

SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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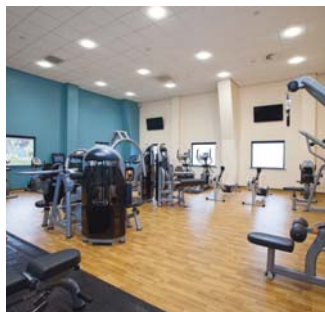




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Time to get it right

What's the most effective way to increase kids' participation in sport and set them up with good exercise habits for life? Lawrence Dallaglio thinks Ofsted is the answer

Speaking at the recent ukactive Summit in London, Lawrence Dallaglio called on the government to take immediate action to improve physical activity in schools, saying: "We have a serious problem... there's too much pressure put on schools to deliver academic results and nowhere near enough pressure to give students a good education in what to eat and what constitutes the right level of physical activity."

"We need to bake metrics of physical activity and sport into how schools are governed and measured," he continued. "We have to do something drastic, we have to do it now and it has to come right from the top."

"If a headteacher gets a 'highly commended' Ofsted report because of the number of hours students achieve doing physical activity per week, then lo and behold, I predict there will be lots more physical activity in schools," he concluded.

It's a powerful plea, because getting children active and hard wiring them with good exercise and eating habits is the most fundamental thing we can do to build a better future for them. School is – realistically – the only place this can happen comprehensively and fairly for all children, regardless of background.

Getting kids into sport isn't just about enabling them to grow a healthy mind and body to live in and the good habits to look after it, it's also about opening them up to a lifestyle that protects them from the dangers of a sedentary, screen-based existence with no body awareness and life-shortening habits.



Lack of exercise means kids grow small airways which they're stuck with for life. Nothing can be done to increase their size once that growth phase has passed

I sat next to an eminent pulmonologist on a plane recently and asked him the biggest issue he was facing in his work. Childhood asthma, he replied.

He explained that the hard tissue of the respiratory system is formed during childhood by pressure from the *inside*. As children run around, exercise and gasp for air, the pressure this exerts forces their trachea to widen and they grow big, healthy, open airways.

But lack of exercise at critical stages in their development means they grow small airways which they're stuck with for life – nothing can be done to increase their size once that growth phase has passed.

He said lack of exercise in childhood means we're raising a generation of kids who will be asthmatic adults, unable to exercise and with limited physical capacity throughout their lives. They will literally be unable to draw a full breath in comfort.

This is no legacy to be proud of and to aspire to for our kids. Could Ofsted be the answer?

LIZ TERRY, EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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HAVE YOUR SAY

Have you got a view on the state of the sports sector?
A topic you want to discuss? An opinion on an article featured
in *Sports Management*? Write to us at: sm@leisuremedia.com



Robust data can help sports organisations attract government funding

It was encouraging to see columns in the July/August issue of *Sports Management* by Andy Reed and editor Liz Terry advocating the protection of team sport.

The challenges of daily life are placing ever greater levels of stress on young people. In fact, 80 per cent of 12- to 16-year-olds say they have experienced a mental health problem. If such issues are not dealt with at an early stage, they can easily become more serious in later life.

Young people can build valuable mental and physical resilience through active participation in sport. Not only does it benefit their current health and happiness, it can establish lifelong good habits. Currently, inactivity and the resultant ill health costs the nation £20 billion a year. Beyond improving physical health, organised sport reaps social rewards too. In particular, team sports can help young people feel less isolated, stay out of trouble and acquire the confidence and life skills that can make all the difference to getting a job.

Demonstrating value

Over recent years, Pro Bono Economics has built a strong body of robust, peer-reviewed economic evidence to prove that investment in sport can produce quantifiable social capital. For example, we worked with Street Soccer Academy, a small charity based in Greater Manchester that uses football and fitness to help people with complex needs.

The charity wanted to produce a compelling 'business case' to secure funding for its future. Pro Bono Economics' volunteer economists gathered and processed a wealth of valuable data. Quantifying the longer-term social benefits



Involvement in team sports helps young people to build mental and physical resilience



**More consistent
statutory investment
is needed to make
sport more accessible**

to Street Soccer Academy's participants, with many going on to lead more productive lives, the initial findings showed that the charity, working with an income of £209,000, could be generating up to £2 million in net benefits.

Overcoming obstacles

Generally speaking, it's not a lack of interest that prevents people from participating in sport. A national survey carried out for Pro Bono Economics suggested that among

the major obstacles are the expense of participation and local facilities that are either inadequate or simply do not exist. Yet many leading health experts are now recommending that the government expand public wellbeing programmes and even offer exercise on prescription.

This all suggests that there is a need for more consistent statutory investment in making sport more accessible and affordable for people of all ages. It could prove a cost-effective way of building a more resilient and productive society. When it comes to presenting a compelling case to government, robust data, analysed according to recognised economic principles, will help to win the game.

*Julia Grant, chief executive,
Pro Bono Economics
www.probonoeconomics.com*



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Sports clubs should be aware of their legal liabilities around safeguarding

When allegations of abuse are made by former sports players, such as Andy Woodward who spoke out last year about the abuse he experienced as a young footballer (see *Sports Management* July/August p30), the fragmented nature of the sports landscape comes under the microscope. It's made up of different organisations, clubs and groups, and a huge number of individuals, such as coaches and physiotherapists, who operate independently on either a self-employed or voluntary basis.

This makes it difficult, but all the more important, for sports organisations to know how far their legal liabilities extend when it comes to safeguarding. If a self-employed specialist coach or volunteer safeguarding officer is negligent or abusive, is the organisation that engaged them responsible?

Setting a precedent

This year, a judgement on a High Court case dramatically expanded the number of circumstances in which a club or group would bear responsibility, making it imperative for organisations to review their arrangements.

The case has, on the face of it, little connection with the sports world. It was



Organisations weren't considered responsible for the conduct of independent contractors until now

brought against Barclays Bank by victims of sexual abuse at the hands of an independent GP, contracted by the bank to conduct medical assessments. Barclays refused to accept it was responsible for the actions of the doctor, who died in 2009, but Mrs Justice Nicola Davies ruled it is indeed vicariously liable for the doctor's abuses after he was engaged by the bank on a consultancy basis between 1968 and 1984.

The GP was a classic example of an independent contractor carrying out assessments in his own premises, with his own insurance cover, and working for multiple organisations at the time. Despite this, the court found that the bank was responsible for the sexual assaults he committed while conducting his medical assessments.

Be prepared

The ruling is likely to have very far-reaching consequences. Previously, the limit of an organisation's responsibility fell short of self-employed contractors. Now sports organisations will need to review their relationships with such individuals.

The nature of the sports sector makes it unrealistic for organisations to stop working with individuals on this basis. Instead, the focus must be on managing risk and carefully reviewing all people working with them and coming onto the organisation's premises.

Clubs should also be mindful of the potential for claims as a result of any misconduct that takes place, ensuring they have adequate insurance cover for deliberate assault and negligence, should the worst happen. Crucially, in the Barclays Bank case the GP was not worth suing: he was dead, his estate had been distributed, and his insurance did not cover deliberate abuse. Suing the bank was the victims' last chance to recover compensation. Sports organisations will want to ensure that, in the event of a claim, they are not the last one standing. ●

*Chris Webb-Jenkins, partner,
Weightmans LLP law firm*



Education is broader than what's learned in a classroom – students need to be inspired by the opportunities they're given in order to succeed

DARREN COX • DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION, SENTINEL LEISURE TRUST

What is the Football Academy?

The Football Academy is a government-funded course, owned by Sentinel Leisure Trust (SLT) and associated with Barnsley College and East Coast College. It's targeted at learners aged 16-plus who want to continue their education through applied learning, and who aim to progress to higher education or employment, possibly in the football or sport and exercise science sector. They attend our programme full time instead of college, sixth form or another provider.

How many sites do you have?

We have five sites – three in Sheffield at centres operated by Leisure United, one in Wednesbury at Pulse Soccer and Fitness and one in Lowestoft at an SLT-operated centre. At all sites, the programme is run by SLT in partnership with the operators.

The programme will be rolled out at a further two Sheffield-based sites starting in September 2018.

Is the Academy for footballers only?

No, many simply want to use football as a catalyst to help them learn. Young people have to remain in education or training until the age of 18, but by 16, after completing their GCSE, many have become uninspired by traditional school and college settings.



Darren Cox is director of education at Sentinel Leisure Trust, which owns the Football Academy

Some may choose to do the course because they want to create a career in football and sport. A few may come with aspirations of becoming a professional football player and will want to train every day. Others will come simply because they enjoy football and can see the benefits of attaching their education to it.

Each learner's week is split between education and practical. Education units are taught using football-related content, and students will select units based on their desired career pathway.

When was the Academy launched?

It was launched in September 2016 at our SLT site in Lowestoft under the name Road 2 Pro. The concept was developed further and in 2017 we partnered with operators Leisure United at St George's Park in Sheffield and Pulse Soccer in Wednesbury.

The first Level 2 education programmes started in September 2017.

Who have you partnered with?

The programme is lucky to have an extensive network of support that includes current and ex-professional players, industry practitioners and organisations including Suffolk Football Association, Sheffield & Hallam Football Association, Sheffield Careers Advice Service and Job Centre Plus.

We also have an arrangement with the sporting university UCFB, providing a natural route for students who wish to progress into university to specialise in areas of the football industry such as finance, media, psychology and management.

What is the practical enrichment programme?

It's an essential element of the courses. Students need to be inspired by the people they meet, the places they go and the opportunities they're given in order to have the best chance to succeed



Some want to be professional footballers, others simply want to use football as a catalyst to help them learn

within employment or higher education. Education is broader than what's learned in a classroom – we feel that too often students finish their traditional education having not gained some of the relevant skills, knowledge and experiences they'll need to succeed in working life.

Our enrichment programme includes: competing in British College Leagues; completing coaching, first aid and safeguarding awards; football workshops; personal development programmes; work experience; visits to elite academies and universities; industry talks from professionals; and trips abroad.

Is the programme for boys and girls?

The Football Academy is open to both boys and girls, learning together in



Students at the Academy get the chance to learn with a group of like-minded people

mixed classes. We're currently working on an idea for a girls-only football education programme with St George's Park Sheffield staff, which would support the FA's key objective of increasing football participation for women. The idea is that we would create a specific women's academy hub within each location moving forward.

Are there any plans to use this model for other professional sports?

Yes. We've already completed a case study on rugby and believe that the concept can work just as well with this sport. We're also looking into developing swimming academies that would link with Sentinel Leisure Trust's swimming schools and local swimming clubs. ▶

“

A lot of first-time adult swimmers are nervous about being in the pool environment. Helping people feel more comfortable and confident was an absolute no-brainer for me

**KERI-ANNE PAYNE • OLYMPIAN AND ADULT FITNESS
SWIMMING AMBASSADOR AT BETTER LEISURE**



Keri-Anne Payne is a two-time 10km open-water world champion and an Olympic silver medallist

What's the Swim Doctor programme?

Swim Doctor is a new offer through Better Leisure centres, with two different aspects: to provide an induction to the pool area and to help people improve their swimming technique. So many adults don't swim due to fear of the unknown. They might not know the protocols – which lane to use, where to get changed, what they can take onto the poolside.

So the first part of the programme is about having someone from the centre be able to answer any questions and to provide helpful information.

To help people improve, a swim doctor will be on the poolside at set times during the week. Anyone who's a Better Leisure member can come along to get technique coaching or advice on how to train.

How often can members attend?

Each member can do 12 sessions a year. They'd probably use the first couple to get their technique set, so they're confident that they're spending their time well. Then they'd go off and do it by themselves, and later come back when they want to check how they're getting on.



Swim Doctor sessions give adults of any ability the chance to improve their swimming

Why did you want to get involved?

I was so excited because they're trying to do something different. Unless you go to a pool all the time you don't really know how it all works. A lot of adults, certainly first-time adult swimmers, are really nervous about being in the pool environment and doing something wrong or not knowing what to do.

So helping people to feel more comfortable and confident was an absolute no-brainer for me.

What does your role entail?

We've recently done a series of masterclasses around the country to promote the campaign. The classes involved helping anyone of any level – we had complete beginners right up to



masters swimmers. We worked on their skills and on giving them confidence.

The swim doctors in each area joined me, helping on the poolside, or getting in and joining the classes to better understand the swimmers and how to run the sessions.

I'll also be doing a bigger masterclass specifically for the swim doctors to show them how I coach, and how they can get more and more adults swimming.

What's the standard of adult swimming in the UK?

I don't think there are enough programmes for adults specifically. There are a few masters programmes, but not enough emphasis on getting more adults to swim.

So many of the clients that I coach have never learned how to swim or



Not only is it great for keeping you fit, swimming is a mood-booster and can help with depression

they've taught themselves as adults, either because they just never got the opportunity when they were younger or they had a really bad experience that left them terrified of water. Many adults are motivated by not wanting to pass on their fear of swimming to their children.

Hopefully these people will now see that there's an option, that someone can help them with their skills in a really helpful and

non-patronising way, and then we'll get more and more people coming to swim.

Why is swimming such a great activity?

There was a big survey done by Swim England recently around what swimming does for wellness. Not only is it great for keeping you fit, and it's good to learn new skills, but there are lots of people who swim for wellness and their mental health.

Swimming and being around water automatically helps people to relax. It's a great mood-booster and can help with depression. And you get a bit of me-time as well – your head's in the water and no one can talk to you or shout at you – you've just got the bubbles and your own thoughts. It's a great way of looking after yourself as a whole rather than just your fitness. ▶



Lewin uses Newfoundland dogs to promote water safety and confidence

“

Many years ago, I almost drowned and became scared of the water, but my dogs built up my water confidence again

PETE LEWIN • PARAMEDIC AND SWIFT WATER RESCUE TECHNICIAN

What does your company, Pete Lewin Newfoundlands, do?

It's a non-profit company that uses Newfoundland dogs to promote water safety and water confidence through workshops at schools and scout groups, as well as at open-water venues.

Where did the motivation come from?

Each year, more devastating statistics arise regarding children drowning in the UK. Teaching water safety should be a priority for everyone with children, and for educational institutions.

Many years ago, I almost drowned and became scared of the water, but my dogs built up my water confidence again.

Described as the St Bernards of the sea, Newfoundlands are natural life savers, thanks to their intelligence, webbed feet and thick coats. They think for themselves and can drag 12 people with buoyancy aids all at once, as well as kayaks and boats.

How do the dogs help build people's confidence?

They're a brilliant way of engaging both children and adults. The dogs are so enthusiastic that it rubs off: they've taken many children for a swim who had never been in the water before. Some have been petrified of water, but are happy to go in with these big beautiful creatures. Even if it's just an on-land talk,

the dogs make the occasion memorable and help to impart the message.

I also take adults out for emotional support swims with the dogs. Often these people are going through a tough time in their lives, but find it cathartic having an open-water swim with buoyancy aids and the dogs, and this can inspire them to start pool swimming more regularly.

How can leisure operators engage with what you do?

A few have allowed us into the pool, but most worry about the dog hair clogging up the filters. But we can still do water safety talks to flag up the issue and promote their swimming lessons. ●

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Rob Knox, Product Director at Matrix Fitness

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NEWS + ANALYSIS



The UK saw huge benefits from the 2012 Olympics



We want to keep our standing as a world leader in this area

Tracey Crouch

UK Sport shares £200m plan for 'mega events'

A £200m (US\$263m, €227m) masterplan to host a decade of 'mega events' has been revealed by UK Sport.

The 2022 Commonwealth Games and the 2021 UEFA European Women's Championships are among the targets, with UK Sport stating that it is "actively considering the feasibility of mega events in a number of other sports".

