

SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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Life habits learned young

The awful consequences of inactivity continue to shock and yet the solution is right under our noses – we must teach children self-care while they're at school

At the ukactive Summit recently, delegates heard that 120 amputations of feet and toes are carried out each week in the UK, as a result of type 2 diabetes caused by obesity.

This shocking statistic is just the latest in a long line of indicators which show how far we're straying from health. It also gives an insight into the brutal reality of the current situation.

Also launched at the event was *Generation Inactive 2*, the new report on kids' activity levels. It makes grim reading, with only 25 per cent of boys and 20 per cent of girls in England doing the recommended 60 minutes of activity each day, and less in the holidays.

The government has our children pretty much all day from the age of four to 16-23 and during those years, has the opportunity to teach them self-care and inspire them to a lifelong exercise habit.

Yet this is simply isn't happening and we're raising generations of broken kids with mental health issues and physical and health challenges which will lead to disease. We simply can't go on like this. Something fundamental needs to change.

It isn't even as though the academic side of the education system – which seems to be a total obsession – is preparing kids for the modern world and the workplace. Ask any recruiter who's been working for a few decades and they will tell you standards of even the basics like grammar have plummeted in recent years. So while this focus on learning isn't



We're stuck in a rut in the way we deliver education, but it doesn't have to be this way. We retain information more easily if it's sandwiched with activity

making kids more employable, the lack of balance in the curriculum is both contributing to the activity crisis and failing to do anything to turn the tide. We're stuck in a rut in the way we deliver education.

But it doesn't have to be this way. We have the knowledge we need to change things for the better.

There's exciting research which shows we learn and retain information far more easily if it's sandwiched with physical activity. The physiological arousal helps prime the brain for the intake of new information and the encoding of that information into memories.

Kids would actually do better at school if they spent less time studying and did more activity, and yet we just stick them behind a desk and then wonder why they grow up to be sedentary adults.

It's time to review the way this works and make a plan to include physical activity in schools in a way that builds a powerful base for a life of self care and enhances academic achievement.

LIZ TERRY, EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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HAVE YOUR SAY

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



New learn to swim standards are setting us up for failure

I read with interest the recent news in *Sports Management* about the new Learn to Swim standards introduced by the European Swimming Federation. Ensuring children are all taught the same skills regardless of the country they live in is a step in the right direction and the ambition to get children to swim 200 meters in a recognisable stroke by the time they are 11 would be a dream come true.

However, this objective in the new standards raises more questions than answers.

For the last decade, the ambition in the UK has been to get children to swim 25 metres by the time they're 11. Currently, our success rate in relation to this target is just 45 per cent.

How can we possibly increase this eight times without any acknowledgement of the current challenge? If we were already achieving the 25-metre goal, raising the bar at this stage would make sense, however, my concern is that this new goal will set us up for failure if appropriate changes are not made.

We're also missing the details. How did the Federation arrive at 200 metres in the first place? How will this be measured? Is there an accurate method for collecting and analysing this data? What is the timescale for this goal? To achieve this worthy objective, there needs to be a realistic and attainable plan in place.

Finally, there needs to be greater transparency on how the 200 metre goal is going to be accomplished. Will there be a mandate to reduce the number of children in a class to ensure more focused teaching?

While swimming is on the National Curriculum, many schools offer lessons



Ferré suggests that swimming lessons be made a compulsory Ofsted requirement



To achieve the 200-metre goal, there needs to be a realistic and attainable plan in place

infrequently throughout the year. This is not sufficient to learn to swim 25 meters in a recognisable stroke, let alone 200. Perhaps more budget needs to be allocated to schools and swimming lessons need to be made a compulsory Ofsted requirement?

Overall, I am firmly in favour of these new standards and I applaud the European Swimming Federation for its ambitious goal. I'd love to see all children learning to swim 200 meters by age 11, swimming confidently and ultimately embracing swimming as a form of fitness. Achieving the goal will be a challenge, but I support it wholeheartedly. As soon as more details are available, I am keenly interested in collaborating with the European Swimming Federation to achieve this important objective. ●
Eduardo Ferré, founder and group director, Swimming Nature

Small changes can make a big difference to swimming participation

I was interested to read your swimming feature 'A Deeper Issue' in *Sports Management Issue 1* 2018.

Active Northumberland was chosen as one of 12 pilot operators for Sport England's Swim Local research project, which aims to find out what's causing the drop in swimming participation and test ways and approaches to get more people swimming again.

Funding from Sport England was used to explore participation, identifying that it's the customer experience, not the swimming itself, that's one of the main problems.

To address this, we carried out specialist customer service training with 240 staff; 20 five-hour sessions specifically tailored to give staff a shared identity and a broader understanding of the business as a whole.



New fitness classes have attracted a wider range of customers to the pool

Action taken as a result included adding new and innovative sessions to the timetable to attract a wider range of swimmers; a loyalty card; a monthly prize draw; a team member permanently on duty wearing a 'Here to help' t-shirt; customer kit pods for storing small items; and poolside hooks for towels and robes.

To date, the 'Take The Plunge' landing page has achieved more than 6,500 visitors and over 1,300 non-members have signed up to the reward card. The new classes have been fully booked, helping to overcome the perception that swimming is just about 'lanes and lessons', and positive customer feedback on changing room cleanliness and the impact of the new swim advisors has been overwhelming. ●

Dave Monkhouse, director, Leisure-net Solutions

Birmingham's Alexander Stadium must provide a lasting legacy for British athletics

Birmingham City Council leader Ian Ward has set the city the lofty ambition of hosting the best Commonwealth Games ever. In addition to that bold aspiration we also need to make sure the Games creates the greatest possible legacy for Birmingham, British sport and specifically UK Athletics.

As the home of UK Athletics, the Alexander Stadium needs to be configured to the needs of elite athletes and can only be considered a true success if it creates a long-term legacy for British athletics that lasts for years to come.

