

Sport England new CEO

## Tim Hollingsworth

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## Fun is the answer

New research has found being too serious kills kids' interest in sport. We need to harness the power of fun to engage children and enable them to develop lifelong exercise habits

**A** new survey by IPSOS Mori for Sport England called *Active Lives: Children and Young People*, reveals fascinating insights into how children view and respond to sport and what motivates them to participate.

The most revealing discovery was that children who are competent in all five areas of physical literacy – enjoyment, confidence, competence, understanding and knowledge – are happier and more trusting of other children. They also report higher levels of resilience.

This is a truly fundamental discovery and must pave the way for a review of the way we value sport in relation to child development. It's especially important at this point in time, when the mental health of children and young people is giving such a cause for concern.

Researchers also found that physically literate children do twice as much activity: effectively, the more physically literate they are, the more active they are.

Factors which inspired children to want to exercise were also examined. Researchers looked at how clearly children understood the value of sport to their own wellbeing. They also looked at how much fun they had doing it.

Although 68 per cent of children were aware that sport is good for their health, having this knowledge actually had the least impact on activity levels. Instead, the biggest motivator was found to be fun and enjoyment.

In publishing the study, Sport England CEO, Tim Hollingsworth, said: "This survey gives us the richest evidence yet that sport and physical activity for children needs to be fun and enjoyable, above all."



The Government's School Sports action plan green paper will be the first opportunity to apply the findings of this new research and the industry must engage and respond

IPSOS Mori also confirmed that physical literacy decreases steadily with age and that as children grow older, they do less sport and report lower levels of enjoyment, confidence, competence, and understanding.

This ties in with Sport England research which shows a tendency for activity levels to drop off as children become teenagers and begs the question, which comes first – loss of physical literacy or a decline in participation?

Do we need to do more to help children maintain their physical literacy as their bodies grow and change?

We know we have to keep people moving all their lives and that developing physical literacy in childhood is the key to enjoyment and the bedrock of a lifelong exercise habit.

All policies relating to sport need to be reviewed to bring them in line with this research, so we continue to place enjoyment at the heart of children's sport.

The Government's School Sport Action plan green paper, which is due shortly, will be the first opportunity to do this and the industry must engage and respond.

LIZ TERRY, EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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## READER SERVICES

### Subscriptions

+44 (0)1462 471930

### Circulation manager

Michael Emmerson

+44 (0)1462 471932

## EDITORIAL TEAM

### Editor

Liz Terry

+44 (0)1462 431385

### Managing editor

Steph Eaves

+44 (0)1462 471934

### News editor

Tom Walker

+44 (0)1462 471934

### Sport-kit.net

Lauren Heath-Jones

+44 (0)1462 471927

## ADVERTISING TEAM

### Advertising sales

Michael Emmerson

+44 (0)1462 471932

## DESIGN

Sharon Hale

+44 (0)1462 471924



### Leisure Media

Portmill House, Hitchin,  
Herts, SG5 1DJ, UK  
+44 (0)1462 431385  
leisuremedia.com  
firstlast@leisuremedia.com



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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](mailto:sm@leisuremedia.com)



## Finding opportunities in cancellations

Over the last few years, we've worked hard to increase customer satisfaction across our facilities; with our offers, our timetables and scheduling. But one area we weren't focused on, was what happened should they wish to cancel. A membership cancellation is complicated, but shouldn't be perceived as a negative; it should be more of an 'au revoir' than a goodbye.

How we could ensure the process was streamlined and efficient when we have many types of memberships across a number of sites? And how could the process facilitate a conversation between us and the customer? What information could we glean from a departing member? And could we change their mind?

We've been fortunate to work collaboratively with Leisure-net to co-create an online cancellation portal, recovery-Focus, that customers must complete if they're requesting to leave. The system allows us to track cancellation applications to ensure they're managed professionally and within a set time, ensuring members feel valued and ultimately helping us retain customers.

Once received, our team contacts the customer to discuss their reasons for wanting to leave and, if appropriate, offers a special pre-agreed deal from an online 'toolbox' to encourage them to stay. This could be anything from a personal training session or an offer to freeze their fitness membership for six months. Or, for children's swimming lessons, the next month of lessons for a penny.

Requests to cancel come in many guises, be that injury, the completion of fitness goals, financial reasons or lack of motivation. Our simple online cancellation request and



Members requesting to leave may be offered special deals to encourage them to stay



We've gained valuable customer insights from our online cancellation portal

follow up conversation allows these to be assessed and alternative solutions to be explored. Should a customer still wish to cancel, we confirm this and the recovery-Focus tool automatically notifies DFC to cancel the membership and from what date.

The system has only been operational a few months, so its early days, but we've already managed some great win-backs and gained valuable customer insights. The data acquired is helping us influence the selling process, review our programming and the learning and development of our team. To me it feels like it's the missing jigsaw piece to our customers' membership journey. ●  
*Emma Thomas, head of development, Trafford Leisure*

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# SM PEOPLE



We'll be focusing on how we might create a roadmap to a more cost efficient, sustainable and exciting sport and leisure future

## **TRACEY FRANCIS • NEWLY APPOINTED DIRECTOR, LK2**

### **Tell us a bit about your background in the industry?**

I have more than 25 years of experience in the sports development industry and have worked within leading bodies such as the England Cricket Board, Sport England and a number of local authorities and cricketing organisations.

While working for Sport England, my remit included grant management, and I feel very privileged to have worked on the indoor skate parks at both Skegness and Corby, including Corby's 50m swimming pool, which has transformed the leisure offering locally.

During my career, I have supported numerous refurbishments and new build projects for multi-use games areas, 3G and 4G pitches, and fine turf and artificial pitches. For my sins I have even completed an Institute of Groundsmanship course and can put a cricket wicket to bed for the winter!

I think my proudest achievement to date would be leading the 'Field of Dreams' project, which saw a derelict 1908 arts and crafts pavilion regenerated as part of the 2013 and 2015 Ashes test series in Nottingham. Over £360,000 worth of goods and services were pledged to the project, which came in around £1m. It's a true

legacy for the people of Nottingham and clearly demonstrates how you can achieve an economic and social return from hosting of international sporting events.

### **What excites you most about taking on the role of director at LK2?**

Over the past ten years LK2 has carved a unique position for itself, having invested significantly in the sport and leisure arm of what was originally a traditional architecture business.

The CEO of the LK2 Group, Dale Lui, and the managing director of sport and leisure, Gary Johnson, have worked to create a niche within the marketplace – they are ambitious to become the industry leaders through offering full-service support to sporting facilities, from securing funding to designing fit-for-purpose sporting locations.

Working alongside Dale, Gary and the wider LK2 team is what excites me most about my new role. With LK2's unrivalled knowledge and experience within architecture and sport, coupled with its knowledge of the commercial and community sector, my addition to the team will be to create a strong and compelling narrative, showcasing how we can tangibly identify and provide alternative solutions to sport and leisure locations, helping to promote and enable sport and physical activity across the country.



Tracey Francis has been appointed new director of LK2



CEO of LK2, Dale Lui, with new director, Tracey Francis



LK2 offers full service support to sporting facilities



**Brexit will likely have an impact on the future growth of our industry. We need to be ready to adapt**

**Can you tell us about LK2's work with Sport England?**

We are moving into a new era with Sport England and have developed a more proactive approach to the framework. We aim to be more prescriptive and not descriptive. Our first significant step change will be to develop a consortium offer working closely with a select group of industry leads to create a new and dynamic solution to the framework.

**What are your views on the current state of the sports facility industry?**

I hate to mention the B word.... but Brexit is likely to have an impact on the future growth of our industry. Either way we need to be ready to adapt, with flexibility to move with the changing landscape. We should see this as an opportunity to build a greater Britain through a human-centred approach and focus on creating communities and facilities that promote



LK2 has deep knowledge and experience within architecture and sport and leisure, says Francis

sport across the UK, helping everyday people to live healthier lives.

**What plans do you have for LK2?**

We have ambitious plans to elevate LK2 as an industry leader within sport and leisure – we see this as a pivotal moment for the business and an opportunity for us to carve a niche for the business.

In my new role, I will be working to develop and procure new projects, as well as working alongside the senior team to offer a full service to our sport, leisure, commercial and education clients; focusing on creating facilities that will enhance communities across the country.

First, I would like to spend time getting to

grips with how the sports and architecture side of the business work cohesively together, as our strength is in our unity.

As a business, our mantra will always be to look at the 'art of the possible' and not be constrained by what has gone before us. We'll also be focusing on how to create a roadmap to a more cost-efficient, sustainable and exciting sport and leisure future, and I'm very excited to be part of this journey.

**LK2 is a company of architecture consultants who specialise in architecture and sports, leisure and education project development**



We were officially fed up with parents not allowing their children to run. We set up the charity Kids Run Free to help show parents that their kids can and do like running

### MARTINE VERWEIJ • CO-FOUNDER, KIDS RUN FREE



Martine Verweij co-founded Kids Run Free in 2011 with business partner Catherine O'Carroll

#### CONNECT WITH KIDS RUN FREE

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#### What's your sporting background?

In my mid-twenties I discovered triathlon. In my first year I competed for the Netherlands, achieving 7th place in the 2005 World Long Distance Championships in Denmark. I then went on to compete for the UK in the Olympic Distance World Championships in Switzerland the following year.

Alongside triathlon I was also competing in mountain bike stage races in Europe and Africa, finishing 13th in editions of the Transalp race and the Cape Epic race in 2007.

Staying with the bike I moved onto cyclocross in my thirties, finishing in the top 10 at the National Cyclocross Championship in the elite race in 2009, and more recently gaining a silver medal in the National Championship in the women's over 40s race.

#### How did the idea for Kids Run Free come about?

When I was six months pregnant with my first child I met and became friends with Catherine O'Carroll. Together we decided to organise running events. Two months later we launched our first event, under the name Raceways.

A year later I sold my catering business and focused all my energies on developing Raceways with Catherine. We also started running races for the children present, but participation was very low. When we asked parents, "why don't you let your child out of the pushchair to participate in the running", they would say things like: "My



child doesn't like running", "My child can't run" or "My child runs away!"

By 2011, Catherine and I were officially fed up with parents not allowing their children to engage with the running. We decided to set up the charity Kids Run Free to help show parents that their kids can and do like running.

In December of that year, Kids Run Free was launched with its first event in a park in Solihull. Our vision is to make all children happier, healthier and more confident through running.

#### What does Kids Run Free offer?

In order to achieve our mission and vision, we have developed two free programmes.

The first is Park Kids, where a group of local volunteers are trained up by us to deliver a fun and engaging running event for children in a park. Children can run as much or as little as they want. They are given a tracking log that they bring each time, to record their attendance and the distance they run.

Along the way, they receive rewards to celebrate their achievements and keep them motivated and having fun.

The second programme is Marathon Kids.

This is a schools programme in which we challenge school children to run multiple marathons over a school year. This can be



Kids Run Free events are held at 31 locations across the UK



**As a result of seeing the engagement of their children, many parents have started to participate in running**

done during break time or lesson times, depending on what works best for the school. We work with each school to keep the teachers and children engaged. We also use research-based tools to reduce barriers and increase facilitators.

**What challenges did you face?**

We struggled to get our first park location off the ground. No council was interested in the concept in the first place. Now we get asked and funded, which is a nice change.

**What impact has the charity made?**

We've doubled the number of children we work with every year, something we're very proud of. Last academic year we engaged over 83,000 children in at least one of our programmes.

Ninety-five per cent of children that stop coming to Park Kids instead step

up to parkrun or athletic clubs or other activities. Meanwhile, as a result of seeing the engagement of their children, many parents have started to participate and find their own activities.

With the schools programme we see academic improvement, improved relationships with teachers, increased enjoyment in school and, of course, more physically fit children.

**What are your future goals for the charity?**

We aim to increase our Park Kids programme in line with the hotspots for our Marathon Kids programme, in order to increase parent engagement from schools to parks.

We will increase our reach to 120,000 next year, however we are more focused on improving the frequency of events.



Verweij has competed in triathlon, mountain biking and cyclocross

**KIDS RUN FREE IN NUMBERS:**

- **3,049 children** have run at at least one Park Kids event during the last 12 months
- **48,910km** is the overall distance run at Park Kids during the last 12 months
- **Over 115,000 children** have been reached by Kids Run Free programmes since 2011
- **Over 100 volunteers** help run Kids Run Free events at 31 locations across the UK



Many of our members would like to start or expand work with girls but don't know how to do it. Project 51 lays the foundations

### **JO IRVING • PROJECT MANAGER, SPORTED**



Jo Irving is project manager at the Sported charity

#### **What is Project 51?**

Project 51 is a joint programme, which brings together our expertise in working with community sport groups with Women in Sport's knowledge and insight on engaging women and girls in sport and physical activity.

We've called it Project 51 because 51 per cent of the UK population are female, yet when it comes to sport and physical activity, almost 1.5 million more men than women are playing sport once per week.

The programme aims to help community sport groups in deprived areas become more inclusive by breaking down the gender stereotypes that prevent more women and girls from getting active. For example, only 43 per cent of girls say they have the same choices as boys at school in terms of sport and exercise, and amongst secondary school-age children, being 'sporty' is still widely seen as a masculine trait.

#### **What led to this programme being created?**

Over the last ten years we've built this incredible membership network of 3,000 community groups across the length and breadth of the UK, all using sport for social change. Our mission is to strengthen their sustainability and build their capacity to reach and change even more young lives.

We know many of our members would like to start or expand work with girls but don't know how to do it. Project 51 lays the foundations, and through a partnership with Women in Sport provides insight, training and a structured plan to take them forward to becoming more inclusive and accessible.

Project 51 is funded by Comic Relief's Levelling the Field initiative. It builds upon the work of a successful pilot we ran in Northern Ireland called Engage Her, which has seen great success.

#### **How does it work?**

Project 51 is all about fostering long-term sustainable change by empowering and upskilling the staff and volunteers of community sport groups. Women in Sport has some fantastic insight and resources on attracting and retaining women and girls into sport. By training and upskilling our own field team and volunteers, we can help disseminate this knowledge to our members.

Through Project 51 we help our members with things such as how to



The Project 51 Young Influencers help to motivate other young girls to get active



**Girls from participating groups are telling us they now have more opportunities to be successful and active**

market and promote their activities to women and girls, consulting and adapting sessions to meet their needs, and monitoring and evaluating their impact.

**Tell us about Young Influencers**

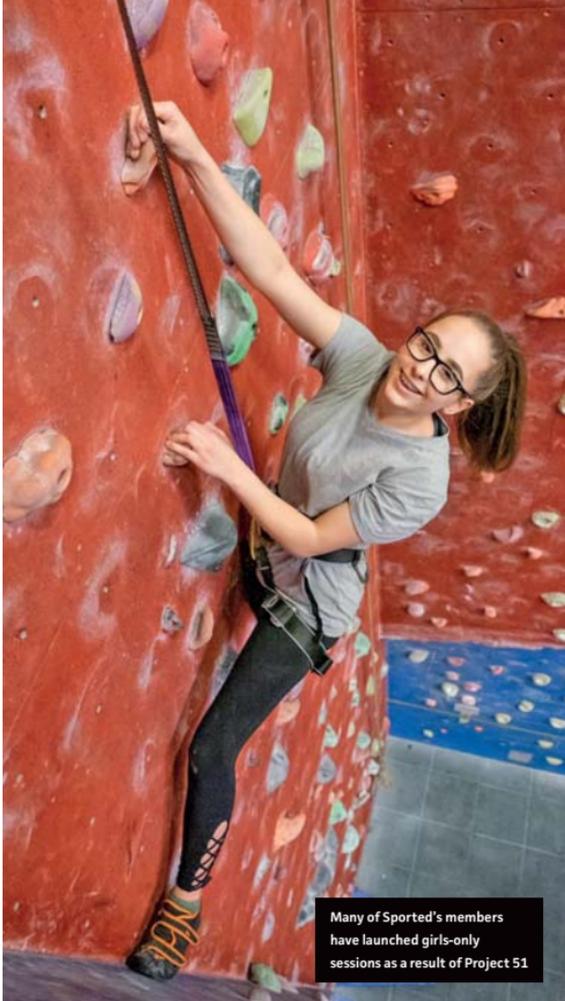
We felt it was really important to involve our target demographic in shaping and informing the programme, as they are best placed to help create change within their group and community. So we asked participating groups to nominate girls who were role models and peer influencers within their groups and clubs.

We selected a group of seven amazingly talented and confident girls who became our Young Influencers. They take part in focus groups, write blogs, launched their own Instagram page and shared their experiences on-stage in front of a live audience of industry experts and decision makers at Women in Sport's Empower conference and Sported's tenth anniversary event.

**What impact has the project had so far?**

Project 51 is improving the lives of girls across the country. Girls from participating groups are telling us they have more opportunities to be successful and active and are more positive about their futures.