Other prospects are believed to include the Champions League final in 2023, parts of the Tour de France in 2021 and the athletics World Championships in 2027 or 2029, according to the BBC, which claims to have seen confidential documents from UK Sport.

Bids for the events before 2025 will be supported by almost £30m (US\$39m,

€34m) of National Lottery funding over eight years, building on the UK's success in securing the 2018 Women's Hockey World Cup, 2018 Boccia World Championships, 2019 Netball World Cup and 2019 World Road Cycling Championships. The government hopes the programme will attract seven million spectators and generate a

direct economic impact of more than £440m (US\$579m, €500m). The estimated cost of staging both secured and targeted events is £194m.

"We want to keep up our standing as a world leader in this area and UK Sport's ambitious events strategy will help us do just that," said sports minister Tracey Crouch. More: http://lei.sr?a=j4M5k_P

Community sport facilities worth £3.3bn to society



Swimming is worth £229m

A landmark study of the wider social value of public leisure facilities in Britain has shown they contribute more than £3.3bn (US\$4.3bn, €3.7bn) a year to health, wellbeing, education and reducing crime.

Physical Activity: A Social Solution draws on data from more than 1.8 million members and casual users across 651 facilities over the past two years, to explore the impact of leisure centres and specific



It shows the impact of the sector stretches far beyond the parameters of sport

Steven Ward, CEO, ukactive

activities. Activity insight platform the DataHub used a 'Social Value Calculator', developed by the Social Issues Research Centre with the DCMS and Sport England, to

determine the overall social value generated by the UK's 2,709 public leisure facilities.

The report found that swimming provided £229m (US\$300, €259m) in social value in 2017, the most of all activities. Football has the largest impact on education and crime, providing the greatest social value per person – £45 (US\$59, €51) and £0.92 (US\$0.21, €1.04) respectively. More: http://lei.sr?a=A8V7Z_P



Designs from Populous show a new Riverside stand

Fulham stand switches from Heatherwick to Populous

Fulham FC has appointed global sports architects Populous to lead the redesign of the Riverside stand at the club's London home, Craven Cottage.

Design firm Heatherwick Studio had previously developed a broad concept for the stand as part of a business case study but its involvement in the project is now over, with Populous responding to a new brief.

The plans include an extra 4,300 seats, taking the capacity to 30,000.



It will blend history and the contemporary like no stadium in the land
Shahid Khan

By appointing Populous, owner Shahid Khan is reuniting with a firm he has worked with closely before. In May the practice completed a stadium extension for US NFL franchise the Jacksonville Jaguars – a team Khan also owns.

More: http://lei.sr?a=k6H5p_P

Free legal aid for sport extended to Northern Ireland

Smaller sports organisations in Northern Ireland will be able to apply for pro bono legal advice using a new £150,000 (US\$ 197,258, € 170,400) fund from the UK's major sports bodies.

Revisions to the Legal Panel Framework, announced on 25 October, mean any organisation operating in the sport and recreation sector with a turnover of less than £500,000 (US\$ 657,525, €568,153) a year can apply to access the funding.

The framework was created in 2013 by the Sport and Recreation Alliance, Sport England, UK Sport and Sport Wales but this is the first time Sport Northern Ireland has been involved.

A two-year contract will see 15 law firms provide up to £5,000 (US\$6,575, €5,682) pro bono support per year, with the total deal worth £150,000, as well as an expert database.

More: http://lei.sr?a=8D3z2_P



Sport is critical to the health and wellbeing of our great city

Tove Okunniwa

Okunniwa named new CEO of London Sport

Tove Okunniwa, the former head of marketing for BBC Sport, has been announced as the new chief executive of London Sport.

She replaces former CEO Peter Fitzboydon, who earlier this year announced his decision to stand down and take up a new role as managing director of Parkwood Leisure. Okunniwa, who is also currently

deputy chair of England Boxing, is a passionate advocate for diversity and equality in sport.

"Physical activity and sport are critical to the health and wellbeing of our great city, and I look forward to doing whatever I can to help achieve London's vision of becoming the most physically active city in the world," Okunniwa said.

More: http://lei.sr?a=V7Z6w_P



Sport England aims to attract more female volunteers

Survey highlights 1.3 million gender gap in sports volunteers

More than one million more men than women are taking up voluntary roles in sport and activity, according to a new survey.

Over the past year, 6.7 million people in England have volunteered at least twice to support physical activity, representing nearly 15 per cent of the population. However, findings published by Sport England show that

men are much more likely to help out, accounting for 60 per cent of volunteers – four million – in contrast with 2.7 million women, a gender gap of 1.3 million.

"This tells us that there's a lot to do to make the experience of volunteering in sport more attractive to women," said Phil Smith, Sport England director of sport.

More: http://lei.sr?a=j8d7v_P



Children were invited to play at the AJ Bell stadium

Solomona says rugby must draw minorities

At the launch of national outreach programme Project Rugby, Sale Sharks winger Denny Solomona has urged clubs and coaches to connect with children from all walks of life

Sale Sharks winger Denny Solomona has urged fellow players, coaches and clubs to reach out to young people from minority groups and encourage more into rugby. "We need to connect with communities that don't really know rugby and wouldn't think about playing it," Solomona told *Sports Management* at the launch of a grassroots outreach programme called Project Rugby.

"I'd like to see other athletes, coaches and clubs join this project. I know the players love seeing kids come out and play rugby so there's no doubt in my mind that players can play a big part in this. People like Eddie Jones will come out and have a huge impact."

Solomona, 23, won an England recall from coach Jones for the autumn internationals, following a blistering start to the club season, which saw him score six tries in the opening seven games.

His journey into the sport started at the tender age of five – making him an ideal candidate to launch Project Rugby. England Rugby and Premiership Rugby



We need to connect with communities that don't really know rugby

Denny Solomona

are aiming to attract black, Asian and minority groups, low socio-economic groups and disabled people into rugby union by providing new opportunities at 200 communities across the country. They hope to get 12,000 new participants aged 14 to 24 into the sport by summer 2018.

New Zealand-born Solomona was fortunate in that his father and grandfather

took him to training from an early age, but he is aware of the barriers facing some communities in England. "Part of it is financial – kids that want to play can't get a pair of boots or the right training gear," he said. "The other thing stopping kids is finding ways to travel to practice. This project will try to improve that and reach all kids so they can play and enjoy rugby."

"Now that schools are getting behind this project, they'll be driving it. If the kids do want to go to rugby they'll help them to get to training."

"As a kid, I thought it would be harder to get into the sport than it was. You really can just go to your local club and sign up – everyone is really inclusive, you meet new people and make new friends, which is the biggest thing I got out of it."

"Hopefully, the kids that came out today will take that step forward in their lives as well. They really enjoyed it and they're going to go back to school with a smile on their face and stories to tell."

More: http://lei.sr?a=c3D9P_P



Akhtar has an MBE for her contribution to equality

Diversity leader Akhtar joins sports ground safety board

Equality campaigner Dr Rimla Akhtar has joined the board of the Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA).

Dr Rimla Akhtar MBE, the first Muslim and Asian woman on the FA Council, has joined the board along with Janet Johnson, after the pair were appointed by MP Karen Bradley.

They will serve three years on the board of the SGSA, which aims to secure safe and enjoyable experiences

for spectators at all sports grounds in England and Wales and campaigns for safe grounds around the world.

Akhtar was awarded an MBE for her contribution to equality and diversity in sport in 2015 and was ranked 15th in the 2015 list of The Independent's Most Influential Women in Sport.

Johnson is a chartered town planner who specialised in economic development.

More: http://lei.sr?a=S9g9s_P

First for Scotland as £2.4m cycle track gears up to open

A state-of-the-art outdoor cycle track will become the first of its kind in Scotland, as construction nears completion.

The Fife Cycle Park is scheduled to open in early 2018, providing a 1.6km track to cyclists of all ages, and has been completed to host the 2018 Scottish Criterium Championships. It will be the first closed-loop cycle track in

Scotland, with a tarmac road, built to 'A Road' standard, which allows for a full range of cycling activities all year round.

The track was funded by Fife Council, sportscotland and the Scottish Government's Regeneration Capital Grant Fund.

An events programme is being scheduled for schools and cycle clubs in the area.

More: http://lei.sr?a=E4J8U_P



This investment will lead to greater playing opportunities for all
Kelly Simmons, FA

Football outreach project gets extra £860k to meet demand

More than 1,500 new football teams and 3,400 coaches will be created after the FA increased funding to its grassroots campaign.

The FA upped its investment in the Grow the Game scheme to £2.36m (US\$3.11m, €2.63m) after the initial funding window saw "unprecedented demand from clubs". The initiative, delivered by the Football Foundation on behalf of the governing body, aims to

increase participation among underrepresented groups – prioritising funding for women and girls, male teams from ages 13 and up and disabled teams.

The additional £860,000 (US\$1.12m, €974,498) funding will create 1,570 new teams at grassroots level.

Each new team can receive a grant of £1,500 (\$1,974, €1,700), to pay for FA coaching courses and more.

More: http://lei.sr?a=t5F2h_P

Sport England's £10m project boost to get older adults active



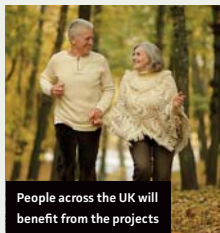
People are living longer but not necessarily in the best of health

Mark Diaper

Sport England is investing £10m of National Lottery money into 20 projects across the country to reduce inactivity among over 55s.

Funded organisations will use activity to help tackle problems including poor mental health, dementia, loneliness caused by bereavement and addiction.

Sport England's Active Lives survey found that inactivity among over 55s is responsible for as many deaths as smoking



People across the UK will benefit from the projects

and 36 per cent of over 55s are inactive compared to 26 per cent of the population.

"People are living longer but not necessarily in the best of health," said Mike Diaper, executive director of Sport England. "We're excited to help get older adults get active."

More: http://lei.sr?a=e8x5y_P

Headingley begins £40m transformation

Work is underway to transform Headingley into a stadium for the future, after Legal & General was revealed as the investor behind the £40m (US\$52.6m, €44.48m) project.

The insurance and investment management group announced it has partnered with Leeds City Council to guarantee the long-term future of the iconic stadium, investing £35m (US\$46m, €38.92m) in addition to £4m (US\$5.26m, €4.45m) already pledged by the local authority. Details of the investor have been kept secret since the deal was sealed in March.

The property will be let to Leeds City Council on a 42-year lease, and under-let to the cricket and rugby clubs



Headingley has hosted internationals for 110 years

jointly. The ground is home to The Yorkshire County Cricket Club, Yorkshire Carnegie Rugby Union Football Club and Leeds Rhinos Rugby League Club.

Construction is expected to generate economic growth in

the region. Once completed, the increased capacity will create additional expenditure of more than £107m (US\$140.7m, €118.95m) by 2023.

Leader of Leeds City Council, Councillor Judith Blake said:



This investment ensures that Headingley will be a first-class venue

Councillor Judith Blake

"Legal & General are ensuring that not only will Headingley be a modern, first-class venue but also that significant economic benefits are brought to Leeds and the wider region." More: http://lei.sr?a=Z2U3z_P

Man Utd legends to launch university focused on wellbeing



Gary Neville says students' wellbeing is crucial

Manchester United legends Gary Neville, Ryan Giggs, Paul Scholes, Nicky Butt and Phil Neville are behind plans for a new university designed to combine sport, education and wellbeing.

The teammates, whose business is called Class of '92, approached Lancaster University and Trafford Council to help them develop the concept, called University Academy 92 (UA92), which will deliver degrees in business, media and sport.

Speaking at the project launch, former Manchester United captain Gary Neville said: "Our aim is that UA92 graduates would leave with an academic qualification, of course, but also with a range of other skills such as how to deal



UA92 graduates will leave with the complete package to succeed in the workplace

Gary Neville

with pressure, understand finance, leadership and presentational skills, and also how to maintain a healthy body and mind. In other words, the complete package you need to succeed in the workplace."

Trafford Council will now commence masterplanning as part of a three-month public consultation period that includes details for a new campus and student accommodation.

More: http://lei.sr?a=d6M9k_P

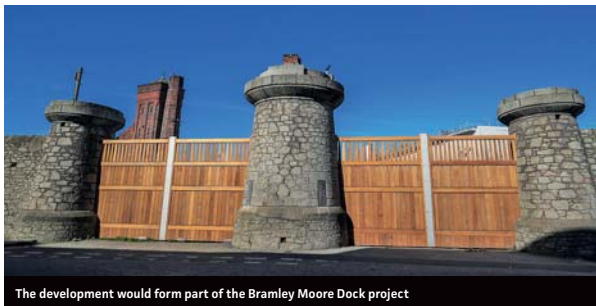
New Everton stadium could boost local economy by £1bn

Everton Football Club's proposed new stadium at Bramley Moore Dock would provide a £1bn boost to the local economy, according to planners.

Projections by partners CBRE of the economic impact of a major new stadium in the north docks area of the city highlight the benefits the stadium will bring, including the creation of 12,000 new jobs during its construction and more than £255m spent locally through the supply chain.

The figures estimate that a new stadium development will bring a contribution of more than £900m gross value added (GVA) to the region's economy before the stadium is even completed.

CBRE says once completed, the stadium will provide an



The development would form part of the Bramley Moore Dock project



A new stadium would be a huge catalyst for change and these figures show the impact would be felt immediately

Mayor Joe Anderson

annual GVA to Liverpool of £94m through hotel occupancy, retail and tourist spend across the city.

The wider construction programme for the area, the Bramley Moore Dock project, is expected to match the £1bn boost to the local economy

recently provided by the Liverpool Echo Arena and Exhibition Centre development on the King's Dock site.

Mayor of Liverpool Joe Anderson described the move as a "huge catalyst for change".
More: http://lei.sr?a=d2j2A_P

Primary school PE gets major funding boost

Primary schools across the country will see PE and sport funding doubled this month in a bid to change the lives of a generation.

The average state-funded primary school has 275 pupils according to the Department of Education's Schools, pupils and their characteristics report,

meaning the average school could see up to £18,750 extra funding to improve physical education thanks a doubling of the government's Primary PE and School Sport Premium.

Children's charity the Youth Sport Trust (YST) is working with more than 6,000 primary schools to ensure the funding boost has a long-term impact.

"There's so much potential for what schools can achieve with this extra funding," said Ali Oliver, chief executive of the YST.

"It presents the best chance we have in a generation to really transform PE and harness its potential to



This generation is facing a health crisis so we must be ambitious

Ali Oliver

improve children's wellbeing.

"This generation is facing a health crisis as it experiences the lowest levels of physical, social and emotional wellbeing on record, so we must be ambitious.

"Children's first experiences of PE have an impact that can last a lifetime. Get it right and we will transform the life chances of a generation."

More: http://lei.sr?a=K7X2w_P



The Youth Sport Trust urged schools to spend wisely

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

Olympic HQ design inspired by movement of athletes

3XN Architects have released new visuals showing the forthcoming home of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in Lausanne, Switzerland.

The studio won the competition to design the 25,000sq m (270,000sq ft) project, called Olympic House, in 2014, and construction began last year on the shores of Lake Geneva.

The new headquarters will bring together 600 employees who are currently working in disparate offices throughout the city.

There will be public facilities on the ground floor, providing space for people to learn about the Olympic movement, and the



Solar panels will generate enough electricity to power 60 homes

surrounding park and campus will also be open to visitors.

