

SPORTS

MANAGEMENT

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Sport Wales chair **Paul Thomas**

“ I want everyone
in Wales to be
hooked on sport ”

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ladies’ are
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MARTIN RICKETT / PRESS ASSOCIATION

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Sported's new Box On initiative aims to help clubs in the most economically deprived areas

Boxing clubs have a unique place in communities

Long before the phrase 'sport for development' had even been coined, boxing clubs were bringing communities together, developing young people's skills and improving discipline – inside and outside of the ring.

The sport has undergone somewhat of a renaissance in recent years. Walk into a boxing club anywhere in the UK today and chances are you will find fitness and sparring sessions open to all ages, genders and abilities. Likewise, Sported members such as

Empire Fighting Chance in Bristol or One Nation Community Centre in Sheffield, are proving that structured and tailored boxing programmes can be a highly effective and efficient method of tackling major societal issues, from mental health to crime and anti-social behaviour.

Boxing clubs have a unique place in the heart of our communities. Yet, for all their enduring success in engaging under-represented groups – in particular young people from lower socio-economic backgrounds – the future of many boxing clubs is far from guaranteed. Issues such as meeting costs, securing funding and managing assets are constant worries.

It's for this reason Sported has partnered with England Boxing to launch the Box On programme. Combining capacity-building support with targeted investment, it's helping boxing clubs in the

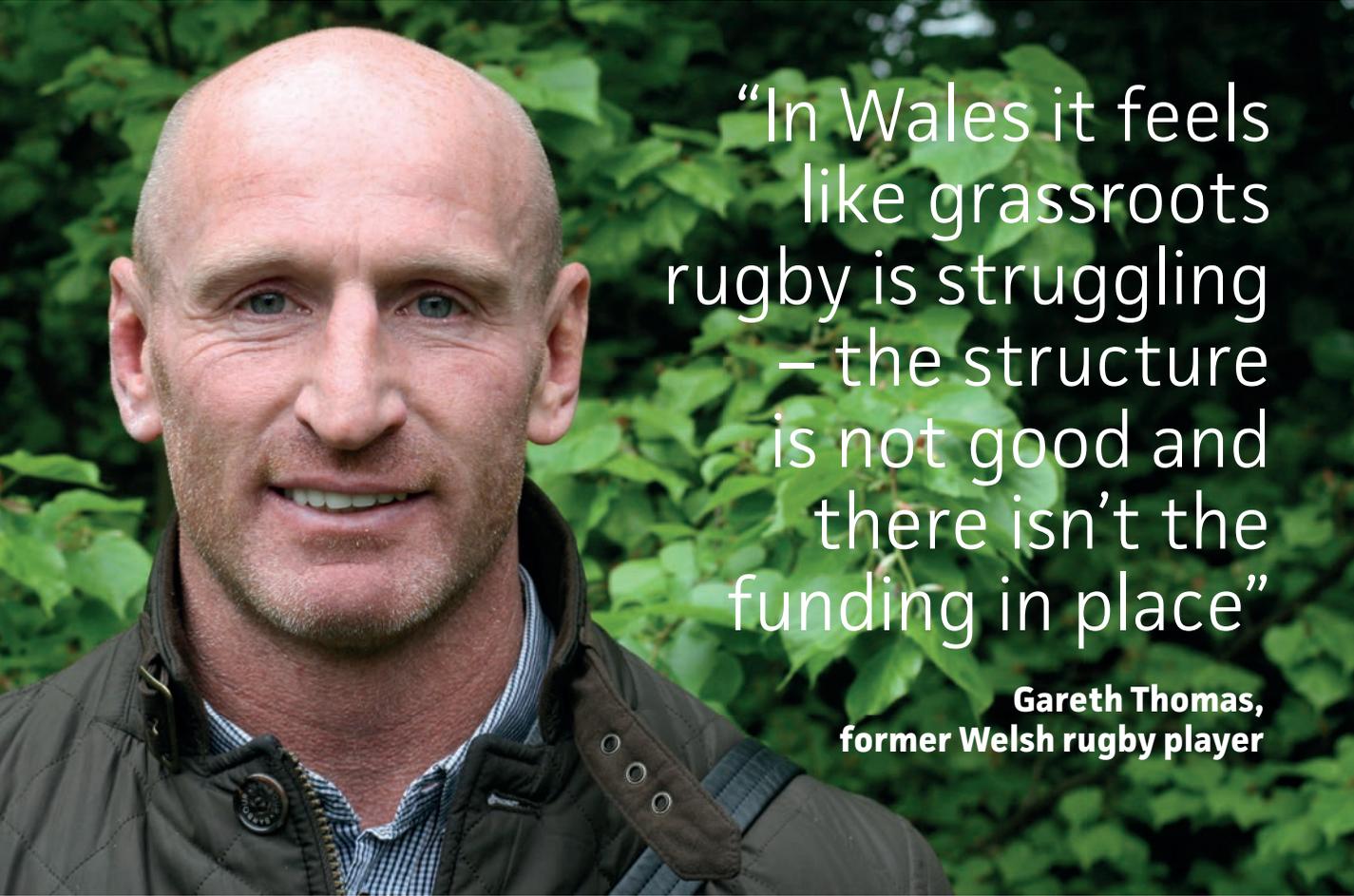
most economically deprived areas of England develop the business knowledge, skills and plans they need to secure funding and improve their long-term sustainability.

At a time when statistics show a worryingly persistent gap in participation figures between those from high and lower socio-economic backgrounds, we need to take a bottom-up approach and find new ways of supporting the amazing work already being done at grassroots level.

As Box On demonstrates, collaboration in the sector will be key. Through combining our respective resources and expertise we can make great strides to breaking down barriers to participation and harnessing the unique power of sport to transform lives.

Paul Steel
Project Lead – Box On, Sported





“In Wales it feels like grassroots rugby is struggling – the structure is not good and there isn’t the funding in place”

**Gareth Thomas,
former Welsh rugby player**

You made your international debut in 1995 – the year rugby ‘went professional’. How has the sport changed since those days?

The game has changed an unbelievable amount, and it’s still changing. Whether it’s changing for the better or for the worse I don’t really know.

Rugby can be a beautiful, engaging spectator experience but there is a danger that constant physical contacts become boring and that means the spectator switches off. When people watch the sport they want to see a range of different skills – speed, vision, ball handling, kicking.

So, I know if I critiqued at a game from 1995 and compared it to a recent game, the former would be probably laughable because the professional standards then were nothing like the professional standards are now. Even though rugby turned professional in 1995, it took a long time for attitudes to catch up, maybe six or seven years.

As a sport, rugby union has always been a game for people of all shapes and sizes and that’s what made it attractive. Now though every player is lean, fit and tall. This takes away a lot of the history of the game

and could potentially limit the size of the audience to which the game will appeal to.

To be successful and popular, rugby needs to be an inspirational sport for all ages and ability levels. Children need role models like Shane Williams – a 5ft 7in (170cm) winger who broke the record for Welsh caps – to follow. They need to think ‘well I might be small but that never stopped Shane’, rather than thinking the game isn’t for them because they do not have the physical attributes of the modern players.

There has been a lot of talk around the banning of tackling in schools. What is your view on introducing a ban?

If you ban tackling in school you struggle to call the activity rugby. Tackling is a technique that is learnt and at some stage developing athletes will have to learn how to do it. Children are fearless. This is a good time to learn the skill.

If we go as far as to exclude tackling we may as well change the shape of the ball and put goal posts at either end of the pitch because you are then turning it into a completely different game.

Thomas says rugby has changed “an unbelievable amount” since he made his debut for Wales in 1995



Many athletes find it hard to transition to ‘real life’ at the end of their sporting careers. Did you find it hard?

It was very difficult. I went from a life where I was surrounded by friends and team mates, the phone ringing every day, sponsorship deals constantly being offered, to a life where I was excluded from my circle of friends, the phone doesn't ring and the cause I had dedicated my whole life to had disappeared. I had gone from being at the top of my career ladder to being back at the bottom.

The challenge is that many employers are looking for academic qualifications to reinforce an individual's ability to perform tasks. As a full-time rugby player, I had no qualifications to show for all my years of effort and achievement.

I believe that professional rugby players carry many traits that would make them successful in the corporate world. Leadership, dedication, the importance of giving 100 per cent commitment to your team mates are all vitally important in the achievement of business goals and difficult for academic qualifications to teach.

Businesses are starting to recognise the value ex-professional sports men and women can bring to their organisations, but it's still a struggle for individuals to carve out successful careers post sport. Most ex-professional rugby players don't have the financial backing that footballers enjoy, so there is still often pressure to find a way to generate a decent income.

You now do some ambassadorial work with schools and young players – what's your take on the health of grassroots rugby?

It varies depending on the school and geographical location. In Wales, unfortunately it feels like grassroots rugby is struggling. The structure of Welsh Rugby is not good, there just isn't the necessary funding structure in place.

Clubs are having to spend too much time raising funds and trying to make themselves financially viable. But rugby is such a fantastic game. It's great for creating social opportunities and instilling core values and these attributes will ensure that it continues to survive at some level. I would like to see more focus on grassroots delivery.



“There have been suggestions that swimming can stimulate parts of the brain that could slow down the progression of dementia – we want to see the evidence”

Ian Cumming, Health Education England chief executive

Can swimming slow down the onset of dementia? Or help people cope with depression? The answer – according to a number of studies – is yes. And, for the first time, the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) will attempt to pull this “wealth of evidence” together to proactively demonstrate the sport’s positive effect on mental, and physical, health.

