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SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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Nick Eastwood

The man who took Wasps to Ricoh Arena

Pottering Around

Quidditch – it's coming to a park near you

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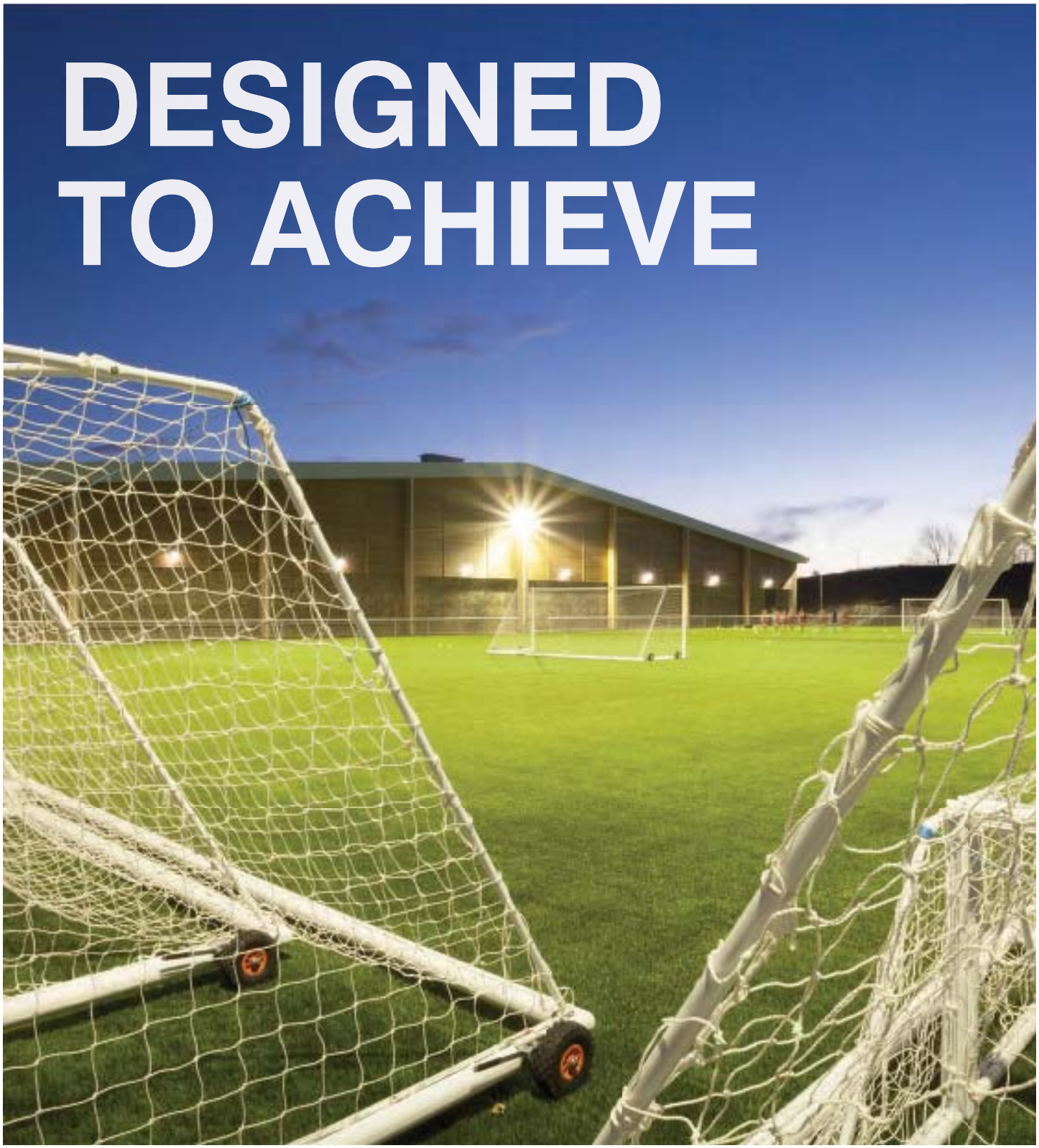

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QUIDDITCH HITS THE MAINSTREAM

Once an imaginary game played by characters in the Harry Potter novels, the sport of quidditch has been made real and is now played by people on every continent. Its popularity is spreading fast through the university network and out into communities around the world

Quidditch. You may think this is a fantasy sport played only in the pages of a Harry Potter novel, but our reporters found the sport has been enthusiastically adopted by muggles (*see our feature on page 62*).

It has its own world governing body – the International Quidditch Association – which has recognised 300 teams worldwide and established 20 national governing bodies and it's spreading via the university sports network and social media. So popular is the sport that it's even being adopted in countries where the Harry Potter novels have never been available.

Sports Management is the first sports magazine in the world to profile quidditch, and we're covering it as part of our regular series on new sports.

We get so used to the folklore and terminology of established sports being firmly woven into the fabric of our lives, that the idea of new sports like quidditch being "invented", means some people don't take them seriously. But most team games started small with eccentric beginnings and the rapidity with which they establish themselves gives an indication of how attractive they are to a wide range of people: will we one day see a version of quidditch in the Olympic Games? Given the rapid adoption of the game, I wouldn't bet against it, however unlikely it seems to us today.

The game was created by two American students, Alex Benepe and Xander Manshel and can be played with easy-to-find equipment: three hoops, a tennis ball in a sock for the snitch, two dodgeballs, a volleyball and seven brooms. Quidditch uses a mix of elements from rugby, dodgeball and tag. The game stays true to the fictional version, except players ride earth-bound brooms.

Harrison Homel, executive director of the International Quidditch Association, says the game appeals to people looking for a different sport: "It doesn't take long for people to realise this is the real deal. It's a full contact, very athletic, very fast game and it appeals to lots of people who haven't read the books, but used to play football or basketball."

In 2014, quidditch held its own European Cup, which was contested by 20 teams and a World Championship, which was played between seven nations and the events will become annual.

The reason for the success and rapid growth of the game seem, in part, to be the strong communities it fosters. Choosing a sport can help you find your tribe in life and it seems that quidditch cultivates an inclusive, friendly and playful atmosphere, as well as being highly competitive and athletic.

> It doesn't take long for people to realise quidditch is the real deal. It's a full contact, very athletic, very fast game

And it's a modern sport in every way. It couldn't have come into being without social media, it's based on an IP and run on a supportive, peer to peer basis – even the referee test can be completed online. It's played on every continent except Antarctica, so has become global in the shortest time imaginable. You could say it's the first social media sport and it's unlikely to be the last.

We need more sports like this – which emerge from a groundswell of enthusiasm and encourage people to come together to make communities and to stay fit and healthy and which are free from politics, government funding and bureaucracy.

As more people learn they need to exercise every day to stay healthy, the need for variety will increase and new sports such as quidditch will thrive. Anything which brings people together to exercise – especially under their own initiative – is to be encouraged.

Liz Terry, Editor
twitter: @elizterry
email: lizterry@leisuremedia.com

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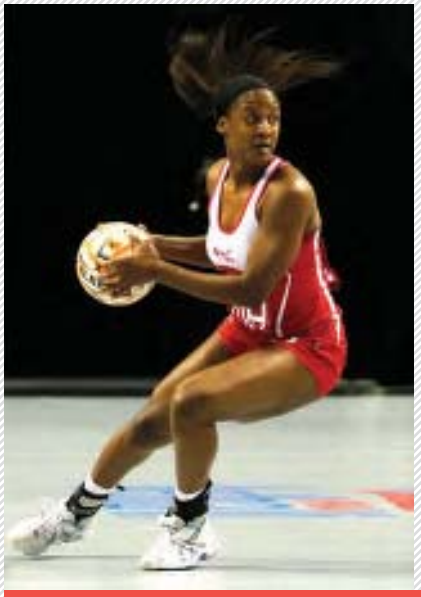

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the team

READER SERVICES

Subscriptions
Denise Adams
+44 (0)1462 471930

Circulation manager
Michael Emmerson
+44 (0)1462 471932

EDITORIAL TEAM

Managing editor
Tom Walker
+44 (0)1462 471934

Editor
Liz Terry
+44 (0)1462 431385

NEWSDESK

Jak Phillips
+44 (0)1462 471938
Tom Anstey
+44 (0)1462 471916
Helen Andrews
+44 (0)1462 471902
Katie Buckley
+44 (0)1462 471936

ADVERTISING TEAM

Publisher
John Challinor
+44 (0)1202 742968

Advertising sales
Jan Williams
+44 (0)1462 471909

WEB TEAM

Internet
Michael Paramore
+44 (0)1462 471926
Dean Fox
+44 (0)1462 471900
Tim Nash
+44 (0)1462 471917
Emma Harris
+44 (0)1462 471921

Sports-kit.net product search engine
Jason Holland
+44 (0)1462 471927

DESIGN

Ed Gallagher
+44 (0)1905 20198
Andy Bundy
+44 (0)1462 471924

FINANCE

Denise Adams
+44 (0)1462 471930
Rebekah Scott
+44 (0)1462 471930

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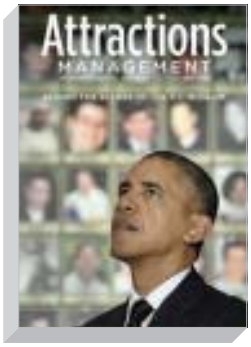

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PEOPLE

Inspired by his childhood in Africa, Amen Iseghohi set up a chain of back-to-basics sports clubs

Amen Iseghohi, founder, Amenzone

As immigration stories go, Amen Iseghohi's is rather unusual. "I was born in Belgium but raised in London," he says. "When I was eight, my parents decided they wanted me and my sister to have a deeper understanding of our heritage and a greater appreciation of what was really important in life, so they took us to live in West Africa.

"At first I thought it was some kind of punishment – coming from somewhere we'd had so many privileges, waking up and eating cereal and watching cartoons, I suddenly found myself in a place with no electricity."

The lack of electricity and other "luxuries" meant that a young Amen and his sister had time on their hands.

"My grandmother – a former athlete – wanted to keep us active. The compound we lived on was filled with tyres, so she used them as a way of keeping us fit, but also as a tool to teach us about life. We'd race the tyres and when we felt like giving up she'd say, 'no, you can't give up in life; you have to keep going. You need to move forward, just as a tyre turns and moves'."

The Amenzone Foundation is a free after-school programme which uses sport and fitness to build confidence

FITNESS THROUGH CONFIDENCE

It was these early experiences in Africa that played a key role in him setting up Amenzone. "When I moved to America in 2003, I immediately noticed that the obesity rate was so significant," he says.

"I realised it wasn't a local or city problem, it was a global epidemic. I thought about it and thought, this issue isn't so much about the lack of fitness and good nutrition. It's a disease rooted in a problem that everyone seems to be ignoring. If you don't feel good about yourself, you don't care what you do to yourself. My grandmother used fitness as a tool to motivate us, but she was always focused on our self-esteem. I thought, that's it – the reason I'm in shape is that I feel good about who I am."

Launched in 2008, Amenzone Fitness is based on a minimalist approach that uses nothing but tyres and members' body strength and movement to get fit. Classes include boxing, 'primal fitness', yoga and 'rebel workout' – all using the tyres in different ways. The first Amenzone gym opened in Scottsdale, Arizona in June 2008. Since then, Amenzone Fitness Corporate has opened two further gyms in Arizona, both in 2013. A franchising arm was launched in 2012 and there are now six franchise gyms open across the US, with a further 23 franchises sold. The first Amenzone outside Arizona opened in Manhattan Beach, California in September 2013. A second California gym is opened in Santa Monica in July 2014.

The rapid expansion of the brand in the past two years has resulted in Iseghohi setting his sights on the international stage. "We will have clubs across the globe," he says.

"We'll go wherever we think we can help. It's such a simple, scaleable model. We've already been solicited by international groups who want to take this to Australia and the UK, but for the next year, we're going to focus on growing organically across the US via our franchise business."

Part of the help will also be the Amenzone Foundation – a free after-school programme which is sponsored by corporates and angel investors. It uses fitness as a vehicle to build self-esteem and get the message out about the importance of physical and mental self care.

"For every location we have an Amenzone Fitness gym, we also want to have an Amenzone Foundation programme there," Iseghohi says. "I refuse to compromise on that. Any franchisee has to be willing to make a difference."

Details: www.amenzone.com

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Amenzone has a minimalist approach which uses nothing but tyres and members' own body strength

The digital health futurist urging sports professionals to get to grips with technology

Maneesh Juneja, founder, MJ Analytics

It's impossible to not feel inspired by – and perhaps a bit scared of – the picture that Maneesh Juneja paints of the future. "Imagine the future of healthcare in a world where seven billion people are constantly connected and online, carrying a plethora of sensors, wearables and tech so that everything they do is monitored," he says.

"As well as details on their blood pressure and heart rate, we could see what each individual eats and when; how much they move and how often; how much sleep they get and what their drinking habits are.

"One day, it could actually be possible to monitor what entire populations are doing – and record it in real time."

Juneja is a digital health futurist and has spent most of the past two decades working within the realm of technology and big data. With a degree in business and computing, in 1997, he joined marketing agency Dunnhumby, which was in the process of creating the vast Tesco Clubcard database. It was when he was tasked with managing Tesco's database of eight million shoppers – being able to analyse everything they were buying, from bananas to biscuits – that Juneja first realised the true value of data capture.

Armed with that knowledge, he joined pharmaceutical giant GlaxoSmithKline in 2003, spending nine years helping the company understand – through analysing data from doctors' offices and hospitals – how drugs are used "in the real world" and how this data could impact both drug development and drug safety.

"It was fascinating," he recalls. "We worked with data on patients in the US, the UK, France and Germany. The largest data set had all the health insurance claims of 100 million Americans. I got to see the impact you can make on the health of people around the world because you manage to do something with patient data that helped a drug get to market just a little bit quicker."

While he could have stayed at GSK and carved out a career in the drugs industry, a fortuitous invite to an event in 2011 changed his outlook on the future. "By chance I went to an event at the University of Cambridge called Silicon Valley comes to the UK," he recalls.

"I met a number of leaders from Silicon Valley and they shared their insight and vision on future technologies. When I went back to my office, I couldn't reconcile what I'd heard with what I was working each day. So I resigned with no plan whatsoever. All I knew was I needed to create space in my life for something new to come in."

That something new was digital health. Juneja set himself up as a consultant and immersed himself in the subject. Three years on and the investment and risk has paid off. He is now a speaker in high demand. His TEDx talks and appearances at high profile conferences, such as Health 2.0 & Body Computing, have established him as one of the foremost thought leaders on digital health.

Juneja predicts that in future entire populations can be monitored in real time

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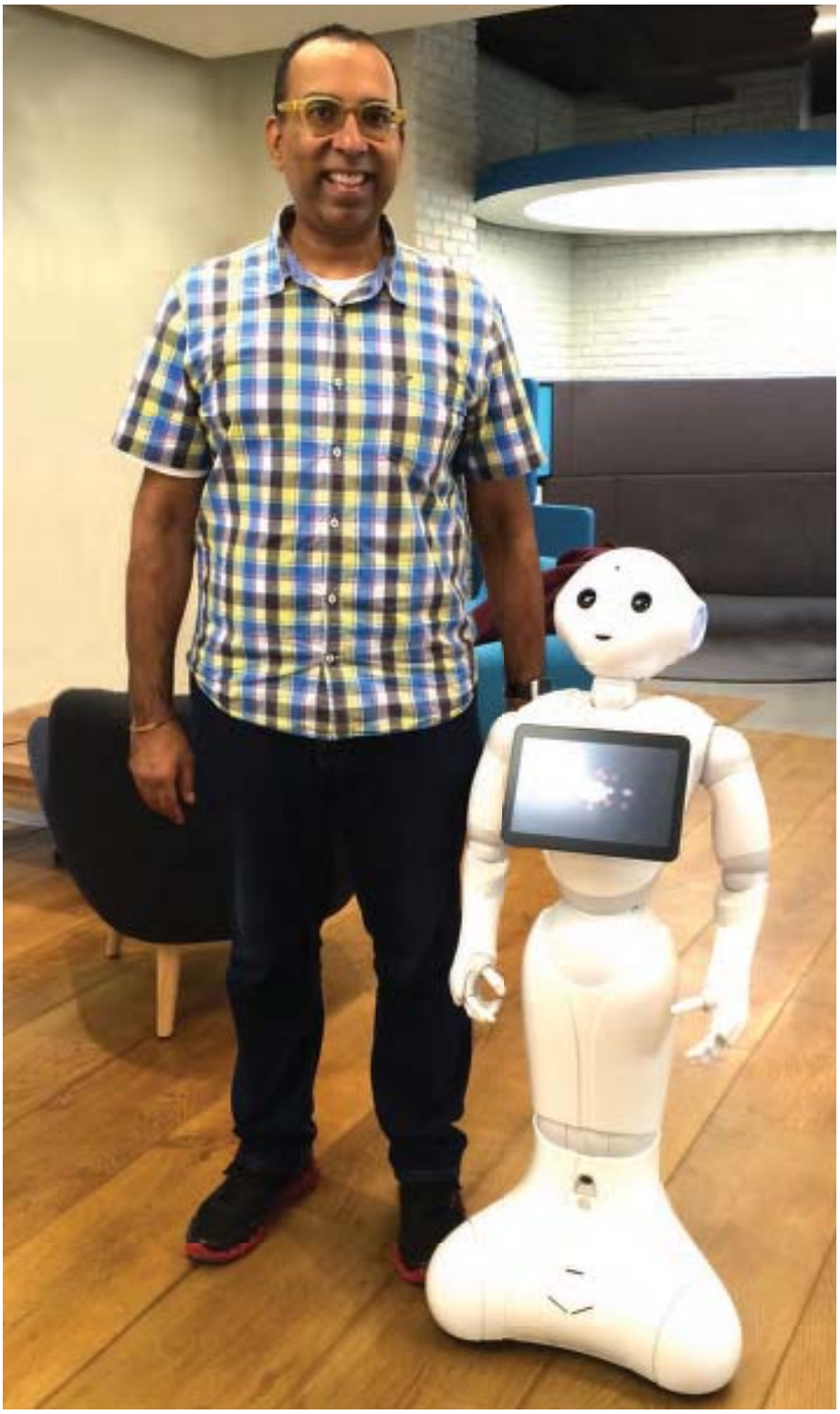

Juneja predicts that it is only a matter of time before robots will be able to coach and teach exercise movements

Part of his appeal as a speaker is that he isn't afraid to rock the apple cart. Last year, he caused a storm by suggesting that technology – more specifically the combination of big data, the internet of things, the quantified self and wearable tech – could make some doctors unemployed within the next decade. He identified GPs as being particularly vulnerable to the possible streamlining of healthcare, brought on by developing tech.

THE FUTURE OF SPORT

It is solutions such as these that pose particularly interesting questions not just for healthcare practitioners but for physical activity and sport operators too. If doctors are in danger of being made redundant, where does the tech revolution leave sport coaches and fitness staff? "It leaves them in similar peril," is Juneja's blunt answer.

"It's all about whether coaches will be able to adjust and compete on equal terms with, say, a smartphone app which is linked to wearable tech sensors and which offers a set of pre-recorded videos or coaching sessions. Can personal trainers compete with the convenience, price and accessibility of a downloadable app – or even a robot?

"It might sound outlandish now, but interactive companion robots are expected to hit the market from late 2015. In years to come, there are likely to be robots capable of teaching exercise movements. Also, a robot won't judge if a person messes up their activity or does it wrong, so some might even prefer a robot to a human being."

So what should people working in the physical activity and sports sectors do to ensure they still have a role in 2025? Juneja says it is important for sports professionals not merely to try and compete with the technology on offer – but begin to create and take part in it.

"I think it will be a case of the industry making sure it is the one creating the new technologies and testing them – rather than just waiting for something to happen and trying to react to innovations," Juneja says. "If you just wait for others to come up with the tech, you might find that you're been done out of a job because a bit of technology has replaced you.

"It's about adapting to change but, more importantly, it's about creating the change. What the sports industry and people within it must say is 'if this is going to be the future then I still want to play a part in it – and I'll create something or test something to help it on its way'".

Details: www.maneeshjuneja.com

THOUGHT LEADERS

UK Sport must stick to its no-compromise approach

John Goodbody, journalist, *Sunday Times*

PIC: ©WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK/OLEKSIY NAUMOV

Basketball England complained after it had its elite funding cut – despite under-performing for a number of years

UK Sport can be forgiven if it is feeling rather vexed. At the 1996 Olympics, Britain won one gold medal (Steve Redgrave and Matthew Pinsent in the coxless pairs) finishing 36th in the medal table. Immediately afterwards, it was announced that lottery money would fund the preparation of competitors for future Games. There were swift improvements and in 2012 Team GB was third in the medal table with 29 gold medals and third in the Paralympic table with 34 golds.

This was achieved with funding being targeted at sports which had a genuine chance of securing success. You would have thought that the case had been made to continue this financial backing with the same strategy and the government reacted, as it was under immediate pressure so to do, by promising to continue to maintain the funding from the National Lottery and the Exchequer. However, when the funding details were announced in January 2014, in a total package of about £350m, there was an outcry that some sports, largely team sports, would not receive any money in the build-up to 2016 because there was little chance of them reaching the podium in 2016 or 2020.

These sports – of which basketball was the most vocal, with water polo close behind – had received money in preparing for 2012, because it was a home Games and it was therefore appropriate to fund them so that they'd put up at least respectable performances at the London Olympics.

UK Sport has reacted to these criticisms by sending out a questionnaire to governing bodies and other interested parties, asking for comments about whether its 'no compromise' approach should be modified. It is currently collating the material it has received. As UK Sport rightly observes "high performance sport is a serious and expensive business – with no room for complacency and failure."

The first canard that should be shot down is that UK Sport is biased against team sports, because so much money has to be spent on so many people with only a possible two medals (one for men and one for women) potentially to be won. It is not. For instance, UK Sport's funding of hockey totals £16m because it's believed men and women could medal in Rio, although the recent performances in the Champions Trophies do not add much confidence to such a forecast.

Basketball argues that because it is such a popular sport among kids in inner-cities and in deprived areas, it should get special allowance. However much money is provided for development in these places, it says the kids need a national team to look up to and therefore UK Sport is obliged to fund a national team.

I don't buy this theory. Kids do not look up to a Team GB basketball team, losing in the early rounds of the Olympics, even if it qualified to get there. Kids primarily admire NBA players in the USA, whose matches when they visit Britain sell out far more quickly than the national team games.

There's also an argument that all the Olympic sports should receive some 'seed funding' and, in fact, last November, the government did broker some funding, largely from Sport England, as well as expertise from UK Sport to help talent development in basketball.

UK Sport must be wary of reducing any funding to the successful sports so as to provide 'seed funding' for those not receiving grants. NGBs need every pound they can get because the margins between winning and losing medals are minute. UK Sport should resist pressure and stick to its "no compromise" strategy.

PIC: ©WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK/BRUNOROSA

Water polo – assessed to have "no prospect of achieving medals at Rio"

The importance of physical activity needs to recognised by those "at the top"

PIC: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM/TAKEPAIRS

Cooperation in the sport and physical activity industry

Andy Sutch, member of Sportsgroup

The sports and physical activity industry attracts political interest (particularly when it suits politicians) and has a history of significant government and commercial funding. It remains, however, a relatively new industry, with unique challenges.

First, it is a very complex, somewhat nebulous and undefined sector. Its remit is spread across sport, physical activity and health. This is reflected in how, at government level, policy is spread across a number of departments, from DCMS and Health to Communities and Local Government.

Secondly, it is disparate, encompassing a number of different types of organisations. The sector includes everything from trade associations and governing bodies to charities. Such disparate interests mean that at times, bringing them together under one remit (such as "sport") can be impossible.

Finally, it is often a divided sector. The differing objectives and priorities of the sector organisations mean that often they are working at odds with each other – or worse, are actively opposed. This is exemplified in their relations with government, where different sector bodies will be found lobbying the same ministers for different – and often contradictory – things: a situation which ministers can find infuriating.

The sector can, however, work together when required. London 2012 was a prime example of how government departments and key sports bodies worked together to produce one of the best Olympic Games in history. There are a number of reasons why this needs to happen more often. Probably the most significant relates to the nation's health.

The growing health costs from lack of physical activity will significantly impact upon the NHS in the next decade. Obesity costs the NHS £162 per second – diabetes £286.

The sport industry can play a unique role in helping tackle the crisis. At a strategic level it can provide the cure by getting people more active. At an operational level, it can provide the delivery mechanisms and opportunities to facilitate participation. And at a cultural level, it has the influence and reach to change behaviours and attitudes.

Its ability to achieve these outcomes and make a meaningful difference, however, will be greatly increased if it works together as a sector. Looking at it horizontally, this means bringing together organisations from the different areas involved – from NGBs in sport, gyms in physical activity and fitness and charities and local organisations in the community. It must also bring together those from different backgrounds – private, public and third sector and examining how, far from being in opposition, a joint approach can help them to achieve their objectives together.