Staff will be encouraged to participate in sport and leisure activities, with the building featuring a green roof, a fitness centre and outdoor sports facilities. Solar panels will create

the same amount of electricity as the consumption of 60 Swiss households – allowing the building to be self-sufficient in terms of its heating, ventilation, cooling and hot water systems.

"With its dynamic, undulating façade, the building will appear



The building will convey the energy of an athlete in motion
Jan Ammundsen

different from all angles and convey the energy of an athlete in motion," said Jan Ammundsen, senior partner and head of design at 3XN Architects.

More: http://lei.sr?a=54c5E_P

IAAF plans heritage branch and clearer world rankings

The IAAF has announced plans to make athletics more attractive to participants and fans, following calls for reform.

The qualifications system for the World Championships and the Olympic Games will be redesigned in an effort to make the sport clearer and increase participation at all levels.

The IAAF announced on 3 November that it has partnered with Elite Ltd (All Athletics), to develop the first official IAAF World Rankings system for qualification into the top competitions, along with a new results and statistics database which will be managed by Elite.



Heritage will be an important tool to help inform, inspire and engage

Olivier Gers

The IAAF also announced the establishment of a Heritage department, which aims to better promote athletics' history, its heroes and heroines and to increase participation at local and regional levels.

"In creating the IAAF World Rankings partnership with Elite Ltd and setting up IAAF Heritage, we're establishing



The changes will come in before the 2019 World Championships

structures to assist the understanding and promotion of athletics for present and future generations," said IAAF CEO Olivier Gers. "Heritage will be an important tool to help inform, inspire and engage

interest through the extraordinary story of athletics."

Details of the rankings will be finalised in time for the 2019 World Championships in Doha.

More: http://lei.sr?a=U9X8P_P



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The U Arena is illuminated by 3,000 LED strips

Racing 92 rugby stadium opens

Rolling Stones open stunning new rugby stadium, the U Arena, in Paris, to become home of Racing 92 rugby club and Supercross motorcycle racing series

The Rolling Stones have officially opened one of the largest indoor sports stadiums in Europe, Paris's U Arena.

The stadium will become the permanent home of French rugby club Racing 92, which will play its first fixture there in December, and will also host the Supercross motorcycle racing series, as well as music concerts.

Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and the rest of the band ended their latest world tour with three sold-out shows at the stadium, built in the heart of the French capital's La Défense district, close to the landmark Grande Arche.

Construction began in February 2014 and has cost a reported €350m (US\$407.8m, £311.5m).

Designed by Pritzker-winning architect Christian de Portzamparc, the arena forms a distinctive horseshoe shape – the 'U' of its name – and can be illuminated by 3,000 LED strips casting over 16 million colours.

"The aim was to build the 'House of Racing' – an ultra-modern enclosure in



The aim was to build the 'House of Racing' – an ultra-modern enclosure

Christian de Portzamparc

which the club will draw most of its financial resources by organising entertainment of all kinds," said de Portzamparc's practice in a design statement.

"It is the largest indoor multipurpose facility with variable capacity in France."

The internal seating configuration can be changed via a movable stand, adjusting the capacity to anything between 10,000 and 40,000.

Rugby matches will accommodate, on average, 30,400 spectators and games will be played on a synthetic turf that can be covered with 'showcase' tiles in 11 hours to prepare the arena for concerts.

The arena features a 6,100-tonne fixed roof raised 40m (131ft) above the ground and a prefabricated concrete facade covered by 592 giant aluminium and glass scales.

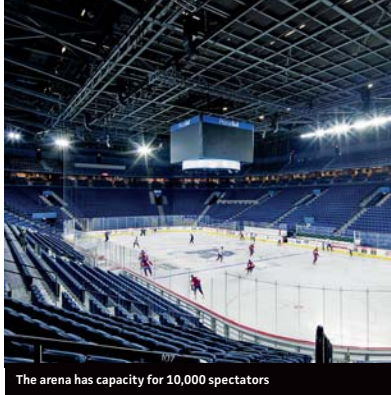
One side of the arena is formed of a new building housing the headquarters of the local council, while the other three have 16 public entrance points.

Reception areas, dressing rooms and refreshment areas are located under the seating, and receive light through the glass scales in the external walls.

The U Arena is home to an image wall of 2,400sq m (25,800sq ft), one of the largest in the world, as well as 350 large HD screens spread throughout the ground.

Theatre projects consultants Findlay Ross consulted on the venue's audiovisual experience and acoustics.

More: http://lei.sr?a=K4z5p_P



The arena has capacity for 10,000 spectators

Quebec ice hockey arena to deliver 'unrivalled experience'

Canadian architects Lemay and US studio CannonDesign have created a striking, transformable arena in the city of Laval, Quebec.

Place Bell is the new home of hockey team Laval Rocket – an American Hockey League (AHL) franchise – and features a 10,000-seat arena. It also boasts a 2,500-seat Olympic speed and figure-skating arena and a regular, 500-seat skating rink. The venue can be transformed rapidly into

an amphitheatre capable of hosting concerts and theatrical shows such as Cirque Du Soleil, and is also home to an ice hockey Hall of Fame.

A statement from the design team said: "Place Bell represents the height of contemporary design strategies, merging architectural form, technology, urban design and landscape architecture to create a community-changing project." [More: http://lei.sr?a=S9e8F_P](http://lei.sr?a=S9e8F_P)

Back to the drawing board for Commonwealth Games bids

The bidding process for the 2022 Commonwealth Games has been reopened by the Commonwealth Games Federation.

Awarding the Games to Birmingham, England, was expected to be a formality after it was the only city to submit a bid by 29 September, however, its bid was described as "not fully

compliant" and the deadline was extended to 30 November.

Entries were not forthcoming from Kuala Lumpur in Malaysia, Victoria in Canada and a potential Australian entry, with their governments failing to approve bids in time. A decision had not been made at time of press.

[More: http://lei.sr?a=A6v9A_P](http://lei.sr?a=A6v9A_P)



We look forward to ushering in a new era of entertainment
Mike Morhaime

LA's Burbank TV studios become Blizzard Arena for eSports

Games developer and broadcasting giant Blizzard Entertainment has transformed a Los Angeles television studio into a major eSports arena.

The popularity of eSports competitions – in which opposing players compete at video games played online, often with thousands of digital spectators following

the action – has grown at a huge rate in the past decade.

Located in LA's Burbank Studios, the arena has multiple sound stages, control rooms, practice facilities and a large retail store. The arena will support year-round events.

Blizzard CEO Mike Morhaime said the eSports industry has reached "tipping point". [More: http://lei.sr?a=y6H8z_P](http://lei.sr?a=y6H8z_P)

Dodgeball and armwrestling begin journey to Olympic status



GAISF supports a diverse and evolving sports eco system
Antonio Espinos, GAISF

Seven aspiring sports took one step closer to Olympic status after being provisionally recognised by the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF).

The first events to receive the new 'Observer Status' are: the World Armwrestling Federation; World Dodgeball Association; Federation of International FootGolf; International Union of Kettlebell Lifting; International Federation of (Match) Poker; International Pole Sports



Dodgeball competition has been growing globally

Federation; and International Table Soccer Federation. Each event is now provisionally recognised as a sport on the international stage, allowing their federations to apply for full GAISF membership and recognition by the National Olympic Committees. [More: http://lei.sr?a=P5a8Q_P](http://lei.sr?a=P5a8Q_P)

A new code for tennis

The new *SAPCA Code of Practice for the Construction and Maintenance of Tennis Courts* was launched at the Association's annual Technical Meeting in October. The code has been created in partnership with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) and is a valuable guide for anyone looking to build or renovate their tennis court facilities.

The code outlines the latest standards and includes guidance on the choice of surfaces and specifications. There is advice on court maintenance, to help clubs and other operators prolong the life of facilities.

According to Mark Fisher, LTA's head of facility development, the code has, over the years, played a key role in raising standards in tennis court construction.

"As part of efforts to improve the standard of courts, particularly at grass-roots level, the LTA continues to work closely with SAPCA to develop the code of practice, drawing on the expertise of contractors and consultants.

"The code sets the minimum standards for courts and what makes it great is that anyone can access it, to make sure that their project meets the requirements."

SAPCA's Tennis chairman, Tim Freeman, added: "Since its original publication, the code of practice has made a significant contribution in raising the standards of facilities across the UK, helping to create well-designed, sustainable tennis courts, particularly at the grassroots of the game."

Fisher says the easiest way to ensure a court is built according to LTA standards is to use SAPCA members for projects.

"At the LTA, we see SAPCA members as a list of trusted companies that we recommend, due to their commitment to the code of practice," he says.

"When people are looking to build a court and place an order with a SAPCA member, they know they are going to get a good service, the courts will be built to a specification that will ensure a sustainable life cycle, and in turn makes the best investment to help get more people on court and playing tennis." ●



The code helps operators prolong court life

SAPCA is the UK trade association for the sports facility construction industry and represents businesses across the sports, physical activity, recreation and play sectors. Sports Management is the official magazine of SAPCA.

EXPORT STRATEGIES

The recent FSB trade fair in Cologne, Germany was attended by a number of SAPCA members, and acted as a timely reminder of how improving export opportunities for members remains one of SAPCA's important areas of work.

In 2015, SAPCA launched an Export Group to guide those looking to sell their products and expand their services into new markets.

Working closely with the Department for International Trade (DIT), SAPCA advises members on doing business abroad. Services include identifying opportunities outside the UK and guiding members through the steps needed to secure projects.

SAPCA's partnership with DIT also means that members are set to benefit from the department's intention to engage more with suppliers.



DIT is in the process of devising a new supply-side strategy

Chris Trickey

"DIT is in the process of devising a new supply-side strategy, which will see it develop stronger links with suppliers," says SAPCA chief executive Chris Trickey, a member of DIT's Sector Advisory Group for the Sports Economy.

The DIT's sports economy team currently focuses on two areas of the sports market: major sporting events and football. ●

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Taking control

We need to get creative in the ways we receive and use sports funding if we are to remain sustainable, says Andy Reed

This has been a tough year for a number of sports organisations, with Sport England shifting its funding focus to tackle inactivity and UK Sport cutting the funding of 11 elite programmes ahead of Tokyo 2020.

According to sports minister Tracey Crouch's answer to a recent written parliamentary question, local government funding for sport and leisure now stands at around £1.1bn. It's still far more than the combined investment of £168m from Sport England, UK Sport and Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport (DCMS), but in 2010 that figure was around £1.4bn. It doesn't sound like a huge difference, but that's a £300m reduction in recent years.

However, I fear we focus too heavily as a sector on the Sport England, UK Sport and DCMS and even local government funding figures, as these are only a small part of the overall picture. To put it all into perspective, the overall sports economy impact is around £35bn GVA (gross value added) and contributes £39bn to the UK gross domestic product.

Looking for alternatives

I have long argued that altering a small percentage of other government budgets – such as targeting some of the transport budget towards walking and cycling – will have a far greater impact than taking funding away from sport, if the aim is to improve physical activity levels across the population.

Looking further afield for new revenue streams, I've been working hard to get some traction in the sector around Social Investment Bonds and the creation of a Sport Impact Fund similar to that operated by Arts Council England. This



Reed has called for some of the government transport budget to be directed towards cycling



I fear we focus too heavily on the Sport England, UK Sport, DCMS and even local government funding figures

would allow investment in projects that are capable of delivering on the government's agenda for sport, health, social justice and emotional health and wellbeing.

Other alternative funding streams remain relatively underdeveloped. Leading the way in philanthropy is the Juan Mata Common Goal initiative, which asks professional footballers to put 1 per cent of their salary into a fund that's distributed to football charities. A sports betting levy is also still on the table as a possibility, with the idea recently raised in parliament.

Making it count

There are growing concerns about why public sector investment continues to be made in sport when the perception is that it's failed to grow participation. I think we as a sector need to be far clearer about the reasons to invest in sport and physical activity and what can be expected from it. Proving our impact will be the biggest challenge when faced with competing demands on public finances.

There are not likely to be any great new investments in the sector from the public finances anytime soon.

It's possible that we've reached 'peak funding' for sport. If this is as good as it gets, we'll have to be a lot smarter about how we use our existing funding and resources. ●

Andy Reed is a former MP for Loughborough, the founder of Sports Think Tank and chair of SAPCA sportsthinktank.com



Grainger won Gold at the 2012 Olympics in the double sculls with Anna Watkins

© STEPHEN POUND FOR ARCHIVE PHOTOS

KATHERINE GRAINGER

UK Sport's newly elected chair, Olympic champion Katherine Grainger spoke to Tom Walker about her first months in the role and her plans for the organisation

Olympic champion Katherine Grainger only took up the role of chair of UK Sport in July, but there are few people who have a better understanding of the organisation's work from an athlete's point of view. The elite funding body's launch in 1997 – a response to Team GB's disastrous showing at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games – coincided with the beginning of Grainger's 20-year career in elite rowing. During this time, she was able to witness first hand how UK Sport helped to transform the fortunes of British sport.

In fact, Grainger's career has closely mirrored the journey of UK Sport. Her first Olympic Games, in Sydney in 2000, were also the first where UK Sport had been responsible for Team GB's funding and performance. At her last Games, in Rio 2016, Grainger won the last of her five Olympic medals and secured her status as Great Britain's most decorated female Olympian. For UK Sport, Rio marked a similarly significant landmark. With

27 golds and second place in the overall medal table, the 2016 Games were the most successful Olympics ever for a British team. A remarkable turnaround from Atlanta, where Team GB finished at a lowly 36th in the medal table.

"During my 20 years as an athlete, I've seen how UK Sport has helped Team GB shoot to the top of global sports," Grainger says. "The rise has been nothing short of incredible – so to now be a part of it is very exciting."

A TESTING START

Grainger has only been in the job for three months, but says she has enjoyed her first taste of sports administration. "It's hard to say whether it's what I expected, because I didn't really know what to expect," she says with a smile. "It's obviously been a big change from going backwards in a boat but I've really enjoyed it."

"So far, it has been challenging, but in the best possible sense. There's been a lot of problem solving and we've been looking at the issues ahead and identifying areas where we want to improve." ▶

The rise of Team GB over the 20 years since UK Sport's launch has been nothing short of incredible. To be part of it now is very exciting



Britain's most decorated female Olympian is now chair of UK Sport



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Grainger says UK Sport's 'no compromise' approach is about giving athletes the best opportunity to succeed

Critics claim that the funding of elite sport shouldn't depend merely on each sport's potential to win medals.

Grainger says, however, that the 'no compromise' motto is often misunderstood. "There has been talk about a 'no compromise' approach ever since the beginning of my rowing career, when UK Sport was first launched," she says. "Back then it meant that there would be no compromise in providing us – the athletes – with the best opportunity to perform – whether that meant hiring enough staff, appointing the best coaches or investing in facilities, training camps or equipment. 'No compromise' stood for no corners being cut on what was being made available to us in order for us to achieve our goals.

"I really believe that, over time, that has slightly been twisted – somehow 'no compromise' now means 'a medal at any cost'. All I can say is that I would never have come to an organisation that had that sort of ethos behind it – and I've never met anyone here who believed that UK Sport was a 'medal-at-any-cost' organisation."