Project 51 came along at the perfect time for our members. It's fitted in with their strategic aims to engage more women and girls and they've all really embraced



Many of Sported's members have launched girls-only sessions as a result of Project 51

it, particularly around consulting their members about their needs and listening to their views around what could be done to improve the overall experience.

Many of our groups have launched new girls-only sessions, while others have revamped their marketing. But for me it's the smaller success stories, which could easily go unnoticed, that show our impact. For example, one group working in a particularly deprived community has started providing free sanitary products to help their girls feel more confident and comfortable

attending training. It's stuff like this that makes me proud to be a part of the project.

**What are your plans for the project?**

We're now in the second year of the programme and we'll be working with another fifteen groups. Alongside this, we've recently been awarded a grant from the London Marathon Charitable Trust to launch a similar programme, focusing on London and the South East. These funds will allow us to open out the opportunity for all our members. ●

## NEWS + ANALYSIS



The guide aims to inform and educate the sector about the challenges faced by those with dementia



We want to transform the way the sport sector thinks about dementia

Tim Hollingsworth

## Sport England publishes dementia-friendly guide

Sport England has partnered with the Alzheimer's Society to produce a dementia-friendly sport and physical activity guide.

The guide, funded by National Lottery money, aims to help the sports sector bring down barriers that prevent people who live with dementia from taking part in sport and physical activity. There are more than 850,000 people

living with the condition in the UK – many of whom say they experience barriers to taking part in activity.

These include having difficulties in navigating around sports facilities and remembering how to use equipment at leisure centres. Others say they worry about people's reactions – for example, staff not understanding their difficulties and a lack

of confidence in finding the right activities.

The practical guide aims to tackle these issues by informing and educating individuals and organisations so they have a better knowledge of dementia and how it affects people.

It also provides tools and guidance so that the sector can help more people affected by dementia enjoy the benefits of staying active in a caring and

understanding environment.

"We want to transform the way the sport and physical activity sector thinks, acts and talks about dementia – with every leisure centre, community hall and sports club equipped with the resources to meet the needs of those living with the condition," said Sport England CEO Tim Hollingsworth.

More: [http://lei.sr/X7X9s\\_P](http://lei.sr/X7X9s_P)

## UK Sport's new strategy to relax 'no compromise' approach



Funding will still look to deliver medal success

UK Sport has set out its funding blueprint for the next Olympic and Paralympic cycles, covering the Paris 2024 and Los Angeles 2028 Games.

The strategy includes a significant change in the way the high performance body will hand out grants – namely, the relaxing of its 'no compromise' approach to funding elite sport.

The no compromise strategy prioritised grants to sports which exhibited the best medal hopes at major games. The flipside



We will put the athlete at the heart of everything we do

Katherine Grainger, UK sport chair

was that sports deemed to have less of a chance of success had their funding slashed.

Instead, the new approach will see three tiers of funding that will channel investment into different stages of the

performance pathway to enable the pursuit of medal success. The funding tiers are:

- **Podium:** Investment to athletes and teams with a realistic chance of a podium position within four years
  - **Podium Potential:** athletes and teams with a realistic chance of podium position within four to eight years
  - **Progression:** sports taking the first step on the performance pathway.
- More: [http://lei.sr/U8X5Z\\_P](http://lei.sr/U8X5Z_P)



Those who regularly take part in moderate level physical activity are 30 per cent less likely to suffer from coronary heart disease

## Sport Wales: physical activity saving NHS Wales £295m a year

NHS Wales benefitted from an estimated cost saving of £295.17m during 2016-17, thanks to physical activity and sport lowering the need for people seeking medical help to lifestyle diseases.

The figure comes from research commissioned by Sport Wales and undertaken by the Sport Industry Research Centre at Sheffield Hallam University, which calculated that adults who participated in sport and exercise at moderate intensity lowered their risk of major illnesses by up to 30 per cent. As well as the reduced



**Findings also indicate that £23.18m was saved from the reduced use of mental health services**

treatment of illnesses, the report links the savings to the time spent in GP appointments and reduced pressures on front line NHS staff and services.

Findings also indicate that £23.18m was saved during the year from the reduced use of mental health services by active adults in Wales.

More: [http://lei.sr/t5H4w\\_P](http://lei.sr/t5H4w_P)

## Work begins on Edinburgh's £47m Meadowbank centre

Demolition work has begun on the former Meadowbank Stadium in Edinburgh – acting as the starting gun for a project to build a new £47m sports centre in the city.

The historic venue, which hosted the Commonwealth Games in 1970, will be rebuilt with extensive provision for both elite and grassroots sport – forming an integral part of Scotland's sports performance system. Facilities will include a dedicated indoor athletics area, a large health club,

martial arts studio, boxing gym and sports halls for badminton and gymnastics, as well as a café.

An outdoor track stadium, 3G football pitch and outdoor throws area will also be included.

"This is another major milestone in our project to build a brand new Meadowbank – a venue that will become one of the country's top community sports centres when it opens in 2020," said councillor Amy McNeese-Mechan of Edinburgh Council. More: [http://lei.sr/T5G6k\\_P](http://lei.sr/T5G6k_P)



**It's a proud moment for me to join Peter Lim and the Class of '92 lads**

David Beckham

## David Beckham acquires stake in Salford City FC

David Beckham has become the final member of the famed "Class of '92" to take a stake in National League football club Salford City.

Beckham joins five other Manchester United legends – Gary Neville, Phil Neville, Ryan Giggs, Nicky Butt and Paul Scholes – in holding a 10 per cent share in the club.

Following the deal, the six former Man Utd stars now hold a combined 60

per cent stake in the club. Singaporean billionaire Peter Lim remains the single largest shareholder with 40 per cent.

"It's a proud moment for me to join Peter Lim and the Class of '92 lads as an owner of Salford City FC," said Beckham.

Lim has pledged to continue offering financial resources for the club and to "help move the club forward". More: [http://lei.sr/H3b7H\\_P](http://lei.sr/H3b7H_P)



The club has already signed a deal for the stadium plot

## 'History is made' as Luton secures planning for stadium

League One football club Luton Town has been granted permission to build a 17,500 all-seater stadium in the town centre.

The club submitted a planning application for the stadium to Luton Borough Council (LBC) in August 2016, but had to wait more than two years for a final decision.

The club has already signed a deal for the stadium plot

– the Power Court area of Luton – with British Land PLC.

Luton Town FC chief executive Gary Sweet described the LBC Planning Control Committee's decision as "momentous".

"The decision to approve the stadium instantly elevates our footballing ambition to another level," he said.

More: [http://lei.sr/h9j9x\\_P](http://lei.sr/h9j9x_P)

# 2021 Rugby League World Cup venues revealed

Manchester United's 'Theatre of Dreams', Old Trafford, is set to host the finals day of the 2021 Rugby League World Cup, one of a number of football stadiums to feature in the event

Old Trafford in Manchester will host the 'finals day' of the 2021 Rugby League World Cup (RLWC2021).

The home of Manchester United is one of a number of major football stadiums to be used during the tournament, which is being held across England in two years' time.

The Emirates Stadium will host a men's semi-final, making rugby league the only sport other than football to have been played at the home of Arsenal FC. The men's opening ceremony will take place in Newcastle at St. James' Park, following four successful seasons as the host of rugby league's Magic Weekend.

Other football stadiums to host games include the Ricoh Arena in Coventry, Bramall Lane in Sheffield and Riverside Stadium in Middlesbrough.

Set to be the most inclusive rugby league event ever, RLWC2021 will see the men's, women's and wheelchair tournaments played concurrently for the first time.

The women's and men's finals will take place as a double-header at Old Trafford, while Liverpool's M&S Bank Arena will host the wheelchair final.

Tournament organisers have met the government target of hosting at least 80 per cent of the tournament in the "Northern Powerhouse", with games also taking place in Doncaster, Huddersfield, Hull, Leeds and York.

"With all three tournaments running concurrently, RLWC2021 will give the chance for people across the country to engage in a variety of ways and really look forward to October and November 2021," said Jon Dutton, CEO of RLWC2021.

"This was an incredibly tough process given the large number of interested parties and the impressive nature of their bids.

"Each and every host now has the opportunity to galvanise and inspire their respective communities ahead of the competing nations arriving in England."



Arsenal FC's home The Emirates Stadium in London will host a men's semi-final



Each and every host now has the opportunity to galvanise and inspire their respective communities

Jon Dutton

## THE FULL LIST OF GAME VENUES/HOSTS:

### NORTH-WEST

The University of Bolton Stadium  
Anfield Stadium, Liverpool  
M&S Bank Arena Liverpool  
The Totally Wicked Stadium, St Helens  
Old Trafford, Manchester  
The Halliwell Jones Stadium, Warrington  
Leigh Sports Village, Wigan

### WEST MIDLANDS

The Ricoh Arena, Coventry

### YORKSHIRE

Club Doncaster  
The John Smiths Stadium, Kirklees  
The KCOM Stadium, Hull

Elland Road, Leeds  
Emerald Headingley Stadium, Leeds  
Bramall Lane, Sheffield  
The EIS Sheffield  
The Community Stadium, York

### NORTH-EAST

The Riverside Stadium, Middlesbrough  
St James' Park, Newcastle

### CUMBRIA

The Workington Community Stadium, Allerdale

### LONDON

The Emirates Stadium



The club saw pre-tax profits grow by more than 300 per cent

## Liverpool reveals record revenues as profits soar

On-field success has helped English Premier League club Liverpool FC (LFC) post record revenues for its last financial year.

Reporting its financials for the year to 31 May 2018, the club saw pre-tax profits grow by more than 300 per cent – from £40m to £125m.

The growth was driven by on-field success, which saw the turnover during the period increase by £90m to £455m.

"All three revenue streams saw rises with media revenue increasing by £66m to £220m, commercial revenue



**Commercial revenue increased by £17m**  
Liverpool FC statement

increasing by £17m to £154m and match revenue increasing by £7m to £81m," the club said in a statement.

The majority of the increases are a result of the club's qualification for the Champions League and the additional games progressing through to the final.

More: [http://lei.sr/A5N4j\\_P](http://lei.sr/A5N4j_P)

## Daily Mile to be introduced in all primary schools in England

All primary schools in England could be offered the opportunity to get involved in the Daily Mile fitness programme, after the initiative secured a £1.5m Sport England grant.

The Daily Mile concept gets kids active by enabling classes to head outside and jog or run around the school grounds every day – rain or shine – at whatever pace suits the child best.

Despite its name, the distance does not have to be adhered

to – although children tend to average running a mile in the given time – with the scheme being more about fostering a sense of inclusivity and enjoyment of physical activity.

Taking just 15 minutes "desk-to-desk", children engaging with the activity are reported to exhibit improved concentration in class, eat and sleep better at home and develop stronger bonds with their classmates and teachers.

More: [http://lei.sr/M8t9y\\_P](http://lei.sr/M8t9y_P)



**These new appointments are crucial for the growth of RLSS UK**  
Di Steer

## All change at RLSS UK: new chair and IQL director named

The Royal Life Saving Society UK (RLSS UK) is shuffling its top team heading into 2019.

The water-safety charity has appointed Mike Owen as chair, replacing the outgoing Dawn Whittaker.

Owen has 25 years' management and board experience and has specialised in not-for-profit bodies, membership associations and family-run enterprises.

At RLSS UK, Owen will focus on working with the board of trustees, providing the organisation with "high levels of strategic insight" in order to shape and govern the future direction of the organisation.

He is joined on the new-look board by Maggie Bradley and Richard Rickwood, who have been appointed as trustees.

More: [http://lei.sr/d6C9P\\_P](http://lei.sr/d6C9P_P)

## Sensory Alliance to make sport accessible for all



**Among its key commitments will be to share data and research with partners**

British Blind Sport, UK Deaf Sport and national disability charity Sense have launched a joint venture called Sensory Alliance, designed to break down barriers to sport and physical activity for people living with sensory impairments or complex disabilities.

Each partner in the alliance will work with key stakeholders within the industry to create a unified approach to help get more people into sport.

Among its key commitments will be to share research and



The alliance will develop guidance for the sector

data with partners to support the increase of physical activity levels of people with sensory impairments and to work jointly on opportunities that will improve experiences of sport and activities.

It will also promote activities and events delivered by each organisation within the Sensory Alliance and highlight other external opportunities.

More: [http://lei.sr/M9w9d\\_P](http://lei.sr/M9w9d_P)

## Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre chief named

Sheffield Hallam University (SHU) has named professor Rob Copeland as the first director of the Advanced Wellbeing Research Centre (AWRC), set to open later this year.

Copeland is a chartered sport and exercise psychologist and director for the National Centre for Sport and Exercise Medicine (NCSEM) in Sheffield – a London 2012 Olympic Games legacy programme that aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the nation through sport, exercise and physical activity.

Copeland's specific area of expertise focuses on behaviour change interventions in public health and he has had research, consultancy and service evaluation experience in both clinical and non-clinical settings. A member of several national academic advisory boards, he has informed national government



The project has received £14m central government funding

on the promotion of physical activity and has worked with Public Health England and the Chief Medical Officer in preparation for the forthcoming update on national physical activity guidelines in the UK.

"This is a really exciting time for the university and for Sheffield as we push forward

with our plans to revolutionise healthcare on a regional, national and international scale," Copeland said.

"Increasingly, healthcare in the twenty-first century is not just about treating illness and disease, it is about supporting people into better health, wellbeing and wellness.



“  
This is a really exciting time for the university and for Sheffield

Professor Rob Copeland

"Inactivity leading to long-term chronic illness is a global challenge. New, technological advances make it so easy for us to lead sedentary lifestyles but they also have huge potential to help people self-manage and adopt and maintain healthful behaviours."

More: [http://lei.sr/w7e3H\\_P](http://lei.sr/w7e3H_P)

## Mencap to set up 27 activity hubs across England



The hubs will offer a variety of activities

Mencap has revealed plans to establish 27 activity hubs across England in order to get people with learning disabilities more physically active.

The hubs will offer a variety of activities – including Zumba, boccia and walking rugby – as well as more traditional sports.

To incentivise those with learning disabilities to take part, Mencap – a learning disability charity – has also launched a special Round the World Challenge linked with the activities at the hubs.

Those completing 100 hours of exercise will have completed their "round-the-world trip", with landmarks along the way including 20 hours for crossing the UK and 40 for Europe – with participants receiving

“  
Exercise is for everyone and can have positive benefits including extended social interaction

Jan Tregelles

'postcards' to recognise their achievement in reaching significant landmarks along their journey.

The £1.7m project will be majority funded by a £1m grant from Sport England, with the sessions at each hub being run by specially trained staff and volunteers.

"Exercise is for everyone and can have positive benefits including extended social interaction," said Mencap chief executive Jan Tregelles. More: [http://lei.sr/6v4p6\\_P](http://lei.sr/6v4p6_P)

## Man U to open themed entertainment centres across China

English Premier League club Manchester United has revealed plans to open a series of club-themed entertainment centres throughout China.

Working in partnership with Chinese property developer Harves, the club will begin the rollout of the Manchester United Entertainment and Experience Centres with three sites – in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenyang – by the end of 2020.

The centres will feature interactive attractions and immersive exhibitions and chart the history of the club, catering for the estimated 100 million Chinese Manchester United fans.

Each centre will offer visitors a slightly different experience, but each will include restaurants and a club retail store.

The Beijing centre – the first to open – will be located within the Hertfordshire Mavericks,



The centres will include interactive attractions which aim to 'transport fans to Old Trafford'



**The concept will offer our millions of Chinese fans the chance to experience the club in a new and innovative way**

Richard Arnold

in the historic Qianmen Dashilan area right next to Tiananmen Square and the Forbidden City.

Harves is a Beijing-based real estate development and investment firm that has developed an estimated 55 million sq ft of real estate over the last two decades. It has a growing portfolio of assets

across a wide range of sectors – including airlines, hospitality, and operations management.

"The concept will offer our millions of Chinese fans the chance to experience the club in a new and innovative way," said Man United's group managing director, Richard Arnold.

More: [http://lei.sr/A5m8f\\_P](http://lei.sr/A5m8f_P)

## Saracens Rugby Club acquires stake in netball team

Gallagher Premiership Rugby club Saracens has acquired a 50 per cent stake in Vitality Netball Superleague team Hertfordshire Mavericks.

As a result of the partnership – designed to "fuel the next phase of growth for both organisations" – the netball team has been renamed Saracens Mavericks.

The strategic move will see the clubs sharing resources and insight for elite player performance, access to a wider fanbase, commitment to community outreach programmes and the integration of key business functions.

According to Tim Hunt, commercial director at Saracens, the two clubs are



**Netball is one of the fastest growing sports and we're excited to be joining forces with Mavericks**

Tim Hunt

"culturally aligned through their independent spirit".

"Netball is one of the fastest growing sports in the UK and we are excited to be joining forces with Mavericks," Hunt said.

"Part of our growth strategy is to collaborate with others that share our ethos and help widen our audience reach.

