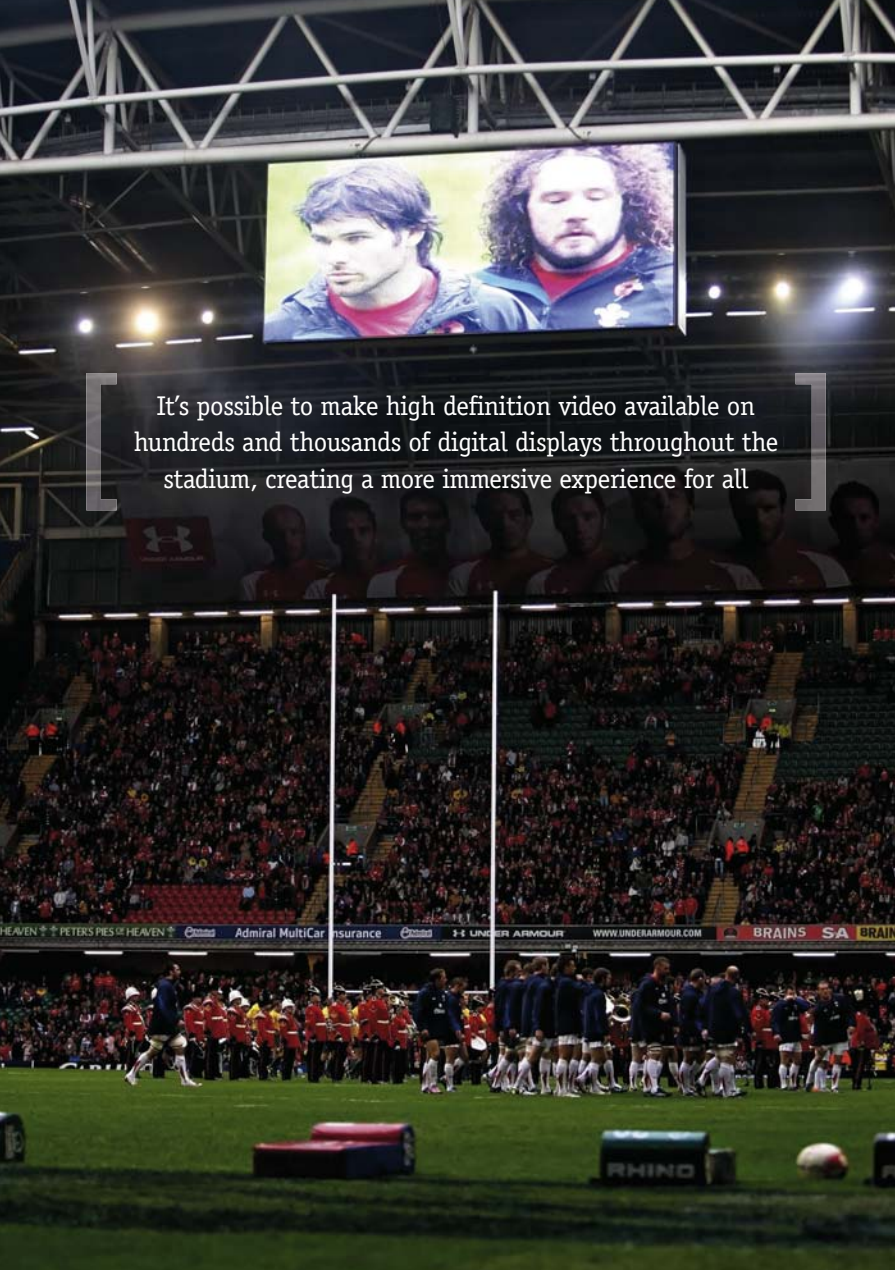
By working with Cisco, the stadium is now able to deliver seven channels of HD video from an expanded channel line of up to 450 displays for more than 74,500 visitors to experience.

The StadiumVision technology allows the stadium to transform from holding rugby or football matches to a concert venue that can host the likes of Take That or U2 as well as opening up new revenue streams through targeted promotions and sponsorship activities.

"Nobody in the elite sport or major event marketplace can afford to allow their supporters to put up with second best in the modern era," says Roger Lewis, group chief executive, Welsh Rugby Union. "We want every single individual who visits the Millennium Stadium to leave armed with special memories of having attended a great event.

> We want every single individual who visits the Millennium Stadium to leave armed with special memories of having attended a great event

"We can now show them images from the action they have just seen and live images of what is happening behind the scenes before, during and after the big events. This enriches their experience of being in the stadium and takes our visitors even closer to the action."



It's possible to make high definition video available on hundreds and thousands of digital displays throughout the stadium, creating a more immersive experience for all

EDEN PARK, AUCKLAND

Eden Park is the biggest sports ground in Auckland, New Zealand and is used for both the rugby union and rugby league national teams during winter and the New Zealand cricket team in the summer.

Cisco's StadiumVision solution was deployed within the stadium to deliver extended experiences for stadium visitors and also future proofed the venue's technology infrastructure so it can continue to provide a great fan experience for years to come.

The technology has allowed Eden Park Stadium to deliver fan content everywhere around the stadium so spectators can follow the action even while they're out of their seats, as well as generating new forms of revenue through advanced advertising and sponsor messages.

David Kennedy, Eden Park Trust's CEO says: "Creative and innovative use of technology is vital for us to be competitive and adapt to the demands of the tech-savvy spectator who expects a media enriched experience that gets them up close to the action."

Eden Park Stadium in Auckland, New Zealand was a main venue for the 2011 Rugby World Cup

> Creative and innovative use of technology is vital for us to be competitive

Cisco StadiumVision enables sports and entertainment properties to manage video and digital content delivery to all TVs throughout the stadium or arena. Video displays at concession stands can be used to show live action from the game as well as dynamic digital menus, allowing venues to offer customised menus and pricing according to the event and audience. For instance, child-friendly menus for kids' days or more sophisticated offerings for evening games or concerts. This can be particularly useful for football stadiums, where rules on selling alcohol during the game can differ depending on the competition. Prices can even be adjusted during the event to help sell off excess stock towards the end of the day.

The displays can also be used to show live feeds from other games, so fans can keep an eye on their team's rivals during the game, and be used to entice fans to spend more time in the stadium before and after games.

Driving revenue growth

Such high levels of configurability within the network allow venues to take in-stadium advertising and sponsorship to the next level. Live video streams can be complemented with targeted advertisements, including offers for upcoming events, special promotions or in-game offers, specifically tailored to the area of the stadium, the time of day or even key moments in the game. For instance, venues can display different adverts in the premium sections of the stadium to the standard seating, or introduce new adverts depending on the half-time score. At the click of a mouse, the stadium or arena can be customised to meet the unique needs of a concert and other unique events.

Premium clubs or suites can be provided with configurable video services, allowing spectators to produce their own unique match-day experience complete with custom video highlights, real-time statistics and video feeds from other events. These can also be adapted to allow fans to order refreshments, merchandise or even personal concierge services without leaving their seats. These opportunities offer significant ways to increase revenue.

It even goes beyond revenue, as digital signage allows venue staff to guide fans out of the stadium in a way that reduces congestion and provides fans with the latest traffic or public transport information. A fully integrated, flexible IP-network also powers video surveillance for the whole stadium and helps communicate key messages to the public, employees and security, allowing the entire venue to be managed centrally to aid crowd management and ensure safety issues can be identified and dealt with before they even arise.

Enhanced Wi-Fi solutions

It can be frustrating for fans to have low levels of connectivity within a stadium, but thanks to the latest in-stadium technology, the game is changing. Fans will be able to connect to their favourite teams via their mobile devices while in the stadium, much in the same manner as they are away from the event. Through a fast, scalable and secure wired wireless network, customised for high density environments, the experience of attending a live sporting event becomes as engaging as being at home.

