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NURTURING THE GRASSROOTS

Sport is an increasingly important part of the global economy. It's important, however, that those working in the industry don't lose sight of what makes economic success possible in the first place – the health of grassroots and community sport

Sport is growing globally, as developing nations thrive and generate middle classes eager to spend their newly found disposable income on sport and recreation. Evidence of this can be seen in the way global sports market revenues are projected to reach US\$145bn (€128bn, £94bn) by the end of 2015 – a 7 per cent increase from US\$121bn (€107bn, £79bn) in 2011.

Advanced economies are benefiting too. The sports industry is now responsible for 2 per cent (€330bn) of the EU's total GDP and the number of people employed by sports-related activities within the EU is estimated at 7.3 million – equivalent to 3.5 per cent of total employment. In the UK alone, sport has become a £20bn-a-year industry, supporting 450,000 jobs.

The impressive figures mean that the riches available for those reaching the top of the sporting tree are becoming unimaginable. Earlier this year the English Premier League – where top players earn up to £250,000 a week – secured a £5.14bn TV rights deal, the largest in history. On an individual level, tennis star Roger Federer earns an estimated US\$58m (€51m, £38m) from endorsements alone, while the net worth of the world's richest athlete, boxer Floyd Mayweather, is estimated at US\$300m (€265m, £195m).

While sport is generating wealth across the globe, we shouldn't, however, forget what makes elite sport possible and feeds interest in sports in general – the grassroots.

In this issue, we celebrate community sport and highlight ways in which we can ensure a healthy future for all by making children active. We ask whether the industry is doing enough in using technology to increase participation (page 32) and also look at programmes that have successfully tackled inactivity (page 58).

Government support for community sport operators and facilities is crucial. In the UK, the new Conservative government has wasted no time in making its case for a fresh sports strategy. Sports minister Tracey Crouch – a qualified grassroots football coach herself – has launched a consultation, *A New Strategy for Sport* which will look to ensure that precious resources are used in a more targeted way to get people more active.

"The strapline of London 2012 was Inspire a Generation," Crouch says. "Participation levels among 16- to 25-year-olds

remain steady across most sports. That's good, but not good enough. When the last *Active People Survey* results were issued in June (2015), I made it clear that I wasn't happy with the decline in the number of people participating in sport." (To read more, see our profile of Crouch on page 38).

Both Crouch and secretary of state for sport, John Whittingdale, have been vocal in their calls for the English Premier League – now the richest football league in the world – to share more of its spoils with those further down the tree. Asked by MPs whether the Premier League – which currently invests around £60m a year on grassroots – should share more of its TV revenue with grassroots football, Whittingdale replied: "Without question. I believe the Premier League should at least double what it currently contributes."

Whittingdale has a point. It's vital that everybody involved in sport nurtures the roots – it's the only way to ensure the rest of the tree will stay healthy.

Tom Walker, managing editor

twitter: @sportsmagtom

email: tomwalker@leisuremedia.com

The number of people employed by sports-related activities within the EU is estimated at 7.3 million

Share your thoughts – visit sportsmanagement.co.uk/blog



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the team

READER SERVICES

Subscriptions

Denise Adams
+44 (0)1462 471930

Circulation manager

Michael Emmerson
+44 (0)1462 471932

EDITORIAL TEAM

Managing editor

Tom Walker
+44 (0)1462 471934

Editor

Liz Terry
+44 (0)1462 431385

NEWSDESK

Jak Phillips
+44 (0)1462 471938

Tom Anstey
+44 (0)1462 471916

Helen Andrews
+44 (0)1462 471902

Katie Buckley
+44 (0)1462 471936

ADVERTISING TEAM

Publisher

John Challinor
+44 (0)1202 742968

Advertising sales

Jan Williams
+44 (0)1462 471909

WEB TEAM

Internet

Michael Paramore
+44 (0)1462 471926

Dean Fox
+44 (0)1462 471900

Tim Nash
+44 (0)1462 471917

Emma Harris
+44 (0)1462 471921

Sports-kit.net

product search engine

Jason Holland
+44 (0)1462 471927

DESIGN

Ed Gallagher
+44 (0)1905 20198

Andy Bundy
+44 (0)1462 471924

FINANCE

Denise Adams
+44 (0)1462 471930

Rebekah Scott
+44 (0)1462 471930



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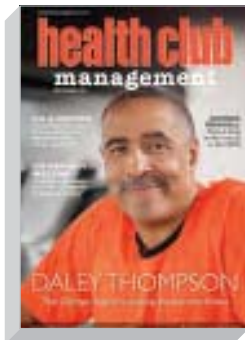
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PEOPLE



“If you have an idea for a challenge, make it harder and you’ll be surprised at how easy it is to get there.”

Sean Conway, extreme adventurer

“I’m just the guy from the pub. If I can do it, anyone can,” says Sean Conway, the first person to have cycled, swum and run the length of Great Britain. An unlikely endurance athlete in lots of ways, Conway isn’t ex-military or a former athlete and had never run a marathon nor had any experience of sea swimming prior to starting his challenges.

Now 34 years old, he admits he spent most of his 20s being inactive and has a penchant for whisky and ale. He says what makes him able to complete his adventures is a talent for being cold, wet, hungry and miserable.

“I was new to each discipline when I started the Great Britain challenge, but with each one I wasn’t breaking any records, so I knew I could afford to get fit on the adventure itself,” he says. “I have learnt, however, that adventures are way more enjoyable when you’re really fit!”

Conway cycled the length of the UK in 2008 because he thought it would be a cheap holiday and an efficient way to see the country. Other challenges followed – he swam from John O’Groats to Land’s

End in 2013 and completed a seven-week run – the subject of a Discovery Channel documentary – across Britain (which took two attempts) on 4 May this year.

Previously a school photographer, in 2011 Conway decided he had had enough of chasing the money, sold his share of the business to his partner for £1 and became a full time adventurer, financing his simplified lifestyle with talks and writing books about his experiences. Conway believes the route to contentment is not

through accumulating “stuff” but through undertaking challenges which are testing both mentally and physically.

“We’re all a lot more physically and mentally capable than we think we are,” he says. “Exercise cures most of life’s minor little niggles. It offers perspective. If you’re running a marathon and hit mile 23, the colour you painted your living room, which wasn’t quite right, doesn’t matter anymore. Being outdoors and undertaking a mental and physical challenge can solve many of life’s problems.

“I do appreciate we live in a country where it’s not always easy being outdoors, but no great adventure started on a fine, sunny day. There’s no such thing as bad weather, just the wrong clothes.”

Even though he did it, Conway claims you don’t need to give up the day job to find adventure, but just look for the adventure in everyday life. For example, instead of taking the train to London, from Cheltenham, for a New Year’s Eve party, he decided to walk. And rather than fly to Geneva and get a bus to the Alps, he cycled, sleeping in a bivi on the way. “Adventure in its purest form is just

SEAN’S ADVENTURES

- Cycled London to Paris in 24 hours
- Cycled London to the Alps in mid-winter, sleeping rough under a bivi
- Cycled around the world (getting hit by a truck in America)
- Kayaked the River Thames
- Climbed Mount Kilimanjaro, dressed as a penguin
- Three Peaks Cycle
- Strongman Run
- Arctic Ironman



Conway completed his run across the UK in May (above) and has previously taken part in extreme swimming and cycling challenges (right)

a way of thinking,” he says. “My mate, Al Humphries, always says that you might have to work nine to five, but you’ve still got the five to nine. There are so many things you can do to challenge yourself on a weekend, to live life more adventurously without sacrificing your personal life.”

“If you have an idea for a challenge, make it harder and you’ll be surprised at how easy it is to get there. If you’re thinking you can’t run a 5k race, sign up for a 10k. Once the bar is set up there you take it more seriously.”

Conway’s next adventure is in September. Still under wraps, it will involve swimming, cycling and running. However, he also likes the idea of organising his own extreme Iron Man: “The sort of race where you’d need to train for six months solid. But, if I can do it, then anyone can. Because I’m not anything special.” ●





“Hosting the Rugby World Cup is perhaps a once in a lifetime experience for the groundskeeper involved”

**Keith Kent, head groundskeeper,
RFU and Rugby World Cup 2015**

As Rugby Football Union’s (RFU) head groundskeeper, Keith Kent is responsible for the most hallowed turf in rugby – the green grass of Twickenham. This year, his work will be under extra scrutiny, as England hosts the Rugby World Cup. In the run up to the showcase event, Kent is being kept busy with extra work – he’s been assisting the other World Cup venues ensure their pitches will be ready in time and up to standard.

“We hosted the groundsmen of the World Cup’s football venues – the likes of Manchester City, Aston Villa, Milton Keynes, Brighton and Leicester – at Twickenham for the England vs South Africa game,” Kent says. “As part of

the experience, they were given the opportunity to inspect the pitch after the game to learn about the effects. I’ve also held seminars around the country, inviting as many of the groundsmen from the training venues as possible. There are 41 World Cup venues in total, so I’ve been unable to visit all of them.

“However we’ve worked with a company called Professional Sportsturf Design to ensure each site has been visited and assessed by a team of experts to ascertain what needs to be done.”

Kent is in an ideal position to understand the differences between football and rugby pitches – he took the top job at RFU following a 30-year career in football. After leaving school at 16, he spent 17

years at Leicester City, most of that time as head groundskeeper. From there he went to become head groundskeeper of Manchester United where he spent 15 years. At Old Trafford, he worked on the Euro 96 tournament – another experience he can draw on while preparing for this year’s Rugby World Cup.

“Learning from the Euro 96 tournament, I’ve been telling everyone involved with the World Cup to enjoy the time that they have with the teams,” Kent says.

“This is perhaps a once in a lifetime experience and although it takes years to get here it’s gone in such a short space of time. We hosted five games at Old Trafford in Euro 96 and I can remember it as though it were yesterday.

“I’ve been pointing out to the groundskeeper that there will be cameras broadcasting their facilities and turfs into front rooms all over the world – and to remember that you only have one chance to make a first impression. It is important that we as groundsmen show the world just how good we are.”

Kent says he’s proud of British groundsmen and what he’s seen during his travels around the country in preparation for the World Cup. “I’m always impressed with the skill, knowledge and dedication of the British groundskeeper.

“We have a knack, a feel for the job and almost everyone that I know enjoys what he or she is doing. It’d be wrong of me to say we’re the best in the world but I’d paraphrase the late, great Brian Clough: “We’re certainly in the top one.”

Details: www.rugbyworldcup.com



Kent is responsible for Twickenham but has also consulted on other World Cup venues

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“RIOU is the world’s first university dedicated to sport business education and our programmes are strongly connected with Olympic values”

Lev Belousov, rector of the Russian International Olympic University

What is the Russian International Olympic University (RIOU) and when was it launched?

RIOU was established in October 2009 under a memorandum of understanding between the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the Sochi 2014 Organising Committee and the Russian Olympic Committee (ROC). It’s an autonomous, non-profit organisation founded by the Russian Ministry of Sport, the ROC, Sochi 2014 and private investment company Interros.

In 2010, the university began running training programmes for staff of Sochi 2014. The main educational product – the one-year Master of Sport Administration (MSA) course – was launched in September 2013.

Were you actively involved in setting up RIOU from the very beginning?

I took charge of RIOU in June 2010 at the initial stage of its development when there was neither a campus nor educational programmes in place. The main management task then was the organisation of the university’s working processes. As Sochi 2014 approached, RIOU started its educational activities by developing and implementing a range of exclusive educational programmes for the staff of Sochi 2014, Sochi City Administration and Olympstroy – the state corporation responsible for the construction of the Sochi 2014 venues.

What was the motivation behind RIOU?

The primary goal was to train the next generation of management professionals for the sports industry. As a legacy



Lev Belousov took charge of RIOU in 2010, becoming the institution’s first ever rector

project of the Sochi 2014 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, we hope that many of RIOU’s graduates will go on to help develop the Russian sports market – but we are also determined to raise the level of sports management globally, particularly within the Olympic movement.

RIOU is also the proud guardian of the Sochi 2014 Archive: an invaluable bank of case studies and best-practice materials on every aspect of the Sochi 2014 preparations since 2007.

What are RIOU’s main activities?

It’s the world’s first university dedicated to sport business education and we offer unique programmes strongly connected with Olympic values and experiences. The principle focus is on training

specialists in sports management and our programmes cover the main aspects of sport business education: venue and infrastructure management, competitions, mass communications, diplomacy and administration, sports law, security in sport and career management. As well as the MSA, we also run a wide range of short-term programmes in areas such as hospitality, barrier-free environments, economics, the management of sporting venues, sports law and sustainable development. Each year these courses attract more than 150 students from around the world.

What does your role as rector entail?

My key responsibilities include strategic planning, interaction with the founders and state structures and, of course, operational management.

The structure of the RIOU team is aligned with our strategic duties. I have four deputies (pro-rectors) who are responsible for managing the following areas: administration, government relations, organisation of academic work, and educational and research activities.

What makes RIOU unique?

A lot of university sport-related programmes focus on narrow areas within management, such as administration or law or by specialising in a single sport only, but our model combines a traditional university curriculum with features commonly found on a career development programme. This broader approach allows us to provide high quality training in sports management to candidates from



a wide range of backgrounds. Many of our students have sport-related degrees on their CVs already but we're open to suitably qualified applicants of any experience. By casting the net wider, we produce more versatile sports managers as there will be a greater mix of ideas among the student community.

Who will RIOU be marketed at?

Our target audience are young professionals at sporting organisations looking to take their career to the next level. This means people working or volunteering with national Olympic committees or sports federations. But it also means people from sports clubs and marketing and communications agencies. We also encourage athletes looking to negotiate a career transition.

How will you utilise RIOU's relationship with Sochi 2014?

Mainly in two ways. Firstly, our lecturers and students have access at any time to

RIOU's inaugural MSA intake at the official opening of RIOU's campus in September 2013

documents relating to Sochi's staging of the Winter Games through our Sochi 2014 Archive. These documents are accessible in hard copy and digital and consist of audio, photo and video materials as well as best-practice case studies of the Organising Committee's operations for Sochi 2014.

Secondly, thanks to the Games, Sochi's sporting infrastructure is world-class and means that our students have real-life examples of how venues can be utilised for the benefit of the local population after the Games are over.

During the Games, we also carried out a detailed survey of more than 200 athletes and representatives of the media to collect valuable feedback on how these groups perceived different aspects of the

planning and staging of the Paralympic Winter Games. This survey was compiled by our first intake of MSA students as part of their observer and participation programmes during the Games.

How important will it be for future Games bids to include legacy plans?

There is certainly no doubting that the IOC has underlined the importance of sustainability and legacy for any city thinking about hosting an Olympic Games. Whether a city is representing a developing or a developed country, it will have to prove that it can implement effective legacy projects if it wants to host the Games. Developing nations naturally have less sporting infrastructure so may have an advantage in being able to show the IOC that the legacy projects attached to the bid will enhance more lives in a more dramatic way than in a developed nation. It will certainly be interesting to see how legacy influences the future bidding process.



“Caribbean people love cricket and they also love a party – the CPL mixes these two elements”

Damien O'Donohoe, CEO, Caribbean Premier League

“When I first arrived in the Caribbean, every kid was wearing a LeBron James, Dwayne Wade or some other NBA basketball shirt,” says Damien O'Donohoe, the chief executive of the Caribbean Premier League (CPL). “Now you see kids running around wearing CPL shirts – it gives me incredible satisfaction and pride to see that. It really makes our project worthwhile.”

CPL, now in its third year, is a Twenty20 cricket league played over six weeks at the end of the West Indies' domestic cricket season. It is the brainchild of Denis O'Brien, head of communications firm Digicel, and O'Donohoe, a qualified lawyer, who chose a career in events after his dreams of becoming a professional rugby player were ended by injury.

In sporting terms, T20 cricket has become big business in each country which has embraced it. The Indian Premier League (IPL), the world's most watched T20 competition, has an estimated brand value of US\$7.2bn. Meanwhile in England, the seven home games played

by the 18 county cricket clubs in the NatWest T20 Blast are responsible for a disproportionately large percentage of annual revenue for the clubs. In Australia, the Big Blast League attracted average attendances of 23,500 during 2014-15 – far exceeding the crowds watching the longer forms of domestic cricket.

CPL aims to not only match the commercial successes of its counterparts, but rejuvenate West Indies cricket, which has for long been losing ground to football and basketball as the region's favourite sport. O'Donohoe believes his team will be able to complete that task.

This year, the CPL involved six franchises, with each team consisting of a mixture of world stars and local West Indian players. The prospect of seeing the likes of Kevin Pietersen, Shahid Afridi, Chris Gayle and Jacques Kallis – all famous for their expressive playing style – is reflected in the CPL's tagline, “The Biggest Party in Sport”.

According to O'Donohoe, the opportunity to see global cricket stars wasn't the only reason for the

chosen motto. “T20 cricket by its nature is very much a mix of entertainment and sport, so the format fits the Caribbean lifestyle perfectly,” he says. “Caribbean people love cricket and they also love to get dressed up, have a good time and have a party. The CPL mixes cricket with the Caribbean culture – the sounds, the atmosphere, the food, the drink. When you put all that together it makes for a very unique experience for the players, the fans and the TV audience.”

As a product, the CPL has been pretty much an instant hit. In its first year, more than 90 per cent of all tickets to the games were sold. This year, all games were played at sold out stadiums, while a string of lucrative TV deals saw the matches beamed to a potential global audience of 300 million. As a result, the league has now broken even and has recouped the initial investment of US\$20m (€18m, £13m) made in 2013.

“The CPL creates excitement,” says O'Donohoe, “And people are passionate about their local teams and its success.”

Details: www.cplt20.com



Now in its third year, the CPL attracts star names such as Kevin Pietersen (middle) and is becoming famous for its party atmosphere

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THOUGHT LEADERS

What are the Conservative government's plans for sport?

John Goodbody, journalist, *Sunday Times*



New sports minister Tracey Crouch has announced there will be a new strategy for sport (for more, read interview with Crouch on page 38-40)



Tracey Crouch, the new sports minister, has certainly not been hesitant in voicing strong opinions and concerns since being appointed in June (see interview with Crouch on page 38-40).

Given her background as a coach of a girl's youth football team, it was not surprising that her first pronouncements dealt with the national game and specifically how little of the Premier League's television income goes to the grassroots to improve facilities. The new TV deal is expected

to exceed £8bn from 2016-17, once foreign rights are signed, and Crouch wants the Premier League to increase the £1bn it is planning to distribute to clubs and facilities, saying that she is "genuinely appalled" at how small amount this is.

She says: "The £1bn includes parachute payments for relegated clubs, so we can expect around a third to go to the grassroots. That is divided in various ways so by the time you get down to talking about artificial pitches, it's not very much money at all. I want to see a lot more from Europe's wealthiest league."

The Premier League says it already distributes more in "good causes" than any other football league, that it's not a charity and the clubs need to keep so much money to retain and attract the best players. Whenever there has been a stand-off between the government and football authorities in the past, there has always been the implied threat of the imposition of a Football Commissioner on the game unless the government gets its way. It will be fascinating to see how long it will be before this idea resurfaces.

Crouch was equally outspoken about the drop in mass participation in physical activity. Sport England in June reported that 220,000 fewer people were taking regular exercise than 12 months ago, although the number of regular participants still exceeded 15.5 million, more than it was before the 2012 Olympics.

Most striking was the drop in swimming with 144,200 fewer people swimming on a weekly basis than six months ago, although it remains Britain's most popular participation activity with 2.5 million people taking part. Attending a gym fell by 150,000. Running, basketball and tennis slightly increased their numbers while figures for most of the standard team games were static.

Crouch said: "The recent downward trend in participation has demonstrated the current approach has had its day. It's not the return we expect for a large investment of public money. I'm going to develop a new strategy for sport as a matter of urgency."

Part of this formal review, which is already underway, will involve a more joined up approach to sport and physical activity across Whitehall,

especially the Ministry of Health. Crouch will also be talking to officials from national governing bodies, organisations such as Sport England, and anyone else who is considered relevant. It is expected to last several months with a possible conclusion at the end of 2015.

Among the areas the review could look at is how to use social media, such as Facebook, to attract youngsters into sport. Swimming, where the ASA has a new CEO in Adam Paker, needs to encourage more swimming pool operators to develop team-based activities for adults, particularly the elderly.

At the moment, swimming is largely divided between clubs, which cater for competition, leaving the vast majority of recreational swimmers to their own devices. Athletics, with the success of the Saturday Park Runs, should point the way for swimming. More pools should have recreational sessions for groups of people, with attendants helping individuals improve their stroke.

One of the legacies of 2012 was meant to be a rise in the number of people becoming active. Crouch's review must ensure that this takes place.



Premier League: facing calls for it to contribute more to grassroots

In future, physical activity will play an increasingly prominent role in society

Sport is gaining traction – and the best is still ahead

Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson, chair, ukactive

Coming from a background of sport and competition, I've had to adjust to my new day job sitting in the House of Lords. It's an incredible place and I feel honoured to be able to make a mark on the decision making process – but one thing is clear: the pace of the decision making can be tediously slow.

We're in the business of getting things right, of visiting and re-visiting policy and making what seem like endless amendments to legislation. But, we're making new laws, so it's right that we get into the detail. Personally though, I think there's something to be said for taking risks, for being bold.



Businesses within the physical activity sector have an incredible role to play as innovators and incubators of new ideas, programmes and practices. We've made some excellent progress in highlighting the issue of physical inactivity at the highest levels of government. We've



created tangible benefits for the sector, like the doubling of public health spend; the growth of National Fitness Day and continued partnership of Change 4 Life. But, I sincerely believe the best is yet to come.

Physical activity will play an increasingly prominent role in society, including the

fundamental design of cities and housing. Recent market developments have made the City of London prick up its ears, and powerful backing could help accelerate progress. The growth of what we have to offer will attract investors and speculators which will give the sector an even bigger wingspan.

Time for the sports sector to get fit for the future

Emma Boggis, CEO, Sports and Recreation Alliance

Figures from Sport England's latest Active People Survey show a very mixed picture. There are 1.4m more people playing sport regularly than in 2005, when London won the bid to host the 2012 Games, but the number has fallen since the Games.

Sports clubs and organisations continue to face a difficult environment when it comes to increasing participation, including countrywide falls in local authority funding which have implications for local facilities, and real average incomes only just returning to the levels



they were at seven years ago. The fact is that many people wanting to play sport face increasing costs, while having less money in their pocket. Many are also time poor – with a range of competing demands on their time.

In response to the latest figures the new minister for sport, Tracey Crouch, has announced she's going to bring forward a new cross government policy for sport which joins up government objectives. This is welcome news. Like many organisations the Alliance has been advocating a cross-departmental sport and physical activity strategy for some time. It is an obvious step for our sector and it makes sense for government, so we look forward to working closely with our partners at DCMS to ensure the views of our members are reflected in what

is produced. Importantly we want to see something which reflects both the breadth of the sport and recreation sector and the benefits it can bring.

The picture of delivery is a complex one and that is why we have just launched a new programme of activity to identify and address the key challenges for the sector. At our Sports Summit in June we published the first in what will be a series of reports to help our members become Fit for the Future. The aim is to help NGBs to become better equipped to increase participation in their sport and help keep the nation active.

CATCHING UP ON LEGACY

In his latest in a series of columns, FaulknerBrowns Architects' Mike Hall recounts the recent meeting of the Sport and Leisure Group of the International Union of Architects

In June 2015, I had the pleasure of meeting fellow members of the International Union of Architects Sport and Leisure Working Programme (UIA S+LWP)



at one of our regular seminars. The event was held in London and was themed around the legacies of London 2012 and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Participants in the event included a broad spectrum of specialist sports architects from around the world, all of whom have an interest in major events facilities and in the legacies which they leave behind.

Speakers at the seminar included representatives from London Legacy Development Corporation, Lee Valley Regional Park Authority, University College London, and from Glasgow 2014. The seminar was followed the next day by a tour of the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.

It was apparent from the seminar and the visit that the organisers of both the 2012 Olympic Games, and the 2014 Commonwealth Games, had taken the correct decisions in their legacy-planning strategies. The balance between temporary

and permanent sporting facilities and the regeneration of the east end of London appears to be a success and Glasgow, very much in line with Manchester's Commonwealth Games in 2002, did much to bolster the principle that careful and pragmatic planning can produce an economic yet highly effective solution.

While the debate rages on as to the legacies in terms of national participation in sports, the multi-purpose and specialist facilities appear to be well-used and well-

Sound and informed briefing is critical to future Games facilities – and more detailed strategies are needed

run. However, there are still lessons to be learnt from the new London facilities in respect of future major events and it is timely that the International Olympic Committee (IOC) is currently reviewing how the sustainability of future Olympic Games can be improved, including a review of the scale of spectator provision.

A particular and pertinent issue in all Olympic venues since 1996 has been how to design an enclosed sports facility to accommodate both the special requirements for the Games (six week period only) and also for the longer legacy period of forty years or more, ie: 99.7 per cent of its lifetime. For some sports, this problem has been exacerbated because the briefs for spectator numbers have spiralled, seemingly out of control and reason.

Take the London Aquatics Centre, for example, where the brief's requirements for 18,000 seats for the Games (compared with only 3,000 seats in legacy mode) not only meant poor, constricted and long-distance views for spectators, but also required the eaves height to be almost double required for an international pool. This additional height inevitably left a lasting footprint on the permanent building – demanding both a higher capital cost budget and greater annual revenue costs.

An alternative scenario would have been for the brief to ask for 12,000 seats (still more than the 1992 Barcelona and 2004 Athens pools) for the Games, giving an option for either retaining capacity for future world class games, or reducing it to 6,000 seats for European/national events.

Sound and informed briefing is critical to future major games facilities and our S+LWP members, collectively, felt even more detailed scrutiny of the briefing and design strategies for sustainable legacy use is required – particularly, the contribution that sound and prudent operational knowledge would bring. My own personal experience, from team discussions on the Lee Valley White Water Centre, was that the brief and the design of the facility benefitted greatly from excellent operational input from the outset. ●

Mike Hall, sports partner, FaulknerBrowns Architects. Tel: +44(0)191 2683007
e: m.hall@faulknerbrowns.co.uk
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Members of UIA's Sport and Leisure Working Programme visiting the London Olympic Park

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The US\$200m stadium was designed by Populous and has been hailed as the most technologically advanced in the region

BBVA Bancomer stadium opens in Monterrey, Mexico

The US\$200m (€184m, £128m) Estadio BBVA Bancomer, touted as the most hospitality-driven soccer stadium in Latin America, has opened in Monterrey, Mexico.