UK Sport as a whole has thrived at the past two Olympics, but apart from the performance of a couple of exceptional sportspeople, UK Athletics has underachieved.

Of the 14 athletics world titles Britain has won in the past decade, Mo Farah and Jessica Ennis-Hill account for nine of them. At the London 2017 World Athletic Championships, Mo Farah won Britain's only individual medal.



Birmingham's Alexander Stadium will be the centre of the 2022 Commonwealth Games

A world class athletics facility is needed to provide a catalyst for change and create a platform for excellence in the way that the Manchester Velodrome has for British Cycling and the Institute for National Football at Clairefontaine has for the French Football team.

Birmingham 2022 must transform the Alexander Stadium so that it provides a legacy for the local community, Birchfield Harriers Athletics Club and a platform to usher in a new golden era for UK Athletics. ●

Simon Dale, director, Midlands at Mace



I truly believe gymnastics is one of the best sporting foundations for children, helping them to develop skills that can be used in all aspects of their lives

MAX WHITLOCK • OLYMPIC GYMNAST

Tell us about your recent partnership with Everyone Active to launch Max Whitlock Gymnastics

We wanted to set up the partnership to combat the long waiting lists for gymnastics that currently exist around the country. There are so many kids that want to take part in gymnastics but who don't have the opportunity, because there aren't enough gymnastics clubs to fulfil the need. We really want to give more kids the opportunity to try the sport and enjoy it.

Our pledge is to get one million children aged four to 11 years old taking part in gymnastics over the next four years. It's a hard target, but it will be a massive accomplishment. For me and my wife Leah it's been a huge dream to get the programme up and running and it feels a bit surreal that it's a reality now.

Training at an Everyone Active centre myself, I know first-hand that their brilliant facilities UK wide offer scope to get children all over the country



Max Whitlock is a five-time Olympic medalist in gymnastics

benefitting from the gymnastics programme. I'm excited to be rolling this out across 30 of their facilities.

How does the programme work?

Leah and I have spent a long time developing the programme from our own experiences within the sport to ensure it's fun and engaging. It consists of structured sessions that give children the chance to develop and perfect their skills as they progress through the sport and on to competition level, should they choose to.

They can try out lots of different apparatuses within the sport to develop their skills. Parents will also be able to track their child's progress and we've developed our own awards scheme for children to work towards.

You must have inspired many children with your success.

Have you noticed this?

It all really started for me at London 2012, but Rio 2016 also had a huge impact. Our country has really come together since the Games, and the interest in gymnastics just keeps on growing.

The results we brought back from Rio as a team made history. I am, of course, proud of



Max Whitlock Gymnastics will be rolled out across 30 Everyone Active centres

my own achievements – coming back with two gold medals, I had kids as young as five coming up to me to tell me that they want to become an Olympic athlete one day.

I started out on a recreational gymnastics programme very similar to the programme I've created, and I want to show kids how possible it is for them to achieve and succeed in the sport. To be able to inspire young children to take part in gymnastics is a massive privilege and something I don't take for granted.

What lessons has sport taught you?

Growing up I was actually really shy, and gymnastics has brought out and boosted my confidence levels. The sport has taught me to be fearless and just go for what you want, as well as strengthening my discipline.

For instance, at one of our launch events there was a young girl who was really scared of heights. She wouldn't jump off the vault to land on the crash mat, but I supported her through it and she did jump. Her teacher told me that they've never been able to get her to jump during her PE sessions at school, so it just shows that programmes like ours in a safe environment can get kids to take part.

I truly believe that gymnastics is one of the best sporting foundations for children, helping them to develop skills that can be used in all aspects of their lives. It's a sport that has opened many doors for me and I hope it can do the same for others.

What are your current personal goals?

I've got the European Championships, which are happening in Glasgow this August and then the World Championships at the end of the year.

The World Championships will also be the first trial for selection into the Olympic team for Tokyo 2020. I'm currently just working on my own performance, training with my team to improve my score during competitions. I'm really looking forward to getting out there and showing everyone what I've been working on.

“

Our pledge is to get one million children aged four to 11 taking part in gymnastics over the next four years



Whitlock believes gymnastics can boost kids' confidence levels



Coach Cycle puts coaching in your hands – the coaches will come to you, to fit in with your life, rather than you having to be somewhere at a certain time

ROGER BLACK, DOUBLE OLYMPIC MEDALLIST AND CO-FOUNDER OF COACH CYCLE



Roger Black won two silver medals at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games

What is Coach Cycle?

We describe it as the 'Uber for sports coaches'. Coach Cycle will offer an online database of coaches. People will be able to search for coaches and coaching businesses via a map directory, while coaches can upload their certificates and experience onto a public profile, advertising their services in their area.

There currently isn't any obvious place to go to find a sports coach, other than contacting local sports clubs. Coach Cycle

A team of entrepreneurs – including double Olympic medallist Roger Black – has launched a new online service that will help connect members of the public with sports coaches. Called Coach Cycle, the new service will aim to make sports coaching more accessible by offering an online database of coaches across 30 different sports.

really puts coaching in your hands. The coaches will come to you, to fit in with your life, rather than you having to go somewhere at a certain time.

It will be particularly useful for those who want to try a sport, but might be intimidated by facing a club environment for the first time.

How did the idea come about?

It was (co-founder) Ryan McCarthy's idea and he's the main person behind the venture. As a coach, he realised that you live on your reputation – and most of that comes through word of mouth.

He wanted coaches to become more accessible. His idea was that if someone, whether an individual or a team, wanted a coach, they should be able to just go online and find one near them. As that service didn't exist, he decided to create it.

How did you get involved?

Ryan came to me for a bit of advice. He lives locally and apparently when he was

seven years old, I signed a pair of running spikes for him! So there was a personal connection there.