Building for the future

Organisations are facing ever more competition for the public's attention from the 'red button effect'. However, the industry is embracing this challenge. The technological advances discussed above, powered by a connected stadium platform, are already a reality in many international venues and could be coming to a venue near you. By tipping the balance back to the live in-game experience, the future is bright for venues around the world. ●

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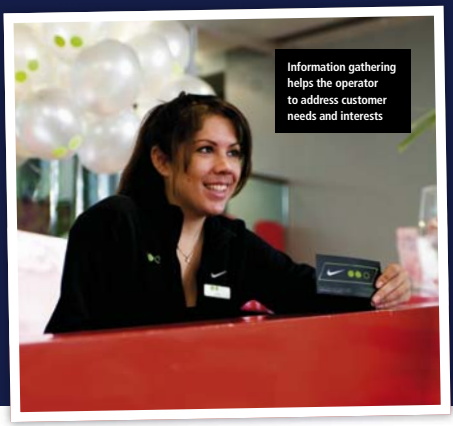

Information gathering helps the operator to address customer needs and interests

IMPROVING CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS IN SPORT

We ask four experts how CRM can aid retention and encourage long-term loyalty in the sport and active leisure sectors

TOM WITHERS HEAD OF SALES AND BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT, GLADSTONE HEALTH AND LEISURE

CRM software is growing rapidly smarter. The leisure industry is driving its evolution in an effort to better communicate with members and prospects by addressing their specific needs and interests – making their experience feel personal and relevant.

Most leisure management software captures a wealth of data – including demographics, usage, visit profiles and customer spend, but good software can enable leisure operators to make the correct choices in how they segment this data and ultimately speak to individuals.

At Gladstone we have launched Contact Manager, a clever software bolt-on for our core Plus2 product that enables operators to maximise the efficiency and effectiveness of any customer-focused strategy. It works with the captured client preferences, processing personal information and automating time-based actions, which can be used to support the management of sales leads, the roll-out of marketing campaigns, for tracking customer service communication and to aid management reporting.

The system is designed to improve customer relationships, increase loyalty, identify customers that should be given a higher level of service and decrease customer turnover. It can encourage repeat purchases, decrease marketing costs and increase sales revenue profit margins.

In a world of diverse communication, where customers choose how we talk to them and what information they want to receive, listening and responding to those preferences is more important than ever.

DARREN BOXALL MD, XN LEISURE

Xn Leisure is engaged in a programme of continuous strategic investment in people, systems and processes that specifically meet the needs of the leisure industry, of which self-service elements and online functionality are viewed as the next progressive step for the sector.

Our partnership approach allows us to work with a carefully selected choice of hardware and technology providers. For example, we've teamed up with Protouch, one of the UK's leading suppliers of touch screen and kiosk systems, to provide efficient solutions for payment, ordering, product look-up and ticket printing services which utilise chip and pin, RFID, keyboard, Bluetooth, web cameras, printers, scanners and WiFi.

> Self service elements and online functionality are the sector's next progressive step

Our recent partnership with Fife Sports and Leisure Trust is a good example of our customer-centric approach. An initial consultation allowed us to understand the specific challenges faced by the trust and this highlighted the fact that the busiest part of its operation was the reception – the first point of contact for information, bookings, payment and interaction with the customers.

Through our collaboration with Protouch, we developed a turnkey self-service kiosk – or virtual receptionist solution – to automate the processes via an easy-to-navigate interface to make the reception processes faster and more efficient.

This has allowed the trust to provide a wider range of services, reduce costs and, at the same time, empower the reception staff to offer a more effective standard of primary customer service.

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Striking new kiosk designs adds to the improved customer experience

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PETER STEDIFORD, CLIENT MANAGER, GREEN 4 SOLUTIONS

CRM systems are seen as essential in helping to recruit and retain existing customers and encourage new supporters. By understanding the customer more intimately and establishing a regular channel of communication, organisations are taking a proactive role in marketing their clubs and events.

In theory, the online ticketing system should be a perfect bedfellow for the CRM database but the design of many ticketing systems has made it difficult for them to embrace the internet (and capture customer data) and the 'per ticket' charge has acted as a barrier for many customers to purchase online, thus artificially reducing the number of customers who were willing and able to provide their contact details.

The centralisation of transactional data from ticketing, access control and merchandising systems into one database allows organisations to gain valuable insight into their data through enhanced business intelligence, segmentation and analysis. The core platform delivers dynamic marketing functionality to enable comprehensive customer profiling and provide email and text marketing channels to ensure communication with customers and members at all stages of their relationship.

Green 4 Solutions delivers a CRM-driven ticketing system, built within the Microsoft Dynamics CRM platform.

Centralised CRM can help clubs to develop their relationships through membership and loyalty

The solution – in place at a wide range of rugby union, football, rugby league, racecourses, ski centres, bowling centres and arenas – can be tailored to suit any booking process and is available online, at point of sale, in a call centre or through a kiosk. Not only does this remove the need for complex integration between different systems, but having powerful CRM and eCommunications features means that profiles of customers are constantly enriched with their interactions with the business and messages can be targeted and relevant to each individual and delivered using the eCommunication tool.

These may be in the form of automated order acknowledgements, pre-event checklists or travel information, which provides a perfect up-sell opportunities. Post-event surveys, thank you emails and targeted follow-up offers can be an automated part of the booking process.

Centralised CRM can help clubs to develop their relationships through the introduction of membership and loyalty. The aggregation of transactional activity enables analysis to take place of supporters' interactions with the club, be it through ticket sales, retail purchases or membership.

Customer profiles are enriched with transaction information at many sports clubs

CRM can help target the right products and services to the right customer

STUART DALRYMPLE FOUNDER AND MD, GOODFORM

During the past decade we've seen the sports industry's approach to its customer relationships shift significantly and CRM has become an increasingly important strategic tool.

Although still slightly behind other industries, sports organisations are rapidly recognising the value of cultivating strong customer relationships to aid retention and loyalty for long-term commercial gains. We've seen this first-hand at our annual Sports CRM Summit, which is a platform for the sports industry to explore the latest developments in CRM. Each year the event has grown and continues to attract more delegates from across Europe who are keen to progress their knowledge of CRM and its application in their business.

From working with our clients on a tactical basis we've witnessed first-hand the commercial gains that can be achieved when sports organisations adopt a customer-centric approach and our work as CRM Agency for Queens Park Rangers FC is a prime example.

We were appointed as CRM agency for the club in 2009 as they were seeking to communicate more effectively with their fan base, develop their business processes and increase revenues via a new CRM strategy. At the time the club had 'a scattergun approach' to marketing, disparate systems and data, no CRM system, no customer history and no single customer view. Our brief was to consolidate the disparate data, create a single customer view and manage this data on an ongoing basis and use it to power targeted, personalised sales and marketing campaigns.

Sports organisations are rapidly recognising the value of cultivating customer relationships

Our in-house CRM system hosts a single customer view of 240,000 records with regular feeds from eight systems across the club. We've segmented and profiled this data to produce nine customer types and produced individual marketing plans for each type based on their preferences. Using this approach we've been able to identify the club's most loyal and profitable customers as well as targeting the right products and messages at the right customers to give our clients an excellent return on investment on their marketing spend.

Spend per head increased by 326 per cent in the 2010/2011 season, our personalised e-marketing campaigns regularly achieve incredible open rates of more than 40 per cent and we've tracked direct incremental revenue generation of approximately £10,000 per month through our campaigns.

ALL CHANGE FOR COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE

DAVID CARPENTER OF TRIOPLUS LOOKS AT SOME OF THE FACILITY ISSUES AS COMMUNITY RUGBY LEAGUE PREPARES TO BECOME A SUMMER SPORT FROM 2012

March 2011 was a momentous month for rugby league at community level as the sport elected to depart from its traditional winter home and, from 2012, become a summer sport. The season will run from the end of March until Play-Off Finals in early November, and will also see the launch of a new enhanced and integrated league structure encompassing the whole sport.

Super League remains at Tier One, the pinnacle of the British game. Tier Two encompasses the Championship. Tiers Three [National Conference Leagues] and Four [Regional Leagues] represent the community game.

SUMMER SWITCH

The community move to summer was not without contention but more than 70 per cent voted in favour and now the sport is well into preparation for what is being termed 'the summer switch' .

Rugby Football League [RFL] director of participation and strategic partnerships, David Gent, is confident of the positive benefits the new arrangements will bring: "The summer switch will bring better conditions for rugby league: Bbtter weather and pitches will mean less cancellations; firmer pitches suited to the modern, faster game; drier conditions for better handling and passing in a more expansive game; and lighter nights for training and development of skills.