PIC: ©SIMON WILKINSON - SWPIX.COM

The sport sector must work together – like it did for London 2012

From the "vertical" perspective, it means encouraging those at the top to recognise the importance of physical activity in terms of public policy and to connect and share information with those organisations which are on the front line. This will not only enable key policy makers to understand what the challenges and solutions are at a practical level, but also to enable grassroots bodies to directly impact policy making.

This is not to suggest that there are easy answers. Even working together, there's no single solution. The issue is about changing behaviours – a challenge which encompasses social, cultural, economic and financial considerations, as well as gender, areas and demographic groups.

But bringing the different sectors of the industry together, sharing information and connecting at a local level would help. We should adopt an approach of "ganging up" on the problem, rather than each other. Bearing in mind what we have achieved in our present form, what could we do if we worked together?

LOOK BACK TO SEE FORWARD

In his latest in a series of columns, FaulknerBrowns Architects' Mike Hall looks at how learning from past projects can be used as a springboard for future developments – and how the most challenging plans are often the most rewarding

The International Sports Academy in The Hague, designed by FaulknerBrowns

By this time of year, we have all had a chance to reflect, to look at the lessons learned last year and to make plans for the coming year. We, as architects, are no exception. Our projects may take three to four years from gestation to completion, but it's valuable to reflect on those things that worked and those aspects that didn't – and to use the experience as a springboard for future projects.

When I reflect on the past year's projects, some of the most rewarding ones were those we'd been involved with from early on and had been able to influence the shaping of the brief – often bringing a new perspective to a client's requirements.

Our role can be much more than simply assembling a building to a brief – satisfying as this can be. These early stages are where we can often add considerable value in terms of the social outputs of a particular project, bringing experience and fusing innovation with sound delivery of projects.

As we look forward to the coming year, it is exciting to consider the power of design in improving social values whether this is in leisure, sport, education, retail or even the workplace. Often the more complex and challenging the project, the richer the final outputs can be.

Of particular interest to us in the coming year is the number of projects where the power of sport is used in conjunction with education. In Holland at Den Haag, our Sports Campus Zuiderpark goes on site in March. The Sports Campus is seen as a leading platform for creating alliances between education, sport and the community – for both public and private partners – and elite sports facilities, providing the opportunity to train and develop talent, as well as create a positive momentum for sport. The Sports Campus is funded by two separate bodies: Gemeente Den Haag (Den Haag Council) which is funding a 3,500-seat arena with hospitality facilities; a multi-purpose sports hall for elite training and competition; a gymnastics hall; a national beach volleyball and a beach soccer centre; dance studios and a dojo. The De Haagse Hogeschool is funding the Academy for Sports Studies which will incorporate lecture theatres and teaching accommodation with four sports halls for community use and teaching.

The power of sport and leisure can be a valuable tool for social good across many other sectors

Closer to home, we are working with football clubs using the power of sport to deliver an education programme to those from under-privileged backgrounds. Our schools team is working on an integrated leisure and UTC project while we continue to work with university estates departments to enhance the HE education experience for staff and students through innovative sporting projects.

The power of sport and leisure can be a valuable tool for social good across many sectors. These projects can be a little more complex and require both operational and design innovation, but the social outputs and value can be much greater than the sum of the parts. ●

Mike Hall, sports partner, FaulknerBrowns Architects. Tel: +44(0)191 2683007
e: m.hall@faulknerbrowns.co.uk
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The stadium will form the anchor for a large mixed-use project

AC Milan reveals new stadium plans designed by Arup

Italian football club AC Milan is considering proposals to leave its San Siro stadium and build a new 48,000-capacity stadium in the city. The club has teamed up with sports architects Arup – who worked on Bayern Munich's Allianz Arena and the National (Bird's Nest) Stadium in Beijing – and revealed plans for a large-scale development in the Portello area of the city.

As well as a new stadium, plans include a hotel, a sports college, restaurants, green areas and public art spaces. A spokesperson for AC Milan said the mixed-use project will take its inspiration from English stadiums, with the purpose of creating a multi-use venue which is operational on non-matchdays.

The stadium will have a capacity of 48,000, fewer than the club's current San Siro home (80,000)

"We're looking to create one of the most innovative stadiums in the world," the club said in a statement.

"We want to create a unique place – planned in collaboration with the Milan Polytechnic Architecture Department – which will be open seven days a week and not just on match days.

"It will hold 48,000 spectators and provide a truly exciting experience with particular attention towards families and the best in security."

Exact plans and designs are to be confirmed, but the club intimated that it would aim to move in to its new home by the beginning of the 2018-19 Serie A season. AC Milan's current home, San Siro, has a capacity of 80,000, but the club only averaged 40,061 spectators during the 2013-14 season.

The club shares San Siro with its fierce rival, Inter Milan, which has also hinted at plans to move into a new home.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=H9p3d

 © Cybertrek 2015

NEWS UPDATE

Atlanta Falcons reveals new images for unique stadium development

National Football League (NFL) franchise the Atlanta Falcons has released a fly-through video of its new US$1.4bn (€1.2bn, £922m) stadium, set to open in downtown Atlanta, US in 2017.

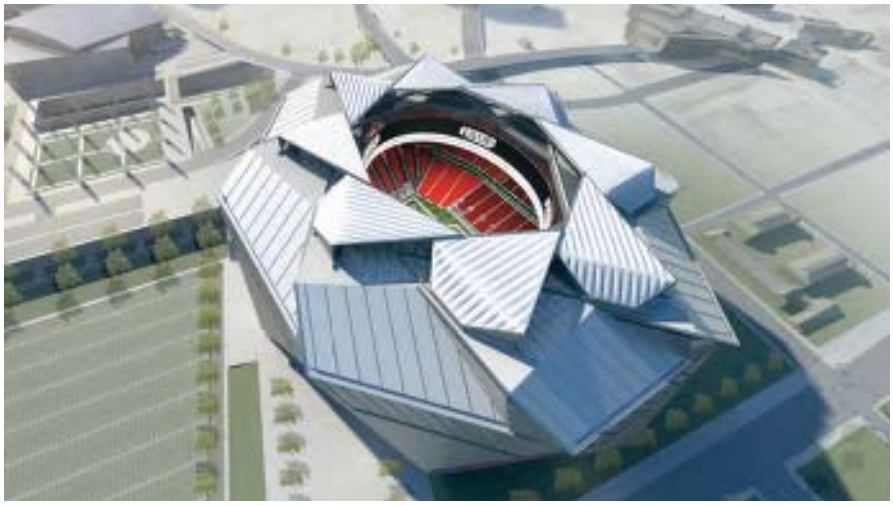
The unique multi-use stadium will feature an eight-petal retractable roof – a first for any stadium – and the world's largest 360-degree HD video screen, viewable from everywhere inside the stadium. Designed by 360 Architecture – recently acquired by HOK Architecture (see pp.30-31) – the stadium will have a capacity of 83,000 people.

Also included in the development is an exterior 61,000sq ft (5,600sq m) fan plaza for pre- and post-game entertainment, as well as a new 100-yard bar and technology lounge offering access to game-day media content.

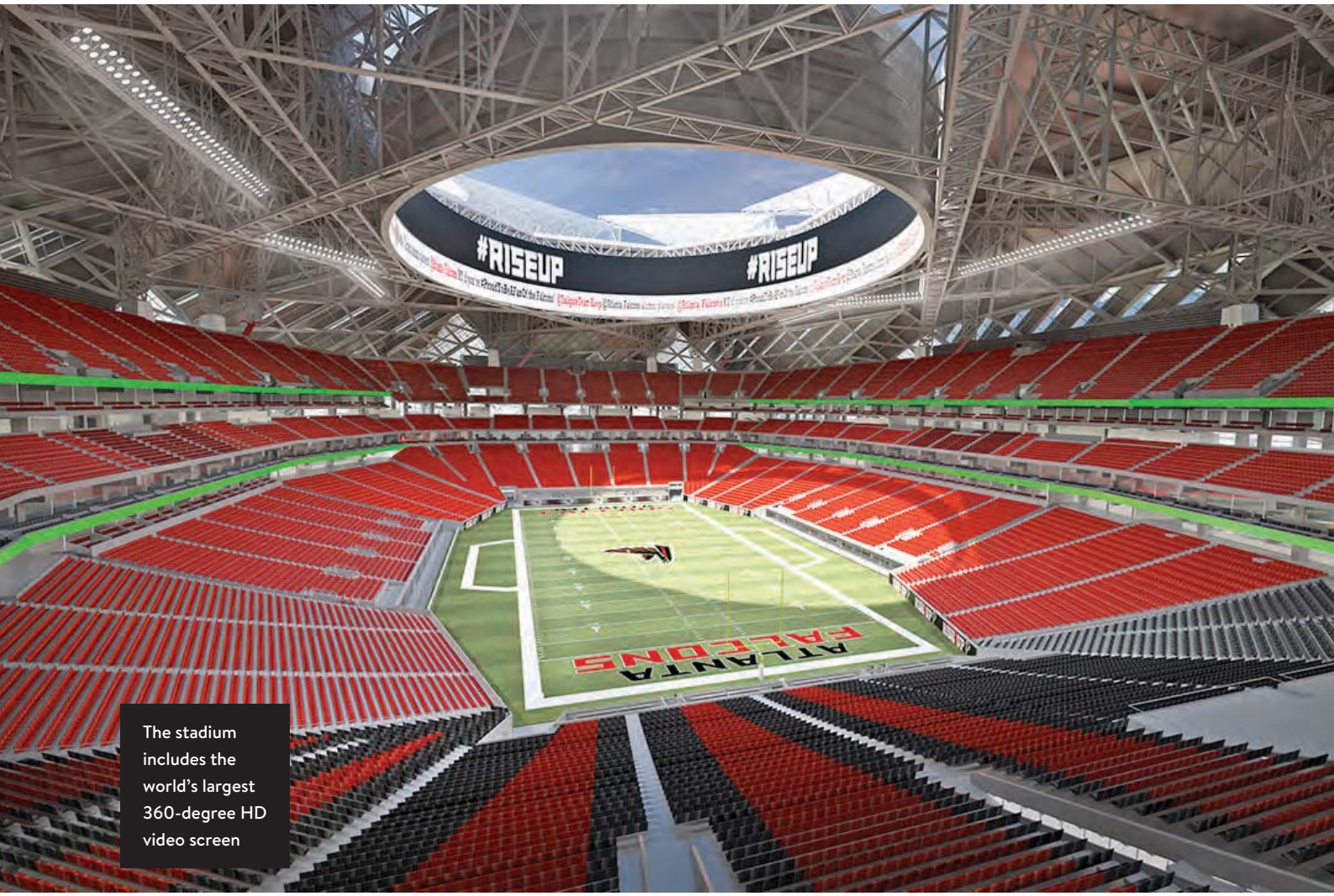
Atlanta Falcons is seeking LEED certification for the venue and recycled building materials are being used in the construction as part of a sustainability strategy. The stadium will be operated as a zero-waste facility and Solar PV panels will be installed to reduce energy usage.

Bill Johnson of 360 Architecture (now HOK Sports + Recreation + Entertainment) is lead architect for the project. Johnson says the circular opening in the roof was inspired by the Roman Pantheon and was designed to be made of a clear, lightweight polymer material that can adjust its opacity to control light.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=H9p3d



The stadium's innovative design will feature an eight-petal retractable roof



The stadium includes the world's largest 360-degree HD video screen

NEWS UPDATE

Spurs wins High Court battle in stadium fight

Tottenham Hotspur FC has been given the green light to build a new 56,250-capacity stadium after winning its High Court battle against the sole business standing in the way of its redevelopment.

Plans for the £400m (US$644m, €498m) stadium, being built next to Tottenham's current home of White Hart Lane, were challenged by landowner Archway Sheet Metal Works at the High Court because of a compulsory purchase order of land being approved in July. However, its appeal was rejected after a judge said a compulsory purchase order against the property was not illegal.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=g2z9U

Beckham has been driving the efforts to bring an MLS franchise to Miami

Beckham "frustrated" at lack of Miami progress

Former England captain David Beckham, who is driving efforts to establish a Major League Soccer (MLS) franchise in Miami, Florida, US has said he's "frustrated" at the delays in securing a stadium site in the city. "Delays are always frustrating but to get it right, sometimes there are delays," he said.

"It's taken a little bit longer than we thought but it will happen and we will get it right. We're making some really good progress and some really positive progress."

So far, Beckham and his team have had two proposals for waterfront locations – at Port Miami and Museum Park – fall through.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=P3v2z

The Games have given grassroots participation a much needed boost across Scotland

Glasgow 2014 increasing sports participation

Last year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow have helped provide increases in participation levels across the 17 Scottish sports that featured at the Games. Figures from Sportscotland show that sports bodies have registered encouraging membership increases during the four-year Glasgow cycle, including a 58 per cent rise at Netball Scotland, a 49 per cent growth at Scottish Triathlon and a 37 per cent increase at Scottish Gymnastics.

In total, there has been an 11 per cent increase in memberships of the 17 Commonwealth Games sports' governing bodies over the past four years.

Perhaps most impressive is the increase in qualified coaches. In 2009-10 there were 4,808 level one coaches across Scottish grassroots sport and by 2013-15 the number had increased to 16,489 – a rise of 243 per cent.

Over the same time period, the number of level two coaches grew from 764 to 4,202 – a 450 per cent rise.

Describing the increase in coaching numbers as "phenomenal", Sportscotland CEO Stewart Harris said: "It's terrific to see increases in the memberships of so many Scottish governing bodies."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=k6W6N

Edinburgh mulls £43m Meadowbank stadium works

The stadium first opened to the public in 1970

City of Edinburgh Council is considering committing to a £43m redevelopment of the city's Meadowbank sports complex. Councillors have been told that without major works the stadium – built for the 1970 Commonwealth Games – will be forced to close within the next five years.

It is believed that the venue cost the council around £400,000 to run in 2013-14, despite more than 500,000 people using the site. Plans include replacing the existing stadium with a smaller venue.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=W8B5N

 © Cybertrek 2015

NEWS UPDATE

£5.1bn Premier League deal should 'result in more grassroots funding'

The deal strengthens English Premier League's status as the richest football league in the world

A number of politicians and former players have called for the English Premier League (EPL) to ensure the league and its clubs "give more money back" to the sport's grassroots and fans, following a record-breaking TV deal signed on 10 February.

EPL announced that it had sold domestic TV rights to Sky and BT Sport for a total of £5.1bn for the three seasons from 2016-17 to 2018-19 – marking a 70 per cent increase on the previous £3bn deal (2013-16).

Sports minister Helen Grant described the Premier League as "a great British success story" but said the TV deal should bring "increased benefits to clubs lower down the football pyramid".

Shadow sports minister, Clive Efford, added that the league's actions would be "nothing short of criminal" if it didn't invest more money in grassroots.

He has also accused the EPL of breaking a pledge it made on the level of investment. "At the outset, the Premier League gave an undertaking to the government that it would put 5 per cent of TV revenue into grassroots sports," Efford said. "So far, that just hasn't happened."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=D3C5a

Rugby World Cup to provide £2.2bn boost for UK

The 2015 Rugby World Cup in England is set to create 12,000 new jobs and provide the UK economy with a £2.2bn boost, according to deputy prime minister Nick Clegg. Clegg said the event will be the "biggest ever for English rugby".

"Not only will it bring billions of pounds to our economy and create thousands of jobs but it will leave a lasting legacy, building on the work here at the Twickenham Academy, inspiring youngsters from every background to pick up a ball," he said.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=P7Z2P

The tournament will kick off in September

Grimshaw chosen for £15m Dublin arena overhaul

A rendering of the new equestrian offering

A consortium of architecture and design firms has been chosen to design a €20m (£15m, US$22m) redevelopment of the RDS Arena in Dublin, Ireland.

International architecture firm Grimshaw has been paired with local practice Newenham Mulligan to carry out the works. Located south of Dublin city centre, the multi-purpose venue is home to Leinster Rugby and also hosts equestrian sports. It'll be included in Ireland's bid to host the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=c6e9N

The development has faced opposition

Scunthorpe Utd submits plans for £18m stadium

Scunthorpe United Football Club (SUFC) has submitted a planning application to North Lincolnshire Council for a new £18m stadium located west of Scunthorpe.

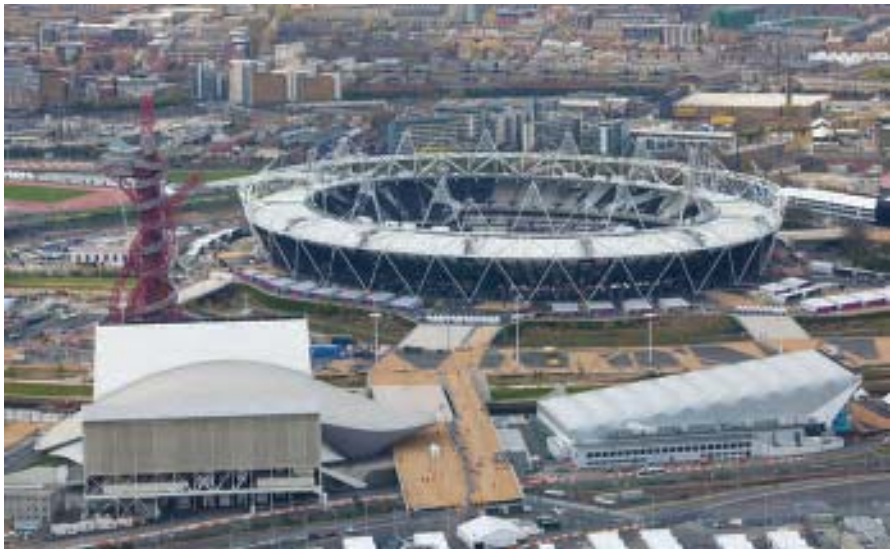
The 12,000-seater stadium is set to be developed as part of the mixed-use Lincolnshire Lakes project – which is spearheaded by Lucent Group and will include 3,500 new houses, a commercial park, a school and a transport hub.

The designs and masterplan for the stadium have been created by the Frank Whittle Partnership and come as SUFC chair Peter Swann is keen to move the club from its current 9,000-capacity Glanford Park.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=a4D7H

NEWS UPDATE

French operator Vinci to manage London's Olympic Stadium



Vinci will operate the stadium and events organised in the spaces around the ArcelorMittal Orbit

Vinci Stadium, subsidiary of French venue operator Vinci Concessions, has signed a 25-year contract to operate London's Olympic Stadium. Vinci's existing stadium portfolio includes the Stade de France in Paris and the company will take control of the London venue later this year. It's first major event will be to host five games of the Rugby World Cup 2015 in September.

Alongside managing the stadium, Vinci will also manage the London Marathon Charitable Trust Community Track and events on the south park lawn, below the ArcelorMittal Orbit. As part of the 25-year agreement, the company will work with the E20 Stadium Partnership to promote sport and healthy living in the local area and deliver mass participation events such as the Great Newham London Run.

David Goldstone, CEO of the London Legacy Development Corporation, said: "It's another step forward in the long-term future of the stadium. Vinci has a great track record in managing world-class venues. We're looking forward to working together and delivering a stadium capable of hosting a range of sports and events, including this autumn's Rugby World Cup."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=N5a6U

Green light for £135m Castleford stadium plans

Wakefield Council has given planning permission for Castleford Tigers' ambitious £135m stadium complex.

As well as a 10,000-capacity stadium, the development – near Junction 32 of the M62 at Glasshoughton, West Yorkshire – will also include a 50-acre country park, shops and restaurants.

Tigers' development partner for the scheme, London-based Lateral Property Group, has said the scheme could create up to 2,000 jobs.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=G9B9C

The stadium will be part of a mixed-use project

This Girl Can campaign kicks off across the UK

This Girl Can, a multi-million pound marketing campaign aimed at getting more girls and women into sport, was launched by Sport England on 12 January.

The high-profile £10m campaign aims to take down the psychological barriers that prevent women from exercising and playing sport by using images that contradict the stylised and idealised images of women.

The campaign is designed to get women of all ages more active

The imagery is combined with motivational slogans such as "sweating like a pig, feeling like a fox".

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=a7g3J

The building's facade conveys the energy of an athlete in motion

3XN reveals designs for new Olympic HQ

Danish architecture firm 3XN has revealed its designs for the new Olympic Headquarters in the city of Lausanne, Switzerland.

3XN was chosen to design the International Olympic Committee's new base in April 2014 following an international competition.

Called 'Olympic Unity House', the scheme will be built next to the IOC's iconic home, Château de Vidy, on the shores of Lake Geneva. It will provide a main base for all 600 staff, who are currently spread across several different sites.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=9a6q2

NEWS UPDATE

Edmonton pulls out of 2022 Games bidding

Canadian city Edmonton has withdrawn its bid to host the 2022 Commonwealth Games, leaving Durban in South Africa as the only remaining bidder.

In a statement, the Edmonton 2022 bid team blamed the "fiscal environment" for the withdrawal, citing falling oil prices as the main reason for pulling out. Edmonton and its surrounding areas are the primary supply and service hub for Canada's crude oil, oil sands and other northern resource industries.The bid team added, however, that it would look to mount a bid to host the Games in 2026.

Edmonton's mayor, Don Iveson, said: "This is an unfortunate announcement.

"Given the provincial government's current financial reality, my city council colleagues and I are disappointed that the province is unable to proceed with supporting the Games bid.

"We want to reassure the Commonwealth Games Federation that Edmonton remains committed to the Commonwealth Games movement and looks forward to a future bid."

Responding to the pullout, David Grevemberg, CEO of the Commonwealth Games Federation said: "We are obviously disappointed to hear Edmonton will not be part of the host city bidding process for the 2022 Commonwealth Games.

"We now look forward enthusiastically to working with the Durban 2022 Bid team and their partners through the evaluation process so, together as a Commonwealth sporting movement, we can realise the ambitions of delivering Africa's first Commonwealth Games."

The Edmonton team was in the final stages of putting together a bid. The city also hosted the Games in 1978.

Edmonton's eleventh-hour pulling out means that only one candidate city remains – Durban

Responding to the withdrawal, the bid committee for Durban said it had noted Edmonton's withdrawal and was following "due process" with its own bid ahead of the March 2 deadline to lodge papers.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=w5v9T

Truro City Football Club announces preferred location for new stadium

Truro City Football Club (TCFC) has announced plans to build a new stadium to the west of the city.

Helical Retail, the club's development partner, has acquired an option from Wycliffe Estates to purchase a site known as Silver Bow, at Threemilestone, for the club's relocation. The site is directly opposite the entrance to the proposed Langarth Development, which has planning consent for 1,500 houses.

Truro plays in the Southern Premier League

Helical Retail expects to submit a planning application for a football ground and related uses in the next few months. No details on the stadium's size or design have been released, but the venue is set to host the club's new academy.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=v5r6k

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Man U rising stars to aid research into exercise

A new research project to identify the effects of exercise on young people's hearts will collect data from 100 Manchester United Academy football players as part of the study. The youngsters will have their hearts monitored by the latest imaging technology to give invaluable insights into how young people's hearts work while doing exercise.

The project, led by the Bristol Heart Institute at the University of Bristol and involving a number of partners, will identify the healthy limits and wider benefits of exercise for young elite athletes, healthy children and children with congenital heart defects.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=Z2h9p

Chelsea's current home, Stamford Bridge, has a capacity of 41,837

Herzog & de Meuron team up with Chelsea

Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron (HM) are working on plans to increase the capacity of English Premier League club Chelsea FC's Stamford Bridge stadium, in partnership with London-based Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands. HM are looking at concept designs for the stadium, which currently has 41,837 seats. The club wants to increase capacity to 60,000.

In a statement, a Chelsea spokesperson said: "We are assessing the feasibility of an expansion of the stadium within the existing historic site boundaries, potentially to enlarge its capacity."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=U4m6e

The number of regular swimmers in England has declined steeply over the past 12 months

Swimming participation plunges to new depths

A huge decline in the number of people swimming once a week has been blamed for an overall fall in sports participation in England. Swimming, the country's most popular sport with more than 2.6 million people hitting a pool each week, saw a drop of 245,000 swimmers in the last 12 months – an alarming 8 per cent drop.

As a result, the number of people doing sport at least once a week in England fell by 125,000 between October 2013 and October 2014 – bringing the overall number down from 15.725 to 15.6 million.

The figures come from the latest Active People Survey (APS), released by Sport England on 29 January. Despite swimming's poor performance, there is reason to be positive about the APS figures.

Reversing earlier trends, team sports saw an increase in numbers in the last 12 months – with football, cricket, netball and rugby union all recording growth.

As well as more people playing team sports, a number of other sports saw increases in the numbers of people taking part – such as athletics, canoeing, mountaineering, taekwondo and fencing.