Designed by sports architects Populous, the 51,000-capacity stadium will be the new home of Club de Fútbol Monterrey (CF Monterrey). What makes the stadium unique in the region is the emphasis on creating a premium fan experience.

The stadium boasts 324 luxury suites – more than any other soccer stadium in the world – and 4,500 club seats, distributed in two central club lounges which will service all club seat holders. The premium ‘West Club’ houses a kids’ zone and a balcony with views to players’ tunnel.

Each seating section has hawkers’ service points built into the seating bowl, offering instant service for fans in their seats. The proportion of restrooms and points of sales per spectator exceeds the current standards for Mexican facilities.

Fans will also be closer to the pitch than at most other stadia – nine meters on the side lines, the closest distance allowed by FIFA. More than 800 high definition televisions are located throughout the concourses for continued connection with the action on the field.

David Lizarraga, lead architect on the project and senior associate at Populous, said Estadio BBVA will usher in the next



The design of the museum has been inspired by different aspects of the city of Monterrey

generation of stadiums in Latin America. “The vision for the stadium will forever change what Latin American soccer fans expect in a stadium,” Lizarraga said.

“The level of comfort for fans and athletes will be unparalleled in Estadio BBVA Bancomer. All seats will have excellent views of the field and the stadium has been designed to be friendly and welcoming for all members of society: children, women, elderly, families and people with disabilities.”

“Through creative urban planning, an understanding of global trends in the fan experience and a progressive, sophisticated vision for the sport’s future in the region, Estadio BBVA Bancomer has the potential to transform an entire region’s expectations.”

According to Lizarraga, the design has been inspired by the region’s history of brewing and steel manufacturing.

The structure is clad in metallic armature and aluminum, paying tribute to the steel mills that once thrived in the city. The silhouette of brewing stills influenced the asymmetrical shape of the stadium that lowers to the south, framing the famous Cerro de la Silla Mountain.

“The design was inspired by the aspects of Monterrey that make it such a unique city,” Lizarraga said.

“Monterrey has long been a major steel manufacturer and a city of ‘the brewery’ and provide some of the city’s most interesting legacies. The design honours this with materials highlighting the heritage – such as the an aluminium façade and crescent shaped openings that pay tribute to beer stills and steel mills.”

To add to the in-game experience, AV specialist Daktronics – working in partnership with Mexican partner Pantallas Publitrónica – has supplied two LED video displays, each measuring 19m wide and featuring 13HD pixel layouts. The displays feature variable content zoning, allowing each display to show one large image or to be divided into different ones to provide a combination of live video, instant replays, scoring information and animations.

[Read more: http://lei.sr?a=M7F4g_P](http://lei.sr?a=M7F4g_P)

Qatar to decide on its 2022 stadium plan “by end of year”

Qatar will decide the exact number of stadiums it will use during the FIFA World Cup 2022 by the end of the year.

A spokesperson for the Qatar organizing committee said the final number hadn't been finalised yet – and could be less than the 12 included in the original bid that controversially won the country the right to host the tournament.

So far, Qatar has announced details for five stadiums but is obliged to use at least eight venues, according to FIFA guidelines.

Foster + Partners are among the architects to have secured a stadium to design, with the UK-based practice chosen as lead architect for the Lusail Stadium, the centrepiece of the tournament. Working in conjunction with stadium specialists Populous and ARUP on the project, the Foster + stadium in Lusail City, north of Doha, will have a capacity of around 85,000 and is expected to host both the opening game and the final.

Elsewhere, multinational consultancy Dar Al-Handasah has been appointed to undertake a complete revamp of Doha's existing Khalifa International Stadium. The group intends to transform the dated Khalifa International Stadium, originally constructed in 1976, into a 40,000 seat venue, with the addition of a roof to cover the entire seating area.



The Al Rayyan Stadium will be renovated for the World Cup and is among the confirmed venues

Initial designs have also been revealed for the 60,000-capacity Al Bayt stadium in Qatar's Al Khor district. The stadium is set to host one of the two semi-finals and the design of the stadium – created by a team of Qatari architects – has been modelled after Bayt Al Sha'ar, a traditional tent used by nomadic peoples in Qatar and neighbouring countries.

Qatari officials remain confident that the 2022 World Cup will be staged in the country, despite an ongoing Swiss probe into the bidding processes for the 2018

(won by Russia) and 2022 tournaments. Accusations of widespread corruption within FIFA reached a dramatic pinnacle in May, when a number of top FIFA officials were arrested ahead of the association's annual congress.

There have been suggestions that the results of the 2018 and 2022 World Cup voting should be annulled – due to fears that corruption and bribes played a part in how the 200+ FIFA member nations voted – and the bidding processes restarted.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=P3q3K_P



The Al Bayt stadium in Qatar's Al Khor district has been designed by a team of local architects and is modelled after a traditional tent used by nomads

WHY 3G IS THE FUTURE FOR SUCCESSFUL SPORTS CLUBS

With the new majority Conservative government in place, a consultation has been launched this month for a new sports strategy to replace the previous one developed by the coalition. It wants to identify ways to help make participation in sports more accessible for all; to enable sports clubs to be financially sustainable; and to help people be fitter and healthier.

One easy way to achieve these goals is with a 3G synthetic sports pitch. Across Europe, 3G pitches are helping sports clubs to provide

better facilities, make more money and get more involved with their local communities.

The UK's climate means that sports clubs can often find that their natural turf pitches are water-logged, completely flooded, or frozen. We have no control over the weather but it has a big impact on revenue and a club's financial sustainability so this is where a 3G pitch can help.

The latest developments in synthetic sports pitch solutions means that they provide all of the benefits of natural turf pitches without any of the drawbacks. They last longer with less maintenance so are available for use more often, meaning sports clubs can generate more revenue and concentrate on developing strategies for growth rather than worrying whether the pitch is going to be available when it needs to be.

The porous layers that the artificial turf sits on mean that the water drains straight through into the subsoil foundation, which has a drainage system built into it when the new pitch is installed. The result – no more flooded pitches. Meaning fewer postponements and cancellations of matches, leading to more revenue, happier teams and fans, and more chances for the community to use the facilities.

Finding the right sports pitch specialist

Investing in new sports facilities has to be done right for two important reasons: so that crucial funding is put to best use, and so that people can and will use them for years to come.

To do it right you need to work with the best sports pitch providers. O'Brien Sports is one of the first large civil engineering firms in the UK able to offer turnkey solutions for a range of sports pitch installations, from stadiums and arenas through to sports tracks and football pitches, tailored to meet your individual needs.

O'Brien's team of experts has a proven track record of delivering design and build sports projects to a diverse range of exacting client specifications and all of the work is completed in-house with no outsourcing required, meaning you get better value for money and projects are always delivered on time and on budget.

Recent projects that O'Brien has worked on include the construction of a 3G football pitch at Worthing FC, a Lano 3G synthetic pitch at Westfield Academy, a sand dressed hockey pitch at Oswestry School, two natural turf pitches for Rugby Town Junior Football Club and preparation works for the replacement of Wasps' Ricoh Arena natural turf pitch.

Worthing Football Club

O'Brien Sports constructed a fully porous, 60mm ACT Global 3G synthetic grass pitch designed to meet the requirements for

playing 11 and 5/7 aside football matches and the FIFA Quality Concept.

George Dorwell, Chairman, Worthing Football Club, said: "The feedback from the fans, players and local community has been very positive and I am extremely optimistic about the coming season and the future."

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FA to invest record £260m in grassroots football

The Football Association (FA) will invest a record £260m into grassroots football over the next four years – a £60m increase on the funding allotted for the previous four-year period.

Announcing the funding at the launch of the *National Game Strategy for Participation and Development*, FA chief executive Martin Glenn said the association plans to target four key areas of the amateur game – facilities, coaching, participation and developing the football workforce. “Our goals are ambitious, but achievable,” Glenn said.

“Grassroots football faces challenges both in terms of facilities and coaching. We’ve now set out how we’ll tackle the challenges and identified the four key areas in which we’ll invest £260m until 2019.”



The grassroots funding will focus on participation, facilities and coaching

Kelly Simmons, FA director for participation and development, added: “It is no secret that facilities need to get better – today we set out clearly and unequivocally how we can make that happen – not only through the creation of

city hubs, but also investing in improving what already exists.

“Our relationship with the Premier League and DCMS, through the Football Foundation, is key to achieving this.

[Read more: http://lei.sr?a=n8f7x_P](http://lei.sr?a=n8f7x_P)

Forest Green Rovers reveal £100m Eco Park plans

Forest Green Rovers Football Club (FGR) has revealed ambitious plans to build a £100m, eco-friendly sports and green technology complex which would include a new 5,000-capacity stadium. The club currently plays in the National League – the fifth tier of English football – and the Eco Park project is part of a strategy to establish FGR as a Football League club. FGR is working with green energy company Ecotricity on the plans. Dale Vince, founder of Ecotricity, is also chair of FGR.

[Read more: http://lei.sr?a=E9V7c_P](http://lei.sr?a=E9V7c_P)



The Eco Park will include a “flexible football stadium” and a green technology park



The Games attracted 690,000 visitors

Glasgow 2014 worth £740m to economy

The Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games has provided the Scottish economy with a £740m boost over the past eight years.

The *Post-Games Report*, published by the Scottish Government, charts the impact of the Games since 2007 – the year Glasgow won the bid to host the event – and shows that the Games have also supported, on average, 2,100 jobs each year. As well as the direct economic boost, the Games also helped Scotland’s labour market, particularly in Glasgow, with more than 11,000 young people benefiting from a range of national and local employability programmes.

[Read more: http://lei.sr?a=V5F2b_P](http://lei.sr?a=V5F2b_P)

Zaha Hadid bids to win back Tokyo stadium contract



Japanese premier Shinzo Abe dropped Zaha Hadid’s original plans for the Olympic Stadium

Zaha Hadid Architects is working with Japanese architecture and engineering firm Nikken Sekkei to submit a fresh bid for the Tokyo Olympic stadium project after their first design was dropped in July.

A new design-and-build competition for the stadium, which is set to host events during the 2020 Olympic games, was launched on 1 September, with a much shorter design and construction schedule. Revised guidelines will cap the cost at ¥155bn (US\$1.3bn, €1.2bn, £850m).

[Read more: http://lei.sr?a=T5R4m_P](http://lei.sr?a=T5R4m_P)

Tottenham Hotspur confirms NFL plans

Tottenham Hotspur FC (THFC) will install an innovative multi-use pitch at its 61,000-capacity stadium in North London – allowing it to host a minimum of two National Football League (NFL) games each season.

The club will use a retractable grass field at its new £400m venue, with an artificial surface underneath that will be used for NFL games.

The design will allow greater flexibility in the scheduling of games, with the NFL having its own playing surface for games held at the venue. The artificial playing surface will also be capable of hosting other sporting, entertainment and community events.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=p7Y4x_P



There are now 3,265 swimming sites in the UK, down from 3,287 last year

Number of swimming pools keeps falling

More than twice as many swimming pools have closed in the last 12 months as have opened, according to the 2015 *State of the UK Swimming Industry Report*.

The report reveals that the number of swimming sites in the UK fell 0.7 per cent over the twelve-month period to the end of March 2015, representing a third straight year of decline. There are now 3,265 swimming sites in the UK, down from 3,287 last year, with private sites closing at a faster rate than public facilities. It was also highlighted that public pay and play fees have increased by 3 per cent.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=b3C6n_P

Fitness First to help members find hidden talents

Fitness First has kicked off the countdown to the Rio 2016 Olympic Games by working with Team GB to launch a new Sports Profiler Tool at its flagship gym in Bishopsgate, London.

The tool has been specifically designed to help people find new sports to try out and receive Olympic-level training advice from Team GB. The tool matches people to the Olympic sport they're most suited to, based on their speed, stamina, strength, power and agility.

Based on findings that the majority of people in the UK train for just four disciplines that feature at the Olympics – cycling, football, swimming and running – the initiative is designed to engage members with the full 28 Summer Olympic sports. There is even hope that sifting through untapped potential could lead to the discovery of future Olympic medal prospects. One example of this is Helen Glover, who won gold in the Women's Coxless Pairs at London 2012. Originally a runner and hockey player, Glover was



Helen Glover won gold at London 2012 after being selected via a talent identification scheme

identified as a potential rower via a talent identification scheme.

"The tool is a similar concept to the way I first got into rowing having never thought about trying the sport before," said Glover. "It's great for people who are interested in trying something new because you never know what it's going to suggest."

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=f9v4J>



The high-profile intervention by Cantona has offered a welcomed boost for the campaign

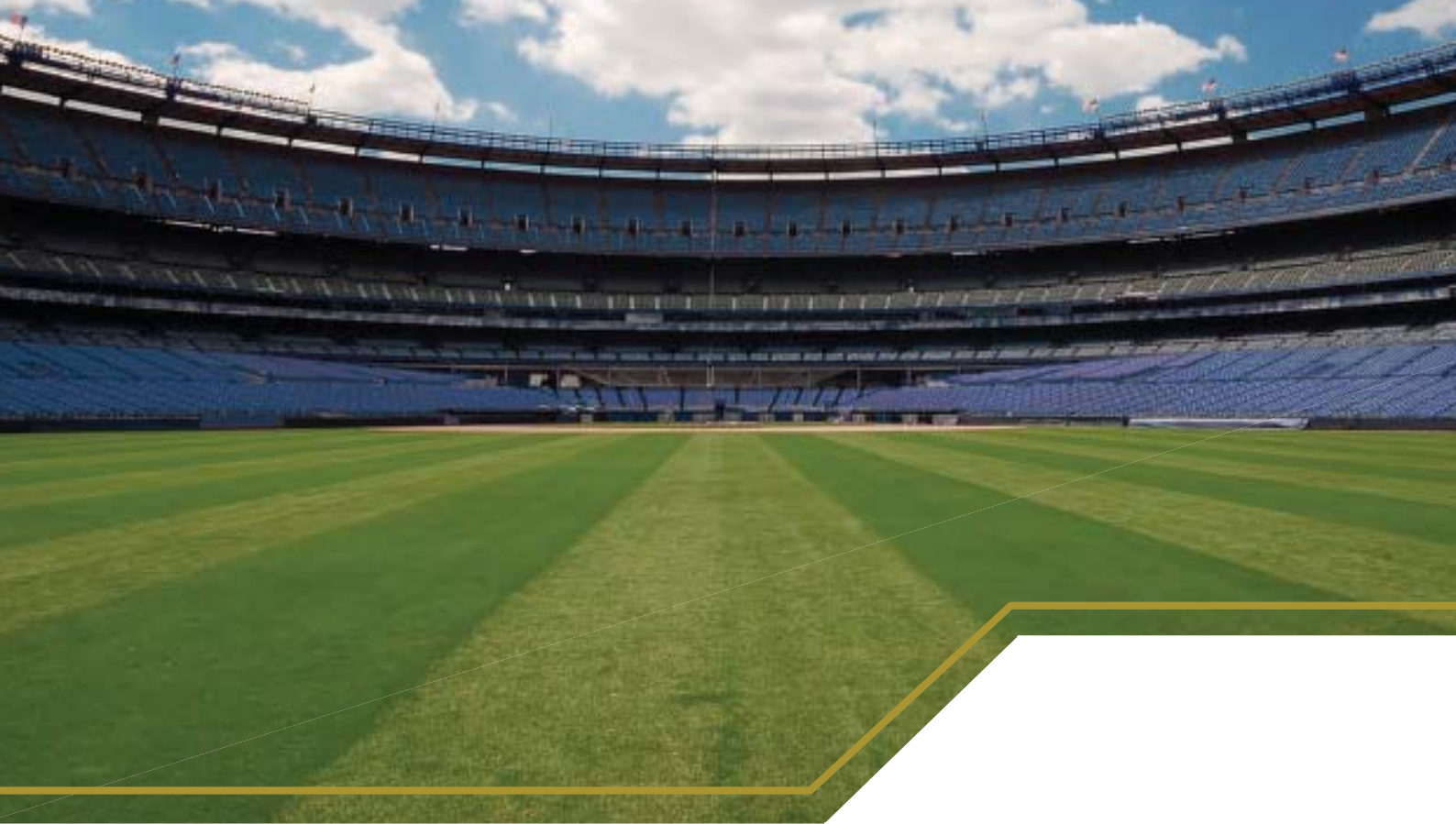
Man U legend Cantona backs Bath City FC project

Manchester United legend Eric Cantona has lent his support to a community share initiative hoping to complete a takeover of Bath City Football Club (BCFC).

Cantona is backing The Big Bath City Bid, launched in June, which aims to raise between £750,000 and £1.25m in order

to complete a community takeover of BCFC. Cantona's involvement is a result of his friendship with film director and Bath City supporter Ken Loach. Organisers are hoping that with Cantona's support, the campaign will secure the club's future.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=k5j6r_P



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London's Olympic Park to host UK's largest-ever snowsport event

London's Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will host the UK's largest-ever snowsport and music festival in November (2015).

Freeze Big Air will see more than 60 of the world's best snowboarders and skiers compete in a number of disciplines – including taking on a huge real snow jump created out of 360 tonnes of snow.

Olympic bronze medallist Jenny Jones has been confirmed as an ambassador for the festival, which will take place on 14 November and forms part of UK Sport's major events programme.

As snowboard big air is likely to become an official Olympic event at the 2018 Winter Olympics, the London Freeze Big Air will be seen as one of the most important qualifiers on the calendar in the lead up to the 2018 Games.



Olympic medallist Jenny Jones will compete at the event and is also an official ambassador

Freeze Big Air is being organised in by event operator Vision Nine, in partnership with the Mayor of London, UK Sport and British Ski & Snowboard. Simon Morton, director of major events at UK Sport, said:

"Hosting a Big Air World Cup in London is a massive boost for winter sport in Great Britain and showcases some of the world's most exciting winter sport athletes."

[Read more: http://lei.sr?a=X6Z2s_P](http://lei.sr?a=X6Z2s_P)

Bath Rugby stadium plans back on track

Plans to build a new rugby stadium on the historic Recreation Ground site in Bath, Somerset are back on track following the overturning of a court order which would have limited the size of land available for any stadium development.

The Recreation Ground Trust (RGT) – which owns the land – is looking to lease more land to Bath Rugby than it currently occupies, paving the way for a larger rugby stadium with a capacity of about 16,500.

[Read more: http://lei.sr?a=A7S8u_P](http://lei.sr?a=A7S8u_P)



The Recreation Ground stadium currently has a maximum capacity of 14,000

Los Angeles to replace Boston for 2024 Olympic bid



The US Olympic Committee will need to submit its official bid before 15 September

Los Angeles is finalising a deal with the US Olympic Committee to become the country's new candidate city for the 2024 Olympics. The city – which has held the Olympic Games twice, in 1932 and 1984 – has prepared a US\$4bn bid, which mayor Eric Garcetti said will include a guarantee to cover any "financial overruns".

The move follows last month's collapse of Boston's Olympic ambitions, as the city was forced to withdraw its bid following a lack of public support.

[Read more: http://lei.sr?a=s9Z4m_P](http://lei.sr?a=s9Z4m_P)



Mo Farah – can he repeat London 2012 heroics at the Rio 2016 Games?

Team GB: on target to meet Rio 2016 target

As sports enter the final year of preparation for Rio 2016, UK Sport has said Team GB remains on target to achieving its goal of becoming the first host nation to win both more medals at the next Olympics Games. The high performance sports agency, which funds Team GB, has invested £347m in summer Olympic and Paralympic sports and athletes for the Rio 2016 cycle.

British Olympic sports are aiming for between 39 and 71 medals at their targeted events in 2016, and so far diving, fencing, hockey and taekwondo have met their performance targets for the year.

[Read more: http://lei.sr?a=y4P3N_P](http://lei.sr?a=y4P3N_P)



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CONTACT US

Tel: 0845 602 6354

Email: louise@sportslabs.co.uk

Web: www.sportslabs.co.uk

[www.twitter.com/SPORTSLABSLTD](https://twitter.com/SPORTSLABSLTD)

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The FIFA Women's World Cup generated unprecedented interest in women's football, with games beamed live to more than 100 countries

Women's World Cup breaks new boundaries

Women's football seizes the moment on a global stage with final game watched by TV audience of 23 million in US, the record for any live game of "soccer" in the country

This year's FIFA Women's World Cup created unprecedented interest for live coverage across the world – partly thanks to a new rights deals brokered by FIFA. The live games attracted peak audiences of up to 23 million in the US, while in many countries – such as the UK and Australia – all 52 matches were aired live. The interest in the games was accompanied by a social media avalanche – during the world cup month, tweets with the tournament's hashtag #FIFAWWC were viewed more than 9 billion times.

Speaking at the tournament's closing press conference, Lydia Nsekera, chair of the Committee for Women's Football and the FIFA Women's World Cup, said the 2015 event was a watershed for the women's game.

"I said at the opening press conference that every Women's World Cup is an opportunity to show as many people as possible how our game has improved," Nsekera said. "I'm delighted to confirm, a month later, that the seventh edition of the tournament has been a roaring success."

Nsekera warned, however, that there was no time for complacency and the effects should be put to good use. "30 million women play football worldwide and we must strive to increase the number. We need this motivational atmosphere to lead to tangible and long-lasting decisions.

"Football must continue to be the number one team sport in the world," she said. "Participation levels still need to improve, and we need to stimulate discussion and action on topics such as governance, structures, competitions, commercial development, promotion, media coverage and sponsorship."

The event was a commercial success too. Peter Montopoli, general secretary of Canada Soccer and CEO of the organising

"IN TERMS OF TICKETING, WE ATTRACTED 1.35 MILLION FANS, THE HIGHEST FOR A FIFA EVENT OUTSIDE THE MEN'S WORLD CUP"

committee, confirmed the event had met its targets. "In terms of ticketing, we attracted 1.35 million fans, the highest for a FIFA event outside the men's World Cup."

PIONEERING

The tournament was also important from a technical point of view. Goal-line technology was used for the first time in a

major women's tournament, but the most controversial technical decision was to play all games on artificial turf.

Prior to the tournament, 50 top women players threatened legal action if matches were not played on natural grass. The group accused FIFA and the organising committee of "discrimination". The threats were, however, dropped by lawyers shortly before the tournament.

As it turned out, the surfaces helped produce the most memorable Women's World Cup of all time, as Eric O'Donnell, managing director of sports surface development and testing company Sports Labs, points out. Sports Labs was appointed to test the playing surfaces and verify the accuracy of the goal line technology at all six World Cup venues.

"Now that the legends have been created and the dust settled on an incredibly successful Women's World Cup in Canada, it is a good time to reflect," O'Donnell said.

"There has been universal acceptance by teams and officials that the playing surfaces presented to the players throughout the tournament were excellent. There were no injuries directly attributed to the pitches and no game was decided due to the condition of the playing surface.

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SALTEX 2015

New date and venue gets industry approval

The Sports, Amenities, Landscaping Trade Exhibition's (SALTEX) move from an outdoor environment into the halls of the NEC Birmingham on the 4 and 5 November 2015 has been met with support from both exhibitors and visitors alike. A packed exhibitor list along with new exciting features has ensured this year's SALTEX is set to be the biggest to date.

The new, centrally located, national exhibition venue and the more convenient time of year has attracted more than 200 exhibitors representing sectors ranging from forestry, play and groundscape to machinery, artificial surfaces, natural turf and landscaping products. Show organisers had to extend the show footprint by adding an extra hall to accommodate the increased interest.

SALTEX is celebrating its 70th anniversary this year and will feature a comprehensive programme of free educational seminars and will, for the first time, combine with the Institute of Groundsmanship's (IOG) annual Industry Awards dinner. Visitors can attend any of the 47 educational seminars on the show floor, hosted by partner associations and industry experts, within the two-day Learning Live programme – many of which has CPD points connected to them.

Mark Saggars, journalist and radio presenter on talkSPORT will host the 'Gaining Ground' turf management debates. The Gaining Ground theatre will offer visitors the opportunity to choose from a range of informative seminar sessions presented by some of the industry's national and international experts including Mark Pover, national facilities manager at the FA; Lee Jackson, head groundsman at Manchester City; Chris Wood, pitch consultant for the ECB and Simon Winman, head of club development at Rugby Football Union.

Other professional bodies supporting the show and contributing to the Learning Live programme include: The Agricultural



Mark Saggars will host this year's Gaining Ground turf management debates

The Learning Live programme will feature a variety of seminars, including a look at the Forsyth Barr Stadium, the world's only natural turf pitch under a permanent roof

Engineers Association, The British and International Golf Greenkeepers' Association, The Amenity Forum, The Institute for Occupational Health, and Safety, British Agricultural & Garden Machinery Association and the Sports and Play Construction Association (SAPCA). The Chartered Institute of Horticulture will also host its annual conference at SALTEX.

From an international perspective the Learning Live programme will feature an in-depth look at the Forsyth Barr Stadium in New Zealand – the world's only natural turf playing surface under a permanently fixed roof – by STRI's Dr Richard Gibbs. Phil Sharples, currently the director of pitches for Gabala FC in Azerbaijan, will focus on some of the challenges he has faced while working overseas. Bertrand Picard from Natural Grass will offer a French perspective on turfcare, while Ian Craig, regional agronomist for STRI, will relay the

bizarre turf management experiences he encountered while working at the Africa Cup of Nations 2015.

Hosted on the evening of the first day (4 November), the IOG Industry Awards at the Hilton Metropole is set to be a celebration in groundsmanship; with 19 awards up for grabs, Alistair McGowan providing the after dinner entertainment and talkSPORT's Mark Saggars hosting the event. ●

MORE INFORMATION

Visitor registration to SALTEX 2015 is FREE. To confirm your attendance visit www.iogsaltex.com where the full programme of SALTEX events will be regularly updated.

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Should sport better embrace technology to engage kids?

A Youth Sport Trust report, entitled *Class of 2035*, warns that the sports sector is in danger of losing a generation to inactivity unless it is better able to utilise smart phones and handheld devices

In June, the Youth Sport Trust published *The Class of 2035* report, which stated that PE and school sport are at a critical crossroads. Conducted for the Youth Sport Trust by the Future Foundation to mark the charity's 20th anniversary, the report provides a unique insight into young people's relationship with physical activity today and 20 years from now.

The findings suggests that the sports industry needs to better embrace

technology. As young people are becoming increasingly dependent on smartphones and tablets, the report warns that ignoring the potential which these devices could have in physical education could be a mistake.