Clubs will also benefit from the integrated structure and will be able to arrange social and other events around guaranteed match day opportunities, without the threat of cancellation," he says.

Although the community move is driven by increasing participation and improved matchplay opportunities, facility improvement is high on the RFL agenda and the governing body has been very proactive in advance of the switch.

FACILITY STRATEGY

In late 2010, the RFL commissioned TrioPlus to research and develop a new facilities strategy to address the summer switch and look at facility needs for the next 10-year period.

More than 100 of the 437 community clubs were researched in detail, including more than 60 club visits alongside detailed interviews with key individuals and research of potential development sites that included schools, parks and universities. The RFL adopted the draft report in spring 2011 and has been very positive in implementing the recommendations.

The strategy raised several significant issues but the poor quality of natural turf playing surfaces was dominant, particularly in the traditional playing areas of Yorkshire, the North West and Cumbria.

An irony is that rugby league played in non-traditional areas is generally played on better surfaces, albeit largely on short-term hired facilities from rugby union clubs and other natural turf providers.

KEY FOCUS AREAS

Security of tenure: A perennial issue with voluntary sports clubs that merits a feature in itself. Asset Transfer is also relevant here as most sports clubs are simply not positioned to understand and take advantage of the potential opportunities and understand the negatives.

Improved club management: Understanding and interpreting lifestyle trends;

ARTIFICIAL TURF DEVELOPMENTS

The RFL is part of the Playing Surface Group established by the major national governing bodies of sport.
The RFL has recently adopted policy whereby rugby league can be played on artificial surfaces as follows:

- **65mm long pile with shock pad [IRB22]**
  Training and competition, all levels of the game
- **55-60mm long pile [FIFA One Star]**
  Training and competition, all levels of the game
- **40mm short pile [FIFA One Star]**
  Recreation and training only, but not full contact version of game

Further ongoing research is being commissioned by the RFL

The poor quality of some playing surfaces was raised in the facilities strategy

Better weather and lighter evenings will offer improved conditions during the summer switch

changes to licensing and smoking laws; competing leisure opportunities; changes in immediate community demographics. All have contributed to a changed environment for club managers and some have struggled to cope.

Changing facilities: These are generally poor. Funding is not available for total renewal but a lot could be done through, for example, Sport England's 'Inspired Facilities' programme to make simple improvements to club facilities that would improve comfort.

Access to other facilities for training and development: This relates to a drive to move away from intensive training on club pitches, often under a single floodlight – moving towards the use of parks and other alternative training facilities – including artificial surfaces.

It was however, **poor natural playing surfaces** that dominated. The strategy identified a potential scenario whereby poor winter surfaces are overplayed, often devoid of grass, rutted and subject to waterlogging and become equally poor summer surfaces that are bone hard. More worryingly, playing surfaces have generally been getting very little in the way of regular maintenance. Too often the comment was: "The grass rarely gets cut [if there is any], it is occasionally spiked and seed thrown down once a year."

A SUSTAINED PROGRAMME OVER A 10-YEAR PERIOD WILL BE REQUIRED TO IMPROVE, MAINTAIN AND SUSTAIN PLAYING SURFACES

ADDRESSING THE SITUATION

The RFL has acted promptly to address the situation. Under the guise of its recently established Playing Surfaces Group, which also draws on the external expertise of the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) and the England and Wales Cricket Board, advice to clubs has improved dramatically.

RFL facilities manager Carol Doran has lead the development of performance quality specifications for both natural turf and artificial surfaces.

Advice has been issued to clubs on the switch to summer rugby league. More than 60 community clubs have had an expert-led pitch remediation survey, resulting in the RFL potentially supporting a £5,000 improvement package by professionals at each club.

Gent says: "The site assessments have now been completed and we are ready to announce the autumn remediation programme."

In addition, more than 25 National Conference League clubs at Tier Three have recently attended grounds maintenance courses organised by the RFL and the IOG. All community clubs will get the opportunity to undertake the course.

Ian Lacy, head of professional services at the IOG says: "The two inaugural courses were a great success. It was a real eye-opener for some of the attendees who had not previously had any grounds care training. We were also able to discuss potential help to clubs through central buying of items such as seed and sand, and how essential machinery might be pooled and shared."

Gent is optimistic about the future. "We've acknowledged the issues but know that a sustained programme over a 10-year period will be required to improve, maintain and sustain the playing surfaces. The summer switch will be the first test." ●

NATIONAL SPORTS CENTRES

Crucial to our medal haul at every Olympics, two of the UK's National Sports Centres have a new contractor in place. Will this boost our chances at the London Games? Kath Hudson reports

Apart from the English Institute of Sport Sheffield, three of the UK's four National Sports Centres (NSC) – Bisham Abbey, Lilleshall and Plas Y Brenin – were gifted to Sport England in the 90s and are now owned by the Sports Council Trust Company.

The high-performance facilities within these NSCs are a vital resource for Team GB: at the Beijing 2008 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Bisham Abbey athletes won seven medals and Lilleshall athletes achieved five.

Elite and aspiring athletes use the training and rehabilitation facilities within these centres; elite athletes can rub shoulders with local and regional users coming up through the ranks, or groups visiting for weekend and holiday camps. The centres are also home to a number of national governing bodies of sport (NGBs).

However, in the lead up to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games the NSCs have been getting a shake up. Serco has taken over the contracts to run both Bisham Abbey and Lilleshall, while the Mountain Training Trust has fought off tough competition to retain the Plas Y Brenin contract.

"If you're looking to manage sports facilities, the National Sports Centres are the top of the tree," says Serco director of leisure Ian Phelps. "We feel privileged to win the contracts in a very tough and challenging selection process and we aim to exceed the expectations of Sport England and the NGBs who use our services."

Exemplar facilities

Twelve contract contenders were originally in the frame and Sport England had

Members of the TeamGB gymnastic squad use the high performance gymnastics facilities at Lilleshall National Sports Centre

Elite athletes are put through their paces by expert coaches from the English Institute of Sport in the newly-installed performance gym at Bisham

WE WANT TO BE PROVIDING EXEMPLAR FACILITIES, WHICH PEOPLE WILL COME AND LOOK AT FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD; PROVIDING AN EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF HOW SPORT SHOULD BE DELIVERED WITH AN NGB

high aspirations. "As the last contract came to an end, we had the opportunity to refresh where we were with the NSCs and make sure they were realising their potential," says Kevin Mills, who's in charge of strategic lead projects and facilities at Sport England.

"We felt some of the provision wasn't at the level we thought it could be. So, when drawing together the new contract and looking for a partner, we wanted to raise the bar in what we could deliver. Our aim was to provide exemplar facilities, which people will come and look at from all over the world; providing an excellent example of how sport should be delivered with an NGB."

A strategic review, completed in August 2009, cited four main aims for the centres: research; talent development; working with NGBs; and cost effective delivery.

Although cost effectiveness was cited as an aim, the board made it clear that sport comes first. However, this means that now more commercial activity, such as conferences and weddings, will have a higher profile within the centres.

Bisham is also base for the WIN Tennis Academy

"The response from the market in terms of the amount of interest and ideas which were put forward was really competitive and interesting," says Mills. "But what I felt Serco did was grasp what we were trying to achieve – that the centres were very special and needed something inspirational in terms of delivery.

"We were particularly impressed with the level of thought Serco put into how to meet the strategic objectives. The operator put effort and resource into engaging with stakeholders, such as the NGBs and UK Sport, to understand the customers and to deliver what was needed. Serco have also linked with local authorities to see how it can encourage community use," says Mills.

According to Phelps, these are complex sites to run, with the right balance needing to be struck between all the different user groups. "The challenge is to satisfy the elite athletes and the national squads, as well as developing the legacy to increase mass participation," he says. "Due to the national status, the centres attract groups from all over the country for sports camps. Another challenge is to balance sport and commercial opportunities that could help offset the running costs."

Positive approach

Serco took over the 15-year contracts for the two centres in April this year, and already Sport England has been impressed with the proactive approach.