FUTURE VISION

Grainger is still at the beginning of her four-year term. While she has made it clear that she is keen to use her experience and knowledge gained as an athlete to

UK Sport funding for Olympic sports

Sport	Tokyo 2020 cycle	Rio 2016 cycle
ROWING	£32,111,157	£32,622,862
ATHLETICS	£27,136,245	£26,824,206
SAILING	£26,231,379	£25,504,055
CYCLING	£25,980,427	£30,267,816
SWIMMING	£21,742,914	£20,795,828
CANOEING	£19,035,169	£20,043,618
HOCKEY	£18,018,945	£16,141,393
GYMNASTICS	£16,688,060	£14,615,428
EQUESTRIAN	£15,361,769	£17,992,600
BOXING	£14,692,636	£13,764,437
TAEKWONDO	£9,959,788	£8,053,837
DIVING	£8,805,908	£7,467,860
TRIATHLON	£8,127,753	£7,457,997
JUDO	£7,575,680	£7,366,200
SHOOTING	£7,028,124	£3,950,888
MODERN PENTATHLON	£6,649,932	£6,972,174
TOTAL	£265,145,887	£274,465,541*

*includes sports not funded for Tokyo ▶



Grainger won Silver at her first Olympic Games in Sydney 2000

UK Sport's goals, no matter what they are, need to be achieved in a healthy and supportive environment

help shape the organisation's work, she's in no rush to introduce any sweeping changes just yet.

"At the moment, my vision is still a very general one," she says. "I'm still getting a real grip on how the organisation works and the scale of it, so any specific aims will fall into place at some point down the line."

"There is a big picture here, and that's our remit from the government to produce medals and to inspire a nation through success at major events."

"What I am keen to stress, though, is that those goals – no matter what they are – need to be achieved in a very healthy and supportive environment and I think that's one of the really big challenges."

Grainger is referring to the well documented concerns over alleged bullying and athlete welfare issues in a number of British sports – including swimming and cycling. She believes it's an area in which her experience will be particularly useful. "I've lived in that world a long time," she says.

"It's stressful, hard and it's challenging almost all of the time. But it's paramount that we strive to make it a positive experience for our athletes, coaches and staff. You want everyone in that environment to have a good experience – whatever the results for the athletes individually."

Grainger believes hosting events can inspire activity



Profile of a high achiever

Dame Katherine Grainger DBE
Born: 12 November 1975

- First took up rowing while she was a fresher studying law at Edinburgh University in 1993. By the time she graduated in 1997, she was already a European Rowing Championships bronze medallist.
- She is the most decorated British female Olympian ever, with one Olympic gold medal and four Olympic silver medals. She also has six World Rowing Championships titles to her name.

Did you know? Grainger is a doctor of law. She completed her PhD on the sentencing of homicide at King's College, University of London in 2012 – the same year she won her first Olympic gold medal.

MAJOR COMPETITIONS

Grainger's time will also be taken up delivering UK Sport's new masterplan to host major sporting events across the country. Following a decade that included hosting the Olympic and Commonwealth Games, UK Sport has a new list of targets for the next 10 years.

These include the 2022 Commonwealth Games and the 2021 UEFA European Women's Championships – as well as the Champions League Final in 2023 and the athletics world championships in 2027 or 2029.

In total, UK Sport is set to invest almost £30m over eight years (2017-2025) in an effort to attract the world's top sporting events. Grainger says that the hosting of events is now a major component in UK Sport's work. "The goal of the events programme is partly to showcase our own athletes, but also to establish the UK as a global influence on sport," she says.

"Ideally, if all goes well, the events we'll be hosting will attract 7 million spectators and have a positive economic impact of around £400m."

Grainger adds that, as well as providing an economic boost, the events play a crucial role in inspiring people to get more active.

"You only had to see the impact that the World Championships of Athletics in London in September had. To see the Olympic Stadium full of athletics fans was amazing and a testament to what London 2012 started."

"Sure, London 2012 and Glasgow 2014 were the 'big hitters', but they triggered a desire for more. That feeling of 'what can we go to next' is one we need to capitalise on." ●

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How can we aid the rise of professional women's sport?

Despite strides being taken, media coverage, sponsorship, prize money and pay for women's sport still lag behind those of the men. What can we do to change this? Kath Hudson rounds up opinions from the sporting world



This year there have been some heartening developments for British women in male-dominated sports. The England rugby team made it to the semi-finals of the World Cup; the cricketers won the World Cup, selling out Lord's in the process, and Johanna Konta became the first British woman since 1978 to reach the Wimbledon semi-finals. Overseas, the new women's Australian Football League hit

the ground running and the Norwegian Football Association has recently announced a financial package for next year that will see the women's national team paid the same amount as its male counterpart, with the men agreeing to take a pay cut to allow the restructure.

Despite this, there is still a way to go until equality is reached. The prize money for the men's FIFA World Cup was £22m, compared to £630,000 for the women's, and although Wimbledon now pays



The prize money for the men's FIFA World Cup was £22m, compared to £630,000 for the women's competition

all its players equally, it's the only Grand Slam to do so. Meanwhile, the British women's bobsleigh team has been stripped of funding by its national governing body ahead of the Winter Olympics.

The situation experienced by elite athletes is mirrored throughout every layer of sport. Only 24 per cent of those directing elite sport programmes are female. Half of the UK's governing bodies are still failing to meet the target of 30 per cent women on their boards and 1.6 million more men than women play sport in England each week.

So, what can be done to bring professional women's sport up to the same level as men's sport?



Johanna Konta's 2017 Wimbledon success boosted viewing figures

RICHARD LEWIS All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club: chief executive

In general, I feel there's a lot of positive momentum gathering for women's sport, coming on the back of outstanding performances on the international stage and a greater commitment to broadcast and media coverage of these events. My feeling is that Wimbledon spectators wish to see compelling and competitive matches, irrespective of a player's gender. They love supporting their national heroes, as we've seen in the UK with the success of Andy Murray and Johanna Konta in recent years.

The Championships, Wimbledon is the only Grand Slam to schedule standalone ladies' singles quarter-finals and semi-finals days, a move that has brought the full weight of international broadcast, print and digital media exposure to the matches and competitors. Konta's quarter-final defeat of Simona Halep this year registered the highest viewing figure of the fortnight on the BBC, with a peak of 7.4 million.

Awarding equal prize money at Wimbledon was, and is, absolutely the right thing to do.



Men and women both bring fantastic skill and excitement, so it's only appropriate to pay equally

I believe showcasing men's and women's tennis together, in one venue, is one of the greatest strengths of the Grand Slams. Men and women both bring fantastic skill and excitement, so it's only appropriate to pay equal prize money.

Long term, I think it's very important to encourage girls to play sport and to keep them involved as they get older. We hope that there are young girls all around the UK who saw Konta's success at Wimbledon and were inspired to pick up a racquet and try tennis.



Our goal is to provide the same opportunities for both males and females. Now all young players can aim to compete at a national level



The public's positive reaction to the AFLW league shows there is a demand for women's sport

ANDREW DILLON

Australian Football League: general manager football operations

The Australian Football League Women's (AFLW) competition had originally been pencilled in to commence in 2020, but a growing participation base and interest in women's exhibition matches over the past four years fast-tracked the launch to this year.

We had a series of events starting from July 2016 that announced the teams, marquee players, coaches, the competition logo, the competition sponsor, the draft, the fixtures and playing

uniforms. This helped to generate media coverage and public interest. We've also established standalone social-media platforms and a website to promote the players and the league and to attract new fans.

The reaction to the league has been overwhelming. Every AFLW match was broadcast live by the AFL's broadcast partners, as well as supported by print, radio and TV media throughout the country.

The opening match between Carlton and Collingwood was

a highlight, with Ikon Park filled to its capacity of 24,500. Attendance across the seven AFLW rounds and the AFLW grand final was 195,000 and television audiences reached 5.6 million across the eight-week season.

Females now represent 27 per cent of football participants in Australia. In 2016, 380,000 females were playing the game, of which 53,500 were aged five to 12 years old. There was a 21 per cent growth in female participation in 2016, as well as a 56 per cent increase in

dedicated female football teams, which brings the total to almost 1,000, with 2,500 female accredited coaches.

The AFL has announced that two new teams will enter the AFLW competition in 2019 and another four teams in 2020.

Our ongoing goal is to provide the same opportunities for both male and female players. Now all young players who start playing in AFL Auskick (a programme for five to 12 year olds) can aim to play at the highest level in a national competition. ►



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HANNEKE SMITS

Newton Investment Management: CEO

Before Newton IM became involved with the Women's Boat Race seven years ago, the athletes had to personally cover the costs of their participation, in addition to studying full time. Newton wanted to ensure our sponsorship assets were more than just brand visibility, but were making a real difference in society.

As a result of our involvement, both men and women now receive sponsorship and other benefits such as media rights and, since 2015, are able to race the same course on the same day. This was not only a pivotal moment in the history of this iconic British sporting event, but also a breakthrough for equality in sport around the world.

This sponsorship has increased audiences, brought additional sponsors on board and also increased the professionalism, sustainability and stability of



It's important to note that men's sponsorship has not been affected by increased focus on the women

the race operations. The overall effect has added to, rather than diluted, what was there before, so men's sponsorship has not been affected. It's particularly important to demonstrate this if we are to see other sports allow equal rights and funding for their female athletes.



© JOHN WALTON/PA WIREIMAGE.COM

Sponsorship has also helped to break the chicken and egg argument as to whether media coverage needs to come before commercial partners will invest or vice versa. We understand that it has increased the attractiveness of investing in women's sport from a commercial perspective and reduced the perceived risk of doing so to commercial partners. Perhaps the biggest impact has been on awareness of the need

The Women's Boat Race was not held on the same day or course as the Men's until its 70th year

to increase funding, media and participation in women's sport.

Studies into the impact of our sponsorship have also noted a vast improvement in the infrastructure standards for women's rowing, increasing the attraction of the UK as a centre for high performance.



Sporting bodies, athletes and teams need to take the time to communicate their commercial value

TAMMY PARLOUR

Women's Sport Trust: co-founder and joint CEO

Women's sport has evolved significantly since the Women's Sport Trust was founded in 2012, but the key areas for development remain similar. We need to increase funding and sponsorship and improve the quality and volume of media coverage, while raising the profile of elite athlete role models. We also need to get more diversity across every level of sport.

We're looking for systemic change, not one-off initiatives, and there are no magic bullets. This requires bold leadership, of real substance, sustained over time. We want progress to come faster but just as importantly we want it to be properly plumbed in so that it will endure.

Women's sport is full of great characters, content and stories. We're looking for bold brands who will step into the women's

sport market, shape it and take advantage of the opportunities on offer. Sporting bodies, athletes and teams also have a role to play. They need to have a compelling product and take the time to communicate the commercial value it can bring to potential partners. Women's sport is not better or worse than men's sport – it brings its own distinctive audiences, entertainment and content. It's time to focus on that.



© DONALD FARMER/PAWIRE/PAINAGES

The Women's Rugby World Cup 2017 final was viewed by 2.3 million households

MAGGIE ALPHONSI

Former England rugby player and media presenter

The situation in rugby is encouraging: rugby club facilities have become more inclusive and cater to women and girls, and there's been a general positive shift in attitudes and perceptions towards women's and girls' rugby.

Alongside this, there has been an increase in media coverage, so international and domestic women's fixtures are profiled and televised. As well as an increase in professionalism at the international and domestic level, there are now more sponsors, so the women's teams have separate or joint sponsorship with the men's teams.



There's been an increase in female players and teams, but the next step is more female coaches and officials

Audiences and interest in women's rugby is definitely on the rise and the Women's Rugby World Cup 2017 was a good example of that. The tournament was viewed in 110 countries, surpassing all previous records. The England vs France semi-final hit viewing figures of 3.3 million in France and the final between England and New Zealand was viewed on terrestrial TV (ITV) at prime time and reached peak figures of 2.3 million.

There has been an increase in players and teams, but the next step would be to see an increase in female coaches and officials in the sport. There's a lot of work

being done to get more women and girls into that side of the game, but progress is gradual.

There's been so much positive progress in the game but, of course, all of this is just the start. Going forward, I'd like to see more of everything: more media coverage, more sponsors and more professional contracts awarded to female rugby players. ●

ANYTHING TO ADD?

If you have a different opinion or new information to add to the debate, send your letters to stepheaves@leisuremedia.com

GET UP, STAND UP

Could standing areas be returning to English football? Tom Walker looks at the increasing drive to provide safe standing at major stadiums

Standing areas disappeared from major English stadiums in the 1990s as a result of the *Taylor Report*, which was produced in the aftermath of the 1989 Hillsborough disaster – a human crush during an FA Cup semi-final that caused 96 fatalities and 766 injuries. Although it specified that “a failure of police control” was the main cause of the disaster, the report also deemed the terraces and poor quality crush barriers were a contributing factor.

The *Taylor Report* put forward 76 recommendations, including that all major stadiums should become all-seater venues and all spectators should be allocated a seat. The recommendations were passed



Standing can even be safe for kids

into law, bringing an end to standing and radically re-shaping stadium design and the fan experience within English football.

Today, standing is still permitted in the lower leagues, where capacities tend to be smaller, but clubs in the top two divisions – the English Premier League and the Championship – are required to play their games at all-seater stadiums. The all-seater requirement also extends to any other stadiums used for international competitions, such as Wembley and the Principality Stadium in Cardiff.

There is, however, a growing groundswell of support for the return of standing areas from a number of sections of English football. Fans, clubs, stadium operators and even safety authorities have voiced views that there could be a place for properly-designed, purpose-built ‘safe standing’ areas within modern football stadiums.

MATTER OF CHOICE

One of the leading campaigners for bringing back standing is the Football Supporters’ Federation (FSF). One of its major arguments in favour of standing is that the move would improve the atmosphere and fan experience during games. In its National Supporter Survey, the FSF asked fans why they would most like to stand at matches, and 71.6 per cent of the 4,287 respondents said standing would provide ‘a better atmosphere’.

There is also a customer-service aspect to reintroducing standing. “As campaigners, we think spectators should have a choice,” says John Darch, FSF



Rail seating is installed at the HDI Arena in Hannover, Germany



Fans at Celtic FC's Celtic Park stadium enjoy the atmosphere in a safe standing area

“A football crowd is made up of a diverse range of people. We feel that the fans who want to stand up are being denied that choice

member and the driving force behind the Safe Standing Roadshow campaign.

“A football crowd is now made up of a diverse range of people. There are those who prefer a VIP treatment in a comfortable hospitality box, there are families who want to sit together in a safe environment and there are those who like to stand up to watch their football. We feel that the fans who want to stand up are being denied that choice.”

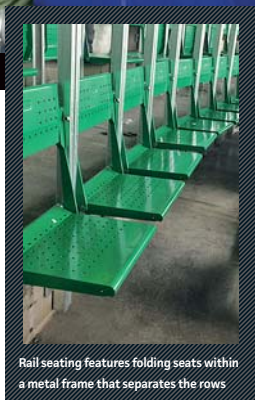
WHAT IS SAFE STANDING?

Introducing standing areas at all-seater stadiums would require – alongside a change in the Football Spectators Act

1989 – the reconfiguration of existing seating areas into standing zones. The standing areas would also need to have the ability to be converted back to seating during European and international games, as both FIFA and UEFA require all games under their jurisdiction to be played in all-seater stadiums.

A number of stadiums outside the UK now house these convertible standing areas. They're particularly popular in Germany, where all-seater stadiums have never required for domestic games.

In principle, there are three different ways to provide adjustable safe standing areas. Perhaps the most popular



Rail seating features folding seats within a metal frame that separates the rows

method – and the one favoured by the FSF – is rail seating, in which fold-up seats are fitted within a metal frame, which forms a waist-high rail that keeps spectators separated into rows.

Bolt-on seats, meanwhile, are a way of making traditional terracing fit UEFA regulations. To convert to a seated area, the terraces' crush barriers are removed and

► each row is fitted with temporary seating, fixed into place using secure bolts.