He wanted my opinion as a former athlete but, after hearing his concept, I became interested – partly as I could see the benefits of the service from a parent's perspective.

I have 12-year-old twin boys and at the time Ryan contacted me, we'd been trying out table tennis. I wanted to get a table tennis coach to pop in and offer the twins the occasional one-on-one session.

What I discovered was that the only way to get some coaching was to contact a local club and then attend whichever night they had training on – so you wouldn't have a choice regarding timing or place. So from a parent point of view I saw that there was a problem that Coach Cycle might be able to solve.

Another aspect that got me interested in Coach Cycle is that it can give opportunities to retiring athletes. I was very fortunate myself, because when I

Coaches can currently only be found at local clubs



Coach Cycle will hopefully engage people who have been lost to sport, as it's not intimidating

retired, it was at a time when not many of us were winning Olympic medals. So I was high-profile and was given opportunities in broadcasting and as a corporate speaker.

Team GB's recent successes, however, means that we now have around 70 Olympic medallists. They can't all become business speakers or TV pundits. You still have your Mo Farahs, Jess Ennises and Chris Hoyes – the really high profile champions – but there are a lot of athletes behind them who have got Olympic medals in their pockets, but who might struggle to find a career after they retire. I think Coach Cycle can help with that.



Coach Cycle aims to connect sports coaches with individuals or teams

What could Coach Cycle mean for sports in the UK?

I'm surprised that this platform doesn't already exist. For me, what it can do is transform coaching from being a word of mouth, ad hoc business, to a much

more well-administered business. It will certainly prove the quality of coaching and hopefully engage people who have been lost to sport as it will give them a way to get involved that's not intimidating, because they are in control. ▶



Ronaldinho Digital Stadiums will be developed in 300 locations, including Asia, the Middle East, Africa and others, within three years

RONALDINHO • FORMER PROFESSIONAL FOOTBALLER

Former Barcelona and Brazil midfielder Ronaldo de Assis Moreira, better known as Ronaldinho, has launched a new digital venture which looks to combine an entirely new cryptocurrency with a range of football services “in the real world”.

Big plans

The project – in partnership with Malta-based World Soccer Coin – is aiming to launch a digital currency called the Ronaldinho Soccer Coin (RSC) and use it to deliver both “digital and real services”.

The partnership looks to establish a football academy, host amateur matches



Ronaldinho has partnered with World Soccer Coin for the project

around the world, develop and operate a betting platform and marketplace, and develop digital, virtual reality stadiums.

“Ronaldinho Digital Stadiums will be developed in 300 locations, including Asia, the Middle East, Africa and others, within three years,” Ronaldinho said.

“The stadiums will be created using cutting-edge digital technologies such as Blockchain, AI and virtual reality.”

He claims that “construction plans” have already been confirmed in more than 10 locations around the world.

One of the best

Ronaldinho, who officially retired earlier this year, is considered one of the best players of his generation. During his career he played for European clubs Paris Saint-Germain, Barcelona and AC Milan, as well as the Brazilian national team. Ronaldinho won two FIFA World Player of the Year awards and a Ballon d’Or. ●

BE PART OF THE PROJECT

The presale for the Ronaldinho Soccer Coin Project opened on 16 August. For more information visit www.soccercoin.eu



The former midfielder is considered one of the best players of his generation

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NEWS + ANALYSIS



The 9,200sq m training centre will create a combined first team and U23 academy facility



This is a major step forward for the club

Andy Hughes

Liverpool FC reveals details of £50m academy plans

English Premier League club Liverpool FC has confirmed plans to redevelop its academy site in Kirkby and the neighbouring Eddie McArdle community playing fields.

The £50m project, designed by architects KSS, will see the Reds' first team and academy football training operations and facilities brought together on one site in a new training

campus. The 9,200sq m training centre will create a combined first team and U23 academy facility, each of which has its own identity, along with new first-team pitches.

The facilities will incorporate two gyms, a full-size sports hall, pool, hydrotherapy complex and specialist sports rehabilitation suites. There will also be dedicated TV studios,

press conference facilities and office accommodation.

The club has appointed building and civil engineering contractors, McLaughlin & Harvey, to deliver the project, which is expected to complete by mid-2020. The club will also sell its existing training ground in Melwood.

Andy Hughes, Liverpool's COO added: "This is a major step

forward for the club and we're proud to be investing in the Knowsley area. Our aspiration to create a clear pathway for our young players through to the first team is an ambitious project. The site in Kirkby provides the ideal location for the new home of our elite performance centre and state-of-the-art training facility."

More: http://lei.sr?a=Y3x6h_P



Swim England will open five performance centres

Swim England launches performance centres

Swim England, the national governing body for swimming in England, has announced plans to open five performance centres nationwide to nurture young talent.

The body is working in partnership with swimming clubs and universities to "give swimmers the opportunity to stay in the sport, achieve academic excellence and perform to the highest standards", according to a release.



We are working with local partners to develop the performance centres

George Wood

Located at High Wycombe, Leeds, Guildford, Manchester and Nottingham, the centres were chosen following an application process and have been developed using a

"partnership model" to "ensure long-term sustainability".

"We are working with local partners to develop these Swim England Performance Centres," said George Wood, Swim England sport development director. "We want to provide members with opportunities to keep training and by working with universities, this will enable them to achieve both their academic and swimming potential." More: http://lei.sr?a=t7U6S_P



The report was based on a survey of 1,152 people working in sport

Women in Sport report cites 'gender discrimination problem'

Sport should focus on having more women leaders, in order to bring about cultural change within the sector, according to equality charity Women in Sport.

The call comes after the charity published its *Beyond 30% - Workplace Culture in Sport* report, which suggests there is still a "serious gender discrimination problem" within sport.