The overall number of young people playing sport has also increased.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=X5g9Z

67m tickets sold for UK sports events in 2014

Glasgow 2014 provided a boost for ticket sales

Professional sports events held in the UK attracted a total of 67 million paying fans during 2014, according to analysis by Deloitte's sports business group.

Football remains the UK's most popular spectator sport, with a total of of 42.8m tickets sold. The 1.3m tickets sold for the 11-day Commonwealth Games in Glasgow offered a boost to the overall figure, although this year's total is less than the 75m tickets sold for UK sports events in 2012 – the year of the London Games.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=u7k9A

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NEWS UPDATE

UNESCO publishes new PE guidelines for global policy makers

The guidelines have been designed to help governments get more young children physically active

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has called on governments to increase investment in physical education and school sport in order to make children more physically active.

The recommendations are made in a new publication, which offers new guidelines on physical education for governments and policy makers.

In the new document, entitled *Quality Physical Education, Guidelines for Policy Makers,* UNESCO addresses seven areas of "particular concern" identified last year in UNESCO's global review of the state of physical education.

The seven areas include persistent gaps between PE policy and implementation; continuing deficiencies in curriculum time allocation; relevance and quality of PE curriculums; and the quality of initial teacher training programmes.

It also highlights inadequacies in the quality and maintenance of facilities and the continued barriers to equal provision and access for all – as well as inadequate school-community coordination.

The guidelines were released during a meeting of UNESCO's Intergovernmental Committee on 30 January.

Read more: **http://lei.sr?a=N7Y8E**

Seven sports to receive extra funding ahead of Rio 2016 Olympic Games

High-performance sports agency UK Sport has invested an extra £2.3m into seven Olympic and Paralympic sports as a result of its Annual Investment Review.

The additional funds include a £135,814 investment in Wheelchair Fencing, which re-joins the UK Sport's World Class Programme after demonstrating medal potential for Rio through performances over the past year. Other sports receiving increases in existing investment are boccia, disability shooting, fencing, para-archery, para-triathlon, powerlifting and shooting.

Fencing will benefit from increased funding

Badminton's investment has been reduced slightly due to a "rebalancing of the programme".

Read more: **http://lei.sr?a=z4Q7V**

NEWS UPDATE

EIS and iceSheffield join Olympic Park project

The English Institute of Sport (EIS) Sheffield and iceSheffield have been officially incorporated into the city's multi-million pound Olympic Legacy Park (OLP) project.

Located in the East End of Sheffield, the OLP is a joint venture between Sheffield Hallam University, Sheffield Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Sheffield City Council. Former sports minister Richard Caborn, who has acted as the lead of the OLP project, said the addition of the two venues is another milestone in the plans.

"In EIS and iceSheffield, we've got two of the best sporting facilities in the UK," he said.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=k3P4v

Chill Factore is the anchor tenant at Trafford Quays Leisure Village

Development Securities acquires Chill Factore

The Chill Factore indoor ski slope in Manchester has changed hands in a deal worth £15.5m.

Property investor Development Securities acquired Extreme Cool, the company that owns and operates the venue, which first opened in November 2007.

Located close to the Trafford Centre, Chill Factore houses an 180m indoor real snow ski slope – the longest in the UK – a climbing wall and 16 shops and restaurants.

It is the anchor tenant in the Trafford Quays Leisure Village, and currently attracts between 1.2 and 1.4 million visitors per year.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=m9b8N

Cristiano Ronaldo, the brightest of Real Madrid's 'Galácticos' who help boost the club's revenues

Real Madrid still king of global football revenue

European Champion Real Madrid remains the richest football club in the world, according to the latest edition of the annual Deloitte Football Money League – which measures annual revenues of football clubs. It is the 10th year running that the Spanish club sits at the top of Deloitte's annual survey, with revenues of €549.5m (£459.5m).

Manchester United now sits second in the table, with revenues of €518m (£433.2m) in 2013-14. It marks a comeback for the English Premier League (EPL) club, having been ranked fourth in last year's survey. While Real dominates the club rankings, the EPL is similarly sovereign when it comes to the world's richest professional football league.

A total of eight EPL clubs are placed within the top 20 this year, with Newcastle United and Everton joining Man United, Chelsea, Arsenal, Manchester City, Liverpool and Tottenham Hotspur.

Strikingly, every club that played in the EPL during the 2013-14 season has made it into the top 40 of the Money League – making the likes of Hull City and Crystal Palace worth more than Portuguese giant FC Porto and Italian club Lazio.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=B9p3F

£1.5m for clubs working with the under-represented

Grow the Game was first launched in 2010

The Football Foundation will distribute a further £1.5m to clubs which are committed to increasing the number of under-represented groups playing football.

The Growing the Game project will help clubs in England meet the costs of expanding the range of teams they operate to cater for players whose opportunities to join suitable teams are limited.

The fund will boost playing opportunities for women and girls; disabled players; and male teams of under-14s and older.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=W8G5J

NEWS UPDATE

York's £41m multi-use stadium on schedule for 2016 opening

The 8,000-capacity stadium will become home to York City FC and York City Knights RLFC

Building services firm ISG has been confirmed as the preferred construction partner for the £41m York Community Stadium and Leisure Complex scheme.

The mixed-use stadium development, which ISG will build as part of a consortium led by non-profit facility management company GLL, will become the new home for York's professional football and rugby teams – York City FC and York City Knights. It will also include leisure, retail, office and community facilities. ISG's appointment is now expected to pave the way for building work on the stadium to begin later this year, with a completion date set for 2016.

In addition to a new 8,000 all-seater stadium with high-quality hospitality and conferencing facilities, the complex will house three floodlit 3G sports pitches for community use and a new leisure centre with a 25m (82ft) six-lane swimming pool and health club. A multi-use sports hall for netball, basketball and badminton will have viewing for up to 250 spectators. The scheme also includes a 100-station gym with dance and spinning studios and an extreme adventure sports zone.

Read more: **http://lei.sr?a=K8N4W**

Tour de France helps Yorkshire break tourism records

Yorkshire's hosting of the Tour de France Grand Départ helped the region set a new record for overseas visits during Q3 2014, with foreign cycling fans contributing to a £230m spend during the period.

As Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg and tourism minister Helen Grant visited Sheffield recently to discuss the £10m Northern Tourism fund, newly released figures for the first nine months of 2014 show a bumper period for Yorkshire with overseas visits up 12 per cent. Nearly 1.1 million foreign tourists ventured to Yorkshire during the period, spending a total of £465m. The strongest growth in visits came from Australia, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain and USA.

The peloton riding during stage 2 of Le Tour

Read more: **http://lei.sr?a=a9T2W**

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NEWS UPDATE

Serco and Sport England launch mentoring scheme

Leisure operator Serco is to roll out a mentoring programme aimed at tackling chronic inactivity across its managed sites, following a successful pilot run in partnership with Sport England.

The Healthy Life programme identifies individuals who do no exercise at all and supports them to build sustainable physical activity into their lives. Under the programme, each individual is assigned a health and wellbeing coach who encourages them to take part in activities at their local leisure centre (e.g. gym, swimming, exercise classes) and assesses their progress at regular intervals.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=h4z9V

The club has been looking to move away from its Goodison Park home

Study outlines benefits of Everton stadium plans

An independent study released by Liverpool City Council has said a stadium-led regeneration around Everton Football Club has the potential to create up to 1,250 permanent jobs, 1,000 new homes and 30,000sq m (323,000sq ft) of leisure, retail and restaurant space.

The study by Volterra Partners outlines the benefits of a regenerated Walton Hall Park, just over a mile from Everton's current home of Goodison Park.

In the plans Everton would gain a new 50,000-capacity stadium, along with replacement facilities for the Lifestyles Leisure Centre, Liverpool Soccer Centre, children's play area and sports pitches.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=t2x7R

Initial rendering of the new Arena, which is scheduled to host its first events by the end of 2017

SMG and Live Nation to manage Bristol Arena

Global facility management giant SMG, in partnership with Live Nation, has been named as the preferred bidder to operate the 12,000-seat Bristol Arena when it opens in 2017. The Bristol Arena, set to become the UK's largest indoor arena, will be located at an old oil depot site near the city's Temple Meads Station and is expected to cost around £95m to build.

A multi-use venue, the arena will be capable of hosting a number of sporting events as well as large-scale conferences and concerts. The arena is part of a wider masterplan for the area by architects Allies and Morrison. Naming an operator now opens the door for Bristol City Council (BCC) – which is leading the project – to begin pre-application discussions with the local community. A planning application is expected to be filed later in 2015.

Based in the US, SMG currently operates arenas in Leeds, Manchester, Newcastle and Belfast as well as several UK theatres through its SMG-Europe subsidiary. It also manages two venues in Germany and one in Poland.

Wes Westley, SMG CEO, said: "We think the Arena will be a fantastic venue for sport and entertainment."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=s5M3u

Dave Brailsford launches Bangor Uni Sports Centre

Sir Dave Brailsford at the newly opened centre

The new Canolfan Brailsford Sports Centre was recently opened in Bangor, Wales by local lad and former British Cycling chief Sir Dave Brailsford, who said he was "honoured" to have the facility named after him.

The centre, which is part of Bangor University, has undergone a £2.5m refurbishment programme to provide sports and exercise facilities for both Bangor University and the local community.

The new facilities include a brand new two-storey 8,500sq m (91,493sq ft) gym.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=6X5X7

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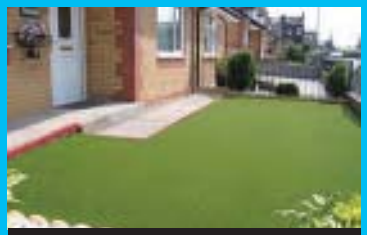
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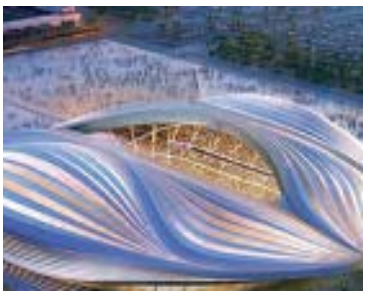
NEWS UPDATE

Inaugural Sport Tourism Awards to be held in May

The first ever European Sport Tourism Awards event will be held at the Thomond Park Stadium in Limerick, Ireland in May. Organised as part of the European Sport Tourism Summit – taking place from 14 to 15 May – the awards will recognise and reward innovation and achievement in sport tourism from across Europe. Events, destinations and venues which have made outstanding contributions to the sport tourism industry will be acknowledged in front of a global audience of sport tourism influencers and practitioners.

Categories include The Sport Tourism City of the year award.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=a5X8e



The Zaha Hadid-designed Qatar Stadium

Qatar to host stadium construction expo in June

Qatar will host the inaugural International Stadium Construction Expo (QISC) this June. The event will act as a meeting point for companies and organisations looking to bid for projects in the region – such as the FIFA 2022 World Cup and those relating to the Qatari government's wider *Vision 2030* programme of investment.

Organised by Pavilion Exhibitions & Conferences (PEC), QISC will take place from 7 to 10 June 2015. Issa Mohamed Mubarak Al Darwish, chair of PEC, said: "The idea behind the exhibition stemmed from a desire to contribute to the accomplishment of Qatar National Vision 2030 in all fields, including sport."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=3n6h7

Swansea was one of only three Premier League clubs to meet the requirements for disability

Efforts to improve disabled access at sports venues

The government is to launch a survey into the treatment of disabled people at UK stadiums and sports venues.

Disabled sports fans will be encouraged to share their experiences of all aspects of viewing live sport – including wheelchair access, disabled parking, accessible toilets, hearing loops and treatment by other supporters at live sporting fixtures.

The survey and its results will be used to guide the government's efforts to improve spectator experiences for the UK's 12 million disabled people.

Earlier this year the government called on Britain's football leagues to take urgent action to redress the "woeful" lack of appropriate support and space for disabled spectators, reminding them of their legal obligations to provide adequate room and adjustments for disabled fans.

Research showed nearly half of English Premier League football clubs don't offer even half the wheelchair space they should for disabled people.

Mark Harper, minister of state for disabled people, said: "For too long in this country disabled sports fans have been treated like second-class citizens at many sporting venues.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=n8P5U

New web-based resource launched for sports clubs

The tool has been designed for all sports clubs

Sport England has launched Club Matters – a free web-based resource to help those involved in running grassroots sports clubs. Designed to help all club officials and volunteers – whether a club chair writing a plan to attract new members or a treasurer managing budgets.

The resources will offer a wide range of help to clubs, from mentoring and club improvement plans to ways to operate Clubmark – the nationally-acknowledged accreditation scheme for sports clubs.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=h8I6w

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TOM WALKER, MANAGING EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE

Brad Schrock (left), will become director of HOK Sports + Recreation + Entertainment. HOK's Bill Hellmuth (centre) and John Rhodes (right)

HOK returns to sport architecture

Global engineering and design company HOK is returning to sports facility design for the first time since 2008, after completing a deal to acquire Kansas City, US-based sports specialists 360 Architecture

Bill Hellmuth, president of global architecture practice HOK is "excited" by the firm's re-entry into the sports sector. Speaking to *Sports Management*, Hellmuth said the acquisition of sports specialist 360 Architecture, which will form part of a new global practice called HOK Sports + Recreation + Entertainment, has "filled a void" in HOK's operations.

"It's great to be back in sports," he said. "It's a piece of our practice that we've sorely missed for the last six years."

HOK's previous sports arm – HOK Sport Venue Event – became Populous in 2008 following a management buy out. A non-compete agreement, which formed part of the deal, meant HOK hasn't worked in sports for more than five years.

Founded in 2004, 360 Architecture is recognised as one of the world's leading designers of stadia, arenas and wellness centres, employing 200 staff. The company's previous work includes the MetLife Stadium in New York and the Basra Sports City project in Iraq. The firm has also been involved in plans for a new training facility for NBA side the Philadelphia 76ers, while its designs for the mixed-use Rogers Place in Edmonton have turned heads in the architectural industry.

Hellmuth said the integration of 360 into HOK will impact all of HOK's future work around large projects. "We do an awful lot of work with developers and a lot of masterplanning of communities," he added. "To be able to work hand in glove with the sports component is just an incredible benefit to working on overall masterplans – especially in Asia and the Middle East where there are very large and complex masterplans of communities.

"Having the sports component woven in from the very beginning is a real benefit. In the past, people doing these masterplans would get to the sports part and we'd have to say that 'we don't do that'. That is no longer the case and it makes our offering to clients so much richer and better."

Brad Schrock, principal at 360 Architecture, will be among the staff to join the new Sports + Recreation +

"JOINING FORCES ENABLES US O TAKE ADVANTAGE OF AN EXCEPTIONALLY STRONG GLOBAL PLATFORM"

HOK will now be able to deliver entire masterplans – including the sports elements

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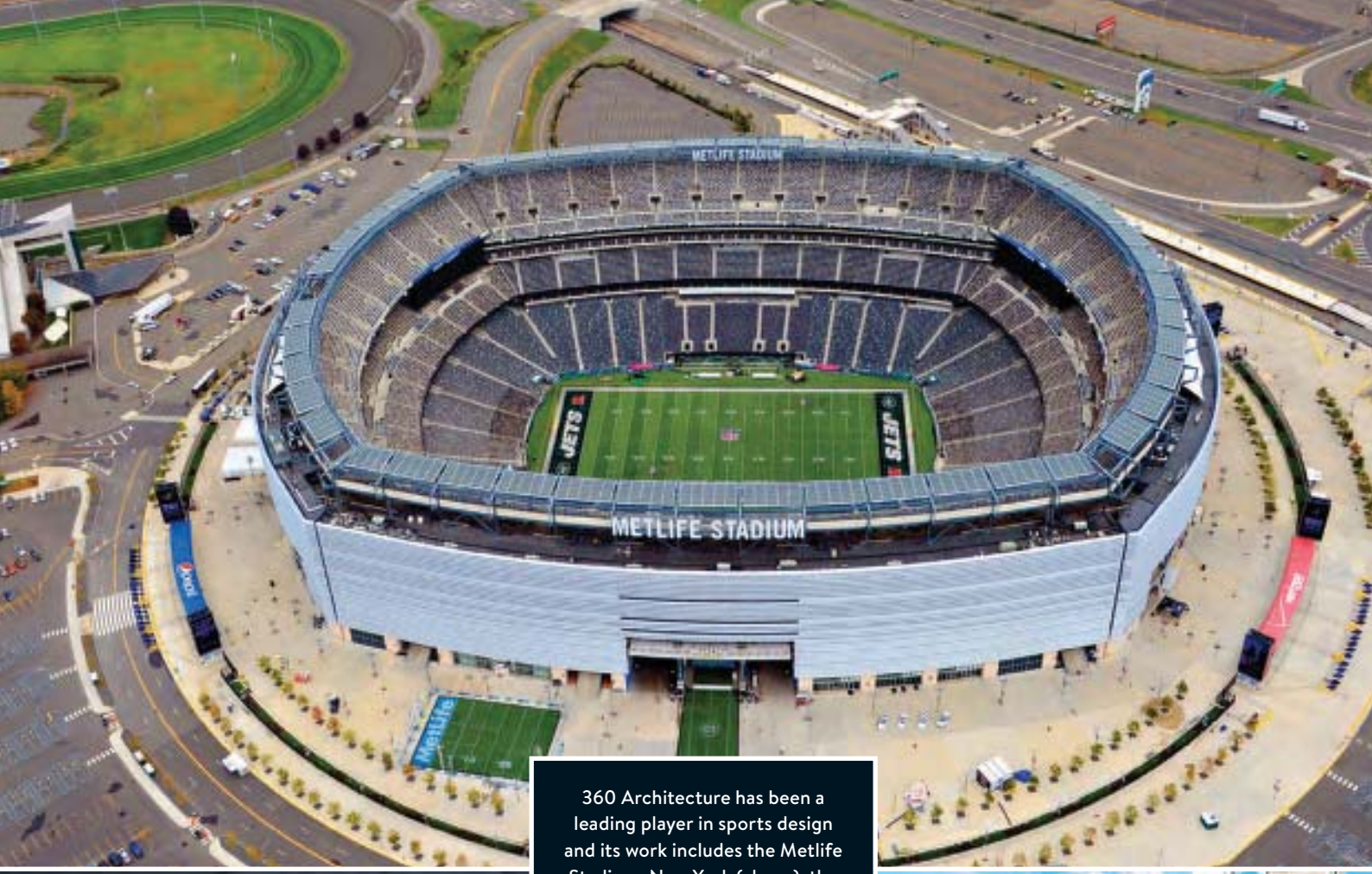
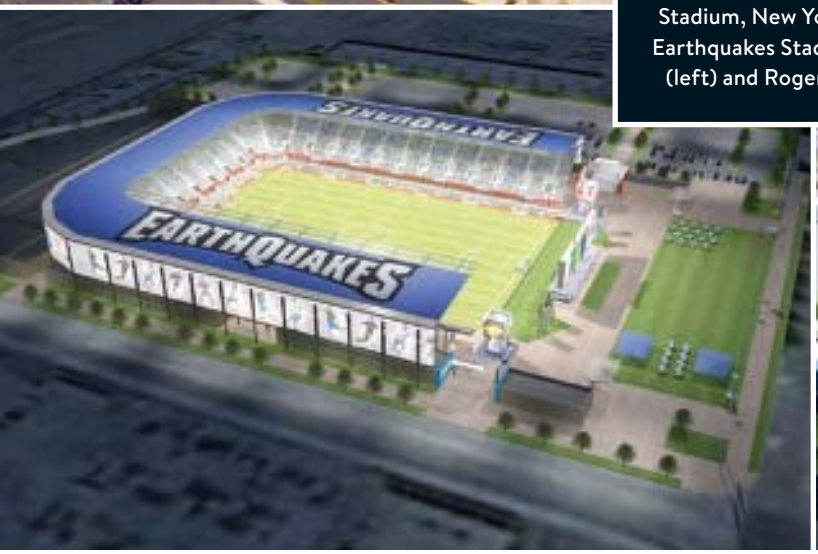


360 Architecture has been a leading player in sports design and its work includes the Metlife Stadium, New York (above), the Earthquakes Stadium in San Jose (left) and Rogers Place (right)



Entertainment practice. He is poised to become its director. Speaking to Sports Management, Schrock said the new sports practice's philosophy will mirror the scale of opportunities offered by being part of a global masterplanning giant such as HOK.

"Sports facilities are so much more than just sports facilities nowadays," Schrock said. "The days of having a traditional sports architect execute a stadium are pretty much over.

"Our philosophy is that we've got an incredible group of professionals and experts around the world that practice in a number of markets that come to bear on all of our sports projects. Joining HOK enables us to take advantage of an exceptionally strong global platform and to expand our sports facility design practice, while offering our clients additional expertise in other markets."

Along with Schrock, 360 Architecture's senior principals set to join HOK include Tom Waggoner, George Heinlein, William Johnson, Tracy Stearns and Chris Trainer.

Meanwhile, John Rhodes has been appointed the new director at the London, UK office of Sports + Recreation + Entertainment. Rhodes said the company has already lined up an impressive project portfolio.

"From our point of view the most exciting thing we're looking at is the Dubai World Expo," Rhodes told Sports Management. "It's an enormous event in 2020 and we're currently working with the master planning team here in London, looking at the venues and how they work and inform that masterplan.

"The prospect of getting 25-30 million people through the site within six months is incredibly exciting – and a challenge in terms of experiential architecture.

"We've also got a few arena projects that we've been looking at and stadium projects around the world – in the Middle East in particularly."

HOK's re-entry into the sports market in 2015 coincides with the celebration of the company's 60th anniversary.

Is staging the Women's World Cup on artificial grass discriminatory?

The decision to play the most prestigious tournament in women's football on artificial surfaces has divided opinion – for some it's evidence of inequality, for others a step in the right direction

The 2015 FIFA Women's World Cup in Edmonton, Canada will be the first senior FIFA tournament to be played entirely on artificial turf. While some see FIFA's decision to use artificial turf a step in the right direction, others – including those working in women's football – claim that female footballers are being used as guinea pigs to test the viability of having the men's World Cup played on artificial turf in the future.

A group of leading female players saw the decision to not use grass pitches as something more sinister – a case of discrimination and sexism.

A total of 84 players from 13 countries launched a legal challenge against FIFA and the tournament's host, the Canadian Soccer Association. They argued that the women's tournament should be played on similar surfaces to the men, and that synthetic pitches would increase the danger of injuries.

While the legal case was dropped at the end of January 2015, the debate still rumbles on. The players believe that, while the challenge was dropped, it will have had a positive impact on women's sport and acted as an instigator for discussions about inequality. For others, the resistance to artificial pitches is misinformed. Their argument is that artificial turf performs just as well as natural grass and is just as safe. We asked industry experts for their views.

ERIC O'DONNELL

Managing director, Sports Labs

Some see the decision to use artificial surfaces as discriminatory and point the finger firmly at FIFA. Is that fair? Shouldn't critics be looking closer at the surfaces women already play on regularly?

The top five ranked nations in women's football – the USA, Germany, Japan, France and Sweden – along with Scotland and England, have senior women's teams playing on artificial turf regularly within their national league systems. Within those seven nations, there are 25 top flight teams playing at 23 different stadia which have artificial surfaces.

The real discrimination is that out of those 23 stadia which regularly host top flight women's games on artifical surfaces, only 40 per cent are checked and approved by FIFA – and only 32 per cent are checked annually to comply with FIFA's top quality mark, FIFA 2 Star. Clearly there have been no headlines about how the national leagues are being sued for discrimination as a result of playing on these artificial pitches.

Some of the players who feel so strongly about being "forced" to play on FIFA approved pitches during Canada 2015 are, it seems, happy to ply their trade on untested, unregulated artificial pitches during their regular season.

JEROME VALCKE

Secretary General, FIFA

It's completely crazy to say that the decision to play on artificial surfaces somehow amounts to discrimination – it has nothing to do with inequity and at FIFA we work every day to develop women's football around the world. Frankly I'm amazed by the size and the scale of the discussion.

It is FIFA's right to stage tournaments on synthetic surfaces as a matter of principle.

We have decided at FIFA – and it's part of our statutes and regulations – that artificial pitches can be used, just as natural grass can, to make sure we can play football everywhere around the world.

When you're going into a country and the country is using artificial pitches, the executive committee can make the decision to authorise the use of artificial pitches.

For example. looking ahead, I can tell you that for the 2019 Women's World Cup we have two candidates – France and South Korea – both of which are set to use natural grass for the tournament – and that's it, there are no discussions. If anyone is saying the use of artificial pitches is a question of discrimination, it's nonsense.

 ©Cybertrek 2015

PIC:©WWW.SHUTTERSTOCK/ MITROFANOV ALEXANDER

Many nations competing at this year's Women's World Cup use artificial turf for their top flight national leagues

KIT CAMPBELL

Kit Campbell Associates

The world of football must be in a state of shock: FIFA has actually made a decision that is in the best long term interests of the game. Let's hope it's abandoning its apparent long-standing policy of attempting to hold back technological advances.