An expert panel – dubbed the Health Commission for Swimming – has been drafted in by the organisation, headed up by Health Education England chief executive Ian Cumming.

Cumming, who is a Level 3 swimming coach himself, will meet monthly with his panel of colleagues to sift through research which correlates regular swimming activity with increased wellbeing, before delivering its findings to the ASA in December.

“Many years ago I used to swim competitively – not



Cumming will head the newly established panel

to an incredibly high standard I have to say – but it’s something I greatly enjoyed,” he tells *Sports Management*. “I have been interested in the benefits of swimming personally for a period of time, beyond the obvious benefits around physical health.”

FINDING PROOF

While Cumming and co will pluck out pieces of work which demonstrate swimming’s effect on weight management, physical fitness and the benefits of the cardiovascular system, he reveals that he is keen to get his

teeth into the academic studies which show that swimming aids the lonely and socially excluded, or slows down dementia for the elderly.

“On top of that there’s the safety aspect as well, in terms of people actually finding themselves in water in difficulty,” he adds. “If people are able to swim then the outcomes are likely to be very different than if they are unable to swim.”

While Cumming’s experience in the pool strengthened his candidacy for the role, his credentials in the world of public health has given him a vast amount of insight into the strain the NHS currently finds itself under, and how physically activity can help ease the burden.

Alongside other arm’s length health bodies, Health Education England published a *Five Year Forward Review* in which one of the three main sections was about “moving people upstream” – preventing people from being ill and helping them manage their own health.

HEALTH BENEFITS

Cumming explains there is an “inexorable rise”



The panel’s findings will be delivered to the ASA in December 2016



Turn over: Former Welsh rugby star Gareth Thomas on grassroots rugby



in the demand for healthcare services as a result of lifestyle choices such as the lack of a balanced diet and regular exercise. While physical activity is being increasingly seen as a preventative measure, he says that the Health Commission for Swimming represents the first time an individual sport is being examined for the health benefits it delivers.

“This piece of work directly links with what we call the ‘health gap,’” he says. “Colleagues in public health have been working for many years and have done fantastic work on linking the benefits of sport and exercise to health. To my knowledge this is the first time we’ve specifically looked at an individual sport and investigated the benefits it can achieve.”

The commission will look globally for research, with “lots of work coming out of Australia, Canada and the US”, but Cumming highlights “eminent research already available in this country”. He admits that presenting the physical benefits of swimming would prove to be slightly easier than any effect the

Swimming is the latest sector to begin making a case for how it can contribute to the health of the nation

sport has on mental health, but he points to “a lot of research in this area,” especially the monitoring of people with depression and anxiety.

“There has been some really interesting stuff done around dementia,” he says. “This is an area I do want to get into the report. There have been some suggestions that regular exercise such as swimming can stimulate parts of the brain that could slow down the progression of dementia.”

However, the panel has reserved the right to commission original research if appropriate if there are gaps in any work. The subject is too important, says Cumming, to leave any stone unturned.

“We will produce our report by early December, and it may be that our report actually identifies that we want more research to be undertaken beyond that,” he explains. “We are probably going to have meetings on a monthly basis as we move through the rest of the year, identifying the findings and putting the evidence all together.”





“The challenge for us has been to differentiate ourselves from systems which only offer a few features”

Niraj Shah, founder, EventGrid

Born: Kathmandu, Nepal.

Bio: Studied Information Technology at Central Queensland University in Sydney, Australia. Moved to New York in search of a new challenge in 1999. Launched Entech Solutions in 2006 – a consulting startup helping other startups with their tech needs. Launched EventGrid in 2013. Lives in New Jersey with his wife and daughter

The company: www.eventgrid.com

What is Eventgrid?

Eventgrid is a registration management and ticketing system designed for sports events of all sizes. It helps organisations with their event management needs by providing a single platform that powers registration, marketing, promotion and management needs.

It is used by a wide range of clients – from individuals to multinational corporations – and customers include sports organisations as well as companies in other markets, such as Sony and AirBnB.

How did you come up with the idea for it?

The idea actually came from helping a client. I was setting up a simple registration site for a client, trying to use the client’s existing system. The solution was very old, so I recommended they create a new system – and it took off from there.

When did Eventgrid launch?

In early 2013. The first couple of events were pretty small. We had a local Little League in New York use the platform for team and game registration.

All of the players had to be registered and had to pay the fee. Then, we had a dance company use our software to sell tickets for their recital and it grew from there. The platform is designed to be simple to use and suitable for a range of events.

How many events does Eventgrid manage?

More than 1,000 a year; ranging from small ones – such as local baseball teams and lacrosse registrations – to Fortune 500 companies distributing tickets to games for their VIP clients.

Which sports are you targeting?

What we’ve learned is that sports industries share many of the same pain points that Eventgrid already helps alleviate in other verticals. While we’ve already had success in golf, baseball and lacrosse, we see massive opportunity in sports such as tennis, swimming, cricket, soccer and running.

What was the most challenging aspect of bringing Eventgrid to the market?

The noise in the event registration and ticketing market. There are hundreds of mediocre solutions available and we had to differentiate our system, which is a complete event management tool, from platforms which only offer a few features.





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ACTIVE PEOPLE SURVEY

Participation rate grows by 340,000

The number of people taking part in sport in England has reached the same level as the post-London 2012 Olympics boom – with a rise in female participants and an increase in gym users.

Sport England's *Active People Survey* revealed that a 340,000 year-on-year boost in participation has lifted the number of people taking part in sport for four days a week to 15.83m – the same figure recorded in October 2012.

Women accounted for 75 per cent of the increase, with 261,200 more active

“The sports sector needs to rethink how it supports disabled people”



SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/VANLEY

▲ The number of women taking part in sport increased by 261,200

than this time last year. The number of sporty men grew by 81,900 year-on-year.

Sport England CEO Jennie Price said that while the figures were “encouraging” she was “concerned” about the fall in participation numbers among the disabled.

Despite “significant focus and investment” the number of disabled

people taking part fell by 2,400 to 1.56m.

“The sports sector needs to rethink how it supports disabled people, and in particular we all need to recognise that most disabled people are over 50 and that 75 per cent have more than one impairment,” said Price.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=j9c9X>

Number of club members in boxing and archery surges in 2015/16

The number of individuals joining boxing and archery clubs has surged in the past year – with both sports increasing their base by over a third.

According to Sport England statistics released with the publication of the latest *Active People Survey*, the number of people joining boxing clubs mushroomed by 39.2 per cent from 28,600 in March 2015, to 39,800 in March 2016.

However, the sport still has some catching up to do to reach the 53,000 level of membership that clubs enjoyed in October 2014.

Archery also grew its club members by a third, with a 33.2 per cent upsurge year-on-year to 33,300 club members, while netball and cricket grew their club base by 13.9 per cent and 13.8 per cent to 97,600 and 148,800 respectively.

Equestrianism experienced the biggest plunge in club members over the year, from 35,700 in March 2015 to 22,700 in March 2016, although participation in the sport curiously increased over the year from 279,300 to 289,900.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=b3t3P>



SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/ZELIKODAN

▲ Archery club numbers are up





▲ John Whittingdale said he was committed to the building of the new stadium

Government backs Cornwall stadium

The government has given its backing to the proposed £10m (US\$14.5m, €12.7m) Stadium for Cornwall development.

The secretary of state for culture, media and sport John Whittingdale said the plan to build the 6,000-10,000-capacity stadium for the Cornish Pirates rugby team was something he was “committed to”.

“I have already had two meetings with interested parties in Cornwall,” he said. “I understand that good progress is being made and a draft planning application is going before the council. I hope that will lead to progress and that we will see commencement of work in the near future.”

“I have had two meetings with interested parties and I hope we will see the commencement of work in the near future”

The development – which will also be the home of the Cornish Sharks American football team and Truro and Penwith College – is awaiting council approval, as well as the confirmation of partnerships with retailers who will invest in retail units to bankroll the project.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=u1R0q>

Business secretary Javid opens Bromsgrove football facility

Sajid Javid helped to launch a new £1.3m (US\$1.8m, €1.6m) football facility in his home constituency of Bromsgrove.

Javid – the secretary of state for business, innovation and



▲ Business secretary Sajid Javid MP

skills – cut the ribbon on a new development for South Bromsgrove High School, which received funding from the Premier League and the Football Association.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=Y1o2r>

NEWS IN BRIEF



▲ Chef de mission, Winckless

England hires Winckless for Gold Coast 2018

Olympic bronze medallist Sarah Winckless has been appointed as Team England’s chef de mission for the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

Former elite rower Winckless – who won her medal at the 2004 Games in Athens, as well as two World Rowing Championship golds – will also oversee the team during the 2017 Commonwealth Youth Games in the Bahamas.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=L3b4L>

British Judo launches governance review

The British Judo Association (BJA) has commissioned a review of its governance procedures after a sponsorship deal dispute resulted in the loss of the European Championships.

Sport England and UK Sport – which published a damning report into the situation – have agreed to the review, which will include an “extensive consultation” with members and stakeholders with a view to making changes to the BJA’s governance documents.

The selection process for the appointment of a consultant to carry out the review will be completed by the end of June.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=f9k1w>



NEWS IN BRIEF



▲ New owner Simon Orange

New Sale Sharks boss sets out his stall

Premiership rugby club Sale Sharks has been acquired by a local investment company which is aiming to turn Manchester into a hotbed of rugby union.

CorpAcq, the Manchester-based firm controlled by Simon Orange, purchased the club from long-time owner Brian Kennedy, who spent 16 years at the helm.

The company is targeting success in the Premiership and has committed to investing in the senior squad, academy and commercial team.