"I recognise that the sport sector is committed to stamping out gender discrimination, but our report has highlighted that where negative behaviours



Negative behaviours often go unseen and do not get addressed
Ruth Holdaway

exist deep within the workplace culture they often go unseen and therefore do not get addressed," said Ruth Holdaway, CEO of Women in Sport.

The report was based on a survey of 1,152 women and men working in sport.
More: http://lei.sr?a=n3v3T_P

Belfast loses rights to 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games

Belfast has been stripped of its right to host the 2021 Commonwealth Youth Games, after the required funding for the event was not released by the Northern Irish government.

Belfast was awarded the Games in February 2016, but Northern Ireland's coalition government collapsed in January 2017, before ministers had agreed to a financial package for the event. Since the government's collapse,

the country has been run by civil servants – who have signalled their belief that the Games do not represent "value for money".

As there are no guarantees that funding for the Games will be released, The Commonwealth Games Federation (CGF) said it has been "forced to re-open" the bidding process for the 2021 event.
More: http://lei.sr?a=G7d7H_P



We're working with leading health charities to help people get active
Jennie Price

Sport England invests £1.3m into fitness for long-term patients

Millions of people with long-term health conditions will be targeted via a £1.3m investment project launched by Sport England to encourage them to become more physically active.

Working in conjunction with the Richmond Group of Charities, Sport England will fund a series of pilot projects designed to improve

the quality of life for people with chronic conditions such as coronary heart disease.

Sport England chief executive Jennie Price said: "We're working with leading health charities to help people get active, because the charities already have the confidence of the people living with long-term health conditions."

More: http://lei.sr?a=E7q3t_P



The single-grandstand venue will have a capacity of 3,900

First dedicated women's football stadium for Sheffield

Plans have been unveiled to build the UK's first dedicated women's football stadium at Sheffield Olympic Legacy Park.

Scarborough Group International has submitted a planning application for a 3,900-capacity stadium, which would become the new home of Sheffield United Women Football Club.

Whittam Cox Architects, supported by Arup Sheffield,

have been appointed to design the £5m (US\$6.5m, €5.6m) stadium, which will feature a single grandstand, housing hospitality and conferencing facilities as well as office space.

The plans come just months after Sheffield United Football Club rebranded its female team as Sheffield United Women, ditching the old 'Sheffield United Ladies' name.
More: http://lei.sr?a=D9c6V_P



E-sports is a rapidly growing industry

DIGITAL HORIZONS FOR SPORT

A new report has suggested that the growth in the rapidly expanding e-sports industry is being driven by the traditional sports sector

A report into the rapidly growing e-sports sector has found that the greatest increase in investments in e-sports over the next year will come from the traditional professional sports industry.

Two-thirds of respondents (68 per cent) to the 2018 E-sports Survey Report think the involvement of traditional sports teams, leagues, investors and athletes has had a significant impact on the growth of e-sports.

More than half (57 per cent) believe that traditional sports will increase their investment in e-sports over the next year.

The finding comes on the heels of significant recent activity by traditional sports leagues and franchises, as they look to diversify their revenue streams.

These include the NBA 2K e-sports league – which involves the National Basketball Association (NBA) and the eMLS Cup, organised by Major League Soccer.

The report, compiled by the Sports Industry Team at law specialist Foley & Lardner, also predicts that in the



Overall, the survey depicts a maturing industry with participants that are heavily focused on protecting and legitimising their brands as interest and investment in e-sports continue to grow

2018 E-sports Survey Report

year ahead, traditional professional sports sources will look to boost their investments, while advertising, sponsorships and media rights are expected to drive the most revenue growth.

Respondents also identified other developments that will support the burgeoning e-sports industry.

Over the next year, the majority (88 per cent) foresee the construction of more specialised e-sports facilities, and 47 per cent expect virtual reality e-sports to grow substantially.

Geographically, the top five regions expected to see significant growth in e-sports are the US, China, South Korea, India and Japan.

"Overall, our survey depicts a

maturing industry with participants that are heavily focused on protecting and legitimising their brands as interest and investment in e-sports continue to grow," the report states.

"As one survey respondent put it, 'e-sports is in a positive but volatile place'."

The report comes hot on the heels of the recent Olympic E-sports Forum, hosted by the International Olympic Committee (IOC) and the Global Association of International Sports Federations (GAISF).

During the event, the IOC revealed it has created a liaison group to work together with the e-sports community – seen widely as a 'baby step' towards the inclusion of competitive gaming at the Olympic Games. More: http://lei.sr?a=u7K8G_P



The network will cover most of the city

Manchester plans UK's largest cycling network

Officials in Manchester have revealed plans to create a city-wide cycling and walking network made up of more than 1,000 miles of routes – including 75 miles of Dutch-style segregated bike lanes.

Once completed, the 'Beelines' network – named after Manchester's civic symbol of the worker bee – will be the largest joined-up system of walking and cycling routes in the UK.

Developed in partnership by the 10 Greater Manchester local authorities and Olympic champion cyclist Chris Boardman, the proposals also include plans for 25 'filtered neighbourhoods', where priority will be given to the movement of people.

The plans carry a cost of around £500m and are the first stage of a planned £1.5bn investment in the city's transport infrastructure. [More: http://lei.sr?a=p6w5Y_P](http://lei.sr?a=p6w5Y_P)

GPs urged to refer older patients for golf lessons

GPs and health professionals are being urged to refer older and inactive patients for golf lessons, after a new report showed that golf builds muscle strength and "improves life satisfaction".

The *Golf on Referral* report studied two research pilots that saw selected patients referred for a six-week behaviour change and golf lesson programme, with their mental

and physical wellbeing tracked over the course of the project.

The programme targeted inactive people at risk of chronic conditions and introduced them to golf while incorporating group support.

Researchers found that, following the six-week programme, participants reported significant increases in muscle strength.