More resources have been pumped into sports development and NGB engagement, sports development officers have been appointed and Serco has started working on development programmes

More than 30 NGBs make regular use of Lilleshall National Sports Centre while some, such as Archery GB, have chosen the centre for their HQ

THERE IS NOW A REAL FOCUS ON WORKING WITH THE NGBS AND MAKING SURE THAT SERVICE QUALITY IS CONTINUALLY AT A HIGH LEVEL

with the resident NGBs – including hockey, gymnastics and archery.

Head of the NSCs Zoe Dixon, who deals with Serco on a day to day basis, says: "There's now a real focus on working with the NGBs and making sure that the service quality is continually at a high level. When we started the new contract, my team had meetings with Serco to talk about how we could develop a positive relationship and how we would work together to ensure the national centres were as good as they could be. It's proved to be a very positive arrangement and we're getting more done by working like this. The contract commits Serco to deliver and things do occasionally go wrong, but there's a real willingness to put things right and improve."

Upgraded facilities

Prior to the contract change, Sport England had funded facility investments that include an indoor archery range at Lilleshall and a hockey pitch at Bisham.

Elite training facilities have also been added – including a specialist performance gym and an indoor training track, together with a medical/rehab hub, manned by four doctors, 12 physiotherapists and two massage therapists. A hydrotherapy pool has also been brought over from the original British Olympic Association medical centre at Norfolk Park.

Further investment is planned, which will include improvements to the accommodation block, pavilions, a sports hall at Lilleshall and investment in football pitches at Bisham. However, this will be delayed until after the 2012 Olympics, so as not to compromise the training facilities in the run-up.

SPORT ENGLAND SEMINARS

Sport England used the experience of the NSC procurement process to run a series of seminars, which looked at operational efficiency, facility rationalisation and leisure management contracts and procurement. Alternatives to service reduction and closure of leisure facilities as a response to financial pressures was discussed and the options to achieve a 30 per cent reduction in revenue and capital costs outlined. Information can be obtained at www.sportengland.org

Mountain training

Regarding Plas Y Brenin, this centre is already regarded as being at the forefront of the mountaineering sport, which is largely thanks to the efforts of its contractor, the Mountain Training Trust.

"We put pressure on the trust to maintain and enhance that reputation, while reducing costs, and they responded positively – the management team are good at making the most of their resources," says Mills. Adding that there's no need for facility investment but the trust will continue to invest into sports provision and coaching.

Meanwhile, the centre's been identified as the mountain biking training centre for the Olympic Games and a new mountain bike skills course has been completed.

"We're supporting the centres as much as possible to increase our medal haul next year," says Mills.

Kath Hudson is a freelance journalist

Bisham Abbey

Mentioned in the Doomsday Book, this 800-year-old Abbey, based in Marlow, was once home to English nobility. Now it's a prestigious training venue for more than 20 sports and home to the south east region of the English Institute of Sport, England Hockey and the WIN Tennis Academy. It's a training base for the rowing and canoeing NGBs, and England Football and Rugby Associations (among others). The centre has 52 bedrooms and a sports science medicine facility, including Europe's biggest non-military environmental chamber.

Lilleshall

Lilleshall Hall, in Shropshire, was built in 1831 as the hunting lodge and family retreat of the Duke of Sutherland. Now a centre of sporting excellence it's home to British Gymnastics and the Grand National Archery society. As well as extensive sports facilities, including 35 acres of grass pitches, it offers accommodation for 187 people, a lecture theatre and 14 seminar/meeting rooms.

Plas Y Brenin

Situated in Snowdonia National Park, North Wales, the original core of the-building was a Grade II listed hotel. Today, the facility offers a year-round programme of mountain sports courses, including rock climbing, mountaineering, scrambling, hillwalking, orienteering, mountain biking, (dry slope) skiing, kayaking and canoeing. A day visitor programme of activities, qualification courses, first aid, mountain rescue and alpine climbing is also on offer.

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RESURFACING SYNTHETIC SPORTS TURF

If your synthetic turf pitch has reached the end of its lifespan, resurfacing could be an option. SAPCA's new training and technical manager, Marie Cooksey, advises on what considerations should be taken into account

By resurfacing a synthetic sports turf pitch, interest can be renewed – bringing increased revenue into the facility

Why should pitch resurfacing be considered?

The most common reason for the replacement of an existing facility is due to the playing surface no longer providing the standard of play required. The synthetic turf pitch may have exceeded its lifespan, leading to potential health and safety concerns for users, with maintenance no longer able to repair or rejuvenate the surface to the required performance standard.

How do I identify whether a surface needs replacing?

The age of the synthetic pitch is the first indication. A surface will last an average of 10 years – depending on the amount of usage, the quality of the product and its installation, and the level of ongoing maintenance. Other signs to look out for are excessive wear and tear of the surface, such as gaps beginning to appear – i.e. the separation of the synthetic turf at the seams where it is joined together. However, each pitch is unique in its design, installation, usage and maintenance regime so it's important to seek expert advice.

Where can I seek expert advice?

Specialist contractors from the Sport and Play Construction Association's (SAPCA) Pitch Division and/or independent consultants from the Professional Services Group can provide the necessary expertise and experience. The SAPCA member companies can be identified using the searchable database at www.sapca.org.uk.

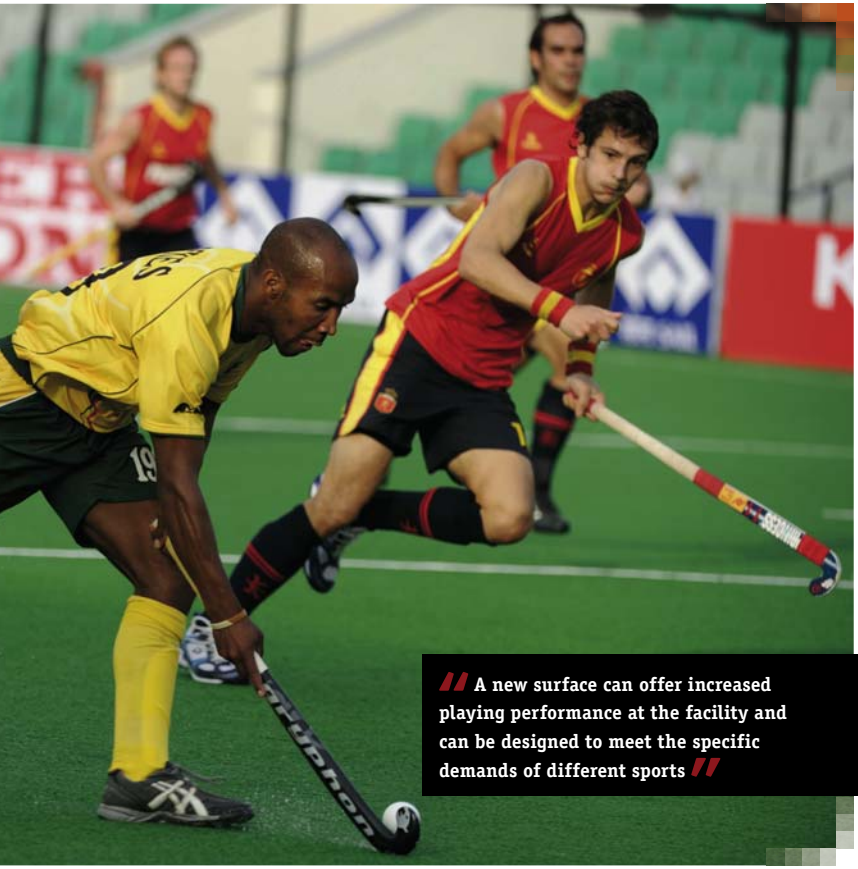
What is the process of deciding on the correct surface?

It's often assumed that pitch replacements will be quoted on the premise of like-for-like. However, different sports require different playing characteristics and the respective governing bodies (NGBs) stipulate precise requirements. It may be that the sport to be given priority on the resurfaced pitch is different from the original pitch, or that the requirements outlined by the NGBs have been amended since the original pitch was constructed. You should also refer to the Sport England document on Selecting the Right Artificial Surface via www.sportengland.org. The questions you need to consider include:

- How many hours of daily play do you require?
- What sports do you wish to play on the surface?
- What standard of play is required?