It is certainly true that the lives of young people are now so entwined with technology that for many it is almost counter-intuitive to assume that their sporting life won't be too. As well as wearable technology and apps becoming

more widely used in sport, gamification has been heralded as a potential game changer when it comes to combining physical activity and mobile technology.

Then there are the 'disruptors' such as Sportarian, an online sports social platform which allows people to find rated and reviewed sports coaches – and winner of the Sports Technology Award for the best technology to promote participation in sport. We asked sports sector leaders for their views.

ALI OLIVER

Chief executive • Youth Sport Trust



The world has evolved considerably in the last 20 years and will change further over the next 20. The digital revolution presents opportunities and challenges with young people potential hostages to their handheld devices.

This report clearly signals that action is needed now to modernise the approach to PE and school sport and in doing so, guarantee the best possible future for generations to come.

If we are to avoid a future whereby young people are disengaged from physical activity, living increasingly sedentary lifestyles, we must recognise their needs today, working with government and partners within the education, sport and health sectors to improve opportunities for young people through PE and school sport.

Government investment through the PE and Sport Premium in recent years has helped to improve the physical literacy of young people and has laid some strong foundations to ensure a more physically active nation in the future. The challenge is to maintain these gains as children become more engaged with digital technology.

The findings from the *Class of 2035* report will be at the forefront of future planning for the Youth Sport Trust and the organisation is already considering how best to support schools to embrace technology further through its network.

SUE CAMPBELL

Youth sport advocate and former chair, UK Sport



The report presents four opposing visions of what the *Class of 2035* could look like, based on the current long term trends and drivers

predicted today. The best case scenario sees the UK head towards a bright future whereby the *Class of 2035* is healthy and active – undertaking PE, sport and physical activity on a regular basis in their schools.

The worst case scenario worryingly shows a 'sidelined generation' consumed by technology, living increasingly sedentary lifestyles and unmotivated to take part in PE and school sport. At present, both scenarios are distinct possibilities but the long term structural changes to UK society forecasted in this work show that, although significant changes are on the horizon, this should not impede our ability to shape a better future for the youth of tomorrow.

Sadly it is equally possible that those same developments could lead us to the worst-case scenario if we do not act decisively. The future is in the balance and the best and most desired outcome will only be possible if action is taken now to enhance the wellbeing, achievement and leadership of the next generation of young people.

I believe physical education, sport and physical activity are central to achieving that outcome and giving our young people the best possible opportunity to fulfil their potential.



Young people's lives are increasingly intertwined with technology – should sports do more to use tech to engage kids?

NICO CURIA

Founder • Sportarian

Some people love technology. Others hate it. The truth is that you can't avoid it and whether we like it or not, technology is changing our lives – and how we communicate and socialise. This is particularly true for young people, who are growing up in the technology era, and can't imagine life, particularly a social life, without it.

Sports technology is relatively new and children are the ones who'll benefit the most from it as they'll grow together with it. Sports will naturally always attract kids as they use movement to release energy, have fun, socialise, win, lose and learn.

The addition of technology to their sports life has the potential to make sports better (more fun) and more engaging. It can assist in forming friendships and setting challenges. This can be through incentives and virtual rewards through gamification; through the creation of challenges (such as a "strava" for kids); being part of an interactive story (such as imaginative-fitness.com); through helping find the right coach (our own sportarian.com) and online coaching.

Parents, teachers and other influencers should encourage children to experiment with technology and movement so they learn that the two can go hand in hand. My view is that, far from encouraging sedentary behaviours, technology can promote and inspire activity.



ROSS WALKER

MD • TeachSport

My 12-year-old stepson recently asked me – after learning that we're launching a new Get Active initiative – which mobile apps we'd be using to deliver it.

When my response was "none", his opinion was that without utilising the likes of Zombies Run! or RunKeeper, the initiative wouldn't be a success. When I asked him why, if tech was so important, did he and his friends so enjoy doing the long jump – an activity for which they most definitely left their phones in their bags – his answer was telling: "We saw the coaches running and jumping, having a laugh and getting competitive. We wanted to have fun too and see who could jump the furthest."

This prompted me to read up on how tech should be used to increase physical activity – and I asked my coaching staff for their opinions. It's no surprise that there's a huge gap between the "expert" ideas and the practitioners.

The consensus among our team was that it's time to put the tech down and commit to physical activity in whatever form it takes. Technology can be fun, but the two just don't mix. We need to separate the two worlds and balance the benefits of both. We need well trained, highly-motivated supportive, positive role models who influence people to welcome sport and physical activity into their lives. If we can get society to take its jobs as seriously as it takes Zombies Run! we'll succeed.



MICHAEL DOWNEY

Tom Walker speaks to the man charged with reinvigorating British tennis – the new CEO of the Lawn Tennis Association

I love a challenge,” says Michael Downey, CEO of the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) when asked for his motivation in leaving Tennis Canada and accepting the task of rejuvenating British tennis. “The UK is a bigger market than Canada and tennis is more important to people. I was keen to see if I could leverage what I’ve learned and use it to make a difference here.”

Downey’s nine-year stint as CEO of Tennis Canada was impressive and he has been credited with transforming the fortunes of Canadian tennis. Grassroots participation has grown by at least 3 per cent each year since 2008 and more than 1.2 million Canadians now play regularly – with another 3.8 million identifying themselves as “occasional players”. Meanwhile, Milos Raonic (ranked number eight in the world) and Eugenie Bouchard (No. 26) are quickly becoming household names as a result of Tennis Canada’s rejuvenated elite performance programme, which included the construction of two national training facilities in Montreal and Toronto.

LEAVING IT BEHIND

A Canadian himself, Downey’s background is a mixture of corporate and sporting experience. Before becoming CEO at Tennis Canada he held leadership roles at Molson Coors Brewing, the world’s seventh largest brewer, as well as senior executive roles at Maple Leaf Sports & Entertainment – owners of the Toronto Maple Leafs ice hockey (NHL) and Toronto Raptors basketball (NBA) franchises. The decision to leave his native country and jump across the pond wasn’t an easy one – partly due to his success. “It was a tough decision as



Downey transformed Canadian tennis during his nine-year tenure as CEO

Tennis Canada is full of great people and we were doing great things,” he says.

“There’s an old saying, however, in which I believe – ‘move when things are good’. I felt the organisation was in a good place and we’d seen great results across grassroots participation and the elite programme. Even though I think I was a good leader – the board believed in me, I had a great relationship with the staff and players – I’m sure they’re going to benefit from fresh leadership. I genuinely think no one should stay in these leadership roles forever and 10 years is a long time.”

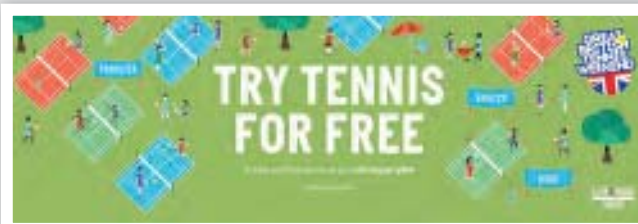
ENTERING THE LTA

Downey took the reigns at the LTA at a time when the organisation faced intense pressure to reverse a steep decline in participation numbers and to improve its elite performance programmes. Sport England was threatening to cut its investment in tennis by £10.3m, while questions were also being asked over an elite performance programme that had failed (Andy Murray aside) to produce players who could break into the world’s top 50. Downey says walking into that environment wasn’t easy.

“I felt for the colleagues here, because there was a lot of external pressure and that can sometimes cause you to lose focus on what you’re doing,” he says. “One of the first things I wanted to do was to shift the focus back on to the job at hand and for the staff not to worry about what the external world was saying. There was good work being done at the LTA and I think there just needed to be a calming voice saying ‘hey, look, these are things that every organisation goes through and we will come out of it okay’”.

Downey recognised the size of the task at hand and while he was keen to shield staff from external pressures, there was no escaping cold hard truths about the state of tennis. Sport England’s figures showed that the number of people playing tennis once a week had fallen nearly 5 per cent (from 445,100 to

424,300) between 2011 and 2013. The decline mirrored a longer-term problem – 530,900 people had played tennis once a week between October 2008 and October 2009. “Looking at the figures it’s obvious that tennis isn’t currently a growing sport in the UK,” he says. “It hasn’t been growing



The LTA’s Try Tennis for Free campaign was launched this year



for years and we've got to accept that it's going to take time to turn it around. No business can turn fast if it's suffering from a long term decline."

SETTLING IN

Downey has now been in his role for just over a year and, while accepting that there's a long journey ahead, he believes the work is already well underway in laying the foundations for the LTA to improve as an organisation – and for tennis to benefit as a result. His emphasis, he says, will be to build from the bottom up and create sustainable growth in grassroots participation and improve the development of elite players.

A crucial part of the process has been to identify what actually needs to be done – to determine a mission statement. "When I took up the role, the LTA's mission was to get more people to play tennis more often," he says.

"That's fine, but you also should be able to answer the question 'why'? Why is it

At the heart of the LTA's strategy is getting more young people into tennis. Downey plans to do this by focusing on the sport's 'bedrocks' – clubs and parks

that we want to get more people playing tennis more often? I don't think anyone had that answer, nor had even truly thought about it. One of the first things we did after I started last year was to come up with a purpose statement which answered that question – which is that we want to get more people to play tennis because it will enrich their lives physically, emotionally and behaviourally."

Once the vision statement was established, the first step was to make sure every member of staff was fully briefed and felt a part of it.

"I believe every organisation needs a set of values which dictate how it operates. After asking our staff what they saw as the LTA's core values, we identified

them as passion, excellence, integrity and teamwork. So for us, outlining our values wasn't a top down exercise, but a collective effort. We're now embedding those values to ensure they are reflected in everything we do."

Downey believes his previous experience in the corporate world has helped him to plan a new way forward for the LTA. "To get more people to play tennis, we need to operate like a business, with strategies and objectives and all the discipline that goes into it.

"The LTA had gone six years without renewing its strategic plan before I arrived, something I wanted to tackle in my first year. I'm a firm believer that every member of an organisation needs to know not just what they are doing but why they are doing it. These things may not be sexy, but they are all fundamental to running a really good organisation. It's crucial for each staff member to understand where this organisation is going, what their role is and how they are going to be measured." ►



Tennis is a product – a brand – and we need to build an image for tennis because consumers love brands. It'll help us use marketing to create a demand for tennis

CREATING A VISION

While Downey has identified the LTA's core values and provided it with a clearer vision, he has also begun working with the more concrete aspects of the task. In March 2015 Downey revealed a four-year strategy which included increasing the budget for participation by more than 50 per cent, adding £9m by 2018 and taking the total to £26m. That figure, however, doesn't include all of the investment planned for facilities, so the funding earmarked for participation is, in fact, even more substantial.

"Some grant programmes will be included in the £26m, but we also have initiatives – such as the no-interest loan programmes for clubs who wish to improve their facilities – which do not come out of the operating budget. So facility spending is largely outside the £26m, which we are planning on investing mainly in people and activators."

The Andy Murray effect: Downey believes the success of leading players can result in more children and teenagers taking up the sport

The strategy published in March can fit on a single sheet of double-sided A4 paper – an intentional move which Downey says will "force people to focus" – but is rich in detail and ambition. Two areas stand out as having central roles in rejuvenating tennis – clubs and parks.

"Clubs are the bedrock of tennis and what we want to do is become a better service organisation for the country's 3,000 clubs. We want to help them not only attract but retain members.

"I also believe that parks will play an important role. It is easy for us to reach and engage with the clubs because they are populated by people who are fixated

on tennis and they're part of an existing network. But we need to start building a greater provision in parks, a network of courts, because at the moment that simply doesn't exist. We plan to do that through partnerships with the local authorities which own the parks."

It is clear that Downey has created a strong vision and strategy for the LTA to work with and his business-like approach has already scored some early wins. In January 2015, Sport England announced that it had been "convinced" by the new focus on increasing participation and as a result the LTA has secured its current funding levels until March 2017.

The corporate approach is likely to continue too: "Tennis is a product, it's a brand," Downey says.

"And we need to build an image for tennis because consumers love brands. That will help us use marketing to create a demand for tennis." ●



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TRACEY CROUCH

The newly appointed sports minister is a self-confessed sports nut and an FA-qualified football coach. She is now on a mission to create a new strategy for sport with the focus on grassroots, fairness, the welfare of athletes and the continued success of Team GB

TOM WALKER, MANAGING EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

Tracey Crouch, named sports minister in May, is likely to be more knowledgeable about her sector than many of her predecessors. An enthusiastic fan of all sports, the MP for Chatham and Aylesford fell in love with football at a young age and managed an under-18 team in her native Kent for nearly a decade.

Her passion for sport has been evident during her time in Parliament. First elected in 2010, Crouch has been a member of the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee since 2013 and has also served as vice chair for the All Party Group for Women in Sport.

“Ever since I was a kid I played sport – every sport you could possibly imagine,” says Crouch. “It was a passion I took throughout school into university and then adult life. I also cultivated my love of politics during that time so it’s incredible to have a job in which the two meet.”

ENTERING THE FRAY

One of the first things Crouch has had to deal with since her appointment is criticism over the London 2012 Olympic Games’ legacy. One of the most vocal detractors has been Labour’s Tessa Jowell, who in her former roles as secretary of state

for sport and then as Olympics minister, was heavily involved in the London 2012 project before Labour’s election defeat in 2010. Jowell claimed that a “once in a lifetime” opportunity to use the London Games to inspire children to play sport had been squandered and blamed her “wicked and negligent” successors – namely the Conservatives – for the perceived failure. Another critic has been Chris Bryant,

Labour’s shadow sports and culture minister, who has attacked the government for its “complacency” in the House of Commons. Crouch says the attacks are unfortunate and – at times – wholly unfair.

“If unnecessary attempts at political point-scoring were an Olympic sport, Chris Bryant would win gold every time,” Crouch says. “He has done his best to impugn the legacy of London 2012, but the simple truth is that we have a great deal to be proud of and it’s a shame that the consensus has been shattered.”

“Despite the opposition’s attempts to say otherwise, we have a good story to tell about London 2012 and its legacy. The Games were the perfect showcase for the skills of our people and our businesses, which led to £14.2bn of trade and investment benefits to the UK. British business has already won £60m-worth of contracts for the Rio 2016 games, with another £100m to come. About 200 people who worked at London 2012 helped deliver the European games in Baku and are assisting Rio in its preparations.”

Facing down criticism from Labour quarters hasn’t, however, affected Crouch’s view that the future of British sport relies on having cross-party support and input. Crouch is adamant that the



Crouch, here with Stoke and England international striker Peter Crouch (no relation), is a passionate football fan



Part of the UK's new sports strategy will be an enhanced focus on participation across all ages



We've come a long way since a teacher broke my heart by telling me I couldn't play football because I was a girl



opposition will have its chance to influence the action plans for sport. "There will be a proper cross-departmental approach to the strategy," Crouch says, and adds that she has already established strong ties with a number of Labour members.

"John Mann (Labour MP for Bassetlaw) is incredibly passionate about sport," she says. "He is a man of great foresight too – we spent 21 days climbing a volcano for charity, during which he lobbied me on facilities for his constituency, a full 12 months before I was even sports minister."

"I've also worked closely with Labour's Barbara Keeley on the issue of women in sport and she has raised some important issues. We both agree that while there has been progress, challenges remain, and I look forward to working with her on those."

THIS WOMAN CAN

Women's sport is clearly something which is close to Crouch's heart – not least due to her background in being a passionate athlete herself. In 2011 she hit the headlines

after highlighting Football Association (FA) rules which prevented her from playing for the parliamentary football team because she was a woman – and it wasn't the first time she had been told that.

"Even though it's 2015, sport is still not as open and welcoming for female athletes and spectators as it is for men," Crouch says. "We've come a long way since a teacher broke my heart by telling me I couldn't play football because I was a girl. Britain's female sports stars are among the best in the world, regularly outperforming their male counterparts."

"Earlier this summer we had Women's Sport Week – an idea that would have been laughed out of the room not so very long ago. But there's still a lot more work to do, and we all need to work together in order to achieve success."

GET THEM ON BOARD

When talk turns to participation in sport – whether female or male – it is inevitable that London 2012 and its impact is brought

into the discussion. Jowell hasn't been the only voice to suggest that the failure to encourage more young people to play more sport in the aftermath of the Games represents a missed opportunity.

For Crouch, to say that there has been no improvement at all – and to suggest the chance offered by 2012 has been squandered – is too simplistic. "I'm happy to have an open and honest debate on participation," she says.

"The fact is that 1.4 million more people are playing sport than in 2005 and sport participation has increased by 300,000 since October 2010. While it is right to say that is not enough, London 2012 has, without doubt, inspired many people to get involved in Olympic and Paralympic sports."

"There has been an increase in the number of people doing athletics, cycling, archery, judo, sailing and many other sports. Let us not forget that inspiration and measurement do not always run concurrently. A group of girls I met recently in my local boxing gym are in the ►



► ring because of Nicola Adams. They are not measured on any survey because they are under 14. We will have examples like that from all over the country.

“The strapline of London 2012 was ‘Inspire a Generation’. The participation results show that our 16- to 25-year-olds are, on the whole, ‘steady’. That’s good, but not good enough. When the last active people survey results were issued in June (2015), I made it clear that I’m not happy with the decline in the number of people participating in sport.

However, the last time an all-encompassing sports strategy was drawn up was in 2002, and it has been the template for sport delivery since then.”

For Crouch, this means that when Labour criticises the government’s strategy, it is criticising something that it created. “We’ve been working on the basis of a strategy that was delivered in 2002 and is no longer fit for purpose,” Crouch says. “So I have ripped up the old strategy, and before the recess began (on 21 July) I published a consultation on a brand new sport strategy which will reform how we deliver sport in this country.

“I am sure the opposition parties will embrace this opportunity to revive the consensus that helped deliver such a successful Games.”

Crouch was elected MP in 2010 and describes herself as a “compassionate, one-nation Conservative”

STRATEGIC APPROACH

While exact details of the new strategy won’t be revealed until its publication later in the year, it is likely to be based on four key points already identified by Crouch. These are the importance of grassroots, a drive for fairness in sport, the safeguarding of all athletes and ensuring Team GB’s successes at major events.

“The first of those points is recognising the importance of the grassroots and the fact that it’s not just about the players,” says Crouch. “We also need coaches, officials and volunteers, all the people that modern sport needs in order to function. Nor am I only focused on organised, competitive sport. I know that’s not for everyone. What matters to me is getting people active and if that means someone’s registering 10,000 steps a day on their smart phone then that’s fine with me.

“The second area, fairness, is that sport should be the ultimate meritocracy. Everyone competes on the same terms and the best player or team comes out on top. But for too many people the playing field is

far from level. Disabled fans are too often denied the right to take part in active sport, or even to access stadiums as a spectator. There’s a huge amount of money at the top of the sporting pyramid, but precious little trickles down to the lower levels.

“Third, I want to see a greater focus on the welfare and wellbeing of athletes. It doesn’t matter whether you’re turning out for your pub team or for your country. If you’re involved in sport at any level, you deserve to know that the government, the sports industry and the governing bodies are looking out for your safety.

“Finally, I want to see Team GB continue its staggering success at the highest level, whether it’s the Olympics and Paralympics or the women’s football World Cup. And I don’t just want us winning on the field. I want Britain to carry on winning the right to host world-class sporting events.

“Last year we had the Giro, the Tour de France and the Commonwealth Games and this year we host the Rugby World Cup.”

It is clear that Crouch is passionate about sport and has a vision of how to improve it. She is excited about being in a position in which she can make a difference.

“This is my dream job. It gives me the chance to help people up and down the country to have the same opportunity to experience and enjoy sport that I did.” ●



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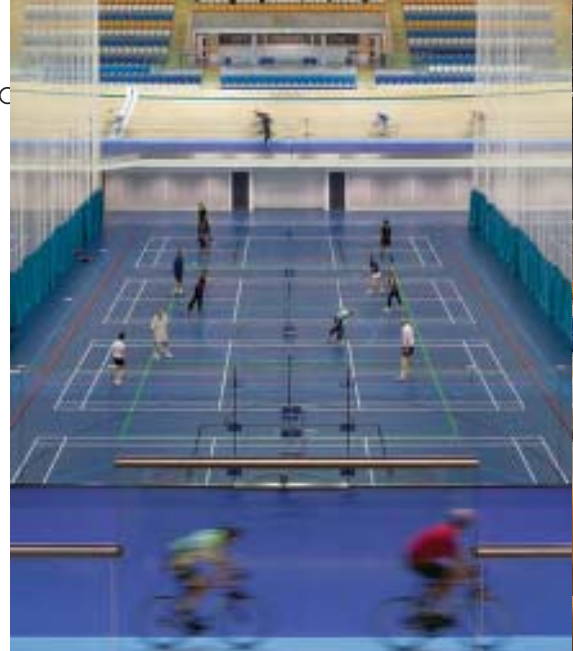
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CYCLING AHEAD

Dave Brailsford called it a “statement of intent” and Derby Arena definitely has the appearance of one. Tom Walker takes a closer look at the UK’s newest velodrome and its innovative design

Clad in gold, silver and bronze, Derby Arena has a slightly otherworldly look to it. With an emphasis on inclusive design and an innovative approach to sustainability, it has been described as a facility which pushes the boundaries of public sector building design in the UK. Located in Derby’s Pride Park next to the iPro Stadium, it’s one of the most significant 2012 Olympic legacy projects to be completed outside London.

GETTING GOING

Derby Arena is the flagship project of Derby City Council’s (DCC) £50m leisure strategy, announced in 2010 and drawn up in order to upgrade the city’s leisure facilities. A feasibility study had suggested that the creation of a new, iconic, dry sports hub with an indoor 250m velodrome cycling track should be at the heart of the plans. The idea was to produce a world class venue with the capacity to host elite competitions, inspire people to take up sport and help Derby achieve its target of becoming the “most active city in England”.

When the tender was launched and the design bids came in, one – by architects FaulknerBrowns – stood out. It promised

Derby Arena in short

Description: Only the fifth national standard 250m indoor cycling track in the UK. The infield is can host a variety of sports – badminton, basketball, netball, volleyball and martial arts (all which can be played by wheelchair users).

Cost: £24m building cost, with another £3.5m spent on external/ enabling works. With support from Sport England’s Iconic Facilities Fund.

Internal floor area: 14,500sq m

Architect: FaulknerBrowns (Michael Hall and Nigel Tye)

Project manager: Mace

Engineers: Arup

Contractor: Bowmer & Kirkland

to provide a multi-use facility capable of catering for the local community’s needs as well as hosting high-profile, national events. FaulknerBrowns’ plans also included a radical solution – to build the cycle track above ground floor level and allow unimpeded access below to a central multi-use infield, providing a 12

badminton court hall space and extensive event overlay potential.

Michael Hall, FaulknerBrowns’ project partner, says the arena is not just a regional landmark but an example of how local authorities can up their game when it comes to providing leisure facilities for the future. “Derby Arena represents a new era and sets new standards in both multi-use velodrome and local authority community sports facility design,” Hall says.

“The arena is a striking, inviting and motivating place to participate in sport and also to visit as a spectator.”

DESIGNED TO IMPRESS

The budget for the building – £24m – was relatively modest, considering the scale and the complex geometry created by the cycle track. The layout and form of the arena wraps the track with four storeys of supporting services and amenities – on one side there is a café foyer, gym, multi-function spaces with a 200-seat balcony and plant room, while on the other sits the 1,500-capacity spectator grandstand.

A key requirement of DCC was to create a ‘wow factor’ on entering the building and arena space. “Architecturally we made a conscious decision that the building



The main spectator stand has a capacity of 1,500 (left). The Arena has been designed to act as a community sports hub for local residents



design should be bold, simple and dynamic reflecting the internal sporting function and a sense of movement,” says Hall.

“The ‘wow’ factor that DCC wanted was achieved by the axial route into the arena infield with the spectator seat backdrop.”

There were challenges too, as the site area for the venue was limited. “The site required the 250m cycle track and the arena had to be rotated 45 degrees to make the building fit within the site area width,” project architect Nigel Tye explains.

“The spaces around and beneath the raised cycle track also had to be carefully optimised – we had to keep the size of the building small enough to deliver the car parking requirements leased to Derby County FC on match days.”