[More: http://lei.sr?a=2w2w4_P](http://lei.sr?a=2w2w4_P)



I'm extremely pleased to have formed a strategic partnership
Tony Xia

Aston Villa FC's future secured by 'significant investment'

Aston Villa FC's immediate financial future has been secured after billionaire businessmen Wes Edens and Nassef Sawiris pledged to inject "significant investment" in the club.

The extent of the Championship club's financial plight was exposed after the club failed to win promotion back to the Premier League earlier this year. Villa, relegated from the Premier League in 2016, invested heavily in players in an

attempt to secure an immediate return to the top flight.

Following the investment, current owner, Chinese businessman Tony Xia, will become co-chair – but will remain on the board.

"I'm extremely pleased to have formed a strategic partnership with Nassef and Wes", Xia said. "We have a common goal of delivering future success for Aston Villa and I look forward to achieving this aim."

[More: http://lei.sr?a=c2CBR_P](http://lei.sr?a=c2CBR_P)

Rugby League World Cup launches legacy programme



Our legacy programme will be far reaching as we aim to engage with people
Jon Dutton

The Rugby League World Cup 2021 (RLWC2021) has launched a legacy programme, which looks to use the tournament, to be hosted in England, as a catalyst to develop the game of rugby league and "engage with the widest possible audience".

Called 'Inspired by 2021', the programme comprises three key strands: volunteers, facilities and community engagement. There will be a gradual rollout of each of the

RLWC2021 will act as a catalyst for the sport



'Inspired by 2021' programmes, including the biggest volunteer workforce project that the sport has seen.

"Our legacy programme will be far reaching as we aim to engage with people in different ways," said Jon Dutton, CEO of the RLWC 2021.

[More: http://lei.sr?a=5f4d_P](http://lei.sr?a=5f4d_P)

Physical activity “key to student mental health” – study

Getting university students physically active and playing sport can have a dramatic effect on improving their mental wellbeing, social inclusion, and perceived academic attainment and employability.

According to the British *Active Students Survey: 2017/2018 Report*, students who are classified as “active” scored better than those classified as fairly active or inactive across four aspects of personal wellbeing: life satisfaction, feelings of worthwhile, happiness and anxiety.

The survey – published at the British Universities and Colleges Sport (BUCS) Conference – also showed that students who participate in both sport and gym activities



Only around half of higher education students currently meet the recommended levels of physical activity

reap the greatest benefits. The survey is the biggest of its kind to date, with 6,891 students from 104 higher education institutes across the UK responding. It was conducted in partnership by ukactive,

BUCS, fitness equipment provider Precor and Scottish Student Sport (SSS). It shows that little more than half of respondents (53 per cent) were meeting the recommended levels of physical activity.



For many students the benefits of being active are multiplied

Sir Ian Diamond

“For many students the benefits of being active are multiplied as activity to manage the stress of coursework deadlines and regular examination diets,” said Sir Ian Diamond, chair of BUCS. More: http://lei.sr?a=E5C5U_P

Portsmouth's inclusive sport complex gets approval



The complex will include a 25m swimming pool

Portsmouth City Council has approved plans for an inclusive and sustainable sports facility at University of Portsmouth.

Designed by FaulknerBrowns Architects, the complex will include a 25m, eight-lane swimming pool, an eight-court sports hall, a health club with a 175-station gym and multifunctional studios, climbing and bouldering facilities, two flexible squash courts and a ski simulator.

The building will also set new standards for sustainability for a sports building and is on target to be the first of this type in the UK to be BREEAM rated ‘Outstanding’.

“Having worked closely with the university and planners, this



Having worked closely with the university, this will set a significant benchmark for future buildings

Mike Hall

will set a significant benchmark for future buildings in the university masterplan and generally across the city,” said Michael Hall, partner at FaulknerBrowns.

The complex is the first phase of the university’s £400m estate masterplan, designed to reshape the city centre campus and strengthen connections with the rest of the city.

More: http://lei.sr?a=f5b5D_P

SRA campaign to ensure every child has right to be active

The Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA) has launched a campaign to make physical activity a “fundamental right” for all children.

The #RightToBeActive campaign asks those across society, including parents, to join the call for government to embed the fundamental right of all children to be active in policy, regulations and legislation.

“Government must consider expenditure on children and young people a vital long-term investment for the development of this country’s future infrastructure and economy,” the SRA said in a statement.

“If change is to be created, there must be a commitment to a long-term strategy to make sure that no child is left behind. Everyone can play their part and



86 per cent of UK adults think that parents should take more responsibility to get their child active



If change is to be created, there must be a commitment to a long-term strategy

Sports and Recreation Alliance

show support for getting our children active by signing the #RightToBeActive petition and bring this important issue to the attention of parliament.”

The campaign has been launched on the back of a new study by SRA, which showed

that 60 per cent of UK adults think that society “doesn’t do enough” to get children active.

Out of the 2,000 people surveyed for the study, 78 per cent believe parents are the most responsible for childhood obesity. More: http://lei.sr?a=2d4f6_P

England planning on bidding for 2030 World Cup?

There is growing evidence that The Football Association (FA) is planning to launch a bid to host the tournament in 2030.

The FA is understood to have been satisfied with the “increased transparency” of the new voting system, which was used last month to decide the host of the 2026 World Cup.

A joint bid by the US, Canada and Mexico was declared winner against a rival bid from Morocco at a FIFA meeting on 13 June. Following the vote, a large screen in the room showed clearly how every member federation had voted. It was in stark contrast to the secret ballot held in



FIFA’s new voting system gives everyone great confidence that the procedures are relevant

David Gill

2010, which saw Russia pull off a surprise win against England’s bid for the 2018 World Cup.