I wonder how many lawyers refused to take on the claim that FIFA is discriminating against women, before the complainants found one who'd represent them.

Just as well American lawyers weren't around when Gutenberg invented the printing press (thereby discriminating against scribes). Other sports have been transformed for the better by technological progress – artificial surfaces for tennis, hockey and increasingly rugby; synthetic tracks for athletics; graphite racquets and golf shafts and so on.

Playing the Women's World Cup on artificial surfaces should prove hugely positive – especially in countries where grass pitches are normally pretty awful and/or ludicrously expensive to maintain. Let's have matches decided by players' skills, not uneven bounces or slippery grass. Would Beckham have skied his famous 2003 penalty against Turkey into the stands if he'd taken it on an artificial pitch rather than a patch of mud?

GEOFF WEBB

CEO, Institute of Groundsmanship

The reality is that since July of 2004, FIFA recommended fields were first authorised for international match play – according to the laws of the game. There have been FIFA-sanctioned tournaments already, albeit at lower age group levels, that have been played out on artificial grass by male as well as female players. This, it would seem, is the precursor to a more high-profile trial of artificial turf, using the women players and the excuse that it is too cold to grow grass in Canada!

Former Scottish International and Chelsea FC player – Craig Burley's recent comment for the ESPN news network: "are you telling me they can't grow grass in Canada, even in winter?" encapsulates what many people think about the direction both Canada and FIFA have taken. Alluding to the amazing grass-growing technologies available to modern groundsman at stadia throughout the world, he continued: "How can you not grow grass in this modern day?" Craig has a point.

The reality is that artificial turf suits the business model of FIFA. It's no longer about the players' opinion, the fans' opinion or that natural turf is not a good enough surface. It's a business decision and it's good for FIFA. But is it good for the game?

TOM WALKER, MANAGING EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

NICK EASTWOOD

When Nick Eastwood joined Wasps Rugby as CEO in late 2012, the once great club was in dire straits, both financially and on the pitch. Since then he's overseen a daring recovery plan which included buying the Ricoh Arena in Coventry – 100 miles away from Wasps' traditional fan base

"I don't think you can over-estimate the effect that acquiring the Ricoh Arena will have on us as a club," says Nick Eastwood, the softly-spoken deputy chair of Wasps Rugby Club. "It's a watershed moment and central to our plans to return to the top of European rugby."

Wasps' acquisition of Ricoh, for a reported £20m – Eastwood remains tight-lipped about the exact price – in October 2014 marks a remarkable turnaround for a club that was, just 18 months prior, within seconds of going into liquidation due to unpaid bills. The club had struggled financially for years, partly due to it not having its own stadium – resulting in diminished non-matchday revenues – since it sold its ground in Sudbury in 1996.

"The move to Ricoh has given us the security the club has craved for years and is the first step in returning this historic club where it belongs – to the top of Europe," he says. "Overnight, we went from having the second smallest turnover in the Premiership to having the biggest.

"The huge non-rugby business at Ricoh – the event spaces, restaurants, the casino – turns over £40m a year and will mean that financially, we'll be able to compete with European heavyweights like Toulouse."

▼ Wasps' life at the Ricoh Arena got off to a flying start – the first home game attracted more than 28,000 fans

SETTING OUT

Eastwood's vision of challenging Europe's top clubs in sporting and economic terms is ambitious – even audacious – but should come as no surprise, considering his impressive track record. Prior to joining Wasps in 2012, he spent a 12-year spell as finance director of the Rugby Football Union (RFU), during which he oversaw a dramatic turnaround in the sports body's fortunes. In the course of Eastwood's reign, RFU's net worth grew from £35m to £180m and the organisation went from recording a £5m annual loss to making profits of £15m. An impressive record, but one which Eastwood is keen to downplay in his typically jovial way. "Don't ask me how we did it," he says on turning around the RFU. "Because I can't remember!"

Prior to joining the RFU in 1999, Eastwood had enjoyed a successful career in the financial sector. He started out at accounting powerhouse Arthur Anderson in the 1980s before a stint at US-based Lifetime Corporation, owner of recruitment company Office Angels.

He returned to the UK in 1993 and joined Anita Roddick's team at ethical cosmetics retailer The Body Shop, where he was global head of corporate services. Eastwood says The Body Shop – and the unique business environment created by the blue-sky thinking Roddick – helped him adjust to life at a sports organisation.

"I think the biggest challenges in a membership-based organisation such as RFU are the very unusual governance structures," he says. "There's a council and a management board largely made up of elected members, who often have a very different perspective from people with a traditional business background.

"In a business environment you make a decision and your team implements it – in a membership organisation you have to work through others far more. My time at Body Shop was quite good preparation for that, because Anita just didn't believe in organisation charts so there weren't many formal structures."

STRIKING THE BALANCE

During his time at RFU he learned about the delicate balancing act required to run a successful sports business. While most businesses have a single primary objective – economic success – sports operators have two main objectives: commercial achievements and sporting prowess. Both of those objectives were achieved at the RFU, as the financial success was accompanied by England winning the Rugby World Cup in 2003.

Eastwood, however, is keen to point out that he is only accountable for the financial performance. At Wasps, he leaves on-the-field success firmly in the hands of director of rugby Dai Young, the fiercely competitive former Welsh prop.

"When it comes to playing matters, there's nothing I could directly do, so I don't even attempt to," he says – and

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▶ Eastwood at Wasps' former home Adams Park: "The decision to leave was a case of do or die for us."

adds that he is keen to avoid setting any concrete on-field targets.

"I don't believe in setting specific targets such as wanting to win a certain trophy by a certain date," he says. "Because what happens if you don't win it? That's not to say that Wasps hasn't got a clear idea of where it wants to be as a club though. We want to be better than we were the year before. We were seventh last year, so want to be in the top six this year."

INTO THE WASPS' NEST

Eastwood was appointed Wasps CEO in November 2012, during the most tumultuous period in the club's history. Former owner Steve Hayes, who'd taken the club over in 2008, had failed in his bid to move Wasps to its own stadium and put the club up for sale in October 2011. Finding a new owner for a club £2m in debt and with no assets other than its playing staff, however, wasn't easy and Hayes relinquished ownership to businessman David Thorne in the summer of 2012.

Thorne's search for a new CEO that would stabilise the club ended when Eastwood joined in November 2012. But what was in it for Eastwood?

"It was the scale of the challenge," he says. "Numbers wise and employees wise, Wasps is probably the smallest job I've ever done – but it's by far the most difficult. Wasps had gone from a dominant force in English and European rugby in the 2000s to becoming a club in real trouble."

During his first week in the job, Eastwood had a meeting with Irish businessman Derek Richardson. It was then that the wheels were set in motion for Richardson, an online insurance magnate, to buy the Wasps from Thorne and secure the club's long-term future.

"The reason it worked so well with Derek from the very start was that we were both looking to do the same thing – to resurrect a once great club that had fallen on really bad times. I mean really, really bad times."

Eastwood and Richardson's rebuilding, however, nearly came to an abrupt end before a brick was laid, thanks to an unpaid £500,000 HMRC bill. At the time, in early 2013, reports suggested that only an 11th hour payment saved the club. Eastwood confirms the reports as accurate.

"We were within a minute of going bust," he says. "We were on a final warning and had to get a payment off to HMRC by 3.30pm – and the money left the bank account at 3.29pm. If we hadn't got it out on time, the automated winding up procedures would've kicked in and we would have been out of business."

Disaster was averted and, after a further cash injection from Richardson secured the short-term survival of Wasps, the two could set out to plot a road to sustainable recovery. A major part of that was to secure a new, permanent home. ▶

> We knew the story of the stadium and that there might be a possibility of it being sold. We got in contact with the owners and they clearly liked our plans

▲ Wasps' new-found financial security makes keeping hold of star players, such as captain James Haskell, easier

MOVING HOUSE

Since selling its old ground in Sudbury, west London for housing in 1996, Wasps had played home games – as a tenant – at four different grounds, most recently at Wycombe Wanderers' Adams Park. Not owning its own stadium meant the club had little control over revenue streams.

"For every pound of non-ticket revenue we made at Adams Park, we only got to keep around 15p," he says, outlining one of the many challenges faced by stadium tenants. "The economic model of a ground share just doesn't work for a rugby club like ours, because effectively all you've got during the year is your central income – such as sponsorship – and then your ticket revenues for 16 home games. It's a bit like having a restaurant and only opening it for 16 days a year. Finding a new home was crucial."

Eastwood says that, while building a new stadium somewhere within its traditional base in west London was initially treated as the best option, it soon became clear that a more radical plan was needed.

"We realised that building a stadium in the south-east wasn't an option," he says. "It was simply never going to happen. To accommodate a stadium and all the revenue-generating facilities you need to have 15-20 acres of free space. Anyone with that sort of land available for a commercial development will never, ever build a stadium on it."

The decision to uproot and move outside the south-east region wasn't taken lightly, but was made easier when the opportunity to move into an existing, first-class facility arose. Eastwood says that the Ricoh Arena first came up as an option in March 2014.

"We knew the story of the stadium and that there might be a possibility of it being sold," Eastwood says. "So we established contact with the council – who owned the stadium – and they asked us to go up and talk to them. They clearly liked what we were planning to do – partly because all of their previous suitors had been property development people – and understood we were real and our ambitions were pure."

▶ Eastwood says the plan is to make Ricoh the country's most successful multi-use arena

TOUCHING DOWN

Wasps' life at Ricoh has got off to a good start. The first home game, on 21 December 2014, attracted a crowd of 28,524 – the highest ever top flight crowd at a club ground. Comparing that to Wasps' average gates at Adams Park – around 5,500 – will force even the most sceptical to accept that the fears of Wasps losing fans due to the relocation were misplaced.

As well as dealing with the increased attendance figures, Eastwood will be kept busy – and happy – by his new responsibilities in running what is now a multi-faceted company. Alongside the 32,000-seater stadium, the company's estate now includes the 6,000sq m exhibition centre, the 121-bedroom Ricoh Arena Hotel, The Grosvenor G Casino and an on-site leisure club. The size of the business is reflected in a new senior management team with Eastwood being promoted to deputy chair and David Armstrong (new group CEO) and Andy Gibbs (new MD) being brought in.

"It's incredibly exciting, having all these assets," Eastwood says. "We're now an events business and want to make Ricoh the most successful multi-use arena in the country. But at our core we're still a sports club, so the results that really matter are the ones on the pitch – that's how our success will be measured. Acquiring Ricoh makes us a leading club in creating revenue, but we need to ensure we translate any financial success to success on the pitch." ●

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KATH HUDSON, JOURNALIST, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

UNTAPPED RESOURCES

Around 14 per cent of the British population is from a black and minority ethnic background, yet they are grossly under-represented in sport, from grassroots to boardroom

According to charity Sporting Equals, only 3 per cent of senior board roles are held by those from a black and minority ethnic (BME) background and 30 out of 45 NGBs have no senior BME representation. Of the 449 board member positions reviewed, only 14 were held by BME people.

Sports minister Helen Grant has said governing bodies could see their grants cut if they do not improve the diversity on their boards. In light of this, Sporting Equals has set up a steering group to help governing bodies overhaul their recruitment processes and cast their net wider. Within football, a joint Professional Footballers Association and FA initiative is giving former players who want to work in sports administration the skills and mentoring required to take on board roles.

Arun Kang, chief executive, Sporting Equals

Chief executive of Sporting Equals, Arun Kang, argues that it's not just a moral issue to ensure this situation is reversed: it makes sound business sense, as ethnic minority spend is around £300bn a year.

"One in 10 London businesses are Asian owned, so if facilities start to encourage these groups to use them, then they can engage those businesses for sponsorship and support," says Kang.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Figures from Sport England show that around 35 per cent of BME people in England take part in sport once a week. The most popular activities are fitness/gym, football and swimming, followed by athletics (running) and cycling. These sports are attractive because they offer the most in terms of availability of services and because of improved fitness, body image and health.

Sporting Equals has found there are four main barriers to people from ethnic minorities participating in sport on a more regular basis. Socio-economic: two thirds of BME people live in the 88 most deprived areas in England. There are cultural barriers, such as lack of opportunities for Muslim women to take part in women-only activities and no prayer facilities.

Racism, either overt or indirect, is another reason: one in five BME people say they have experienced racism in sport. Finally, there are also attitudinal barriers because BME communities often don't rate sport – it is sometimes seen as a hobby for young people before they move on to higher education and consider other issues, such as caring for family, generating income and religious practise, which are deemed to be more important.

KNOW YOUR MARKET

Broadening the appeal of exercise to this market requires creative thinking, according to Kang: "Leisure centres need to get an insight into the demographics of their local area, find out who makes up the community and assess the latent demand. For example, it's been demonstrated that there's a strong latent demand for gym and swimming sessions for Asian women."

He also recommends facilities review their practises internally to make sure staff are truly committed and willing to put the work and effort in to growing this market. "Lots of people think they just have to tag on a session from a moral point of view, but this is a business issue," he says. "They should be looking at developing their business by engaging what is a largely untapped market."

Sporting Equals has been working with a number of organisations to help them understand the demographics of their

Facility operators and clubs need to know the barriers and challenges that exist for the groups in their particular area: who is in the local area and what their language is

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local market and then helping to get the staff on board with getting the message out. Every area is individual, so there is no catch all approach, which is why Kang counsels against generic training. "Facilities need to know the barriers and challenges of the groups in their particular area: who is in the local area and what their language is," he says.

One successful project was in Kirklees, where a leisure trust was considering the closure of a swimming baths because it was so underutilised by its surrounding BME community. Sporting Equals was brought in to engage the local Muslim community. They found there was latent demand from women who wanted to swim, but the offer wasn't right: they wanted learn to swim sessions. The centre starting offering lessons and single sex sessions and the increase in usage has now secured the future of the swimming baths.

CHANGING ATTITUDES

There's also progress regarding the attitudinal barriers. The Muslim Sports Council, set up in the wake of the 2012 Olympics, seeks to change attitudes to sport and encourage Muslims to take a positive view on taking care of their health.

"There have been taboos and obstacles regarding sport in the Muslim community, and one of our aims is to remove those from within," says Yahya Sidatt, co-founder of the Muslim Sports Council. "We're speaking to religious leaders, sports bodies, imams and those who are revered in the community to encourage participation and build awareness about health and encourage them to think that sport is a positive thing. The Prophet Muhammad spoke about the need to keep the body healthy and himself did sports such as swimming, horse riding and archery."

The negative attitude within the Muslim community towards women playing sport has made it difficult for women to take

Elite athletes can be used as role models (below) to encourage people from BME backgrounds to get more active at grassroots level (above)

CASE STUDY

Having developed a love of football while at primary school, 20-year-old Jawahir Robel set up a Muslim girl's football league in September 2013, with the help of a Think Big 02 grant and support from Middlesex FA. Robel, who is currently at university and undertaking her FA Level 2 coaching and refereeing qualifications, coaches the weekly Football Beyond Borders women's sessions for beginners at the Hollington Centre in Camberwell, promotes casual girls football drop-in sessions with Kinja FC and runs two girls-only football sessions.

"I have a dream that one day my fellow Muslim sisters will happily play sport," she says. "My overall aim is to promote football as a tool to engage young girls and to run workshops that develop teamwork, boost confidence and promote a healthy lifestyle."

She believes attitudes towards Muslim girls doing sport is softening, because they're increasingly understanding the benefits of exercise. Robel cites the lack of single sex sessions as the main barrier for Muslim women participating in sport.

The Muslim Sports Council was set up in 2012 and seeks to change attitudes towards sport, especially among young Muslim women

part. But thanks to some great role models at elite level, such as footballer, Saddiqa Shan, cricketer, Salma Bi and boxer, Ambreen Sadiq, attitudes are changing.

"More Muslim women role models are springing up," says Sidatt. "They might have had to overcome some negativity in their community but have had supportive, open minded and modern thinking families."

Sidatt also raises the point about money being a barrier to entry for many Muslims. Subsidised sessions, volunteer-led activities, or engaging sponsorship from local Muslim businesses are all routes which could be considered.

Discrimination is an issue which affects both ethnic minority groups and the lesbian, gay and bisexual (LGB) community, so it is vitally important that operators show they are welcoming to all members of the community. Staying quiet on the issue and hoping to appear welcoming is not enough. Again, this is a business issue, since the LGB community spends £70bn a year on goods and services.

Juliet Chard, the policy officer at Stonewall, which campaigns for equal rights for the LGB community, points out that even if sports and centres aren't directly homophobic, it doesn't mean they are doing enough to welcome the LGB community. "If the issue isn't discussed then people might not feel comfortable and feel they need to hide who they are when they're playing sport," she says.

Stonewall's research shows that six out of 10 gay and bisexual men and four out of 10 lesbian and bisexual women would expect to experience homophobia in some form if they took part in team sport and were open about their sexual orientation.

Stonewall is in the process of creating a guide for community sports clubs about how they can become more accessible and create visible sports for LGB people, for example, running events which promote inclusion and celebrating diversity which already exists.

Chard recommends leisure centres and clubs look for partnerships within the LGB community, as these can be good for sharing learning and resources and to mutually support activities.

A partnership between inclusive Manchester rugby club, the Canalsiders, and traditional club, the Red Doubles, works very well. Marketing material is useful to ensure facilities get the message across that it is an environment where

By encouraging participation by all members of the community, sports and leisure facilities will be strengthening the community as well

Specialist swimming sessions targeting particular groups can dramatically increase usage at facilities

discrimination will not be tolerated. Stonewall, for example, has a number of downloadable guidance and resources on its website which can be printed off and displayed in changing rooms.

Chard also recommends connecting with local groups using the multiple avenues offered by social media. "Tweeting and Facebooking shows you are engaged and thinking about the issue," she says.

As the obesity crisis deepens and the NHS comes under further pressure, it is vital that leisure operators strive to engage all of the local population in meaningful and regular activity. Sport is an excellent tool in removing barriers and fostering life-long friendships.

By encouraging participation by all members of the community, sports and leisure facilities will be strengthening the community as well. ●

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TOM WALKER, MANAGING EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

SETTING THE STANDARD

England Netball – winner of the "NGB of the year" award in 2014 – is delivering impressive growth at grassroots level. Innovative schemes to get more people playing include a mixed-team format which is inviting the boys to play too!

England Netball is clearly doing something right. In the past two years, the number of young people in England (aged between 16 and 25) who play netball at least once a week has grown from 59,200 to 88,400. The achievement – representing a 33 per cent increase – is spectacular, not least when you take into account that a huge majority of netball players are female – and traditionally less likely to take part in sports than men.

The impressive increases are the result of a clear strategy and hard work, according to Paul Clark, CEO of England Netball. "The 16 to 25-year-old age group is an area which we've really focused on," he says. "We want to make sure that we're able to deliver a product which keeps those in higher and further education engaged with the sport."

ATTACKING THE GOAL

As part of England Netball's action plan to attract the crucial demographic of young adults, it has established a network of University Netball Officers (UNOs) to encourage young people to try out – and keep playing – the sport.

In 2012, four universities were selected for a pilot to establish whether student-led activity could drive an increase in netball participation at their university.

Now in its third year, the network has grown to cover 30 universities, all of which are working with England Netball to deliver a range of programmes to attract new participants to the game. Based on a volunteer model, each UNO is empowered and supported to deliver sessions and drive netball opportunities at their university – including identifying and providing formats of the game which will engage students.

The UNO scheme is, however, just one of England Netball's successful programmes growing the game at grassroots level. Over the past four years the organisation has worked hard on tailoring its marketing and commercial activity so it appeals to a wider audience – ranging from those aiming to play at elite level to those who simply wish to get active and socialise with peers.

"A few years ago we began a journey to discover what current and future players wanted from their netball experience," Clark says. "We looked into what motivates players, what they want from the game and how we can support them to ensure that they get the best experience possible. We found that there are a number of different groups of netballers, with different aims and needs. So we listened and responded."

The engagement programmes spawned by the research include Big Summer of Netball and Netball Now. The two schemes are designed to keep players active throughout the summer months – the traditional off-season for netball.

Before the two programmes were introduced, the summer saw huge drops in participation each year, not because of lack of interest, but purely through lack of opportunities for games.

Other schemes established so far include one called '1621', which is aimed at those aged between 16- and 21-years-old and still in education; 'Into High 5', which has been designed to introduce those under the age of 11 to the sport; and Netball Youth Camps which have been established across the country to cater for girls aged between nine and 16 years old.

Growing the game

The number of people aged 16+ regularly playing netball:

- **2005-06:** 111,700
- **2006-07:** 118,800
- **2012-13:** 122,200
- **2013-14:** 148,700

* Figures based on Active People Surveys 1-8

REAPING THE REWARDS

The organisation's efforts haven't gone unnoticed. For Clark, the Sport Governing Body of the Year award marked an important milestone in the organisation's journey. "The BT award highlights the incredible progress that we continue to make," he says. "We've been one of the most innovative organisations in attracting more people to play the sport."

Clark's use of the term 'journey' is an appropriate one. By its own admission, England Netball was a relatively low-profile

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England Netball signed a deal which will see all England home games being broadcast on Sky Sports

As with all minority sports, it is vital that netball is afforded the chance to appear on TV – the reach that comes with it is invaluable in promoting the sport to grassroots

NGB just five years ago, with a club-centric business model and a tight focus on its members. Recognising its responsibility to reach out to everyone involved in netball, during 2009, England Netball launched a research programme to identify the needs of those engaged in the sport.

The research highlighted the many different participants engaging in the game and England Netball's wider role and responsibility for the development of netball in England. It also provided valuable insight into the needs and expectations of all netball players and changed the philosophy of the business, as well as the way England Netball does things on a day-to-day basis.

Published in 2010, England Netball's strategy – entitled *Your Game, Your Way* – places players and coaches at the very core of all actions. Designed to establish England Netball as a top performing, financially stable NGB which promotes a 'Netball for Life' ethos, the strategy has been a success. In its first four years it led to a 34 per cent increase in adult participation, 2,688 newly qualified coaches and a 600 per cent increase in primary school affiliations.

CASTING THE NET

Another area of importance highlighted by the strategy was the need to increase netball's visibility. As part of this, a deal was agreed with Sky Sports which will see 17 live Superleague games being broadcast each season – as well as all England's home international games. According to Alex Sexton, England Netball's communication manager, the Sky deal is crucial to promoting netball as a competitive sport.

"As with all minority sports, it's vital that netball is afforded the chance to appear on broadcast television," he says. "The reach that comes with a partnership such as the one we currently have with Sky Sports is invaluable in both promoting the sport at grassroots level and recognising the achievements we make at elite level."

The work towards increasing interest in netball is, however, rendered pointless if ▶

Products and programmes

There are a number of versions of netball. Each has a variety of different rules specifically designed to meet the needs of a particular type of participant. Below are the current versions, along with some new additions England Netball will be introducing between 2013-2017. These constitute the main products offered under the My Game brand.

FastNet
A fast-paced, relatively new form of netball. A number of innovative rule changes have been introduced in order to challenge the fitness, technical ability and tactical awareness of teams. For coaches, it provides an opportunity to try different strategies.

Netball 7s
The traditional seven-a-side form of the game. A fast and highly skilled sport, one of the most popular team sports for women in England.

High5 Netball
The recommended five-a-side version for 9 to 11-year-olds. It gives every child the chance to experience and enjoy every position. It boosts fitness and adaptability and provides a great social framework.

Netball Fitness Sessions
Fitness sessions are a circuit-based fitness class designed specifically to enhance the skills required for netball. Each station on the circuit incorporates a netball or medicine ball and is designed to improve physical attributes such as stability, agility and vertical elevation.

Caged version of the game
Played indoors, it is the fastest and most furious form of netball played today. Games are played inside high-tension netted courts, so the ball never goes out of play, creating a faster-paced game.

Netball Skills Sessions
Designed for children under the age of nine, the aim is to develop key netball skills such as throwing and catching as well as spatial awareness.

Indoor netball is gaining popularity and as a result England Netball will devise a facility strategy later this year

there aren't enough facilities for people to play the sport. Netball is traditionally played on outdoor courts with educational sites being the most highly used by volunteer-run leagues and club training. There is also an increasing demand for indoor facilities, as the average recreational netballer prefers to play indoors – while performance focused netball also tends to be based at high quality indoor venues.

In some areas, access to indoor facilities can be a real challenge and cost can be a barrier, especially if there is a high demand from other sports for a peak time slot. "High quality, accessible and affordable venues are key to England Netball's ambitions for increased growth and improving participant experiences," says Sexton. He adds that in order to help identify future needs – and chart the current state of the infrastructure – a national facilities strategy will be produced during 2015-16.

"We don't currently have accurate figures on how many courts there are in England. With that in mind, we're currently analysing data to assess the number of venues which are used for club-related activities, recreational programmes, leagues, competitions and workforce development. This information will be available later in the year."