Orange said he would put the finance and effort in to “close the gap between Sale Sharks and the teams above us”.

“We intend to establish Manchester as a Premiership rugby region,” he added. “The academy is one of the best in the Premiership, with 12 of our junior players involved with England at various age groups and three senior players, originally from our academy, called up to the full England training squad, and we plan further investment in order to strengthen it.

“Sale also has an award-winning Community Service Programme which we also intend to grow.”

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=C4S30>



▲ Powerleague will also launch free Soccercise classes for women beginners

Powerleague offers free women's football

Women will be allowed to play free football at Powerleague sites around the country as the five-a-side operator attempts to grow its female customer base.

The move is part of a wider initiative, titled #SheScores, which has been launched by Powerleague to generate interest among adult females. Women will be allowed to hire a pitch for free an hour each week, all day at weekends and between 9am-5pm weekdays.

Powerleague is also launching the first Women's Euro League – a format which

includes a weekly game night with teams playing two matches of 25 minutes each. The winners of the league will earn an all-expenses paid trip to the Netherlands for the Women's European Championships.

In addition, women new to the game will be invited to take part in a free weekly Soccercise session that teaches basic skills and includes a 60-minute aerobic workout. The routine was developed by the Football Association (FA).

“Participation in women's football is on the increase and we want women players to feel welcomed in our centres,” said Powerleague CEO Rupert Campbell. “We've spoken to players and understand there can be barriers to playing five-a-side so we've looked at how we can redesign five-a-side to overcome some of those obstacles.”

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=u5l9s>

“Women's football is on the increase and we want women players to feel welcomed”

British Gymnastics scheme attracts 1,500 disabled members

A British Gymnastics programme to make the sport more open to disabled participants has attracted 1,500

people to become members.

Following the launch of I'm In, more than 200 affiliated clubs

offer gymnastics to people with physical or learning disabilities.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=W2r0W>

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PARTICIPATION

Warwickshire kids get free cricket bats

A thousand youngsters across Birmingham and Warwickshire will receive a free cricket bat as a way to encourage more children into the sport.

Warwickshire County Cricket Club has partnered with Birmingham City Council's health and wellbeing team to deliver the plastic bats to local schools, youth clubs and community initiatives.

Children will also be invited to attend free cricket coaching on Friday evenings, where they will also be eligible to take home a bat. In addition, bats will be

“This is part of a wider initiative to get people of all ages playing this summer”



▲ Warwickshire and Birmingham Bears' Ian Bell (left) poses with a plastic bat

distributed through the Edgbaston Foundation, which provides support for community projects across the region.

Neil Snowball, Warwickshire CEO, said the club was “aiming to make the game more accessible to youngsters” and playing with a plastic bat and tennis ball broke down some of the barriers.

“The giveaway is part of a wider initiative to get people of all ages playing the game this summer,” he added.

Birmingham City Council deputy leader Ian Ward said: “This is a great way to get young people across Birmingham into cricket.”

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=m2Y8M>

British Swimming launches youth training camp

Eighty talented young British swimmers have been invited to a four-day camp to give them the experience of being in a national squad environment ahead of the Tokyo 2020 Olympics.

Hosted by British Swimming at the Aberdeen Sports Village, 40 females aged 14-17 and 40 males aged 15-18 from England, Scotland and Wales will be split into gender and stroke-specific groups.

Athletes chosen to take part will be selected during the British Summer Championships



▲ The camp will take place in September

in July. Once selected, the camp will take place between 15 and 18 September.

“This is the first time in a long period that we have embarked on bringing such a large group of junior

swimmers together for one consolidated camp,” said Tim Jones, British Swimming's head of performance pathway.

“At the start of the Tokyo cycle it is a great opportunity to be as inclusive as possible with a group of athletes who potentially see the 2020 and 2024 Olympic Games as longer-term goals.”

The camp will include athlete profiling and education sessions, with selected swimmers working with some of the nation's leading coaches.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=i8Y4m>



▲ England player Sasha Corbin

Ten netball players become first professionals

The first batch of full-time players have been unveiled by England Netball as the organisation launches its world-class training programme.

In a historic move for the sport, 10 athletes have gone professional as the national governing body aims for success at the 2019 World Cup.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=v4v5o>



Turn over: New Sale Sharks owner looks to build the game of rugby in Manchester

health sport activity



“Working together for a brighter future”



PARA-SPORT

IPC signs 'brand enhancing' deal

The International Olympic Committee (IOC) and International Paralympic Committee (IPC) have aligned ever more closely after signing a long-term agreement to "enhance the brand" of the Paralympic Games.

The organisations agreed a Memorandum of Understanding in which they both will increase the visibility of the Paralympic Games and ensure the financial sustainability of the IPC. They will also work closely on the implementation of Agenda

"The focus on sport for all will enable the IPC to reach more people around the world"



▲ The IOC will support the IPC and increase its ability to be financially sustainable

2020 – the IOC's governance and sustainability requirements.

Running until 2032, the new agreement builds on current partnership and cooperation agreements that were signed prior to the London 2012 Games.

IOC president Thomas Bach said

the agreement was an "important milestone", adding: "The IPC's focus on sport for all and on high-level performance will enable it to reach more and more people around the world, and to ensure the organisation's long-term success."

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=r4g2p>

Glasgow Warriors rugby team seeks council's artificial pitch permission

Scottish rugby union club Glasgow Warriors has submitted a proposal to install an artificial pitch at its Scotstoun Stadium after being forced to play matches elsewhere last season.

The Pro12 team saw its field badly affected during last winter's heavy rainfall and had to play three matches away from Scotstoun, while a fourth match was postponed.

The proposed all-weather pitch installation – which meets World Rugby guidelines – will reduce the risk of fixture postponement. As part of the work planned, the adjacent training field will



▲ Last winter's wet weather damaged the pitch

also be improved, as well as the athletics facilities for International Association of Athletics Federation events.

Glasgow City Council's Executive Committee will be

asked to approve the works this week. If the project gets the green light, it will be funded by the council, Scottish Rugby, Glasgow Warriors and sportscotland.

Work will commence later this month and is poised to be ready for the 2016/17 season.

Glasgow Warriors coach Gregor Townsend said the "state-of-the-art artificial surface" would give the team the opportunity to play a "high-tempo game".

Nathan Bombrys, Glasgow Warriors managing director, added: "After the challenges of last season, it's great that we're close to installing a pitch that will give us a consistently excellent surface all season, to play the exciting rugby that we like to play."

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=z1a0Y>



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NGBS

Sport England chief praises netball, cricket and rugby

Insight work endorsed by the quango helps governing bodies increase participation

Sport England has praised the governing bodies of rugby union, netball and cricket for their insight work after all three saw substantial boosts in participation.

Cricket grew its number of participants by 32 per cent year-on-year to 179,700, netball surged by 9 per cent to 164,100, while rugby union increased its number of players to 196,900, representing a 13 per cent increase.

While the latter benefited from the “unprecedented” effect of hosting last year’s Rugby World Cup, with extensive national interest, Sport England chief executive Jennie Price was quick to highlight the work done by the Rugby Football Union (RFU) to bring people into the game with a long-term focus.

“Steve Grainger, the RFU development director, really understands the principles of insight-driven delivery,” Price told *Sports Management*.

“The RFU spent a lot of time working out what people might want from rugby, and they used initiatives around the World Cup to provide that.”

Price pointed to the RFU’s emphasis on getting older players back into the game, spending money on insight-driven advertising and putting on special sessions as the foundation for the growth.

Netball, said Price, was also doing sophisticated work in terms of insight.



JIPKX/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

▲ The ECB’s Get the Game On initiative has been praised by Sport England

“The RFU really understands the principles of insight driven delivery. It spent a lot of time working out what people might want from rugby”

She referenced the sport’s Back to Netball initiative – which brings former players back into the game – and the research behind it as one of the reasons for the strong growth in netball players aged over 26.

The England and Wales Cricket Board’s (ECB) Get the Game On scheme was lauded by the Sport England boss for its innovative concept and for the flexible way it approaches club games even when teams can’t field full sides.

Price commented that the ECB has become “more insight-driven generally” over the past two or three years, and that

clubs were “more relaxed”, facilitating the participation growth it has experienced over the last 12 months.

Last month the quango published its new five-year strategy, which revealed that core money for national governing bodies (NGBs) would shrink from 38 per cent to 29 per cent of its total budget. NGBs will, however, be able to bid from other pots of money if they can produce outcomes consistent with the government’s sport strategy, such as mental and physical health improvement, social cohesion and positive economic output.

<http://lei.sr?a=Z9P3k>



▲ Jennie Price, CEO of Sport England



Turn over: Rugby team makes artificial pitch request to the council

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FACILITIES

Indian firm wins Qatar project

Larsen & Toubro, the largest construction firm in India, has won the contract to build Qatar's 2022 World Cup venue, the Al Rayyan Stadium.

Construction of the 40,000-capacity stadium will be delivered in a joint venture with Qatari contractor Al Balagh Trading & Contracting. The deal was announced by the Supreme Committee for Delivery and Legacy (SC) – the organisers of the tournament.

“This marks an important milestone in our progress and preparations for

“The impact of the stadium will be felt long before the stadium is finished in 2019”



▲ The stadium will be converted to hold 20,000 people arena after the tournament

the 2022 FIFA World Cup,” said SC secretary general Hassan Al Thawadi.

“The impact of this stadium and its surrounding precinct will be felt long before the stadium is finished in 2019, with the recently completed outdoor training pitches set to be used by the current Qatar Stars

League champion Al Rayyan Club for its upcoming season.”