Among those to have been impressed by the more transparent voting system is David Gill – former Manchester United chief executive and current FIFA vice-president. Gill said he was particularly pleased to see the joint US/Mexico/



England could be playing the 2030 World Cup on home soil

Canada bid win “by merit”. The joint bid was deemed vastly superior on technical grounds to that of Morocco, receiving four out of five in a FIFA bid evaluation report, compared with Morocco’s 2.7 out of five.

“What FIFA’s new voting system does is give everyone great confidence that the procedures they now have in place are appropriate and relevant,” Gill said. More: http://lei.sr?a=v9V8W_P

Healthy and Active Fund to improve access to sport in Wales

A new funding initiative looks to encourage and support innovative ideas that help people build physical activity into their lives in Wales.

Grants from the first phase of the £5m Healthy and Active Fund (HAF) will be available to projects that improve physical activity levels and encourage collaboration between existing community assets, such as clubs, schools and workplaces.

HAF – a partnership between the Welsh government, Sport Wales and Public Health Wales – will also look to utilise new technology in order to lower the barriers people experience when trying to get active.

"Becoming healthy and active should not feel like an ordeal or something to



The new funding will be available to projects that encourage collaboration between sports clubs, schools and workplaces

be apprehensive about," said Vaughan Gething, the Welsh government's cabinet secretary for health and social services.

"It should be something that is fun, open to everyone

and a way for people, families and communities to come together.

"I look forward to the first projects supported by the Fund being up and running early next year, delivering innovative



Becoming active should not feel like an ordeal

Vaughan Gething

solutions and making a real contribution to the health and wellbeing of people in Wales."

Details of the HAF and the application process will be announced later this year. More: http://lei.sr?a=a2u9M_P

BBC: EPL clubs would make profits even in empty stadiums



Fans of EPL clubs are considered some of the most passionate in the world

More than half of the clubs in the English Premier League (EPL) could make pre-tax profits even if they played at empty stadiums – without a single fan in attendance – according to research by the BBC.

A record £8.3bn broadcasting deal signed by the EPL ahead of the 2016-17 season – coupled with income from other commercial deals – meant that matchday income contributed less than 20p in every £1 earned by 18 top-flight outfits.

The BBC cites EPL minnow Bournemouth – the club with the smallest ground capacity in the league (11,450) – as an example of how match day ticket income has lost its importance.



Matchday income contributed less than 20p in every £1 earned by 18 top-flight outfits

Bournemouth had a turnover of almost £136.5m in 2016-17, with only £5.2m coming from tickets – less than 4p in every £1 of its income.

There is little fear that Premier League clubs would ever play in empty stadiums, however. Over the past three years, EPL clubs have sold more than 96 per cent of all tickets available. More: http://lei.sr?a=h5G3E_P

INTERNATIONAL NEWS

HOK to design Valencia arena for billionaire Juan Roig

LICAMPA 1617, an enterprise led by Spanish billionaire entrepreneur Juan Roig, has revealed plans to develop a multi-use indoor sports arena in Valencia, Spain.

The company is looking to create the region's premier destination for sports, music, arts and cultural events and has appointed sports architects HOK to design the arena.

The main tenant of the arena will be Valencia Basket, a professional basketball team – sponsored by Roig – which competes in Spain's Liga ACB and the EuroLeague competition.

As well as the main arena space, which will have a capacity of around 15,000, the fan-focused arena will house training



The 15,000-capacity arena is part of a larger masterplan

facilities, a basketball museum, a diverse range of hospitality products and a seating bowl designed to create an intimate experience for spectators.

HOK has been tasked with creating a multi-purpose, flexible design that will

enable the venue to attract a wide range of events.

The practice will work in partnership with local architecture practice ERRE on the project.

"Although it is early in the process, our vision is to create a sustainable home for Valencia



Our vision is to create a sustainable home for Valencia Basket

John Rhodes

Basket that will become a world-class sports and entertainment destination," said John Rhodes, director of HOK's Sports + Recreation + Entertainment. More: http://lei.sr?a=b8u5r_P

Foreign fans spent €1.3bn during Russia 2018 World Cup

Overseas fans visiting Russia for the FIFA 2018 World Cup spent an estimated €1.3bn (US\$1.5bn, £1.2bn) during the tournament, according to a report by Sberbank of Russia – a state-owned banking company.

Sberbank analysed usage of foreign credit cards during the World Cup, taking into consideration all credit cards purchases, cash payments and currency conversions.

During the tournament, foreign citizens' expenses in Russia doubled when compared to the same period in 2017 (between 14 June and 16 July).



Foreign fans were most active during the second week of the group stage

World Cup 2018: who spent money, where, and why?

According to the *World Cup 2018: who spent money, where, and why?* report – published in July – fans spent most of their money on hotels and restaurants, with the largest expense surge registered in the sports goods segment.

Sberbank's report also shows that consumers have moved away from cash



Brazilian fans at the Rostov Arena in Rostov-on-Don

payments, with just 8.2 per cent of all expenses being covered by ATM cash withdrawals.

"Foreign fans were most active during the second week of the group stage," the report reads.

"In July, the level of spending from countries that had left the tournament fell as fans started leaving, but the overall volume of expenses remained at the same level." More: http://lei.sr?a=F9r4Y_P



The released image shows that the complex will mix a 25,000-seat stadium with a 58-acre park and 23 acres of football fields

'Beckham stadium' moves forward

Miami residents will vote in November on whether the city should negotiate an agreement to develop Miami Freedom Park, the proposed home of David Beckham's MLS franchise

The group hoping to establish a Major League Soccer (MLS) franchise in Miami, Florida, US, has released the first image of the proposed stadium complex.

Led by former England football captain David Beckham, the group is hoping to establish the development – which would mix a 25,000-seat stadium with a park and commercial projects – on land currently occupied by a city-owned golf course near Miami International Airport.

As well as the home of the Miami MLS team, the plans include 750 hotel rooms, restaurants, retail and entertainment, along with a new 58-acre park and 23 acres of football fields for the public.