For Tye, the overriding challenge however, was to create a facility which was sustainable in operation. “Velodromes are generally underused and expensive buildings to operate and construct,” he says. “The infield area within a 250m cycle track is 3,000sqm and in many facilities is

Facilities

- 250m indoor cycling track
- Cycle hub with hire, repair & storage
- 140-station health club and gym supplied by Technogym
- Watt bike and exercise studios
- Sports infield the size of 12 badminton courts
- Fixed seating for 1,600 spectators
- Events and conferencing facilities
- Meeting and hospitality rooms
- Café and bar
- Fully accessible changing rooms

underutilised. The day-to-day cyclists only require a small area to prepare for training, which is usually to one semi-circle end of the infield. There are many velodromes where the infield is used for other activities – Manchester Velodrome has a two-court sports hall space and the Apeldoorn

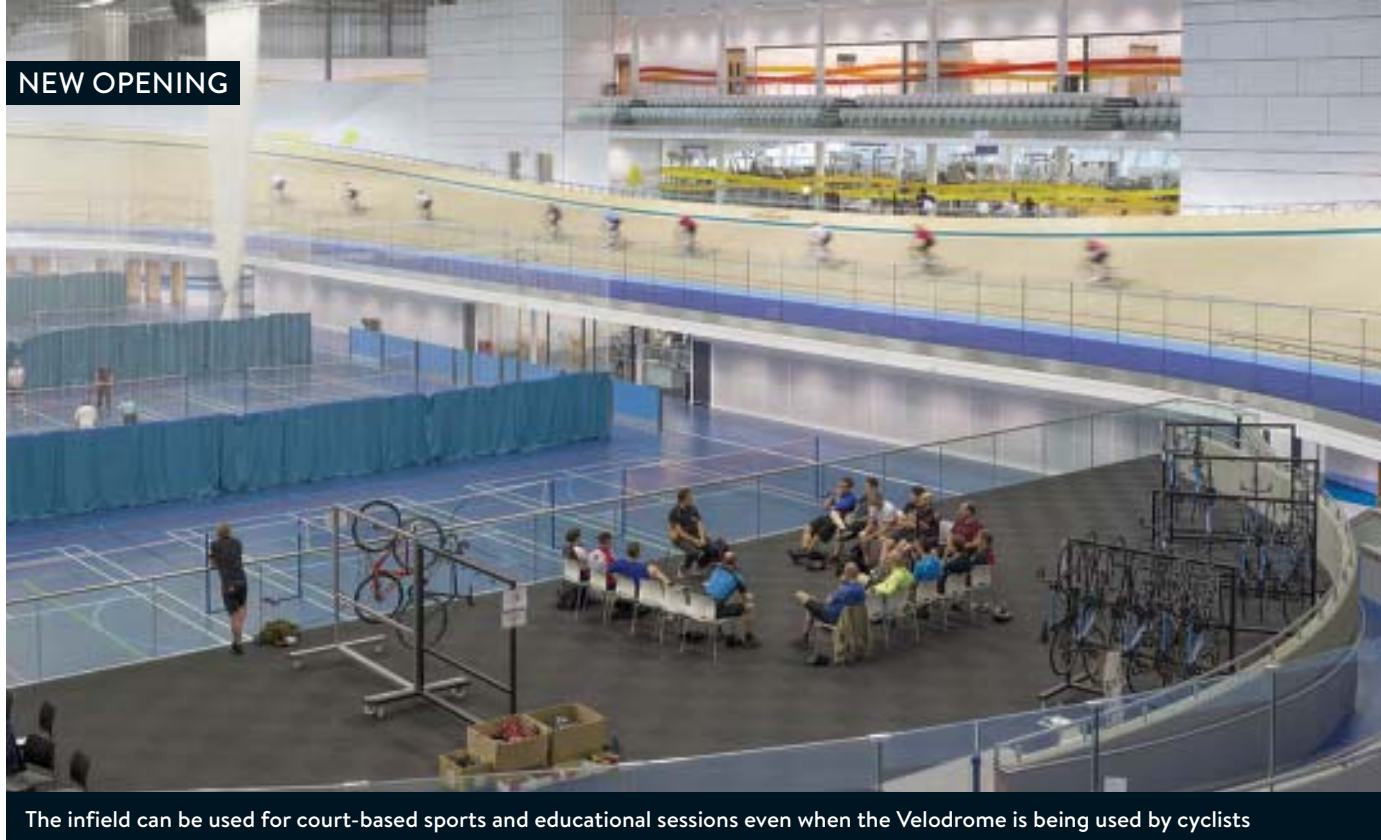
velodrome in the Netherlands has a 200m running track – but access is usually only accessible by a bewildering route of ramps and unpleasant tunnels.

“At Derby, by raising the cycle track, we were able to provide flexibility and vastly increased accessibility of the infield which opened up the opportunity for the facility to deliver a vast range of events alongside the day-to-day sporting output.”

The lifted design of the track – alongside the integration of acoustics, catering and toilet facilities – has helped create a very flexible venue. As well as being able to hold 1,700 fans for cycling, the arena is able to host music and entertainment events for up to 5,000 people.

SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS

While economic sustainability was a key priority, the arena also has impressive credentials when it comes to environmental sustainability and energy saving. A low energy displacement heating and ventilation system installed in the



The infield can be used for court-based sports and educational sessions even when the Velodrome is being used by cyclists

The efficiencies of the compact design could set the future standards for sustainable, multi-use velodrome design

- main arena space allows stratification of temperature, meaning that the sports in the middle will benefit from cooler air while a warmer temperature – preferred by cyclists – can be maintained on the track.

All energy and water systems are submetered and linked to a comprehensive building energy management system. Low energy LED technology has been used for all general lighting and the foyer is naturally ventilated.

The building's form also helps with energy saving. The layout tightly wraps the internal facilities around the fixed form and dimensions of the cycle track to reduce the arena volume and its energy loads. Additionally, the building's shape minimises surface areas and reduces embodied carbon within the substructure.

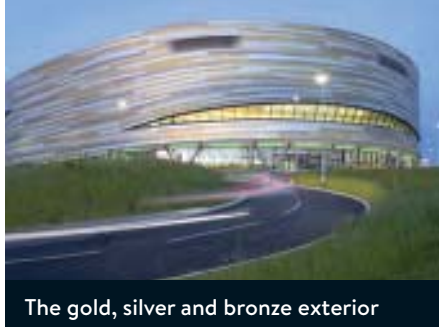
Savings are also made on lighting, as natural light floods in from three, large 'eye-lid' windows which permeate deep into the facility. While reducing the reliance on artificial lighting, the windows also allow a passive connection with the outside.

Tye says the building has been deliberately designed in a simple and robust manner to provide ease of use of environmental systems – as well as maintenance and operation. "The efficiencies of the compact design could set the future standards for sustainable, multi-use velodrome design."

In the architect's words: Nigel Tye

The upper façade of the arena is expressed as a ribbon of material which wraps (or spins) around the building. The geometry created between the curving roof profile and the lifting of the building front and back has been deliberate to create a consistent height to the upper layer.

This consistency allows a horizontal strip cladding to be used akin to the boarding of the velodrome track. The aluminium shingles received a high quality anodised finish in three colours reflecting sporting success as 'gold, silver and bronze medals'. The soft metal cladding has a subtle distortion / rippling which create a shimmering surface appearance which adds to the feeling of movement.



The gold, silver and bronze exterior

MULTIPLE USES

The unique plans have delivered – Derby Arena is a truly multi-sport venue and had more than 13,000 visitors in its first month of operation. While the velodrome has been received enthusiastically by cyclists, the opening of the arena has also given a boost to DCC's fitness memberships.

Spectator events are being lined up too. The arena recently hosted the Sky-sponsored national badminton competition and in August held cycling's 2015-16 Revolution Series – featuring Bradley Wiggins, Mark Cavendish, Jason Kenny and Laura Trott. And it's not just sport that is benefitting from the The Arena. It has already hosted a diverse range of events including Derby University graduation, a BBC Symphony Orchestra concert and a Jimmy Carr comedy event. Not to mention the Aladdin Panto, scheduled for later in the year!

Sir Dave Brailsford, who was born in Derbyshire and lives on the outskirts of the city, is impressed. "When I heard they wanted to create this (the Arena) I thought they were taking the mick," he said. "But they've done an absolutely fantastic job."

"This is a statement of intent from Derby and the city council to invest in the future. Now people have to use this facility and as long as the opportunities are there for people, they will take them." ●

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EARL SANTEE

First published in
CLADMag 12015



A well-designed sports stadium can transform a community, but there are no shortcuts to making it authentic, Populous principal Earl Santee tells Magali Robathan

Why did you become an architect?

I've always loved to draw and through my teenage years I helped my dad with his construction firm. My love of art and building gave me the passion for architecture. I studied architecture and environmental design at the University of Kansas. I was always a big sports fan so when the opportunity to join HOK Sport presented itself in 1985 I didn't hesitate.

How do you approach your projects?

When I'm faced with a new project, I start by looking at the local community and thinking

about how we can connect the community to the building and the sporting events it will host. I think they have to be more than just connected; they have to be completely linked in all aspects from transportation to community development.

Why is it so important that the buildings are rooted in their communities?

It's what gives a spirit to a place. Our work is about more than just the building itself – it's about how people feel about it and about how it fits into the community it sits in. Our goal is to create sustainable,

impactful experiences that have a real definite spirit to them and last a long time.

How do you achieve that?

I spend a tremendous amount of time in the cities and towns I work in. I need to fully understand a place so that I can appreciate the client's comments about their desires, goals and objectives for the project.

I try to experience the communities as the people who live there experience them. I stay there, use the public transportation system, go to the restaurants and bars, the public activities and sporting events.

Target Field in Minneapolis is located on a very tight urban site, surrounded by parking and mass transportation



ABOUT POPULOUS

Global architecture firm Populous is responsible for some of the world's best known sports and entertainment buildings, including the Sochi 2014 Olympic Stadium in Russia, the Arena das Dunas stadium for the FIFA World Cup 2014 in Rio, Brazil; the London 2012 Olympic stadium, the new Yankee

Stadium in New York and the O2 Arenas in London, Dublin and Berlin.

Populous started out as HOK Sport, which was founded in 1983 as a division of US-based HOK group. In 2009, Populous was created through a management buyout and now operates as an independently owned collective with more than 500 staff worldwide.

■ More: populous.com

PHOTO: POPULOUS



Earl Santee

I want to fully understand the unique differences between that community and others – what's great about that city, what the aspirations of the people who live there are. It's also about the art of possibility. What can that community become? You have to have a really deep understanding of all of these things in order to make a project authentic – you can't make it up.

How does the design of a sports building affect the experience of the fans?

Having a stadium changes the dynamics of a community completely. It's important

to understand how that works – to understand that the moment when we take the subway to a stadium or ballpark is the first moment of our experience. The culmination of that is the event itself, but at the end of that, it doesn't stop – you go back out into the community, back on the subway, back to the restaurants or bars, back home or to your hotel. Understanding the synergy of all those experiences, both inside and outside of the stadia, is so important.

At Target Field in Minneapolis (2010), we designed a baseball stadium that was

completely connected to all possible modes of transport. We built a pedestrian skywalk that links the stadium to the city, we have bike trails running under the site, we built in access to light rail and commuter rail connected to the bus service and there's also a car park on site.

This had a big impact on the architecture, because we wanted to design something that was iconic no matter how you approached it. We had to think about how people would see the park from the highway system three or four miles away, from mass transit 10 miles away, or from



BOTH PHOTO: PAUL CROSBY



Target Field is easily accessible on foot and by public transport – an important part of the brief

The Populous-designed
McLane Stadium in Waco,
Texas, which opened in 2014



PHOTO: CHRISTY RADEKIC

It's definitely a challenging time for sports architecture right now – we really have to focus and innovate constantly. Every detail counts

- close up as they approached it on foot or by bike. Part of the design is manifested by the opportunities created by the site.

What have you been working on over the past 12 months?

We recently completed Baylor University's McLane Stadium [a new 45,000-seat American football stadium that opened in Waco, Texas in August 2014].

I'm currently working on the design of the Atlanta Braves stadium, a baseball stadium in Atlanta, Georgia, and we're in the middle of construction on the Kyle Field [American] football stadium at Texas A&M University, which is the largest renovation project in collegiate sports history. It will open during 2015.

What have been your the most challenging projects in your career?

Target Field in Minneapolis was one of our most challenging projects, because we had to put a 41,000-seat, 13-acre ballpark on an 8.5-acre site which is very tight.

We had to make do with what we had space-wise – it was a very urban site, and was surrounded by a railway line, a federal highway, viaducts, an interstate, an underground creek and a waste incinerator

EARL SANTEE BIO

Earl Santee received a bachelor's degree in architecture and environmental design from the University of Kansas, and joined Populous (then HOK Sport) in 1985.

Describing himself as an urban designer first and an architect second, Santee's philosophy is that urban sites shape the buildings he designs.

Santee has designed more than 40 sports venues across the US, including the new Yankee Stadium, New York (2009), Marlins Park, Miami (2012), Target Field, Minneapolis (2010), McLane Stadium at Baylor University, Waco (2014) and the Texas A&M Kyle Field redevelopment in College Station (due for completion in 2015).

A senior principal at Populous, Santee is a member of the American Institute of Architects, the Society for American Baseball Research, the Stadium Managers' Association and the Urban Land Institute.

In 2014, he was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects.

plant – among other things. Making the project fit within the site was a huge challenge. We built under the bridges and vertically in some places, we built out over the street where we could. We took advantage of every nook and cranny on the site to make it work.

The renovation and redevelopment of the Kyle Field stadium at Texas A&M University was also a huge challenge. We were faced with a building that had been designed by five or six different architects since the 1920s – trying to find a way to unify the architecture in and around pre-existing conditions was tricky. The scale of the project was also a challenge – it's a \$450m renovation, which takes the capacity from 82,000 to 102,500 seats, and the work is being done without interrupting the team's schedule.

Do you have a favourite project?

I couldn't choose a favourite, but I do have moments in each that are personally powerful. Walking up on Babe Ruth Plaza at the new Yankee Stadium is a real moment for me. I have a very strong emotional connection to it. We wanted to capture the legacy of the Yankees and I think we did it in a strong way.



PHOTO: CHRISTY RADEK

What have been the highest and lowest points in your career?

This year I was named a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects – that was a great moment. I don't often look backwards in my career, I just take one project at a time, so it was great to stop and think: Wow, maybe I really did accomplish something.

The lowest points have been whenever we've had to lay anyone off. I love our staff, I love the work they do and the commitment and passion they all bring to the projects we work on, so having to let anyone go is really hard.

What are the biggest trends in sports architecture at the moment?

We're going through a really dynamic change in the industry because of technology. The experience people can have at home is so much greater than it used to be, so the challenge is competing with that and giving as much impact to the experience of watching a live sporting event as possible.

It's definitely a challenging time for sports architecture right now with so much competition – we really have to focus and innovate constantly. Every detail counts.



PHOTO: ESTO PHOTOGRAPHICS

Santee says the Yankee Stadium, New York City, captures the legacy of the Yankees

How do you judge whether a building has been a success or not?

If you can create great experiences outside a building, it's easier to create them inside. You have to focus on tying the two together. On greenfield sites it's more challenging because everything's new, you have to understand connected moments – how people arrive, their experience as they approach and once they get inside.

With urban sites, one of the biggest factors is whether people can get there easily. You have to give them every reason to come and remove reasons not to.

How has the focus on sports legacy changed during your career?

Together with our partners in London, we've been thinking hard about the adaptability of our projects as they move on in their lives. The London Olympic Stadium [designed by Populous] was a good example of this.

What's the best part of your job?

I love when I'm in a meeting with a client and they're finding something impossible and we find a solution.

There's a magic moment when everyone gets it at the same time. These moments are what really builds the relationship with a client; they bind you forever.

And the worst part of your job?

I'm not a morning person. I do my best to all my work after noon.

Which other architects do you admire?

I've always liked the simplicity of César Pelli's work. I like the work of Santiago Calatrava and I'm also a fan of the clarity of IM Pei's work.

What three words sum you up?

Passionate, engaged and optimistic. ●

GRASS
ROOTS
SPECIAL

CITY OF DREAMS

Nottingham was named the first ever UK City of Football – a pilot initiative launched by Sport England to increase the number of people playing football

There were 2.2 million adults (over 16s) playing football regularly in 2012. Just 18 months later, that figure had fallen to 1.8 million. Something needed to be done and that “something” was Sport England announcing it would invest £1.6m of National Lottery funding into creating the first ever UK City of Football. The aim was to choose a city to host a pilot scheme, designed to find new ways to get more people playing the sport regularly – with a particular focus on those aged 14- to 25-years-old.

BID TIME

In the initial application stage, 22 cities submitted expressions of interest and three were shortlisted. From that group, Nottingham overcame competition from Manchester and Portsmouth and was chosen as the one to drive the two-year experiment. Nottingham’s winning bid brought together partners from both inside

and outside the traditional footballing family. These included the Creative Quarter – the city’s creative network where business, art and technology come together – local sports clubs, schools, colleges and universities as well as large local businesses such as retailer Boots and banking company Capital One.

FOOTBALLING EXPLOSION

Announcing the winner, Sport England said Nottingham’s use of insight and understanding of its target audiences was “most impressive”. The City of Football took lessons from Nottingham’s annual GameCity Festival, which successfully draws young people into digital technology by showcasing the cultural side of video games.

As the first City of Football in England, the Nottingham team’s chosen mission statement was to help people ‘find their football’. Since delivery of the initiative began in April, it has created new football

partnerships, supported better planning of football events and is driving the city to having the fastest growing number of female and BME players.

As well as promoting initiatives to support the diversity of the groups participating in football, Nottingham City of Football (NCF) is also promoting the cultural, social, health and educational benefits of participating in all forms of football for people of all abilities.

NCF managing director, Amanda Chambers, says the programme’s main purpose is to ensure more people play football regularly (at least 30 minutes a week), reversing the trend of declining participation. “Our overall ambition is to spark an explosion of grassroots football participation, by people of all ages, but particularly by young people,” she said.

“However, we do not just want to engage with people who are currently playing football, or just get more of the same people participating.

The initiative will look to utilise rolemodels such as Alex Greenwood, the Notts County Ladies defender who was part of the bronze-winning England World Cup squad this year (in white, right)





NCF managing director,
Amanda Chambers

The initiative has recruited a number of former top-flight players, including Nottingham-born former Notts County player Michael Johnson

“We want to reach those who are not currently taking part and are not engaged in football at all.”

NCF chair Jeff Moore is also keen to reach out to the communities which the established game fails to influence. We want to widen and deepen engagement with the communities and groups of people which the established game of football does not reach. We think there are limitations in the traditional ‘targeted interventions,’” he said.

“There is a need to focus on a change in behaviour, not just within individuals, but within the football infrastructure and organisations currently leading, managing and delivering activity in the city.

“We’d also like to reach people who are inactive and get them active, providing equality of access and opportunity and ensure our activities are inclusive to



all communities. While we will only get to keep the title of City of Football for two years, it’s not over for us after that. We want to ensure the increase in participation is sustained and that football will be embedded in the lives of people.”

FUNDING THE GAME

The group is currently only funded through National Lottery backing from

Sport England and the money is being spent carefully and in ways which will directly increase participation in football across their key target audiences.

For example, many of the events have been highly targeted and involved localised activities with 14 to 25-year-olds, black and minority ethnic communities, women and girls and disabled people.



NCF chair Jeff Moore (above). The programme looks to attract more BME people to play football (right)



“Our goal is to reverse the trend of declining participation. We’re taking all the right steps to see a fundamental change in football participation across Nottingham” - Amanda Chambers

- Over the two years of the project, NCF also aims to achieve a shift in the gender, ethnicity and demographic profiles of people playing, coaching and volunteering in football in the city to better reflect the diversity of people living in Nottingham. The team is creating new approaches to how football is delivered, including the development of a new planning tool called Playbook.

A digital platform, Playbook will help providers planning to put on football activities in the city target the right people, in the right places, at the right time, with relevant offers.

Playbook will allow the NCF to communicate its football offers more effectively and more coherently across a broad range of communication platforms. It will also mean that football activity programmes can be designed around specific user needs.

It’s hoped that Playbook will become an open football platform, allowing people and communities to identify where football events or coaching sessions are happening, who they can play with and how to get there. By doing so, the NCF believes Playbook will remove some of

the greatest barriers to participation by making football sessions available and accessible for all.

LASTING EFFECT

Chambers and Moore share the same hope that Nottingham’s time as the first City of Football will leave behind a great legacy for the city’s grassroots football at the end of the two years. The ideal outcome would be more people playing football, a more diverse demographic of players and coaches, and the creation of a more accessible local football infrastructure. The team accepts that it will face challenges as it has a relatively short time span to deliver its goals to positively alter and challenge the structure of how football is delivered and viewed in the city.

The team also hopes that future participation projects will be able to learn from what is achieved by Nottingham’s tenure as City of Football – and that other cities and national governing bodies can take on board the key conclusions as they implement their own plans across the UK. Sport England has already announced that it plans

to use Nottingham’s experiences and lessons to implement a new strategy for football in the future. With the project already seeing improvements in football participation across the city, Chambers is confident that the initiative will help drive a radical change in football across the region and beyond. “There’s already been a real buzz around the city since we began implementing the project in April, she said. “There are some amazing role models within our local football sides and the success of the women’s teams recently, both nationally and locally, has helped us inspire more women and girls to get into the game, which is fantastic.

“We’ve seen a similar rise in the number of BME communities getting involved in local football sessions and coaching courses, which is great for the future of football at all levels.

“We want this increase to continue and particularly with those young people aged 14 to 25. Our goals will always be set around the need to reverse the trend of declining participation and I truly feel that we’re taking all the right steps to see a fundamental change in football participation across Nottingham.” ●

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GROWING SPORT

To get the nation active, more needs to be done to engage and encourage young children, especially the less confident. Kath Hudson reports

For the first time in history, we are facing a situation where parents are likely to outlive their children. One third of children are leaving primary school overweight or obese and physically illiterate.

Recent research from Essex University – which previously charted schoolchildren's fitness levels in 1998 and 2008 – has found that children's activity levels are waning and fitness levels are declining by 0.95 per cent annually. Ukactive's *Generation Inactive* report, launched in June, draws similarly disappointing conclusions: only half of seven-year-olds are meeting the recommended guidelines of 60 minutes of physical activity a day.

CATCH THEM EARLY

With school sport diminishing and generally skewed towards the most able, the less confident frequently fall by the wayside, becoming inactive children and then inactive adults. If they were helped to find the sport which suits them, which they find fun and which they are given confidence to play, this could change.

It's crucial to give primary aged children a positive introduction to sport, because if you miss out on sport as a child it's far harder to pick it up as an adult.

Money is a key issue. The funding for clubs affiliated to the national governing bodies of sport doesn't start until age 14. While Sport England hands more than £500m each year to NGBs to engage the over 14s, there is no funding allocation for the under 14s, except for school sport, which means places available in out-of-school clubs are limited.

Former PE teacher and CEO of Fit for Sport, Dean Horridge, argues there should be some funding for the under 14s. "The NGBs have no remit to engage those under 14. The younger children have a few grants here and there, but have to rely on subscriptions and



Engaging children early is the key to ensuring they develop a life-long relationship with sport

volunteers to run the clubs," he says. "But if you haven't engaged them by the time they are 14, it's unlikely you ever will. It's not rocket science: University College London research, which looked at the 1970 *British Cohort Study*, shows that if you engage children at an early age then they're more likely to continue to play sport as adults."

PARTICIPATION DOWN

It's not just the health of children and the nation which is suffering, sports are losing out as well, with many (excepting tennis, cycling, basketball and running) in decline. According to Sport England's Active People Survey, the number of people engaged in regular physical activity in England fell 1.4 per cent between October 2014 and March 2015.

Swimming and fitness suffered the biggest casualties. Although swimming is the most popular participation sport, almost 400,000 have stopped swimming over the past year. This has raised some eyebrows. Sport England CEO, Jennie Price, has said this "serious, long-term decline needs to be reversed."

Horridge reiterates his point about engaging children earlier. "Many clubs are not hitting their targets for participation, so are having funding clawbacks," says Horridge. "There's got to be a catalyst for change from the top down, to engage children when they're younger and sustain that as a teen and an adult."

COMMUNICATION

As a parent with two primary school aged children who between them have tried football, rugby, athletics, swimming, gymnastics, triathlon and cycling, which has led to much volunteering on my behalf, I have noticed a few common pitfalls, which translate into barriers to participation.

Communication is the first issue. Enquiry emails often go unanswered, because this is left to a volunteer who is too busy to keep on top of them. I'm not criticising volunteers – I know first hand how hard you have to work to be a volunteer – I'm saying they should be given more support.

If there was funding available for under-14s then clubs could consider paying someone for a few hours a week to keep on top of queries, and also be in charge of other important admin tasks, such as time consuming funding and grant applications, as well as seeking sponsorship, CSR and partnership opportunities, which could then lead to more opportunities being offered. In the current situation most clubs have to run lengthy waiting lists.

"Volunteers are great and our grassroots sports rely on them, but that comes with the pitfall that communication is not great," says Horridge. "Consumers expect a bit of



A sporty child can make a sporty adult,
so it's crucial to give young people a
positive introduction to sport



Offering children a wide range of sports means it's more likely they will find an activity they enjoy and pick up a lifelong habit



► professionalism around the sports which we see as core sports and the non-payment element leads to a lack of professionalism.”

The British Gymnastics-affiliated club my daughter attends is a very professional set up, thanks to its paid staff. However, the price charged for the sessions reflects this. If all sports were to pay staff under the current structure, then subscriptions would rise considerably, presenting another barrier to participation – but it might improve the quality of the sessions.

ENGAGEMENT

While learning the correct set of skills and techniques are undoubtedly very important –and not just for the talented – at a young age the focus should be more on fun and engagement to ensure all kids taking part get moving and involved.

“I’ve really got an issue with someone spending 20 minutes explaining to a six year old how to hold a hockey stick,” says Horridge. “It’s better to ask them to dribble a ball around a cone with their stick as many times as they can and try and beat last week’s score. Make it fun.”

My children were turned off both swimming and football because the sessions involved too much time waiting for a turn and getting cold, and too much

focus on technique which they couldn’t grasp. “You see it all the time at football: two lines of 10, rather than 10 lines of two,” says Horridge. “Young children just want to be involved, they want to be running around and they have short attention spans. If they’re not busy they start to misbehave.”

Because the NGBs remit is to teach the sport correctly and find talent for county and national teams, coaches are taught to put more emphasis on teaching technique and less on engaging children. This policy might be good for elite sport but is less effective in getting children moving and mobilising the masses. Perhaps a two pronged approach could work better to keep the less competitive engaged.

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) has been tweaking its coaching over the last few years to boost continual involvement. My son has enjoyed training sessions where he’s kept occupied, the coaches are encouraging and the atmosphere is inclusive. Also good to see is the Amateur Swimming Association’s (ASA) recent partnership with the British Sub-Aqua Club, to introduce children to snorkeling and aquatic sports. This injects a fun element and also illustrates how swimming is a gateway to other sports.

RIDING HIGH

Boosted by the medal haul at the London 2012 Olympics and Bradley Wiggins’ success in the Tour de France, cycling is enjoying an upsurge. It is a great activity for families to enjoy together, the downside is that it requires investment in kit and a safe place to cycle, which is harder to find now than in the 1970s.

The number of people cycling recreationally once a week has increased by 17 per cent since 2008 according to the Active People Survey. DCMS figures estimate 31.8 per cent of five- to 10-year-olds (1.3 million) participate in cycling, or ride a bike once a month.

Sarah Lewis, British Cycling’s senior marketing and communications officer, says it is important for children to be given a positive experience of cycling at a young age: “People are far more likely to have a sporting habit for life if they are engaged early on. Time spent playing sport as a kid is an important factor in adult participation.”

Although reliant on its network of 6,000 volunteers at its 300 clubs, British Cycling has been successful in finding sponsors, in a competitive market, to implement its initiatives, which include bike handling workshops, entry level competitions and holiday coaching programmes.



The number of people cycling recreationally once a week has increased by 17 per cent since 2008

Local clubs are starved of cash and provision is often targeted towards bringing on talent, rather than encouraging broad participation

British Cycling has also been pro-active about forming partnerships with schools and local authorities and implementing outreach programmes, which Horridge says is something more NGBs should be doing. In my view the reason they are not is lack of time and not lack of need, because they all run waiting lists.

COLLABORATION

Triathlon is another fast growing sport and Britain now has more world and Olympic triathlon champions than any other nation. However, the British Triathlon funding model is targeted at elite level and boosting adult participation, not bringing young children into the sport.