While a wider strategy is still in the works, there are a number of programmes which aim to increase the number of courts – indoor and outdoor – and opportunities to play netball at all levels. These include Nets – a grassroots initiative to establish caged netball arenas to support a new, accessible form of the game – and the Intensive Netball Training Centres (INTC), which sit at the top of the elite performance pathway.

Nets is a fast, non-stop version of netball with a heavy emphasis on the tactical aspect of the sport. Played using a regulation ball on a traditional court layout, player movement is restricted in a different way from that of traditional netball. The initiative also looks to attract mixed teams, further expanding the player base from the traditional female-only core.

The three INTCs are based in Manchester (across three sites), Bath University and Brunel University. The centres are designed to provide the highest quality coached training and supervised strength and conditioning programmes for England senior and U21 athletes.

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FORWARD PLANNING

For Clark, the work is never done and the organisation is constantly looking for new ways to involve new players and to keep existing ones. "Our success has been the result of the new, innovative approach we have adopted that puts the netballer at the centre of everything we do," he says.

The most recent scheme to expand the game, launched in January 2015, is another example of how England Netball wants to expand its horizons. Called Netball in the City, the programme will be piloted in eight cities and aimed at the corporate market. It will encourage staff to take time away from work and get involved in teambuilding activity using netball as a twist.

It will be marketed as a "fantastic chance to develop teamwork and communication skills" and will use the element of competition to make itself appealing for businesses and staff. The new phase in the organisation's development will be led by interim Joanna Adams, who replaced the retiring Clark on 5 January 2015.

Adams is no stranger to the sport, having joined England Netball's commercial team in 2009. "Netball is a sport with huge potential," she says. And we'll be working with our stakeholders to fulfil it." ●

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Drifting, a form of motor sport, is popular in Japan and Extreme plans to bring it to the UK

The company describes itself as unapologetic, irreverent and "anti-establishment"

EXTREME VENTURES

The Extreme Sports Company has been shaping the 'adrenalin sport' sector since its launch in 1995. Steered by its youthful founder Al Gosling, the team at Extreme is constantly looking for ways to expand the brand

TOM WALKER, MANAGING EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

Since its launch two decades ago, The Extreme Sports Company has been a pioneer in the alternative sport sector. Starting out as a company sponsoring athletes, the group's founder, Al Gosling, has developed the Extreme identity into one of the most recognised brands in the sector and grown its turnover to US$50m a year.

Marketing itself as "unapologetic, irreverent and anti-establishment", the company has been at the centre of the popularisation of the adrenaline and adventure sports. Through its Extreme TV Channel – which broadcasts in more than 60 countries – it has had a major role in overseeing the growth of BMX, skateboarding and wakeboarding from niche sports to mainstream activities.

The company's business model is to work in partnership with companies across a wide range of markets, licensing its brand and delivering distinctive products and experiences.

Its most recent venture will see it enter the hospitality sector, with three Extreme Sports-themed hotels planned in Russia, Switzerland and Cape Verde. It already has a strong presence in the drinks, fashion, men's grooming, electronics, apps and gaming sectors.

 © Cybertrek 2015

The Extreme brand is rooted in the 'do it yourself' counterculture of snow, surf, skate and punk rock

AL GOSLING

Founder and CEO

Could you describe the journey that lead you to founding Extreme

My career and life in general has been shaped by my passion for sport – and especially the extreme side of sport. From an early age I was into surfing, snowboarding and skiing. Mountains and oceans were "my thing". I had no A levels and never went to university, which was a source of frustration for my parents. Instead, I worked and travelled until the age of 24, when I finally thought "right, I'm going to set up a company and try and build something I really love". It was all about wanting to make my passion my job.

When did you set up Extreme and how did it grow in its early years?

Extreme will celebrate its 20th year this year. We started by managing athletes and having a TV distribution business – and built it from there. TV distribution was our core business for the first three years. It did rather well and we started to plan the launch of a TV channel. It took around a year to secure the money and the channel started broadcasting in 1998.

We first launched the channel in the Netherlands in 1998 and had Extreme TV up and running in 18 countries before we began broadcasting in the UK. It was quite funny, trying to convince my friends that I was the boss of a cable TV channel. The reason we weren't in the UK earlier was that Sky was being very difficult about it all.

Since those early days the company's grown into a number of sectors. How would you describe Extreme as a company in its current form?

It's a brand and lifestyle company. What we do is manage the brand and develop it into multiple areas using a partnership model. So we partner with companies in different areas and sectors to create Extreme-branded products, events and services.

That's why – from the outside looking in – we look a very big company. We are, in terms of the areas that we're working in with partners, but in terms of the core team, we're not. You don't need this huge team of people to do what we're doing. We have a small, very tight knit team and that's working very well. Whether it's Natalie working on licensing and commercial side of things, whether it's Ryan, who's on the marketing side of things or Pippa, who is running all the events part of the business. ▶

What are your core markets?
Events, our sports theme park concept, branded fashion and apparel, drinks, hotels, video gaming, electronics – so quite a few!

How do you identify the new sectors you want to expand into?
It's strategically thought through. We look whether there's a gap in a market somewhere and assess if there is an opportunity to create something. The brand also has to fit the sector. We do have a presence in a diverse range of markets so from the outside looking in it may not look like there's a strategy behind it, but I can assure you there is!

Extreme has the look and feel of a youthful brand for adrenaline junkies – is that your key customer group?
What's interesting is that extreme and adrenaline sports have huge appeal across a wide range of age and socio-economical groups. We reach everybody from young skateboarders to middle class parents with disposable incomes and a thirst for an adventure. It's extraordinary how extreme sports resonate with all types of people.

Class and age don't come into it – it's about a mindset. Our brand is driven by that kind of anti-establishment, irreverent mindset that appeals and connects with many consumers in many ways.

How has the extreme/adrenaline sport sector changed since 1995?
It's really developed from being a niche sector to a much more mainstream one. As an industry, we could have been described as a stroppy teenager up until about five years ago, but we're now in the mid 20s and becoming more sensible.

The core hasn't changed though. It's still about man – or woman – against the nature and the environment and even themselves. It's not like most mainstream sports where you have federations, associations and clubs dictating rules and regulations – creating the structure within you have to perform. Non-traditional sports are much more independent and there are a wide range of people setting stuff up independently and just going out there and doing their own thing.

Extreme is one of the most recognised brands within the adventure sport sector

The brand aims to reflect the common attitude and behaviour of youth culture

ENTREPRENEURS WHO TALK ABOUT HOW AMAZING THINGS ARE CAN BE INTERESTING – BUT THE ONES THAT EXPLAIN WHERE THEY WENT WRONG ARE MORE USEFUL

It's 20 years since you found Extreme – what have been the high points?
The thing I love most about of the journey is that I've worked with some phenomenal people over the past two decades. We've done some amazing things with amazing people. I'm proud of the fact we launched a TV channel and grew it into something that has inspired many young people to get into sports – especially those young people who would not do a traditional sport.

What about the low points?
We nearly went bust twice, which was pretty intense – both of those experiences were definite lows. There were also people who tried to take the company off me. I had some pretty interesting shenanigans going on so it hasn't all been plain sailing!

I could probably speak to you for about an hour, describing mistakes I've made – but that's all part of it and you need to stay positive. In fact, I do a bit of public speaking nowadays and when I do, I normally spend five minutes on what's gone good in the company and then spend the next 40 minutes just about where I've really screwed up. Entrepreneurs who stand up and talk about how amazing and brilliant things are can be interesting – but the ones that explain where they really got something wrong are much more useful.

What are your future plans and targets for Extreme as a company?
Continue to build the brand and expand it into multiple areas. We're particularly excited about the three hotels in Sochi, Cape Verde and Switzerland and can't wait for them to come online. Also, as part of the hotels arm, we have a destination experience project which is more like a sports theme park offer.

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Extreme's core customers are the young alternative trendsetters who influence the wider youth market

NATALIE HORNE

Licensing director

What is your current role at Extreme?
As global licensing director I manage the commercial aspects of the Extreme brand, its licensees and product development. Working with our partners, maximising their expertise to deliver the most fitting product for the brand and its end user. It's also my responsibility that the brand's DNA is accurately reflected in all that we do, whether a product or a point of sale.

Could you describe your career journey?
I studied fashion design and product development at the London College of Fashion and joined Marks and Spencer's after graduating. I spent 10 years in retail before joining Disney Consumer Products, where I managed the apparel business across EMEA. In one of my buying roles I was responsible for sports and fitness products and now sport is the anchor to what we do at Extreme. Each of my roles have had a focus on brand management.

What is your typical day-to-day?
As I oversee all of the licensing business, each day is different. If I'm not out visiting existing or prospective licensees, commercial partners or at a trade show, I will generally be at the office with the creative or marketing heads to discuss either assets we need for product development or brand events that our licensees may be involved in and new product launches. As our business is growing outside of Europe, I also spend time liaising with our agents, discussing the new licensees they are on-boarding and the marketing support needs they have for the brand in their territories.

How would you describe Extreme?
Despite the brand's heritage, the company has a youthful feel to it, probably brought about by the people that work here, how we do things and the culture the brand is focused on.

What are the latest trends you've identified in the extreme sports industry?
Traditional and alternative sports will be heavy influencers in the trends affecting 2015-16, therefore this plays to our strengths and the Extreme brand's position, it will help us maximise our commercial efforts in all product categories.

More schools are offering non-traditional sports as alternatives to team sports. How important is creating choice?
Team sports are important because life is about working in a team, but I think its great that kids and youth are given an opportunity to experience and try out alternative sports.

What implications do you think this could have for companies like Extreme, who operate in the alternative sport sphere?
The shift will probably drive more awareness, more participants and therefore more demand for products, content and facilities which would be positive for the alternative sports sphere.

What are the future plans for the Extreme brand?
We are really excited about the brands product exposure in general but in particular we are really looking forward to the launch of the personal care line and our first mobile game. We have signed a number of agents in territories outside of EMEA, which will expand the brand penetration beyond our traditional footprint. As you might expect we have plans to take the brand into other product categories, more fashion accessories and consumer electronic. Watch this space!

RYAN MAXWELL
Marketing Manager

When did you join Extreme?
I came on board in July 2014 – but I feel as though I've been around for years!

What does your role entail?
It's really diverse and ranges from management of the athlete/ambassador programme to social media, trade and consumer events all the way through to campaigns, communications and public relations.

Could you describe your career journey?
I had a varied education, spending time between the UK and Germany. Growing up I knew I would end up in either the action sports industry or the automotive industry, as they where the only things that got my adrenaline pumping.

I did some work experience at Audi in Ingolstadt in both the design and marketing departments. This is where I knew marketing was the best direction for me.

I saved up some money and after university spent an entire winter season snowboarding at Zermatt (Switzerland). Once the season came to an end reality set in and I realised I needed a career.

I struck a bit of luck and Hornby, the model railway company, where on the hunt for people in their marketing department. I always knew the particular industry wasn't for me, but the three years I spent there gave me a brilliant education and grounding for marketing and brand management

Now working at Extreme I'm able to take the experience I had gained in other industries and channel it into something I am passionate about.

Skating – one of Extreme's core markets

With action sports at its core, the brand also encompasses fashion, graffiti and music and is fuelled by non-conformity and creativity

PEOPLE WHO ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT EXTREME SPORT HAVE A CONNECTION AND BOND TO OUR BRAND – THEY UNDERSTAND AND APPRECIATE OUR EFFORTS

What is your typical day-to-day?
There is no such thing as a typical day at Extreme! A day can be anything from sitting at the desk hammering out e-mails, through to being in the middle of a park or raving field at a festival. That's what I love the most about working here, one minute you are in meetings, the next you are playing on the office table tennis table or on the road with ambassadors filming an edit. There is no predictability.

How would you describe Extreme?
It's everything you'd imagine it to be – a company full of attitude where anything goes and you are encouraged to work hard but play harder. If there is a swell building, or a dump of powder due – get your work done and pack your bags for a trip.

What makes it such a powerful brand?
For me I think the strength lies in the heritage and the current team behind it. It originated from the 'Do It Yourself' counterculture of surf, skate and snow and has support for the sports at the core. It's the fact that the people working for the brand live and breath the lifestyle and its this love and support of progression that ensures it stays true.

Extreme is a recognised brand in what is still a fairly niche market. What are the advantages of that?
People who are passionate about extreme sport have a connection and bond to our brand. They understand the influence and work Extreme has done to support the industry and appreciate the efforts. It's this reputation that spreads within the scene and gets people to trust you.

Any exciting projects you are currently working on?
We're currently working on some huge competitions and giveaway stunts that you'll see in the early parts of 2015, which rest assured will have a unique Extreme twist so keep your eyes peeled!

 © Cybertrek 2015

The company promotes and supports festivals, extreme sports events and activities

PIPPA SIMPSON

Special events & project director

When did you join Extreme?
March 2014

What does your role entail?
I work alongside Ryan Maxwell in marketing to identify and manage event-led opportunities for brand promotion or revenue driving activity for Extreme. I'm also commercial director for Extreme Drift Allstars, a drifting championship which is a major asset for us.

Could you describe your career journey?
I come from an PR, events & communications background and worked in a number of FMCG focussed agencies before starting my own retail events agency working with shopping centres to drive marketing campaigns and footfall generating activities. I have worked directly with retail & leisure facilities for seven years, but sport is a relatively new addition to my experience.

What is your typical day-to-day?
Particularly for the drift Series, the team I collaborate and consult with is spread across Europe, so a lot of time is spent on emails or messenger, getting the latest updates on projects, whether it be the editing of the TV Series in Lithuania, or the voice overs being recorded in San Francisco. At this stage of pulling the Series together for 2015 we are also compiling and sending out a lot of sponsorship and promoter contracts.

What are latest trends in adrenaline and adventure sport?
We have seen a huge upsurge in the popularity of motorsports which has led us to become involved in the Drift Allstars – the sport of drifting is exploding!

What are the challenges operators face in the special events sector?
The events sector is definitely growing, but there are a lot more competitors in the marketplace – from our involvement with festivals in the summer, we found there was a vast number of opportunities but we pick the right ones to ensure they fitted the brand profile appropriately.

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Where do you see the greatest opportunities for expansion?
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ACTIVE DESIGN

Jacqueline Bennett looks at whether, by adopting a new approach to design and city planning, we can make our cities – and their populations – well again

Even Mick Cornett, the enterprising mayor of Oklahoma in the US, couldn't have envisaged the huge impact his 'We're going to lose a million pounds' campaign would have on the city when he launched the initiative in 2008 (www.thiscityisgoingonadiet.com).

After 18 months – with local restaurants providing healthier options and sports facilities offering special discounts – the city's residents had collectively lost half a million pounds in weight. But it was only after citizens agreed a seven-year, one cent increase in sales tax to fund new bike lanes, sidewalks, hiking trails, ice rinks, green spaces and wellness centres that the city finally reached its target in 2011.

Oklahoma reputedly now has the highest adult employment rate of any city in the US. Firms are keen to invest and relocate there because the workforce is so much fitter than in other cities. Not only has the city become healthier, it has become wealthier too.

Evidence and policy

Much is now being written about active design – designing, constructing and managing our environment in such a way as to encourage people to be active. It's an exciting idea and one that has had a long genesis in town planning across Europe.

In the UK, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) demonstrates how the planning system can play an important role in promoting healthy communities, leading to reductions in health inequalities, better access to healthy food, reduced obesity, more physical activity, better mental health and wellbeing, and improved air quality.

Meanwhile, recent major reforms to planning and to health and social care – notably the National Planning Policy Framework 2012, the Health and Social Care Act 2012 (which created local Health and Wellbeing Boards) and the Localism Act 2011, which ushered in neighbourhood planning – now present many opportunities for joined-up thinking to improve people's health.

A promotional video by the mayor of Oklahoma was aimed at inspiring the US state's residents to get active and lose weight

These opportunities have been highlighted by, among others, the Town and Country Planning Association through the *Reuniting Health with Planning: Healthier Homes, Healthier Communities* report. This report offers an overview of how local authorities can improve health and reduce health inequalities by bringing together related disciplines such as housing, transport planning and regeneration. It includes a section designed to help identify links between public health objectives and how places can be shaped to respond to them.

Alongside growing statutory endorsement of the benefits of better town and city planning for improving health, fitness and quality of life, a raft of other documents and initiatives have emerged. In 2003, CABE Space – a specialist unit of CABE – was set up to champion the importance of urban public space, particularly parks and green spaces, in improving quality of life.

Meanwhile, in what has turned out to be a prescient document, Sport England published its *Active Design: Promoting opportunities for sport and physical activity through good design* document in the mid-2000s, integrating agendas around design, health and transport and setting out many examples encapsulating the three design objectives of improving accessibility, enhancing amenity and increasing awareness.

In its City Health Check – published in 2012 and analysing health problems correlated to the amount of green and public space available in London and England's eight 'core cities' – the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) found the areas of the UK's cities with the poorest health outcomes are those with the least green space. Moreover, it's the quality of streets and parks – as much as the quantity of them – that encourages people to walk more.

Then there's the Design Council, which is championing its own Active by Design campaign – including a conference in London – to address the serious health issues facing us, brought on by a lack of physical exercise and poor diet. It aims to be a catalyst for change, finding new links and connecting aspects of the planning system, health service and the built environment sector, both public and private, where few currently exist. There's a plethora of advice and guidance around

 ©Cybertrek 2015

There is evidence to suggest that taking active lifestyles into account at an urban planning level leads to healthier communities

"Even small changes to design can have a huge knock-on effect in terms of getting people active."

improving our environment to benefit health and wellness.

Theory into practise

So how is all this manifesting itself in practise? Initiatives range from the quirky – such as designing stairs to look like piano keys – to the ambitious, such as the High Line in New York City, US, where the old elevated railway track in lower Manhattan has been resurfaced and turned into a green walkway.

Meanwhile the Movement for Liveable London campaign is aiming for a more pleasant and healthy city by changing the way people move around it. This sits in line with Sport England's Active Design report, which talks about linking popular "everyday activity destinations" – so that's shops, schools, doctors' surgeries and main workplaces – via cyclepaths and good, pedestrian-friendly walkways.

Another example is Living Streets' Fitter for Walking programme, funded through the Big Lottery's Wellbeing Programme, which has provided support and information to residents and promoted small-scale enhancements to streets in selected city areas in the UK. Increases in walking were recorded within almost all the targeted areas.

Connect the existing network

Currently, when we build anything new, we need to be aware of the enormous possibilities out there, and how even small changes to design can have huge knock-on effects in terms of getting people active. Equally, we mustn't lose sight of the facilities we already have and how they can be integrated into active design, ensuring they are viable and sustainable.

For example, the facilities laid out in our traditional recreation grounds during the mid-20th century – typically a couple of football pitches, a cricket square, some tennis courts and a bowling green – represented a 'keep fit' package then aspired to, which suited people's way of life. It would be taken for granted that you would cycle or walk there, although rarely along special cycleways or footpaths. However, their pattern and level of use is changing: for example, there's a trend away from grass surfaces for adult 11-a-side football towards small-sided soccer on artificial grass pitches. There's also a drop-off in demand for outdoor public tennis courts and bowling greens, leaving some of them sadly under-used.

Parallel to this, there has been an explosion in the number of running and cycling groups, clubs and events now taking place throughout the UK, catering for all levels of ability and demand.

Recreation grounds have adapted to some extent: adding children's play areas, changing tennis courts to multi-use games surfaces, installing floodlights to extend hours of use and constructing 'trim trails'.

Although there's still a range of funding sources for developing and improving sports facilities – particularly for the voluntary sector – local authorities have seen their budgets for provision, enhancement and maintenance severely reduced and have fewer personnel to promote, supervise and manage them. Meanwhile, well over half of all sports facilities are located on school, college and university sites; we need to encourage their use by the wider community, not only to make the best use of resources but also to show young people that being active is important for their whole life.

We need to link all these existing facilities in to the Active Design movement and try to bridge the divides that exist between fitness and sport, between indoor and outdoor facilities and between public, educational and commercial sites. It's wonderful to have new cycleways and footpaths, but wherever possible let's try to link them to other existing activity destinations – sports centres, outdoor and indoor pools, artificial pitches, grass pitches, tennis courts, allotments, beaches, rivers and school sports facilities.

We can use open space in parks more effectively too, by providing sheltered seating and meeting points, water fountains and outdoor showers, measured walking tracks, wildflower meadows and healthy food outlets. Many such projects are being funded through the Fields in Trust (formerly the NPFA) and its Queen Elizabeth II Fields initiative, which set out to permanently protect outdoor spaces.

On a positive note, some sports centres are already using health sector funding to provide bicycles and setting up local cycling networks; others are increasingly used as bases for running and cycling events. But as further food for thought, how about converting disused tennis courts to small allotment areas? Co-locating facilities in this way can bring many benefits in terms of increased use, revenue, sustainability and better supervision.

Golden Lane leisure centre in London – an example of how sport can be embedded in its surroundings

Maximising use

In its City Health Check document, RIBA recommended the production of Healthy Infrastructure Action Plans in local authorities which comprise less than 50 per cent green space and/or have a housing density of over 5 per cent, with the idea that these might be partly funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy.

A spin-off from this could be the creation of fitness trails which set out measured routes by foot or bicycle linking

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activity destinations, with opportunities to stop off along the way. It would be great to encourage people using these to become volunteers and responsibly monitor use of facilities, so that as well as benefiting their own health, they are helping others.

Indeed, some local authorities are already training volunteers to check for litter and damage to play areas and paddling pools, so they can notify the local authority if there's a problem to attend to, thus making more efficient use of maintenance staff's time.

As well as taking responsibility for our own health, we need to take it for our active environment, as in this era of reduced public sector expenditure we risk losing sports and fitness facilities we don't use. There are already many wonderful opportunities out there – let's encourage their use as effectively as we can.

Some of the documents referenced in this feature can be found online:

- Reuniting Health with Planning: Healthier Homes, Healthier Communities
  www.health-club.co.uk/TCPA
- Active Design: Promoting opportunities for sport and physical activity through good design
  www.health-club.co.uk/sportengland_activedesign
- City Health Check
  www.health-club.co.uk/cityhealthcheck

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EMERGING NATIONS

The balance of power of hosting international sports events is shifting away from Europe and North America. Major competitions are now being held in countries which until recently would have been described as "developing". But how sustainable is the progress being made by these countries? We speak to international development expert Derek Casey

TOM WALKER, EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE

There are a number of emerging countries whose fast growing economies and future prospects are attracting funding from foreign investors. Grouped under terms such as BRIC and MINT, these countries are challenging traditional industrial powerhouses with their natural resources and, in many cases, by offering a more affordable environment for manufacturing and production.

Inevitably, the economic growth in these countries has resulted in the expansion of middle classes, which has created the need for improved services, health care and leisure. There is a particularly strong correlation between economic development and sport in many of the emerging nations. As the countries have developed, they have come to use sport – and particularly the hosting of international competitions – as a marketing tool. All of the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China) have won bids to host major sporting events in recent years, while the MINT countries (Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey) are beginning to show interest in doing so. Turkey has already thrown its hat in the ring, with Istanbul narrowly losing out on the rights to the 2020 Olympics to Tokyo.

What has been conspicuous in the approach taken by some countries, however, is how the development of competitive sport domestically has not been a priority – or even of parallel importance. While significant funds have been spent on hosting (and bidding for) events and creating iconic, international-standard competition venues, investment in community sport facilities has often remained relatively low. This, however, could be about to change.

The burgeoning middle classes are demanding spaces to get physically active, leading to more emphasis being put on "sport for all" initiatives. From a supplier point of view, this will open up further opportunities for the providers of sports-related infrastructure and services to pitch for business.

Building with BRICs

Brazil:
- FIFA World Cup 2014
- Olympic Games 2016

Russia:
- Winter Olympic Games 2014
- FIFA World Cup 2018

India:
- Commonwealth Games 2010
- Cricket World Cup 2011

China:
- Olympic Games 2008

Sport is a growth sector in China, where a swelling middle class is looking for ways to get active

CHINESE EXPERIENCE

Of the BRIC countries, the largest economy belongs to China, where sustained, long-term growth has created a huge, urbanised middle class. As a result, the government faces demands on investing in quality of life – especially in the larger cities. The increased free time and disposable income has led to leisure becoming a major growth sector.

Former Sport England CEO and chair emeritus of the World Leisure Organization, Derek Casey, now spends most of his time travelling the world, advising and lecturing on sports

 ©Cybertrek 2015

Development of grassroots sport is still lagging behind in many of the countries which have successfully bid to host high-profile events

The Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games was a success as an event, but questions remain over its ability to create a lasting legacy for sport

development in all its forms. He predicts the emerging nations and their sports infrastructures will develop in the same way they did in Europe – and nowhere is this pattern clearer than in China.

"Traditionally, unless a sport is likely to win an Olympic medal, it will not be given funding by the Chinese government," Casey says. "But there is now a mass participation directorate within the Beijing government, so you can see the beginnings of a "sport for all" attitude being adopted as a major contribution to improving the quality of life in China.