What are the benefits of pitch resurfacing?

The technology within synthetic turf systems is constantly evolving and will have advanced significantly since the first pitch installation. Improvements in the durability of yarns and fibres during the manufacturing process can increase a surface's life expectancy. A new pitch surface can offer increased



> A new surface can offer increased playing performance at the facility and can be designed to meet the specific demands of different sports

playing performance at the facility and can be designed to meet the specific demands of different sports.

What design considerations need to be taken into account?

In the absence of a copy of the original design and specification, it's essential that a comprehensive investigation be carried out to establish the basis of the original design, and its relevance to the new design being proposed. A condition survey of the existing pitch can also determine the following key points:

Drainage – existing system checks to ensure the drains are working satisfactorily by rodding or carrying out a standard drain test. Resurfacing may provide an opportunity to install new drainage where the current design is inadequate.

Sub-base – ensure an adequate thickness of sub-base material underneath the synthetic turf system and that the material has not become contaminated in any way.

Perimeter edging – this edging retains the pitch construction and should be checked for line and level as well as structural integrity. If the existing edging is to remain in position it must be suitable for the finished level of the new surface.

Shockpad – if the existing pitch was constructed using a shockpad as a resilient layer to provide player comfort and to comply with performance criteria, this should be checked to ensure that it will perform satisfactorily in the new design.

Are there any other refurbishment options?

As part of the facility's condition survey and upgrade programme, the pitch surround fencing and the floodlight system ►

can also be inspected to determine whether any repairs or even replacements need to be made.

What are the cost implications?

To maximise the return on current facilities and make budgets stretch further, pitch resurfacing could be a preferred choice for facility owners and operators who are faced with reductions in public spending and ongoing rises in overheads. By replacing your pitch, interest within the facility can be renewed – bringing an increased revenue stream through increased usage of the pitch.

How long will a resurfacing project take?

The project duration for the replacement of a synthetic turf pitch surface can range from three to five weeks – depending on the actual specification and level of replacement. This time will increase if the surface shockpad or other refurbishment upgrades are required.

> **"It's essential that maintenance is undertaken regularly to ensure optimum playing performance, pitch longevity, safety and appearance"**

How do you ensure a newly resurfaced pitch lasts another lifespan?

The life expectancy of the surface will depend on the maintenance and how intensively it is played on. It is essential that maintenance is undertaken regularly to ensure optimum playing performance, pitch longevity, safety and appearance. The pitch contractor will always provide specific maintenance instructions. Further guidelines, which could help to maximise the surface's lifespan can be found in the SAPCA Code of Practice for The Maintenance of Synthetic Surfaces via www.sapca.org.uk.

CASE STUDY

ALDENHAM SCHOOL

Following advice from a specialist synthetic surface maintenance company and a subsequent pitch inspection, Aldenham School in Hertfordshire decided to replace its existing sand-filled synthetic sports turf surface.

The original surface had become slippery where the sand in-fill was contaminated and it was starting to hold water. Joints in the existing surface also required repairs and the surface pile height had deteriorated greatly in recent years.

After visiting various reference sites, the school chose the International Hockey Federation-accredited TigerTurf Evolution surface, which it had observed at Imperial College's Harlington sports ground. The surface was chosen on the basis of being excellent for hockey, useable for tennis and five-a-side football and extremely hard-wearing and long-lasting.

Once McArdle Sport-Tec had removed the existing surface, the company checked the levels and the integrity of the underlying shockpad and found this still within guidelines set out by SAPCA and Sport England, before installing the new surface.

The project was carried out to a tight programme during the school's Easter holiday and was completed ahead of schedule – allowing the school to use the pitch when the children returned for the summer term.

The 3G surface had to perform well for both football and hockey use at the facility

LANCASHIRE FA

Lancashire FA's sand-filled synthetic grass pitch at its county ground had performed well since it was originally constructed by Thornton Sports in 1997. However, after 14 years of continuous use, the full-size pitch was showing signs of wear and tear and no longer provided the standard of playing surface required.

The Lancashire FA was looking for a 3G surface that would perform well for their coach education and referee courses, while being suitable for use by local hockey clubs.

Thornton Sports' UK manufactured SoccerTurf 40M surface met both these requirements; approved by the International Artificial Turf Standard (IATS) for football use and the International Hockey Federation (FIH) for local and regional league competitions.

The re-surfacing process involved removing the existing surface and disposing of it in a safe and sustainable manner. The existing shock-pad was then inspected, and necessary repairs were carried out before the new synthetic surface was laid. Finally, a sand and rubber infill was applied which, in this case, was automated by a specialist Sandmatic machine to ensure a consistent infill level.

The pitch re-construction works and the building of a new five-a-side facility, were completed in just five weeks.

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LIGHTING MAINTENANCE

Rob Eadson, maintenance manager at Abacus Lighting, explains why effective, regular maintenance is essential to ensure the long-term viability and sustainability of all sports lighting systems

With rising costs and everyone feeling the pinch, your lighting installation may be an easy target for cutbacks. However, this could be an expensive mistake, which can lead to the need for bigger capital investment further down the line.

COST-EFFICIENCY

Keeping high-value equipment in continual operation is key to maximising investment – whether it's generating stadium income by enabling HDTV broadcasting or keeping sports enthusiasts happy at a local community sports centre.

Just one faulty lamp can cause major problems for an entire venue or event, whether it's an insufficiently lit sports field or a world-class stadium. Downtime costs heavily, as does replacing faulty equipment that's been neglected or incorrectly used – a costly mistake that can easily be avoided when you consider that maintenance packages can cost as little as £2 a day.

PERFORMANCE

Regular maintenance of sports equipment can improve the performance of a sports lighting scheme and ensure it continues working at optimum levels throughout its planned lifetime.

For larger facilities, maintaining the correct lighting levels is important to ensure the scheme continues to have adequate requirements for both the sport and any planned broadcast. As any photographer or TV crew will testify, you can have the best camera in the world but if the light fails, so will the picture. These lighting levels can change over time so a service plan is vital.

However, it's not just high exposure venues where lighting performance is critical. Even at grassroots facilities,

TRENT BRIDGE CRICKET GROUND, NOTTINGHAM

CASE STUDY

Trent Bridge Cricket ground hosted the 2011 World Twenty20 Cricket Championship

When Trent Bridge Cricket Ground chose Abacus to manufacture and install six new floodlight masts as part of an £8.2m re-development project, the club also signed up for a comprehensive 10 year maintenance plan.

The 40m-high fixed masts carry a total of 360 floodlights and the maintenance plan includes annual cleaning, bi-annual illuminance testing and bulk lamp replacement after 2,500 hours of use. Routine maintenance includes cleaning, spot replacement of failed lamps and checking for floodlight alignment. Further periodic maintenance includes bulk lamp replacement, non-destructive testing of the foundation bolts, mast inspection and NIC EIC electrical certification.

To facilitate maintenance, the masts were designed to incorporate a 'man rider' system, which allows operatives to safely access the floodlights. This system removes the need for ladders, offering a less visually obtrusive solution. This method of access fully complies with the latest working at height regulations and allows engineers to take tools and spare lamps up the masts in safety.

The floodlighting scheme had to be designed to accommodate 20Twenty, Pro40 and day/night One Day International cricket matches without the need to hire expensive, temporary floodlighting equipment. Designed to meet English Cricket Board and International Cricket Council One Day International standards, the scheme was instrumental in helping the ground win the honour of hosting the World Twenty20 Cricket Championships in 2009. This was a major coup for the ground, which saw off competition from a number of clubs across the country and brought millions of pounds of extra revenue to businesses across the Nottinghamshire county.

Based-hinged masts can be lowered to ensure maintenance can be carried out safely

> AN INVESTMENT TO ENSURE A LIGHTING SCHEME IS SAFE, COST-EFFECTIVE AND RELIABLE WILL PAY OFF IN THE LONG RUN BY MAKING A FACILITY ACCESSIBLE AND ATTRACTIVE

Lighting levels at a sports facility can be boosted significantly by ensuring that the front glass of the lamp is cleaned regularly

sports lighting levels are designed to achieve a maintained level of light below which it should not fall. This level can only be achieved by carrying out regular cleaning of the floodlight glass.