Triathlon is an intimidating sport, so starting early has got to be an advantage. Fortunately, a number of race organisers, including Tempus Leisure, Castles and Human Race are running mini triathlons alongside their adult races, and so the opportunities to participate are starting to trickle down to children. Also, a CSR programme between British Triathlon

and steel company, Tata, has offered 66,000 children, aged eight to 13, the opportunity to sample triathlon in the world's biggest mini series.

It is apparent that local clubs are starved of cash, and provision is targeted towards bringing on talent, rather than encouraging broad participation. The decision to do this goes all the way up to central government, which gives the direction on how Sport England and NGBs spend their funding.

The results from the Active People Survey, as well as recent research into children's activity levels, illustrates that the current approach isn't working. The DCMS has pledged to change the current model.

Sports Minister Tracey Crouch acknowledges that participation levels shown in the Active People survey are not good enough: "I am very disappointed by these numbers. A significant amount of public funding has been invested in sport in the last decade but the results simply aren't good enough. It's time for a change. The recent downward trend in participation has demonstrated the

current approach has had its day. It's not the return we expect to see for a large investment of public money.

"I am going to develop a new strategy for sport, as a matter of urgency. I will consult with the sector on a new approach that will strengthen sport across the country, focus support on those that can deliver the goods and look to take a more joined-up approach to sport and physical activity across Whitehall."

Something needs to change and I believe there should be more investment in engaging children, and providing opportunities for younger children. We need to find a way of encouraging the less sporty to stay active.

At the moment it is left largely to schools and as Tam Fry, spokesperson for the Child Obesity Forum says, this is inadequate. "Schools are not preparing children for adult life, there has been too much focus put on academic achievement at the expense of lifestyle choices. Schools have got rid of playing fields and discarded physical education." ●



CHILD'S PLAY

A key legacy pledge of London 2012 was to inspire a generation and get the nation physically active. Katherine Selby looks at the initiatives.

KATHERINE SELBY, ACTION PR

This year marks the 10th anniversary of London winning the bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games. At the time, Lord Coe promised the Games would inspire a generation and create a legacy of physical activity and sporting success – pledges which were embraced by those working in the sport and physical activity sector. Yet a decade later, physical activity in the UK has fallen by more than 20 per cent – and is forecast to drop a further 35 per cent from current levels by 2030.

Of major concern is that inactivity starts in early childhood. Only half of seven-year-olds are meeting recommended physical activity guidelines of 60 minutes per day and less than half of schools record the length of time children actually spend being physically active in PE lessons. Older children's activity levels don't fare well either, with secondary school aged children dropping out of sport at an alarming rate.

The problem of inactive kids has been recognised, with the leisure industry, government and numerous professional bodies taking steps to address the challenges. Initiatives such as the cross



YMCA works with all ages and, with The Youth Sport Trust, created a Smart Start Club for pre-school children

party commission on physical activity and unactive Kids – a newly launched, children-specific division of industry body unactive – are encouraging. So while there remains a gap between the legacy aspirations announced in 2005 and reality, the continued emergence of activity projects and programmes indicate there is a real desire to tackle the issue. It seems that for every damning report on how inactive children are, there's an exciting new programme underway. For every critic, an inspirational individual or company coming up with new ideas. Look closely and you'll see that some of Britain's finest physical activity 'architects' are successfully building bridges to close the gap.

CATCH THEM YOUNG

As the challenge of inactivity starts young, it makes sense to start the solution when children are young. Chris Wright, head of health at the Youth Sport Trust (YST), says that a good age could be as young as two. YST created the Smart Start Club for pre-school children – in partnership with YMCA – which supports the Early Years Foundation Stage framework and gets



All Above: Fit for Sport's Engage to Compete initiative is aimed at primary school children
Right: Only half of seven-year-olds in the UK are meeting recommended physical activity guidelines

kids ready for school by developing their cognitive and social development.

"At this very young age children love to be on the move and we aim to get them moving correctly," says Wright. "We are looking to develop co-ordination, cognitive skills and enjoyment in activity so they can maximise the opportunities when they join primary school. Currently the Early Years Foundation curriculum doesn't have a section for physical activity and we believe it needs to be added in order to be taken seriously, measured and valued."

Working with pre-school children inevitably requires buy-in from parents, so the Smart Start Club provides plenty of simple activities for families to do at home. Not only does this help children learn through play, but parents gain an appreciation of the difference activity makes and instills in them a desire to encourage their child for years to come.

The Youth Sport Trust trains early years teachers to implement their programme, giving them enhanced skills and additional qualifications. "Everyone must take early years activity seriously and prioritise it: from Public Health England down,"



believes Wright. "It's never too early to offer children structured activities."

PHYSICAL LITERACY

Primary school children are measured in subjects such as maths, English and science but when it comes to physical literacy, parents and teachers are completely in the dark and this concerns Dean Horridge, chair of ukactive Kids and CEO of Fit For Sport. "We must bring the measurement of PE in line with that of academic subjects. All involved – including parents – need to recognise the impact good physical and cognitive health can have on a child's life", he says.

Fit For Sport recently completed a second successful pilot of its Engage To Compete programme which boosts and measures levels of physical activity among primary school children. More than

10,000 children and 600 teachers across 66 schools in London and Birmingham took part in the programme which was supported by nearly £200,000 of National Lottery funding from Sport England. Engage to Compete brings structure, focus and fresh new activities to the playground. It is designed to engage all children and trains teaching assistants to deliver the activities. The key partners in the programme include local councils and leisure centre providers. Their involvement includes providing services and facilities for large scale, motivational events – such as bringing together 1,000 children from local schools for a Legacy Games Day, hosting family activity days and offering incentives and discounts to encourage further activity out of school.

"Fit For Sport is a valued partner for GLL and the Engage to Compete



Early teens should be offered a varied range of physical activities

A shift of emphasis away from ‘pure sport’ towards more fun, engaging activities can help create environments in which younger people can get physically active

programme has proved to be an innovative way to engage primary school pupils in challenging, fun activities with a measurable outcome,” says Phil Lane, head of sport & community participation for GLL. “The large numbers involved in the London Borough of Tower Hamlets are hugely encouraging and we are looking to build on this success with Fit For Sport.”

“Fit For Sport is working to broaden attitudes towards physical activity so that people see it as more than just PE lessons or sports training,” says Horridge.

“Engage to Compete shows how successful realignment of attitudes among teachers, teaching assistants and head teachers ensures every child can be engaged in fun activities at school, even if they shy away from team sports or more traditional forms of exercise.”

Engage to Compete meets several of the recommendations listed in the *ukactive Generation Inactive* report released in May, including: adopting a whole school approach, ensuring an effective PE curriculum is built into teacher training, providing support, measuring improvement and giving guidance to schools.

FUN AND FUNDING

The YMCA works with a number of schools and leisure partners to create

and deliver programmes. It is seeing more and more schools choosing to use their legacy funding to pay for sports activity and training. Danny Potts, Y Active programme manager at the YMCA welcomes this and believes a more joined up approach working with schools and partners is needed. “Leisure providers are definitely ready to help and the best way for schools to access these services is from a consistent sustainable funding stream earmarked for such activities,” he says. “A key aspect to success is offering a variety of activities, not just conventional sports, to appeal to all children.”

THE TROUBLE WITH TEENAGERS

Establishing healthy habits early on is one thing: engaging teenagers in activity needs a very different approach. Older children’s activity levels drop dramatically, unless they play school or club sport.

Physical activity can benefit teenagers in many ways and should not be singular in its approach. Developing programmes simply to get teenagers fit is to miss the point: physical activity has great potential to help teens build life skills and cope with issues they typically face – such as stress, body image issues, self-confidence and exam pressure. In May 2015, YST started the PE 2020 programme at the specific

request of the Northampton public health team to run in partnership with the local charity Young Healthy Minds. More than just a physical activity project, it is a bespoke strategy for secondary schools – each school has activities developed individually for them to meet their exact needs – which helps improve the social and emotional wellbeing of pupils.

This is an excellent example of bringing together local partners from sport, education and health fields. The collective response to local issues not only makes it of immediate relevance and benefit, it also ensures the various interested parties help support and implement it.

“This project is fulfilling a local need to help teenagers navigate this tricky stage of their life by easing stress, building confidence and creating friendships,” says Wright. “I’d love to see similar programmes set up but fear that until physical activity is valued and measured like academic subjects, head teachers will struggle to prioritise it,” he warns.

Local partnerships, intuitive programmes, tailored training support and a shift away from ‘pure sport’ towards engaging activity seem to be the way forward to bridging the gap. The leisure industry has the necessary skills and tools. If put in the right hands, the new approach could be a game changer. ●

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 UNIVERSITY
SPORT SPECIAL
PART 1


Sheffield Hallam University currently has 4,759 paying sport and fitness members at its clubs, across all user categories

UNIVERSITY CHALLENGE

Universities are investing heavily in sports facilities to woo both students and outside users. But how do they balance the needs of students with those of elite athletes and the wider community? We look at how three universities are rising to the challenge

Next year, the University of Birmingham will open a new £55m indoor sports centre to replace its existing, ageing facility. It's a huge investment for the renowned sporting university – Birmingham is currently fifth in the British Universities & Colleges Sport (BUCS) points table – the financial commitment to sport that it reflects, however, is not unique within the higher education (HE) sector.

In 2016, Nottingham University will open its own £40m sports centre, while in 2010 Northumbria spent £30m on its flagship Sport Central. In the intervening period, many other universities have invested significant sums in building, developing and upgrading sports facilities.

This recent surge of investment in university sport is inextricably linked to the sweeping changes taking place across higher education as a whole.

“For many parts of the university sector, the introduction of £9k tuition fees has been a real game-changer,” says Tim Garfield, director of the sports development centre at Loughborough

University, which spent £11m in the last five years improving its already extensive facilities. “It’s made universities commercial and competitive with each other.”

On this new playing field, sporting universities have to work harder to meet the expectations of fee-paying students

who want to play sport, while continuing to nurture the elite athletes who help raise their profile. The new developments are also pushing university sports centres to re-evaluate how they operate commercially, particularly with regard to usage by external organisations and the public.



Loughborough has dedicated centres for a range of sports – including netball

BREADTH OF OPPORTUNITY

So how do university sports operations balance the needs of such different groups while staying financially viable? At Loughborough, Garfield and his colleagues pride themselves on the university's range of sport-specific facilities, in contrast with the multi-sport buildings of most of its competitors. “The focus is unashamedly our students and elite athletes,” he says.

With centres dedicated to athletics, badminton, cricket, football, gymnastics, hockey, lacrosse, martial arts, netball, swimming, squash, tennis and table tennis, the reach is vast. “Even though these are specialist facilities, the vast majority cater for the full range of abilities and interest in that sport,” says Garfield. “It’s this breadth of opportunity, for novices and



The UK's leading sporting university, Loughborough, has invested £11m in its Holywell Sports Complex since 2010



elite athletes, that makes us so inspiring.” During term-time there’s some, limited community usage of the facilities – for example, Charnwood Athletics Club regularly uses the athletics track while the 50m pool hosts regular casual swimming sessions and community swimming galas.

But it’s in the holidays that the university focuses on optimising commercial opportunities. It hosts three national camps for the Youth Sport Trust each year, and will be the team base for Tonga, Namibia and Uruguay during the 2015 Rugby World Cup.

While Loughborough has a long history of catering for elite athletes – some of its facilities are funded by NGBs, requiring the university to provide some priority use to performance athletes – the introduction of tuition fees has sharpened its focus on students who want to play sport recreationally. Since 2010, £11m has been invested in the Holywell Sports Complex, now home not only to an upgraded stadium, eight grass pitches and the university’s fifth floodlit artificial pitch, but also the new Holywell Fitness

We have a very healthy sporting eco-system in which there’s a large amount of mutual respect between users

Centre, opened in October 2014. The figures support Loughborough’s claim to be catering for all levels of interest – 70 per cent of the 17,000 students play sport regularly: 6,000 are members of its gyms, 4,500 are members of its 54 sports clubs, 2,500 take part in intramural sports and 3,000 participate in non-competitive sports. All organised sport is free of charge, with a “modest fee” charged for casual use.

With such demand, a scheduling group meets regularly to diffuse potential clashes: “There is constant tension, but not conflict, between the demands of different user groups,” admits Mark Davies, Loughborough’s strategic manager for sports operations. “[But] despite the tensions, we believe we have a very healthy sporting eco-system in which there’s a large amount of mutual respect.”

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

At the University of Durham, second only to Loughborough in the BUCS rankings, there are three competing priorities, says head of sport Quentin Sloper: meeting the needs of elite athletes, increasing student participation and providing high-quality facilities to community groups.

To support these aims, the university has spent £12m on its facilities since 2011, including £6.7m on a new indoor sports centre and £1.6m on two rubber-crumb surfaces. Facilities now include a £1m indoor rowing tank and a 28-station ‘ergo’ gallery; a world-class fencing salle, home to British Fencing; a sports hall; a high-performance weights room and a fitness suite. There is also an aerobics studio, two squash courts and three physio rooms. Outdoor facilities include multiple grass pitches, a water-based hockey surface and ▶



Out of Durham University's 12,000 students, 90 per cent regularly take part in sport and physical activities



► a sand-dressed artificial pitch. If a key aim of the new centre was to increase student participation, this has certainly been achieved: more than 12,000 (90 per cent) of Durham's students regularly engage in sport. Of these 2,000 compete for the university across 45 clubs and 10,000 take part in intramural or non-competitive sport.

Durham also places great emphasis on making its facilities available to the wider community – and not only for the commercial benefits. Its University Sport programme involves 47 local schools and all the city's major clubs. More than 200 student volunteers coach within schools each year and 2,000 children have access to the university's sporting facilities.

"Community outreach is a key component of our overall programme," says Sloper. "It's integral for the personal development of our students, who have the opportunity to coach, organise, lead and interact with people who they might not otherwise engage with at university."

Catering effectively for all these different groups means not only extended opening hours, but also templating programmes for an entire academic year so everyone's clear about what they can access and when. "The requirements of our performance clubs and athletes are

given a level of priority, but it's always a compromise," says Sloper. Another challenge is how to be commercial. "During term time, our facilities are used constantly, seven days a week," he says. "It's difficult to grow a commercial programme when users want access 50 weeks a year."

While the fitness suite does offer memberships to locals as well as students, community members only account for around 10 per cent of the 700-strong membership base.

VALUE FOR MONEY

Another university balancing the needs of different user groups is Sheffield Hallam University (SHU), which has also committed to upgrading its sports offering.

In October 2013, SHU invested £6m in a 22-acre outdoor facility, Sportspark, with a further £1m spent on indoor facilities and £325,000 on refurbishing and rebranding the Sheffield Hallam athletics stadium.

The policy at SHU is that all facilities should be available for community use. It currently has 4,759 paying sport and fitness members, across all user categories. According to operations manager Andrew Miller, keeping so many different user groups happy is a constant balancing act. "Athletes want free access to the facilities

and this is agreed prior to selling space to individuals," he says. "But some contracts are done prior to athletes' bookings. Nobody is given priority."

At present, SHU has around 350 community members. As part of its efforts to remain competitive, SHU has signed up to two national schemes: Sport England's quality scheme Quest and the National Benchmarking Service (NBS), administered by Leisure-net Solution in partnership with SHU's own Sport Industry Research Centre.

Designed to be both a badge of accreditation and a tool for continuous improvement, Quest Plus involves an initial two-day assessment and mystery visit, followed by a one-day review a year later. NBS, meanwhile, is used by facilities to identify how they are performing compared to their competitors.

According to Miller, a key goal of signing up to the benchmarking system was to demonstrate SHU's value for money. Quest, meanwhile, helps develop formal structures that support best practice.

As the different approaches of these three universities show, there's no one-size-fits-all solution when it comes to balancing not only the varied needs of their different users but also their commercial aims. ●



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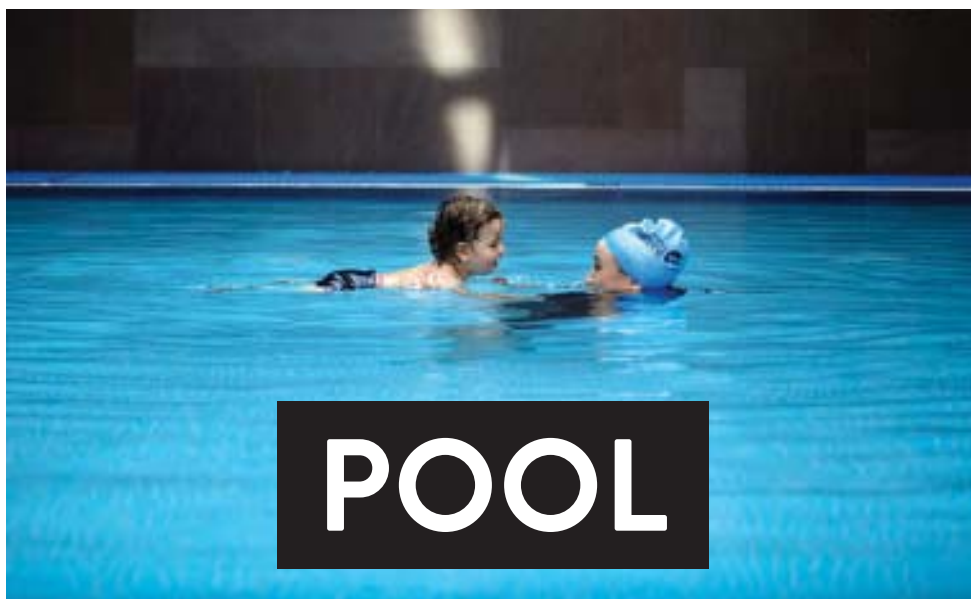


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By running swimming classes for families, centres can generate thousands of pounds each year

PROGRAMMING

Swimming pools may be one of the most expensive overheads for sports and leisure operators, but clever programming and subcontracting swimming lessons can help maximise usage and drive revenue

“There can be a general reluctance to embrace change, especially at a time of financial uncertainty or when budgets are being cut,” says Kayle

Burgham, technical manager for aquatics at Swimming Teachers’ Association (STA). “But this should be the catalyst to be creative and explore new ways to maximise pool space and increase revenue.”

Operators who adopt a commercial view and diversify their pool programmes can create value around their pools, make better use of pool time, and increase usage as well as drive income.

“Having a structured and well organised swimming scheme can create massive income for a leisure centre. A programme with correct classes and good teachers mean learners will progress to the next group, creating more space at the lower levels where new learners can join,” says Burgham.

One on one lessons are also a valuable way of generating income. Swimming Nature delivers

1,300 bespoke one on one and small group classes in 50 venues across London and Edinburgh using its own teachers. It partnered with Fitness First earlier this year to offer private adult swimming lessons at 11 clubs, and is currently rolling the scheme out to other sites.

“We teach more than 4,700 people a week, from babies through to adults. This provides a regular revenue stream for our pool partners, as our students commit to a full term in advance and we currently have over 85 per cent retention rate,”

says Eduardo Ferré, founder of Swimming Nature. Group classes are typically two or three to one, and no more than six to one for adults, so they only require a small section of the pool, meaning regular use isn’t disrupted. Children’s programmes are tied to the school calendar, which is generally 15 weeks in the autumn, 12 in spring and 12 in summer. The company also runs fast track courses during the school holidays which take place daily for five days. Adult lessons are more flexible and are purchased in blocks.

“The beauty of our lessons is the simplicity; we teach people to swim naturally without flotation devices or aids,” says Ferré. “We can tailor each lesson to each student, tracking their progress in the pool on waterproof tablet devices for efficiency. We focus on breathing and flotation first and only when that is established, do we move onto actual swimming. The benefit of this is that there are no additional apparatus/tools for the pool operator to provide or authorise.”



Adult learner classes are popular and often lead to regular memberships

The Rookie Lifeguard scheme aims to retain children after learn-to-swim programmes



Operated by PfP, Wolverhampton Swimming and Fitness Centre runs four 30-minute Rookie classes each week, generating up to £9,000 per year

As well as generating revenue – one partner experienced a 25 per cent increase across four sites in one year – the company supports partners with proactive marketing and PR initiatives.

BEYOND LEARN-TO-SWIM

The STA conducted a national baby swim school survey this year, which confirmed substantial growth in the demand for baby swimming over the last five years.

Seventy per cent of respondents said they have waiting lists for baby swimming lessons and almost 86 per cent believed the market had not yet reached its peak, although many warned that growth could be capped because of pool time availability. “There is a real opportunity for pool owners to maximise income in this growth area,” says Burgham.

The STA’s Baby and Pre-School qualification gives teachers the skills to teach aquatic activities to babies and pre-school children. Retaining children after learn-to-swim programmes can be a challenge. The Royal Life Saving Society UK’s (RLSS UK) Rookie Lifeguard

Programme is an awards scheme for eight to 12-year-olds teaching lifesaving skills. Designed to help operators retain children for a further three years, the nine awards contain survival, rescue and sports skills as well as life support and water safety elements. Staff who hold a Level 2 swimming teacher qualification



STA offers pre-school swim teacher training

and a lifesaving qualification can qualify as a Rookie Lifeguard Instructor without needing to attend a course. Operated by PfP, Wolverhampton Swimming and Fitness Centre runs four half hour Rookie classes each week, 50 weeks a year generating between £4,500 to £9,000 per annum.

The STA’s new Junior Lifeguard Academy, which is also aimed at youngsters aged eight years and above, offers more than 40 different aquatic and fitness activities, which can be programmed in the shallow and deep end to maximise pool space, as well as on dryside with a junior medic.

For older children (12 years and above) and adults, the RLSS UK offers the Survive & Save lifesaving awards programme. The awards teach lifesaving rescue, self-rescue, survival and lifesaving sport skills, and also develop swimming ability and fitness.

“The programme allows operators to add another six awards to their pool programme to help attract new swimmers and retain those from other programmes. One 10-week course for 12 pupils can potentially achieve an income of more than £1,000,” says Martin Symcox, director of the

POOL MANAGEMENT

► charity's training subsidiary, IQL UK. Any member of staff can qualify to deliver the Survive and Save awards by qualifying as a lifesaving instructor. Young people from the age of 16 can qualify as a lifeguard, which provides another opportunity to engage young people.

The RLSS UK National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ) is the most awarded lifeguard qualification in the UK and Ireland and is also recognised internationally. Operators can market the qualification as a way for students to fund their studies – or even as a stepping stone for them to enter into a career in leisure. STA also offers accredited lifeguarding qualifications.

There are a host of other programmes operators can offer. Open water swimming is the second fastest growing mass sport in the UK and STA's Pool to Open Water Swimming Coaching qualification helps teachers prepare individuals for open water swimming in a swimming pool setting; creating new class opportunities. Meanwhile, the RLSS UK has teamed up with Surf Life Saving Association Wales and Surf Life Saving GB to develop the National Vocational Beach Lifeguard Qualification, which launched this spring. All of the above programmes are supported by a wide range of quality teaching resources and marketing materials.

GOING IN HOUSE

Getting accredited to deliver training in-house can provide a variety of benefits for operators. "Training an in-house aquatic tutor means more staff can be trained in swimming to support lesson cover," says Burgham. "This reduces the number of cancelled lessons. It also means teachers can be trained in all aquatic disciplines,

including swimming and lifesaving, to deliver a flexible and versatile programme. The tutor can also deliver CPD and keep staff up-skilled to the highest quality, which will benefit the reputation of the centre."

The STA do not charge approved centre fees, which brings further cost savings. Operators can also open up courses to

the community or external candidates to generate income. An operator can generate £3,000 from running a National Pool Lifeguard Qualification course.

The RLSS UK has 1,000 Approved Training Centres covering 2,500 pools; which are accredited to deliver the RLSS UK National Pool Lifeguard Qualification as well as other RLSS UK qualifications.

"The breadth and diversity of our Approved Training Centre network is a major strength and enables us to ensure that our qualifications are accessible and relevant to today's leisure market. Approved Training Centres enjoy a range of benefits from their approved status such as advertising opportunities, marketing support and technical advice and guidance," says Symcox.

There's no doubt that pools are an expensive overhead, but taking an innovative approach to managing pool programming can help them to pay their way. "Offering a diverse mix of programmes is key to retaining customers, attracting new ones and maximising revenue," says Burgham. ●



WATER BABIES

Water Babies is the UK's largest baby and toddler swim school. Run as a series of franchises, it teaches more than 45,000 children in the pool every year. Each franchise has relationships with local pools and buys pool time to run its classes. Water Babies spends around £2.5m on pool hire in the UK every year.

The programme is endorsed by the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) and Water Babies teachers obtain a nationally recognised diploma in baby swimming approved by SkillsActive. Water Babies lessons can bring significant

benefits to pools, helping to secure ongoing additional revenue through pool hire and associated supplementary income, including potential membership conversions and hire of dry side facilities. Classes can be scheduled to run during quiet pool times, which wouldn't usually generate income for pool operators. The classes encourage a natural progression into pools' own existing learn2swim programmes.

The Water Babies' pool doctor service provides technical support and guidance to operators, helping to improve standards of operation and reduce the amount of down time.



RLSS currently has 1,000 approved training centres covering 2,500 pools across the UK

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SHOULD WE TRUST TRACKING?

Recent research casts doubt on the ability of existing technology to accurately count the calories burned during exercise. But does being able to tell whether you've burnt off 400 calories or 450 during a workout actually matter? Crispin Andrews reports

Earlier this year, BBC TV technology presenter Lara Lewington decided to find out whether wearable activity trackers gave people an accurate indication of the exercise they do. She spent a week wearing four of the latest trackers and found that they each gave a different record of how many calories she'd burnt off and the steps she'd taken: the range was 2,649 calories, with a 23 per cent difference in the recorded number of steps. Not long afterwards, researchers at the Perelman School of Medicine and the Center for Health Incentives and Behavioral Economics at the University of Pennsylvania, US, claimed that smartphone apps are just as capable of accurately tracking physical activity as fitness trackers and other wearables.

Participants in this study walked on a treadmill wearing a pedometer, two accelerometers, three wearables and two smartphones running four apps. The researchers counted people walking 500 steps and 1,500 steps and then checked

to see what the apps and wearables had recorded. They found that wearables logged between 22.7 per cent and 1.5 per cent less than the observed step count, while apps recorded between 6.7 per cent less and 6.2 per cent more.

The researchers concluded that, if everyone has a smartphone and can download free apps, why – if there's not much difference in accuracy – would you pay for a wearable device?