"This parallels the continuing emphasis on economic development. As middle classes expand in the likes of the BRIC countries, there'll be an automatic increase in the number of people wanting to play sport regularly.

"We saw this in the UK from the early 1960s onwards. The expansion of the middle classes, their new aspirations and changes in working conditions and practices meant a demand for greater choice and for the provision of more leisure opportunities. We're now seeing similar processes at work in the countries which are experiencing economic development. Witnessing this sometimes makes me wonder whether all the "sport for all" campaigns in the 1970s and 1980s might have been a waste of time. The increases in sport participation numbers were inevitable due to the changing social, cultural and economic positions of the population."

MINTED

Casey adds that while the MINT countries aren't as developed economically as China, there are similar patterns emerging – especially in Mexico and Turkey. Both have been actively bidding for major events, resulting in the development of sporting facilities within the countries. Mexico was among the bidders for the Youth Olympics for 2018, which could pave the way for a potential bid for the Olympic Summer Games again sometime soon. Meanwhile, Turkey came close to securing the 2022 Olympic Games with its Istanbul bid and narrowly lost to France in the race for the rights to the 2016 UEFA European Championship.

MINT

MINT is a neologism referring to Mexico, Indonesia, Nigeria and Turkey. The term was coined by US-based asset management firm Fidelity Investments and popularised by Jim O'Neill, former chair of Goldman Sachs, who also created the term BRIC.

The Euro 2016 bid also triggered an ambitious, collective plan among football clubs in Turkey to build new – and redevelop existing – football stadia and to bring them up to modern standards. Although those plans have since been downscaled due to France winning the bid, it showed a glimpse of how transformative a successful bid can be for the sporting landscape of an emerging nation.

Of the remaining MINT countries, Nigeria made the final round of bidding for the 2014 Commonwealth Games but lost to Glasgow. Recent political unrest might derail sports development and delay the country's advancement however.

The only one of the group to show little interest in developing sport so far has been Indonesia, where sport largely remains a pastime for the wealthy.

"It's clear that if you see countries developing economically, getting people out of poverty and creating a more equal society, you are very likely to soon see higher levels of participation as well as increased ambitions to become a player on the international stage," Casey says.

"However, bidding, and especially a successful bid, does not just place the spotlight on the event but also on the hosts. In recent years, this spotlight has drawn attention to the social and economic challenges in many of the host countries which has often seemed to come as a surprise to the event owners."

NATURAL RESOURCES

Adding to the BRIC and MINT countries there is a group of oil- and gas-rich nations which are utilising their natural resources to create and develop new sectors for their industry. The obvious example – and certainly the most high profile – is the United Arab Emirates' Dubai, which has for decades used oil revenues to build up its tourism sector. Most other emirates have followed suit and created their own centrally-planned, free-market capitalism – although one could argue that the approaches taken by Abu Dhabi, Ras-al Khaimah and Sharjah are different from Dubai's glitzy theme parks, indoor snow slopes, entertainment venues and luxury hotels.

Other countries which are using natural resources to future-proof their economies by creating new sectors of industry include Kazakhstan, Qatar, Uzbekistan, Bahrain, Angola and Azerbaijan. In all of these countries, tourism will play a major

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Neymar (right) carried the hopes of Brazil at last year's FIFA World Cup. The nation's poor performances were described as a 'disaster' by Brazil's media

"The spotlight shone by a bid draws attention to social and economic challenges in the bidding countries – which often seem to come as a surprise to the event owners"

part in economic growth – and sport will be one of the vehicles used to raise awareness of the countries for foreign tourists. Some have already taken the plunge. Qatar was – rather controversially – chosen to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup while Bahrain is now a regular feature on the F1 circuit. Azerbaijan will host the very first European Games in 2015 while Kazakhstan's Almaty is one of the two candidate cities bidding for the 2022 Winter Olympics.

"A 'second tier' is beginning to emerge," says Casey. "They are perhaps furthest away from having an established sport for all programme domestically, but internationally they are capable and – due to the resources – they are keen to invest in facilities. There are also Sub-Saharan African countries whose economies are growing rather well – such as Angola, Botswana and Zambia.

"Angola staged the Africa Cup of Nations in 2010 while Botswana is hosting the 2014 Africa Youth Games. What's encouraging is that many of the African countries are also concentrated on developing sport domestically. It's important for emerging nations to realise that their ambition to play on the international stage should not ignore or be a substitute for parallel domestic development. A strong sports hinterland is a strong base for the successful staging of international events."

STADIUM DIPLOMACY

Casey adds that progress in Africa – and other parts of the world – has been helped a great deal by China's concerns over securing the resources it needs to feed its manufacturing industry. Most of the stadia in Angola which hosted the Africa Cup of Nations were built using Chinese money. "And it isn't just Africa that China is interested in," Casey adds.

Nigeria is a leading nation for sport in Africa and has actively bidded for events

"Many of the Cricket World Cup stadia in the West Indies were funded by Chinese money. One of the bids for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, Hambantota in Sri Lanka, significantly relied on the Chinese for its venues strategy."

Casey predicts that China's impact will only grow as it continues to invest not just in stadia but larger infrastructure projects to ensure the flow of resources.

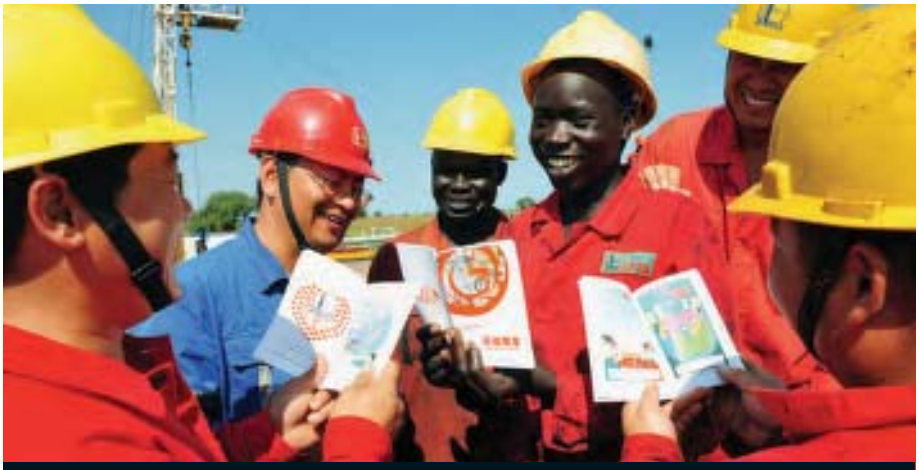
"What we are beginning to see is the strong influence of China and some of the other BRIC countries – India in particular – playing a role where major sporting events may take place. How this 'stadium diplomacy' works is that China will build venues in exchange for exclusive trade deals. The stadiums in Angola, for example, were built in return for mining rights, while in Samoa the Chinese have built facilities and received fishing rights.

"The next step could be that China will invest further in larger infrastructure,

such as airports, which can then form a base for a sporting event bid. The airport will serve the Chinese aim of providing a way to improve communication with a country, while for the bidding country it will provide a way to improve infrastructure to the level expected from, say, an Olympic host city. I wouldn't be surprised if one of the countries in which China has invested would win a major competition to host, simply due to the level of investment they have attracted."

There can, however, be a problematic side to the Chinese method. What happens to the large scale venues once they have been built and the Games are over? Will there be high enough demand to use the international competition standard venues?

"Chinese investment is welcome in so many countries and is contributing to economic development. Capital is provided by the Chinese but not usually the revenue cost," Casey says. "The age-old problem of what do you do with these spaces after the event persists. For example, in Angola there were five new stadia built and most of them are not being used to optimum capacity. This is as much an issue of the demands placed on the host by the event owner as the source of capital funds."



Chinese stadium diplomacy at work in Angola, where five new venues have been built

MADE IN CHINA

The first wave of China-funded stadia was completed in the 1980s and by 2010, more than 50 stadia have been built in Africa alone.

Stadia built using Chinese money since 2005 include:

Africa (10)
- Angola (5 stadia)
- Cameroon
- Cape Verde
- Central African Republic
- Malawi
- Mozambique

Caribbean (5)
- Antigua
- Bahamas
- Dominica
- Grenada
- Jamaica

Australasia/Pacific (4)
- Cook Islands
- Kiribati
- Papua New Guinea
- Samoa

Asia (2)
- Laos
- Mongolia

South/Latin America (1)
- Costa Rica

END RESULTS

So what does the emergence of new players on the international sports stage mean to the established sporting nations? Nations in Europe and the Americas which may have some of the infrastructure already in place to host major games and a strong sports hinterland. Casey predicts that many of them could simply give up on bidding, as the international governing bodies will be increasingly keen to award Games to developing nations to ensure that their particular sport gets a foothold and, by the award of the event, to make rather superficial political statements.

"The Dutch (with Rotterdam and Amsterdam as joint hosts) have decided against a bid for the 2028 Olympic Games," Casey says. "They came to the conclusion that they don't want to have the cost and would probably lose against an oil-rich country or a strong emerging economy. It will be fascinating to see how it all plays through in the coming years.

"The spread of host countries and cities is understandable when the location of major events over the last century is considered. With Rio de Janeiro hosting the first Olympics in South America; with events such as the Olympics and Commonwealth Games still to be held in Africa and a historic concentration of events in Europe and North America, it is understandable that others have ambitions.

"I wish that in selecting hosts there was less attention on legacy – the often spurious and post analysis result of staging the event – and more attention paid to strategy well before the bid is even made. More emphasis should be placed on making sure that hosting an event contributes to such areas as health, education, environment, equality and wealth creation." ●

The Rio 2016 Olympic masterplan is an example of how sport can drive urban redevelopment

Krasnodar Stadium, Russia

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Having started out as a university sport in the US, quidditch has spread across all continents

GOING POTTY OVER QUIDDITCH

A sport which combines tag, rugby and dodgeball and is played at ferocious speeds astride a broom? Welcome to the crazy, chaotic world of quidditch: a fictional game which has become reality

KATH HUDSON, JOURNALIST, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

If your facility is looking for a fun way to engage teenagers and young adults who are losing interest in traditional sports, then quidditch could be the way forward: the teams are mixed and very sociable and the sport has been built up in a culture of inclusivity.

Even though quidditch can be competitive, the broom aspect offers an ironic twist, which makes it fun and breaks down barriers. The game requires and develops a range of skills including throwing, catching, tackling, speed and agility and requires players to think quickly.

It's cheap and easy to set up and is a marketing dream: everyone knows Harry Potter (don't they?!). The novelty factor means that a picture or video posted on social media networks should have people thronging to your centre, with the ensuing word of mouth doing the rest.

uidditch has emerged as an inclusive and friendly sport where everyone and anyone of any race, gender or sexual orientation is welcomed with open arms.

The magical game

Originally created by JK Rowling in the Harry Potter books, the real life version of quidditch was born in 2005 at Middlebury College, Vermont, US.

"Like many excellent things, quidditch came about on a lazy Sunday afternoon," explains Harrison Homel, executive director of international governing body, the International Quidditch Association (IQA). "Two students – Alex Benepe and Xander Manshel – had the idea to develop the fictional sport into real life. They started playing it at school, a few other schools heard about it and it snowballed."

Since then, the sport has spread by YouTube, social media and word of mouth. For those who have wanted to give it a go, it has just involved a trip to a hardware and a toy store, recruiting a few friends and heading to a park.

"When we started out quidditch was mainly attracting people who were avid fans of the Harry Potter books," says Homel. "But, increasingly, it's appealing to people looking for a different sport, as it doesn't take long to realise this is the real deal. It's a full contact, very athletic, very fast game and it appeals to lots who haven't read the books, used to play football or basketball, and have walked past it on a university campus and thought 'that's something I have to try'."

Flying around the world

Currently it is still quite a university thing, especially in the UK, with most universities fielding a team open to non-students. Three hundred teams are officially recognised by the IQA across the world and 20 countries now have their own governing bodies, with the UK governing body, Quidditch UK, being the fastest growing. The sport is played on every continent, except Antarctica, and in countries as diverse as China, Argentina and Malaysia.

The European Cup was very well attended, with 15 to 20 teams and lots of press coverage. Last July, seven nations competed for the World Championship

 ©Cybertrek 2015

Games of quidditch are easy to set up and equipment cheap and easy to find

title in Canada. Homel hopes to double that number by the next tournament in 2016. "One has to have their tongue firmly in their cheek to get on a broomstick and play this sport," he says. "It's very difficult to take yourself too seriously.

"One of the things we're proud of is that it's a gender inclusive sport: on the pitch at any time there can be people who identify as men, as women, as agender, as transgender, all playing together. That diversity and Big Tent effect doesn't happen in very many sports, and brings something very special to our community."

Rowling hasn't been asked to give quidditch her blessing and neither has she offered it. "I certainly like to think she's sitting in a mansion somewhere smiling," says Homel. "However, we're happy to develop and grow on our own.

"We'll always have roots in the Harry Potter books, but as the sport grows and develops and creates its own identity we move further away and it becomes less of a priority to get her endorsement.

> What I love most about quidditch is that a group of people from all walks of life can set aside any amount of shame and play a sport as hard as they can

Dig out your hula hoops

Another advantage of quidditch is that it's very easy for leisure centres and sports clubs to set up: the equipment required should be lying around in store cupboards, so all you need is the players and a soft surface about half the size of a football pitch. Have a look through the official online rule book (www.sportsmanagement.co.uk/quidditch) and off you go.

If you want to formalise it, the IQA and the individual governing bodies offer resources and mentoring, as well as advice on the pathway into leagues and tournaments. Quidditch UK's Hooch initiative offers a mentoring programme where an existing team will help you get going. The referee test can also be completed online.

Those who play quidditch become evangelical about it, partly because of the sport itself and partly because of the inclusive community it fosters.

Homel sums it up: "What I love most about quidditch is that a group of people – from all walks of life – can set aside any amount of shame that they have and can play a sport as hard as they possibly can, and as aggressively and competitively as they can for as much glory and pride as any other traditional sport.

"But then they can get off their broom and give the other team a hug because the community is that strong."

The mixed gender policy is ingrained in the game's rules (main picture). Quidditch is now played all over the world – even in places where Harry Potter is unknown (below)

The equipment

Three hoops – hula hoops will work. A tennis ball in a sock for the snitch, two dodgeballs and a volleyball. Seven brooms, teams often start with a BYOB – bring your own broom – policy.

The rules

Quidditch uses a mix of elements from rugby, dodgeball and tag. The game stays true to the fictional version, except players ride their brooms like you used to when you played horses as a kid.

There are seven players: a 3:4 gender ratio. A goalie defends the goals against the three chasers who advance the quaffle (volleyball) down the pitch, by passing, kicking or running with it and score points (10 each) for getting a goal through the hoops. The two beaters throw bludgers (dodgeballs) at the other players to stop them getting goals or finding the snitch (someone who has a tennis ball in a sock stuffed into their waistband.) Any player who gets hit by a bludger is out of play until they touch their own goal.

Each team has a seeker who tries to catch the snitch. The snitch is worth 30 points and its capture ends the game. If the score is tied after the snitch catch, the game proceeds into overtime. To stop games being over too quickly, the snitch is released 15 minutes after the start.

The Cambolts

Angus Barry and Steffan Danino co-captain the Cambridge University quidditch team, the Cambolts. Barry has trained as a referee and as well as setting up this team, they also founded the Oxford University team, the Radcliffe Chimeras, in 2011. "At Oxford, it just started as a laugh, we didn't know about the IQA at the time, so we just got some traffic cones and hula hoops and made up our own rules," says Barry. "Initially we allowed anyone to tackle anyone, which got a bit extreme, and were using tennis balls as bludgers which was a bit painful," he says.

However, very quickly the team matured and started using IQA rules, playing in leagues and tournaments. The main glue of the team was that they had all become such good friends. Barry, who had played tennis, rugby and football before focusing on quidditch, says that it's a great sport because there are so many elements.

"You can take a role that plays to your strengths, whether you're good at throwing, running, or tackling. It's a game with continuous play and substitutions so it's very intense. There are lots of balls in play, so you have to react quickly," he says. Barry, who is currently doing a post-graduate in African Studies at Cambridge University, is going to be playing for the Ugandan team, Katwadde Community Quidditch team, when he goes there next year as part of his studies.

Katwadde Community Quidditch team

Quidditch has reached Uganda before the Harry Potter books, thanks to the enthusiasm of John Ssentamu, working with the charity, Sport is the Answer, which encourages youth activity and civic engagement. Despite the lack of hardware stores to buy equipment, they have created a thriving quidditch scene with around 70-80 kids between the ages of 13 and 18 playing on five or six teams.

"We started quidditch in 2013 to provide youths with an alternative sport to other common and competitive sports," says Ssentamu. "The reaction was amazing since it is a new sport, with new game play and a number of balls on the pitch. It caused enthusiasm among the children and youth."

Ssentamu says the main challenges in setting up the side was lack of equipment and knowledge: "I was trainee and trainer." The campaign was given an immense boost when Angus Barry travelled out from the UK with equipment and to provide first hand training. The sport has also been taken to Mbarara University of Science and Technology in Uganda. Many more institutions would like to start the sport, but lack of equipment and funding currently curtails the progress. ●

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TOM WALKER, MANAGING EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

TURFING IT

Natural grass remains the first choice for a number of elite sports venues and facilities. We look at recent, high-profile natural turf installations from around the UK

O'BRIEN

Wasps' new nest gets resurfaced

The new owner of Coventry's Ricoh Arena – Wasps rugby club – has wasted no time in making its mark on its new home (*see interview p. 34*). The Aviva Premiership outfit has installed a new playing surface at the Ricoh – a stadium it shares with League One Coventry City Football Club.

O'Brien Contractors partnered with leading European sports pitch specialist GreenFields UK for the installation. The project involved site preparation works to remove the existing 8,000sq m playing surface before GreenFields UK installed the new natural XtraGrass turf, farmed in the Netherlands. Work started on 5 December 2014 and was completed ready for Coventry City's home league game with Fleetwood Town on 20 December.

Wasps had initially announced its intentions to replace the current pitch during the summer to provide a playing surface suitable for the demands of both rugby and football matches. Following a consultation however, the rugby club decided to lay an interim pitch to ensure both clubs had the surface required to give them the best chance of success.

A spokesperson for GreenFields said: "The former pitch had been poorly maintained and the condition was such that we have provided a temporary replacement of the existing surface, using natural turf, farmed in the Netherlands. Works will commence in May 2015 to replace the entire natural grass pitch with XtraGrass and the deal incorporates a five year maintenance agreement to ensure the surface is kept in optimum condition."

The works included removing the old pitch and replacing it with a new XtraGrass turf, farmed in Holland

 © Cybertrek 2015

DESSO

The City Football Academy boasts a total of 17 outdoor pitches across an 80-acre former brownfield site

Man City goes for Desso

Manchester City Football Club (MCFC) has opened the doors to its new City Football Academy – reported to have cost £200m (US$312m, €255m) – following a four-year project. The new facility in East Manchester – a stone's throw from the club's Etihad Stadium – forms a key part of plans to regenerate the former industrial wasteland. The two-year building phase was led by BAM Construction working to designs by Rafael Vinoly Architects.

After a successful experience using a Desso GrassMaster system at its main Etihad Stadium, the club chose to go with Desso as the surface at the academy too. Desso Sports installed 30,000sq m of its reinforced natural grass, Desso GrassMaster and an additional 33,000sq m of its latest artificial turf technology – Desso iDNA X at the academy.

The strategy behind the partnership between MCFC and Desso Sports – which now includes both match and training pitches – is to enable young talent and the first team to perform on similar surfaces, regardless of weather conditions or the intensity of use.

Yves De Cocker, director, Desso GrassMaster, said: "The academy shares Desso's desire – to provide high-level, consistent and durable playing fields catering for professional performance."

Vincent Kompany, Manchester City's captain, added: "Desso GrassMaster is becoming a premium standard in the sports industry. We, as players, are excited to play and train on such a high level surface."

In addition to 17 pitches and three gyms, the City Football Academy boasts a 7,000-seat stadium for Elite Development squad teams, Manchester City Women's FC and community use. MCFC will use the facility to train its current stars – as well as future prospects in the club's youth teams – and has also worked to ensure parts of the facility will be available for use by the local community, particularly schoolchildren.

PIC: ©SHUTTERSTOCK/DEBU

The pitches at the academy match those used at the club's Etihad Stadium

SIS PITCHES

New turf laid at Hampden after Glasgow 2014 repairs

SIS Pitches returned the pitch to the exact level of the pitch first built in 1990

The renowned 'Hampden Roar' was back in full voice in January, when the first competitive football game was held at Scotland's national stadium since November 2013. The 14-month hiatus was brought on by Hampden Stadium playing centre stage for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. The stadium hosted all of Glasgow 2014's athletics events, for which a temporary 400m running track was installed.

The stadium has now been returned to its original configuration as a football stadium and Queen's Park FC has returned as the venue's primary tenant. As part of the works to turn the stadium back into a football arena, a new turf was installed by specialist sports contractor SIS Pitches.

Once the temporary structures of Glasgow 2014 had been removed, SIS came on site fighting seasonally challenging weather to begin a four-week project to reconstruct the pitch to its original level and contours, install new drainage, undersoil heating and a fully-automated irrigation system. The project involved removing sand, rootzone and gravel layers, undersoil heating, irrigation and drainage then installing new systems within a deeper profile, recycling materials if at all possible.

"The brief was to deliver a first-class playing surface in keeping with our status as Scotland's national football stadium," said Hampden Park managing director Peter Dallas. "The fixture on 3 January was the first opportunity the fans had to see the new pitch first hand.

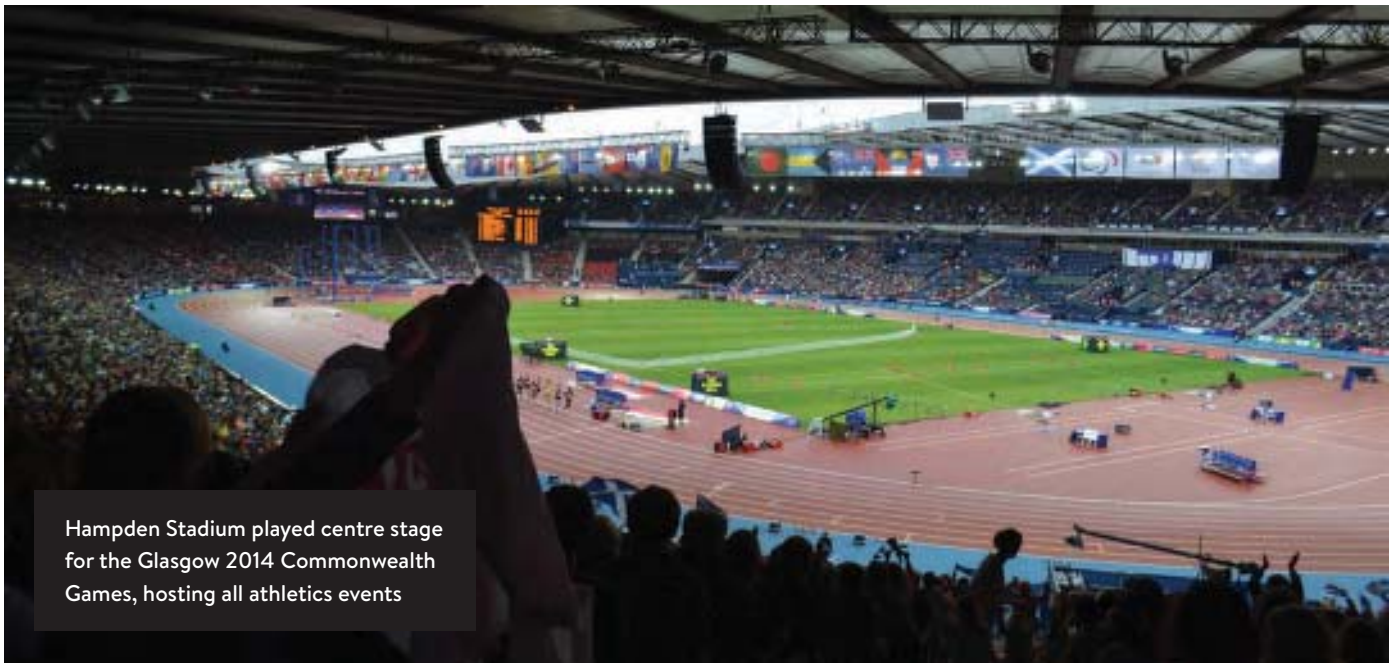
"Under the annual maintenance programme, SIS will continue to monitor the pitch to ensure it continues to be presented in the best possible condition."

SIS Pitches contracts director Phil Blackwell said the environment at Hampden created some unique challenges for the re-installing of the grass pitch. "In the late 1990s the pitch was built on a plateau, with gradual grading around the perimeter to 0.5m higher than the surrounding Tarmacadam," he explained. "Our job was to reinstate the new pitch to the evel of the existing one."