Beckham and development partner Jorge Mas, of infrastructure firm MasTec, published the visual in July. In the same week, a decision was made that Miami residents will vote in November on whether to authorise the city to negotiate an agreement to develop Miami Freedom Park.

Beckham officially launched his MLS venture in Miami on 29 January, following



Bringing an MLS club to Miami has been one hell of a journey

David Beckham

nearly five years of negotiations.

Beckham had exercised an option in his contract with former side LA Galaxy to buy an expansion franchise in 2014. He spent five years at LA Galaxy after signing from Real Madrid in 2007 and is set to become the first former MLS player to own a team.

Until a decision is reached about the stadium in November, however, the Miami team – Club Internacional de Fútbol

Miami – can not begin negotiations about the possible year it will join the MLS.

"Bringing an MLS club to Miami has been a hell of a journey," Beckham said at the official launch event earlier this year.

"I promise you the team that we bring into this league will be one of the best teams... the best team.

"When I was awarded the team there was only one city for me and it was here. I was drawn to this city for the same reason that millions of people are – the diversity, the culture, the weather, the beaches, the people."

Beckham also emphasised the need to foster homegrown talent in Miami, rather than relying exclusively on signing seasoned pros from the more competitive European leagues.

"We want to bring in the top players from Europe, of course, but the thing we are more interested in is home grown talent. We will build a top-class academy – that is how you build a team that everyone can be proud of," Beckham said.

More: http://lei.sr?a=p7C6y_P



The 1,252-capacity venue can be expanded to 3,000

CannonDesign creates baseball 'stadium in the park'

North American sports and arena specialists CannonDesign have designed a new baseball park for Virginia Tech University, with natural grass terraces utilised to create the feeling of being in "a stadium in the park".

The press box and permanent stands of the university's former ground have been removed to make space for a new and larger seating area, a three-tier hospitality deck, four private suites and a picnic area close to the field. The

venue, called English Field at Union Park, has a capacity of 1,252, which can be expanded to over 3,000 with VIP seating and the grass terraces.

"My favourite aspect of the project is the ability to watch a game from different settings all in one venue," said Matthew Dates, CannonDesign vice president. "You can sit in a traditional seat near the concourse, or get right up close to home plate in the lower bowl." [More: http://lei.sr?a=b8Q2_P](http://lei.sr?a=b8Q2_P)

Luxembourg skatepark opens next to UNESCO-listed fortress

One of Europe's largest and most dramatic skateparks has been built in Luxembourg, in the shadow of a UNESCO World Heritage site.

The multi-level park has been built beneath the fortifications of Vauban in the Peitruess Valley, which separates Luxembourg's Old and New Towns. French studio Constructo Skatepark Architecture, based in Marseille,

worked with members of the local skateboarding community to create a facility suitable for their needs and in keeping with the historic surrounds.

With a total surface of 2,750sq m, the site includes bowls and domes of different sizes and has been designed for all urban sports, including rollerblading and BMX. [More: http://lei.sr?a=x7S8e_P](http://lei.sr?a=x7S8e_P)



Following the Asian Games, we're sure we can host a bigger event
Joko Widodo

Indonesia throws its hat in 2032 Olympic bid ring

Indonesian president Joko Widodo has revealed the country's intentions to bid for the 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The announcement was made following a meeting between Widodo and International IOC president Thomas Bach.

Indonesia held the Asian Games in August – which

Widodo said would provide a 'strong foundation' for the country's 2032 bid.

"With the experience we have in organising the 18th Asian Games, we are sure Indonesia can also host a bigger event," Jokowi said.

Indonesia is the first country to have announced a bid for the 2032 Olympic Games.

[More: http://lei.sr?a=B5q3q_P](http://lei.sr?a=B5q3q_P)

Incredible Mercedes-Benz stadium roof revealed



The question over the roof was to get the weight distribution right
Mike Eagan

The innovative roof of the Mercedes-Benz Stadium in Atlanta, Georgia, US has been completed and is now fully operational.

The roof is made up of eight moveable pentagonal shapes – labelled as "petals" by architects HOK – that join at the centre to provide full precipitation coverage.

The eight petals move together along 16 individual tracks, giving the effect of the opening and closing of the aperture of a camera.



The roof is made up of eight moveable 'petals'

The announcement of its finishing puts to bed rumours that the roof was not working properly.

Mike Egan, senior vice president at stadium operator AMBG, said: "The roof has always worked – it was never a question about whether the roof worked or not. The question was getting the weight distribution right."

[More: http://lei.sr?a=3h9Y3_P](http://lei.sr?a=3h9Y3_P)

EXPORTING EXCELLENCE

SAPCA's Export Group is preparing to take its operations to the next level with the appointment of Bob Edge as the new chair of the group

The SAPCA Export Group is preparing to step up its activities following the appointment of Bob Edge as its new chair. First launched in 2015, the group was set up to guide and advise companies looking to expand their products and services into new markets. Edge is the managing director of



SAPCA will develop an export strategy that will look to help existing exporters and encourage smaller UK companies



Japan, host of the 2020 Olympic Games in Tokyo, was present at a recent DIT meeting



Bob Edge, managing director of Envirostik, has been appointed chair of the SAPCA Export Group

Envirostik, a leader in adhesives for synthetic grass-based sports surfaces. With his vast experience in exporting, Edge will be invaluable to the group, as it looks to inform and advise SAPCA members on doing business abroad – from identifying opportunities outside the UK to offering guidance on the steps needed to bid and secure projects.

PARTNERSHIPS

In July, the Export Group was represented at a meeting organised by the Department for International Trade (DIT). The government department had invited staff from 12 of its overseas offices to London in order to update the teams on British industry's capabilities across a number of sectors – including sport.