In January 2015 there was more bad news for wearables. Iowa State University announced that seven of the most popular wearable devices provided inaccurate readings. The Iowa researchers gave 50 participants seven wearable devices each, and recorded how many calories the devices said each individual burned off.

As a control, they simultaneously tested each participant with a system that determines calorie burn by analysing oxygen levels in exhaled breath – widely recognised as the most accurate way to measure calorie consumption. The Iowa team found that all seven devices were at

least 15 per cent inaccurate, with the worst offender out by 40 per cent.

ACCEPTABLE MARGINS OF ERROR

Newspaper headlines made much of the inaccuracies and discrepancies. However, Greg Welk, an Iowa State University professor of kinesiology, says a device that is 10–15 per cent out is actually providing a reasonably accurate estimate of calories burnt. Mitesh Patel, from the University of Pennsylvania, also said the devices his team tested were “all pretty accurate”.

“You can't expect a perfect measurement,” comments Yang Bai, the lead Iowa State University researcher. “Ten to 15 per cent out is good – 5 per cent is difficult to achieve.”

Bai explains that the actual number of calories a person burns during exercise varies depending on the person and what they're doing during the workout. She adds that tracking technology in fitness devices doesn't take the amount of resistance into account – say, for instance, if you're running up a hill or lifting a heavier weight.



Even if not 100 per cent accurate, tracking data offers users a benchmark against which to measure their future performance



A study at Iowa University tested 10 trackers – a pedometer, accelerometers, wearables and apps – and none was accurate



The MioFuse is able to monitor heart rate by measuring the volume of blood under the skin



You can't expect a perfect measurement. Ten to 15 per cent out is good – 5 per cent is difficult to achieve



"When the activity changes, or you change speeds, this will affect how many calories you burn off," she adds.

OVERSTATING CALORIES?

The challenge of accurately measuring calories isn't limited to trackers, as Liz Dickinson, CEO of wearable company MioGlobal, explains, pointing out that counting calories based on steps taken gives only an indication of what an average person of average fitness might burn off during the exercise. "It's imprecise," she says. "Calories actually burn off depending on metabolic expenditure, which varies with age, fitness level and gender."

"If you input all this information it gives a picture of who you are, but you still only get a crude reading."

So if the reading is only crude when all this data is inputted, what happens when people using fitness equipment in a gym just press 'quick start', or at most input their age and weight? Dave Wright, CEO of heart rate system MYZONE, believes 99 per cent of people using a piece of fitness equipment don't provide enough information to get any sort of accurate indication of the calories they burn.

Wright also believes some equipment manufacturers overstate the number of calories burned. "It makes members feel better on their piece of equipment, which helps the supplier sell more of its brand to health clubs," he says. "But if you want accuracy, the more data points you collect, the more accurate the equation and the more precise the calorie count."

EVERYDAY ACTIVITY VS EXERCISE

Returning specifically to the trackers vs apps debate, Doug McClure, executive VP of product marketing at FitLinx – which has recently launched its AmpStrip device – doesn't accept that smartphone apps do as effective a job as wearables in tracking fitness. "People might carry their phones with them all day, but the phone isn't always on their person – it's sitting on a desk, in a bag, or a drawer," he points out. "If you're running on a treadmill for an hour, then a phone app will do a similar job, but in the real world phone apps fall down."

Dickinson says another drawback to smartphone apps is that – at least for now – they tend to measure steps, not heart rate. Meanwhile, new wearables such as the Apple Watch and MioGlobal's latest

general purpose tracker, MioFuse, use more advanced technology to measure heart rate. In the case of MioFuse, the technology measures the volume of blood under the skin, with an algorithm calculating the heartbeat during the workout. "This technology doesn't calculate heart rate from an electrical beat of the heart, though, which would be more accurate still," comments Wright.

"It also relies on the person's arms staying still and the device being tight enough not to let light in from the outside. The algorithm predicts the movement of the wrist, which is OK for regular movement – running or walking. But if the movement is irregular, it can't measure heart rate in real time and will be inaccurate during vigorous exercise."

Wright believes these devices are good for the 23 hours of the day when someone isn't exercising, but says they will need an accurate device, such as a chest strap, to more accurately measure what goes on during vigorous activity.

Even then there are challenges to obtaining accurate data, because the analogue chips in cardio equipment rely on the heart rate belts that come



FitLinxx's AmpStrip sticks to the body, so it tracks activity 24/7

► with this chip, says Wright. “The issue with analogue chest straps is that, with multiple people exercising across numerous pieces of cardio equipment, you get cross-talk – your heart rate appears on someone else’s machine. You can’t guarantee the readings are yours.”

PROGRESS OR ACCURACY?

When it comes to accuracy of calculating calories, it seems the main issue is not whether the device is wearable, an app or a piece of gym equipment. It’s more that, with current tech – or at least tech that’s appropriate for everyday use – it’s very hard to calculate calories accurately.

Mick Rice, operations director at Pulse, confirms: “There’s lots of data we don’t know and can’t get at – for instance, a person’s BMI. Anything other than an oxygen mask to some degree gives you an average.” McClure agrees: “The question is: how close can we get to that gold standard in a consumer-friendly environment?”

But if existing technology can’t measure calorie count and heart rate accurately, how – short of people running around with oxygen masks on – can technology measure fitness progress? “If you can’t get perfect data, don’t worry about perfect data,” suggests Jeff Bartree, networked fitness product manager at Precor US. “Instead, measure relevant data.

“If you walk 10,000 steps or do 45 minutes on a cardio machine and you’re told you’ve burnt 450 calories, you also know you’ll burn even more if you increase the intensity. You may not know exactly how many calories you burn off, but you’ll get in better shape, and that’s the real aim.”

Rice agrees. “All this is just an index that encourages people to keep up levels of



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/SYDA PRODUCTIONS

Trackers are great in helping to motivate users and measuring users’ progress

“If you can’t get perfect data, don’t worry about perfect data. Instead, measure relevant data”

activity and track trends,” he says. “Time, distance travelled or intensity provide more accurate indicators. Calories burned gives an indicator of sorts, so too heart rate and step count. So why not put them all into a wearable device? People are motivated by different things. We want users to hold on to some method of keeping up an active, healthy lifestyle, so we should offer them as many indicators as possible.”

Bartree agrees, adding: “It’s also useful if technology allows the user to record what they do across a number of different types of exercise.”

WATCH THIS SPACE

Eventually, technological advances will enable trackers to be more accurate. “We’ll get better data recording,

better algorithms and better ways of communicating this to users in meaningful and useful ways,” says McClure. “Today’s technology is much more accurate than early tracking tech and I don’t see any reason why this trend wouldn’t continue.”

Bartree believes people, and headline writers, need to be more patient: “This technology is a relatively new thing for mass market fitness. It might not be 100 per cent accurate at the moment, but now it’s caught on there will be lots of clever people looking at it and improving it.”

Currently, the general consensus is that tracking relative progress and offering people different measures to motivate them – to be used as an index against which to measure progress – should be more important than absolute accuracy. ●



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PERFECT PITCH

Artificial sports surfaces are becoming increasingly popular as facilities and clubs seek to ensure maximum usage from their pitches. We look at some of the most recent installations across different types of venues



The indoor 3G pitch at Largs

■ TAKING IT INDOORS

The opening of a new a £1.75m indoor 3G pitch at Inverclyde Sports Centre in Largs, Scotland, is set to transform community sport in the area. Designed and built by Collinson, the 60x40m hall features a playing surface supplied and installed by Allsports Construction & Maintenance. The pitch meets IRB and FIFA standards and can be configured as a single seven-a-side pitch or two five-a-side pitches using a retractable dividing curtain. Facilities include a spectator area and changing rooms.

Project: New 3G sports centre

Client: Sportscotland

Design and build: Collinson

3G surface: Allsports Construction and Maintenance

John Kent, sportscotland's principal of the National Sports Training Centre at Inverclyde, said: "It has always been a

vision of Inverclyde to have this indoor facility and this development will now enhance opportunities for sports people from all over Scotland, as well as the local community, to come and enjoy sport in an indoor environment.

Called Weir 3G Indoor Hall, the facility has been named after local Euromillions-winning couple Christine and Colin Weir, who donated £1.5m towards the building. The Weirs, who won a total of £161m in 2011, have previously funded tennis courts and a five-a-side pitch in the area.



The project has breathed new life to the Nursery Ground pitch adjacent to the main ground

■ NEW SURFACE FOR CLASSIC VENUE

Synthetic cricket surfacing systems supplier Notts Sport has installed a new pitch and refurbished two existing ones at Lord's Cricket Ground in London.

The work included the replacement of the match pitch on the Nursery Ground, with the former synthetic system excavated, removed and replaced by a NottsBase D System NG12 over an Envelope Base. The aim was to provide a playing surface providing performance as close as possible to that of a covered first-class cricket square.

The refurbishment of the two practice lanes, also on the Nursery Ground, included extending the length of the areas, rebuilding the base aggregate, adding new NottsBase performance pads and laying new NottsGrass NG7 carpets.

Project: Three new cricket pitches at the home of cricket

Client: Lord's Cricket Ground

By: Notts Sport

The work was carried out in just four days and the new match pitch will be used by youth teams, while the practice facilities will be used by Middlesex and national teams before and after a match at Lord's main pitch.

Alex Bennett, cricket sales director for Notts Sport Cricket South, said: "The ultra-low maintenance and performance of the NottsBase D System and the durability of the tufted NottsGrass surface provided the perfect solution."

■ RECYCLING FIT FOR CHAMPIONS



The Chelsea FC pitch being removed using SMS' Turf Muncher machine

Project: Removing and reusing 3G pitch

Client: Chelsea FC

By: Sports Maintenance Services

Chelsea Football Club will become one of the first clubs in the English Premier League (EPL) to install a 4G pitch for its young academy players. The 3G pitch being replaced at the club's youth training facility in Cobham, Surrey, won't go to waste either, thanks to Sports Maintenance Services (SMS). A sports centre in Rotherham and a school in Hertfordshire will benefit from the EPL champions' decision to upgrade – with the old pitch being reused at the two locations.

SMS director Tim Gallagher explained: "We've taken care of the Chelsea Academy surface for the past seven years and kept it in excellent condition. So when the club announced its plans to upgrade to a new infill-free 4G pitch, we wanted to avoid a negative waste story and ensure a positive environmentally-friendly outcome for all concerned."

"Using a Turf Muncher machine we lifted the old carpet and extracted the infill on-site, both of which were then independently tested. The pitch was found to be fit for reuse, so a sports centre in Rotherham has taken 2,500sq m of it to create four five-a-side pitches and a school in Herts will reuse a further 5,000sq m."

■ COMMUNITY MATTERS

Pitch construction company O'Brien Sports has been awarded a contract to replace the main playing surface at Worthing FC's Woodside Road stadium with a 3G pitch.

O'Brien will install a new 60mm ACT Global surface at the stadium, which the club plans to use as a springboard to increase its profile and provide a hub for the community. The project will see the conversion of the natural turf pitch into an all-weather surface that meets the requirements of the FIFA quality concept. The works will also include drainage kerbs and a dynamic aggregate sub base.

The club, which currently plays in the Isthmian League Division One, expects



Worthing is looking to use the new 3G pitch to create a community hub at Woodside Road

Project: Replacing main grass pitch with 3G surface

Client: Worthing FC

By: O'Brien

1,500 more players to use the new facilities each week – ranging from toddler groups to first team training sessions. O'Brien Sports expects the new surface to generate around £200,000 of revenue each year for the club, based on 50 hours of use per week.

■ ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

After 10 years of loyal service, a well-used synthetic pitch at Aston University had come to the end of its natural life and began experiencing a number of performance issues owing to its age.

The pitch was condemned and could no longer stage hockey games, but its continued importance for the university's staff and students, as well as for the local community, meant that a swift replacement would be necessary.

Having successfully applied for funding from Sport England's Community Sports Improvement Fund – thanks in part to the facility's extensive community use – the university went out to tender for a

Project: Replacing a hockey and football pitch

Client: Aston University

By: McArdle Sport-Tec and TigerTurf

new surface which could accommodate hockey and football at both recreational and competitive level.

With each sport placing very different demands on a surface, the university worked with a consultant who specified TigerTurf's Evo Pro as the perfect solution to bridge this gap, while offering a

long-lasting pitch able to cope with a high level of use. Specialist contractor McArdle Sport-Tec was selected to install the new surface, and the 97.4m x 62m full-size pitch was successfully completed ahead of schedule in just ten weeks.

Clive Eals, project manager for Estates and Capital Development at Aston University, said: "We were keen to use a product which was manufactured in the UK, as this meant we wouldn't have to pay for the turf to be shipped from the other side of the world and also that we could rely on delivery times.

"Whereas the old pitch had a longer length and rubber crumb infill which wasn't ideal for playing hockey, the new surface is made with a sand infill – although you wouldn't know it as you have to go looking for the sand.

It's a beautiful, even surface and it just makes you to want to get out there and play sport, which is what we want for our students and the community."

Paul Langford, managing director at TigerTurf UK added: "It can be tricky for those investing in new facilities to cater for a number of different sports, especially when they will be used by such a large and varied number of people, as was the case at Aston University.

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The new pitch is able to cater for hockey and football at both recreational and club level

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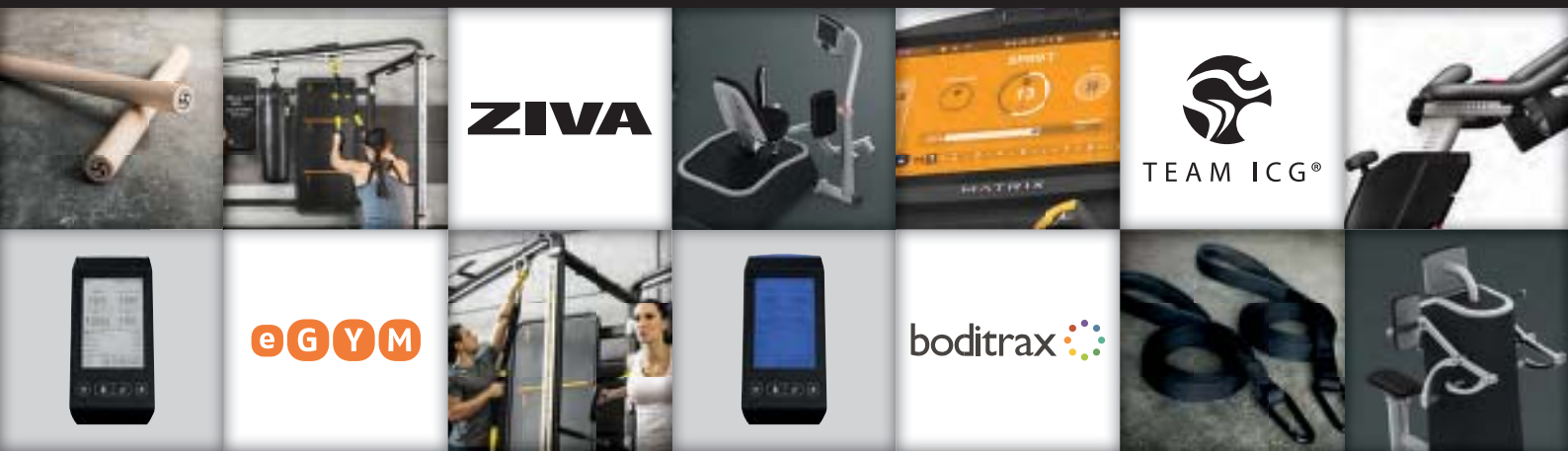
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EDUCATION, INNOVATION & INSPIRATION

Leisure Industry Week (LIW) relaunches under new management this month, having been acquired by BodyPower – the company behind the BodyPower Expo series in the UK, Ireland and India. We look ahead to LIW 2015

An all-new LIW will open its doors at the NEC Birmingham in September, led by a team that has a remit to build on the positives of previous years. The aim: to deliver a world-class trade show and networking event to key associations, brands and decision-makers, and provide an educational programme that brings valuable knowledge and insight to leisure professionals.

LIW CEO Nick Orton says: "We're delighted by the response we've had to our acquisition of LIW. Our philosophy, innovative approach and fresh thinking seem to have been embraced by key personnel and organisations within the leisure sector, and it has created an added air of anticipation before this year's event."

EDUCATION

Feedback from thousands of previous LIW attendees was collated during mid-2015, with the aim of ensuring that the free LIW educational programme delivered the kind of knowledge and practical insights that could be applied by a wide range of employees, from personal trainers to managing directors.

Featuring a plethora of well-known names, the Keynote Theatre will therefore be a headline act at Leisure Industry Week 2015.

Delegates will be treated to a comprehensive programme featuring the likes of Rugby World Cup winner Ben Cohen, former chief of UK Athletics David Moorcroft, the ECB's most successful chair of selectors Geoff Miller, former England football international and Under



The LIW Pool will feature Zoggs UK ambassador and endurance swimmer Adam Walker (pictured)

21's manager Stuart Pearce, and boxing promoter Kellie Maloney – who managed Lennox Lewis to become the undisputed heavyweight champion of the world. This line-up will be complemented by fitness industry heavyweights such as IHRSA

director of Europe Hans Muench and Ray Algar, MD of Oxygen Consulting, which specialises in the fitness sector.

High profile names aside, organisers have gone to great lengths to ensure the education at LIW has received a thorough shake-up. Beyond the Keynote Theatre are two areas dedicated to tackling the most prevalent issues in the leisure industry head-on.

The Operators Conference will be specifically aimed at industry operators looking to increase their knowledge and skills in a wide range of topics, from digital marketing to wearable technology. CIMSPA CEO Tara Dillon, Jaguar Land Rover and Rolex digital expert Chris Woods, and former ukactive CEO Dave Stalker will be among those delivering sessions on wellness, retention, marketing and operations. Meanwhile, for those in a hurry – or with a full schedule of meetings – the quick-fire Industry Theatre will be an interesting prospect. Covering the entire spectrum of leisure, these 30-minute talks will be sector-specific and will deal with issues, trends and future-proofing for all sectors, including wet leisure, play, sport and physical activity, facilities management and much more – all in a slightly less formal environment.

There will also be a dedicated conference for independent operators, as well as a conference solely targeted at personal trainers.

In addition, delegates will be able to tap in to the Fitness and Nutrition stream of educational sessions, which will offer training and nutrition knowledge designed to boost professional development. This

VISITING LIW

Venue: Hall 4, NEC, Birmingham, UK

Dates: Tuesday 22 and Wednesday 23 September 2015

Opening times: 09:00 – 17:00

Registration: Pre-register for the show for free before 7 September, at liw.online-registration.co.uk

Website: www.liw.co.uk

Get involved using #LIW2015 and by following @L_I_W



Stuart Pearce



David Moorcraft

will include cutting-edge training information and a balanced mix of ideologies and views surrounding the complex topic of nutrition, training and fat loss. These seminars will be delivered by leading fitness professionals including Mark Coles, Jamie Alderton, GB Weightlifting coach Sam Dovey, Commonwealth champion Zoe Smith and many more.

DEMONSTRATION AREAS

This year's show will include a number of demonstration areas – including the Jordan Fitness Functional Zone – that will put a spotlight on the latest trends in group training and functional fitness.

Featuring live workouts and interactive 'have-a-go' sessions encompassing the latest techniques, equipment and trends in functional training, Jordan Fitness will deliver a high-energy programme designed to highlight ways in which leisure operators can maximise the revenue from their fitness classes – and indeed use functional fitness as a secondary spend opportunity.

The LIW pool will take centre stage once again, with a number of live swimming, aquatic, lifesaving and pool plant demonstrations. This year's sessions will include demonstrations from Adam Walker – the first Briton to swim the toughest seven oceans in the world – and Simone Benhayon, former ASA swim teacher of the year.

All sessions are designed to show leisure operators how they can increase participation and swimming frequency to cost-effectively maximise the revenue from their pool facility.



Ben Cohen

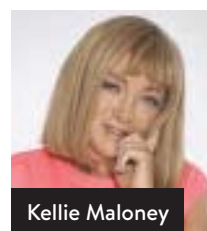
Featuring a plethora of well-known names, the Keynote Theatre will be a headline act at this year's LIW



Hans Muench



Ray Algar



Kellie Maloney



Geoff Miller

NETWORKING

Given the prominence of LIW as a world-class meeting place for trade professionals in the leisure sector, networking retains huge importance in the revitalised programme. LIW will offer a number of networking events over the two days, including the ukactive VIP Connect programme, featuring a hosted lunch on the ukactive stand, speed networking and a reception on Tuesday 22 September.

LIW will also be running the VIP 1000 Club, sponsored by XN Leisure, which offers exhibitors the chance to register their key clients and accounts for free

refreshments and a comfortable meeting lounge off the show floor.

The VIP Lounge is part of a two-day programme run by sponsors Leisure-net Solutions, Right Directions, Bigwave media and Lifetime Training. Leisure-net and Bigwave will also run a seminar for marketing professionals and customer insight specialists, and Right Directions will run a Quest training session.

On Wednesday, the VIP lounge will host an active-net pop-up networking lunch for invited delegates, followed by a quick-fire networking programme consisting of five 10-minute meetings. ●

The content for the classes will focus on engaging kids on three important levels: physically, mentally and socially



Switched on kids

For budget-conscious facilities looking to expand their customer base, virtual classes are still a largely untapped market, particularly in the children and families segment. Classes can be run with little investment, with a facilitator rather than an instructor, and most importantly, can get less sporty kids moving in a fun way

While rising obesity rates and declining physical activity levels represent a huge challenge for government, the problem also presents a great opportunity for leisure providers to become more involved in the public health agenda and deliver potentially life-changing results.

The spotlight has more recently shone on childhood inactivity in particular. There's a generation at risk of longer-term health problems due to sedentary lifestyles, often compounded by the over-use of technology. ukactive's recent *Generation Inactive* report, for instance, showed that only 50 per cent of the UK's



While iDEA helps kids to get physically active, there are also classes teaching skills like magic

seven-year-olds are meeting current activity guidelines of an hour a day.

But rather than point the finger at 'culprits' like computers, iPads and PlayStations, more enlightened leisure facilities are starting to embrace the popularity of technology to attract more children and families into their facilities.

Virtual classes, which are becoming established among adults at many clubs and leisure facilities, have the potential to impact on children's programming too.

Children's activity specialist Chris Sharman, who heads up the iKidz Training and Consultancy, is currently developing exciting new content for a virtual kids class product, called iDEA, to be



launched (see interview, right) at Leisure Industry Week 2015.

As someone who started out as a lifeguard, rising through the ranks of both public and private leisure operations, becoming head of family activities for the Esporta chain, Sharman is well aware of the challenges of catering to this segment of the market.

He says: "One of the biggest challenges providers face is finding the right people to deliver a variety of kids programmes, and to do it consistently well. It's never been a well paid activity, earnings are commonly close to the minimum wage, so you'll often find that instructors quickly move on to teach aerobics or PT where they can earn upwards of £25 an hour.

"So there's a huge gap in instructor availability, which makes programming extremely difficult. Class cancellations are common due to the reliance on such a small pool of people for just a couple of hours each day, and many classes never get off the ground because clubs don't attract the numbers to make running them economically viable."

By contrast, he says, virtual classes require no specialist instructor, simply a facilitator to run the technology (any internet-enabled device and a screen) and guide the participants enthusiastically ►



MD and co-founder Jane Maguire and creative director and co-founder Ben O'Hara on the launch of iDEA, their new virtual class concept for kids

What's the idea behind iDEA?

It's about using the latest technology to help people reconnect to family values. Through virtual classes, we wanted to reignite those retro playground activities that mums and dads and grandparents could relate to, but that would also engage today's kids. Our virtual yet traditional concepts include Hula Hooping and Jump Rope, which are now quite current urban sports.

Some of our first concepts were developed for holiday park operator Haven, and were a storming success. The parks saw a massive increase in attendance to these activities and, instead of parents simply dropping their kids off at the club for the day, they were staying to participate, along with grandparents, uncles and aunts.

What are your backgrounds?

We both have around 20 years of experience in the fields of leisure and entertainment having worked for large organisations such as The Tussauds Group and the Thomas Cook Group. We founded The Business Creative in 2010, and specialised in creating and producing world-class entertainment experiences. iDEA is our new virtual class product for the kids and family market and we're so excited to be launching it at LIW this month.

How have you developed the virtual class content?

When we did our research, we felt that some of the offerings for kids were limited and not very current. We've listened to what kids and families really want and iDEA will present content that's exciting, engaging and on trend.

For instance we've been working with Liam Richards from *Britain's Got*

Talent on our martial arts offering, and with the latest street dance stars.

We'll launch with seven offers that will range from magic tricks to tutting (a kind of dance using intricate hand movements, currently being used by Taylor Swift on her new video), but we'll be filming and adding new content on a regular basis and can be very reactive to what activities are trending and what kids 'experts' are in the news.

How flexible is the content?

It's totally flexible, depending on whether it's a school, leisure centre, health club or holiday park using it. A park might want a 45 minute session, whereas a school might want to break the content up into 15 minutes segments to teach as lessons over three days. A lot of our content has been developed in line with the National Curriculum, but the emphasis is always on fun.

Facilities can get really creative with the content and our specialists will help them do that. A health club might want to offer our circus skills class as a series leading to a certification, for example.

We've ensured that classes can be run with little or very low cost equipment, and facilities simply pay a subscription fee of £48 per month.

What's the future for iDEA?

There are so many possibilities. Currently there are three virtual channels, Activate for 5-11 year-olds, Together for families and Zest that can involve the more mature market, either alone or with the kids. In the future we also plan to develop concepts targeted at teens and pre-schoolers and some of the content could even be adapted for use in care homes.

HOLIDAY CLUB FUN

Jamie Thomson
Entertainments experience
manager, Bourne Leisure

I've turned to Jane Maguire and Ben O'Hara (founders of iDEA) to develop virtual kids class content at both my current position with Butlin's, and also my previous role with Haven. Both times what they've put together has proved a huge success.

This is particularly so with Butlin's kids clubs at our three resorts, where we've been focusing on creating their own identity. In my role I've been able to see that being able to offer kids exciting classes like Yoyo or Diablo has greatly increased the kids clubs' credibility and popularity.

We also noticed that instead of simply dropping off their kids at the club for the day, parents and extended families will start to join in. Classes were often full with around 40-50 people, and when run four times a week for 40 weeks at all our parks, that's a lot of people we've interacted with.

ATTRACTING FAMILIES

Mark McMahon
GM, Village Hotel, Farnborough

We have a large fitness facility, with around 3,000 members in addition to hotel guests. Because of our business park location, a lot of our members are from the corporate sector visiting through the week.