"To achieve this, the dual-priority is to create an environment where our elite



The clubs will share resources and insight for elite player performance

teams continually strive for sporting excellence and to inspire our local communities to lead healthier, happier lives through the positive power of sport. Mavericks mirror our culture, making them a perfect match for Saracens."

Kathryn Ratnapala, director of netball for Saracens Mavericks, added: "This is a fantastic opportunity to continue to push to be the standout, ultimate franchise within Vitality Superleague." More: [http://lei.sr/Y5t3W\\_P](http://lei.sr/Y5t3W_P)

## INTERNATIONAL NEWS

## 3XN-designed multi-purpose arena planned for Munich

Danish architecture firm 3XN have been tapped to build an as-yet-unnamed stadium in Munich's Olympic Park.

Set to occupy the site of the recently demolished Radstadion velodrome – the arena will feature three canopied ice rinks and an oval-shaped green roof that merges with the surrounding park landscape.

Landscape design for the al fresco space and the ground-level concourse will be carried out by Latz + Partner.

Another notable element of the structure will be its facade, which will have a lamellar or membranous shape, representing a series of interlinking bone tissue.

Once complete, the 11,500-seat sports complex will be the home of two professional



The arena will have a capacity of around 11,500 spectators

clubs: Eishockeyclub (EHC) Red Bull München and FC Bayern München Basketball.

Plans for the Olympic Park property were first lodged in September 2018 by software company SAP SE, the project's developer.

Commenting on the building scheme, Munich's mayor, Christine Strobl, said: "The new sports arena will integrate harmoniously with the existing park landscape, while its structured facade and roof greening will create elegant

highlights. The sports arena will help strengthen the Olympic Park's position as an outstanding venue for both professional and grassroots sports in Munich."

The project's expected completion date is 2021. More: [http://lei.sr/4R2k5\\_P](http://lei.sr/4R2k5_P)



The arena will integrate with the existing park landscape

Christine Strobl

## Dalian Wanda considering US\$500m IPO for sports unit

Chinese conglomerate Dalian Wanda Group is understood to be planning an initial public offering for its burgeoning sports unit.

According to Reuters, Wanda is preparing for an IPO which could fetch up to \$500m.

Adding to its interests across entertainment, hospitality and healthcare, Wanda has in recent years been active in acquiring sports properties.

In 2015 it won an auction to purchase Swiss sports marketing company Infront Sports & Media – which gave it the exclusive sales rights to broadcast FIFA events from 2015 to 2022, including the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

It also owns the World Triathlon Corporation, the Competitor



Wanda has in recent years been active in acquiring sports properties

Group (CGI) – operator of the Rock 'n' Roll Marathon Series – and held a 20 per cent stake in Spanish football club Atletico Madrid for three years.

According to Reuters, Wanda made the filing for the IPO with the US Securities and Exchange Commission and the listing could happen as early as the first half of this year.

Outside of sports, Wanda has been very active in the



Wanda's sports properties include the Competitor Group

leisure and entertainment industries – with the movie and theme park sectors particular markets of interest.

In April 2018, Wanda celebrated the opening of its Qingdao Movie Metropolis mega-development. The

US\$7.9bn (£5.7bn) scheme covers more than 400 acres and includes a theme park, 30,000sq m waterpark, yacht club and hotels, as well as a vast movie studio and film production facilities.

More: [http://lei.sr/U7k2d\\_P](http://lei.sr/U7k2d_P)

# Community Leisure UK

## The voice for community leisure trusts across the UK

The community leisure trust collective has launched a new brand that seeks to support and develop our public leisure and culture services. **Community Leisure UK** – formerly Sporta – is the association that specialises in charitable leisure trusts across the UK, enabling networking and knowledge sharing with peers and external stakeholders.

Collectively, member community leisure trusts manage a **combined budget of more than £1.6bn**, employ over **67,000 people**, and receive **233million visits per year**.

Charitable trusts are key community anchors who **reinvest every penny** into developing services focused on their local people across the life course. Trusts are working with more and more partners to develop supported routes to **mental and physical health improvement**, while reshaping services to meet local strategic objectives.

The ultimate aim of community leisure trusts is to **engage all people across the community**, whether that is having a health check, a coffee in a safe and warm space, going for a swim, taking a walk in the park, borrowing a library book or becoming a member of a gym.

*Community Leisure UK are keen to help organisations who would like to know more about the public leisure landscape and / or the charitable trust model. Please do get in touch at:*

[www.communityleisureuk.org](http://www.communityleisureuk.org)

@CommLeisureUK

[cateatwater@communityleisureuk.org](mailto:cateatwater@communityleisureuk.org)

*Thank you for reading.*





## AEG and SMG merge to create global business

Two major players in sports venue management have joined forces to create a behemoth which will operate some of world's leading venues

**A**EG Facilities and SMG have revealed plans to merge, creating a standalone global facility management and venue services company which will operate under the name ASM Global.

AEG Facilities is the venue management subsidiary of Anschutz Entertainment Group (AEG), the worldwide sporting and music entertainment giant and one of the world's largest owners of sports teams and sports events.

SMG is a stadium and sports arena manager owned by Canadian private equity group Onex.

The deal will see Onex and AEG each own 50 per cent of ASM Global.

The newly created company will be headquartered in Los Angeles, California, with key operations also based in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

The company will operate AEG's and SMG's diversified portfolio of arenas, stadiums, convention centres and performing arts centres. In total, the estate will have more than 310 venues across five continents.



**This new company draws upon the depth of our combined talent and resources**

Bob Newman

High profile venues to be operated by ASM Global will include the Barclays Center in New York, US; AT&T Center in San Antonio, US; Dubai Arena in the UAE; Ericsson Globe in Stockholm, Sweden and the Suncorp Stadium in Brisbane, Australia. "This merger is a major step for our industry," said Wes Westley, CEO and president of SMG. "We plan to accelerate innovation by

combining our expertise to deliver increased value and offer enhanced capabilities to municipalities and venue owners worldwide.

"At the same time, we expect that this transaction will offer employees at both our corporate headquarters and field operations tremendous new opportunities."

Bob Newman, president of AEG Facilities, added: "This exciting new company brings together the two organisations and draws upon the depth of our combined talent and resources to create an organisation that will deliver value and long-term success, as well as innovative services to our clients around the world."

Newman will become president and CEO of ASM, while Westley will join ASM's board of directors.

AEG will retain ownership of its real estate holdings outside of the new venture, including its entertainment districts and owned venues in Los Angeles, London, Hamburg and Berlin. It will also retain its development, sports, music and sponsorship divisions.

More: [http://lei.sr/D3F4v\\_Pa](http://lei.sr/D3F4v_Pa)



The plan will "inspire young people with the Olympic spirit"

## Beijing 2022 organisers reveal outline of legacy plan

The organising committee for the Beijing 2022 Olympics has outlined its legacy plans for the Games.

The plan is centred around "inspiring young people with the Olympic spirit", encouraging millions more to embrace winter sports and using the Winter Games to promote social progress. Beijing 2022 and its delivery partners will focus on seven themes – sports, society, economy, culture, environment, urban development and regional development.

"The early identification of this legacy framework, together



**China will enjoy long-lasting benefits far beyond the Games**

Beijing 2022 spokesperson

with the already-identified governance structure that is responsible for monitoring the progress of legacy projects, will help to ensure that the people of China enjoy long-lasting benefits far beyond the Games," a spokesperson for Beijing 2022 said.

More: [http://lei.sr/7n6N2\\_P](http://lei.sr/7n6N2_P)

## Paris wants breakdancing and skateboarding at 2024 Olympics

Breakdancing is among four new sports being proposed for inclusion at the Paris 2024 Olympic Games.

Surfing, climbing and skateboarding are the other disciplines put forward by the Paris organising committee, which is looking to create interest in the Games among the younger populations. Sports to lose out on being proposed were squash, which mounted a campaign to be included at the Paris Games, as well as billiard sports and chess.

The four selected sports do have some Olympic pedigree. Breakdancing (or breaking), skateboarding and sport climbing all appeared as medal events at the Youth Olympic Games in Buenos Aires in 2018, while skateboarding, sport climbing and surfing will make their debuts on the Olympic programme in Tokyo in 2020.

The sports proposed by Paris 2024 will now be reviewed by the Olympic Programme Commission. More: [http://lei.sr/4f9s2\\_P](http://lei.sr/4f9s2_P)



**2018 was a landmark year for Irish sport**

Kieran Mulvey

## Sport Ireland to invest €32m in grassroots and elite sport in 2019

Sport Ireland will invest €32m in national governing bodies, direct athlete support and the Local Sports Partnership Network (LSP) during 2019.

The funding – which represents a €6.5m increase on the investment made in 2018 – includes an investment of €12.845m in NGBs, more than €9m in high-performance programmes and €7.29m in LSP. There will also be

a €500,000 pot reserved for targeted funding for projects, designed to assist with the preparation for key events in 2019.

"2018 was a landmark year for Irish sport," said Sport Ireland chair Kieran Mulvey.

"At a strategic level, the publication of the new National Sports Policy was a key milestone for the sports sector."

More: [http://lei.sr/f9Y8f\\_P](http://lei.sr/f9Y8f_P)

## BIG draft updated concept for Oakland Stadium



**The restructuring was put forward after meetings with stakeholders**

Dave Kaval

Danish architects Bjarke Ingels Group (BIG) have revealed the latest changes to their vision for the proposed Howard Terminal Ballpark in Oakland, California.

Set to replace the Brutalist-style Oakland Coliseum, the new sports complex, which will be the home of the Oakland Athletics Major League Baseball (MLB) team, will have a circular instead of jewel box shape in order to "boost fans' experience".

In a statement, Dave Kaval, president of the sports club, said that the restructuring



The fresh design features a "more circular" shape

– which includes the creation of a rooftop park with views of the Oakland waterfront – was put forward over the course of meetings with various public officials, fans, and members of the local community.

Details for the 35,000-seat stadium – set to be the smallest arena in MLB – were first proposed last November. More: [http://lei.sr/j8Q7x\\_P](http://lei.sr/j8Q7x_P)

# Delivering a successful project

## Step 1: Preparation and planning

In 2019, we'll feature a series of four quarterly articles, in which experts from SAPCA outline the steps required to ensure a successful facility project. In the first of the series, SAPCA project manager Colin Corline explains the importance of preparation and planning

**E**ach sports facility project begins with a great idea. It may be one borne out of a specific need, such as a governing body's Strategic Plan, or a local authority needing to improve its facility infrastructure. Or it could be a sports club or school wanting to upgrade its facilities in order to attract more people to play sport.

Having a great idea marks the beginning of the project journey – but the first real step is to come up with a great plan.

### DEVELOPMENT OF A BRIEF

Developing a facility can be a daunting prospect with so many variables to consider. Whatever the project, however, it



**Whatever the project, creating a strong project brief in the early stages is essential**

is important to realise that the principles are the same – and that creating a strong project brief in the early stages is essential.

The project brief should encompass all elements of the project – from the specific requirements of the sporting



SAPCA project manager Colin Corline says strong planning is key to success

and non-sporting facilities and the type of sports to be played, to the perceived business case and any budgetary constraints. You also need to consider local insight and the demographics that would support the project, as well as local authority, NGB or sports council backing.

When developing the project brief, it is essential that you engage with a wide range of partners to ensure the initiation document considers all the relevant elements of the project at an early stage. This is where SAPCA can help. SAPCA members construct the vast majority of sports facilities across the UK, and at this early project development stage members of SAPCA's Professional Services Group can offer design and technical expertise on all aspects of project planning. Having specialists assist you at an early stage will help you develop a clear and comprehensive brief.

Once the document is complete, the next phase is to circulate the project brief within the wider community, in order to gauge support with the relevant bodies and to allow the conceptual idea of the brief – where applicable – to be enhanced and developed.

### THE APPLICATION

The development of a detailed design and planning application can potentially be the most important phase of the project. Here is a useful list of things you need to consider:



SAPCA's Professional Services Group can offer design and technical expertise



Project managers should undertake discussions with local residents and community groups to garner support for the project

- The business plan, both for the delivery of the project and for the ongoing development of the venue, should be developed at this stage. This is to ensure you consider and understand the impact of the project and how the new (or upgraded) facility will impact on the potential growth of participation and the retention of existing players.
- There will be a need to develop a cost plan for the project development, to allow budgets to be set and to allow you, if applicable, to seek partnership funding.
- In order to support the development of the cost plan, it is likely that you will need to engage design consultants to produce drawings and get the development through the required site surveys.
- Engage with the local authority planning department to assess the viability of the project from a planning perspective. This may also require further assistance from consultants to aid the



### Developing the business plan ensures you consider how the new facility will impact participation

planning application with required reports, surveys and layout drawings.

- Undertake discussions with local residents, community groups and any other relevant interested parties to garner support for the project.
- Use SAPCA's web-based project journey information to aid the development of the project through case studies and technical information.
- Use information from the relevant National Governing Body's facility development website to aid the development of the project.

- Play-test any relevant products or playing surface products to aid understanding of the sporting needs and to aid the formulation of the design.

Once you have completed this process, you should have solid plans in place for the project. While the plans can be tweaked and fine-tuned at a later stage – through engagement with NGBs, consultants and contractors – following this guidance you should have plans that offer a solid base for a successful project. ●



For more information on SAPCA, its Technical Programme or safety at sports facilities in general, contact us at: [info@sapca.org.uk](mailto:info@sapca.org.uk) or 024 7641 6316 [www.sapca.org.uk](http://www.sapca.org.uk)

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# TAKING THE LEAD

We need to ensure new governance strategies don't restrict great leadership, says Andy Reed

It has been quite a time for leaders across our sector stepping down recently – Sport England, UKsport, the Sport and Recreation Alliance and the BPA, for example. It's not just at senior management level – in the boardroom too, the new Sports Governance code has meant quite a bit of experience has been lost in a short time as those who had served the maximum term limits had to step down.

The loss of CEOs at Sport England, UK Sport, Sport and Recreation Alliance and Sported also means some of the progress we had made on diversity across the sector could be lost in a short space of time.

Leaders moving on is not always a bad thing as the sector continues to evolve and change with the shifting sands of political and socio-economic times. However, with the new emphasis on boards bringing in 'independent' voices and more skills-based members, have we lost something along the way? A number of CEOs and chairs who were keen advocates of this have admitted to me recently that the rush to appoint outsiders may have tipped the balance too far in the other direction.

## DEMAND THE BEST

When I carried out a review of the sector around CSPs and their communities for the sports minister I found one of the biggest issues facing the ability of the sector to respond to the new government strategy was the need for greater and more consistent leadership across the sector.

If I'm being honest, the desire to bring in outsiders from other sectors has led to, at best, mixed results, with a few recent high profile individual chairs being forced out of office.

I have been fortunate over the years to have been around the leadership of many industries, and whilst we have



Reed says the rush to appoint board members from outside the sector may have backfired



**Our future planning and leadership needs to be ready for the increasing pace of change**

some great individuals in our sector, we also have too much mediocrity.

I can assure you I don't count my former life in Westminster as an example of good leadership – but rather as an extreme example of what happens when any organisation lacks proper leadership.

Whilst I spend much of my time inside the sector, I have managed to build and maintain a portfolio of interests in other sectors and these remain much more collaborative and demonstrate impressive leadership against difficult and challenging backdrops.

I still have to spend too much of my time trying to encourage parts of the sport sector to spend less time criticising other parts and to concentrate on creating their own excellence.

## THE RIGHT BALANCE

A recent World Economic Forum Report suggested that 65 per cent of children currently starting primary school will be doing jobs when they leave school that currently don't exist. Our future planning and leadership needs to be constantly ready for the increasing pace of change heading our way whilst maintaining a level of stability.

Like any successful sporting team, our leadership of the sector needs to be finely balanced between those with plenty of relevant corporate memory and fresh new blood with ideas and innovation, and from both outside and inside the sector. If we don't manage this we will continue to be held back in our goal to create an active nation. We have a short window in which to get this right. For the sake of a healthy nation we need to create some genuine collaborative leadership and leave the egos behind. ●

*Andy Reed is the founder of Sports Think Tank, former MP for Loughborough, and chair of SAPCA. [sportsthinktank.com](http://sportsthinktank.com)*



# TIM HOLLINGSWORTH

Following the departure of Jennie Price, Tim Hollingsworth, former CEO of the British Paralympic Association, was recently appointed as the new CEO of Sport England.

He talks to Tom Walker about preparing for the role and his plans for the body

Shortly before the identity of Sport England's new chief executive was revealed in August 2018, *Sports Management* asked a number of sport and physical activity sector leaders for their advice for the incoming CEO. The resulting article, published in the Q3 issue of the magazine, was picked up by Tim Hollingsworth – the person who the commentators were, indirectly, addressing.

"I pinned that article on the wall in my office at the British Paralympic Association," says Hollingsworth, who by then knew that he would take up the CEO role in November 2018.

"The advice from the people in that piece was really helpful. It indicated that there's a general feeling that it's really important for the sport and physical activity sector to come together – and that Sport England has a crucial role to play in that.