There are also fold-away seating products, in which seats are hidden away under aluminium terrace steps to create a standing area. During domestic games, the area has the appearance of traditional terracing with crush barriers, but for UEFA and FIFA games, the aluminium steps are folded back and the seats flipped up.

In the UK, it is the rail seating product which is providing the most popular possible solution for clubs – and the focus for the FSF when campaigning for safe standing. “Seeing the rail seating that is being introduced in Germany has given us something that we can now put in front of the politicians,” Darch says.

“We can also point out that we already have standing in our stadia – people are standing in seated areas not designed for the purpose. Wouldn’t it be far better to let the fans who are standing – and will go on standing – stand in a safe area?”



People who stand in seating areas are much more at risk of getting injured than they would be in an area that has been designed for standing

SHREWSBURY TOWN – FIRST WITH SAFE STANDING

League One club Shrewsbury Town is set to become the first English club to establish a safe standing area at an all-seater stadium. Earlier this year, the club launched a crowdfunding campaign to fund the installation of 550 rail seats at its Montgomery Waters Meadow stadium. In October, the club reached its target of £65,000.

Brian Caldwell, Shrewsbury Town CEO, said: “We’re delighted that Shrewsbury Town will be the flagship club in addressing this issue, which is so important to so many fans. We’ll now continue to work closely with our local Safety Advisory Group to gain the necessary certification for the safe standing area and we hope to have supporters watching home games from the safe standing area before the end of the season.”



Shrewsbury Town's Aristote Nsiala

SAFETY HAZARD

The introduction of secure standing areas at stadiums – particularly those using rail seats – has secured the cautious backing of the Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA).

As the organisation responsible for safety at the UK's sports venues, the SGSA has acknowledged that all-seater stadiums haven't eradicated standing. It sees the current trend of fans standing in seating areas as one of the major safety hazards at modern football stadiums. Earlier this year, SGSA's chief inspector, Ken Scott, said that the government should address supporters' wishes to stand, before “something happens”.

Caroline Hale, SGSA's head of communications, is keen to emphasise that the authority's tentative support for safe standing is down to tackling the safety issue. “I think it's important to distinguish that there are two issues here – the desire to return to standing, which the FSF is campaigning on, and the



Celtic FC installed nearly 3,000 rail seats in 2016, a move credited with improving the atmosphere of matches



issue of persistent standing, where people are choosing to stand for a prolonged time in seating areas," Hale says.

"People who stand in seating areas are much more at risk of injury than they are in an area that's designed for standing – so therefore we do see safe standing as a potential solution to the issue."

CELTIC STANDING

As well German stadia, safe standing advocates in England can point north of the border to Scotland for a successful example. Thanks to differing stadia legislation, Scottish Premiership club Celtic FC became the first club in the UK to install rail seating at an all-seater stadium.

In 2016, the club installed nearly 3,000 rail seats – from UK supplier Ferco – at its Celtic Park home. As well as eradicating the issue of persistent standing, the safe standing zone has been credited with improving the stadium's atmosphere.

"Originally we were challenged by our local authority safety team to come up with a solution for fans persistently standing in seated areas," says Robert Buchanan, Celtic FC's stadium manager.

"We looked at various solutions and the rail seating we saw in Germany was by far the best one for us. We picked a corner site at Celtic Park, because it fitted in with the

dynamics of the stadium – and we didn't lose too many seats in that area. It's been a fantastic success – the fans enjoy it."

Buchanan adds that there are also safety management advantages in using the rail seating. "There are no surges and no danger of fans being pushed over," he says.

"Also, when we first installed the standing area, the fire brigade and ambulance service were worried about access and how they'd be able to get into the area.

"Since they've worked in the area, they've said that it's a fantastic solution and the 'best thing that could have happened', as they are fully protected on both sides when they go into the crowd."

WHAT NEXT?

There is no doubt that the momentum towards introducing safe standing areas at English clubs is increasing. In 2014, the English Football League (EFL) voted in favour of exploring safe standing and called for the minister for sport to review stadium arrangements for Championship clubs. Meanwhile, the English Premier League is expected to complete its own consultation of safe standing by the end of 2017.

There is also movement at government level. Sports minister Tracey Crouch is set to have a meeting with representatives of the SGSA later this year, which is



Separation barriers prevent surges and protect access to the area

significant, considering that for standing areas to return, the government would need to instigate a change in law.

The final say of whether a stadium will introduce standing areas, however, should always lie with the clubs, says Michael Brunsell, FSF's director of communications.

"We've always said that it should be up to each club – in consultation with their fans," Brunsell says. "We'd never say, 'every club has to have a safe standing area', but the opportunity should be there. If a club and its fans want one, they should be allowed to have one." ●

AT THE HEART



© LAUREN HALE/EPA WIRE/PA

In June 2017, as Westway Sports & Fitness Centre was preparing to reopen following a major renovation, disaster struck the neighbourhood. Steph Eaves looks at how, by opening its doors to those in need, the centre took on a special significance within the local community

Arriving at the Latimer Road tube station and wandering through the streets of North Kensington towards Westway Sports & Fitness Centre, it's impossible not to notice the effects of the tragedy that occurred there just a few months earlier. Grenfell Tower, a blackened shell, looms over the

area, a constant reminder of lives lost and devastated. Yellow ribbons are tied around trees, and photos of victims are still plastered to walls and fences.

As I pass under the Westway flyover, and make my way to the sports centre, the streets are quiet and the atmosphere dark. But on stepping through the sliding doors into a bright, spacious reception area,

complete with the buzz of coffee machines and the thuds of tennis balls, my mood lifts.

"This was the first phase of the refurbishment," Alison Norman, Everyone Active contract manager explains after greeting me. "The reception desk used to be an old-fashioned circle in the middle of the space. It was a bit of a barrier between the public and the centre, so we opened it out and brought the cafe to the front, in an effort to make it more welcoming."

Welcoming more of the community through the centre's doors was always a central goal of the multi-million pound refurbishment by Everyone Active, which won a 10-year contract to start managing Westway back in November 2016. But at that time, no one could have foreseen just how far this goal would be taken.

"On 14 June, the morning after the Grenfell fire, we stopped trading and decided to open the doors for the community to come in," says Norman. "We took a walk down towards the tower, and there were just people everywhere. There weren't enough places where they could sit down or get away from the area. The nearby church was completely inundated,



It is estimated that the Grenfell Tower fire resulted in 71 deaths and over 70 injuries

© RICK FINDER/PA WIRE/PA IMAGES



“

Nobody knew how big it was going to become. There was never any question about whether we'd continue, we were just here to do whatever we could – ALISON NORMAN

so we told them to come to us, as it was a lot more comfortable and spacious, and they could just sit down and have a drink.”

At first, with around 200 people in the centre, Norman thought they might be closed for a day or so, but after that first day when hundreds of people had come through the doors, along with dozens of volunteers and truckloads of donations, Norman realised they were in for the long haul.

“Nobody knew how big it was going to become,” she tells me, still looking slightly bewildered by the turn of events. “There was never any question about whether we'd continue, we were just here to do whatever we could for the victims.”

“We could have locked the doors and said we can't help,” adds Ian Ling, general manager of the centre. “Especially as we'd just refurbished and were on the cusp of officially reopening. Everything was brand new – we could have been very protective of that, but it wasn't even a thought. It was that openness to help that I think people appreciated, and that I'm really proud of.”



Free memberships for the fitness centre have been provided to all Grenfell residents

Under the Westway

Everyone Active was granted the contract by the Westway Trust, a charity set up in 1971 to be custodian of the 23 acres of land under the recently-built Westway flyover, and to help promote positive use of this space for a community that had been all but torn apart by the colossal construction.

Forty-six years later, the Westway Trust is still on this mission. The aim of the partnership with Everyone Active is to achieve 1.2 million visits to the centre each year (up from 600,000) and in doing so to improve the health and wellbeing of the local community. To help reach this target, Westway Trust has invested £2m and Everyone Active £1.7m.

“We're on that journey already,” says Norman. “That's the reason for doing the refurbishment, so we can support that goal of getting 1.2 million people active.”

Now completed, the newly refurbished centre boasts a new, state-of-the-art Stages Cycling studio, group exercise studio, an improved climbing area and

a new fitness centre kitted out with Technogym equipment. The centre has also received fresh paint and flooring throughout, refreshed changing rooms with new Craftsman lockers and all the courts have been resurfaced.

As we enter the expansive climbing zone, with its undulating walls and colourful holds, Norman speaks proudly.

“We're really well known for climbing right across the country,” she says. “We've just put in a new bouldering area that's double the size of the old one. Bouldering is going to be in the Olympics in 2020 so we know it's a growth sport.”

“We have several elite climbers who train here when they're in the area, and mountaineer Sir Chris Bonington is also a regular user of our climbing facility.”

Breaking down barriers

The new fitness centre is another point of pride for both Ling and Norman, and leads to a discussion about how the membership has changed as a result of the disaster. ▶



After a delayed reopening, Westway Sports Centre is once again helping kids and adults get active

► "When we look at the demographic in here, we're seeing more local residents than before," says Norman. "So many people came here after the fire that it's broken down some of those barriers. Our involvement in that event really helped us to show that this a community space for everybody. That's a massive positive to come out of what was a horrible situation."

In the aftermath of the fire, the centre stayed open 24 hours a day for 10 days, during which time hundreds of victims were coming in for advice, support, clothing and food. Dozens of people were sleeping on the indoor tennis courts,

donations were being stored and sorted in reception and a Marks and Spencer truck was parked outside providing food and water. Volunteers poured in, both official and unofficial, from all over the country.

"We also had Everyone Active colleagues from across the region coming to support and help us," tells Norman. "About 50 or 60 were here every day, without being asked."

It wasn't until 27 July, about six weeks after the fire, that the assistance centre was moved to a building rented especially for the purpose, and it was time for Westway to get back to the business of getting people active.

Moving forward

It wasn't an instant switch back to normality. Everything had to be properly cleaned and asbestos-tested. The outdoor pitches were covered in debris from the fire and needed to be resurfaced.

Then there was the fact that the community was still in shock, grieving lost family members, friends, homes and their sense of safety. The team applied for funding straight away, to allow the centre to provide extra programmes and services for all those affected by the tragedy.

"Funding came in quickly from the City Bridge Trust, John Lyon's Charity and Westway Trust," says Ling. "Everyone Active matched this, so all together it allowed us to run a series of football workshops over the summer, for local kids aged between four and 15 years old."

"We had a lot of local children who were affected by the fire," adds Norman. "Many lost their homes, family or friends. We wanted to give them something fun to help them through that tough time."

Ling continues: "We were approached by QPR Football Club on the Friday before the workshops started, and they offered to make it much bigger. They organised for posters, etc, to be dropped through hotel doors where people were staying. They also volunteered their coaches and



Westway boasts playing areas for a wide variety of sports, including Wallball



Kids were able to try climbing at a recent Legacy day, with Olympic hockey champion Helen Richardson-Walsh

“We’re very proud of what we did, but obviously we’re a sports centre, so to have kids and adults here taking part in sport and fitness is what we’re all about – IAN LING

some of their players to come down and help out. With their support we were able to host 4,791 kids over the summer.”

With the football camps lifting the spirits of the kids, the adults have also been taken care of, thanks to funding from the Westway Trust that has provided free gym memberships to anyone who was displaced by the fire.

“The parents who were bringing their children to those football clubs all got coffee vouchers, so they were coming into the cafe here, where we could then offer them those memberships,” says Norman. “We had groups of Korean ladies, Muslim ladies, etc, all sitting together while their kids took part in the programme. And I’ve seen some of those same ladies this morning, doing Zumba together!”

A close knit team

Ling, who only joined Westway in January 2017, is proud of everything they’ve been through, but is glad to once again be focusing on what the centre does best.

“We’re very proud of what we did, but obviously we’re a sports centre, so to have kids and adults here taking part in sport and fitness is what we’re all about.”

As the team moves forward into the next phase of the centre’s life, they do so as a group that’s bonded closely by their experience, not just with each other, but also with the North Kensington locals.

“It’s affected us in a number of ways,” says Norman. “I think Westway provided a real beacon for people during that time. It was a place to come and be together, to be safe. A number of the local schools and community



Ian Ling is the general manager of Westway Sports Centre

groups lost children and teachers, so our normal client base was affected. Our staff was also affected – they lost friends and children from our football teams.

“The fact that we were able to help and support has, I think, helped everyone involved to find something positive in a negative situation, which in my book, is a really good way of dealing with it.” ●

ROLLING INTO THE MAINSTREAM

Once part of a rebellious subculture, skateboarding is now a recognised sport, confirmed for inclusion in the 2020 Olympics. Kath Hudson takes a look at its evolution and how it's being used for social good



Most Saturdays I now find myself hanging out at a repurposed warehouse, while my nine-year-old son spends three hours riding his skateboard around bowls and halfpipes. Sonny didn't take to traditional team sports, but has found his niche at the skate park.

According to Trevor Johnson, designer at BMX and skate park design company Four One Four, this is not unusual. "Skateboarding can pull in a different crowd because it's all about doing what you like," he says. "There are no dads or teachers on the sideline telling you what to do, and there are no rules or uniform. The freaks, geeks and whoever else all mix in together in skateboarding."

Danish charity GAME has been founded on this premise. With its street sport concept, Streetmekka, its mission is to create the perfect place for young people, from all backgrounds, to hang out, practise street sports and express themselves.

Founder Simon Prahm says the idea for Streetmekka came about when he realised Copenhagen's immigrant youths were not engaging with traditional sports. "In 2002, I was chair of one of Denmark's biggest basketball clubs, but noticed there were hardly any non-white

In the skate park, you're exposed to people of different ethnicities, genders and beliefs. Youths from different backgrounds form strong friendships



Four One Four's Trevor Johnson has seen skateboarding evolve into a sport

faces, even though a quarter of Copenhagen's youths are immigrants," he says. "I wanted to mix street sports and urban music in a venue that's accessible for everyone, in terms of location and price."

Prahm explains the reason for this: in Denmark people only tend to join sports clubs if their families are members, and in Lebanon – where GAME has now created 10 outdoor street sport facilities – it's prohibitively expensive to join a sports club, so few do.

So far, GAME is doing well in achieving its engagement objectives. At the first site in Copenhagen, 30 per cent of the users are immigrants or refugees, in Esbjerg this figure is 16 per cent. Now two more Danish sites are in the pipeline and Prahm is looking for more opportunities to develop globally.

Skateboarding's ability to break down barriers between people and to tackle inactivity has been noticed by another charity, Skateistan, which uses the sport as a tool to empower, activate and educate young



people. The charity is working with 1,800 youths, aged five to 17, in five locations in Afghanistan, Cambodia and South Africa. More than half are female and the majority are from low-income backgrounds, with many working on the street. The charity also works with internally displaced youths and children with disabilities.

"Thanks to skateboarding, youths are exposed to people of different ethnicities, genders and beliefs," says founder Oliver Percovich. "In Afghanistan, it's considered inappropriate for girls to ride bikes, but there is no stigma attached to skateboarding. In the skate park, youths from different backgrounds are able to form strong friendships, and the novelty of skateboarding, compared to mainstream sports, has been especially enticing."