The Al Rayyan Stadium was designed by Ramboll and Pattern and is expected to be built by 2019. Following the tournament the stadium will accommodate 20,000 seats.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=h404G>

Cox Architecture design pre-manufactured velodrome for 2018 Asia Games

Cox Architecture will create a 3,000 capacity velodrome in Jakarta for the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia.

According to reports in Australia, where the studio has its headquarters, the project will cost AU\$51m (US\$38m, €33.6m, £26.5m) and is set to be completed by June 2018.

Engineering firm Motts MacDonald, Indonesian architects BKM and construction company Wika are all said to be involved.

In order to ensure the quick construction time, a modular structure will be used and readily available materials chosen. The velodrome will

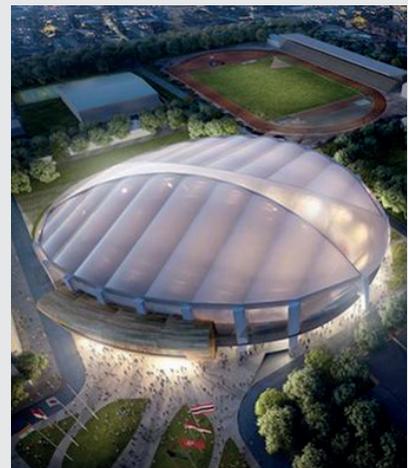
have a membrane roof allowing natural daylight into the building, and making the venue glow in the evenings.

Indonesia won the right to host the tournament in October 2014, after Vietnam withdrew due to the high cost of staging the event.

Tournament planners have come to view the partial prefabrication of facilities as a way to make sure construction is completed on time.

After the Asian Games, the velodrome will be converted to host multiple other sports and events.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=9L0x1>



▲ The arena has a membrane roof



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▲ Bid co-chair Tony Estanguet

Paris 2024 unveils aquatics centre plans

The organisers of Paris’s bid for the 2024 Olympic Games have unveiled plans to build a 15,000-capacity aquatics centre if the city’s hosting application is successful.

Located in the Saint-Denis region of Paris, the centre will house two 50m (165ft) swimming pools and two diving pools. Once the Games are over the capacity will be scaled down to 2,500.

The aquatics centre will be the only facility that will need to be constructed for the Games, and will be home to the swimming, synchronised swimming and diving events. The venue will be connected to the Stade de France, which will host the opening and closing ceremonies.

Tony Estanguet, co-chair of the Paris 2024 bid, said the facility would be a “spectacular venue for Olympic sport providing optimal conditions for world-class performances”.

“The new venue’s close proximity to the Stade de France and the athletes’ village enhances the compactness of the Paris 2024 bid with great accessibility for athletes, spectators and media,” he added.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=H7P7k>

SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/MITCH GUNN



▲ Inter has struggled for success since winning the Champions League in 2010

Chinese firm acquires Inter Milan FC

Italian football giant Internazionale Milan has been acquired by Chinese firm Suning Holding in a move which indicates the nation’s growing interest in owning football assets.

Suning – which also owns Chinese Superleague club Jiangsu Suning FC – has purchased a 70 per cent majority stake in the 2010 Champions League winners for around €270m (£212.3m, US\$306.6m), with Erick Thohir’s International Sports Capital becoming the sole minority shareholder.

Thohir will retain his position as president, with former owner Massimo Moratti exiting the club. The Indonesian said the deal was a

“This agreement will allow us to get much closer to our huge fanbase in China and the Asia Pacific region”

“game changer” for Inter.

Thohir added: “The popularity of the game, particularly in Asia and China, is going through a period of massive growth. This agreement will allow us to get much closer to our huge fanbase in China and the Asia Pacific region.”

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=O2Z7w>

Irish government earmarks €1m for women’s traditional sports

Women’s football and the traditional sport of camogie will receive a €1m (£791,745, US\$1.2m) boost from the Irish government over a two-year period.

Minister for Tourism and Sport Patrick



▲ Camogie will benefit from the funding

O’Donovan announced the two-year deal to provide support for inter-county ladies football and camogie. Funds are being provided by Sport Ireland.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=f1k0S>

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Paul Thomas

Strategic leadership and sport inclusion expert Dr Paul Thomas took over as chair of Sport Wales in May. In his first interview since his appointment, Thomas speaks about the importance of volunteers and the need for a partnership approach to getting people more active

Tom Walker • managing editor • Sports Management

Sport Wales' newly appointed chair, Dr Paul Thomas, has an impressive CV. Perhaps best known by the wider public as the BBC's 'Business Doctor', he is the founder of creative think tank DNA Definitive, a guest speaker at the prestigious TEDx conferences and a former course leader of MBA programmes at the University of Wales.

Within sport, the Welshman has worked closely with Olympic coaches through his work at DNA Definitive and has also headed major projects for UK Sport and Sport England. He has frontline experience too: he began his career as a 15 year-old lifeguard and worked as an assistant manager at a leisure centre.

Now Thomas – shortlisted for Sir Alex Ferguson's 'most influential leader' award in 2015 – has a fresh challenge: to ensure every child in the country is "hooked on sport for life", as outlined in Sport Wales' strategy.

In keeping with his reputation as a high achiever, however, Thomas is keen to push the brief even further. "I know our strapline is to get every child hooked on sport," he says. "But for me that doesn't do our mission justice. What we really want to achieve is to get everyone in Wales active on a regular basis.

"That's not to say we're not completely focused on getting children more physically active, because of course we are, but the language shift I want to achieve is that we're very much focused on adults too."

VOLUNTEER FORCE

While Thomas' self-imposed target of making every adult active is ambitious, the Welsh people's famous



Sport is incredibly important to Wales – you can witness it in every Welsh town on a Monday morning when there's been a sporting success

Paul Thomas was appointed as Sport Wales chair in May 2016

passion for sport has provided him with a head start. According to figures from Sport Wales' latest *Active Adults Survey*, 41 per cent of people aged 15 or older are already "hooked on sport" – meaning that they are regularly involved in sport in some way – either by taking part or by volunteering.

"Sport is incredibly important to Wales," he says. "You can witness the euphoria in every Welsh town on a Monday morning when there's been a Welsh sporting success over the weekend – such as a Six Nations rugby win or a podium finish at a major competition."

It is Thomas' intention to harness that passion and to convert it into higher participation figures.





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Cover star:
Footballer Gareth Bale's electric performances at the Euro 2016 tournament has made him a national hero – and could inspire more children to take up sport



For help, He will rely on what he describes as Welsh sport's biggest strength – its army of volunteers.

"The rough estimate last year was that we have 43,000 volunteer coaches," he says. "I want to build on that. The important thing for us over the next couple of months will be to work out how we get more people engaged, even if it's in roles such as organising and being stewards at events."

To help with that engagement, Sport Wales earlier this month launched a new strategy designed to recruit more volunteers. Called Give to Gain, the plan outlines three approaches, to be adopted across all sports. These are telling volunteers exactly what's expected of them, such as role descriptions or time commitments; making sure volunteers are valued, developed and supported with education and awards; and highlighting the benefits of volunteering, such as improved health, employability and confidence.

As with the target of making every Welsh adult active, Thomas and his Sport Wales colleagues have set the bar high for Give to Gain – to boost the number of sports volunteers to 300,000 by 2019. With a population of 3 million, that's 10 per cent of the Welsh population.

For Thomas, the new volunteer strategy doesn't come soon enough. "The

Sport Wales has set the goal of getting every child in the country hooked on sport

problem I think we've had in the past has been to place too much emphasis on definition. The traditional way to secure volunteers is to say that there's a certain role at a certain place and someone needs to commit to it. That's fine, but what we also need to do is to catch and then support the people who can't commit to a specific role – but are ready to give an hour or two a week.

"We also need to take away some of the bureaucracy that exists in volunteering. We want people to enjoy sports and not overwhelm those looking to help, which I think might have happened in the past. Filling out forms and conducting risk assessments are all valid and needed, but we've got to ensure we make it easier for people to actually get involved and get doing things."

IMPROVED FACILITIES

As well as implementing a new plan to recruit volunteers, Thomas will also be kept busy delivering Sport Wales' new sports facilities blueprint. Published in partnership with the Welsh government, *Facilities for Future Generations: A Blueprint for Sport and Active Recreation in Wales* lays out a framework as a point of reference to "help inform long-term, sustainable decision-making" on the design, provision and maintenance of facilities.

The report outlines a 25-year plan and a long-term approach to facilities provision, recommending a local government review for all current and planned

Army of volunteers

The number of volunteers in Welsh sport has grown from 110,000 in 2008 to 235,000 in 2015, contributing £300m (US\$433.9m, €388.8m) to the Welsh economy.





The biggest challenge we face in achieving our goal is to somehow find a way to stop people working in isolation. The more we can sit down together and plan the better

provisions – including schools, colleges/universities, private and voluntary sector facilities. Thomas says it’s an important document which will add clarity to the way sports facilities are planned and delivered in Wales – as well as ensuring every effort is made to create sustainable venues at every level.

“The new strategy is about making sure we plan every penny we spend and that we have a proper infrastructure and the right facilities in the right places,” Thomas explains. “It will also help us make sure we’ve got the right number of facilities for our needs – enough pools, for example.

“What I really like about it is that it’s not a short-term vision. It will be in place for the next 25 years. It’s part of our work to move Sport Wales from short-term strategies to long-term ones – to come up with solutions for the next five, 10 and even 25 years.”

PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

Thomas describes his role as a strategic one and says one of his key responsibilities will be to ensure the voice of sport is heard whenever policy decisions are made in any of the areas affecting physical activity. “I want to make sure Sport Wales is

Volunteers such as coaches are seen as key to delivering the ambitious targets

part of every conversation in every meeting about education and health,” he says. “We need to be seen as a real, true partner, who wants to listen and help facilitate towards an even better future for sport and physical activity here in Wales.”

“The biggest challenge we face in achieving our goals – from producing better facilities to getting everyone active – is to somehow find a way to stop people working in isolation. The more we can sit down together with those who plan education, health and town planning the better.”

Three months into the part-time role, Thomas has already gone above and beyond in order to familiarise himself with the challenge ahead. “While my role is officially for two days each week, I’m working seven days a week at the moment,” he says. “I’m visiting clubs and going to events because I want to make sure that I’m there for anyone who needs a little bit of help and support in their delivery of sport.”

And it’s not just the days he spends thinking about his new job. “The people involved in sport in Wales are incredibly driven,” he says. “I’m literally having sleepless nights for fear of letting these people down – I’ve not had that during my 30-year career.” ●

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The importance of honest appraisal

Submitting views to consultations can be time consuming – but it can make a huge difference, writes Andy Reed. The former MP is currently undertaking a review of the County Sports Partnerships

When I was asked by DCMS to carry out the review of County Sport Partnerships (CSP) – first announced in the government's *Sporting Future* strategy – I jumped at the chance to help. Although, for very good Civil Service reasons, the 'review' became an 'appraisal', but that's another story.

Having worked inside government with civil servants on policy development over the years, I couldn't resist the opportunity to help address some of the challenges set out in the strategy and the Sport England response. It's one of the reasons I set up the Sports Think Tank – to develop good long-term policy solutions based on evidence.

STRATEGIC CHALLENGES

The new strategy sets tough challenges, such as working with new groups of consumers and measuring outcomes differently. In many respects we're entering uncharted waters. So the appraisal isn't

The consultation events were lively and engaging and some people certainly took the opportunity to be very honest

intended as a review of past performance, but is about how we can get the most out of the current network and partnerships.

I'm sure there was a degree of 'consultation fatigue' in the sector by the time I launched the CSP Future online survey and set up workshops across the country. But I was determined that we listened and encouraged stakeholders to participate. I was also genuine in my intention to start with an open mind.

The fact that more than 300 people and organisations took time to submit useful and interesting insights was powerful for me. I spent my Friday evenings individually reading all weekly submissions. I'm sure there are some who wonder if it's ever worth submitting views to consultations. From my experience and engagement in this process, I'd always encourage thoughtful interventions. I picked up new information, fresh ideas and perspectives and some very honest feedback. This is vital in any policy-making process.

The consultation events were lively and engaging and some people certainly took the opportunity to be very honest. I love this sort of input and challenge. It's good we can be robust in a mature way with each other if we are to get the best out of our combined efforts.

CONSISTENT MESSAGES

If new community sport and physical activity partnerships are to work they will have to be consistent

in their mission and delivery of services and strategic in their approach locally. This may mean partnerships looking different across the country and working with different agencies but the objective of a joined-up sport and physical activity system at local level still remains a dream worth pursuing. Where the tensions do exist we need to act quickly to resolve them in the interests of the consumer.

I trust that as we develop and deliver the new Sport England strategy all those who submitted their views will recognise their input has been part of the answers to making the system work better for the people we are here to serve.

Consultations, reviews and appraisals are far from kicking an issue into the long grass. They are a great opportunity to listen, share and shape solutions. ●



County Sport Partnerships look to activate all members of the community



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The leisure water effect

FaulknerBrowns Architects' Mike Hall reflects on the public sector's role in providing innovative spaces for sport



FaulknerBrowns recently submitted plans for an exciting new, high octane waterpark for the city of Coventry. During the process, I couldn't help but reflect on the parallels between this bold move by the local council and the debate surrounding the remit of the BBC as a public broadcaster in contrast to competing providers in the private sector.

Of the few waterparks built in the UK in the last few years almost all have been investments by the private sector, with holiday destinations such as Center Parcs dominating the landscape. This has raised the question of why a publicly funded local authority would invest in a city centre waterpark and – like the BBC – how will it be able to demonstrate value for money.

PUBLIC BENEFITS

Firstly, it's important to consider the wider regeneration benefits that a destination leisure facility can bring to a city centre. We know that through increased footfall and inspirational placemaking, similar schemes have acted as catalysts for private sector investment, bringing a welcome boost to the economy.

For the last 20 years, much sporting

policy and funding in aquatics facilities has been driven by lane swimming, but the reality is that participation covers a wide spectrum of activity, ranging from supervised play through to developing water confidence, swimming for recreation and fitness and competition swimming. The ideal aquatics centre would contain facilities to provide for all these activities.

As well as the characteristic flume rides, the Coventry waterpark proposals contain toddler areas, leisure water to a range of depths and also lane swimming.

From both a social perspective and – in particular – a health standpoint, it's interesting to examine the concept behind this new waterpark through the viewpoint of changing government policy, because the *Sporting Futures* strategy places much greater emphasis on a wider, more holistic health and leisure offer which is in tune with this type of facility development.

HEALTH BENEFITS

There's also a strong argument to suggest that significant 'incidental' (non-swimming related) health benefits arise from the leisure water experience, both in terms of the physical movement up and down the levels of the facility and also

from the associated feel-good factor.

In our Coventry proposal this vertical movement up through the building is exaggerated by the tight city centre site, which has led us to stack the facilities on top of each other: the main pools and the ride hall are stacked three stories above the 25m pool, the wet changing and the spa, with access provided by a generous spiral ramp up through the building.

STRONG PUBLIC SECTOR ROLE

Like the BBC, there is a strong role that the public sector can play, alongside the private sector, in providing high quality entertainment. In this case the added public value is provided through strong health and wellbeing benefits, in much the same way the BBC focuses on providing an educational offer.

In the post-Olympic landscape, schemes to promote health and wellbeing need to be conceived and delivered through innovative delivery mechanisms. As in the case of the BBC, change is needed, but the public sector is capable of championing innovative thinking. ●

*See more on sport in Coventry on page 34
Read about the ASA's initiative to prove the health benefits of swimming on page 8*





A SLEEPING GIANT

Coventry is emerging as a new sporting powerhouse, thanks to a new emphasis on partnerships and a strategic approach to improving facilities

Tom Walker • managing editor • Sports Management

“**T**he next two years will be spectacularly exciting for sport in Coventry,” enthuses David Moorcroft, chair of the Coventry Sports Network (CSN). “The city is a sleeping giant when it comes to sport and it’s great to see it being woken it from its slumber.”

‘About time’, is probably what a typical Coventry-based sports fan would say. Despite the city’s rich heritage in team sports – and reputation for producing a string of Olympic athletes and swimmers – there has been a distinct sense of underachievement over the past 30 years.

Coventry City Football Club (CCFC) – FA Cup winners in 1987 – last played in the Premier League in 2001 and now languishes in the third tier of English football. The club even had to move to Northampton for a year, following a dispute over rent payments at its Ricoh Arena home.

In rugby, Coventry RFC has been unable to build on its golden era in the 1960s and 70s –



Paul Breed, CEO of Coventry Sports Foundation (left) and David Moorcroft



Turn over: Mike Hall column

– when many of its team played for their countries – and the club slipped out of the Premiership in the late 1980s, never to return. Meanwhile, Warwickshire County Cricket Club has failed to repeat the successes it enjoyed in the 1990s, when it dominated English cricket.

Things haven't been brilliant at grassroots level either. According to ukActive's *Turning the Tide of Inactivity* study, published in 2014, Coventry was England's 9th least physically active local authority, with more than a third (37 per cent) of adults classed as inactive. The report estimated that sedentary lifestyles were costing the city an extra £24m a year in healthcare spending.

NETWORKING

According to Moorcroft – a Coventry-born former double Commonwealth Games champion runner and 5,000m world record holder – that is all about to change. “The plan is to return to the heady days when Coventry's rugby and football teams – as well as athletes and swimmers – were among the best in the country,” he tells *Sports Management*.

Coventry Sports Network

Coventry City Council

Coventry Sports Foundation

Coventry Sports Trust

University of Warwick

Coventry University

Sport England

County Sports Partnership

The network includes all sports delivery agencies and holds meetings every six weeks

At the centre of those plans is a brand new, city-wide strategy for sport. Published by the CSN, the document covers every aspect from grassroots to elite sport and from facilities to major events.

“There had been a noticeable lack of a sports strategy which would clearly outline what the stakeholders were trying to achieve in the city,” says Paul Breed, CEO of leisure trust Coventry Sports Foundation, and one of the driving forces behind the strategy. “So we thought it'd be a good idea to contact all the organisations who were delivering



The new Engage! initiative delivers rugby training at 50 schools and looks to establish Coventry as a “city of rugby”



Eight visionary aims for Coventry

- 1** To inspire more people within the city to take up and regularly engage in sport
- 2** To provide a wide range of high quality and exciting sporting opportunities and experiences
- 3** To inspire more people to volunteer, coach and be facilitators of sport
- 4** To identify and support talented athletes to reach their sporting potential
- 5** To provide a range of modern, accessible and high quality sports facilities in the city
- 6** To attract high profile sporting events to the city and to celebrate sporting achievement at all levels
- 7** To grow and promote sport in the city through effective partnerships
- 8** For sport to make Coventry a better place to live, work and visit



sport in the city, put our heads together and decide together on a strategic focus for the next 10 years.