"The advice called for better advocacy for what sport can do, strong leadership to galvanise the message of what physical activity can do towards creating a healthy

nation and the need for effective partnerships. It is easy to agree with all of those points."

## Building on experience

Hollingsworth was appointed to the top job at Sport England after nearly eight years as CEO of the British Paralympic Association (BPA). He led the organisation into four Paralympic Games – including ParalympicGB's best-ever Summer and Winter Games performances at Rio 2016 and PyeongChang 2018 – and was at the forefront of efforts to increase the profile and interest of the Paralympic movement. Prior to his time at BPA, Hollingsworth spent more than six years at high performance agency UK Sport – the last of which as chief operating officer.

How useful, then, will his 14-year experience of high performance sport be in his new, grassroots-oriented role? "I think it will be useful when it comes to having an understanding of the clarity of outcomes," he says.

"At BPA and UK Sport the medal targets helped sharpen our focus. The clearly defined targets gave us the ability



Under Hollingsworth, ParalympicsGB had its most successful Summer Games at Rio 2016

“ It’s about the wider outcomes that physical activity can bring



Hollingsworth was CEO of the British Paralympic Association

to create a narrative around why we were doing what we were doing. So that is definitely something that I have at the front and centre of my thinking.

“But I also think that to get to the level we did at both UK Sport and BPA we moved beyond the medals and understood what it took to win – rather than just count how many medals we might win at a Games.

“Similarly, here at Sport England, it will be important to understand that it’s not just about getting a certain number of people more active, but about what the wider outcomes and benefits that getting people physically active can bring. And I think my experience will help with that.

“Another thing that working in elite sport has taught me is that if you are to achieve a target, you not only need to be clear about what that target is, but you also need a ‘licence to operate’.

“By that I mean the ability to put things together to achieve those targets. The ‘licence’ is about building your organisation’s credibility, strength of purpose and ability to partner to leverage and to maximise resource.” ▶



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Hollingsworth enters at the midpoint of *Towards an Active Nation*

#### ► From “what” to “how”

Hollingsworth takes the helm at a time when the agency's five-year strategy, *Towards an Active Nation*, is at its midpoint. The document, published in May 2016, outlines the organisation's direction of travel from 2016 to 2021.

*Towards an Active Nation* was launched in response to the government's Sporting Future strategy and signalled a major change in focus for the funding body, leading it to direct more of its money and resources to tackling inactivity – rather than simply growing the numbers of people playing organised sport.

There was also a significant change in number of young people it needs to consider in its grant-giving. Sport England now dedicates funding to children from the age of five. Previously, it focused on helping youngsters from the age of 14 and up.

“There's an enthusiasm now in Sport England to get on with the job

Coming in to Sport England at the middle of this major strategic shift, Hollingsworth says he sees an organisation in transition. “Sport England has been through quite a lot of change in the last few years – and that can be unsettling,” he says.

“It feels to me like there's a general enthusiasm now to get on with the job, having worked out what the job is and how best we can deliver it.

“Over the last 24 months alone, we have invested more than £550m in over 3,000 projects and nearly 2,000 different organisations. Our focus on inactivity has seen us challenge the NGBs to improve the experience for the customer and help grow the number of people being active, and we have new partnerships with The Richmond Group of Charities, parkrun and the Daily Mile, to name a few.”

As a result of the ongoing changes, Hollingsworth sees one of his first tasks as CEO to offer direction towards the next stage of the transition.

“There has been a lot of work on ‘what,’” he explains. “Such as what the new purpose is, what the new targets are and what the responsibilities are.

“So one of my jobs is to start thinking about the ‘how’. How are we looking to deliver to the strategy? How should we behave and engage in a way that will maximise our opportunities? How are we delivering to people who are either looking for new ways to become active or improving their current levels of activity?”

Twelve local delivery pilots aim to understand the power of community





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## Learning on the job

Hollingsworth says the work on the 'how' has already started. "We are now doing quite a lot of what in the corporate world would be called 'test and learn,'" he explains.

"These include our local delivery pilots and the work we are doing around our data and our campaigning. So we're doing things that are relatively new to the system. We need to learn from them, see whether they work and then decide whether they are the right things to be doing."

He highlights the delivery pilots as an example of the 'test and learn' process. Recognising that communities have their own unique structures, relationships and geography, the pilots look to understand how local identities can be used to deliver sustainable increases in activity levels.

One example of the 12 targeted pilots is the Everyone Active, Every Day project in the London Borough of Hackney. The area – which has a large Black African/Caribbean population – is characterised by high levels of deprivation, low levels of education and high unemployment. Insight

Hollingsworth says Sport England is doing new things, learning from these and feeding this learning back into the organisation

gathered during the early stages of the pilot has enabled the Sport England-funded programme to segment the audience according to specific needs and design interventions with partners to address them.

The creation of such targeted programmes marks a significant change in the way Sport England goes about its business – but for Hollingsworth it is the way forward. Even if some of the pilots might prove less successful than others.

"We spend a lot of time, quite rightly, on insight and evidencing what we do," he says. "But a part of that must also be to have the boldness to get insight into something that doesn't work – as well as looking to replicate something that does. As a public body, that is quite a challenge. But we need to be unafraid of that challenge."

## Partnering up

Another area in which Hollingsworth hopes to use his high performance sport experience is the way elite agencies have utilised partnerships – both inside and outside the ▶



Giving people a sense of purpose when it comes to physical activity is important, says Hollingsworth

▶ sports sector. He was part of the UK Sport team which negotiated a technology partnership with BAE Systems – a collaboration which has yielded some impressive results for both Team GB and Paralympics GB. At BPA, Hollingsworth oversaw partnerships with the likes of Sainsbury's, BP, Cadbury, Adidas and Allianz.

"At the BPA, commercial partnerships are critical as a vast majority of the income comes from the private sector," he says. "That definitely taught me the importance of partnerships for achieving success.

"So I'm ambitious to get commercial partners involved with Sport England too. Obviously, as a lottery distributor and in receipt of public money, we aren't necessarily gearing up to seek large amounts of commercial sponsorship. Not least because there is a danger that it could then cannibalise that which is available to our governing bodies. But I'm convinced we can do huge amounts with effective commercial partners here too."

Hollingsworth mentions two areas in which partnerships could help the grassroots agency's work. "Firstly, they can help amplify our messages – especially when it comes to our campaigns," he says. "This Girl Can being the most obvious one.

"Amplifying our campaign messages in a retail context, through media channels or through a corporation's customer base could be huge for us – and it's something we need to do more of and be better at.

"Secondly, I believe we could learn a lot from some companies when it comes to their practices, business processes and the way that they engage with their audiences."

“ Ultimately, what we are trying to do is solve complex human problems

### The three Ps

By coincidence, Hollingsworth is speaking to *Sports Management* having just completed the first 100 days of his tenure. Has he now got the "feel" of the organisation and its people – and has he already identified any areas that he feels he wants to focus on as CEO?

"I have pretty quickly understood where I need to put my energy, in terms of what we are doing as an

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Training centres play an important part in inspiring people

Partnerships can help Sport England to amplify its campaign messages

# #FITGOTREAL

THIS  
GIRL  
CAN

SPORT  
ENGLAND  
LOTTERY FUNDED

organisation," he says. "I categorise them as the three Ps: a sense of purpose, a sense of people and a sense of place.

"What we're trying to do – in very thoughtful and progressive ways – is to inspire people and to make them understand why sport and physical activity could be beneficial to them. To give them a sense of purpose.

"We then need to have people – whether that's the coaches, volunteers or a professional workforce – who can help make the experience fun and enjoyable, so that those who have been inspired to become physically active want to repeat the experience and not feel like sport is not for them.

"And then there is the sense of place – the venues, the training centres, local clubs and other facilities – where it all happens. That is perhaps the most important out of the three, as it can truly deliver that wider benefit of giving people a feeling of belonging, a feeling of being part of something. It's all about making 'the place' meaningful for those who have been inspired to come along and be active.

"Because ultimately, what we are trying to do – the behavior changes, to get people more active – is solve complex human problems.

"We are trying to help people with their lives – their health, their wellbeing, their sense of inclusion and identity. And you can only do so much to solve that with mechanistic and transactional solutions. Ultimately, it's about human solutions to human problems." ●

## TIM HOLLINGSWORTH: A CAREER IN SPORT

Armed with a background in corporate communications at media companies such as Granada TV, Hollingsworth joined UK Sport as director of policy and communications in 2005, three months before London won the bid to host the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

In 2010, he became the high performance agency's chief operating officer, before being appointed chief executive of the British Paralympic Association in 2011.



At BPA, he led the organisation into four Paralympic Games, including a best-ever Winter Games performance at PyeongChang 2018 – where ParalympicsGB won seven medals, including one gold. That followed an impressive 147-medal haul at Rio 2016 at which ParalympicsGB finished second on the medal table – its greatest Summer Games performance in the modern era and up from third and 120 medals at London 2012. His success leading the team resulted in him being awarded an OBE in 2017. He was named CEO of Sport England in August 2018 and took up the role in November 2018, replacing Jennie Price who had been at the helm for 11 years.



# ACTIVATING THE NHS

The NHS's new long-term plan offers worryingly little detail on how the government plans to use physical activity to prevent serious health issues. Why is the government not utilising physical activity? And what can we do to change this? Steph Eaves asks the experts

**DUNCAN WOOD-ALLUM** Managing director, SLC

**T**he NHS is currently structured and funded primarily around treatment, rather than prevention.

With a government that cannot spare any quality thinking time on anything other than Brexit, I wasn't entirely surprised to see the lack of foresight in this new long-term plan for the NHS.

Silo-based thinking has been the hallmark of central government for most administrations in recent memory. Prevention and whole-systems-thinking are still in their infancy in the eyes of many in government who want to see results in 18 months, not wait for 18 years. Why? Lack of leadership, exacerbated by a lack of resources and increased demand on primary and secondary care.

So, what can we do to change this? We can continue to lobby, provide great case studies of good practice and work with partners to influence key stakeholders. However, I strongly believe that we shouldn't wait for government to tell us to do the right thing. Just do the right thing, consistently and relentlessly, and communicate the benefits through evidence.

What does this look like? My thoughts are this: public sport and leisure provision is an intervention, not a replacement of the private sector, so let's intervene more where the market fears to tread. Let's help inactive and less active people stay active and well.

This can be funded in the short term through the sector being more effective and efficient at



**To many key decision makers, the sports industry is inconsistent in its messaging and commitment to health**



Just do the right thing, says Duncan Wood-Allum

asset management, outreach and interventions. There are numerous examples of recent partnerships secured between leisure operators and their local authority partners, which are prepared to invest in sustainable services. Longer term, this funding should also come from other partners who see our sector as a key contributor to wider strategic outcomes.

However, to many key decision makers in government, the NHS and Public Health, we are inconsistent in our messaging, behaviors and commitment to health and wellbeing. One example of this is leisure operators who insist on selling unhealthy junk food and drink. We should be part of the solution, not the problem.



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ukactive has submitted a proposal to the government for a Workout from Work scheme, which expands Cycle to Work

## STEVEN WARD

Outgoing CEO, ukactive

**W**e welcome the focus on prevention, mental health and technology in the NHS Long Term Plan, and its recognition that a lack of exercise is a leading cause of premature death.

Despite the plan's references to exercise, there has been disappointment at the lack of detail on precisely how physical activity – including sport – will play a part in this vision. Clearly, the plan is designed to re-model NHS frontline services within the community, rather than address public health in its entirety. However, this re-modelling does promise a healthcare pathway directly to our door.

The NHS Comprehensive Model of Personalised Care reflects ukactive's call to use social prescribing to improve prevention and rehabilitation, with 2.5 million more people set



**Our role now is to help the government to realise the full potential of our services, and at the same time educate our sector to understand how social prescribing can be fully inclusive to the wider physical activity sector**



More investment in our sector is needed, says Ward

to benefit within five years.

The physical activity sector stands ready and armed with the capacity and motivation to ensure success in this area.

We recognise how our sector can both impact and benefit from social prescribing. Our role now is to help the government

to realise the full potential of our services, and at the same time educate our sector so there is a clear understanding of how social prescribing can be fully inclusive to the wider physical activity sector.

While we recognise the opportunity within social prescribing, we do remain concerned that £1bn has been taken out of public health spending since 2015, with further cuts of more than 4 per cent in real terms planned for the year ahead.

Government must match ideas with action, and that means investment. Physical inactivity causes more than 37,000 premature deaths each year, so we need to support our most vulnerable populations to be more active: disadvantaged communities, children and elderly people. Nobody

is better placed to provide this support than our sector.

The government is in possession of three proposals with the potential to transform our nation's health: a £1bn capital investment programme for Wellness Hubs; a Workout from Work scheme, which expands Cycle to Work to include gym passes and fitness equipment; and a plan to reimagine schools as community hubs, using empty facilities as places to support family health, education and care.

ukactive is ready to work with the government to realise our sector's role in delivering against this plan and elevating the importance of a holistic approach to health. These conversations are ongoing and we must continue to demonstrate how we can provide a truly preventative solution.



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More evidence is needed to convince policy makers of the benefits of sport and physical activity

## ANDY REED

Director, Sports Think Tank

The NHS's new long-term plan has worryingly little detail on the government's plans to use sport and physical activity to prevent obesity and other health issues related to inactivity. In fact, it was conspicuous by its absence.

We have made progress as a sector – the NHS's own guidance on its website has great advice on the benefits of exercise – it's just a pity this recognition didn't make the pages of the 10 Year Plan.

We obviously need to redouble our efforts to convince policy makers of the value and contribution of physical activity to reducing the burden on the NHS

and helping us all to live longer, healthier lives. We have to admit that, despite all the progress at moving this subject up the agenda and gaining more profile in the media, it still isn't central in policy makers' eyes. We have failed and we need to learn the lessons and come back stronger in our advocacy and evidence.

Having taken time to listen to policy makers and why we are not making the impact we like, it comes down to four areas: i) Our evidence base is better but still not consistently good enough for the impacts we claim; ii) Our offer is fragmented and confusing to those outside the sector; iii) We

“ Stopping people doing things like smoking, gambling and eating unhealthy foods is a simple proposition. Our offer is a tougher behavioural change

are still not clearly differentiated from the obesity issue; and iv) We have convinced some policy makers but our reach isn't wide enough to win the battles inside the machinery of government.

A general point also is relevant for us all. Stopping people doing things like smoking, gambling and eating unhealthy foods is a simple proposition. Our offer is a tougher behavioural change.



We have failed and need to learn from this, says Reed



The role of physical activity interventions must be recognised if we are to create a healthier nation, says Boggis

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

## EMMA BOGGIS

Outgoing CEO,  
Sport and  
Recreation Alliance



There were plenty of positive signs in the report but we now need to see positive action

It is positive to see that prevention has been given such a focus in the NHS long term plan, but we are disappointed that there is no mention of physical activity and its role as a preventative measure.

We have previously highlighted our frustration that physical activity remained largely ignored in Chapter Two of the government's Childhood Obesity Plan last year. We strongly feel that the role of activity interventions must be recognised if we are to truly create a healthier nation.

For example, the plan states that cardiovascular disease has been identified as the single biggest area where the NHS can save lives over the next 10 years because it is 'largely preventable'. But, despite the evidence, there remains no explicit mention of the role physical activity can play in reducing the risk of cardiovascular disease, yet alcohol misuse, smoking addiction and food reformulation are included instead.

The Alliance is committed to working with government to drive greater collaborative working and helping to relieve the strain on the healthcare system, but until there is acknowledgement of the

importance of physical activity, we believe that only part of the problem is being solved.

The development of the long-term plan through detailed consultation with the public and varied stakeholders is also a welcome change, as is the creation of an NHS Assembly.

There were plenty of positive signs in the report but we now need to see positive action. We need improved, collaborative working across government departments with our politicians recognising the impact that inactivity is having on society. Funding improvements focusing on preventative measures will result in less pressures on the health care system in the future.

To give a specific example, we welcome the investment made

by Sport England in the Moving Medicine programme to help upskill healthcare professionals to talk to patients about the benefits of physical activity – but would question whether this would better be fully funded by the Department of Health and Social Care.

In light of this, we were pleased to see the Sports Minister say in her speech on 12 February that she will be working with her colleagues to ensure that future spending decisions take into account the huge benefits that sport and physical activity bring.

However, this is an incredibly urgent and expensive issue, it should be tackled by the government with the highest priority and given the same importance as any other issue. ●



Physical activity was also ignored in the Childhood Obesity Plan

PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

# COMMUNITY MATTERS

Sporta, the membership association representing charitable leisure trusts in the UK, has rebranded as Community Leisure UK. CEO Cate Atwater spoke to Tom Walker about the reasons behind the new name and identity

## What were the motivations for rebranding Sporta as Community Leisure UK?

The main motivations were to reduce confusion, as people often mistake us for a mainly sport focused body, and to better reflect our members. The rebrand will act as a building block for our change of position and approach as an organisation.