Our weekends can be quite quiet and that's why I started to look at what we could do to attract the family market. When I came across the iDEA virtual classes it looked like the perfect concept to try.

We'll be starting a pilot at the club within the next few months, offering all seven activity programmes and seeing how it is received. The classes could easily appeal to both our regular members and families staying at the hotel on weekends and holidays.

With increased competition from the budget sector, we must find ways to increase revenues by offering greater value for money and innovative programming.



iDEA plans to bring the most current activity trends to the virtual screen, alongside more timeless activities

► as they follow simple instructions on the screen. Clubs and centres have more flexibility to run these classes anywhere – perhaps in a studio, a conference room or even an old squash court – depending upon the weekly demand.

Sharman continues: "Participating in a virtual kids class should be as easy as watching a YouTube video and following along. Done correctly and timetabled intelligently, I think virtual classes can be a game changer for the children's market."

There is no need to send your instructors off on special training courses the moment a new type of class comes out. They simply need to be versed in the content being screened, and any member of staff could fill this role. This alone could save a centre thousands of pounds each year in training fees."



Sharman adds: "There have also been studies done on club retention, which show that families who exercise together have far greater rates of retention than those who don't."

So it really makes good business sense, he says, to attract families to your facility. While waiting for their kids, parents might be encouraged to try a workout for themselves, or spend more time and money in the catering areas.

"For leisure facilities that are already doing children's programming well, virtual classes can grow their business rather than replace current content."

"If kids are visiting twice a week for football and swimming, a virtual class could tempt them to come a third time."

"For those sites who struggle with family content, virtual classes could offer a great kick start to attracting this market, at very little investment and ongoing cost."

“Done correctly and timetabled intelligently, I think virtual classes can be a game changer for the children’s market”



The new virtual offer that Sharman is working on – called iDEA – will bring a host of new activities for kids, from magic and card tricks, to martial arts and army bootcamp, and he feels that it's really important that classes should appeal to all children's tastes.

"Many kids today are not at all sporty, so operators should draw them in with other fun offers, like juggling, that don't require any physical fitness or even special equipment, to be enjoyed. "It's essential to engage kids physically, socially and mentally, because their long term

wellbeing is dependent on all these needs being nurtured and developed," he says.

"In doing so, facilities can make a valuable contribution to the health and social agenda, raise their profile in the community, increase their revenues and diversify their business at the same time."



WWW.IDEAGETACTIVE.COM



EXHIBITOR NEWS

The latest news from exhibitors at LIW 2015

Ashbourne Membership Management

Tel: 0871 271 2088 (UK number)

www.ashbourne-memberships.co.uk

There's no need to waste money on costly monthly licences with our suite of club software, which gives you full entry control and all the recruitment and retention data you need – and it's all part of our All-Inclusive+ service. Ashbourne provides a direct debit collection service and debt recovery with all the software needed to run your club, all for a small fixed fee per member per month, with no hidden extras. Visit us on stand D2 at LIW to find out more about our latest services, including Scheduler+, which allows you to plan facilities, classes and staffing.

SECTION: FITNESS AND NUTRITION

Bodystat Ltd

Tel: +44 (0)1624 629571

www.bodystat.com

Bodystat is a leader in bioimpedance systems, which measure muscle, fat and water levels. Regular monitoring of

body composition is easy to carry out using the Bodystat 1500 hand-held unit. Our clients use Bodystat as a valuable revenue earner or as a promotional tool, providing a value-added service. With our new optional Windows software program and thermal printer, the system offers a comprehensive service.

SECTION: FITNESS AND NUTRITION

ClubWise

Tel: +44 (0)1844 348300

www.clubwise.com

Take the heavy lifting out of the administration and management of your memberships with ClubWise. ClubWise integrates direct debit collection, club management software, sales, marketing and retention tools to provide health, fitness and leisure clubs with a truly all-in-one solution. ClubWise allows you to optimise cash flow, generate new business, manage memberships and undertake club management tasks with ease – all stored and managed from a cloud-based system. Find out more about the extensive suite of ClubWise services, including: prospect tracking, member management, staff management, POS, diary and booking, automated communication scheduling with Active CRM, a comprehensive KPI dashboard, reporting, email & SMS campaign creation, promotion management, online joining, online member area (optimised for both desktop and mobile) and our unique member rewards referral programme. Visit us on stand D49 at LIW for product demonstrations, where you can meet our friendly team and learn more about how ClubWise can help you to take control of your business.

SECTION: LEISURE FACILITIES



Cybex will be launching its new SPARC Trainer at LIW 2015

Cybex International UK

Tel: 0845 606 0228 (UK number)

www.cybexintl.com

Cybex is a leading manufacturer of premium commercial fitness equipment designed to improve physical wellbeing, function and performance. With a full range of cardiovascular equipment and the industry's largest range of strength equipment, Cybex's products are designed to deliver unparalleled results for first-time users to professional athletes, backed by the Cybex Research Institute. Launching at LIW 2015 is the new SPARC Trainer, combining the innovative features of Cybex's Arc Trainer with fan-based resistance to provide immediate resistance with no power requirements. The intuitive 'get on and go' design invites users to simply choose their incline whilst their speed determines their intensity to deliver powerful interval workouts for the most effective resisted cardio workout users will get from any cross trainer. Also on the stand will be equipment from Cybex's Prestige VRS and Eagle NX selectorised strength lines, the Bravo Functional Training system and Big Iron platform. Visitors can also learn more about Cybex Care, the new Web-based asset management system designed to reduce equipment downtime and manage usage efficiently and effectively. British Weight Lifting athletes will also be training on Big Iron platforms adjacent to the Cybex stand.

SECTION: FITNESS AND NUTRITION ►



Bodystat 1500 is a portable device which monitors body composition

BEEF UP YOUR BOTTOM LINE WITH NFC TECHNOLOGY

ELECTRONIC LOCKER SYSTEM



GANTNER electronic NFC locks can be securely opened and closed by presenting an NFC credential (card, wristband, keytag) or NFC-enabled mobile phone to the lock's reader field. GAT ECO.Sidelock utilizes low power technology to achieve a long-lasting battery life of up to 10 years. Acoustic and visual alarm function provide an additional level of security and complete in locker mounting provides a sleek and elegant design. Locks can be programmed for either free or rental modes.

FEATURES

- Up to 10-year battery life (due to Low Power Technology).
- Acoustic and visual alarm function at the locker.
- Operates with all NFC credentials (mobile phone, card, wristband, key tag).

MOBILE CLUB MANAGEMENT



With the new GAT Mobile.Connect, mobility in the leisure industry is redefined. This innovative app, suitable for NFC-compatible smartphones and tablets, offers the ability to check-in, display member information or sell services regardless of location. Thanks to GAT Mobile.Connect, your club management system is now available where and when you need it.

FEATURES

- Check-in capability where and when you need it
- Enhanced member data streams
- Smart phones turn into additional POS



Check us out
on youtube

GANTNER Electronics Ltd.
T +44 1245 69 75 88
info-uk@gantner.com | www.gantner.co.uk



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► **DaleSauna**

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www.dalesauna.co.uk

DaleSauna is the ideal solution partner for your spa project. Whether you are investing in a new, full service spa with a range of thermal experiences, retrofitting facilities into an existing site or just want to update your offering, we can advise you on the best facilities, design and layout to suit your site, budget and clientele to maximise the return on your investment. We work with operators in both the public and private sector with recent projects including the new Center Parcs Woburn Village, Gainsborough Bath Spa, Spa on

DaleSauna works with operators in both the public and private sector



the Breck and The Abbey spa. We are very proud to announce that we have secured the prestigious industry quality standard ISO9001 for meeting customer expectations and delivering customer satisfaction. We were awarded the certification after demonstrating clear quality standards and a focus on continuous improvement to ensure the best quality products and services for our customers.

SECTION: SPA AND WELLNESS

Gantner Electronics GmbH

Tel: +44 (0)1245 697588

www.gantner.com

Gantner's new battery-operated locking system Ideal for health and fitness facilities, the new Gantner Battery Locking System GAT ECO.Side Lock is a safe and sound choice. It is the world's first battery lock to include up to a 10-year battery life, acoustic alarm function, and can be mounted in the locker rather than on the door, making it vandal-proof and ideal for the high aesthetic demands of architects. To open and close the locker, members simply swipe any available locker with their

Gantner offers a battery-operated locking system



membership card, wristband or NFC-enabled smartphone. Multiple operating modes and easy retrofitting help simplify operations, reduce maintenance and staff costs and increase your non-due revenues. The system offers up to 10-year battery life (due to low power technology); acoustic and visual alarm function at the locker; multiple operating modes – free, personal, and timed; electronic master keys for club operators; and sleek and elegant design. It also operates with all NFC credentials (mobile phone, card, wristband, key tag).

SECTION: LEISURE FACILITIES

M3i

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**Lucy Edwards
Project Manager
Cycle Rhythm**



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PRECOR

► **Harlands Group**

Tel: + 44 (0)1444 449157

www.harlandsgroup.co.uk

Harlands Group is the UK's leading direct debit and membership management provider. Our affordable service includes fully managed collection, call centre, online sign up and debt recovery delivered to a diverse range of clients. Harlands provides third party collection and a bureau service to clients who already have a BACS service user number. Our Snap system introduced online sign up to the UK in 2005 and the recent release of version 2 brings even more features. Our systems integrated seamlessly with many leading CRM solutions, ensuring that administration is maintained at a minimum and the use of technology brings significant efficiencies to your business. Harlands is now the only UK company providing direct debit across the EU using the SEPA platform.

SECTION: LEISURE FACILITIES

Horne Engineering Ltd

Tel: +44 (0)1505 321455

www.horne.co.uk

Horne Engineering's range of pre-plumbed shower panels provides your most cost-effective solution for new-build or refurbishment projects. Highly robust, easy to install and maintain, Horne offers timed flow control 'group' or user-operated flow and thermostatic control showers as well as for DDA/Equalities Act compliance. Recently installed at Widnes Sports Pavilion and the new Welsh National Sailing Academy, the Duŵo, with its striking and robust design is ideal for communal, team, poolside and outdoor settings. Water and energy efficient, Horne showers also offer tax relief via enhanced capital allowances water Technology List. Stand C72.

SECTION: LEISURE FACILITIES

iDEA

Tel: +44 (0)1273 324418

www.ideagetactive.com

iDEA is on a mission to get people active, physically, mentally and socially. Our subscription-based service provides

on-demand access to entertainment, dance and fitness activities for health clubs, leisure centres, holiday resorts and schools. It is instant and unlimited meaning you can give your customers flexible and easy access to the latest fun and on-trend activities such as street dance and martial arts. It's about maximizing fun, interaction and engagement regardless of customer age or skill level. Plus, to keep things simple all that's needed to run the activities is a facilitator, a bit of space and a screen which can be connected to the internet. Most don't require any equipment, and those that do only need basic things such as hula hoops, skipping ropes or balls. Additionally everything is led by on-screen experts, at the top of their field, so there's no need for qualified in-house staff – activities can be scheduled whenever and wherever needed. All of which means not only is iDEA flexible, but it's also highly cost effective. We'll be showcasing our current range of activities at LiW this year, come and visit us at stand **SECTION:** SPORTS AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

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SPEEDFLEX



SPARC[®]TRAINER

HIGH INTENSITY TRAINING EVOLVED

Cross trainers are a staple feature in every gym's cardio section; but ever since the launch of the Arc Trainer, premium fitness equipment supplier Cybex has been offering a unique training option for the fitness industry.

And now there's something new; launching in the UK this September, the SPARC Trainer combines the innovative features of the Arc Trainer with fan-based resistance providing immediate resistance with no power requirements. The intuitive 'get on and go' design invites users to simply choose their incline while their speed determines their intensity to deliver the most powerful and effective resisted cardio workout users will get from any cross trainer.

BASED ON THE BEST

Modelled on Cybex's Arc Trainer, SPARC incorporates the design features that makes the Arc so iconic; its unique patented Reverse Arc Motion places less stress on the user's knees and is scientifically proven to be gentler on joints, explains Dr. Paul Juris, executive director of the Cybex Research Institute: "Unlike other cross trainers, the Arc pattern of motion allows the hip and knee to move synchronously while the foot stays under the knee - so when the user pushes down and back, the opposite footplate is already up and in position, severely reducing the load and stress levels placed on key joints."

Its activation of the glutes, quads and hamstrings – as a direct consequent of

the biomechanical design of the Arc Motion – means users can work at a higher intensity, resulting in a higher level of calorie burn.

Also integral to the design of SPARC – and another feature that has been adopted from the Arc Trainer - is its ability to provide a multi-faceted workout: "SPARC doesn't just train for cardio and weight loss; users can really boost metabolism, build muscle and gain power by moving faster against the fan resistance to generate over 1200 watts of power," explains Rob Thurston, Cybex UK commercial director.

Where the two differ is what makes SPARC so unique; SPARC is self-powered, aligning itself closer to fan-based rowers and bikes than treadmills



The SPARC's 'get on and go' design makes it suitable for all levels

and traditional cross trainers. And it's this feature, combined with everything else that makes SPARC so revolutionary, that has led Cybex to launch a product that supports one of the industry's current biggest trends; high intensity training.

THE HIT TREND

High intensity training is by no means a new phenomenon; it rose to significance following Roger Bannister's sub four-minute mile success, as he was credited with using HIT training as his preferred and consistent training method. HIT further gained popularity and standing, when, in the 1970s, middle-distance runner Sebastian Coe trained via this method. Then in the 1990s, Izumi Tabata's research evidenced that using HIT protocols generated greater aerobic gains than steady state aerobic training. Interest, and application, of many different protocols have now been adopted throughout the fitness industry utilising a mix of machines, body weight and variety of small equipment.

High intensity interval training (HIIT) remains the most popular training method; so much so that it was named as #2 in The American College of Sports Medicine's (ACSM) Worldwide Survey of Fitness Trends for 2015.

"The concept of HIT has grown in popularity over recent years; it's widely accessible with a vast and ever-increasing number of training protocols and can be used by anyone at any age provided appropriate equipment and methods of monitoring intensity are used," explains Julia Dalgleish, Cybex UK master trainer.

"There's extensive research that proves the health benefits of HIT and it's fast becoming the training method of choice for time-poor gym goers.

"Members are also wising up to the fact that they don't necessarily need to spend hours in the gym to reach their goals; if they train smarter and with focus, they can often achieve greater results in a shorter time."

This booming trend is now starting to impact on how operators and gym owners are designing their facilities: "There is very much still a place for a traditional cardio setup in gyms but more recently, we're seeing an increasing number of facilities creating a space dedicated to circuits and high intensity training for both individual users and for small group classes," adds Thurston.

SPARC & HIT

SPARC has been designed to meet the soaring popularity of HIT; it offers Cybex's quickest, safest and most effective cardio experience and its small footprint, ease of use and 'Touch and Train' console means it's ideally suited for use in training zones and group classes.

"By minimising perceived exertion, SPARC encourages harder work; it differentiates itself from other resisted cardio pieces such as ellipticals with its sprint-like mechanics with exceptional biomechanics," adds Dalgleish.

It's 'get on and go' design means not only can it be incorporated in a traditional cardio area but integrated as part of a functional training zone; combining SPARC with kettlebells, medicine balls, plyo boxes, battle ropes and suspension trainers to create a workout space which challenges even the most devoted gym goer.

OPERATOR BENEFITS

By introducing SPARC, gyms are able to expand their service offering to not only

SPARC TRAINER: BENEFITS

● Record results

Five benefits in just five minute workouts: cardio, shape, strength, endurance, stamina. SPARC does it all

● Exceptional ROI

Get more for less. SPARC's short burst workouts offer maximal results in minimal time

● High interest in HIIT

According to ACSM's worldwide survey of fitness trends for 2015, high-intensity interval training is soaring in popularity

● Get On and Go

Simple to adjust. Simple to use. Simply amazing

● Versatility

SPARC is the perfect all-around high-intensity training machine for all fitness members

● Safety

SPARC is biomechanically engineered to be gentler on joints, and a superior choice for long-term health

keep their existing members engaged but to also attract new members who are seeking something different from a training facility.

Its biomechanically correct design and straightforward programme features means that it can be incorporated into a workout for almost all gym users; regardless of training ability or goal.

As the SPARC uses a fan as its primary method of resistance and is self-powered it doesn't require a mains supply; this gives clubs maximum versatility in where it can be used and also permits it to be manufactured and, consequently, sold at a lower price point than most traditional cardio equipment.

"The SPARC Trainer offers health and fitness clubs something that no other fitness equipment manufacturer can," concludes Thurston.

"Its evolution from the Arc Trainer proves its effectiveness as a tool for training not only for cardio and weight loss, but also strength, power and endurance, and its flexibility and versatility will provide operators with the opportunity to transform group exercise and functional training zones."

CYBEX

Find out more about the
SPARC Trainer by visiting
www.cybexintl.com/sparc

► **Jordan Fitness**

Tel: +44 (0)1553 763285

www.jordanfitness.co.uk

Jordan Fitness is launching its new custom powder coating colour service at LIW, to complement its already extensive range of custom branding options. The custom branding services offered by Jordan Fitness are designed to give facilities the option of ensuring their Jordan product is entirely consistent with their own brand image, and the tone and experience that they are trying to create for their members. The new custom powder coating solution will enable customers to colour all steel elements of Jordan Fitness products and will work in harmony with existing Jordan Fitness custom design and branding options.

SECTION: FITNESS AND NUTRITION

Jordan customises products to keep them in line with clubs' brands



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NEW LINES UNVEILING LIW 2015 HALL 4-STAND E50

LIW 2015 EXHIBITOR NEWS



Master trainers will offer training sessions on the Keiser stand

Keiser UK

Tel: +44 (0)1666 504710

www.keiser.com

At Keiser our passion is to challenge the barriers of traditional thinking to continually expand the limits of human performance. The Keiser stand will feature the Warrior Challenge where visitors can test their strength curve using the Keiser Air Resistance against a conventional weight stack system. Keiser Master Trainers will be putting visitors through a dynamic 90 second power circuit using the Keiser Functional Trainer. The stand will also feature the Keiser M3i studio cycles with Bluetooth technology for connectivity to smartphone apps and virtual cycling projection systems. Today, Keiser is the leader in top sport training across the world.

SECTION: FITNESS AND NUTRITION

Lucozade Ribena Suntory

Tel: +44 (0)1594 812800

www.lrsuntory.com

Lucozade Ribena Suntory Ltd will be showcasing its popular product range, including the UK's number one sports drink Lucozade Sport, and best in class vending solutions at this year's Leisure Industry Week - stand D38. The machines feature cashless payment compatible with Apple Pay and will display a range of product samples including the new Lucozade Sport Mango & Passion Fruit. As front of entrance sponsors at the show, the supplier will be encouraging trial of its portfolio, which also includes Lucozade Energy, Ribena and Orangina, by handing out interactive wristbands which are compatible with its vending machines, allowing visitors to purchase a free drink. With the new Multi-Brand machine now available there is a solution for a wide range of outlets.

Lucozade Ribena Suntory Ltd will also be looking ahead and presenting the vending machines of the future within the Club Showcase area which is not to be missed.

SECTION: LEISURE FACILITIES



Lucozade's product range will be showcased on stand D38

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For more information on the ClubWise product, or to book a meeting with the team at LIW, please get in touch.



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LIW 2015 EXHIBITOR NEWS

► Matrix Fitness

Tel: +44 (0)7870 899 814

www.uk.matrixfitness.com

Matrix Fitness is proud to be hosting The Matrix International Show at The Vox, running in conjunction with LIW 2015.

The Vox, a newly opened, purpose built conference centre inside Resorts World is a short walk away from the NEC and is where we will showcase our full range of equipment including our very latest partner products such as In-Trinity, Connexus & eGym. The Matrix International Show will also consist of open education seminars available to all attendees hosted by Lifetime Training, our Education Partner. Take the opportunity to meet and greet our ambassadors and sporting partners who will also be on hand to answer your questions, expand your knowledge, and to help you really understand the Matrix brand. Alongside our ambassadors and sporting partners there will be a Matrix crew available to assist with queries and share knowledge. Not only will we be at The Vox, Matrix Fitness have their very own VIP lounge at LIW (stand E48). Come and see our cutting-edge equipment, our experts, ambassadors and sporting partners who will be available to offer support and expertise, everybody is welcome!

SECTION: FITNESS AND NUTRITION



The Matrix International Show
will be held at The Vox

Octane Fitness UK Ltd

Tel: +44 (0)20 3463 8542

www.octanefitness.com

Experience the next generation of Octane Fitness cross-trainers with the XT-One, the all-in-one machine that lets members move any way they want and target different muscles. This one x-trainer does it all in one compact footprint. This ultimate multi-tasker delivers valuable results for members in all clubs. The LateralX brings a new dimension with a 3D lateral movement, nothing else feels like a LateralX. There's also 10 variable width settings to add variety to all users. The 'seated x-trainer', the Octane xR6000 is unique and very different to anything in your gym. The xR6000 can be easy for de-conditioned users or incredibly tough for advanced users. The Pro 3700IFI model was the first elliptical to receive IFI Stage 2 accreditation, making it ideal for beginners, IFI users and GP referrals. Cross Circuit gives a buzz to small group or personal training.

SECTION: FITNESS AND NUTRITION



Octane will be exhibiting the next generation of its cross-trainers at LIW

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WHAT IS HYDRO+

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HYDRO+ MORE THAN JUST OUTSTANDING ROI

Would you like to increase your secondary spend income in an intelligent way?

HydrO+ has proven to significantly generate secondary spend income in excess of £50,000 per annum in some UK Health Clubs. Not only that but hydrated members are more likely to achieve their goals, meaning increased member satisfaction, which increases member retention!

IF THE ABOVE HAS GIVEN YOU A THIRST FOR MORE INFORMATION...

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WHY CHOOSE LUCOZADE VENDING?

A Lucozade vending machine offers a great sales opportunity, as it provides availability and visibility of the number one sports drink¹, Lucozade Sport, which meets the nutritional needs of members exercising.

We know that 15% of people will not buy if they can't find the product they want², so it's really important to stock the leading brands.

LUCOZADE VENDING - INNOVATIVE AND MARKET-LEADING

- » Interactive touch screen offers a shopping cart functionality allowing members to purchase multiple products in a single transaction and read nutritional information about the products
- » Cashless payment delivers a 23% sales uplift, providing a solution when members don't have change with them³
- » Lucozade vending solutions are energy efficient and have a large capacity, ranging between 220 – 340 bottles

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- » Customer Helpline available 7 days a week for technical and general queries
- » UK's largest team of specialist field engineers, meaning a local engineer can be with you quickly – 6 days a week



GET IN TOUCH

Our LR Suntory Support team are available to help answer your questions.

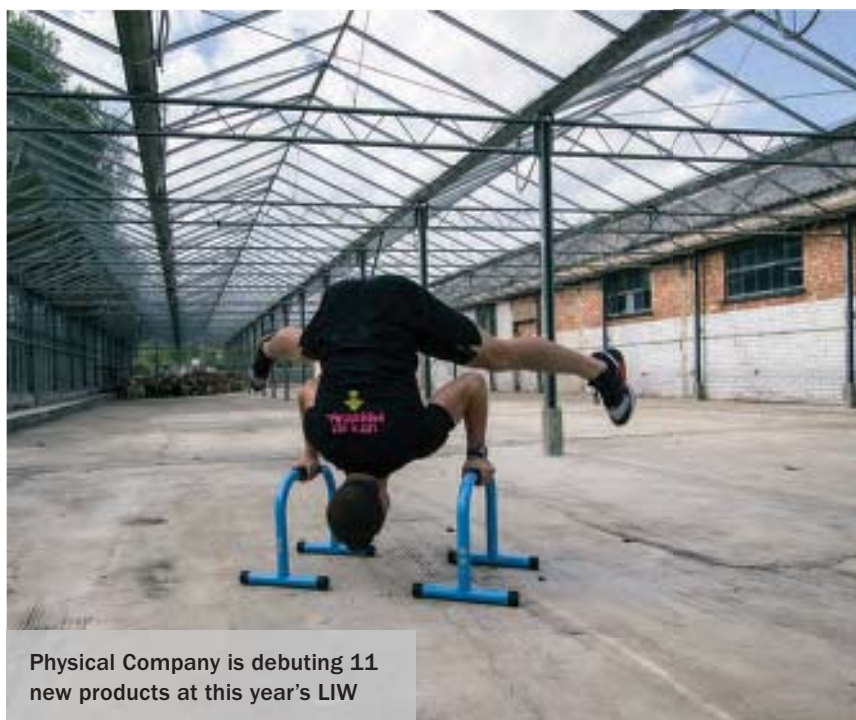
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Physical Company is debuting 11 new products at this year's LIW



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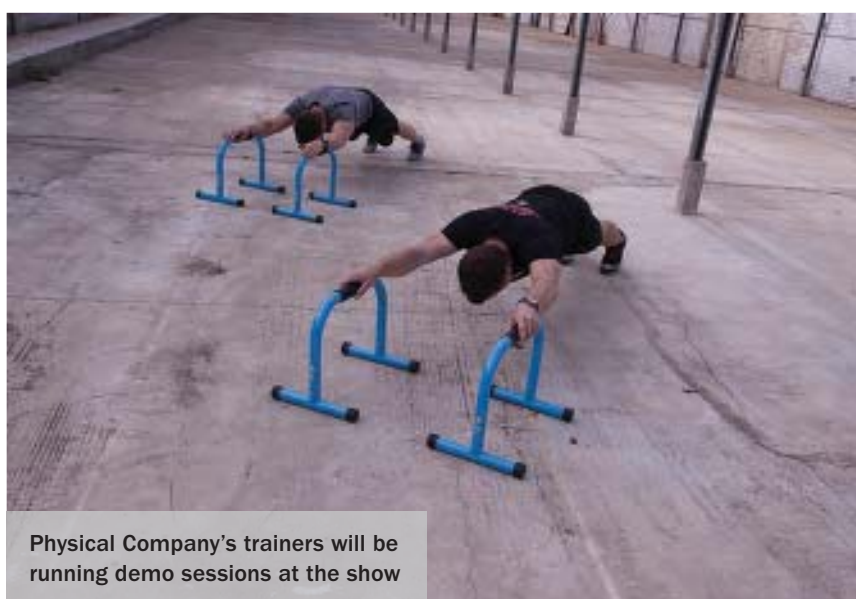
► Physical Company

Tel: +44 (0)1494 769 222

www.physicalcompany.co.uk

Physical Company, producer and distributor of innovative commercial fitness equipment, is unveiling 11 new products and demonstrating its new APEX Gym Floor Programming solutions on stand E50 at LIW. Expanding its ever-growing portfolio, Physical Company is launching a mix of kit manufactured by the company and in partnership with new suppliers to boost its strength and functional training lines. Physical Company is also introducing 'The Bolt' and 'The Forge' – two brand new customisable, modular functional training rigs. The newly-launched APEX Gym Floor Programming Solution will be demonstrated live on the stand throughout the show. Set to revitalise the gym floor, the series of six 30-minute sessions are designed to be delivered by personal trainers ensuring high-level interaction with small groups to give members personal attention without the price tag of a one-to-one session. Master Trainers from Physical Company will also be delivering sneak-peek taster sessions in the Group Training Area for everyone to come and try. The sessions will be at 12:00 and 15:30 each day and people are advised to sign up in advance by emailing education@physical.co.uk to secure their place and avoid disappointment.