“The first step was the creation of the Coventry Sports Network. The two leisure trusts – the Coventry Sports Trust and Coventry Sports Foundation (CSF) – took the lead and sat down together with the likes of Coventry City Council, the County Sport Partnership and our two universities (Coventry University and the University of Warwick). From there, we began to work together to formulate a strategy which would encompass every aspect of sport in Coventry.”

STRATEGIC APPROACH

Work to develop *Coventry Sports Strategy 2014 - 2024* began with a detailed review of sporting provision in the city – including all indoor facilities and playing pitches. Discussions with stakeholders within the CSN then further informed and shaped the strategy, which was published in 2014 with eight “vision aims” and 37 “strategic objectives” (see box above).

“It’s a strategy which many cities would share,” says Moorcroft. “It’s a blueprint for creating a link between

The number of regular swimmers increased dramatically in the north of the city, following investment in a new pool

physical activity and sport, working with partners to get more people active – particularly those who are currently inactive. It’s an opportunity to link schools, sports clubs, the city council, the universities and colleges and all of the other sports providers together.”

The effects of the strategy can already be felt. “One of the early successes we’ve had thanks to the strategy is that we’ve now got a whole public leisure facility investment model,” says Breed. “As a group, we identified that many public leisure facilities in the city are ageing and not sustainable – and the council has committed itself to investing in replacing them.

“As a direct result of that council commitment, we were able to open the new £8m Centre AT7

The plan is to return to the heady days when Coventry’s rugby and football teams were among the best in the country



swimming pool and replace an old, not fit for purpose pool at the Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre.

“Since the opening of the new centre, swimming in that area of the city is prospering. The old facility only had 438 swimmers a week, while the new one is attracting 5,100 – so participation has gone through the roof through just one single investment.

“The new pool development is only 1,500 yards down the road from the previous one, so it’s evidence that if your offer is right, people will come.”

The strategic approach and the council’s commitment to increasing funding for facilities means that a number of similar upgrades are being planned at facilities right across Coventry.

It’s not just ageing facilities that are getting facelifts, either. A number of ambitious new projects are currently making their way through the planning process. In the city centre, a new £37m indoor waterpark, designed by FaulknerBrowns Architects is set to open in 2018 (for more, see Michael Hall’s column on page 33), while a new 50m swimming pool is being planned for a location in the south of the city.

The Centre AT7 has benefited directly from the new city-wide strategy for sport

ELITE SPORT

The strategy also outlines plans to bring elite sport back to Coventry. This has already been achieved by the arrival of Aviva Premiership club Wasps, which provided a huge boost and breathed new life to the city’s premier elite venue – the Ricoh Arena.

Wasps purchased the 32,000-capacity stadium in November 2014 and have already completed an upgrade programme of the venue’s facilities. The club is also looking to build a second, smaller arena close to Ricoh and has applied for planning permission for a new “world-class” training facility.

As well as providing local sports fans with an elite team to support, Wasps has provided grassroots rugby with a huge uplift. “What’s refreshing about Wasps is that while it’s a club with aspirations to win Premiership and European rugby titles, it insists on getting involved in the community,” says Breed.

“Wasps have been keen to work with the CSF and together we are delivering a programme of community rugby as part of a new Engage! initiative in more than 50 schools. The Engage! programme also coordinates a number of rugby-based initiatives under the banner of ‘Coventry – a city of rugby.’”

ACTIVE PEOPLE

For Moorcroft, the plans for sport in Coventry can be boiled down to one, simple goal. “The biggest aim, the strand which runs through everything, is to inspire more people to get active,” he says.

“We also want to see young people picking up a habit for life – and the way to do that is to offer them really exciting opportunities to be active, rather than just preach at them. The CSN and the strategy will be crucial to this. There are so many people pulling together in a way I’ve never seen before. What’s happening in Coventry is something special.” ●



Dinner time sports

An innovative programme which trains ‘dinner ladies’ – lunchtime assistants – and other school staff to deliver sports sessions during breaks has engaged and activated more than 15,000 children in inner city London

Tom Walker • managing editor • Sports Management

How do you get inner city school children – notoriously hard to engage in after school activities – to do more sport? The answer could be to engage them during lunch times.

A project which does just this, by upskilling lunchtime assistants and other school staff to deliver sports sessions during lunch times, is claiming remarkable results. Called Engage To Compete (ETC), the initiative is being run by youth activity specialist Fit For Sport and has been so successful that it has now secured Sport England funding and is being expanded in two London boroughs.

TRANSFORMING BEHAVIOUR

So far, the campaign has trained more than 700 school staff to deliver physical activity sessions at 44 schools across the boroughs of Tower Hamlets and Sandwell. Staff were shown how to engage children in activity and help them achieve the government guideline of 60 minutes of activity a day for every child.

Using lunchtime activities as a focal point, staff were given guidance on how to increase physical activity, develop competition and deliver the Engage To Compete challenge: a set of simple challenges to measure children’s physical literacy and fitness levels including stamina, agility and co-ordination.

The schools have reported improvements in children’s behaviour and concentration levels, as well as reductions in staff time spent dealing with incidents from the playground



Fit For Sport coaches provide school staff with training



The sessions have improved children’s physical literacy skills



Lunch time sport has increased pupils' confidence levels as well as improved academic performances

“Engage To Compete has totally changed the way we run our playground and it has given us a new lease of life with a broad range of ideas on how to engage our pupils in physical activity,” says Joanne Hingley, a PE teacher at St Hubert’s School in Sandwell – one of the schools taking part. “As well as improvements in the playground, Engage To Compete has resulted in a more positive atmosphere in the classroom too.”

IMPROVING SKILLS

The schools taking part have reported improvements in children’s behaviour and concentration levels, as well as reductions in staff time spent dealing with incidents in the playground. Children’s activity levels have also improved and, thanks to the training they have received, school staff have been left feeling more confident in taking an active role in play time.

As well as increased academic performance, the scheme has led to improvements in children’s core skills and physical literacy. Fit For Sport measures children’s skills across three areas during and after the initiative: hand-eye coordination (measured using a throwing and catching challenge), body

Engage To Compete

- 44 Primary schools took part during 2014-15
- 15,826 primary school children took part in some form of activity
- 5,377 pupils went on to take part in inter-school competitions
- Estimated cost per child per year for the school – £10.83

coordination (a jumping challenge) and agility (an agility run). “Scores improved over the academic year for all three challenges,” says Dean Horridge, CEO of Fit For Sport. “Children not only increased their activity levels but also their confidence to take part in activity and competition.”

The increase in pupils’ confidence levels has meant many of the schools, including St Huberts, have been able to introduce play leaders among children in each year group. “It’s fantastic to see our pupils taking on more responsibility and developing their communication skills among their peers,” says Hingley. “Pupils received training from Fit For Sport,





Fit For Sport is looking to roll out the scheme across more schools in the future



The programme has also built and developed key local relationships with stakeholders – bridging the gap between schools and leisure providers

with one of our year five pupils developing into a real young man with some excellent leadership skills, learning how to deal with minor confrontations in a calm way. Previously, he used to find this difficult but he is now a real asset.”

SHARED BENEFITS

Engage To Compete has been commissioned by Sport England in Tower Hamlets until August 2016 and the programme is available for schools and local authorities nationwide. In Sandwell, Fit For Sport has partnered with Sandwell Public Health to roll the programme out across all 97 primary schools. Called Sandwell Active Schools Programme, it will take place over the coming academic year.

According to Horridge, the benefits of the scheme extend beyond the lunch break – as well as the school gates. “The ETC programme has also built and developed key local relationships with providers and stakeholders to ‘bridge the gap’ between schools and leisure,” he says.

“Leisure providers have committed to the programme by allocating activity cards for children and offering free activities and taster sessions out of school and during holidays – as well as hosting legacy events. This has led to an increase in children using their facilities and being active during school holidays, which is obviously a great result for the schools and their partners.”●

Dean Horridge, CEO, Fit For Sport



Where did the idea for the initiative come from?

We felt that there was – and still is – too much focus on sport during curriculum time, so we began looking at utilising the entire school day.

We identified lunch and break times as key periods to get children active and combat inactivity and knew that through our “train, support and deliver” model, lunchtime assistants could make a real impact. Traditionally lunch and break time assistants have been there to supervise children – so they have the perfect opportunity to become activators.

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Sport for all



A new breed of leisure centre – catering for people with dementia and other special needs – opened in Crewe last month. The £15m facility is in line with Sport England’s new strategy of creating inclusive community hubs

Tom Walker • managing editor • Sports Management

The newly opened £15m Crewe Lifestyle Centre is more than just a leisure facility. Covering 7,800sq m (83,959sq ft) across two storeys, the building has been designed as a ‘next generation’ community hub – bringing together a range of different services under one roof.

As well as sport and fitness facilities, the Lifestyle Centre houses a new library, a family services centre, a café and office space. There are also day-care facilities for adults with learning disabilities and other complex needs, such as autism and sensory impairment.

Crewe Lifestyle Centre combines sport and fitness with a family services hub and day-care facilities for adults with special needs

One of the centre’s special features is a dementia garden – a therapeutic, enclosed and safe area for vulnerable adults. The primary purpose of the garden is to provide sensory stimulation through sounds, sights, touch and smells gained from the grasses, water features and flowers.