Sporta has been on a journey of change throughout 2018. The focus of the change has been to really crystallise our position and our services to members. Within this we have adjusted our purpose and how we engage with organisations, form strategic partnerships and ultimately deliver greater impact for our members.

## What were the driving forces for the rebrand?

As a members' association we are always driven by member need. Our executive (made up of members) and membership had been discussing a need to change the name for about two years. However, for me, the name had to change sooner rather than later, so we drove energy and resources into the change.

The change had to be evidence-based, so we invested into external, independent research and marketing support. Working with Phil Anderton of Fireworks Consultancy and Netfluential, they carried out in-depth research through members' customers and non-customers, and our stakeholders.

The research provided unequivocal conclusions and recommendations, which formed the proposal back to the executive and membership of Community Leisure UK.

## You said one reason for the name change was a need to tackle "false perceptions" of being a solely sport-focused body?

Yes, we wanted the identity to better reflect our members. More than 30 per cent of our members manage cultural services and facilities. Our members work in public leisure, focus on communities and – as independent charities or social enterprises – every penny of surplus is reinvested into the communities.



Community Leisure UK has members across the leisure industry

**Our new name clarifies what we care about and stand for. It is representative of our membership, which is vitally important**

Therefore, to ensure that we deliver the greatest impact for members, as an organisation we needed to be able to develop strategic alliances with a number of key stakeholders. As Sporta's first five letters spelt sport, it often meant we were ring-fenced as sport-focused and not as key deliverers of public services across leisure and culture.

## What would you identify as the biggest advantages of the new name?

Clarity of what we care about and stand for. It is representative of our membership, which is vitally important. And initial responses from key stakeholders have been positive about the change, noting that it makes clear our purpose.

Atwater says the name  
'Sporta' misrepresented  
the organisation's scope





Community Leisure UK's focus is on driving greater impact for its member leisure and culture trusts

## Our core purpose will remain to drive impact for members through enabling peer support within the membership and engagement with key stakeholders

### WHAT'S IN A BRAND?

The new brand has been designed to help people to visualise what Community Leisure UK stands for. The two 'M's in changing shades of blue signify coming and joining together. The word 'unity' is then more apparent, and as a members' association unity is important. The UK is highlighted



to demonstrate that we are a truly UK-wide association, and finally the circular arrow depicts togetherness, inclusion and welcoming, etc. These were all terms from Netfluential's research and conclusions.

### ► Could you give a bit of insight into what the future has in store for Community Leisure UK?

Our core purpose will remain to drive impact for members through enabling peer support within the membership and engagement with key stakeholders.

We have six key objectives that will lead our work throughout 2019, while we finalise a three-year strategy and financial plan for the organisation.

The big ticket items for us include engaging in the public health reform in Scotland – this is a significant opportunity for members to engage in the new public health landscape.

Then there's developing and expanding our partnership with Charity Finance Group, which provides expert financial insight for members.

Leisure procurement practice and championing a commissioning approach remains critical too, until a level playing field is formed.

We are also focusing on driving energy and time into partners across the UK who care about public services. This includes a collective group of organisations which



People are at the heart of  
Community Leisure UK's work

focus on public services. It's an exciting group involving CLOA, APSE, LGA and the CSPN.

There will also be a continued focus on direct support to trusts on contracts, arrangements, articulating social impact, building resilience and identifying future models of working.

#### What about strategic objectives?

Our focus is on driving greater impact for member leisure and culture trusts. I do believe that our core objectives and areas of work can support a wider group of non-profit-distributing organisations, and we are scoping potential engagement with such organisations, e.g. independent libraries or theatres.

#### Do you have a target for members you'd like to have?

We do not have any growth targets – we don't want to be member chasing, but rather, scope where we can genuinely offer bespoke support to organisations within our areas of knowledge and resources. I believe if we really develop those areas and marry that with communications and increased awareness, then potential members would decide to join us. ▶

## CATE ATWATER'S CAREER JOURNEY

I've been fortunate in having a varied career. I first discovered the positive effect sport can have on people while volunteering with the RFU regional office in Hull. I then spent seven years at East Riding of Yorkshire Council – in various community development roles – and three years as a regional development manager for Age UK.

I first joined Sporta in 2013, tasked with setting up and managing a grant funding programme with Sport England called 'Make Your Move', which supported and developed the

capabilities of the member trusts to recruit and retain inactive people. I was then named Sporta's lead for programmes and operations.

Looking back, all of those different roles have been the perfect building blocks to my current role as CEO.





Atwater worries that public leisure services will be reduced, cut or pushed to breaking point

▶ **You recently expressed concerns on pressures put on the delivery of public leisure services. How bad is it out there?**

In my view, it is bad – it worries me greatly. However, I think there are two considerations.

The first is that public services right across the board are under significant strain to achieve the same or even more, with less financial investment. The challenges are significant, while the need for services is increasing right across the life course. Every public service is under pressure, and in leisure we're in a race to the bottom driven by procurement practice.

The second consideration is that public services, including leisure trusts, are always solution-focused in my experience. How can we continue to deliver our best for communities? How can we navigate through this together?

For me, this is because trusts and in-house delivery models focus on the communities, neighbourhoods and people, and finding solutions is their natural 'default' position. But there is a point which, if practice doesn't change, I don't think is far off, where public leisure services will be reduced, cut or pressed too far to breaking point.

This is why we so strongly believe in supporting local authorities to make longer-term, insight driven and outcomes-based decisions. Focusing on partnership,

**The challenges are significant. Every public service is under pressure, and in leisure we're in a race to the bottom driven by procurement practice**

collaboration and building trust and co-ownership, etc. We believe that if we can all support local authorities to make those kinds of decisions that include cost effectiveness – then the required outcomes for communities will be achieved.

**If you could introduce one policy that would make the biggest positive difference to the public leisure sector, what would that be?**

We need central leisure policy 'ownership' and long-term strategising for the services to develop and to support them in the future. Therefore my one government policy would be for public leisure services to be a statutory service.

This would not be the solution to everything, but with the current threats to public leisure services, the marketplace and its future existence, it would mean we have central government oversight, care and ownership, and would drive a need for collaboration. ●



The high costs associated with maintaining facilities is a weakness of the sector, says Atwater

## WHERE ARE WE NOW?

### CATE ATWATER GIVES THE PUBLIC LEISURE SECTOR A SWOT ANALYSIS

#### STRENGTHS:

- passionate people who care
- solution-focused mindsets
- ability to integrate services across leisure, culture and health
- strength and voice of industry organisations – such as CLOA, Community Leisure UK, ukactive, LGA and APSE – which all care about the health and wellbeing of communities

#### WEAKNESSES:

- costs of maintenance of the assets and facilities
- recruiting and retaining staff – such as swimming teachers and lifeguards
- limited resources to invest in capital expenditure

#### OPPORTUNITIES:

- strengthening of social value within contracts for leisure services and moving to outcomes-based commissioning
- to build greater transparency of operator models within public leisure

- amount of innovation in the sector – from architects to data programming and drowning detection
- commissioning of leisure services for the health and wellbeing of people
- strengthening of cross-strategy recognition of the impact of leisure within local authorities

#### THREATS:

- uncertainty caused by EU exit – including increasing pressures leading to increased short-term decision making
- aging facility stock
- a loss of strategic and policy-focused leisure expertise within local authorities
- rising costs, including energy and utilities bills
- decisions being made on outputs and cheapest price – rather than outcomes and community needs
- some messaging to local authorities that all leisure contracts should make profits for the local authority



# GET OVER IT

**Mud, mates and mayhem are the main ingredients in obstacle course racing. Kath Hudson finds out more about where this new sport is headed**

It's an unseasonably cold, wet and windy autumn day and I'm standing in the corner of a cliff edge field in Poldark country, waiting for my children to come into view. My last glimpse was them shooting down a makeshift tarpaulin slide into a chest-deep river and running off into the woods on the other side.

Just as I'm getting anxious that they might have fallen off the cliff, I see them climbing over a gate at the opposite end of the field. Their team of six are soaked and muddy, but wearing huge smiles as they run across the field towards the next obstacle, which involves scrambling under wire netting – through mud, naturally. A few minutes later they're collecting their Tuff Enuff t-shirts and medals and asking to do it all again.

Obstacle course racing (OCR) has grown out of long distance endurance racing. Only the mighty could ever hope to even start an endurance race, let alone complete one, whereas the proliferation of events that have sprung up over the last 10

years has made OCR something to which everyone can aspire. Races are designed to test participants mentally as well as physically, and require them to work as a team. Crawling, climbing, sliding, dropping, swinging and jumping – all those things you loved doing as kid – are all part of the fun.

## FAMILY FUN

The two big players in the market are Spartan and Tough Mudder: they both started around 10 years ago, have gnarly reputations and have become global brands with millions of participants. Tough Mudder famously brings fire and electric shocks into its challenges, plus other aspects that play on human fears, such as heights and water. It offers a wide range of races from the entry level 5km up to a 12 hour overnight challenge, but the eight to 10 mile lap, with 25 obstacles, is its classic race.

At the other end of the spectrum is Somerset-based Rocket Race, which aims to be fun and non-intimidating. Rather than



Mud is an essential ingredient of obstacle course racing events

bracing themselves for electric shocks, participants can expect to do a limbo competition or a Zumba class mid-race.

"We're all about getting people off the sofa to come and do something cool in a friendly, non-intimidating environment," says Rocket Race director, David Baird, who is an enthusiast turned organiser.

"Lots of OCRs tick boxes for people's egos, but that's not us. I like to bring in elements that make people laugh. We also love people to come as a family. It's really important for parents to inspire kids to put down their Playstations, but also for kids to inspire their parents to be active."



Tough Mudder challenges its participants with fire and electric shocks

## MUD IS GOOD

Fun and family is also a priority for Nuclear Races, a permanent, ever-evolving facility based on an Essex farm, which runs year round training, corporate days, charity events and outdoor parties.

"Obstacle course racing is exercise without realising it, because it's fun! Who doesn't love a zipline over water or a waterslide with airtime?" says race director James Parrish. "It's an opportunity to challenge your comfort zone, exercise, get social and get outside. Mud is good!"

Participation is growing year on year: the first race, eight years ago, had 180 entries, while 2018's Nuclear Rush had 12,000. Parrish says the youngest competitors are four, up to regulars in their late 60s.

"It's the perfect sport. Every race can be run, walked or crawled!" he says. "It gets every muscle in your body moving and you realise what can be achieved. Courses and obstacles are achievable, and there is the option of bypass routes."

The organiser of Total Warrior, Yorkshire's largest mass participation event, says one of the best things about OCR is that it makes running a team sport, which people can do with their mates: "It's doing ▶

“ OCR lets you exercise without realising it, because it's fun! Who doesn't love a zipline or waterslide?



Obstacle course racing gives people a more extreme challenge



The social atmosphere of obstacle course racing events keeps many people coming back



► something different at the weekend, giving you an experience you wouldn't normally be able to have. With a road race you can just run the course anyway, but you can't do that with OCR. The mud, the monkey bars, the big walls bring out the inner child in people. Ultimately it's great fun."

Total Warrior focuses on running a mass event over the June solstice weekend, with schools and scout groups coming on the Thursday and Friday and a huge mass event on Friday night. A new 6km distance is being added, along with a 12km, a 3km juniors course and the ultra, which involves five hours of running. Participation is growing year on year and 2019's event is gearing up to be the biggest yet, with 14,000 warriors and 7,000 spectators expected over the weekend.

**GOING PROFESSIONAL**

Although race organisers say they are growing year on year, other companies, including the Cornwall-based Holy Grit have ceased trading. With entry fees north of £40, race organisers have to keep reinventing, adding something new and upping the fun factor to bring people back. Although participants earn prizes like medals, t-shirts, headbands and sometimes beer, in addition to the bragging rights, it's not a cheap pastime.

Recognising that it's expensive for those athletes at the top, Spartan founder Joe de Sena has started offering prize money, with the long-term view of professionalising

“ Spartan founder Joe de Sena has started offering prize money, with the goal of professionalising the sport



Unlike standard running events, OCR events rely on teamwork to complete



Obstacles like monkey bars give participants the same feelings they would have had when playing as a child

the sport. Last year Jonathan Albon, widely regarded as the world's number one obstacle course athlete, made around £45,000 in prize money, as well as £15,000 from sponsors.

At the start of 2018, De Sena also vowed to give US\$1m to any athlete who won all three races in the Spartan Ultra Trifecta Series. Having won the first two races in the series, Albon had the cash in his sights when he started the gruelling 24-hour, 100-mile Ultra World Championship, but unfortunately he fell short in the final event.

## OLYMPIC OBSTACLES?

In 2018 more than one million people took part in 275 Spartan events, in 41 countries, and with expansion increasing every year, De Sena now has designs on the Olympics. "We tick all their boxes, we have a massive audience globally, with more participants than a number of the Olympic sports," he says. "Now we're working on convincing the national governing bodies of sport in 42 countries to back us. They are overwhelmingly positive, but it takes time because there are only so many medals that can be handed out at the Olympics."

## “ We tick all the Olympic boxes, now we're working on convincing the sports bodies of 42 countries to back us

Spartan is running five events in the UK and one in Ireland in 2019. "We're penetrating more countries and going deeper into existing countries – China is going to be huge – and we're getting more television coverage," says De Sena. "It's like having a tiger by the tail. OCR is sexy and exciting, people get hooked and once they've signed up to a race then they are inspired to train. It's so hard to commit to a regime unless you have something like this on the calendar."

Going forward, Murray predicts OCR will continue to grow, but will split into three strands. Firstly, the local mud runs with a few obstacles, which are a fun introduction to the sport. Secondly, a handful of huge, festival-style events, where people make a weekend of it, drawn by challenging obstacles and the social atmosphere. Thirdly, there will be the higher-end competitive events for the serious runners. ●

## THE TOUGHEST WORKOUT

Last year Tough Mudder diversified with the launch of the Tough Mudder Bootcamp, a functional studio-based HIIT workout, incorporating teamwork. Director of franchise sales Dan Henry says it's a way of engaging more people, creating a different lifestyle and disrupting the fitness industry.

The first site opened in Massachusetts last June and franchisees are being sought outside of the main urban centres, as 69 per cent of Tough Mudder's 3.2m participants live outside of the top 10 US cities.

# BRITAIN'S FINEST

A long list of heroes who have served their sport, either by representing it on the world stage or working to widen opportunities, were honoured in the 2019 New Year Honours List. Kath Hudson asks award winners what it means to them and how it might impact their sport



Geva Mentor (R) competes for possession during a match against New Zealand

## Geva Mentor, CBE

**NETBALL: ENGLAND PLAYER**

It's great to see netball recognised on the wider stage, not just among other sports, but among other professionals and people who have given great service to this country. For a netballer to receive such a high honour is unusual, so hopefully it will pave the way for people to take our sport more seriously and see all the added benefits that come with it.

Lifting the profile, so more people will want to watch, invest and play the sport is the current priority for netball. This will help strengthen the Superleague, England's elite domestic competition, which in turn supports the future of us and our Roses programme. This award comes at a time when keeping active and being social is important and a team sport like netball is great for that.





Jacobs hopes his MBE will encourage more funding for fencing

## Peter Jacobs, MBE

**FENCING: OLYMPIAN AND ADMINISTRATOR**

I think it's fair to say that the biggest challenge for fencing in Britain is the ever-shrinking funding environment, meaning the sport will increasingly rely on an army of volunteers to help create opportunities for participation. At the elite end, the challenge is the absence of stable long term investment in a sport which takes

VERY many years to develop a potential medallist, and in an environment where more and more countries are doing just that.

At the international federation level I would cite two major challenges: the need to generate more TV/internet/social media visibility, and the task of continuing the globalisation of the sport.



## Kate Caithness, CBE

**WORLD CURLING FEDERATION: PRESIDENT**

It's an exciting time for our sport, as we look towards the Tokyo Olympics. Challenges in the sport include working with our member associations to make sure they have access to, or are working towards, high quality curling ice. We are also making changes at elite level which will offer more opportunities to our member associations to qualify for the Olympic and

Paralympic Winter Games and improve the standard of competition at all levels.

We have signed a new five-year partnership with the World Academy of Sport, which is helping us to develop our educational resources for umpires, athletes and officials and to overhaul our camps and courses programme to increase its global reach.



The World Curling Federation is working to improve the standard of competition



© JOHN STUWELL/PA WIREIMAGE.COM

Rosenior hopes to eradicate racism from both sport and society

## Leroy Rosenior, MBE

**SHOW RACISM THE RED CARD: VICE PRESIDENT**

My priority is to make tackling racism, and all other forms of discrimination, a top priority for everyone involved in football. I hope that for many years to come football will assist organisations such as Show Racism the Red Card to tackle racism in both sport and society.

This award helps to raise the profile of my work and hopefully more people will support our organisation and the work it carries out in schools and educational settings. I am extremely proud to be receiving the award but it doesn't mean the hard work can stop, we still have a lot of work to do to eradicate racism from both football and society.