Lighting Guide 4: Sports Lighting published by the Society of Light and Lighting (part of CIBSE – the Chartered Institute of Building and Service Engineers) indicates that between 10 per cent and 17 per cent of the light output of a floodlight is lost through dirt depreciation over a three-year period without cleaning – dependent on the site location. So a facility's lighting levels can be boosted simply by having the front glasses cleaned regularly.

To protect a lighting investment in the long term and to ensure a sports facility is fully compliant with electrical and mechanical regulations and guidelines, ongoing maintenance of exterior lighting is vital. It's important to prove that the facility is certified National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Consulting (NICEIC) compliant and there is also an obligation, by law, to undertake adequate precautions against the risk of death or personal injury from electricity. Since the introduction of the Health and Safety Offences Act in 2009, it has become essential to follow good practice and maintain high standards, not only to protect a facility's workforce and the general public, but to avoid serious legal ramifications.

MASTS AND COLUMNS

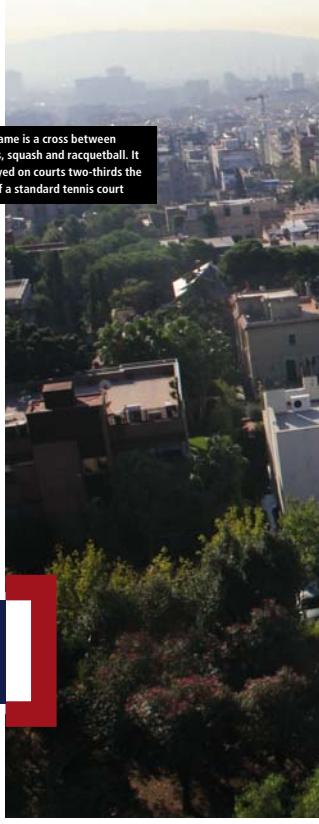
It's not just the floodlights which need regular attention in order to ensure the safety and longevity of a lighting project. Lighting masts, fixed or hinged, are designed in compliance with the ILE Technical Report No. 7 (Institution of Lighting Engineers). Similarly, this design standard, which is recognised and accepted worldwide, stipulates a maintenance and inspection regime, which ensures that masts or poles remain safe. In accordance to this it is vital to ensure a maintenance regime involves the inspection of foundation bolts, security of floodlight brackets plus a range of other checks. You need to be mindful of the number of people standing or sitting under lighting masts every time the facility is open to spectators.

Recent developments in mast technology, including telescopic solutions, make on-going maintenance and inspections even more vital to ensure that the initial investment is fulfilling its potential.

Abacus has developed a range of raising and lowering masts to ensure maintenance can be carried out safely. We also provide counterbalance training to enable any lamp replacement or cleaning to be carried out by the facility staff.

A little investment to ensure a lighting scheme is safe, cost-effective and reliable will pay off in the long run by making a facility accessible and attractive to both users and spectators. ●

The game is a cross between tennis, squash and racquetball. It is played on courts two-thirds the size of a standard tennis court



INTRODUCING PADEL

Trevor Baxter looks at the racquet sport that's taken the Spanish-speaking world by storm and asks whether the UK is ready to follow suit?

Huddersfield is synonymous with former Prime Minister Harold Wilson, Hollywood actor James Mason and as the birthplace of rugby league. But this West Yorkshire town, whose growth and subsequent decline centred on the textile industry, is also now home to one of the fastest growing sports in the Spanish-speaking world.

Padel is the newest-born sibling of the racquet family – a cross fertilisation of tennis, squash and racketball.

Currently, there are just four padel courts in Britain; two located at the Huddersfield Lawn Tennis and Squash Club. Rye in Sussex and the Harbour Club in Chelsea, south west London are the other venues.

When you consider there are 12 million padel players worldwide, including six million registered in Spain, there is considerable room for its expansion into the UK.

Spain is also home to Tony Lee, president of the UK Padel Federation (UKPF). Registered in Yorkshire and recognised by the International Padel Federation (IPF) its international influence has grown steadily in the past 18 months.

Padel England, an alternative governing body, has offices in London and Kent. Both have designs on obtaining funding from Sport England to help the sport flourish.

"It took 30 years for the sport to develop in Spain, so it's early days for the UK," says Lee. "The sport needs to be played by a sufficient number of players or have a minimum number of facilities before Sport England will grant recognition."

WHAT IS IT?

Lesson one – don't add tennis to the title. It may resemble an abridged version of the sport, but it's not padel tennis, it's padel – a game originating in Mexico, circa 1970, and now the most participated in sport in Argentina.

According to padel coach Toni Salord Monserrat, it started with a wealthy Mexican man who had a tennis court in his back garden. "He became bored by having to pick up all the balls. So, he decided to build a wall to prevent that happening and Padel was born," he says.

WHAT'S NEEDED TO PLAY IT?

Over time, padel courts have become standardised. They are roughly two thirds the size of a traditional tennis court; 20m long by 10m wide, incorporating a low

Playrite's Matchplay 2 surface was installed at Escuela Pia de Barcelona. Padel has become a popular sport throughout Spain

lying net. At the ends are 3m high walls of concrete blocks or toughened glass.

The walls extend from the back corners to 4m down the length, 3m high for the first 2m and 2m high for the next 2m. The remainder of the court is made of strong metal fencing to a height of 4m.

The playing surface can be tarmac, concrete or synthetic turf and permitted colours are green, blue or terracotta.

If synthetic turf is used, the IPF stipulates partial sand infill for indoor courts and full sand infill for outdoor courts.

Racquets are shorter but heavier than their tennis cousins and bear little resemblance to squash equivalents. Balls are also less pressurised than tennis balls.

Serving is underarm with balls hitting the floor first. However, points are scored in exactly the same way as tennis games at Wimbledon or Flushing Meadows and – apart from elite level matches – it's doubles play rather than singles.

"Padel is easy to pick up," says padel pioneer, Peter Vann in Huddersfield, who was seduced by the simplicity of the game during trips to La Manga sports resort in Spain.

"Tennis and squash can be technically difficult games to get pleasure from if you have never picked up a racquet before. With padel you can learn to play, have fun and be competitive after just 20 minutes. Anyone from four to 84 can enjoy a game from scratch," he says.

SPORT DEVELOPMENT

So, with such a glowing reference, why is padel only marginally more popular than other sport derivatives, such as bossaball (a sort of trampoline volleyball) and the Swiss sport hornussen (a mix of golf and hockey)? Indeed, Padel England's official website describes padel as 'the fastest growing sport you've probably never heard of'.

Possibly because of the cost of a court, which, according to Vann, will set you back approximately €25,000 (£18,000). The price does include, however, manufacture, shipping from Spain and installation.

"A padel court can be a large initial outlay," says Vann, who oversaw the development of the Ellesse Padel Academy in Huddersfield. Particularly as, without Sport England recognition we are not entitled to government funding."

Huddersfield's courts were funded through member donations plus a £20,000 grant from Kirklees Council and another £5,000 from UKPF in 2009. ►

"We need to prove to Sport England that padel is a fully-established sport with the requisite number of members and facilities and that a proper development structure is in place"

Young padel players at a coaching session at Ellesse Padel Academy in Huddersfield. Padel helps with eye/ball coordination

However, despite the set up costs, more courts are on the horizon. Four courts are due to be installed at the David Lloyd Centres in Chigwell, Essex and Raynes Park in south west London.

A tennis club in Warwickshire has planning permission for a further two courts and there is a self-funded scheme to provide facilities at a club in north London.

At the Ellesse Padel Academy, Vann points out that to play the game you don't necessarily have to join a club. "Probably 30 per cent of our revenue at Huddersfield comes through pay and play for padel," he says.

According to Vann, court hire costs £12 for a 45-minute session while social sessions on Tuesday and Thursday evenings are priced at £7 for 90 minutes.

Early learners are also encouraged to try out the sport too. "It's an ideal game for youngsters, as the racquet skills that you get in padel can translate straight into tennis," says Vann.

"There's a thriving junior section at the club and a number of members recently participated at the World Junior Championships in Mellila, Spain," he says.