The centre’s sports facilities are managed by leisure trust Everybody Sport & Recreation and have been made accessible for those with special needs, including the 25m (82ft), eight-lane swimming pool and a 17m learner pool. Each pool has elevated platforms and access to its own advanced hydraulic wheelchair lift to

BECCY LANE/POSITIVE IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHY



BECCY LANE/POSITIVE IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHY

Lifetime Centre

Cost: £15m

Owner: Cheshire East Council

Operator: Everybody Sport & Recreation

Architect: Pozzoni

Builder: Kier Construction

Timeline:

June 2013 - Council approves funding

May 2014 - Planning approval received

August 2014 - Construction begins

February 2016 - Building work completed

May 2016 - Official opening

aid disabled and mobility-impaired users, making the pools accessible to swimmers of all abilities.

Other spaces include a four-court, multi-purpose sports hall and group fitness studios. There's also a 100-station health and fitness club fitted out by Matrix Fitness – featuring a selection of Inclusive Fitness Initiative-accredited (disability friendly) equipment. There are also separate changing facilities for wet and dry leisure use, with dedicated changing facilities for customers with disabilities.

INCLUSIVE ACCESS

A key motivation for the creation of a centralised hub was to provide a place where people with special needs could build their confidence and become physically active. Co-locating the council's adult services department alongside sports amenities – making the sports provision more familiar to care services users – has been identified as one way of achieving this goal.

Each pool has elevated platforms and access to an advanced hydraulic wheelchair lift

BECCY LANE/POSITIVE IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHY





BECCY LANE/POSITIVE IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHY

A special feature of the build is that it's one of the first centres to cater for people living with dementia and it allows them to access all the facilities within the building independently.

According to Paul Winrow, operations director at Everybody Sport & Recreation, having different services sitting side by side will lower the barrier for people with disabilities to try them out.

"The idea is to provide a place where those who use adult and social day-care spaces are encouraged to use other council facilities too, in order to help them enrich their lives," he says. "As well as nudging them to sports, the intention is to make users familiar with the library and everything else that the council offers. The addition of the café means that the Lifestyle Centre is a place where people can spend the entire day."

Winrow adds that as well as increasing participation numbers among special populations, the joined up services have produced much needed operational cost savings for the council at a time when public finances are under increased pressure. The opening

The Lifestyle Centre has been designed to nudge people using the adult services and day-care centre into trying sports and fitness activities

Q&A: Paul Winrow, Operations Director

Which special needs groups will use the Lifestyle Centre?



The Acorn Adult Day Care Centre – which organises the council's adult care services – is now based at the Lifestyle Centre. This means all Acorn's users are able to use the leisure facilities, something they weren't able to do previously due to Acorn's separate location in the town. There are also a number of community disability groups and charities which use the centre, including the Seahorse Swimming Club, Cheshire Centre for Independent Living and Crewe Care (Belong). Swim sessions, including those for people diagnosed with dementia and their carers, are also organised by Everybody's dedicated disability and inclusion staff as part of our leisure development programmes.

How many people with special needs use the centre on a regular basis?

The Acorn Centre has 70 clients in the centre each day, the majority of whom have a learning disability. We also support adults with physical disabilities and dementia and the number of people which have a higher level of support needs is around 55. Springfield School arranges a swim every week and around 15-20 of their students have complex special needs.

Has sports staff received specialised training due to the diverse users?

There hasn't been external training, although some of the user groups coming in have offered us training relating to their specific needs. We have set up a number of workshops and there's an operational meeting every week to make sure all staff understand what each department at the Lifestyle Centre does.



BECY LANE/POSITIVE IMAGE PHOTOGRAPHY

of the new centre meant that the council was able to mothball three ageing leisure centres and concentrate operations on one site.

“There have been significant savings – there’s no doubt about that,” Winrow says. “We had ageing leisure and social care stock which was costing a lot in maintenance. Bringing those sites under one roof, and into a modern building, means we have eliminated those costs entirely.

“The old Crewe Swimming Pool, for example, was housed in a 1940s building. Accessibility was poor – it

Swim sessions are organised for disability groups and charities, including for people diagnosed with dementia and their carers

wasn’t inclusive in any shape or form – and the gym was rather disjointed. There were no exercise studios either, so it simply wasn’t fit for purpose as a modern facility catering for the range of users we have.”

The amalgamation of three separate sites into one has also been wholly positive for membership numbers. “When the three sites operated separately, we had 900 members across them,” Winrow reveals. “Now that we’ve combined the three, our membership stands at more than 2,500. So we’ve trebled the membership in three months.”●

Q&A: David Spoons, associate, Pozzoni Architecture

Could you describe the special needs-friendly design elements at Crewe Lifestyle Centre?

As well as making the centre fully wheelchair accessible, there are design techniques throughout which are normally only used in areas used by vulnerable people. Doors have been colour coded to signify public, semi-public and private spaces and they also carry symbols which can be recognisable without the need to understand signage or brail. The needs of people with

dementia have also been considered, through materials and colour choice to avoid discomfort or confusion.

Do you expect the need for such spaces to increase considering efforts to get people active?

Definitely. Personally, I don’t believe there’s any excuse as to why leisure spaces cannot be designed to cater for people of all ages or abilities. Techniques can be employed from an early stage in order to allow a leisure space to be easily understood and used

by all. Solutions ranging from simple wayfinding through signage, imagery and colours to advanced technological installations can better cater for an ever-growing population .

There has never been such a variety of leisure activities – why shouldn’t they be enjoyed by everyone? Even the tightest budget can accommodate some degree of designing for all.





IMAGES: DOTSTOCK / GABI MOISA / MONKEY BUSINESS / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The alternative triathlon challenge is based on three core activities and replaces swimming with rowing

Run, Row, Ride

A new concept for a new charity, Run, Row, Ride is an alternative triathlon which is aiming to engage with gyms to become part of a mass participation event

Kath Hudson • journalist • Sports Management

When the fundraising arm of Mount Vernon Cancer Centre, part of East and North Herts Hospital Charity, launched in 2015, the team set out to create a signature, annual mass participation sports event with the potential to become a must-do event in the area.

“Triathlons are very popular at the moment but we found that many people are put off by the swim element,” says Mount Vernon Cancer Centre fundraiser, Liz Hizli. “There is, however, interest in challenging yourself in three different disciplines, so we came up with an alternative triathlon, substituting the swim for a row – and RunRowRide was born.”

Keen to promote health and wellbeing, the centre aspired to create an event which could encourage people to get active and lead healthier lives.

“It needed to be enough of a challenge for participants to feel like they had achieved something



Liz Hizli aims to create a new ‘must do’ charity event

and to win support from family and friends,” says Hizli. “We also wanted to make it accessible to people who are new to exercise, as well as appealing to those already exercising. For this reason we are offering sprint and endurance distances.”

HEAD TO THE GYM

Initially the idea was to have the rowing element take place on a lake, but this threw up logistical problems. Making the event gym-based means it is very simple and straightforward to run and opens up the opportunity for

leisure centres and health and fitness clubs all around Hertfordshire to take part by hosting and supporting.

“We think making it gym-based will feel more reassuring to people – similar to the Aspire challenge



Turn over: How Crewe Lifestyle Centre caters for people with special needs



to swim the channel at your local swimming pool," says Hizli. "However, how people complete the challenge is up to them, we are expecting the endurance participants to run and cycle outside."

Participants will have to prove they have completed the challenge via the RunRowRide website, either by using an app like MapMyRun, or by taking a photograph of the console in the gym. Everyone who raises over £50 will receive a t-shirt and a medal.

In the next few months Mount Vernon will be working hard to spread the word and engage with health and sports operators. This is one of the challenges it faces, because as a new charity Mount Vernon doesn't have a large database of contacts for marketing and is having to do a standing start.

Marketing of the event is in full flow across Hertfordshire



EVENT IMAGES © NICK ISERKWE



Fact box

When Sunday 16th October

Where Any facility willing to host

What is it Two distances are on offer

Sprint triathlon: 5k run, 2k row, 20k cycle

Endurance triathlon: 10k run, 4k row and 40k cycle

Cost £25 for an individual, £50 for a team

Fundraising target:

Individual: £50 **Team:** £150

www.runrowride.org



JACOB LUND / SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

To date, Everyone Active, One YMCA, More Energy, Active 4 Less and David Lloyd Stevenage all have come on board. Mount Vernon is hoping to work with 100 gyms and is aiming for 300 to 500 participants. Hizli believes the event will mainly appeal to 30 to 55-year-olds, both men and women, who are looking to get fit and will see RunRowRide as a goal to aim for.

It is not exclusively for adults, however. Some local schools have shown an interest and will be running RunRowRide events ahead of the main event.

There is no charge for sports clubs and gyms to participate in RunRowRide, they simply need to make their equipment available on 16th October for participants to take part. Any facilities running special offers for new members in the lead up to the challenge will receive a special mention on the social media sites.

Sport and health clubs can host the challenge free of charge

Mount Vernon will be supporting the event with local advertising, press and social media, so sport and health clubs could potentially piggy-back off the triathlon to get new members, as well as engage existing members in a post-summer challenge. Marketing material will also be made available for use, including posters, leaflets and banners. All materials can be downloaded and personalised with the operators' logo to tie in with clubs' own marketing.

As this is the first year of the event and only the second year of active fundraising for the charity, there will be an element of trial and error. However, the team at Mount Vernon is hoping both the sports club and the health and fitness sectors will give the support needed to create a successful event which will build to greater things in the future. ●



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DISC WORLD

Could creating disc golf courses be the answer to getting families active? Kath Hudson reports on the burgeoning sport

Like golf, but using specially weighted discs and metal cages, disc golf is a relatively simple game, which has widespread appeal from children to OAPs. It dates back to a group of Canadian college students throwing tin plates at cans in the 1920s, but became more popular in the US in the early 1960s.