## Frances Houghton, MBE

**ROWING: OLYMPIC SILVER MEDALIST**

Being awarded an MBE is hugely rewarding recognition for the 21 years I spent on the British Rowing team. I hope it portrays the values I drew on every one of those days – of working hard, with no guarantee it would all work out and having the belief in doing something that wasn't normal. For me, the relationships I formed with the people I had the huge fortune to call my teammates was the greatest reward of the sport.



Houghton says her greatest reward is the relationships she formed with her teammates



Parlour and Bostock are committed to creating a real change in women's sport

## Jo Bostock, MBE and Tammy Parlour, MBE

**WOMEN'S SPORTS TRUST: CO-FOUNDERS AND JOINT CHIEF EXECUTIVES**

We are excited about the progress that has been made in women's sport, but there's still so much to be done. Our focus now is on mainstreaming women's sport so that it is seamlessly woven into media schedules, accessible throughout the year and an integral part of brands' investment portfolios.

Athletes are also telling us that they need help building their personal brands and understanding how they can commercialise

themselves, and we feel this is an area where we can really help. We believe that if we can empower athletes from the grassroots we can accelerate change.

We genuinely believe women's sport has the power to stimulate social change and gender equality, but to do this we need to influence the influencers. Hopefully this award will get us in the room with the people who can help us, as well as inspire athletes to be activists too.



Reed aims to challenge perceptions

## Charles Reed, MBE

**ACTIVITY ALLIANCE:  
OUTGOING CHAIR**

Disabled people are twice as likely as non-disabled people to be physically inactive and Activity Alliance brings our members, partners and disabled people together to make active lives possible. Collectively we continue to challenge perceptions and change the reality of disability, inclusion and sport.

This award reflects the huge significance of Activity Alliance's work in supporting disabled people to be active for life. I hope it helps more organisations and leaders to ensure disabled people are considered as part of every strategy and delivery programme.



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The Daily Mile prevents obesity and increases fitness

## Elaine Wylie, MBE

**THE DAILY MILE: FOUNDER**

I'm delighted to receive the honour of MBE and believe this will help to raise the profile of The Daily Mile even further. It's an important initiative because it's sustainable, transferable to all settings and is scalable to a national cohort of children.

Children enjoy it, which is the route to success. It also means that children are fit enough to access the wonderful range of sporting and physical education opportunities available in this country. Research from the Universities of Stirling and Edinburgh shows that The Daily Mile impacts obesity and that children who have been doing it for seven months lose up to 4 per cent of the excess fat in their skin folds.



## NEW YEAR HONOURS LIST



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**Knighthood**

**ALASTAIR COOK**

Former England cricket captain, for services to cricket



© ANTHONY D'ERILUNA/WWW.PHOTOIMAGES

**Knighthood**

**BILL BEAUMONT**

Former England rugby union captain, for services to rugby union



© ANDREW GUNN/WWW.PHOTOIMAGES

**Order of the British Empire, Dame (DBE)**

**LOUISE MARTIN**

Commonwealth Games Federation president, for services to sport

# NEW YEARS HONOURS LIST CONT.

## Commanders of the Order of the British Empire (CBE)

**Kate Caithness:** World Curling Federation president, for services to sport

**Willie John McBride:** former Ireland and Lions captain, for services to rugby union

**Richard Scudamore:** Premier League executive chair, for services to football

## Diplomatic Service and Overseas List, Order of the British Empire Commander (CBE)

**Geva Mentor:** England netball player and Gold Coast Commonwealth Games gold medalist, for services to netball

## Order of the British Empire (OBE)

**Maureen Campbell:** former chair of Scottish Swimming, for services to swimming

**Harry Gregg:** former Manchester United goalkeeper and Northern Ireland manager, for services to football

**Richard Johnson:** jump jockey, for services to horse racing

**Professor Mary Nevill:** head of sports science, school of science and technology at Nottingham Trent University, for services to sport and sports science

**Garth Southgate:** England manager, for services to football

**Gerain Thomas:** 2018 Tour de France winner, for services to cycling

**Doddie Weir:** founder of My Name's 5 Daddie Foundation, for services to rugby, motor neurone disease research and to the community in the Scottish Borders



Willie John McBride was awarded a CBE for services to rugby union

© VICTORIA JONES/PA WIREIMAGE.COM

## Order of the British Empire (MBE)

**Endi Bakewell:** former England all rounder, for services to cricket

**Roger Blades:** for services to athletics and school sport

**Lorna Booth:** former British Athletics team manager, for services to sports coaching and administration

**Joanna Bostock:** Women's Sports Trust, for services to gender equality in sport

**Karen Brown:** former England and Great Britain defender and former England and Great Britain assistant coach for services to hockey

**Hew Chalmers:** British Curling director and British Olympic Association board member for services to Olympic sport

**Derek Crawford:** for services to rugby union

**David Dein:** former Arsenal and Football Association vice-chair for services to football and to voluntary work in schools and prisons

**Thomas Downes:** former Scottish Volleyball Association director of coaching and former Scotland senior men's national volleyball team head coach, for services to volleyball

**Paula Dunn:** UK Athletics Paralympic head coach, for services to athletics

**Ray Goodwin:** for services to canoeing

**Keith Hardy:** for services to football and the community in Staffordshire

**Richard Hill:** disability cricket support officer with England and Wales Cricket Board for services to disability cricket

**Frances Houghton:** British Rowing team member and three times Olympic silver medallist, for services to British Rowing

**Peter Jacobs:** competed in individual and team epee for Great Britain at the Tokyo Olympics of 1964, for services to British and international fencing

**Helen Jenkins:** three times ITU world championship title winner, for services to triathlon

**Harry Kane:** England captain, for services to football

**John Lowe:** three times world champion for services to darts and to charity

**Gareth McAuley:** Rangers and Northern Ireland defender, for services to football in Northern Ireland

**Caroline Matthews:** competed in wheelchair basketball at the Athens and Beijing Olympics, for services to wheelchair basketball

**Matthew Maynard:** former England cricket, for services to charity and sport

**Gary Newbon:** for services to media, sport and charity

**Claire O'Hara:** for services to canoeing

**Tamsin ParLOUR:** Women's Sport Trust co-founder and chief executive, for services to gender equality in sport

**Charles Reed:** outgoing chair of Activity Alliance, for services to disability sport

**Leroy Rosenior:** vice president of Show Racism the Red Card, for services to tackling discrimination in sport

**Ray Smiles:** for services to football and young people in Wales

**Elaine Wyllie:** founder, The Daily Mile, for services to the fitness of children

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# GLOBAL APPEAL

Professional sports clubs now have the opportunity to maximise their commercial potential more than at any other time in history. Euromonitor International's Egle Tekutyte analyses how professional sports teams are balancing local performance with global growth aspirations



The commercial landscape of professional sports exhibits more commercial promise than ever before. In a climate of limited resources and seemingly unlimited opportunities, sports clubs require laser-focused strategic direction in order to compete off the field of play. Every club is nuanced, meaning there isn't a singular approach that can be exalted as definitive to maximising potential, however, by analysing the strengths across the top performing teams in Euromonitor International's *Global Club Attractiveness Index*, clubs can better understand both the ingredients (the data) and the recipe (strategy) for success, allowing them

to unlock new fans and commercial partnership opportunities globally.

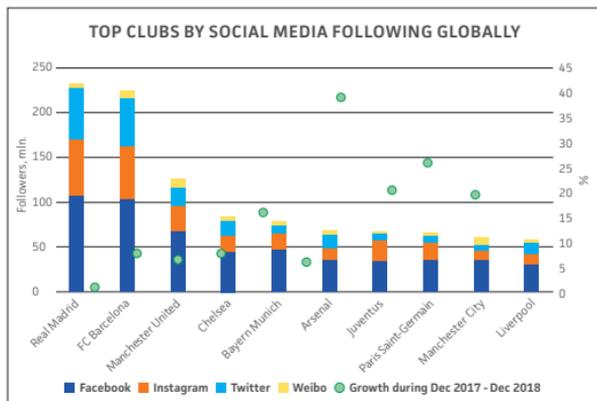
## How are clubs harnessing digital to establish a global reach?

Through continued commercial outreach with some of the largest teams and leagues in the world, we are always drawn back to two questions: how can we unlock new fans in various markets, and how do we strike the right balance between digital and traditional growth methods? The impact of a strong social media footprint globally has become an important driver of overall team valuation, as it allows both local and global fans to engage with the leagues and teams they support and illustrates commercial

potential far beyond stadium confines.

Real Madrid is the most followed sports club globally, with over 230 million followers across Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and Weibo. A commercial juggernaut in professional sports, the Spanish club remains a leader in social following and enjoys a global reach well reflected in its partnership portfolio, inking deals with adidas, Audi, Nivea for Men and Coca-Cola, among others. Real Madrid's partnership with Emirates Airlines remains the most expensive shirt sponsorship in European football according to sources, valued at US\$84 million annually, surpassing other mammoth deals such as Chevrolet's sponsorship deal with Manchester United.

FC Barcelona has over 224 million followers and sits just behind its La Liga rival, and remains a constant threat to Real's supremacy in this space. In 2018, showing impressive results in domestic competitions, FC Barcelona grew its online fanbase by 8 per cent compared to the rather marginal 1 per cent of Real Madrid. Nevertheless, a vast social media following offers both clubs an unparalleled brand value across the globe, and with La Liga games set to be broadcast on Facebook in India and seven other South Asian countries from 2018-19, the future looks promising. Furthermore, North America's familiarity with the league and its clubs is expected to be further solidified following the announcement of plans to play a selection of regular season games in the US and Canada.



Based on December 2017, December 2018 data



© SHUTTERSTOCK/ALPHACREATIVE.COM

Top: Barcelona FC has over 224 million social media followers  
Below: Real Madrid and Juventus both boast huge global followings



## Real Madrid is the most followed sports club globally on social media

### Targeted social media

The importance of sustained social media activity directly targeted at particular markets shouldn't be underestimated. Reacting to the usage trends and producing localised content is essential in order to attract new fans' attention in global markets.

Celebrity endorsements are another important feature of engagement with fans on social media. According to the *Euroonitor International Global Consumer Trends survey 2016*, 45 per cent of consumers state they are influenced by celebrity endorsements almost every day, a statistic that directly correlates with the star quality of top-flight professional sports teams.

Some major leagues are already implementing these trends in their social media strategy. The National Hockey League (NHL) notably launched a hockey puck challenge for Chinese fans on Weibo, WeChat and Twitter (NHL stars stacking as many hockey pucks as possible with



© SHUTTERSTOCK/CHIRAZ



The NFL worked with Chinese celebrity Kris Wu in order to gain Chinese fans

chopsticks in a given time), Premier League launched an official app in Mandarin for fans in China, and the National Football League (NFL) chose Chinese celebrity Kris Wu to be the NFL ambassador in China and to sing at the Super Bowl LIVE festival in 2018.

### Sport as a product

Despite the demonstrable value of the Real Madrid and FC Barcelona brands, the margin both on and off the pitch between the two clubs and the remaining La Liga clubs remains significant. Thus, La Liga's challenges hinge not just on how well it distributes native content to various

© SHUTTERSTOCK/ANKAN/HUIJUNGS



While not as popular as other leagues on a global scale, the NFL's home fanbase is second to none

▶ platforms engaging with global fans, it comes back to the foundation of a league as an entertainment product in a world where content abundance and consumer distraction are the new norm. Real Madrid and FC Barcelona rank at the very pinnacle of the *Global Club Attractiveness Index*, yet, when benchmarking leagues against each other, La Liga stands seventh overall.

In fact, according to the sports market metrics within the *Global League Attractiveness Index* such as average attendance, ticket spend, sell-out ratio and social media footprint, the NFL ranks number one, outperforming La Liga across the board with the exception of social media following. The NFL on average brings in more than double the number of fans per game than La Liga. The NFL boasts a 96 per cent sell-out rate, whereas La Liga fills around 70 per cent of seats.

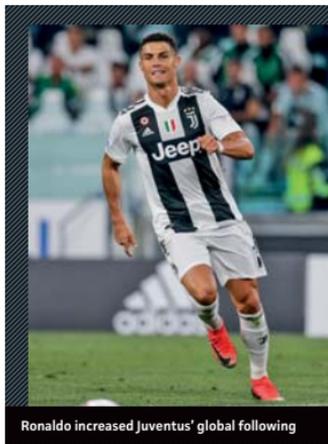
A wider variety of champions and a stronger league's competitive balance are useful proxies in determining the value of an entertainment product – and again, in these departments, the NFL wins. The NFL,

## “ By signing Ronaldo, Juventus gained 1 million Twitter followers in a day and sold 520,000 shirts bearing his name

of course, faces challenges of its own on the quest for global growth, yet the strength of its home fanbase is second to none.

### Star power

Another behemoth of European football, Juventus FC, saw a 40 per cent surge in digital following over a year to December 2018 resulting in a grand total of over 65 million followers. The arrival of Cristiano Ronaldo – an online juggernaut himself with over 355 million followers on social media – proved to be beneficial for Juventus – both on the pitch and in attracting more attention to the club's overall entertainment product. Within the first 24 hours of signing Ronaldo, Juventus gained over one million followers on Twitter and sold 520,000 shirts bearing Ronaldo's name compared to a total of 850,000 shirts



Ronaldo increased Juventus' global following

© SHUTTERSTOCK/CHRISTIANO BARNI

Paris St Germain signed Neymar as part of a strategy to increase sponsorships from outside France

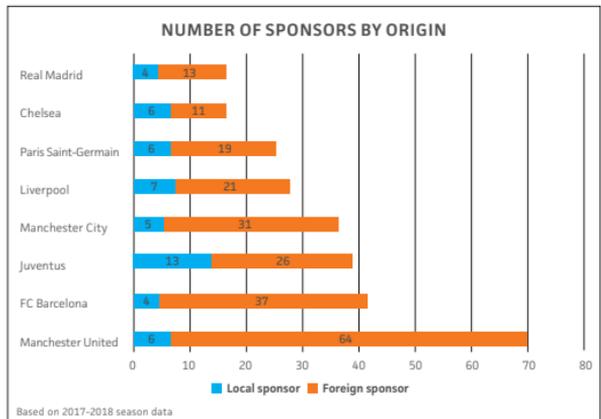


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sold by Juventus during the entire 2016-17 season (according to reports).

If Juventus is to continue its winning streak with Ronaldo on board, the club will look to further capitalise on growing brand awareness globally, much of which will be achieved through digital channels. Attracting lucrative sponsorship deals from international companies will also aid in further establishing Juventus as a global brand. At the end of 2018, due to increased visibility of its brand, the club has already been able to renew its multi-year contract with adidas, seeing the club nearly doubling the deal value per season.

Geographic commercial partnership diversification has also been seen at Paris St Germain (PSG) after signing Neymar. The Brazilian's transfer to PSG has been a component of the club's long-term strategy ▶



**All data is taken from Euromonitor International's Passport Sports database, unless otherwise stated.**

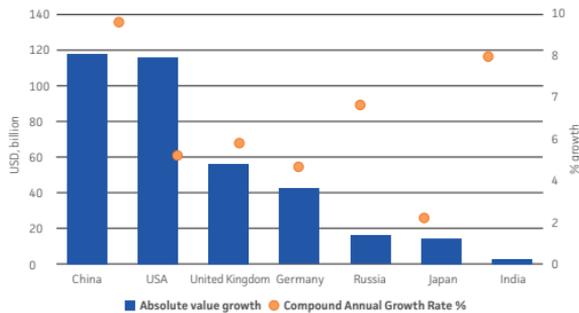
Disclaimer: Euromonitor International's Global League and Club Attractiveness Indices are independent, objective tools that inform partnership potential within professional sports clubs, and can be used in combination with Euromonitor International Sports commercial partnership statistics to better understand the current landscape and opportunities that exist globally in this space. For more information on how we rank sports properties and discover new sponsorship opportunities globally, please contact [Egle.Tekutyte@Euromonitor.com](mailto:Egle.Tekutyte@Euromonitor.com)



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Alibaba acquired a 50 per cent stake in Guangzhou Evergrande FC in 2014

### INCREASE IN TURNOVER OF SPORTING AND RECREATIONAL SERVICES WITHIN THE LARGEST ECONOMIES DURING 2018-2030



Sporting and Recreational Services is the aggregation of organisation of sports events, sport event support services, lotteries and gambling, sports arenas and stadiums and other sporting and recreational events.

to move to the next level in terms of sport success, and consequently to attract more fans and higher value sponsorship agreements from outside France. As a result, in 2017-18 PSG has reduced the share of France-based sponsors from 33 per cent to 24 per cent.

Commercial partnerships by their very nature are symbiotic, and leagues and teams are realising that infrequent activations in growth markets, or a social media strategy lacking a localised touch is limited in what it can achieve. By working with partners within target growth markets, the benefits are mutual and have the ability to further catalyse online traffic to a club's digital assets.