Tony Lee sees Huddersfield as a perfect example of how tennis traditionalists can be won over by the Latin interloper.

"The club committee was ardently against the introduction of padel; fighting it at all costs," he says. "Now those very same people are the biggest supporters."

INTERNATIONAL SUCCESS

Like every other credible sport, padel world championships are hosted on a bi-annual basis.

The 2010 version took place in Mexico and the UKPF sent out a 14-strong team, finishing 10th out of 13 nations. The federation also prepared squads for a European Championship in Portugal and the recent World Juniors.

Only four countries have won world championship medals since the first men's championships in 1992: Spain, Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay. Spain is the current reigning men's and women's champion.

In the UK, former tennis professional Richard Brooks is regarded as one of our leading padel players. Top international tennis players Andy Murray, Gael Monfils, Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal have also been known to swing a padel racquet.

HARNESSING OPPORTUNITIES

Padel England was founded in March this year with the aim of developing a structure for the sport in the UK. The governing body's president and director is Erik De Wilt – a Dutch-born former hockey player.

De Wilt believes that by June 2012 there could be as many as 10,000 registered padel players in the UK. He also thinks up to 40 courts will be operational next year, including padel's own national training centre in central London – the sport's equivalent of Roehampton or Wimbledon.

Working with five manufacturers, De Wilt is determined to provide courts at cost price, across the country, with some components built in the UK. Padel England – a non-profit organisation – will also part fund these courts through investment from its board members.

"There are some sponsors but we are happy to invest our own money too," De Wilt says.

According to Lee, the UKPF's mission statement, launched 18-24 months ago wasn't quite as bullish as Padel England's.

"We hoped to build 20 courts in the first year, but found that a challenge," he says. "The 40 courts forecast by Padel England would certainly create a better infrastructure and dramatically increase the number of people playing the sport."

De Wilt says: "Until we can prove to Sport England that padel is a fully-established sport with the requisite number of members and a proper development structure in place, including a schools programme and qualified coaches, then this is the way we must go.

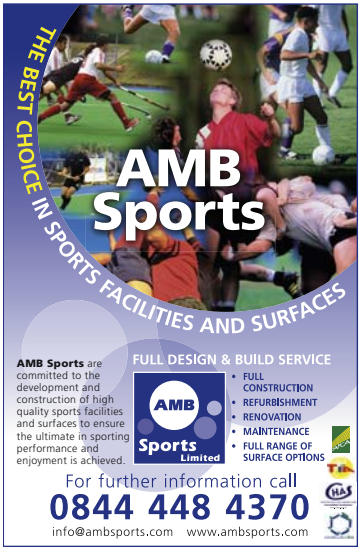
"We believe the UK Federation has similar aims. We are not asking people to pick one side or another."

According to De Wilt, Padel England already co-ordinates a development network that provides a pathway for aspiring players to progress from schools and clubs to the national squad.

In addition, the association offers information about the game, runs coaching courses, tournaments from county to international standard, distributes results and promotes the sport at all levels.

The issue now is to ensure that the game is a good fit into the English sporting culture.

Trevor Baxter is a freelance journalist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The Encapsulated rebound boards are ideal for advertising

During these difficult financial times, we understand that schools, colleges, universities, councils and volunteer organisations are struggling to grant fund new projects. However, our Image Fencing System helps to bridge this funding gap through advertising opportunities.

An average-sized football area offers space for approximately 45 full-sized boards at 2.5m wide x 1.2m high. These boards are exterior quality birch wood with a special film on one face to allow any digital image to be reproduced. Through innovative design we are able to encapsulate the boards within the fencing without the need for drilling and bolting the boards in place. This means that the boards will not suffer from water ingress and because of this we are able to offer a three-year anti-fade guarantee on the colour printing and a 10 year guarantee on the steel work.

Some organisations may not have the man power or know how to successfully sell the advertising boards so to help kick-start this process we have compiled a database of potential advertisers that may be willing to invest in your project (subject to location/organisation etc.)

A recent JB Corrie customer sold their boards to advertisers for £1,000 each. This bought each advertiser printed board advertising for their organisation for a three-year period. In today's market there can't be many marketing opportunities with such a low cost! As a matter of fact, why should they stop at one board? They might take one in each of the four elevations, this will enable them to reach directly to the sports players and spectators whether it is within a school, a college, a university, a sports/leisure centre or local sports club. Plus Image Sports Fencing offers the added benefit for advertisers to give something back to their community – and helps you to improve your sports facilities.

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Along with our contacts we will also offer your advertising opportunity to local firms. The more boards sold helps towards club funding. For instance if the new fencing cost £35,000 and 40 full boards sold at £1,000 you would not only receive free top of the range fencing but you'll have an additional £5,000 for your funds.

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The advertising rebound boards can be sold on a time dependant contract. Once this agreed contract is completed the rebound boards would be available to be sold again and again. This could regularly add thousands of pounds to your funds.

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The image boards are manufactured in birchwood (From sustainably-managed forests). The boards can have any digital image printed on the inside face – an advert, a school crest or logo etc. The reverse side of the boards are supplied green.

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Please contact us with your enquiry.
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ENGAGING IN PLAY

Four commentators who work within the play sector give their views on what to consider when designing a play area to capture children's long-lasting interest

DUNCAN WOOD-ALLUM
DIRECTOR, THE SPORT, LEISURE AND CULTURE CONSULTANCY

We need to be directing more revenue to support programmed play in parks and urban open spaces – particularly in holiday periods. Having visited the City of New York Parks and Recreation Department in April 2009, I was introduced to some innovative programming in areas of limited outdoor space, under the strapline 'It's your playground'. A couple of initiatives in particular caught my eye.

The Imagination Playground concept was a set of building blocks, or boxes, which contained a variety of loose parts, such as foam blocks, sand and water tools, as well as tarpaulins, fabric and milk crates, which children used to create their own toys and games.

Supplemented by sand, soil and natural features within the play area, this concept was suited to its tight urban outdoor space and encouraged 'free play', which is critical to children's intellectual, social, physical and emotional development.

Trained play workers facilitated activity at each playground site but they let the children direct their own play.

Another play concept was the annual free Street Games festival – held in Thomas Jefferson Park in Harlem and supported by the Walt Disney Corporation.

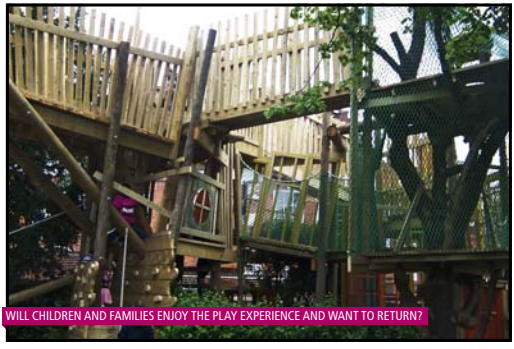
This initiative brought the classic street games back from the 60s and 70s. Pogo sticks, double-dutch (skipping), hula hoops and yo-yos were just some of the activities that families were encouraged to try, along with roller skating and skateboarding. Background Motown, Rock and Roll, and Soul music created a cool urban atmosphere, which encouraged major corporate sponsors to support the event, resulting in zero cost to the city.

MICK CONWAY,
PROGRAMME MANAGER, PLAY ENGLAND

The key to creating and sustaining children's engagement in play areas is good design and a sense of place that incorporates a range of natural features as well as play equipment.

In 2008, Play England published the *Design for Play* guideline, which remains one of our most popular downloads and led to what *The Times* newspaper described as the play revolution. More than 3,000 play areas were refurbished or created in line with the guidance and research has shown that these facilities are now more popular with children and families.

As well as the physical design of the play area, a play facility provider should also think about its ease of access and inclusion for all. Other considerations should be focused on whether it is safe, is it easy to get to and explore, and will children and families enjoy the experience and want to return?



WILL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES ENJOY THE PLAY EXPERIENCE AND WANT TO RETURN?

Structured around 10 principles based on what works, the *Design for Play* guidance outlines a six-stage design cycle from preparation through to review.