The UK market

With most towns and even some villages in the UK having some form of skate park or ramp, opportunities to get involved in the sport are growing. According to Statista, in September 2016 around 53,500 adults were skateboarding on a monthly basis in England, a statistic that has remained steady for the past nine years. The number of children participating in the sport is increasing. Inclusion in the 2020 Olympics and the fact that the organisation Sk8 Safe is now offering the first-ever skateboard coaching qualification are expected to further drive interest and participation. ▶



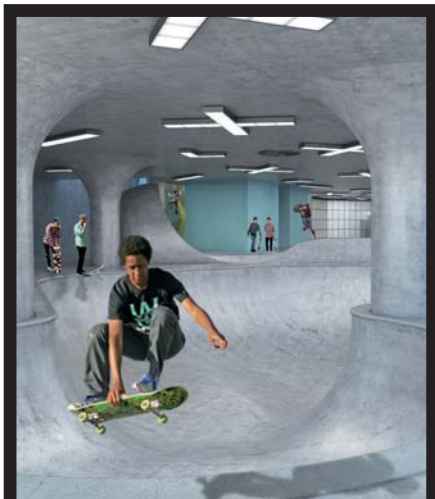
PHOTO © SK8 SAFE ISTAN

- Skateparks are becoming more innovative and ambitious. The Source is an underground skate and BMX park, converted from a former Victorian swimming bath complex in Hastings. The £1.25m project received backing from the local borough and county councils, as well as the Regional Growth Fund. With capacity for 600 spectators across two balconies, the plan is to host major events, such as Olympic qualifiers.

Charitable objectives are behind the creation of an ambitious project in Folkestone to create the world's first multi-storey skate park. Slated to open in spring next year, it is being financed by the Shepway Sports Trust, a charity set up by Saga founder Roger De Haan, who wants to give back to his hometown.

The Urban Sports Centre will have three storeys for skateboarding – a bowl, a flow floor and a street floor – as well as a multi-sports space for classes, a boxing gym and a climbing and bouldering centre. "We're hoping there will be a cross pollination of people doing different activities," says Dan Hulme, who is leading the project.

"This centre will bring skateboarding more into the mainstream. What we discovered in our research was that skateboarders don't want to be stuck out in old factories on industrial estates, but that's where the facilities are currently," he says. "We established there was a market for this type of facility, particularly with



The Urban Sports Centre in Folkestone will have multiple storeys

We discovered in our research that skateboarders don't want to be stuck out on industrial estates, but that's where the facilities are currently

skateboarding and climbing being included in the next Olympics. The demand for this type of facility is predicted to grow – even sports minister Tracey Crouch has talked about these sports becoming more popular."

Skater girls

Scootering has recently come along as a gateway sport, helping to make skateboarding more accessible. Johnson says another factor driving participation is a combination of YouTube videos and better facilities, both of which make it easier to learn the sport. "In the 90s, skateparks were designed by 'suits' and we took what we were given, but we've gone from modular, linear, unjoined ramps to seamless ramps that flow from one to the other.

"For example, Mount Hawke is a flowy indoor park where riders can go round and round. This makes it easier ►

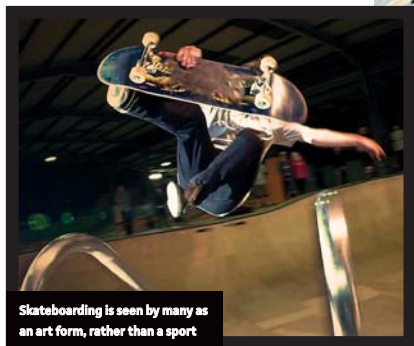


Scootering provides an accessible introduction to skateboarding

It won't be long before male and female competitions merge at elite level, as the female riders are improving their skills hugely



In Afghanistan, it's considered inappropriate for girls to ride bikes, but skateboarding does not have the same stigma



Skateboarding is seen by many as an art form, rather than a sport

► to learn to ride, so kids are nailing tricks faster," he says. "The fact that kids can now access content on YouTube and go to lessons is also fuelling the sport."

All these factors are also encouraging more girls to take up what has traditionally been a male-dominated sport. Building on this, She Shredders is a programme set up in 2013 by Brighton and Hove City Council's sports development project and Brighton Youth Centre. Its aim is to help teenage girls and young women gain confidence and develop riding skills. The group meets weekly and is trained by UK skateboarding champion Lucy Adams. Johnson predicts it won't be long before male and female competitions merge at elite level, as the female riders are improving their skills hugely.

Going mainstream

Generally, the inclusion of skateboarding, along with other street sports like BMX and parkour, in the Olympics has been welcomed. Prahm says: "Immigrants tend to be less active and there are many reasons for them to feel marginalised. So if the sports they do aren't recognised, this doesn't help matters. It's much more inclusive if they see them at major championships."

Johnson agrees that it's good for the profile of the sport and welcomes the fact that it could bring in more funders and investors. However, for a sport that started out on the streets and is generally considered to be edgy and raw, there are bound to be some in the community who don't like these attempts to take their sport mainstream.

"Some people like the sub-cultural identity and are resistant about the Olympics," says Prahm. "Skateboarders are more interested in doing things in style, not time."



UK skateboarding champion Lucy Adams trains young women in the She Shredders programme

Immigrants tend to be less active and can feel marginalised. If the sports they do aren't recognised, this doesn't help matters

The core of the skateboarding community will hate it, says Johnson. "They say it's not a sport. There are no rules, no managers, no team. It's an art form, not a discipline. It's all about freedom of expression."

Purpose-built indoor skate parks and Olympic classification are creating more momentum around what is already a growing sport, one which is proven to engage hard-to-reach groups. Currently, charities and passionate entrepreneurial individuals are the driving force behind the sport, creating more opportunities for people to take part, while safeguarding its integrity. As the sport moves forward, let's hope that it retains its spirit and continues to provide a home for those kids who are turned off by football drills. ●



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MAKING THE CASE

In our last issue, we explored how sport and leisure providers can demonstrate social impact in line with the new government and Sport England agendas. Here, we speak to five organisations who are doing just that

Organisation: **GLL**

Method: **DataHub's
Social Value Calculator**

GLL has been using DataHub's Social Value Calculator (SVC), delivered in partnership with Experian and Sheffield Hallam University, to measure the social value of its interventions since 2016.

As a charitable social enterprise, measuring the social impact of its work in local communities is at the heart of GLL's ethos, even forming part of its annual corporate plan.

Will Barr, who heads up GLL's business intelligence team, worked with 4 Global to design the SVC and implement the module into GLL's 250 leisure centres. Liaising with DataHub's development team, Barr helped ensure the SVC – which won Spark of Innovation at the 2017 Flame awards – meets a real operator's needs.

"We opted to ensure needs were met by measuring the cost savings to society in four key areas: improved health, greater subjective wellbeing, increased educational attainment and reduced crime," explains Barr.

"Now, if we put on a specific programme – for example, No Strings Badminton – we can demonstrate exactly what social impact that had, with which demographic groups, within any centre. Crucially the social value generated is monetised, which we can then use to bid for future funding. The data is so specific we could drill down and find out the social impact of squash on a particular court."

For every £1 spent by GLL to deliver its activities, the trust generates £2.02 in social value; a total of £423 per customer. Overall, it generated £350.4m in social value in 2016, nearly £90m more than in 2015. Broken down, this amounts to more than £75m in improved health, £262m in increased life satisfaction, £12m in increased educational attainment and £266,000 in reduced crime.



© SHUTTERSTOCK/ANON

GLL uses the SVC to determine which grassroots initiatives are effective



The data is so specific we could drill down and find out the social impact of squash on a particular court – Will Barr, GLL

Using these figures to bid for future tenders will be a major GLL selling point going forward. The organisation also plans to use the calculator to establish which community schemes are on target, and where refinement is needed. "Lots of our community work is, essentially, guesswork at the moment. Using the SVC we can see exactly what is effective and where. It will definitely influence some of our decision-making at a grassroots level," says Barr.



SIV can now put a monetary value on every initiative it runs

Organisation: **SIV**

Method: **Sheffield Hallam University's SROI model**



We wouldn't have got the £50,000 grant without some sort of evidence-based impact report – Rob Womack, SIV

In 2015, Sheffield City Trust and its operational arm SIV commissioned Sheffield Hallam University's Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) to conduct a study into the Social Return on Investment (SROI) generated at its facilities (seven leisure centres, an ice rink and five golf clubs) during 2014/2015. The methodology used was adapted from the national model used by SIRC in its England-wide study of SROI in sport.



SIV's walking football is a great introduction to physical activity

Healthy partnerships manager Rob Womack explains that, as a charitable organisation, SIV's primary objective is to improve Sheffield's health through a variety of initiatives.

However, when it came to demonstrating the impact of this work, the trust increasingly felt the data (such as number of visits or number of members) did not adequately reflect the social benefit it was creating. This ultimately led it to undertake an SROI review.

The study found that for every £1 invested by the council, there was a 'societal return' of £2.01 in benefits relating to health, crime and education. And for every £1 it spent on its well-established Physical Activity Referral Scheme in particular, the return was £3.42.

But even more valuable than these figures, says Womack, was the evidence of SIV's impact on disease. "In one year, we've prevented 251 cases of coronary heart disease, 61 cases of type 2 diabetes and 60 cases of dementia. To me, that's much more powerful, because it shows we're impacting not only the quality of life of those individuals, but also of their families."

The report has already helped SIV to secure a £50,000 Big Potential grant from the Lottery, which it will use to explore new ways of attracting social investment. "We wouldn't have got that money without some sort of evidence-based impact report," says Womack.

Organisation: **Everyone Health**

Method: **iMPACT outcome management solution**

Everyone Health, the sister company of leisure operator Everyone Active, delivers a wide range of health-related services to local authorities from Cambridgeshire to Nottinghamshire.

In 2016, the provider collaborated with software supplier Gladstone to develop iMPACT, a new outcome management system that has not only improved the efficiency of its service delivery, but also makes it easier to collect and report on outcome data and KPIs.

Steph Shadwell, health data and informatics manager at Everyone Health, says: "We now use iMPACT on all

iMPACT gives us confidence in our ability to report accurately back to commissioners

– Steph Shadwell, Everyone Health



Everyone Health runs initiatives that help people lose weight healthily

our health contracts to report on KPIs from number of referrals, starters and completers to change-over-time measures such as weight, BMI and dietary intake.

"In-depth reporting is a requirement of contracts and without a functional database we simply couldn't achieve this. iMPACT gives us confidence in our ability to report accurately back to commissioners.

"It also enables our practitioners to measure patients' progress against set targets so they can give instant feedback to drive motivation."

Organisation: **Vision Redbridge**

Method: **ReferAll exercise referral management solution**

Vision Redbridge Culture and Leisure reviewed its Exercise on Referral scheme in 2014, moving from a paper-based referral system to a software solution from ReferAll. This allows online referrals to go from primary care, mental health teams, cardiac rehab teams and hospitals to Redbridge's Exercise on Referral (EOR) team and, in turn, to all the centres in the borough with gyms.

Steve Smith, exercise on referral manager at Vision Redbridge Culture, says: "In 2015, we secured £173,000 of funding from Redbridge Public Health. To achieve this, we showed data that included the number of users accessing EOR programmes, the number completing all 12 EOR sessions and the number still participating in regular physical activity six months after completing EOR.

"Our data continues to show the success of our EOR programmes. In the year 2015 to 2016, we saw an increase in the number of participants accessing and completing EOR as well as in continued participation. One of the most exciting statistics is the number of



Eighty-eight per cent of Exercise on Referral participants lost weight

We secured £173,000 of funding by showing our Exercise on Referral data

– Steve Smith, Vision Redbridge



participants showing weight loss and reduction of initial BMI, blood pressure and waist circumference six months after completing our EOR programme, which stands at an amazing 88 per cent. We've also reduced the use of clinical and GP services by our participants by, on average, over 65 per cent in this 12-month period.



Working with Quest has helped the council to attract funding

Organisation: **Oxford City Council**

Method: **Quest for Active Communities quality assessment**



It has allowed us to showcase more of the work we already do while also highlighting new areas for us to grow into

– Hagan Lewisman, Oxford City Council

This year, Oxford City Council became the first organisation in the country to receive an 'Excellent' rating in Quest for Active Communities, the new assessment model from Quest, Sport England's quality scheme for sport and leisure. A remarkable achievement, since, eight years prior, its sport and leisure provision had been rated poor by the Audit Commission.

According to Hagan Lewisman, active communities manager at the council, Quest's decision to replace the Sport Development assessment with a new model dovetailed perfectly with changes the council was already implementing. This included internal restructuring to create an Active Communities services team, and integrating the individual teams for Sport and Physical Activity, Leisure, Parks and Green Space Development, Youth Ambition and Community Centres.

The new team has forged closer partnerships with the council's housing, planning, environmental sustainability and community safety teams, as well as external groups such as community associations, tenants and residents' associations, housing associations and even pubs.

Lewisman says: "The new Quest model very much reflects the direction we've been moving in: working in partnership to have a more demonstrable impact within our communities. It focuses on the impacts delivered

in a better, more holistic way; and it has allowed us to showcase more of the work we already do while also highlighting new areas for us to grow into."

According to Lewisman, working with Quest over the past eight years has also helped to attract external funding of more than £1.3m. "It gives funders confidence that we're well run, showing that we have a fantastic track record of delivery and can demonstrate great results." ●



Oxford City Council worked to achieve an 'Excellent' rating from Quest

GET WITH THE PROGRAMME

From Zumba to tai chi, ParkLives is tackling inactivity and social isolation by offering free activities. What can the sports and fitness industry learn from this initiative? Kath Hudson speaks to two key players

WILL SMITHARD

ukactive: strategic projects director

Now in its fourth year, the ParkLives initiative was spearheaded by Coca-Cola Great Britain in the wake of the company's sponsorship of the London Olympics. The ambition was to leave a lasting, positive legacy, benefitting thousands of people in local communities, including those living in some of the country's most deprived areas.

Based on the model of Birmingham's Be Active campaign, ParkLives delivers activities in parks and open spaces, and the key is to be local, accessible and flexible. The aims are to offer engaging, fun and sociable

activities, which are free to access, and also to break down the common barriers of money and time. People will never be asked to make a financial contribution.

This is Coca-Cola GB's largest Corporate Social Responsibility programme and is part of a £20m commitment to invest in community-based programmes. The company has been hands-on in driving the initiative: creating the ethos, brand and direction. ukactive came on board to measure and evaluate success and manage the programme, while delivery is down to local partners, who build programmes relevant to the needs of their community.



"The ambition was to leave a positive legacy, benefitting thousands of people, including those in the most deprived areas" – Will Smithard, ukactive



Gaining momentum

ParkLives kicked off in 2014 in three locations: Birmingham, Newcastle and the London Borough of Newham. All programmes were run by local authorities. These were followed in 2015 by Manchester, Glasgow and Nottingham and in 2016 by Southampton, Dundee, Swansea and Stoke on Trent.

The programme also reaches 35 further locations through a partnership with StreetGames, the long-standing charity partner of Coca-Cola Great Britain, that brings sport to the doorsteps of disadvantaged communities across the UK.

All cities were chosen for the strength of their proposals, as well as their levels of social need, and with the aim of creating a geographical spread. Now that 10 cities



ParkLives helps new mums to overcome social isolation

and StreetGames are on board, the growth of the programme will be from within.

The diversity of activities has grown in the last three years and each area is different. Southampton and Swansea have taken advantage of the abundance of lakes and water in their catchment area by running sailing and stand-up paddle boarding sessions, while cities like Newham have broadened their activity set by introducing DJ workshops, graffiti arts and even donkey grooming.

Popular city activities include Nordic walking groups, which tend to run all year and have had success in alleviating social isolation, as well as Zumba and tai chi. The summer holidays see a broader mix of activities, such as adventure trails, Quidditch, rounders, Nerf wars and

den-building. Going forward, ParkLives programme managers will be looking to strike up more local partnerships to engage larger and new audiences, offering fun activities for all ages and abilities.