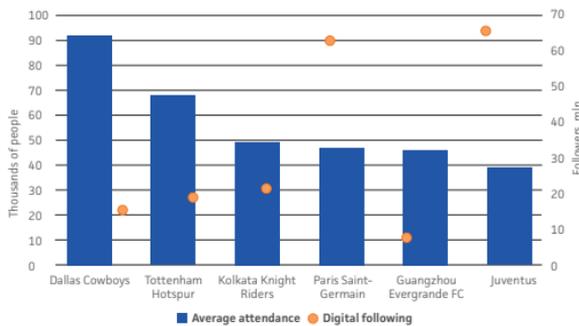
### Global versus local

Does the globalisation of professional sports render the local economic environment obsolete?

The short answer is a resounding no. There is no doubt that the opportunity to achieve global growth is ripe. However, sports properties remain irrevocably linked to the city and country in which they operate. To win abroad, clubs must first win at home. Understanding in detail the size, spend power, digital readiness and youth population of a club's home market allows clubs and potential sponsors to contextualise the business environment and can act as a springboard or a hindrance towards unlocking a global fanbase.

Unsurprisingly, US clubs are leaders in economic statistics determined by high purchasing power and willingness to spend on

### CLUBS BY AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AND DIGITAL FOLLOWING



Based on 2017-2018 season data for average attendance and Dec 2018 data for digital following



## China and India show high percentages of Gen Z and Millennials, providing sports teams with strong potential for growth

activities such as sports and entertainment. Clubs located in the UK, Japan and South Korea boast high levels of consumer digital readiness with over 94 per cent of their populations using the internet. At the same time, China and India show high percentages of Generation Z and Millennials as a share of total population – 40 per cent and 53 per cent, respectively, thus providing sports teams strong potential for further growth, especially given the sheer size of their markets.

The global opportunities are hard to ignore for all major rights holders in professional sports. China's vast consumer market makes clubs in the market strong contenders for investment. For example, Alibaba acquired a 50 per cent stake in Guangzhou Evergrande FC for USD192 million in 2014. With strong financial backing, the highest average crowds (over 45,000) and social media following (7.7 million) in China, the club has attracted such partners as Nike (kit supplier) as well as Real Madrid, AC Milan and Bayern Munich, which are helping the club to build its footballing academy and ensure its further dominance in the league.

### Entertaining Asia

With a young and growing population behind its growth, India's cricket T20 league – Indian Premier League (IPL) – is one of the top sports leagues in Asia Pacific and Cricket T20 leagues globally. One of its teams, the Kolkata Knight Riders, despite its fail to win the league title during recent seasons, has been climbing up the league table, attracting the highest average attendances



Indian cricket T20 team Kolkata Knight Riders has the highest social following in Asia

(over 48,000) not only in Asia but also garnering greater average attendances than many European football powerhouses such as Juventus or PSG. The club boasts the highest social media following in Asia (over 21 million), exceeding such clubs as Dallas Cowboys or Tottenham Hotspur.

Making the connection between the Kolkata Knight Riders fan and the Cleveland Cavaliers or Tottenham Hotspur fan is essential. All clubs, all leagues, all sports – plus, of course, any other number of entertainment offerings out there – are battling it out for the attention of that fan.

Sports properties need to understand the demographics of the fans, their willingness and ability to invest in the matchday experience and the time spent engaging on digital platforms. They also need to understand how best to engage

that fan – through partnerships, native content on social media, or a combination of both – ensuring that whatever strategy is implemented is sustainable.

A quest for a global fan base, however, means protecting and growing the entertainment value of the product at home and executing a sustainable growth strategy, utilising digital as a means to an end, rather than an end in itself. ●

**Egle Tekutyte** is a Sports Analyst at Euromonitor International. Egle provides data-driven insight on professional top-flight team sports, covering everything from match-day metrics and social media performance to cross-industry commercial partnership opportunities.

# THE CAMPUS

Luxury resort Quinta do Lago, in The Algarve, Portugal, has recently opened a new state-of-the-art multi-sports complex, designed to attract both elite sports teams and holidaying families. Steph Eaves visited The Campus to find out more

**Q**uinta do Lago's new facility, The Campus, officially opened in October 2018 after being built in two phases. Designed by Essência Criativa, the first phase – finished in summer 2017 – included tennis and padel courts and a cycling hub, The Bike Shed. The second phase added a high-performance sports and fitness training centre.

Explaining the decision to create this multi-sports facility, Sean Moriarty, chief executive of Quinta do Lago, says: "Since its founding 46 years ago, Quinta has been encouraging an active, outdoor lifestyle at the resort, and we're committed to providing the very best experience to every person who spends time with us – from the family here on holiday to the champion athlete here to rehabilitate.



The Bike Shed was built in the first phase of Quinta do Lago's new development



Sean Moriarty (L) with general manager of The Campus, Craig Goodwin (R)

"The Campus is part of the evolution of that – it's an exciting new facility that adds a unique lifestyle experience for our regular guests, but that will also attract a completely new audience to the elite training venue."

## State-of-the-art facilities

The sports and fitness training centre has certainly been designed to appeal to the professional athlete. The centre encompasses a stadium-quality DESO GrassMaster hybrid pitch, high performance gymnasiums, dedicated studio space, a recovery suite with hot and cold plunge pools, and sports medicine and rehabilitation facilities.

"We went to a lot of grounds," says Moriarty. "Football grounds and rugby grounds throughout Europe and other parts of the world. We spoke to nutritionists, physiotherapists and health and wellness professionals and asked them what's good and what they're missing. We captured all of that and tried to get it all in here. We got as much as we could. We always have a big wish list though!"

"When we've got big football teams visiting, the ground floor gym is usually closed off for them. We've got two



The Campus includes four padel courts

changing rooms for home and away teams or for males and females. Then upstairs we've got another gym with a view of the pitch. The pitch is the very same pitch they use at Manchester City or Aviva or Twickenham."

Indeed, the team seems to have hit the mark with The Campus, which has already been utilised for specialist training by the British Paratriathlon Team, footballers Rio Ferdinand and John Terry, padel champion Diogo Rocha, athletes Lily Partridge and Susie Chan, as well as football teams Beijing Sinobo Guoan, the Croatian national team, S.L Benfica, Olympique de Marseille and Wolfsberger AC.

### Sport for all

Moriarty stresses, however, that the elite facilities are not aimed solely at professionals, and that the centre is just as much there for visitors of any fitness level or sporting ability.

"The philosophy at The Campus is to be elite, whatever your level," he says. "It's a very inclusive place.

"I think what's special about Quinta do Lago is how everyone is treated the same. Whether you have an ordinary job, like the rest of us, or you're a superstar. The ▶

**The philosophy of The Campus is to be elite, whatever your level. Everyone is treated the same, whether you have an ordinary job or you're a superstar**

### WHAT IS PADEL?

One of the fastest growing sports in the world, padel is similar to tennis but with some key differences. It's typically played in doubles on an enclosed court, which is a third of the size of a tennis court. Scoring is the same as tennis and the balls used are similar but with a little less pressure.

The court has walls and the balls can be played off them in a similar way to the game of squash. In place of tennis racquets, solid, stringless racquets are used. The height of the ball being served must be at or below the waist level.

The sport was invented in Mexico in 1969 by a Mexican billionaire. It took off in Argentina and then Spain and Portugal, where it has become hugely popular.

**NEW OPENING**



The Campus was designed to be a social activity hub



► Campus is no different. During your workout you might notice a professional football team training on the pitch, or an Olympic athlete recovering in the spa, but we're all here for the same things, so it's very relaxed."

### Active kids

Not only does the centre welcome adults of any sporting level, it also welcomes kids. Families are an important target audience for The Campus, and the team are encouraging them to come by offering a wide range of sporting programmes and experiences.

"We're committed to inspiring and educating young people, and creating the superstars of tomorrow," says Moriarty. "Young people are a big part of our vision here. We run coaching experiences for children, such as Soccer Camp with Rio Ferdinand, Tennis Camp with Judy Murray (see boxout on p64) and Rugby Camp with Brian O'Driscoll, as well as Junior Performance tennis, which coaches children up to professional tournaments.

"These camps are an incredible opportunity for children to learn from their heroes, make friends and get on a positive path with activity and sport."

**We're aiming to make The Campus a 'fly-to destination' for anyone who loves sport and the outdoors. We're trying to bring in more families and make it more open**

### Changing perceptions

This family focus is a relatively new evolution of Quinta do Lago, and one Moriarty is keen for visitors to embrace.

"For quite some time, Quinta do Lago was seen as a very elite, wealthy retirement home for golfers," he explains. "But it was also a hidden gem for a lot of people that wanted to enjoy an exclusive leisure experience. What we've been doing now over the last couple of years is trying to bring in more families and make it more open.

"We're trying to make The Campus a 'fly-to destination' for anyone who loves sport and the outdoors."

Two gyms are kitted out with Technogym equipment

### Onwards and upwards

So far, Moriarty says, visitors have been enjoying the new facilities. "We've had a very positive response since opening The Campus. It really is a beating heart within the resort. What's great is that the whole family can spend time here, whether for a family padel tournament, studio fitness class or bike ride. They can be active together or each person can go off to do their own thing and then meet up afterwards.

"It's a real hub of activity. We've had resounding positive feedback from the athletes who have joined us too."

Going forward, Moriarty says he plans to keep evolving the centre and continue growing the membership base.

"The Campus is still very new, so we have a lot of evolving to do, but we're nimble and plan to move ahead of the times. We like to set the trends, not follow them." ●



For more information, check out The Campus at: [www.quintadolago.com/en/the-campus/](http://www.quintadolago.com/en/the-campus/)



The Campus features indoor and outdoor swimming pools and several dining options



Several professional sports teams have already come to train at the new centre, including Beijing Sinobo Guoan football team

## WHAT'S INCLUDED AT THE CAMPUS?

Stadium quality DESSO GrassMaster hybrid pitch

Technical area

High performance gymnasium

Centre for active living and sports medicine

Recovery suite including hot/cold plunge pools and sauna and steam rooms

Studios for cycle and group exercise

Stadium specification locker rooms

Team rooms with high tech analysis capability

25m heated indoor swimming pool

Four acrylic tennis courts

Two synthetic clay tournament specification tennis courts

Four padel courts with shock pad features

The Bike Shed – a hub for cycling

Dano's Sports Bar & Restaurant

## Q&amp;A WITH JUDY MURRAY



Judy Murray will lead four tennis camps throughout the year at The Campus, aimed at kids of all abilities

#### Tell us about your partnership with The Campus

I'm going to do four programmes a year, each one taking place over a week. They're targeted mostly at junior players, up to 16 years old. I came out here a few times before the camps started, to look at the place and to train the coaches. They've got a super coaching team here, but I coach in a completely different way to them, so I've been sharing how I do it and giving them lots of ideas for making tennis more fun – more fun to do and also more fun to teach.

It's something that's new, so being involved with it at the start and being able to help shape how it evolves is exciting. Plus, it's nice to be able to coach in the sun, it's quite different to being in the UK!

#### What do you enjoy most about coaching these programmes?

A lot of what I've been doing over the last few years has been teaching people how to teach. So I really enjoyed the two days that I spent with the coaches here.

Doing camps with big numbers of kids, where there are mixed abilities, mixed attention levels and mixed ages presents a lot of challenges when you're trying to



#### It's been a good learning experience for me, adapting the sessions to mixed abilities and ages

help everyone improve. So you have to adapt to the group and stay flexible in your approach. I think that's a good learning experience for me, having to adapt the session to all the different kids.

#### What do you think of the state of British talent development?

I think that's a big challenge for tennis right now and it's been that way for a few years. We've had a huge opportunity because of Andy's success in particular, but also Jamie and Johanna Konta. These people have created a bigger profile around tennis, but I think that tennis, like many traditional sports, is competing with so many other things for kids' time, not least anything that's on a screen.

We have to make our sport attractive and once we attract them, we have to retain them and for me, retention comes from the environment. A facility like The Campus is a lovely environment in which to play tennis.

#### How can we attract more people?

I think that tennis is still an expensive sport compared to some, and it's still perceived as difficult to access, difficult to do and expensive. Until we smash that, it will still be a sport for those who have money. For me, one of the solutions is to do more of these types of programmes, with big numbers and keeping it fun. It would reduce the costs enormously if you've got one or two coaches with 20 kids, and you only need one court. ●

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# ELEVATE 2019

The UK's largest physical activity trade event returns to ExCeL, London on 8-9 May alongside COPA and Elite Sports Expo. We take a look at what's on offer this year

The event once again boasts a range of 350+ exhibitors who will showcase their latest products, aimed at positively contributing towards decreasing physical inactivity levels.

The exhibition areas at Elevate 2019 will focus on: Commercial Fitness; Innovation in Elite Sport; Active Aquatic; Design, Build and Interiors; Elevate KIDS; and COPA.

Elevate is a once a year opportunity for physical activity professionals to make purchasing decisions, discover the latest innovations and meet suppliers face to face.

## Key suppliers

Elevate is where the suppliers of physical activity equipment showcase their new innovations to the UK market. James Anderson, director of sales and marketing at Physical Company, says: "Elevate has established itself as a key



Founder and director of Elevate, Max Quittenton is excited for the 2019 show

event for anybody working within the field of physical activity. Last year's show put us face to face with lots of decision makers and this meant it was imperative

we attend Elevate this year. Physical Company will be showcasing a range of new innovations and demonstrating our new app at the show."

## Tech Lab

Another way event attendees will be able to explore the latest products and services on show is in the Tech Lab innovation space, organised in conjunction with the London Sport-backed Sport Tech Hub and uactive's Active Lab. The Tech Lab will provide unrivalled sector insight to event attendees, featuring technology start-ups that are disrupting the physical activity market.

## Awarding innovation

With so much product advancement on display, the Elevate Innovation Awards, sponsored by FitnessCompared, will return again. As with previous years, a panel of experts will judge the best sector products and services in six defined categories: Best Workout Innovation;



Fitness professionals can discover the latest product innovations at the show



# ELEVATE

Elevate 2019 speakers include:



350+ exhibitors will showcase their latest products and services

Best Facility Innovation; Best Health & Wellness Innovation; Best Rehab & Recovery Innovation; Best Innovation for Human Performance; and Best Start-Up.

The lead supporters for the 2019 trade show will play a significant role in creating engaging content for Elevate's programme of events. These supporters include ukactive, CIMSPA, London Sport, UK Sport, ISEH and the Chartered Society of Physiotherapists.

Max Quittenton, founder and director of Elevate, commented on the trade show's build-up: "We are extremely excited about Elevate 2019. The show has continued to evolve with new additions including innovative seminar streams, partners, supporters, exhibitors, sponsors and crucially, the highest level of decision makers attending.

"Happily, consumer trends appear to be encouraging further growth in physical activity, sport and fitness spending. Thankfully, tackling physical activity remains high on key political and social agendas. We recognise that partnership working is highly regarded within the sector in both alleviating barriers to physical activity and subsequently understanding behaviour change. To that end, we are delighted that Elevate 2019 will welcome more stakeholders from more sectors than ever before."

## Thought Leaders Conference

After successfully debuting in 2018, organisers have confirmed the return of the Elevate Thought Leaders Conference, sponsored by PayAsUGym. The conference will delve into how physical activity and



**Prof. Charlie Foster**  
Senior lecturer,  
University of Bristol



**Dr Zoe Williams**  
Activity champion, Public  
Health England



**David Minton**  
Managing director,  
Leisure BD



**James Sanderson**  
Director of personalised  
care, NHS England



**David Stalker**  
CEO, Myzone EMEA



**Justin Musgrove**  
Chief executive,  
Bannatyne Group

Happily, consumer trends appear to be encouraging further growth in physical activity, sport and fitness spending. And thankfully, tackling physical activity remains high on key political and social agendas

healthcare sectors can significantly contribute towards a happier, healthier and more active nation.

With the UK government's ongoing efforts to eliminate physical inactivity surrounding pressing challenges such as prevention over cure, increased investment in the NHS and digital disruption to community-wide behaviour change initiatives, the conference aims to inspire bigger picture thinking that will maximise the full power of the physical activity sector as a reputable force for positive societal change and impact.

The Thought Leaders Conference will feature keynote talks and strategic debates from senior representatives within various areas of the industry. Already announced as headline speaker for the conference is ▶

## SUPPLIERS INCLUDE:

fibodo, PayAsUGym, Matrix, eGym, Hutchison, Fitness Compared, Les Mills, FunXtion, MYZONE, Jordan Fitness, Keiser, Origin, Physical Company, Concept2, Eleiko, Swim England, Speedflex, WaterRower, JP Lennard, TRX, Octane Fitness, Legend, Freemotion Fitness, Wattbike, Core Health and Fitness, InBody, Power Plate, FitQuest, Miha Bodytec, Powerhouse, Perfect Gym, Hippo Leisure, Codelocks, Gerflor, TVS, CMS Danskin Acoustics and SwimTag.