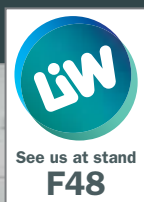
SECTION: FITNESS AND NUTRITION



Physical Company's trainers will be running demo sessions at the show

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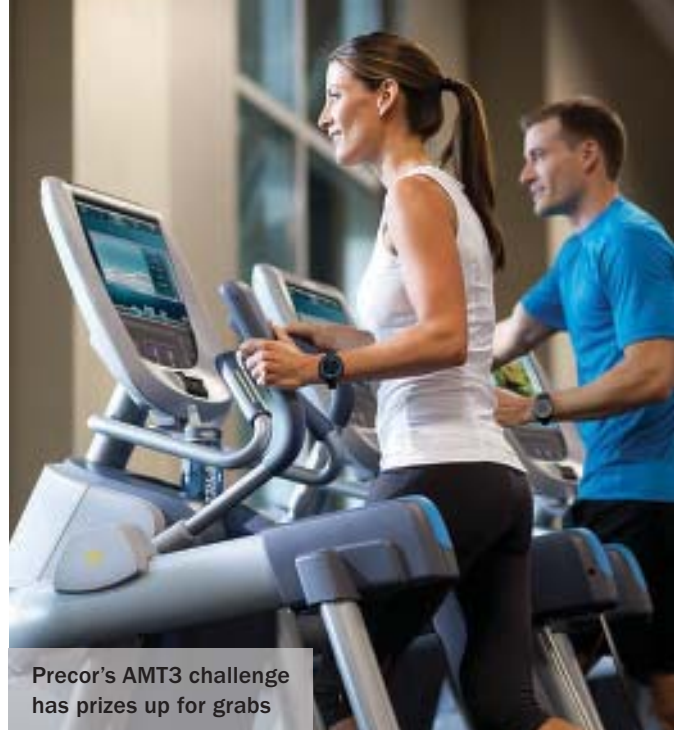
EXHIBITOR NEWS

▶ Precor

Tel: +44 (0)1276 404900

www.precor.com

Precor challenges the fitness industry to go the distance! LIW visitors are invited to take on the AMT 3 Challenge, brought to you by leading fitness equipment manufacturer and supplier Precor. Open to gyms and health clubs across the UK, the challenge runs from 3 September until 3pm at LIW on 23 September when the winners will be announced. Participants and LIW attendees are challenged to see how far they can travel in just three minutes on the award-winning Adaptive Motion Trainer by stepping, climbing, striding or sprinting the furthest distance. A selection of prizes are on offer including a bundle of sporting goods featuring items from Salomon, Suunto and Wilson worth over £1,000. Jonathan Griffiths, marketing manager for Precor UK said: "This exciting national campaign is a fantastic way for operators to engage their members, entice new people to sign



up and encourage existing members back after the summer. Nothing fuels engagement more than healthy competition, particularly when there are great prizes to be won. LIW participants can join in during the show to win prizes and the coveted title of LIW Champion." Visit Precor on stand D56 to meet the team and join in.

SECTION: FITNESS AND NUTRITION

Purus Limited

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Purus Limited manufactures stainless steel drainage channels, stainless



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steel sanitaryware, interiors and much more. For example, the popular Channel 100 is a stainless steel channel suitable for many floor types, including tiles, which can be installed with a choice of grates including the Tile Insert. Purus' products have been installed at the Wilton Centre Gym, Stoke City FC and Southampton FC training ground. They also offer bespoke and modular systems – giving your leisure project the choice and quality it deserves.

SECTION: LEISURE FACILITIES

Safe Space Lockers

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www.safespacelockers.co.uk

Safe Space Lockers is showcasing a fantastic array of high quality lockers at LIW this year. The products are available in a variety of finishes, including MFC laminate, wood veneer, solid wood and glass. Managing director Dominic Hyett is also offering premium locking solutions from Ojmar, including the OCS Digital Lock and the OTS Electronic Lock. Visit Safe Space Lockers on stand F48 at LIW to discuss your project.

SECTION: LEISURE FACILITIES



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www.speedflex.com

Speedflex is launching a new business model at LIW. Following the successful national and global launch of Speedflex studios, this unique circuit-based training concept is set to expand its footprint in health clubs and gyms nationwide, creating standalone Speedflex studios within existing facilities. The concept taps into the growing trend of HIT training and group exercise, offering individuals an effective alternative to conventional exercise with exceptional results. With an emphasis on motivational group exercise, each 30 or 45 minute circuit-based group session, which is led by an experienced personal trainer, combines a low impact, high intensity, cardiovascular and resistance workout for optimum calorie burn. Each circuit features a Speedflex machine which will automatically respond to – and create resistance levels based on – the individual's force, enabling users of all ages and abilities to work out together, at their own pace, with a reduced risk of injury and no muscle pain or soreness.

SECTION: LEISURE FACILITIES



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fitness products to commercial health clubs, community recreational centers, hotels, governments and more. Headquartered in Vancouver, Washington, US, we employ over 400 people worldwide and serve customers in over 80 countries. We operate regional sales, engineering or service offices in the United States; the United Kingdom; Germany; Spain and Brazil. Our vision is to be focused on the success of our partners. We facilitate their success by being incredibly responsive and easy to work with, and by maintaining the highest level of integrity.

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SECTION: LEISURE FACILITIES



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The rowing sector is expanding. As fitness professionals and gym members alike wake up to the undisputed benefits of this full body, low impact exercise WaterRower is offering options never seen before on the gym floor. Long regarded as the closest thing to rowing without getting in a boat, recent years have seen the WaterRower presence steadily grow in the commercial gym environment. At the forefront of this expansion is the WaterRower M1 series, crafted from tubular aluminium and available in custom colours. See this and our latest 'Nohrd' range on stand F44 at LIW this year.

SECTION: FITNESS AND NUTRITION

Xn Leisure Systems Ltd

Tel: 0870 8030 700 (UK number)
www.xnleisure.com

Xn Leisure improves customer service through technology with a range of products designed to work with your business, delivering enhanced service to your customers. Xn is also an integrated part of the Sports Intelligence DataHub; part of an ongoing partnership with 4Global. We provide a centralised set of web business intelligence tools based around consistent sector wide standards. Aligned with NGB participation and programming it allows operators to target and track interventions and monitor outcomes.

SECTION: LEISURE FACILITIES



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Get Berkshire Active tackles the physical inactivity epidemic

At SAPCA's Sports Facility Show on 9 June, Get Berkshire Active gave a presentation about the worryingly low levels of physical activity in the younger generation and the cost of this lack of exercise, from a healthcare and a financial perspective.

Among Get Berkshire Active's findings were that 46 per cent of physically inactive boys are more likely to consider themselves poor students. In later life, physical inactivity leads to workers taking approximately one week extra off work a year than their more active colleagues for illnesses and, ultimately, leads to 5.3 million premature deaths, all due to inactivity.

Brett Nicholls, CEO of Get Berkshire Active, said: "The country is experiencing an epidemic of physical inactivity that is having a devastating effect on our children and young people with tragic consequences to their health, and at the same time creating an unsustainable burden on the NHS and local services. We bring funding and expertise down from national sources to inspire, enhance, co-ordinate and deliver physical activity and sporting outcomes where they matter locally."

• For more information about Get Berkshire Active, visit www.getberkshireactive.org. To see the presentation in full and to download other helpful sports and play resources, visit sapca.org.uk.



Brett Nicholls and Get Berkshire Active encourage sport and physical activity across the county

New HQ for SAPCA



After sharing offices in Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire, since 1997, the Sports and Play Construction Association (SAPCA) has now moved into its own headquarters for the first time.

The move reflects the growth of the Association and is the next step in its aim of broadening its reach across the industry.

The new HQ, called the Hexangle due to its unusual shape, has undergone a full refurbishment by LaSalle Investment Management as part of an on-going transformation of Stoneleigh Park. The refurbishment has dramatically transformed the building with a modern open plan office space, meeting rooms and storage facilities. The overhaul also included the installation of environmentally friendly systems including energy efficient LED lighting and air source heating.

Chris Trickey, CEO of SAPCA, said: "It is a coming of age for us. SAPCA has been in existence for 18 years and during that time has been based in a small office in a shared building at Stoneleigh Park, but we have outgrown that space. Now we're spreading our wings and moving into our own headquarters for the first time. This is quite a milestone – not only are we taking

Colin Hooper, left, estates director at Stoneleigh Park and Chris Trickey, right, outside SAPCA's new headquarters.

on bigger premises and doing so under our own steam, but it is also key to our plan to grow and develop as an association.

The not-for-profit organisation has more than 220 members involved in sports and play facilities including contractors, manufacturers, suppliers, consultants and sports governing bodies.

Trickey said: "As a trade association we are here to deliver benefits and services to our members, but our most important role is to promote high quality sports and play facilities at all levels, from grassroots to elite, across the country.

"Our plan is to increase our membership by reaching more parts of the industry and continuing to develop standards and guidance for different types of sports and play facilities. Stoneleigh Park was always going to be first choice for our new base. As a national organisation hosting meetings and conferences for companies based all over the country, being in a central location with excellent transportation links is key."

‘What has PE and sport ever done for us?’

This was the question raised by Derek Peale, headteacher of Park House School & Sports College, Newbury, at SAPCA’s Sports Facility Show in Reading’s Madjeski stadium in June.

“Those of a certain age – or with a particular taste for British comedy – will remember an iconic scene from the popular 1979 Monty Python Film, *The Life of Brian*,” explains Derek.

“Members of The People’s Front of Judea debate what ‘benefits’ their Roman oppressors have brought them, ironically concluding, ‘All right – but apart from the sanitation, medicine, education, wine, public order, irrigation, the roads, the fresh water system and public health, what have the Romans ever done for us?’”

“It was with equal irony that I therefore recently posed a re-phrased question to



Sport is used at the school to enrich and innovate within the official UK curriculum

delegates at June’s Sports Facility Show: what has the use of PE and school sport ever done for us?”

Based on his own experiences as Headteacher at Park House School, Derek summarised that it has shaped learning in a wide range of related areas, providing a framework for: the development of values-based whole school culture;

curriculum innovation and enrichment; students’ social, moral and cultural development; an inclusive praise and reward system; and partnership working.

Examples of how Park House School uses PE and sport beyond the normal curriculum can be seen in Mr Peale’s presentation, available in the “events” section at www.sapca.org.uk.

SAPCA PRESENTS AWARD TO SHROPSHIRE CPFA

At the recent National Conference of the County Playing Fields Associations, the Sports And Play Construction Association (SAPCA) presented an award for outstanding achievement to shropshire CPFA in recognition of its valuable work to support the development and protection of local sports facilities and open spaces.

The Shropshire CPFA is leading a survey of facilities within Church Stretton that will provide a robust assessment of local needs and support planning and funding applications for future projects.

Receiving the award, David Kilby of Shropshire CPFA said, “We are delighted that this important project has been recognised through the Award, and very much hope that the model will be repeated across the country, and therefore make a significant contribution to grassroots



Local residents help Dave Kilby of Shropshire PFA with information on usage of the town park

sports and play. The outcomes will provide evidence to help protect, enhance and improve open spaces, sport, play and recreational facilities for the Church

Stretton town area as it evolves into the future. Identifying new ideas, aspirations and opportunities that will help increase levels of participation and new sources of income generation,” he added.

Shropshire Playing Fields Association are taking the lead on delivery of the project which includes working closely with the local town council, local schools, leisure centre, sports clubs, Shropshire Council and, most importantly, the local community. The National Conference was held on 17th June at the Ramada Hotel in Kenilworth, and was supported by SAPCA.

Delegates from CPFAs and local authorities gathered from across the country to debate the key issues affecting the future protection and use of playing fields, and to promote the vital importance of the sport, play and physical activity sectors.

FOOTBALL & SYNTHETIC TURF – A MAJOR STEP FORWARD

Across football the acceptance and popularity of synthetic surfaces continues to grow, with 3G pitches now seen as a valuable asset for any club. But how many buyers understand the different yarn options and the impact they have on the final playing surface? Bonar Yarns tells us more

More clubs, communities and schools are interested in installing high performance football surfaces that are free from mud, slippage and cancelled/postponed games. Within the synthetic turf industry, a multitude of systems exist to meet the needs outlined by end users – whether they are looking for durability, resilience, softness or enhanced performance. Whether the needs are met can be significantly impacted by the choice of yarn used. SAPCA member Bonar Yarns takes us through the four main types of synthetic grass yarn used in mainstream football.

Monofilament yarns

In the last decade monofilament yarns have become the preferred choice for most artificial pitches, as they are the best at meeting the stringent safety and quality requirements set by governing bodies including FIFA and World Rugby.

The individual monofilament fibres increase strength and resilience, facilitating improved ball roll and body-surface interaction with dense monofilament surfaces offering fantastic protection against the weather and intense use, whilst offering amazing comfort. These types of constructions also self-support, allowing yarns to stay upright for longer increasing its life expectancy, particularly for intensively used football fields.

Fibrillated yarns

Recent technological developments in fibrillated yarns has extended the lifetime of synthetic pitches beyond what was previously possible. Perfect for facilities that will be subjected to intensive use, some fibrillated yarns can withstand up to 140,000 Lisport cycles, which is a durability test, before any effects are seen, delivering greater playing time and increased ROI.



An increasing number of professional clubs are choosing synthetic pitches

PIC: @QOSFC.COM

A hybrid surface possess major advantages over regular natural turf pitches, such as increased durability and weather resistance

The web of fibres also encapsulates rubber infill reducing rubber splash, allowing surfaces to have a lush, natural appearance – not to mention providing exceptional tuft lock to maintain its high quality. The surface also requires less maintenance.

Combination thatch yarns

The more fibre ends a surface has, the more natural the pitch looks and feels, which is precisely what a thatch system offers. Combining monofilament yarns with a twisted, thinner fibre known as 'thatch', mimics the roots of natural turf providing a more stable playing surface. The thatch support also reduces rubber splash, providing a more natural looking pitch whilst providing a 'spring-like' feel, which reinforces support underfoot – enhancing safety and comfort for top-flight football.

Reinforced natural turf/hybrid yarns

Reinforced natural turf, sometimes also referred to as hybrid, infuses a natural grass surface with synthetic fibres, making it perfect for those looking for a pitch that provides a natural look and feel whilst delivering far greater use.

The resulting surface possesses major advantages over regular natural turf pitches such as increased durability, weather resistance and the ability to access new revenue streams.

Whatever yarn is being considered, SAPCA would recommend that buyers consult its Code of Practice for the Construction and Maintenance of Synthetic Turf Sports Pitches.

In addition, details of SAPCA approved manufacturers and installers can be found on its website – www.sapca.org.uk



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PICTURE: SHUTTERSTOCK_KARAMEA PRODUCTION

Ensuring the quality of tennis courts

As part of its new Quality System, the Sports and Play Construction Association has confirmed the 2015 inspection programme for tennis court projects

Seleected members of SAPCA's Tennis Court Division will have examples of their projects audited in September, with facilities inspected by a team including SAPCA's project manager and a representative of the Lawn Tennis Association – a supporter of the initiative.

This year's inspection programme will follow the format introduced in 2014, when the first eight specialist tennis court contractors were audited. Under the Quality System, approximately a third of the members of the Tennis Court Division will take part in the audit each year, meaning that all recognised tennis court builders within SAPCA will have their work inspected at least every three years.

The inspection of completed tennis court projects has been an essential part of the application process for potential members of the Tennis Court Division since SAPCA was formed in 1997. Together with the other strict membership criteria, the mandatory inspection of applicants' work has helped to ensure that only contractors with the requisite expertise and experience are accepted into the Tennis Court Division.

Other membership criteria include compliance with both the association's code of professional conduct and the industry's code of practice for the design and construction of tennis courts, as well as

precise requirements for financial stability. SAPCA works closely with credit experts Experian, using the Commercial Delphi system with Experian's risk reports, to ensure all contractors meet the required standards for financial strength both on admission to SAPCA and to retain membership each year.

“It's vital SAPCA takes a robust approach to standards by members of the Tennis Court Division”

As part of its code of professional conduct, SAPCA operates a technical mediation service, through which impartial advice can be used to assist in the resolution of any disputes between members of the Tennis Court Division and their clients.

SAPCA has been very keen to ensure that all Tennis Court Division members continue to comply with the standards required of them, and the Quality System will play a key role in this. SAPCA's Tennis Chairman, Tom Ralph, said: “The

Quality System helps to ensure that the industry continues to deliver the high quality of tennis courts demanded by the marketplace. It also plays a valuable role in providing valuable, constructive feedback to members, and sharing best practice.”

Each tennis court and MUGA project being inspected is rated using an agreed scoring system, with various aspects of the completed facility being assessed, from overall aesthetic appearance through to the quality of the playing surface and workmanship. Courts are evaluated against agreed project specifications and standards set out in the code of practice.

Minimum acceptable scores for projects have been agreed by the industry, and any company not able to meet the requirements of the Quality System will face suspension or removal from the Tennis Court Division.

Tom Ralph continues: “It's vital that SAPCA takes a robust approach to standards by its members. We have worked hard over many years to establish a reputation for high quality and the Quality System is an important means of providing reassurance to tennis clubs, schools, local authorities and all of our other clients that they should choose members of the Tennis Court Division for their projects.” ●
Further information about the Quality System and Tennis Court Division, see sapca.org.uk.

SAPCA DIRECTORY



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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EXHIBITIONS & SEMINARS: SPORTS FACILITY SHOWS

SAPCA regional exhibitions featuring the leading constructors of sports facilities and suppliers of related products and services, together with seminars on key aspects of sports facility design and construction.

Forthcoming shows in 2015:

Tuesday 24 November: AJ Bell Stadium, (formerly Salford City Stadium), Salford

MORE INFORMATION:

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Xtraction Ltd puts in a premiership performance

The Xtraction Turf Muncher machine was recently used to reclaim valuable infill from All Weather Pitches at Premier League Champions Chelsea FC's academy in Cobham, Surrey. The UKAS laboratory-tested infill and carpet were reused. Xtraction director Tim Gallagher said: "On-site reclamation reduces the carbon footprint linked to transportation and creates a viable product that might otherwise be disposed of in an unethical way."

sport-kit.net KEYWORD

Xtraction



Fleet offers free upgrades to machinery

Fleet Line Markers is offering free upgrades for purchases of all of its machinery for grass, hard and synthetic surfaces at Saltex 2015. This includes its Ki, Kombi and BeamRider line markers as well as the company's solid transfer wheel machines and Fastliner kits. Fleet Line Markers has more than 62 years of experience in the line marking industry with users from grass roots and all the way up to the world's largest stadiums.

sport-kit.net KEYWORD

Fleet

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Wherever you are in the world, find the right products and services 24/7 by logging on to Sport Management's free search engine www.sport-kit.net

Are outdoor spaces important for your work?

Fields in Trust, the national charity working to ensure UK communities have access to free, local recreational space, has launched new guidance. The charity describes the new guidance as a one-stop shop for the practitioners – local planning authorities, developers, planners and urban designers, landscape architects and town and parish councils – in the planning and design of outdoor sport, play and informal open space. The guidance is online at www.fieldsintrust.org



sport-kit.net KEYWORD

Fields in Trust



sport-kit.net KEYWORD

Harrod

Harrod UK to display new bespoke range

Harrod UK will promote the bespoke design services that are now available on its weighted hockey goal and Fibretech team shelter ranges at the upcoming Saltex exhibition. The company will be showcasing a full size bespoke weighted hockey goal with a sample book and portfolio presenting the array of options and capabilities on offer. Personalisation options include a wide range of RAL framework colours, the ability to screen print club logos onto the side and back boards, and the choice of a preferred carpet colour and whether to have a club, school, college or university name added via laser.

log on to www.sport-kit.net and type the company name under 'keyword search'



Conica unveils permeable paving solution at Saltex

As a first time exhibitor at Saltex, Conica will be showcasing its CONIPAVE permeable paving systems for sustainable urban drainage solutions. The slip-resistant paving solution is part recycled with rubber granules from end-of-life tyres. It does not necessarily require a newly engineered base and can be installed with minimal groundwork, and may not need planning permission in the UK, according to the company. Conica will also be exhibiting its surfacing solutions for indoor and outdoor athletics tracks and sports surfaces.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

Conica



Bostik's flooring for FC United of Manchester

Bostik UK has supplied the flooring at FC United of Manchester's new £5.5m, 4,440 capacity stadium, which was officially opened earlier this year. The company supplied enough material to cover flooring in the Broadhurst Park stadium's main 250sq m (2,691sq ft) function

room. Bostik's local technical representative worked in partnership with Stockport-based flooring contractors Siteform to oversee the installation at the stadium.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORDS**

Bostik



3G football turf pitch for Sutton United

Sutton United plays in The National League South and has a new 3G Football Turf match pitch designed and installed by S&C Slatter. The work features a state-of-the-art FieldTurf Vertex 3G Football Turf installed over a 25mm E-Layer performance base. The eight week fast-track works programme involved significant earthworks and sub-base construction incorporating piped lateral drainage. S&C Slatter will be showcasing its work at Saltex 2015.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

S&C Slatter

New synthetic line paint

A new synthetic line marking paint has been launched by Rigby Taylor. Duraline Synthetic is the latest addition to the company's range of Duraline and Impact products. The advanced and ready-to-use paint formulation has improved flow properties and is specially designed for use on synthetic playing surfaces, according to Rigby Taylor. Acrylic-based and available in a range of colours, it has been created to offer better surface adhesion and stronger water repellency. Available in 10 litre containers, it can be applied straight from the pack through iGO markers.



sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

Rigby Taylor

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Manchester Central Convention Complex, UK

The Soccerex Global Convention is the world's largest football-related business event, with the global leaders of the sport come together to debate, network and do business. Lasting five days – and including a two day Football Festival – the 2015 edition will again take place in Manchester. The event brings together businesses of all sizes that work in the football industry, as well as many of football's current stars and living legends of the game.

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www.soccerex.com

16-17 SEP 2015

Sports Matters Asia

Sands Expo and Convention Center

Sports Matters is a conference which aims to build the foundations for a healthy and sustainable Asian sports industry. The 2014 edition of the event witnessed the launch of the Sports Matters Academy and the gathering of more than 420 senior executives from 220 companies (including 67 speakers) for two days of networking and insight in Singapore. Confirmed speakers for the 2015 event include entrepreneur Victor Cui, owner of ONE Championship.

Tel: +852 2167 8040

www.sportsmatters.asia

22-23 SEP 2015

Leisure Industry Week (LIW)

The NEC, Birmingham, UK

Leisure Industry Week (LIW) is a trade show covering a wide range of engaging topics and interactive seminars in the fields of sport and recreation, facilities, fitness & nutrition, group training, , pool & spa and the club showcase. LIW offers tailored educational streams aimed at all roles and positions within a leisure centre to benefit leisure professionals.

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www.liw.co.uk

28-30 SEP 2015

Stadia & Arena Asia Pacific

Singapore Sports Hub, Singapore

The Stadia & Arena annual conference and exhibition is an annual meeting of the world's sports venue owners, operators and developers as well as the sector's leading architects, designers, contractors, producers and suppliers. More than 400 high-ranking industry attendees representing 35 countries, alongside are expected to attend, alongside 50 industry elite speakers and 50 industry leading exhibitors & sponsors. Launched in 1999 in London, the event attracts a high quality audience of industry decision-makers from around the world. In the past, the event has taken place in cities as diverse as Barcelona, Geneva, Milan, Munich, Rome, Prague and Bordeaux.

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www.saevents.uk.com

7-8 OCT 2015

The Sport Business Summit

Stamford Bridge Stadium, London, UK

The Sport Business Summit attracts more than 100 world class speakers and an invitation-only audience of 1,800 director level executives across 45 sports representing more than 50 countries. The event is covered by around 150 international media across TV, radio, print and online and offers sports leaders to gather knowledge and insight.

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27-30 OCT 2015

FSB / Aquanale

Koelnmesse, Cologne, Germany

Covering an exhibition area of around 80,000sq m (861,112sq ft), FSB – the International Trade Fair for Amenity Areas, Sports and Pool Facilities – is among the world's largest sport-related trade shows. From 2015, FSB will occupy Koelnmesse's modern North Halls. Having adopted a new themed hall concept, FSB will share the location and dates with its sister show Aquanale (the International Trade Fair for Sauna, Pool and Ambience).

Tel: +49 1806 603 500

www.fsb-cologne.com

04-05 NOV 2015

IOG Saltex

NEC, Birmingham, UK

The Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) has announced that its annual SALTEX event will be moving indoors – to the National Exhibition Centre (NEC) in Birmingham – for the first time in the event's history. This year's show marks the 70th anniversary of SALTEX and it is expected that more than 250 exhibitors will be showcasing their products and services – ranging from natural turf care, artificial sport pitches and specialist machinery to landscaping and playgrounds.

Tel: +44 20 7973 6401

www.iog-saltex.com

22-24 NOV 2015

UK Pool and Spa Expo

NEC, Birmingham, UK

UK Pool & Spa Expo is the UK's only independent trade show for the wet leisure industry and offers manufacturers and suppliers to this sector the greatest opportunity of reaching a National and International audience. The 4th Edition of UK Pool & Spa Expo will be at the NEC and will once again host to a larger selection of exhibitors than ever before. The New Product Zone will be featuring the cutting edge technology from the industry and training and networking opportunities will be plentiful.

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24 NOV 2015

Sports Facility Show

AJ Bell Stadium Barton-upon-Irwell, Salford, UK

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