Engaging with leisure operators

Local delivery partners would welcome discussions with sports and fitness operators, in areas where ParkLives programmes are taking place, who either have responsibility for parks and green space, or would like to expand their activities into these spaces.

Although sessions have to be free to the public, operators might want to use some one-off park-based sessions as a business development opportunity to meet new audiences in the community. ▶

THE GROWTH OF PARKLIVES

2014

Birmingham, Newcastle and the London Borough of Newham

2015

Manchester, Glasgow and Nottingham

2016

Southampton, Dundee, Swansea and Stoke on Trent

2017 >>>

Growth from within the network



ParkLives Southampton has encouraged many families to get active



STUART MARTIN

Active Nation Southampton: managing director

“Southampton is one of the smallest cities in the programme, but we’ve achieved great results. Of those registered to take part, 73 per cent considered themselves inactive when they started. Sessions we deliver include Run 4 Fun, Buggymums, Family Play, Nordic walking and Paddleboard Yoga.

One big success story has been the Buggymums programme. We were approached by a health trainer who’d identified a need in her local area for a post-natal activity group. We found an instructor and put on a session that continued to go from strength to strength and now has an average of 20 mums attending each week, with their young children. These mums will tell you they feel better for being active and enjoy socialising with other mums, which helps to tackle isolation.

Drop-in classes

Unlike traditional exercise classes, which start and stop at a particular time, a lot of ParkLives sessions allow people to undertake as much or as little as they like. This approach can mean you start a session with five people, have 30 in the middle and only 10 at the end. Running this type of open programme requires dynamic, friendly and welcoming leaders and we hand-picked the most incredible team we could find to run our activities.

Expanding activities

People can be worried about the small things, like what to wear and if they’ll be able to keep up, so we created short, 60-second videos that give an insight into the sessions and settle anxieties.

ParkLives showed outstanding growth in its first year and in year two we’ve built on



“Southampton is one of the smallest cities in the programme, but we’ve achieved great results. Over 70 per cent considered themselves inactive when they started” – Stuart Martin, Active Nation Southampton

PARKLIVES– FIRST THREE YEARS

22,000 sessions

190,000

unique individual attendances

430,000

attendances in total

50%

of attendees in Birmingham are BAME

65%

are in the poorest 20% of society

the lessons learned. Our main programme increased to 30 sessions a week, with more in the school holidays. We brought in guest activities, like Parkour, stand up paddleboarding, skiing and BMX. Gardening will be added at St James’ Park.

A ParkLives grant scheme, which allowed communities to access funds to run activities in their local parks, was also introduced in our second year. ●

Find out more: www.parklives.com

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FLOORING INNOVATIONS

TOM WALKER TAKES A LOOK AT THE LATEST PROJECTS AND INNOVATION IN SPORTS FLOORING FROM AROUND THE WORLD

Futuristic flooring

ASB

Glass playing surface for elite sports

What will indoor sports surfaces look like in 20 years' time? Will there always be space for wooden flooring? Or are there innovative new playing surfaces around the corner that will transform the sports sector for the better?

One of the disruptors that could have a major effect are glass-based products that allow digital signage. An innovator in this space is Germany-based ASB.

The company started off as a specialist in squash courts, but has since developed a futuristic product called ASB GlassFloor. Designed to be highly versatile, the surface of the floor has two treated glass plates that are held together by a polyvinyl butyral (PVB) safety layer.

Due to its transparency, LED lighting can be used to change the layout of the court and the play-lines – transforming the court from, say, basketball to badminton at the push of a button.

ASB has now taken the concept further and has developed two different glass-based flooring products. ASB MultiSports can be used both outdoors and indoors and has been designed to be used for nearly any sport.

"The MultiSports floor not only meets all technical requirements of a modern sports floor, it offers much more," says Christof Babinsky, ASB chief executive.

"The touchscreen allows you to switch on a professional playing field for any type of



The ASB Glassfloor products are FIBA, IHF and WFS accredited

The courts can be easily changed for use by any sport



The floor can transform any space into a visual experience

– Christof Babinsky, ASB

sport. The system can be installed both indoors and outdoors and even portable floors are possible."

Meanwhile, ASB LumiFlex is a full video floor, offering a plethora of opportunities from displaying scores and statistics to commercial use during breaks in play.

"The entire floorspace is a multi-functional monitor," Babinsky says. "The floor was designed to transform any space into a visual experience. Its patented glass surface is one of the most innovative flooring surfaces ever made and can be used for a variety of solutions ranging from sports to concerts, retail to trade shows."

The BallSportArena in Dresden, which opened in May 2017, embraced the technology.

"This very first professional sports venue with ASB GlassFloor's product proves the multi-functionality and durability of this type of flooring," Babinsky adds.

"The flooring allows the venue to be used for professional team sports – but also for gala dinners and concerts. The same flooring stays in place and does not need to be covered."



The flooring in the new training centre is a bespoke, branded, 'motivational space' for players

Branding it up

REPHOUSE

Branded flooring for Palmeiras training centre

Brazilian football club Palmeiras, based in Sao Paulo, is one of the country's most successful clubs. In recent years, it has invested heavily in its facility infrastructure. In 2014 it moved into a new home – Allianz Parque – which is now one of South America's premier, multi-purpose venues.

Earlier this year, Palmeiras upgraded its training facilities to include a new indoor training centre. As well as sports science labs, indoor pitches and physio rooms, the indoor centre includes a multi-use training area.

For the training area, Palmeiras appointed international flooring specialist Rephouse to create a bespoke, branded "motivational space" for players to train in.

Rephrase provided the flooring for a large, open group exercise and warm-up area, as well as a two-lane, 25m sprint track. For the US\$150,000 (€127,000, £114,000) project, the club chose a Neoflex REptile



The sprint track has the club's name inlaid into it

Fitness Flooring product, with inlaid rubber graphics to highlight different training areas.

The end result shows how modern flooring products allow branding and messaging – while still providing a training surface for elite use. The sprint track has the club's full, official name – Sociedade Esportiva Palmeiras – inlaid into it and the training floor area is dominated by a 92sq m club logo.

"The floor in the training centre is a great example of a creative use of the Neoflex REptiles with inlaid graphics," says Michael Brinkers, managing director of Rephouse.

"It's possible to build up detailed flooring patterns or functional marking designs in a modular, rubber tile format. Since the inlaid markings are CNC cut and inlaid under exacting manufacturing conditions, the accuracy and complexity of the designs are pretty revolutionary."

The new training space will be used by Palmeiras' first team, which has been a springboard for a string of world class talent, such as Manchester City's Gabriel Jesus.

One of Palmeiras' current stars, former Inter Milan and Juventus midfielder, Felipe Melo, says the new training centre shows the club is level with the world's top teams.

"We're at the level of Real Madrid and Barcelona now," Melo says. "As soon as I arrived here, I was impressed by the training facilities provided by the club. I can say that there's nothing to envy back in Europe – in fact, I believe our new training centre is better than Inter Milan's." ▶

There's nothing to envy back in Europe, our new training centre is better than Inter Milan's – Felipe Melo, Palmeiras

Tennis for everyone

GERFLOR

Flexible outdoor tennis for community centre

As part of her Tennis on The Road campaign, which aimed to get more people playing tennis, Judy Murray picked Inchgarth Community Centre in Aberdeen as one of the locations to benefit from an innovative and flexible sports surface.

Murray – mother of two-time Wimbledon champion Andy – supplied Inchgarth with a PowerGame outdoor sports pitch that had been donated by Gerflor.

PowerGame's patented design provides players with a multi-use surface that offers the traction needed for tennis, while reducing the strain on athletes. Suitable for all levels, PowerGame has been designed to overlay outdated concrete or asphalt surfaces, transforming them into colourful play surfaces.

The hard-wearing flooring was donated by Gerflor to help with Tennis on the Road initiatives in locations that are lacking of proper facilities.

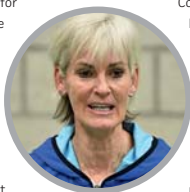
The PowerGame system, which was installed earlier this year, has now become a permanent part



The PowerGame flooring is being used daily by all members of the family

– Paul O'Connor, Inchgarth Community Centre

Gerflor donated the flooring to Murray



of Inchgarth's outdoor facilities – and is playing a key role in providing tennis lessons for the local community.

Paul O'Connor, chair and manager of Inchgarth Community Centre, said "The community is loving the PowerGame flooring. It's being used daily, not just by children, but all members of the family. It has given us a fabulous platform from which to introduce people to tennis, and once they get a taste for it, they can then progress to our free outdoor courts."

"The courts have given children the opportunity to try tennis, with the benefits being less anti-social behaviour, healthier children and ultimately giving the kids somewhere safe to play."

Good as new

SPORTS AND FITNESS FLOORING

Redeveloping an ageing but popular centre

When Caerphilly County Borough Council decided to redevelop the ageing Caerphilly Leisure Centre, the plans included the renewal of its original flooring. The council appointed Monmouth-based Sports and Fitness Flooring (SFF) to complete the project – which quickly proved a tricky task.

"Caerphilly Leisure Centre was built more than 45 years ago," says Darren Wood, director of SFF. "Back in the 1970s there was no requirement to provide a specific performance floor in sports halls, so the product used was a paint, applied direct to the concrete sub floor."

"The sports hall is used by a number of community groups, playing a wide range of sports. In addition, there are vulnerable user groups that were not being adequately protected from falls on the old surface."

Wood describes the £40,000 project as having been a challenging one. "On a floor installation, paint is actually classed as a contaminant. There are very few adhesive



The sports hall is used by many groups for a variety of sports

manufacturers, if any, that would guarantee their product if you bond a synthetic sports floor to a painted surface.

"That meant that we had to remove the paint, apply a damp-proof membrane and then a latex screed to give a smooth, flat and clean surface. We used an isolating membrane and Tarkett Omnisport, for a significant saving on time and the cost of preparation works."

Despite the challenges, SFF managed to re-lay the total of 645sq m (6,900sq ft) area, providing the centre and its members with a much-needed upgrade.

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Tests for a new way to implement lighting took place at the University of California, Berkeley

Lighting up the court

VERSALUME

Using flooring to assist refereeing and fan engagement

When the University of California, Berkeley decided to rip up and renew the hard court flooring at its Haas Pavilion indoor arena, Silicon Valley-based tech company Versalume took the opportunity to use the old court to conduct a test on a new product.

Using light-diffusing fibre technology, Versalume lit up the perimeter of the basketball court with colourful, flexible lighting. The lights were synchronised with the arena's shot clock and game clock buzzers.

The idea behind the lighting is two-fold – to assist referees with their decision making and help arena operators improve fan experience.

Tests were done before the old floor was ripped out



We embedded the shot clock lights into the floor to improve visibility for the refs

– Kerry Keating, Versalume

With the perimeter of the floor lit up, referees have another tool to use when making in-game decisions. This is in addition to existing technology, which enables referees to use LED-lit backboards to determine whether or not a shot was released before or after time has expired.

"Our flexible, thin fibre optic laser light can be installed in places where light could never be put before," says Kerry Keating, senior strategist at Versalume.

"With that in mind, we came up with the idea of expanding the shot clock lights – which are currently on the backboard only – by embedding them into the floor right on the outside line of the playing surface lines.

"This would help improve visibility for the referees when the shot clock and or game clock go off. When in place, and through a DMX controlled device, the lighting could also double as an entertainment lighting element for the arena production crew."

"So when Berkeley was set to install a completely new floor, we took the opportunity to test the idea on the old floor before they ripped it out."

Keating adds that the testing was successful – and that a fine-tuned product will have a number of uses across the sector.

"The target market for this will be all courts that need a shot clock and/or game clock lighting."



The new sports hall will be used for a wide range of sports

Top marks for sport

TVS GROUP

Enhancing a school's sport offering

The independent Bryanston School, in Dorset, UK has a proud tradition in sport. It counts as alumni a number of top athletes – including a number of professional rugby players, cricketers and even a double-Olympic champion – German eventer Heinrich Romeike. As part of the school's efforts to train the next generation of elite athletes it has developed a wide range of outdoor and indoor sporting facilities. These include a 25m indoor pool, a huge equestrian centre, 37 tennis courts, two all-weather playing pitches, four indoor squash courts and a large fitness club. In 2017, Bryanston School invested in a new extension to its indoor sports centre. The aim was to create three new elite performance areas – this included a 40m sprint track conforming to IAAF standards; an EN14904 (the European standard for sports floors) compliant sports hall; and an elite-level strength and conditioning area.

The school appointed UK-based sports and fitness flooring specialist TVS Group for this project, which was able to provide a full solution for all three areas. For the sports hall, TVS utilised a seamless, polyurethane, point elastic system, incorporating a four-layer build to ensure a level surface with performance characteristics suitable for multi-sport use. TVS also identified and rectified damp and level issues in the structural sub-base by installing a damp-proof membrane, as well as a self-leveling screed.

According to Andy Roberts, sales director at TVS, the most intricate aspect of the project was the installation



Heinrich Romeike is an alumnus of Bryanston school



The school's extension project included a 40m sprint track

The three lane athletics track presented a unique challenge

– Andy Roberts, TVS Group

of the 40m-sprint track. "The three-lane athletics track presented a unique challenge," he says. "The system had to conform to IAAF standards and take a running spike, as well as meeting the strength and conditioning flooring at the same floor height and matching the colour scheme of the sports hall. Force plates were also to be installed at a point below the track and this added another level of complexity to the project."

"We decided to use our TVS SW 1200 sandwich system, which conforms to IAAF standards. This is installed using our TVS prefabricated elastic layer, poured in polyurethane binder and an EPDM granulate spread over the top. As part of the works, the school constructed the concrete slab work in order to ensure the athletics track, hallways and strength and conditioning areas all met at the exact same height".

In the strength and conditioning area TVS installed T40 Sportec Style Tiles, a 40mm-thick, interlocking, heavy-duty rubber gym tile. These tiles are manufactured specifically to cater to heavy weight-lifting activities. Despite the irregular shaped room – and the IAAF track running in at an acute angle – the tiles were all installed in a single day to create a large open plan free weights area. ●

PROPULSIVE POWER

According to British Swimming, a strength programme is one of the key variables in the performance of elite swimmers. The marginal gains brought about through strength training can convert a strong performance into a world record or podium finish. Kath Hudson looks at the programmes of top swimmers

You may be familiar with Adam Peaty's 'Don't try these until you have guns like me' videos, which show his punishing strength programme, including push ups with a teammate on his back and the #peatypushup, where he propels his whole body into the air and claps. This incredible strength was integral to him breaking world records and winning gold at the Rio Olympics in 2016.

Top coaches agree that strength training is absolutely vital for elite swimmers aiming to be in peak condition, but swimmers at all levels should be doing some form of strength exercise. Strength exercises improve the swimmer's speed

by increasing the propulsive forces and reducing the resistance forces in the water.

Mark Rose, head of coaching and strategic aquatics lead at Manchester City Council's Swim England Beacon Programme, incorporates an element of strength training into every swim session he does with his elite athletes, as well as two weights sessions a week and a yoga class.

"It became apparent in the 90s that every international athlete was doing all they could to be a fast swimmer and would struggle to spend any more time in the water in order to get faster," says Rose. "So elite coaches adopted strength training and it became mainstream in the 2000s. You can't physically develop

on the international stage without a strength and conditioning base."

Rose says there is a finite amount of force that a swimmer can generate through swimming alone, and then they need to do something different to adapt the body physically and build the necessary neurological pathways for improvements. He says that even participation swimmers should spend 10 per cent of their training time doing strength-based training to improve their performance and reduce their injury risk.