The 150mm main drainage pipes were laid along the pitch perimeter with 80mm lateral land-drain pipes at 4m centres across the pitch. A computer-controlled irrigation system was installed, consisting of 16 pop-up sprinklers around the pitch perimeter and eight infield sprinklers.

The undersoil heating's main pipework was laid on a gravel layer along the pitch perimeter, before 25mm lateral pipes were ploughed into the profile.

First opened in 1903, Hampden Park was at the time the largest stadium in the world, attracting an attendance of 149,415 to see Scotland play England in 1937. It hosted the European Cup Final in 1960.


Hampden Stadium played centre stage for the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games, hosting all athletics events

PIC: ©FLICKR-DANIEL0685

CHAPPELOW SPORTS TURF

Going gets great at York

Groundsmanship and natural turf care can at times throw up unforeseen issues to sort out. This was the case at the award-winning York Racecourse, where rich sediment, silt and clay deposits left by the River Ouse had created a number of issues. To correct the problems, the racecourse's grounds team, lead by Adrian Kay, oversaw a two-year programme of extensive resurfacing.

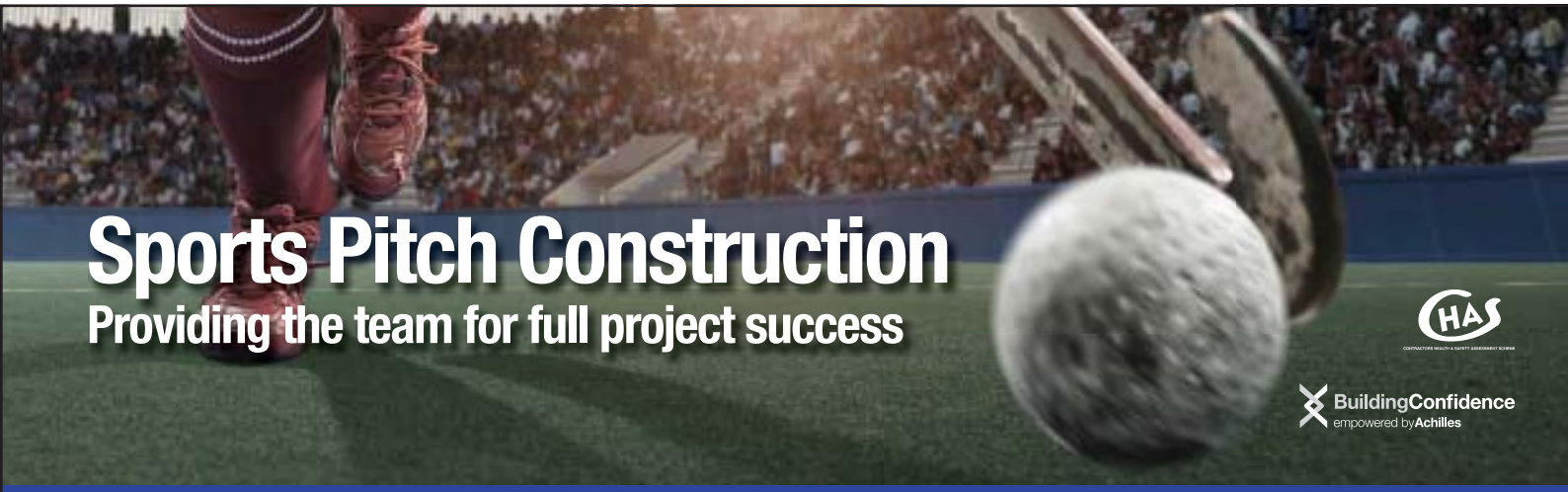
"We lie in the river's floodplain and the conditions had allowed weed grasses to proliferate, along with a major build-up of thatch," Kay said. "Weed grass is always prone to disease and creates a lot of organic matter, which can prevent water penetrating to the root zone. A 10ml layer of thatch is fine but the course had around 25-30ml, which was far too thick."

The grounds team spent nearly two years correcting the issue (above) Flooding had left sediment, silt and clay deposits on the course (below).

Kay, who was crowned the 2014 IOG Groundsman of the Year, called in sports contractor Chappelow Sports Turf to conduct a programme of remedial work to rectify the problem, which included the reseeding of the course's South Bend with a ryegrass mix. In October 2014, he called in Chappelow once again to conduct top draining of the home straight, which sand-slitted the surface down to the main drains, laid in 2007, and removed the silt and clay deposits to stimulate free draining.

"About 8,000sq m of deposits were removed in just three days," says Kay. "I hope to recycle some of the material when we plant up shrub beds later in the year.

Chappelow Sports also recently completed Bury Football Club's Gigg Lane stadium pitch renovation and a major recontouring of a sports field at Greetland Academy in Halifax. ●



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ELLEN ROWLES, SKILLSACTIVE

LEARNING CURVE

Arsenal and England star Jack Wilshere is one of the elite athletes to have benefitted from the AASE programme

For the past decade, the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence has been providing young athletes with the support and training they need to succeed in elite sport. Ellen Rowles offers insight into the inner workings of the successful scheme

From athletes competing at Olympic and Paralympic level, to World and European Championships to professional contracts, there has been no shortage of young talent progressing through the Advanced Apprenticeship in Sporting Excellence (AASE). The programme was launched in 2004 when SkillsActive, the sports' national governing bodies (NGBs) and industry experts wanted to ensure top young athletes received the help and coaching they need

Sports currently engaged in the AASE programme:

- Aquatics
- Athletics
- Basketball
- Boxing
- Cricket
- Equestrian – (Showjumping, Dressage)
- Fencing
- Football
- Golf
- Handball
- Hockey
- Horse Racing
- Judo
- Modern Pentathlon
- Netball
- Rowing
- Rugby League
- Rugby Union – (Men & Women)
- Skating (Figure, Short Track, Speed)
- Snowsports (From next year)
- Squash
- Table Tennis
- Tennis
- Volleyball

 ©Cybertrek 2015

Rowing is one of the sports that has embraced AASE and delivered a number of graduates

to succeed in elite sport. AASE provides a structured training and development route across a number of sports for young, talented athletes (aged 16-19) who have a real chance of excelling in their sport. Created by SkillsActive, the sector skills council for active leisure, the programme is funded by the Skills Funding Agency and supported by Sport England.

The first sport to begin delivery of AASE was football, which offered its Premier League and Football League Education scheme to all 92 professional clubs across England's top four tiers. Since then, the sports performance apprenticeship has grown and is now offered to 3,000 athletes annually in more 30 sports.

TALENT IDENTIFICATION

Each AASE programme reflects the range of skills, knowledge and performance criteria required in elite level sport. Crucially, they also give athletes the skills, knowledge and qualifications to pursue a dual career, should they fall short of their ultimate goals. The programme covers performance and knowledge related topics, technical skills, tactical skills, physical capability, nutrition, psychological skills, lifestyle management, career planning, health and safety and communications.

To complete an AASE programme, apprentices must produce a portfolio demonstrating what they've learnt about each of the units during their sporting pursuits. This could include a training log, a nutrition diary, video samples or a journal. Apprentices must also work with a qualified assessor to test their understanding and work-based performance.

AASE is a unique talent programme because it is specifically tailored to meet the demands and support the needs of young talented athletes within each individual NGB. The NGB plays a crucial role in the delivery and endorsement of the programme. To be eligible for the apprenticeship, athletes must proven ability and/or the potential to play at the highest level in their sport, determined in collaboration with the NGB of each sport.

Ian Taylor, SkillsActive CEO, said: "The AASE programme provides a clear framework to help apprentices develop their skills and build on their knowledge to become an elite athlete. As well as measuring development in their sport, AASE looks at wider issues such as lifestyle, career path, media communication and health and safety."

FROM CLASSROOM TO PODIUM

A total of 30 AASE apprentices represented Team GB in the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and a further four competed at the winter Olympics in Sochi. At last year's Commonwealth Games in Glasgow, there were 23 athletes who had ▶

CASE STUDY

Name: Rebecca Adlington
Sport: Swimming
Date of Birth: 17 Feb 1989
Home Town: Mansfield
AASE: 2006-2008
Success: Double Olympic gold medallist / Double Olympic Bronze medallist

Having now retired from a glittering career which saw her win two gold medals at the Beijing Games and two bronze medals at London 2012, Rebecca has since gone on to open her own swim school, Becky Adlington's SwimStars.

"My AASE apprenticeship with the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) provided me with high quality training and gave me the opportunity to gain qualifications at the same time. Winning two gold medals in Beijing and breaking a world record was the greatest achievement of my life and hopefully we'll see many of the AASE apprentices competing for Great Britain over the next few years."

Swimmer Andrew Willis, an AASE graduate, competed at the London 2012 Games

come through the AASE. Some of the most recognisable names in British sport are products of AASE – swimmers Rebecca Adlington, Jemma Lowe and Lauren Steadman; diver Tom Daley; and Arsenal and England footballer Jack Wilshere.

Matt O'Dowd has been delivering the AASE programme for a number of years and manages Loughborough College's Elite Sport Team. He is currently a sport work related manager on the college's AASE programme.

He says the system is perfectly geared to deliver sporting excellence as well as secure a career path for athletes.

"The AASE programme is unique as it allows talented young athletes to continue their development as elite sports performers and to aid their progression from junior to senior level," he said.

"It allows NGBs to offer more quality support from coaches and support services at this crucial time. For many NGBs, AASE has created a new level in the performance pathway and information gathered as part of AASE can follow the athlete through the pathway and on to senior elite level. Here at Loughborough College we currently run AASE with England Hockey, British Athletics, Rugby League, England Netball, Volleyball England, England Squash and Racketball and Short Track Skating."

Each NGB delivers the AASE differently and there are currently more than 2,500 athletes on the programme throughout England. SkillsActive will continue to support NGBs to deliver success for programmes for rising talent and also looks to encourage new sports which are not currently engaged in the programme to begin delivery.

Find out more:
www.skillsactive.com/aase

CASE STUDIES

Name: Andrew Willis
Sport: Swimming
Date of Birth: 3 December 1990
Home Town: Frimley, Surrey
AASE: 2007-2009
Success: Final in Olympics 2012, Bronze at Glasgow 2014

200m breast-stroke swimmer who completed the AASE programme in 2009.

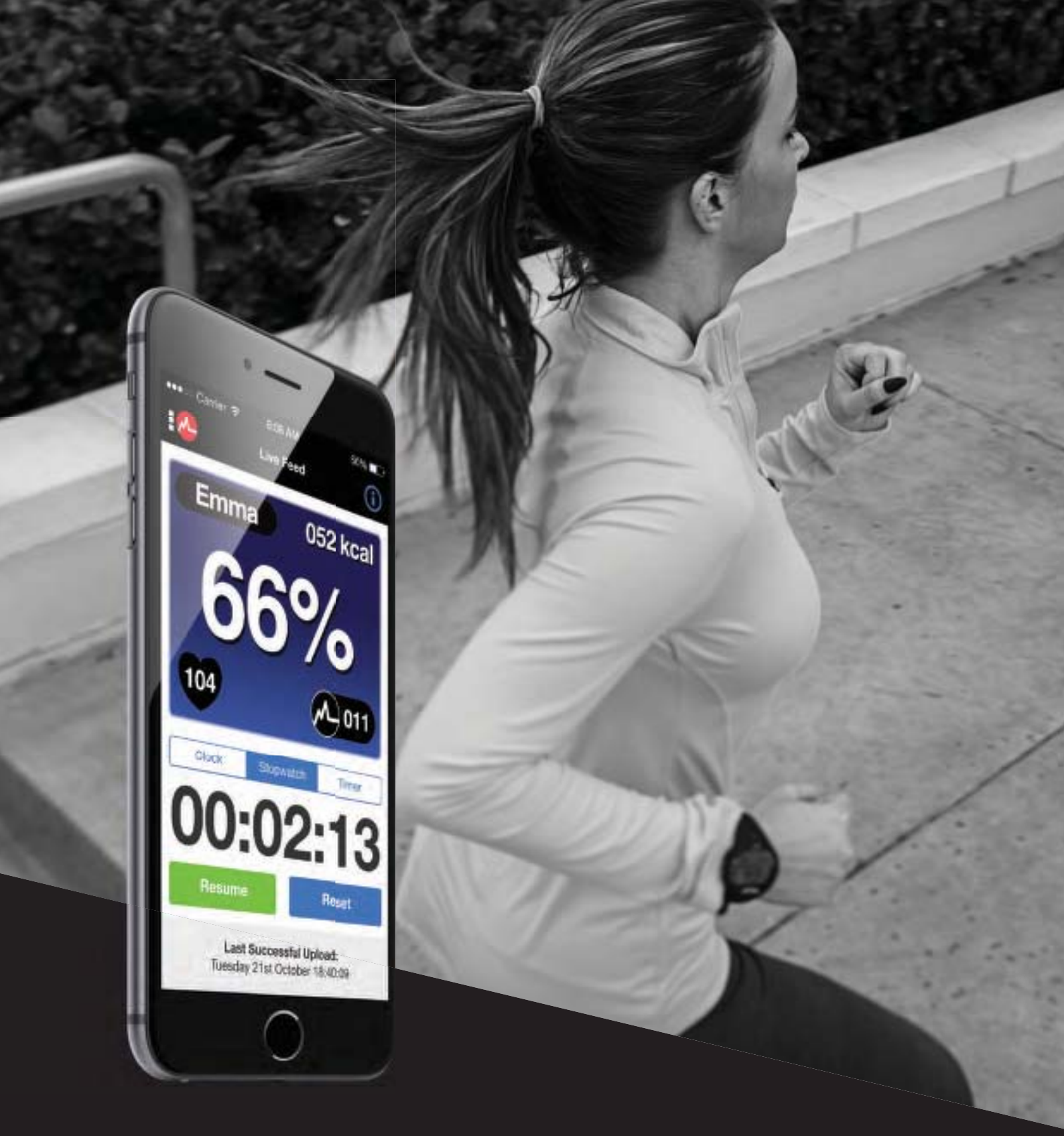
"The AASE programme taught to me to become an all-rounded athlete. Combining the sport with education has been perfect for me and I have been able to use the information I learnt about nutrition and physiology to help me prepare as best as possible."

Name: Jackson Wray
Sport: Rugby (Saracens)
Date of Birth: 10 Nov 1990
Home Town: Sunderland
AASE: 2007-2009
Success: Saracens senior player, England player

Jackson Wray was spotted by a talent agent during a county game and asked to start training with the junior academy Saracens team. He was encouraged to enrol on the AASE programme when he was 16 and he finished the two-year programme in the summer of 2009.

"If I hadn't joined the AASE programme at Saracens then I wouldn't be where I am now. I trained on average 3-4 hours a day, usually in the morning, and then attended college every afternoon except Wednesdays to complete my technical certificate. It's the perfect tool for athletes and coaches in any sport to get a better understanding of each other, so their relationship grows stronger and as a result their performance improves."

 © Cybertrek 2015



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MYZONE

TOM WALKER, EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT MAGAZINE

WEARING IT

On the back of increasing consumer interest and demand, the wearable technology sector is growing rapidly. There is an increasing number of products that offer their wearers a plethora of ways to track movement, monitor health and analyse performance

While tech giants such as Apple and Google are pouring millions into 'the next big thing', the wearables market is also courting innovation from a range of exciting start-ups.

Sports companies are also getting in on the act – Manchester City recently became the first club to launch its own exclusive wearable match day app. Elsewhere, billionaire entrepreneur and Dallas Mavericks NBA franchise owner Mark Cuban is leading a transformation in how athletes are tracked by working together with Australian company Catapult Sports and developing a pioneering GPS device.

The wearables market is expected to be worth at least US$2bn (£1.32bn) in global revenue by 2018, with sport and physical activity trackers currently representing around 61 per cent of the sector.

The ramifications for health and wellbeing are huge. Medical institutions are already using the technology to monitor patients' vitals – aiming to identify problems early – and there's potential for sports and fitness clubs to monitor customer biometrics as well.

Wearables are infiltrating corporate wellness programmes too, as US employers harness information from health trackers to determine employees' health insurance premiums. Many feel this is just the start for wearable tech, which has the potential for seamless integration with the Internet of Things – the advanced connectivity of devices, systems and services – as it gains momentum.

We look at the latest innovations in health and fitness wearables, to assess which ideas could leave rivals stuck in the starting blocks.

The designer t-shirt tracks biometrics and movement

RALPH LAUREN POLO TECH T-SHIRT

From 2015, tennis enthusiasts will be able to record metrics and data from recent performances to improve their game, thanks to a movement tracking shirt from fashion designer Ralph Lauren.

The luxury brand's Polo Tech T-shirt uses sensors knitted into the fabric to read heartbeat, respiration and other biometrics. Data collected by the shirt is stored by a 'black box system', which also captures movement and direction metrics.

These findings, along with data related to energy output and stress levels, are sent to the cloud and are viewable on a tablet or smartphone.

Meanwhile, Sony is preparing to launch its attachable Smart Tennis Sensor early next year. The US$200 device attaches to rackets to record up to 12,000 shots of swing and serve data.

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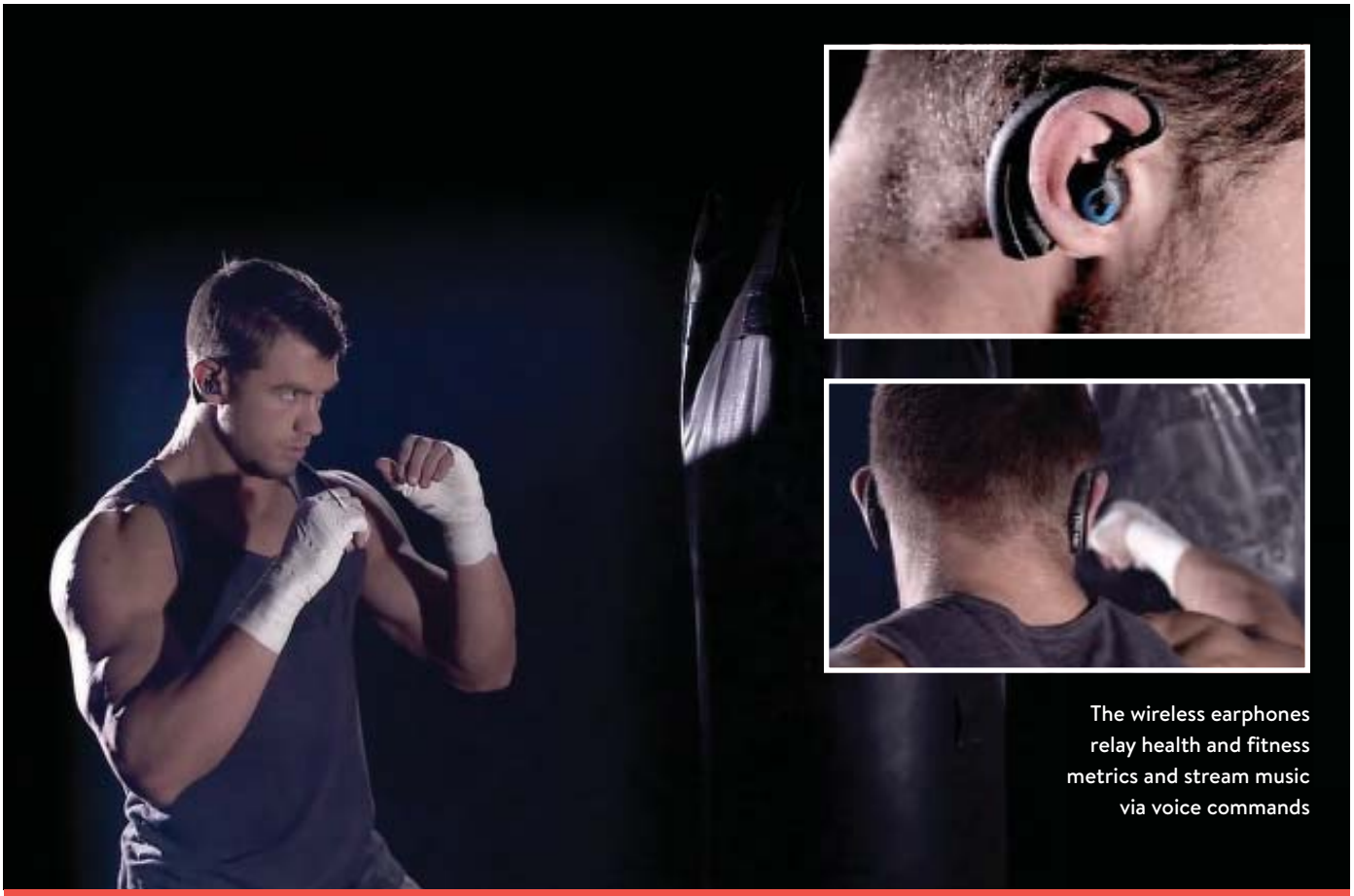


The wireless earphones relay health and fitness metrics and stream music via voice commands

FREEWAVZ EARPHONES

FreeWavz is creating a set of earphones which will collate health and fitness metrics and audibly relay this information to exercisers – particularly useful for cyclists and joggers, who won't have to take their eyes off the road.

Designed by US-based otolaryngology specialist Dr Eric Hensen, the earphones will operate without the need for any other wearable tech, also offering wireless connectivity to music streaming, a step counter, plus heart rate and oxygen saturation monitoring.

Hensen was frustrated by poorly-fitting headphones which can disrupt workouts by falling out – or worse still, cause injuries when the wires become entangled – hence he set out to invent wireless ones.

Freewavz allows exercisers to change or pause music through voice commands and connect to a smartphone to collate health metrics.

The earphones also feature an extra speaker above the standard earbud, which allows users to listen to music while at the same time keeping ears alive to the sound of passing cars – improving safety.

The first production run of the innovative headphones began in January 2015.

LECHAL TRAINERS

While most wearable technology focuses on above the ankles, an Indian company wants to get to the heart and sole of fitness tracking through its Lechal wearable tech trainers.

Secunderabad-based Ducere released its interactive haptic feedback footwear at the end of 2014. The shoes are built with bluetooth-enabled insoles (which can also be bought separately) which connect to a smartphone and provide user feedback through insole vibrations. They can be connected to Google Maps, enabling directions to be disseminated without the need to look at a screen – handy for running in busy streets – while the usual pedometer/calorie counter is also present.

Bluetooth enabled insoles measure vibrations and connect to a smartphone to provide user-feedback

The company has indicated the insole will initially be priced at US$100 (£67, €94), with the cost of the shoes likely to be similar.

The creators were initially developing a shoe designed for the visually impaired, before realising the concept had broader applications.

Prices for the watch start at US$349

APPLE WATCH

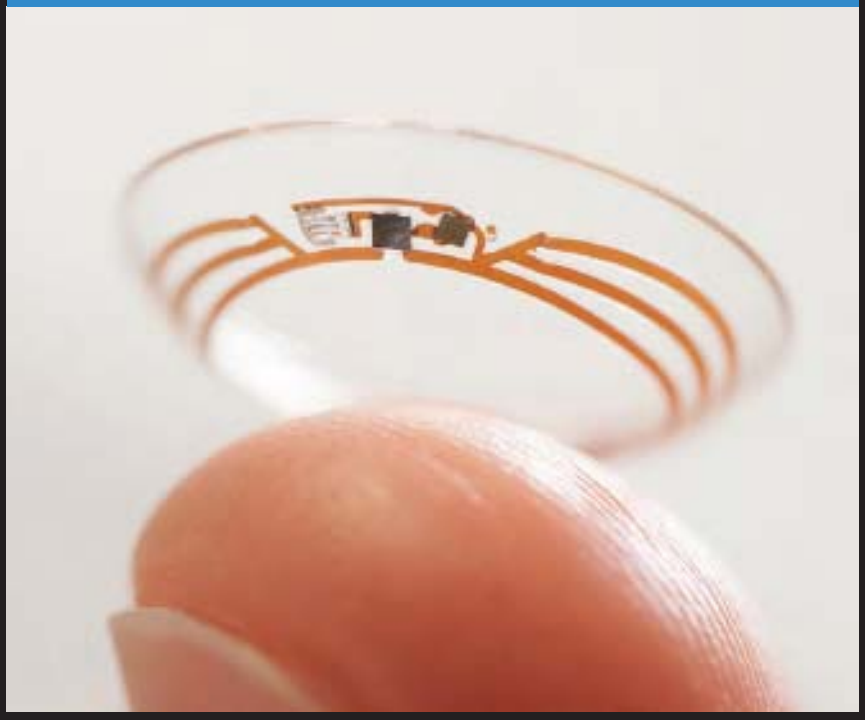
Apple will launch its long-awaited smartwatch offering in the UK in April 2015, featuring a host of health and fitness-related functions.

The Apple Watch features photo-sensitive sensors to record pulse information, while connectivity with an iPhone allows for wifi and GPS usage to track movement, pace and distance travelled. It also has an accelerometer, which measures total body movement, as well as the quality and intensity of movements made.