Play England has developed a range of tools to assess the quality of both staffed and unsupervised play areas and can provide bespoke training and support packages to help those responsible for children's play to implement them. ►

IT'S OUR REPSONSIBILITY TO ENGAGE AND DESIGN BETTER SPACES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ADAM WHITE CMLI
DIRECTOR, DAVIES WHITE LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

The important thing to remember is that the success of any public play space project is not down to one thing – there are a few key milestones that need to be met if you want to give your play space a fighting chance of being around in 10 years' time.

Firstly it is essential to know the difference between consultation and engagement. All too often timescales are reduced and budgets cut and a three-month engagement programme becomes an afternoon consultation event.

To encourage ownership and respect for a space you've got to get the children actively involved in the design and build of the project. It's also essential to involve the council's maintenance team from the outset, as they know what works and what doesn't on the ground.

'Big Society' sounds like a fantastic idea, however, we are finding more and more councils are using this as an excuse to delegate the final decision on what to do with their public play spaces to the community.

This is great, but without professional guidance and support the general public are not going to know what's possible and are

increasingly likely to default back to what they know. More and more KFC (Kit, Fencing and Carpet) playgrounds with springy chickens, bow top fencing and rubber bouncy wet pour surfaces are reappearing on the design briefs.

I believe there's got to be some connection between the value we put on public spaces for young people and the respect they show them later in life. It's our responsibility as professionals to ensure we're genuinely engaging and designing better spaces for our young people.

Some councils prioritise genuine engagement and design quality in the creation of play spaces, as for the others – shame on you!

CLAIRE MOLLETT
SALES AND MARKETING DIRECTOR, HIPPO LEISURE PRODUCTS

Engaging children in the world of water play is certainly not a 'one splash suits all' situation. Recent research shows how the waterphobic, less water confident and often fearful group of children (typically nought to eight age range) respond to the introduction of water play equipment in leisure centres and swimming pools around the country.

Multi-sensory water play can encourage even the most reluctant toddler to get their feet wet. It can build confidence to help them cope with traumas that are often associated with swimming pools, splashing water and putting their face into the water.

Products that promote parental participation and inclusive play scenarios are vital to these early stages of development. A combination of interactive toys – creating gentle water flows, cascades and waterfalls

are perfect to attract and distract these young minds.

A recent survey of leisure centre managers showed that parents will travel a greater distance to leisure centres offering a variety of water play equipment to please their children. Many centres experience record figures following refurbishments and the introduction of new interactive play equipment. The returns for a relatively small investment can be profitable in more ways that one.

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Mark Harrod to be sole Futsal Five supplier

Suffolk-based Mark Harrod has become sole supplier to the FA's Futsal Fives – a series of indoor adult Futsal leagues. Previous high-profile contracts for Mark Harrod also include supplying the FIFA Futsal World Cup and other Futsal centres as well as the FA Futsal start-up leagues in Paignton, Liverpool, Northampton, Hertfordshire and Middlesex.

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FieldTurf in Preferred Producer programme

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Audience Systems walking on air

An innovative idea from Audience Systems helps venues with sports floors to accommodate mobile retractable seating units, by reducing the need for floor reinforcement. Operators simply plug the units' transport trucks into an airline – allowing the seating to be moved with minimum manual handling and without the need for floor reinforcement along its route.
The 'air hover' system can be retrofitted easily to existing retractable seating systems.

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Lighthouse makes an Impact in Vancouver

Lighthouse and TS Sports have completed the installation of four video screens at BC Place in Vancouver, Canada, home of MLS' Vancouver Whitecaps and the CFL's BC Lions football and soccer teams. The stadium now features the world's second largest centre-hung LED video system. It features Lighthouse's new Impact 16 LED video panels and is used for showing sponsor messages, animations, replays, player introductions, custom video and live concert and special event coverage.

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Harrod UK's towering success in New Zealand

The world's third largest sporting event, the Rugby World Cup, hosted this year by New Zealand, saw 20 teams battle it out for the right to lift the Webb Ellis Trophy over 48 matches spanning 45 days. Lowestoft-based Harrod UK supplied three of the main stadiums – Eden Park and North Harbour in Auckland, plus Forsyth Barr (or Otago) in Dunedin – with 17m-high aluminium Millennium rugby posts for use during the high-profile event.

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Pedal-powered outdoor games by Sportswise

Sportwise has added a self-powered fitness game to its equipment portfolio – combining technology with the opportunity to get fit outdoors. Console-based, the EQ Fitness game is powered by pedal power, so the longer the participant performs a cycling motion – the longer the game.
This equipment is available in a variety of designs to suit budget and facility and is ideally suited to holiday parks, open spaces, schools and leisure centres. It is environmentally friendly as no external power is required.

sport-kit.net KEYWORD

EQ Fitness

Itza Kidzworld with Timberplay

Alongside a range of indoor play facilities Kidzworld, in St. Austell, Cornwall, now boasts new extensive outdoor play equipment supplied by Timberplay. The project, part of a redevelopment programme, has seen the attraction double in size. The play area now includes Smugglers Cove, an undercover sand and water play area featuring pumps and slides, and the Treetop Scramble, a custom-built area featuring wobbly walkways and a rope climb to reach a steel tunnel slide.

sport-kit.net KEYWORD

timberplay

Vredo's winning pass

Murrayfield Rugby Stadium has acquired a 1.2m Vredo Supa Compact disc overseeder to enable groundstaff to overseed the sports pitch in a single pass. The action of the closely spaced discs, which are only 35mm apart, make a precise cut into the turf where the seed is sown directly into the soil. Three different models are available.

sport-kit.net KEYWORD

vredo

Two new signings for Matchsaver

Real Madrid and Gothenburg are the latest signings for Matchsaver's new automated pitch protection system. Matchsaver – suitable for all outdoor sporting venues including football, rugby and cricket – enables a pitch to be covered in less than 10 minutes at the press of a button. This maintains the best possible playing conditions and negates the need for match cancellations due to adverse weather.

sport-kit.net KEYWORD

matchsaver

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The Sports and Play Construction Association, SAPCA, is the recognised trade organisation for the sports and play facility construction industry in the UK. SAPCA fosters excellence, professionalism and continuous improvement throughout the industry, in order to provide the high quality facilities necessary for the success of British sport.

SAPCA represents a wide range of specialist constructors of natural and synthetic sports surfaces, including both outdoor and indoor facilities, from tennis courts and sports pitches to playgrounds and sports halls. SAPCA also represents manufacturers and suppliers of related products, and independent consultants that offer professional advice on the development of projects.

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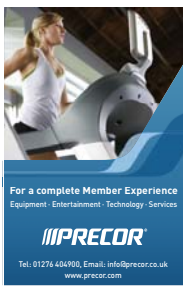
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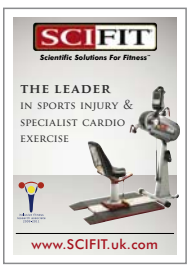

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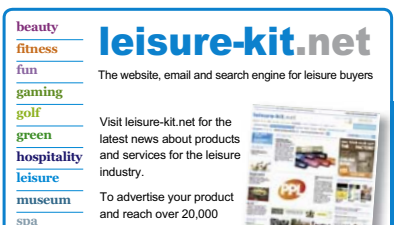

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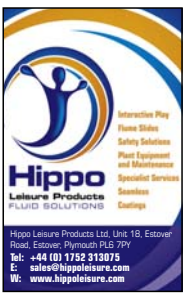

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29 NOVEMBER 2011
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SAPCA's 14th annual conference is a key event on the industry calendar, where members can get together with NGBs and funding agencies to examine the sport facilities construction marketplace. For further information please contact the SAPCA office on 024 7641 6316.
www.sapca.org.uk

20-22 FEBRUARY 2012
Grass Yarn and Tufters Forum 2012
Swissotel, Zurich, Switzerland
This event provides an opportunity for delegates to discuss structural changes in the synthetic turf market. They can learn about the industry's growth prospects, better understand what is going on in other regions of the world and hear about recent product and technological and performance developments.
www.amiconferences.com

8-9 FEBRUARY 2012
Driving educational achievement through PE and sport
Telford International Centre, UK
The Youth Sport Trust brings together innovative work in PE, school sport and whole school achievement and showcases global practice.
www.youthsporttrust.org

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