Improved performance

Many swimmers attribute improvements in their performance to strength training. Cassie Patten, who won a bronze medal in the 10km open water swimming at the 2008 Beijing Olympics, as well as reaching the final in the 800m, says her big gains came when she started putting more emphasis on sport-specific strength and conditioning, targeting the muscles used in swimming: lats, pecs, triceps, biceps and trapezius.

"If you do the same thing all the time you get good at it, but in order to get the marginal gains you have to find different ways to stress the body – you can do this with a strength workout," says Patten. "Strength training should account for about one-third of the training programme for distance swimmers, like myself, but it can be more for sprinters and middle distance swimmers, who need to focus on building their explosive power."



Swimmers need to strengthen their lats, pecs, triceps, biceps and trapezius



Adam Peaty's strength programme helped him win gold at Rio 2016

“ In order to get the marginal gains, you have to find different ways to stress the body – this can be done with a strength workout

Patten says she used to do a two-hour morning swim session, followed by one hour of strength training, as well as lots of prehab strength building, such as Pilates and using resistance bands to do stabilising exercises.

Better balance

When elite swimmers are in the water for up to 90km a week, being able to swap out time in the pool for land-based training has many benefits, such as alleviating boredom. And, as Rose points out, it means athletes can work out in a group and feel a sense of camaraderie.

Swimming is a very technical sport and training on land can also help to consolidate this. “We use lots of bodyweight training, and by learning to control the body better a swimmer’s technique will improve,” says Rose.

FAVOURITE EXERCISES

MARK ROSE – “My favourite piece of kit is the TRX. We like to use our imagination and adapt exercises that are good for swimming. For example, a sit up with the neck and arms extended into a streamlined position. Everything is checked with a physio first.”



CASSIE PATTEN – “I used to do lots of exercises with the medicine ball: slam downs and twists. As well as push ups, pull ups, circuits, skipping, body weight exercises, planks and plank twists. I love a Russian twist – working the abs until you feel a bit sick!”



JOSH WALSH – “You need a lot of upper body strength for swimming, so I rate bodyweight pull ups, as well as barbell lifting and Olympic lifts. Squatting and overhead squatting are great for keeping a neutral upper body in the water.”





Swimmers in their early teens can use light weights

“When you swim a lot you can overdevelop one area of the body. We need to offset this on land, to ensure it doesn't lead to injuries

The core is a key area for swimmers, as it helps them to maintain a streamlined, balanced position in the water, as the base for the arms and legs to work as levers.

“The stronger your core is, the better you can perform,” says Patten. “In other sports, you have some sort of anchor, such as a foot on the ground, but in swimming you don't have one, so you're relying on your core as an anchor. If you don't have a strong core to hold the position and allow the body to rotate, you won't be able to reach your potential as a swimmer.”

Reducing injury

“If the core isn't strong enough it can lead to lower back issues,” says former international swimmer Josh Walsh, who is now lead strength and conditioning coach at the University of Stirling.

“Swimmers are also prone to repetitive strain injuries, in the shoulder and rotator cuff, so they need to work those areas, as well as the upper back, to prevent injury,” he says.

Walsh says the strength programme can be used to even out imbalances that are



A strong core is essential for swimmers

caused by the time spent doing the same movements continually. “When you swim a lot you develop movement patterns and can overdevelop one area of the body. We need to offset this on land, to ensure that it doesn't lead to injuries,” he says.

Rose agrees that strength training seems to significantly reduce the injury risk: “We have a very low injury rate for swimmers who have been in our programme for more than one year. We look for weaknesses in

their physiology and strengthen them. For example, if they have instability in their glutes, which is creating pain in their lower back, we give them extra glute exercises.”

Starting young

“The younger that people are introduced to strength training the better,” says Walsh.

“For early teen swimmers, it's good to do resistance band work to strengthen the shoulders and rotator cuff and to counteract the hunched position,” he says. “Light weights can be used to drill in movement patterns at an early age.”

It can be difficult to determine how significant a strength training programme is for a swimmer, but Rose claims that it brought the British relay team up to fourth at the London Olympics. “One swimmer dropped two seconds off her 100m time in a year, which is a massive amount at that level. Her improvements alone took the team from being ranked 12th in the world to coming fourth at the Olympics, and the only difference was her strength and conditioning programme.” ●

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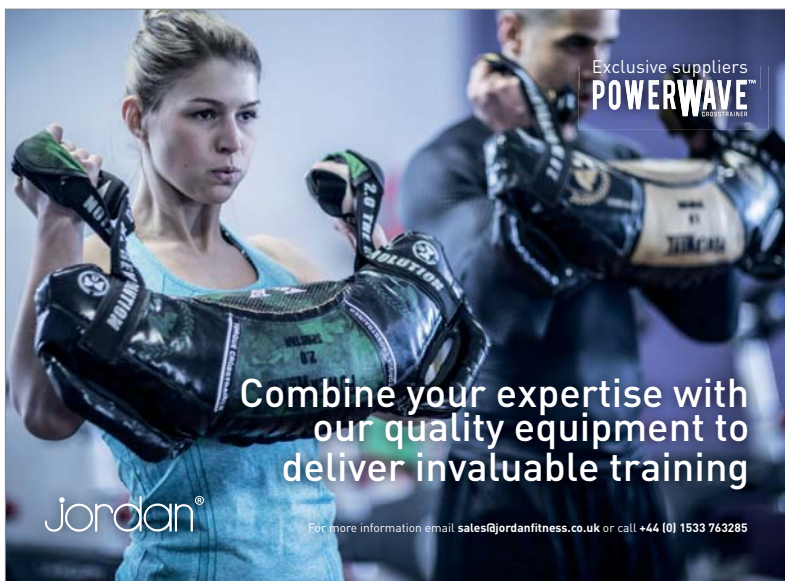
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ON THE TABLE

It may not be a mainstream sport, but table tennis is something that can be played almost anywhere, by anyone. Table Tennis England's Paul Stimpson discusses how the body plans to attract new audiences and grow the sport

What's the history of table tennis?

Table tennis originated as a parlour game in late Victorian times and became formalised worldwide by the creation of the International Table Tennis Federation in London in 1926. This year, the sport created history when it became the first in which every nation of the world was officially a member of the international federation – a total of 226. It has been an Olympic Sport since 1988.

What's the current level of participation?

We've seen a gradual increase in participation numbers in England over the past five years. According to the most recent Sport England research, the number of regular participants is 448,700 – however, more than 3 million people say they play at least once a year.

How are you growing the grassroots of the sport?

Our most recently launched programme is 'Be TT', an initiative which is all about working with and supporting our existing clubs, leagues and volunteers to make sure the experience we're offering as a sport keeps people coming back time and time again.

The key focus areas from speaking with our participants, clubs and leagues include: recruiting and retaining volunteers, developing junior leagues and shorter format leagues, training our volunteers and coaches and introducing more adult coaching opportunities across our clubs and leagues. These are all areas requested by participants and that our own insight tells us will help attract more young people and females into the sport.

How are you encouraging more young people to get involved?

The next year is more focused on developing the opportunities clubs can provide for young people, so those who start the sport get hooked and keep coming back. This will mean that, in as many areas up and down



Denise Payet (L) is a member of Table Tennis England's youth squad



We're focusing on developing opportunities for young people, so they get hooked and keep returning

the country as possible, clubs will be able to support kids when they're a complete beginner, then provide competitive opportunities for them and lead them to stay in the sport for many years. This may be done through the development of our coaches, as well as by introducing junior leagues to ease the transition from starting the sport into our existing local league structure.

Moving forward, we've also just entered a very exciting period for the sport following a merger with the English Schools Table Tennis Association. Part of the reason for this merger is to look at how we can increase the number of schools offering table tennis and progress to holding schools competitions. We're also introducing a junior development programme that can help bring more young people into the sport at all levels.



Ping! is an initiative that takes table tennis tables into public spaces

What's the pathway from grassroots to elite competition?

We have a network of Talent Development Centres (TDCs) around the country where talented youngsters can get regular specialist coaching. To feed into those, we've launched the Performance Club Programme, so clubs can work with TDCs to develop younger players.

We also have a National Talent Academy based at Ackworth School in Yorkshire and we run an England Youth Squad where the most talented youngsters can begin to prepare for life in international competitions. The age range in the squad is 14 to 18. TDCs cater for youngsters aged from around nine and there are plans to create a younger England development squad.

How are you attracting different audiences to try the sport?

Our 'Loop', 'Ping!' and 'Ping Pong Parlours' initiatives are designed to bring the sport into everyday spaces, offering it in a relaxed, low commitment, accessible way.

The Loop initiative is a range of subsidised ping pong table packages that include everything needed to be able combine fun and activity into the places people already spend time. The packages are aimed at workplaces, community groups and venues, university campuses and sports clubhouses.

Ping! brings the game to public spaces all over England. In its eighth year of delivery, an unprecedented

24 towns and cities have welcomed our table tennis tables this summer, providing free-to-use equipment to the community and encouraging everyone to grab a bat and ball and get playing!

Ping Pong Parlours are 'pop-up' spaces, usually occupying empty retail space, which are filled with table tennis tables, providing drop-in opportunities for passers-by to play ping pong for free. These pop-up parlours provide a fun, accessible venue for passers-by, as well as brightening up empty retail spaces. ▶



Table Tennis England wants to encourage everyone to pick up a bat



Table tennis players competed at the London Youth Games

© PAUL HADNOC/P.A. ARCHIVE/PA IMAGES

“ Losing funding caused a period of uncertainty as well as reputational damage

► What are the biggest challenges to growing participation?

The biggest challenge is getting more volunteers and coaches involved and accessing affordable facilities. Many of our clubs are at capacity and are really keen to grow their participation levels further but are unable to.

Over the next 12 months we're focusing on engaging more young people in volunteering and coaching through our network of clubs and leagues. While we don't have the resources to invest in building new facilities, we're supporting clubs through our recently launched Be TT programme to create sustainable business plans around the use of facilities.

Do you partner with any other organisations to grow the sport?

We work in partnership with many traditional organisations, but over the past seven years we've also worked with the Jack Petchey Foundation to develop table tennis across London and Essex, with more than 500 schools and youth clubs receiving tables and equipment and over 40,000 young people benefitting. We also work closely with Greenhouse Sports to support their work bringing table tennis to schools across London.

You recently lost funding from Sport England for a short time. How did that impact the sport?

It caused a period of uncertainty for clubs, leagues and the rest of the sport because we were unable to commit

to programmes and were unsure how we would be able to support the sport going forward. It resulted in reputational damage and potential cashflow problems.

What reforms have now been agreed?

The main reform that was passed at the EGM (Extraordinary General Meeting) was the ability for the Board to appoint a Chair, rather than it being one of three positions elected by the members. However, we've retained three elected directors on the Board, any of whom are eligible to apply to be Chair, in order to retain the democratic voice of the members.

We've also committed to a wide-ranging and thorough review into our governance and structures to see if there are improvements that can be made which are still compliant with the government's Code of Governance. That process is just beginning. ●



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The body is aiming to introduce junior leagues to retain young members

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PRODUCT INNOVATION

Lauren Heath-Jones takes a look at the latest technology and innovation currently making waves across the world of sport



For full company and contact details of any of the products and services featured here, please visit www.sport-kit.net

Physiolab's S1 unit 'maximises performance' says **Simon Withey**



The portable unit can be used pitch side or in the clinic

Performance equipment specialist Physiolab has extended its offering with its newest launch, the S1 unit, a portable unit designed to deliver effective compression, cryotherapy and thermotherapy treatments. These treatments are designed to maximise physical performance, accelerate soft tissue repair following injury, aid recovery time and reduce pain.



Simon Withey says the unit will maximise athlete performance

Simon Withey, CEO at Physiolab, says: "The S1 retains the consistency and innovation for which we're renowned but is at home both on the pitch and

in the sports injury clinic. We have created a truly practical pitch side product including removable plug and play cartridges, easy to fill, sealable water and ice cartridges and up to six hours of battery life." Withey adds: "By providing physiotherapists and sports injury specialists with the tools needed, they can maximise their players' performance, improve recovery rates and accelerate soft tissue repair while reducing pain."

SPORT-KIT KEYWORD

PHYSIOLAB

Tottenham Hotspur's retractable pitch is "world first" says **Danny Pickard**

Sheffield-based engineering firm SCX has been selected to design and install a retractable pitch at the new Tottenham Hotspur stadium.

The retractable pitch will be made from real turf and

will sit atop an artificial pitch, making the new White Hart Lane stadium the first in the UK to contain two pitches within the same bowl.

To preserve the integrity of both playing surfaces,

the real-grass pitch will be used exclusively for football matches, whilst the artificial pitch beneath will be used for NFL matches and other events including live music.

The grass pitch sits in three pitch-long trays that, when retracted, slide back into the south stand to reveal the artificial pitch beneath. The joins in the grass pitch are designed to be undetectable when in use.

The installation, which began in October, is expected to take 12 weeks, and will be carried out by SCX Special Projects, the bespoke precision engineering arm of the SCX Group.



Danny Pickard says SCX is proud to deliver a world first

Danny Pickard, lead engineer at SCX, says: "Our expertise and heritage enables us to constantly push the boundaries of moving structures and precision engineering."

SPORT-KIT KEYWORD

SCX



Tottenham FC's new stadium will also be used for NFL matches

Walljam will “revitalise how sport is played” says founder **Tim Worboys**

Crowd-funded company Walljam has launched an interactive training wall, designed to get all types of people engaging in sport.

Developed by Hertfordshire-based Tim Worboys, the

wall incorporates a number of different ball sports, including football, tennis and cricket, and is designed to improve a player's game whilst tracking their performance and development.

It also adds an element of gamification to training.

Users aim balls at intelligent LED targets on the wall and score points for the speed, accuracy and power of the strike. Scores can then be shared to an online leader board via the accompanying Walljam app.

The wall is formatted to allow for single or group play and is designed to offer a fast-paced, high intensity experience that also improves users' overall fitness and technique. Features include: an integrated stopwatch, colour coded LED lights that flash when a target has been hit and inbuilt impact pressure sensors to measure accuracy and power.



Founder Tim Worboys used crowdfunding to start Walljam

Tim Worboys, founder of Walljam, says: “We’re mashing physical sport and play with digital performance output – we want to revitalise how sport is taken up and played”

He adds: “It’s our aim to see people engaged with the wall, showing that they can rise to the physical challenge.”

SPORT-KIT KEYWORD
WALLJAM



Walljam uses gamification elements to keep users engaged

Xsens MVN Suit to make performance analysis “easier and more accurate” according to **Hein Beute**

Dutch tech developer Xsens has developed the MVN Suit, a self-contained motion capture suit designed to enable motion capture in any environment, including extreme situations such as mountain biking or sky diving, without the need for cameras, sensors or stages.

The suit is built to overcome the effects of magnetic distortion – a previously uncontrollable environmental factor where magnetic interference from nearby metals corrupts motion data – promising to deliver clear and accurate data.



Xsens' Hein Beute says the suit allows for more authentic data

An on-body pack with a battery life of 12 hours records information. Ultra-small sensors are designed to accommodate movements including stunts and rolls.

Hein Beute, director of product marketing and head project manager, says: “Our core aim has always been to make performance analysis easier and more accurate. Our MVN system can track an athlete's movement data in any location. Capturing an athlete in their natural competitive environment rather than a laboratory allows for more authentic motion capture.”

The suit is expected to be released in coming months.

SPORT-KIT KEYWORD
XSENS



The MVN Suit can be worn during any activity

The Sports and Play Construction

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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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