Elevate 2019 is the perfect place for fitness and physical activity professionals to meet and share insights



Featuring for the first time in 2019, the Moving Medicine stream will showcase the latest science and evidence in the field, and the tools required for effective communication of this information



► the UK Government's chief medical officer, Professor Dame Sally Davies, who will outline the industry's vision for physical activity and healthcare.

Other speakers include Professor Charlie Foster, senior lecturer in physical activity and public health at University of Bristol; Dr Zoe Williams, Public Health England physical activity champion; David Minton, managing director of Leisure BD; James Sanderson, director of personalised care at NHS England; Chris Grant, managing director at 14A; Justin Musgrove, chief executive of Bannatyne Group; David Stalker, CEO at MyZone EMEA; and Professor Robert Copeland, Professor of physical activity and health at Sheffield Hallam University.

There will also be keynote interviews in a 'conversation with' style, including former Welsh international rugby player Gareth Thomas and Mark 'Dot' Perkins, registered physiotherapist and captain of the Invictus Games 2018.

### Seminars and workshops

Also included in your free pass are an extensive range of seminars and workshops on offer within a variety of streams. These include: Strategies for an Active Nation, Future Performance, The Business of Physical Activity, Active Aquatics, Maximising Wellbeing & Performance, The Business of Physical Therapy, and the newly created Moving Medicine and Active Kids streams.

Featuring for the first time in 2019, the Moving Medicine stream will showcase the latest science and evidence in the field, and the tools required for effective conversations and communication of this information within practice case studies. With a targeted audience including fitness professionals, sports coaches and personal trainers, the Moving Medicine stream is set to add a further dimension to Elevate.

Debuting alongside Moving Medicine is the Active Kids stream. The seminars in this stream will critically examine

the latest trends and innovation in activating kids, exploring the role of behaviour change, motivation and goal setting, and the use of digital and technology for activation.

To find out more about the full programme for the conference and seminars, and to register for a free place, visit [www.elevatearena.com](http://www.elevatearena.com). ●

### FIND OUT MORE

**Date of event:** May 8-9, 2019

**Venue:** ExCeL London, Royal Victoria Dock, 1 Western Gateway, London E16 1XL

**Registration:**

This event is free to attend

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# ELEVATE

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Elevate is now firmly established as the UK's largest gathering of fitness, performance and healthcare professionals. With more exhibitors, physical activity innovations and expert speakers than ever before, make sure you don't miss out. Highlights include:

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- Elevate Kids
- Seminar streams:
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Dr Zoe Williams

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Al Oliver

James Sanderson

Michael Brannan

Julie Creffield

Gareth Thomas

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# GIRLS WHO GOLF

Traditionally a male-dominated sport, is golf making strides within female participation? Dr Chris Mackintosh and Christopher Mills take a closer look at how England Golf is working to engage with women

**A**cademic research conducted in north America and the UK over the past 15 years has tended to characterise golf as a male-dominated sport in which women experience chauvinism and constraints on participation. Within our own research we occasionally see evidence of this, however, while instances of poor female experience may still exist, it's important not to tar an entire sport with the same brush. In England, there are just under 2,000 golf clubs and our own research has shown that there is considerable variety in culture and practice. Most golf clubs are now working hard to attract more women into the sport.

The 2010 Equality Act provided the golf industry with a significant stimulus to accelerate the pace of change. Whereas some golf clubs previously offered different membership types for women and placed restrictions on their playing times, they found themselves having to comply with the Equality Act. It helped many golf clubs take positive steps towards creating a better experience for women golfers.

### An inclusive culture

The golf industry has recognised the enormous growth potential of women's golf and is making a concerted effort to improve the experience of women golfers. The R&A, which governs the sport worldwide outside

of the United States, launched its Women in Golf Charter in May 2018. The charter creates a commitment to developing a more inclusive culture within golf.

The Professional Golfers Association (PGA) is also promoting initiatives to help more women learn to play. The We Love Golf scheme is one particular initiative that has refashioned the way that golf is coached to new women golfers and is proving successful at making golf more appealing. Another example is Golf Access, a scheme set up to attract children by making the format fun and welcoming to everyone. Its very nature makes it appealing to both girls and boys. It encourages them to compete on an equal footing, playing from the same tees. The

Girls Golf Rocks is a national project that aims to attract younger girls into the sport





**The golf industry has recognised the growth potential of women's golf and is making an effort to improve**

emphasis is on getting out onto the golf course and having fun.

Golf Access launched in March 2017 and has been implemented in around 85 clubs. A survey of these clubs found that it had attracted around 1,000 junior participants in its first six months. Approximately 40 per cent of these were female. England Golf is undertaking more formal research piloting of this project to establish best practice. ▶



England Golf has set a target of 20 per cent female participation by 2020



1,400 girls participated in Girls Golf Rocks in 2018



Research found that women in golf clubs tend to volunteer at twice the rate of men

### ► Ambitious targets

England Golf, the sport's governing body in England, is particularly proactive in promoting women's golf. In 2015, it set a target of 20 per cent participation by women by 2020. If achieved, that would represent a significant growth in the female market. Lauren Spray, women and girls manager at England Golf, has the task of supporting initiatives to help achieve this target.

Spray explains: "Golf is taking steps to make sure we're more inviting and more

accessible. While there may have been some women happy with the old status quo, perhaps just playing on their allocated weekday afternoon, the women coming into the game want to play on a Saturday. That's the peak time when you want to go out and play your sport. We've got to adjust to that."

Female participation is a major strand running through England Golf's strategic plan and its Get into Golf initiative, which aims to inspire more people to try golf. The programme offers low-cost or free beginner

## Tentative findings from England Golf suggest that female participation rates have reached 17 per cent

activities at golf clubs across England. The campaign branding is young and vibrant with the aim of attracting 25 to 40 year olds.

"We've seen a really high number of women engage with Get into Golf because they like the structured group format to the coaching. It suits women a lot," says Spray.

### Challenging perceptions

England Golf also runs a Girls Golf Rocks project. This is a national project run in partnership with the Golf Foundation and aims to introduce younger girls into golf.

"When we started Girls Golf Rocks four years ago, there were no girls-only sessions to learn golf," says Spray. The project saw over 1,400 girls complete the 5 week coaching programme in 2018.

In July 2018, England Golf inspired and led Women and Girls' Golf Week, an industry-wide social media campaign to raise awareness of women in golf and to challenge perceptions of the sport among women. The campaign, which was also supported by Scottish Golf, Wales Golf, the Irish Ladies Golf Union and The R&A, encouraged female golfers to share their



The success of England's Georgia Hall has helped to introduce the sport to more women

golfing stories on social media using the hashtag #WhyGolf. The response far exceeded expectations. The campaign reached more than 2.5m people on Twitter and generated over 12 million impressions. Spray said: "The response during that week from women, girls – and men was fantastic."

The campaign fortuitously coincided with England's Georgia Hall winning the Ricoh Women's British Open at Royal Lytham. The 22 year-old was the first British winner of the Women's Open since 2001. As Spray explained: "Georgia winning at the end of the week was the icing on the cake. We couldn't have wished for a better ending. We're now working on ways to channel this energy and enthusiasm to grow the game."

### Female volunteers

As academics at Manchester Metropolitan University, our own research is currently focused on the role of volunteers within golf clubs. Volunteers fill a variety of roles including governance roles, team captaincy, competition organising, junior coordination and supporting new members. They have an important role to play in setting the

right tone within a golf club and supporting new members to get involved and feel welcome. Interestingly, we found that women golfers tend to volunteer at twice the rate of male golfers, yet women remain under-represented in the most influential governance roles. Our research is helping England Golf to determine strategies to increase diversity at a decision making level.

### Moving in the right direction

There is a lot of effort going into the promotion of women and girls golf, but will it pay off? It's early days, especially since success will depend on delivering the cultural change that makes women feel genuinely welcome at golf clubs. There are, however, some signs of progress. England Golf already has some tentative findings to suggest that the female participation rate has increased to 17 per cent. There's a lot more to be done, but things seem to be moving in the right direction.

It appears that England Golf and its partners in the wider golfing world are responding to the challenges set out in the DCMS 2015 Strategy and to Sport England's

vision for a more active nation. The 'gender agenda' is now central to achieving wider organisational goals for golf. We hope our research is able to deliver evidence-led decision making at club, county and national policy level to position female volunteers as critical stakeholders in shaping a better future for the game of golf. ●

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



For further information on this golf research, please contact Dr Chris Mackintosh at [c.mackintosh@mmu.ac.uk](mailto:c.mackintosh@mmu.ac.uk). Chris is a senior lecturer in sport management at Manchester Metropolitan University. Chris Mills is a PhD researcher studying golf club volunteers with a three year studentship funded by England Golf.

# NETBALL FOR ALL

This much-loved sport is going from strength to strength, particularly following the success of the England team at the Commonwealth Games in 2018. Netball England's Helen Wynn spoke to Steph Eaves about how the body continues to grow the grassroots

## What's the background of netball in England?

England Netball celebrated its 90th anniversary in 2016. Since its inception, levels of participation are growing fast. We know that more than one million women and girls play netball during a typical week in the netball season.

While the sport is continually growing, many women still think of it as an old-fashioned, slow-paced game only played at school. However, the sport has changed massively and has been thrust into the limelight since the Vitality Roses won the Commonwealth Games in April 2018.

Thanks to our partnership with Sky Sports, netball is now one of few women's team sports which enjoys weekly television coverage during the Superleague season.

## How do people usually come into the sport?

Our Back to Netball and Walking Netball programmes are the biggest way that adults engage with the sport. We find that many women have fond memories of playing netball at school but may not have played since leaving.

These programmes are extremely popular as they offer a fun and accessible way for people to re-engage with the sport they enjoyed so much at a young age. For example, our Back to Netball programme was introduced 10 years ago, and in 2018 it welcomed its 100,000th member.

Netball is still a sport that is played in lots of schools, so this is how many children and young people engage with it for the first time.

People can use our Session Finder on the England Netball website to find their nearest session, which also helps to increase participation.

## Which groups are you targeting to join the sport?

We want there to be a way for all women and girls to enjoy the sport, in a way that works for them. It's about creating their own game – no matter what your age or fitness level, there's a way to get involved with this sport in a manner that suits you and we want to share that message as far and wide as possible.

Whether someone wants to simply watch netball, try Walking Netball as a soft introduction to the sport, or have a go at Back to Netball – there's a way for everyone to take part, so we're not targeting one specific age group, we are targeting everyone.

## How are you engaging people?

Locally there are lots of plans tailored to meet the needs of local communities, but nationally a couple stand out; in particular our current work with the Women's Institute (WI) to get their members involved in Walking Netball is proving successful, with an unprecedented amount of interest received from them.



Work with the Women's Institute (WI) has attracted high levels of interest from its members



Walking netball is one of the most popular routes into the sport for adults

## “ There’s a way for everyone to take part in netball

As we approach the Vitality Netball World Cup, which takes place in Liverpool this July, we have some great plans and activities that will be launched soon to inspire even more people to get involved with the sport and make 2019 the biggest summer of netball England has ever seen!

### What are you doing to retain participants?

Our clubs and leagues do a fantastic job of providing opportunities week after week for people to play netball regularly and locally. A key part of our Back to Netball initiative is to support as many groups as possible to establish themselves as a club or a team beyond the programme – last year nearly 100 brand new clubs purely from Back to Netball were created.

### Do you have any partnerships that help you to grow the grassroots?

All of our partnerships provide support from a grassroots to an elite level. Our partnerships are key to helping us to grow the sport at all levels. We’ve recently announced a number of new partnerships including Nike, Red Bull, the British Army and Jaffa. Vitality also renewed its existing title partnership with England Netball for a further three years.

### How do major events affect participation in netball?

Since the Vitality Roses made history at the Commonwealth Games in April 2018, more than 130,700 women have started playing netball or playing more netball as a result. Following major international games we often see an increase in participation as women are more inspired to give it a go. With the Vitality Netball World Cup just around the corner we expect that we will see a significant growth in participation once again. ●



Back to Netball targets women who played at school or as children



For full company and contact details of any of the products and services featured here, please visit [www.sport-kit.net](http://www.sport-kit.net)

# PRODUCT INNOVATION

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

## Toro Lynx creates the best surface for sport, says **Simon Gibson**

Turf maintenance specialist Toro has completed a major overhaul of the pitch irrigation system at the King Power Stadium, home to

Leicester City Football Club. The club opted for the Toro Lynx central control system, an app-controlled system that is designed to enable facilities

to manage its water and other resources. The system enables operators to keep all of their essential irrigation information in one place, and features a single, intuitive interface where users can track water usage, control irrigation and generate daily reports.

In addition, the club had the Turf Guard wireless soil monitoring system installed on each corner of the pitch, as well as 10 Infinity sprinklers around the perimeter of the pitch, and eight T7 sprinklers in the centre.

Simon Gibson, head groundsman at the King Power Stadium, says: "Expectations for sports surfaces are always high and the pressure for the



**Gibson is pleased with the result achieved with Toro**

best surface possible only ever increases. You've got to get the best results and you do with Toro. Its irrigation system delivered everything we asked for."

**SPORT-KIT KEYWORD**

**TORO**



The King Power Stadium has 10 Infinity sprinklers

## Kieran Gallagher on PlayCam debut at Trent Park Football



**Gallagher says players can view footage quickly and easily**

Billed as 'Match of the Day for amateur football', PlayCam aims to retain player interest and build a social community by enabling grassroots players to view their performance online within an hour after the final whistle has blown.

Players can watch footage of their training sessions or 5, 6 and 7-a-side games, as well as social matches and party events, simply by going to PlayCam's online portal.

PlayCam venues are equipped with software that enables



PlayCam cameras capture training and matches

operators to schedule games in just 30 seconds. The software then takes care of recording the games, and emails players once the recording is viewable online.

Kieran Gallagher, general manager at Trent Park Football in North London, says: "With

such easy-to-use software and technology, our players are able to view and share the replay of their games in less than an hour after the final whistle has blown."

**SPORT-KIT KEYWORD**

**PLAYCAM**

## CPP Group and DeCyber partnership protects sports clubs from malicious cyber attacks, says **Jonathon Lane**

CPP Group UK, a global supplier of financial assistance products, has partnered with DeCyber, a cyber security specialist, to create a suite of products for businesses to manage their online security.

With a reported 58 per cent of malware and cyber attacks targeting small businesses, including sports clubs, CPP and DeCyber's product suite is designed to detect and minimise these attacks.



Lane (R) says sports clubs are at high risk of cyber attack



DeCyber products come with cyber insurance cover

The product offering, strategically backed by The Risk Transfer Group, consists of three programmes: OwlDetect, KYND and WardWiz. OwlDetect is a web scanner that searches the web, including the dark web, for data leaks, while KYND identifies potential weaknesses in users' websites and online resources. WardWiz is a comprehensive anti-virus package that provides real-time protection from online threats. Each comes with cyber insurance cover through Lloyds of

London and cyber risk awareness training through CybSafe.

Jonathon Lane, MD of DeCyber, says: "The statistics about the risks that sports clubs are facing are pretty frightening. DeCyber's easy-to-use platform and 'healthcheck' process ensures that clubs and associations can have simple, easy and cost effective access to the latest cyber protection solutions."

**SPORT-KIT KEYWORD**

**CPP GROUP**

## Swim Smooth to support and advise Everyone Active members, says **Jacqui Tillman**

Swim Smooth, an Australia-based aquatic coaching company, has launched a new partnership with leading leisure operator Everyone Active, that will give members free access to a host of digital

resources that will help them to develop their swimming skills.

Swim-only members at Everyone Active centres will be given access to Swim Smooth Guru, a virtual coach offering a wealth of online advice, such as step-by-step technique tutorials, video analysis and tips on defining and overcorrecting strokes, for swimmers of all abilities.

Jacqui Tillman, head of Swimming at Everyone Active, says: "The partnership with Swim Smooth will bring benefits and add value to our swim-only members."

"We chose to partner with Swim Smooth based on its reputation for providing world-



Members can access drills and stroke correction processes

class support and advice to swimmers, and I am excited to see the positive impact it has on our members."

Adam Young, UK head coach at Swim Smooth, says: "Using our virtual coach swimmers can

improve their swimming with unique drills, stroke correction processes and even a full learn-to-swim process for beginners." ●

**SPORT-KIT KEYWORD**

**SWIM SMOOTH**



Tillman is excited to see the positive impact on members

**The Sports and Play Construction Association, SAPCA**, is the recognised trade organisation for the sports and play facility construction industry in the UK. SAPCA fosters excellence, professionalism and continuous improvement throughout

the industry, in order to provide the high quality facilities necessary for the success of British sport. SAPCA represents a wide range of specialist constructors of natural and synthetic sports surfaces, including both outdoor and indoor facilities, from

tennis courts and sports pitches to playgrounds and sports halls. SAPCA also represents manufacturers and suppliers of related products, and independent consultants that offer professional advice on the development of projects.

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