There are now at least 35 disc golf courses in the UK and new courses are cropping up all the time. They provide a great way to use under-utilised public areas to get people active as the barriers to entry are low.

Carlyon Bay, in Cornwall, launched the UK's first beach-based disc golf course at the end of May. Event manager, Charlotte Parslow, who discovered disc golf on a trip to New Zealand says: "We wanted

The goal is to get the disc into the cages with as few throws as possible



LINDSEY BAUMAN / PRESS ASSOCIATION

The sport attracts people of all ages and abilities

to do something which is family friendly, sporty and different, and which isn't already being offered."

HITTING THE BEACH

The six-hole course at Carlyon has been designed by Chris O'Brien, from disc golf specialists Catch the Spirit, and the main obstacle will be the offshore wind. It will be offered free of charge, on a first come, first served basis with people bringing their own frisbees or buying the specially weighted discs on site.

Two years ago, Devonshire golf course, Mount Edgcumbe, opened three disc golf courses (a beginners, advanced and pro course) to attract a new clientele to the country house and park and provide a new way of enjoying the spectacular location.

"We try and get everyone who visits to have a go," says spokesperson Jez Whillmott. "Most people can throw a frisbee, the learning curve is quick and once you've tried it, it can be very addictive."

Many courses offer free usage, but Mount Edgcumbe charges £6 for adults and £4 for children in order to make people 'value the experience more' and to create revenue to keep the course well maintained.

There has also been a lot of promotional activity to drive participation, especially visits to primary schools. Willmott says the sport has a widespread appeal because it is affordable, doesn't require much kit, is uncomplicated and something the family can do.

"People enjoy the flight of the disc and the challenge of getting it into the basket or cage. You can go out and have fun instantly," he says. "It



JEFF MOREHEAD / PRESS ASSOCIATION



ANDREAS FUHMANN / PRESS ASSOCIATION

Disc golf can be played in pretty much any terrain and in any weather

PEOPLE ENJOY THE FLIGHT OF THE DISC AND THE CHALLENGE OF GETTING IT INTO THE BASKET

definitely has the potential to be big in the UK and it's growing very quickly."

DISC FACTS

The British Disc Golf Association oversees the sport in the UK and organises the 12-date tour.

There are almost 4,000 courses in the US and 5,000 globally. The sport is played in 40 countries, primarily the US, Canada, central and western Europe, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia. Each year 390 sanctioned tournaments take place.

Around £12,000 should be enough to install a basic nine hole course. Several acres are needed for a recreational course, which typically have nine to 12 holes, with three holes per acre. Pro courses need one acre per hole and the Professional Disc Golf Association requires courses to have at least 13 holes for its events. Some obstacles are needed to add jeopardy: trees and bushes are perfect. A secondary income stream can be created by hiring or selling



NICK TOMECK / PRESS ASSOCIATION





The sport is currently played in 40 countries and a world championship tournament is held annually

DISC FACTS

The British Disc Golf Association oversees the sport in the UK and organises the 12-date tour

There are almost 4,000 courses in the US and 5,000 globally

It is played in 40 countries, primarily the US, Canada, central and western Europe, Japan, South Korea, New Zealand and Australia

Each year 390 sanctioned tournaments take place, including a World Championships

discs, which usually cost about £10 and are weighted differently to go either straight or in a curve. Good players have around 15 differently weighted discs.

PUBLIC INTEREST

Local authorities are identifying disc golf as a relatively low cost option to provide physical activity. Now open, but set for official launch in July, the Longford Park Disc Golf course is the result of a joint venture between Trafford Council and Manchester Disc Golf Club. Funded by the council, a crowdfunding campaign and a £50,000 grant from the Veolia Environmental Trust, the course is considered one of the best in Europe and will host this year's British Disc Golf Association Nationals.

The focus, however, is not on elite players. "We knew the small cadre of passionate, top players wasn't going to be enough to justify or support an 18 hole course long term," says Alan Heckman, the executive chair of the new club. "So we have focused a big part of our volunteer effort on teaching people how to play and building a community of players. Our open days are especially popular with families."

The course is free to use and unmanned, except during special events. The cafe in the park will hire out

WE HAVE FOCUSED A BIG PART OF OUR VOLUNTEER EFFORT ON TEACHING PEOPLE HOW TO PLAY AND BUILDING A COMMUNITY OF PLAYERS

discs for £1 and volunteers from the club will carry out maintenance tasks, such as looking after the basket targets and keeping the course beautiful. The council contractors will carry out any major mowing and tree maintenance work which is needed on the site.

As well as informal play, twice weekly club events will be organised, along with ladder competitions and open days, inviting the community to come and learn.

Heckman expects the course will be well utilised by three core customer groups: "We think it will develop a wide local user base of people who play occasionally for a laugh, a more passionate core group of locals which makes up the club, and disc golfers from around the UK and the world who are willing to travel to play a great course.

"We particularly hope that we will bring teens and young adults into the park and teachers and sports coaches tell us it is perfect for getting kids moving and developing physical skill." ●



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Game changers

A look at the technology and innovation currently making waves across the world of sport



The technology uses electrode pads and ear clips to transmit microcurrents

Everton banks on pioneering new injury treatment

English Premier League team **Everton Football Club** has partnered with **Alpha-Stim** – a cranial electrotherapy stimulation device – as part of efforts to speed up the recovery time of injured players.

Designed by neuroscientist Dr Daniel Kirsch, the company says the Alpha-Stim works by provoking a reaction in both the electrical and chemical synapses in the body, kick-starting the healing process.

The Alpha-Stim uses a specific wave form and sends a microcurrent through the body, which then – it's claimed – activates the cell's receptors – increasing cell energy and sodium/potassium levels.

The currents are also said to enhance the communication between the cells, so that when the body has been traumatised during an injury, more blood and oxygen are sent to the area of trauma.

The process itself is initiated by sending out a variety of electrical frequencies that the body is familiar with, using electrode pads and ear clips – making it a fully portable form of treatment.

Joe Hinnigan, Everton FC's physiotherapist, said: "We use the Alpha-Stim unit for a range of soft tissue, bone and nerve injuries and it's proven to be very effective." www.alpha-stim.com



Sörenstam retired from golf in 2008

Golf legend Annika Sörenstam launches activity app

Former golfer **Annika Sörenstam** has launched an app which recommends nearby events and activities catering for the user's individual interests.

The 10-time major winner – often described as the best female player in golf history – says she got the idea for the app, called **Fundu**, during her 18-year career as a professional golfer. The gruelling schedule and constant travel meant that she often found herself alone in a strange place with a few hours to kill – but no knowledge of what activities were available.

"After years of travel and missing out on fun events at home, I wanted to create a virtual 'fun finder,'" she says.

"I wanted an app which eliminates the time, work and frustration of trying to manually search on the internet.

"Fundu is a one-stop shop ideal for future planning or inspiring last-minute ideas, whether it's an amusement park visit with family, a nice dinner or hanging with friends at a cool wine bar."

www.funduapp.com



Minnesota Twins will utilise Google Cardboard in tandem with mobile devices

Twins take on virtual reality

US-based Major League Baseball (MLB) team Minnesota Twins is giving away 5,000 disposable virtual reality viewers to fans during the home game against Chicago White Sox on 29 July.

Combining the viewers with the downloadable MLB.com Ballpark mobile app, fans will be able to “check in” to the game and access virtual reality videos

with the cardboard viewers. The VR footage will allow fans to experience the players’ perspective throughout the game day – observing the players arriving at the ballpark, greeting teammates, warming up in a batting cage and heading out onto the field.

Twins will utilise Google Cardboard goggles in the campaign, made of inexpensive materials such as cardboard, foam and plastic.

“This is a first-of-its-kind promotion for Major League Baseball,” said Chris Iles, senior director of content at Minnesota Twins. “What makes this unique is the scale of the promotion and how it is intended to be delivered within a game environment via devices.”

The initiative is a strategic partnership between the Twins and MLB, aimed at promoting the MLB.com Ballpark app. mlb.mlb.com/mobile/ballpark

Sacramento Kings ties up with Bitcoin, chatbot and Uber

National Basketball Association (NBA) franchise Sacramento Kings is strengthening its claims of having the most technologically advanced sports arena in the world when it moves to the new Golden 1 Center in October.

While the official opening of the venue is still months away, the Kings have already revealed a number of innovative ways in which it will utilise the latest tech to benefit both players and fans. As well as announcing that it will become the first professional sports team to accept Bitcoin as payment, the club recently struck a partnership deal with on-demand taxi service Uber,

resulting in the integration of the Uber API into the Kings’ own mobile fan app.

Now, the franchise has announced that it will become the first NBA team to communicate with fans using chatbot technology, which uses artificial intelligence to predict and understand fans’ needs and interests.

Initially, the chatbots will be used to provide updates via Facebook Messenger about the building work progress at the Golden 1 Center.

The technology will then be expanded to fan engagement uses once the arena opens in time for the 2016-17 season.

www.nba.com/kings



The Golden 1 Center will open in time for the 2016-17 NBA season

SAPCA DIRECTORY



The Sports and Play Construction Association, SAPCA, is the recognised trade organisation for the sports and play facility construction industry in the UK. SAPCA fosters excellence, professionalism and continuous improvement throughout

the industry, in order to provide the high quality facilities necessary for the success of British sport. SAPCA represents a wide range of specialist constructors of natural and synthetic sports surfaces, including both outdoor and indoor facilities, from

tennis courts and sports pitches to playgrounds and sports halls. SAPCA also represents manufacturers and suppliers of related products, and independent consultants that offer professional advice on the development of projects.

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Job purpose

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