The Watch includes two specific health and fitness apps: Fitness and Workout. The Fitness app tracks all types of activity goals, with a series of visual 'rings' signifying daily progress. Workout facilitates fitness plans and displays workout metrics in real time.

With so many apps tracking aspects of wellbeing, Apple has also moved to unify the fragmented market by launching its Healthkit platform (compatible with the watch) which pulls in data from third-party health apps and presents the data in one manageable dashboard.

GOOGLE SMART LENS



While Google is undertaking a "change of direction" for its Glass product, the tech giant is also working on producing smart contact lenses.

First announced last year, the lenses will be able to monitor blood sugar levels via an antenna smaller than a strand of human hair.

This will open up new methods of self-management for chronic diseases such as diabetes, as well as tracking uses applicable to fitness.

With a camera potentially being used the lenses could have virtual reality applications and people's vision could be corrected much like the auto-focus on a camera. This could create new interactive opportunities for the visually impaired in terms of sport participation and health and fitness, as well as virtual reality applications.

Google is partnering with pharmaceutical company Novartis to take the project forward, aiming to come up with a prototype in 2015.

The Google contact lenses will be able to measure a number of health metrics, including sugar levels in the blood

PAVLOK

Be it sleeping in or skipping the gym, everyone wishes they could kick those bad habits that which productivity and prevent physical activity. Now, a new wearable is bidding to not just track activity, but use pain and shame to ensure users have no choice but to reach their goals.

Due for release in 2015, Pavlok is a fitness tracking wristband which also serves as a behavioural conditioner, with a pre-order price of US$149.99.

Aside from the usual tracking of steps, activity and sleep, this wearable has the ability to give away your money, shame you on social media, or even deliver a 340v static shock if you slip back into bad habits. It also offers rewards – as yet unspecified – as well as posting encouraging social media posts if you stay on the straight and narrow.

Triallists have mainly been using the device to help programme their body to wake up earlier and exercise more, although there's clearly potential for such technology to be applied to diet control and smoking cessation as well.

The fitness tracking wristband delivers a 340v static shock if wearers slip into bad habits

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GAME ON

THE LATEST NEWS FROM SAPCA AND ITS MEMBERS

Saltex will be held at the NEC this year

SAPCA to support Saltex 2015

SAPCA and the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) have agreed to work closely together in 2015, in particular to support the two organisation's exhibitions.

SAPCA will participate in and support the IOG's Saltex exhibition, which is moving to a new venue – the NEC, Birmingham – and to a different time of year (4-5 November 2015).

As well as having a presence at the exhibition, SAPCA will share technical advice and guidance and support the show's educational programme by presenting seminars on key technical subjects on the design, construction and maintenance of sports facilities.

The IOG will support SAPCA's one-day Sports Facility Shows, which will take place at three different venues across the country in 2015:

- **Tuesday 10 March:** Lee Valley Athletics Centre, London
- **Tuesday 9 June:** Madejeski Stadium, Reading
- **Tuesday 24 November:** AJ Bell Stadium, (formerly Salford City Stadium), Salford

Welcoming the agreement, SAPCA CEO Chris Trickey said: "SAPCA and the IOG share common objectives in raising the standards of sports facilities. Many IOG members maintain playing surfaces and facilities which are designed and built by SAPCA members. There has always been a positive relationship between the two bodies, but it makes great sense that we develop an even stronger partnership."

SAPCA honours Bill Pomfret

In January the industry lost one of its most knowledgeable and respected members, with the untimely death of Bill Pomfret, aged just 61, following a prolonged illness. Bill was the managing director of Thornton Sports' synthetic grass manufacturing division, Nordon. His extensive experience from more than 30 years in the industry included the management of a wide variety of sports surfacing projects.

A long-standing member of SAPCA's board of directors, and chair of the Manufacturers and Suppliers Group, Bill was also appointed as chair of the association's Technical Committee in 2013. In recognition of Bill's outstanding contribution and commitment to the industry, SAPCA made a posthumous presentation of the prestigious SAPCA Award for Achievement at its recent annual dinner. Accepting the Award on Bill's behalf, Chris Stephenson of Thornton said: "Those who knew Bill are likely to describe him as a man of integrity. While being honest and forthright, he also had a fantastically dry sense of humour. Outside of work he was a loyal, family man who enjoyed good food and fine wine. His hobbies included fishing and tinkering with vintage motorbikes. He will be greatly missed by all those who knew him.

Bill Pomfret – an industry icon

SAPCA strengthens technical programme

SAPCA's Technical Committee met in January to progress work on the association's Technical Programme, a diverse range of projects which seek to develop knowledge and guidance on key aspects of sports facility design and construction. The committee, which is composed of experts from a number of different fields, is now chaired by SAPCA director Mark Oakley, an experienced civil engineer with Hunter Construction.

Following the association's biennial Technical Meeting, held at Loughborough University in November and attended by more than 100 people from across the industry, the Technical Committee reviewed the feedback from the event, which had formed part of the consultation process on several current projects.

One of the main areas of activity is the production of the association's codes of practice, which set standards for the industry and provide valuable advice and guidance on the development of different types of sports facilities. Work is currently taking place on new or updated codes of practice for the design and construction of synthetic pitches, synthetic tracks, multi-use games areas and natural sports turf, as well as on the design and selection of sports equipment.

Technical Committee member Alastair Cox

SAPCA is also working closely with Sport England and sportscotland to produce a code of practice for the design, construction and testing of bases for outdoor synthetic sports surfaces, which is due to be published jointly in 2015.

SAPCA director Dave Moorcroft and chair Eric Page with Olympic medallist Cath Bishop (top left), who gave the keynote speech (main picture)

Annual conference builds better businesses

This year's SAPCA Conference – held at the Chesford Grange Hotel in Warwick – was aimed at giving SAPCA members some of the tools needed to build stronger businesses

The 2015 SAPCA Conference offered delegates a series of sessions and workshops across a variety of core areas of the industry – from dealing effectively with financial and legal issues, through sales and marketing skills to project funding and planning law.

Olympic silver medallist, rower Cath Bishop, delivered an inspiring keynote on the pursuit of excellence. She encouraged companies to be more like elite athletes, with clear objectives and plans of how to achieve them.

"Companies should think of themselves as lean, smart, business athletes," she said.

"If you look at it, successful businesses and elite athletes have a lot in common. To succeed, both need to have a high performance mindset and clarity over what they want to achieve. Those that are clear about their targets are much more likely to achieve them."

Bishop, who won the silver medal in the coxless pairs with Katherine Grainger at the Athens Olympic Games in 2004, also shared her experiences of working in hostile environments during her time as a Foreign Office diplomat. She emphasised how forming personal relationships, which can withstand a "stress test" during tough times, should be the lifeblood of all successful companies. "Life is all about interdependencies – and so is business," Bishop said. "No one does business purely by themselves, every business needs partners and collaborators. The stronger you can make those personal relationships with other businesses, the more likely they will stand by you in the time of need. A great starting point for lasting relationships is to find what you have in common."

Other speakers included Karen Woolland from consultants WCTD, who gave delegates advice on project funding, and Neil McHugh, director of MUGA-UK, who offered his insight on how to prepare a winning tender. There were also sessions on risk assessment and marketing, while Michelle Leavesley from Citydesk Sport gave delegates great advice on how to improve marketing in an environment which is increasingly connected and digital in its nature. Among the more technical sessions was an open tennis forum – chaired by Tom Ralph, the leader of SAPCA's Tennis Court Division – on the latest quality systems for tennis.

Chris Trickey, SAPCA CEO, said: "This year's SAPCA Conference was a little different, focusing directly on how members can build stronger businesses, with a variety of first-class speakers from the industry and beyond, sharing their expertise and experience. As SAPCA chair Eric Page highlighted at the start of the day, the association is also growing stronger, such as through the strict membership criteria we have for financial stability, and the increased scores we have seen for members over the last few years.

"It was very pleasing that this conference was so well attended, and had grown from last year, with more than 130 delegates and over 140 at the Annual Dinner that evening. The event also attracted more sponsors and exhibitors than we've had before, led by very generous support from Conica. The feedback we have had has been excellent, and will help us to plan next year's Conference, set for 8 February 2016."

• The Annual Dinner provided an opportunity to raise funds for SAPCA's official charity, the Warwick Wheelchair Racing Academy. The generosity of members and guests raised over £2,600, which will fund the WRA's own very special race meeting, "The Coventry Classic", which will be held at the University of Warwick on 22-23 August 2015. ●

The Zaha Hadid-designed Al Wakrah Stadium in Qatar – one of the World Cup 2022 facilities being constructed with UK involvement

SAPCA forms specialist Export Group

UK companies encouraged to look abroad for new challenges as global sports industry expands

As part of its efforts to increase business opportunities for members, SAPCA has launched a new Export Group to guide and advise those looking to expand their products and services into new markets. Chaired by Paul Langford, managing director of TigerTurf, the group held its founding meeting during the SAPCA conference in February and is open to all SAPCA members. The group will look to work closely with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI) with the aim of identifying and highlighting to members the resources offered by UKTI and other partners. The main aim will be to inform and advise members on doing business abroad – including identifying opportunities outside the UK and guidance on the steps needed to bid and secure projects.

Chris Trickey, SAPCA chief executive, said the new group will also play a crucial role in drawing up the organisation's new export strategy.

Qatar World Cup

The 2022 FIFA World Cup will act as the catalyst for the country's ambitious 2030 National Vision – which is to create a sustainable economy and advance the standard of living of its people. Opportunities include:

- A US$4bn (£2.58bn) stadium building programme
- Construction of 89 training facilities
- 21 new hotels to be built within five years and a further 29 by 2022
- US$140bn (£90bn) investment in general infrastructure projects

"In January, SAPCA was re-accredited by UKTI as a Trade Challenge Partner," he said.

"As part of that relationship – and to take it to the next level – we'll now be working closely with UKTI to develop a new export strategy for the association. The strategy, which will be produced by the new Export Group, led by Paul Langford, will identify the role of SAPCA in supporting the UK's sports facility industry. As well as helping existing exporters to increase their international business, it will also be a priority to encourage small UK companies to begin to export."

He added that the plan for the group is to assist not just SAPCA members but to involve those who are already actively involved in projects abroad. "We'd certainly like to broaden our contacts with UK firms involved in sports infrastructure business overseas," Trickey said.

"Some of what we will do – such as our presence at the FSB trade show – is already geared up to involve any and all UK companies working in sport abroad."

OPPORTUNITIES

The launch of the group comes as an increasing number of UK companies are looking to benefit from the booming sports industry across the world, which is growing at a faster pace than global GDP.

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UKTI - global sports projects

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2016: Olympic Games, Rio, Brazil
2017: Asian Indoor & Martial Arts Games, Ashgabat, Turkmenistan
2017: Universiade, Taipei, Taiwan
2018: Asian Games, Jakarta, Indonesia
2018: FIFA World Cup, Russia
2018: Winter Olympic Games, Pyeongchang, South Korea
2019: Rugby World Cup, Japan
2019: Pan Am Games, Lima, Peru
2020: Olympic Games, Tokyo, Japan
2022: FIFA World Cup, Qatar

Andrew Bacchus speaking during the launch of SAPCA's new Export Group in February

"Global events have always provided a constant stream of opportunities for UK companies, from feasibility and planning to stadium fit outs"

Currently, the sports market generates US$600bn-700bn each year – roughly 1 per cent of global GDP. During the SAPCA Conference, Andrew Bacchus, UKTI's head of global sports projects, presented findings on the global sports construction industry – and how the market is evolving. Bacchus said that while UKTI's focus has, until recently, largely been on helping UK companies secure contracts at major sporting events, the landscape is changing.

"Major events have always provided – and will continue to provide – a constant stream of opportunities – from feasibility and planning stages to fitting out stadia and security and ticketing," Bacchus said.

"UK companies have been very successful in securing contracts for events and we've played a part in that.

"Some of the future events, however, will be held in markets such as Japan where we know it will be hard for UK companies to get involved. Therefore we are looking to spread our focus and are now actively identifying large-scale projects that aren't tied to events – such as the Kai-Tak sports development in Hong Kong. The advent of the Indian (football) Super League is another exciting prospect and one which could offer a number of opportunities.

"That said, major events will still play a major role in our work. UK firms secured contracts worth more than £130m in the runup to the Brazil World Cup – for the Qatar World Cup in 2022 the figure has already reached more than £600m."

Andrew Bacchus, UKTI (left), Nick Fielder, FSB (centre) and Paul Langford, TigerTurf

GET INVOLVED

During the launch of the Export Group, delegates were asked for their opinions on the topics they'd most like help with. If you have any suggestions regarding the work of the group – or you want to get involved, whether you're a current SAPCA member or not – please email: info@sapca.org.uk ●

SAPCA is a Trade Challenge Partner to the UKTI Global Sports Projects team, which:

- Provides knowledge of future sports events
- Opens doors to the organising committees
- Hosts events to help UK companies learn about opportunities
- Offers networking opportunities to meet decision makers
- Organises visits to markets that host events

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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SAPCA regional exhibitions featuring the leading constructors of sports facilities and suppliers of related products and services, together with seminars on key aspects of sports facility design and construction.

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Flexible retail units help sell Premiership shirts

Three Premiership football clubs contracted Rapid Retail to provide bespoke retail merchandising units for the 2014-15 season. The orders from Southampton, Tottenham Hotspur and Leicester City mean that the UK company now counts all but three Premiership clubs as customers. Rapid Retail designs, supplies and builds the units, with the contracts allowing the clubs to either purchase or rent the units, with the flexibility to upgrade.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

rapid retail

Conica is the new name for Charles Lawrence

Charles Lawrence International has changed its name to Conica as of January 2015. The change comes as a result of the acquisition of the company by the Munich-based Serafin Group in October 2013. Under the new name, Conica will continue to provide the same tyre recycling services, supplying rubber granulate to sport, leisure and other industries. There will be no changes to the management of the company and Newark will continue to be its base.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

conica

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Thornton Sports completes pitch project

An artificial grass sports pitch successfully resurfaced by Thornton Sports has received the necessary accreditation to allow competition level hockey to be played on it. The surface chosen for Driffield Leisure Centre's new pitch was Thornton Sports' in-house UK manufactured 'Premier 10 National' sand-dressed surface. The pitch was examined by an independent test house and passed FIH (International Hockey Federation) national accreditation. Other sports will also be played on it.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

thornton sports

Unique fitness machines offer improved rehab

The world's first range of fitness machines which allow users to perform controlled multi-axial exercises through all ranges of motion has been launched by Multiple Joint Fitness Systems (MuJo). It says the equipment will facilitate improvements in performance and rehabilitation after injury or surgery and the company is already partnering with a number of Premiership football clubs both in direct sales and research. An initial range will feature two stations – for the internal and external shoulder – which were first unveiled as prototypes by the company in 2012.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

mujo

 © Cybertrek 2015

Gerflor acquires US sports surfacing company

Flooring specialist Gerflor has completed the acquisition of the US sports surfacing company Connor Sport Court. The move brings three leading brands – Connor, Sport Court and Taraflex – together under one flagship group. Gerflor said the acquisition will not only expand its global reach, but the combined resources of the two companies would allow it to offer "more innovative solutions and improved services". Connor Sport Court International is known for building systems for a variety of top sports associations, including the NBA.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

gerflor

LEDs light sports centre

A new energy-efficient LED lighting system from Barclay LED Solutions has been installed at a sports centre in Liverpool. Multi-sport centre Activity for All contracted the Harrogate-based company to install the system to light two five-a-side football pitches, with 15 160wm high-powered, LED fittings replacing the 20 existing 400W sodium son fittings. The LED system is expected to reduce carbon emissions by more than 8,600 tonnes a year and decrease the sports centre's energy output by over 16,000 kwh a year.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

barclay

2012 Olympics inspires range for active people

A range of skin and bodycare products designed for active people by active people has been launched. British entrepreneur Lara Morgan is the creative force behind 'activbod', which features a regime of products for pre, during and post exercise designed to make sport and physical activity a more appealing experience through better recovery and a pleasant bodycare experience. The London 2012 Olympics inspired its development.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

activbod

Replay has pitch ready for landmark FA Cup game

A 3G artificial pitch was used for the first time in the first round of the FA Cup during Maidstone's home tie against Stevenage. Synthetic surface maintenance specialists Replay Maintenance carries out its 'Revive Plus+' process on the Gallagher Stadium pitch four times a year to ensure it is always in top condition and the company was on hand to support Maidstone in the run up to the game, a replay. The pitch is certified to the FIFA 2 star standard.

sport-kit.net **KEYWORD**

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DIARY DATES

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14-15 APR 2015

Soccerex Asian Forum 2015

King Hussein Convention Centre, Jordan
This two day event in the world's biggest football market provides a platform for networking and knowledge exchange between East and West. The event will once again be held on the banks of the Dead Sea, bringing attendees from clubs, federations, rights holders and businesses together to discuss, network, learn and do business over two intensive days. The first edition of the forum, in May 2014, was a huge success, gathering leading administrators and business figures in Asian football with their global counterparts to look at the development of football across the Asian continent.
Tel: +44 (0)20 8 742 7100
www.soccerex.com/events/asia

29-30 APR 2015

active-net 2015

imago Burleigh Court and Holywell Park Loughborough University, UK
active-net is a new approach to "buyer meets supplier" events, combining quality one-to-one meetings with a comprehensive seminar and networking programmes. active-net is aimed at all operators and suppliers with a focus on the public sector whether it be Trusts, Local Authorities or Universities/Colleges. The event is supported by ukactive, the Senior Management Network of BUCS and CIMSPA.
Tel: +44 (0)1603 814233
www.active-net.org

11-14 MAY 2015

15th Annual International Conference on Sports: Economic, Management, Marketing & Social Aspects

Athens, Greece
The aim of the conference is to bring together scholars and students of all areas of sport. Held in collaboration with the Pan-Hellenic Association of Sport Economists & Managers (PASEM), participants can present on sports topics within broad streams of research areas.
Tel: +30 (0)210 363 4210
www.atiner.gr/sports.htm

14-15 MAY 2015

The European Sport Tourism Summit

Thomond Park Stadium Limerick, Ireland
The European Sport Tourism Summit will feature an International Sport Tourism Conference, the inaugural European Sport Tourism Awards, industry expert sessions, meet the buyers and sport tourism academic conference. Categories for the awards include The European Sport Tourism City Award 2016 – a designation awarded to a city in Europe who is considered to be delivering an integrated sport tourism city destination approach throughout 2015-16. The winning city will hold the title European Sport Tourism City 2016.
Tel: +353 (0)1 507 9413
www.sporttourismsummit.ie

27-28 MAY 2015

The Arab Sports Management Summit

Dubai, United Arab Emirates
The Arab Sports Management Summit will be the region's premier sports event, deriving it's focus from the growing sports market in the Middle East and North Africa. The summit will attract stakeholders from over 22 countries in the Middle East and North Africa providing an ideal platform to access business contacts in the region. The Arab Sports Management Summit will be a platform for sports event management, security, logistics, vendors for sporting goods, sports wear & accessories, stadia equipment and consultancy and a unique opportunity to network.
Tel: +44 (0)20 3289 4515
www.micequotient.com

9 JUN 2015

Sports Facility Show

Madejski Stadium Reading, Berkshire, UK
The second of the year's SAPCA Sports Facility Shows takes place in Reading. The events are special, one-day events that comprise a series of informative and educational seminars, together with an exhibition featuring specialists in the design, construction and maintenance of sports facilities and leisure centres.
Tel: +44 (0)247 641 6316
www.sapca.org.uk

24-27 JUN 2015

20th Annual Congress of the European College of Sport Science

Malmö University, Malmö, Sweden
Annual congresses have been organized since the inauguration of the ECSS in 1995. Today the ECSS congresses rank among the leading sport scientific congresses worldwide. The congress comprises a range of invited lecturers, multi- and mono-disciplinary symposia as well as tutorial lecturers and Socratic debates. The ECSS congress is attended by international sports scientists working in academia. The ECSS congresses now welcome up to 2,000 participants from all over the world.
Tel: +49 221 4982 7640
www.ecss-congress.eu/2015

08 JUL 2015

Sports & Leisure Facilities Forum

Hilton London Wembley, Wembley, UK
The Sports and Leisure Facilities Forum is a one-day event that saves months of time, money and effort by bringing together senior sports and leisure professionals with solution providers, for a full day of prearranged face-to-face business meetings. The event provides an insight into the latest technology, innovations and developments in all aspects of the sports facilities business. Attendees have the opportunity to network with industry-leading experts, share best practice and discuss trends and challenges associated with the development of sports facilities.
Tel: +44 (0)1992 374100
www.forumevents.co.uk

05-09 SEP 2015

Soccerex Global Convention

Manchester Central Convention Complex
The Soccerex Global Convention is the world's largest football-related business event, seeing the global leaders of the sport come together to debate, network and do business. Lasting five days – and including a two day Football Festival – the 2015 edition will again take place in Manchester
Tel: +44 208 742 7100
www.soccerex.com

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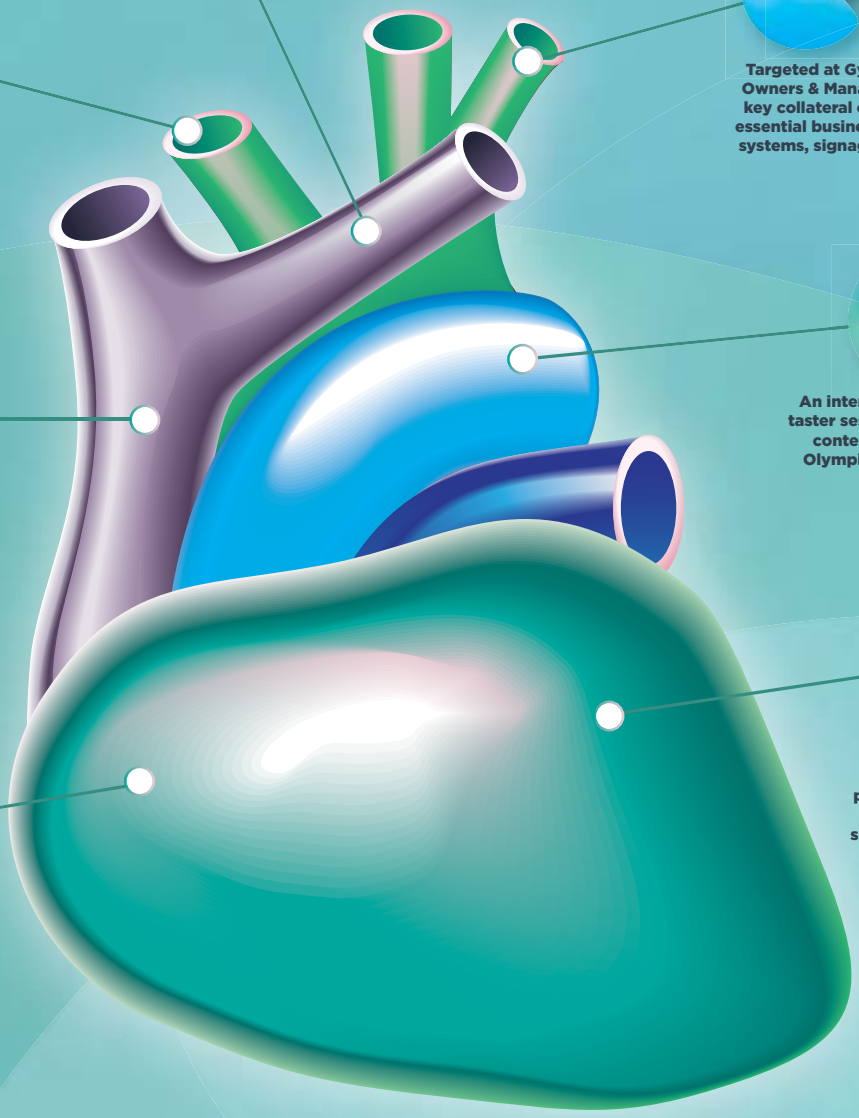
POOL & SPA ZONE

A comprehensive array of pool and spa products, design concepts, with advice from industry experts on how you can benefit. Enjoy a spa treatment from one of the expert therapists

LEISURE FACILITIES CONFERENCE

Targeted at Gym and Leisure Centre Owners & Managers, talks will deliver key collateral on industry trends and essential business systems such as pay systems, signage, financing and much more



GROUP FITNESS

An interactive area providing varied taster sessions in everything from HIIT, contemporary Personal Training, Olympic lifting, step & tone, Pilates and much more

YOUNG FITNESS & PLAY CONFERENCE

Dedicated to the education of children from primary school upwards with seminars and demonstrations on physical literacy, tackling childhood obesity, health, nutrition and soft play

SECONDARY SPEND

Learn more about how to maximise revenue with presentations on secondary spend options including sports nutrition, accessories and clothing

1000 CLUB

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