The 12 offices represented a number of countries that have secured major sporting events – such as Peru (host of the 2019 Pan-American Games), Japan (2020 Olympic Games) and Qatar (FIFA World Cup 2022) – and countries with rapidly growing sports sectors, such as China and India. During the meeting, UK companies and organisations were given the opportunity to present their capacities and abilities to the representatives.

"Our presence at the meeting meant that we were able to offer an insight of what the sector can offer," Edge said.

"SAPCA is currently a DIT Trade Challenge Partner and the next step is to develop



The 2018 FIFA World Cup final was played on SIS Pitches' SISGrass system

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an export strategy to guide our work. The strategy will look to help existing exporters to increase their international business, as well as encourage smaller UK companies to begin to export."

GETTING ACTIVE

Edge adds that the work the group does is likely to increase in importance, as a growing number of members look to benefit from the rapidly growing international sports industry.

According to Plunkett Research, the global sports industry is now worth around US\$1.3trn (£987bn). As well as growing in monetary value, the industry is expanding its geographical reach, with emerging nations looking to develop and improve their sports infrastructures. This will create opportunities for suppliers and service providers in markets such as the UK, where companies have the expertise and knowledge to assist developing sports economies.



UK suppliers will find opportunities in emerging nations, as they look to improve their sports infrastructures

TACKLING BREXIT

Brexit and its implications will also keep the group busy over the next 18 months. This is because once Britain leaves the single market, the way UK companies are able to access the EU market will change. Whatever form the free trade agreements take, the export group will be on hand to interpret them.

Many SAPCA members are already active outside the UK and there are plenty of recent export successes within the association's ranks.

One of these was the selection of SIS Pitches to design, construct and install six of the 12 stadium pitches for this year's FIFA World Cup in Russia 2018. The company's SISGrass system consists of 95 per cent natural turf reinforced with plastic – meaning that this year's World Cup final was the first to be played on a part-synthetic pitch.

Elsewhere, B&L Fencing's installation at the Goals Soccer Centre in Pomona, California, earned the company a finalist's spot for the 2017 SAPCA Award. ●



If you would like to find out more about SAPCA or the work of the Export Group, you can get in touch: info@sapca.org.uk or 024 7641 6316 www.sapca.org.uk

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LEARNING FROM FAILURE

Failure is a key stage in the journey to success, and learning from each others' mistakes can only help the sports sector, says Andy Reed

Professional athletes are excellent at learning from defeat. Listen to any champion or winning team and they will often refer back to how defeats and failures in their careers defined them. I've been inspired recently by the book *Black Box Thinking* by Matthew Syed, which says that failure is an important stage in the journey to success, and suggests ways to change perspective and admit mistakes.

I've been looking across our sector to see how successful we are at learning from failure. Frankly, what I discovered was a culture that doesn't even embrace sharing best practice, never mind admitting failures. In fact, there appears to be a culture of denial.

In the work I do to support tech startups, I've come to learn that the most important thing is to fail faster than the competition. The pace of change means you can't sit around waiting to create the perfect solution. We need this speed of innovation in all areas of our sector too.

An honest approach

In the summer of 2017, Street League published its annual report. What was new was the healthy admission of where the organisation had failed in its outcomes, rather than just trumpeting all of its successes as most annual reports do.

Being open about where the programmes failed to meet their goals created a lot of healthy headlines. In this sector it seemed quite groundbreaking.

Take for instance the failure of spogo. We all know it failed but I can't find the lessons learned anywhere. We need to create a culture for our sector where we talk and share openly.



Athletes learn from their failures to become better. Why doesn't the sports sector?



Learn from the mistakes of others – you can't live long enough to make them all yourself

Creating a new culture

In partnership, the Sports Think Tank and Upshot are creating the resources, and a conference in the autumn, to open up the debate. We want to create a culture in which we seek out failure in the same way as we do success.

When people are confronted with evidence that challenges our deeply held beliefs, research has shown that they are more likely to reframe the evidence than alter their beliefs. We need to challenge this thinking. We need to learn

when to stop a new programme if it isn't working, rather than just ploughing on.

This applies to the government, funders and those developing projects.

Learning from each other

As Matthew Syed says in his book: "Learn from the mistakes of others – you can't live long enough to make them all yourself."

This project is vital to our sector. We need to start opening up and sharing our mistakes, so we stop repeating them. The culture of admitting mistakes needs to change with both funders and those delivering sport and PA, developing a much more mature open relationship of trust and co-creation. Perhaps then we can really start to impact on our nation's activity levels. ●

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

JENNIE PRICE

The Sport England CEO steps down in November after 11 years in the role. Tom Walker spoke to Price about her time at the helm, the changes she has witnessed and her views on the future of sport





© NURPHOTO/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Women's sport has seen huge growth in the 11 years that Price has been at the helm of Sport England

Jennie Price took over the role of Sport England CEO in April 2007. As its first female chief executive, Price has led the grassroots organisation through major reformation – not least the development of its new strategy: *Towards an Active Nation*.

During her tenure, the number of people regularly taking part in sport in England has grown by 1.6 million (since London won the bid for the 2012 Games). She has also been credited with helping to raise sport's profile in the corridors of power at Westminster.

Seen initially as an "outsider" – joining Sport England following a six-year stint as CEO of environment charity WRAP, preceded by a 15-year career as a lawyer in the construction sector – Price was awarded a CBE for services to sport in the 2017 Queen's Birthday Honours.

How much has the landscape of sport changed in the 11 years you've been at Sport England?

There have been pretty big changes, but I'd say that three developments really stand out.

The first is the way the sector utilises data and insight. When I joined, there wasn't a systematic approach to data – partly because there wasn't a lot of data available.

Today, the sector uses data really well. We could use it even better, but there's now an understanding that insight and evidence are important in decision making. In fact, we've become world leaders at it.

Secondly, I think there's now genuine recognition, all the way to government level, of the wider benefits of sport – its ability to improve mental as well as physical wellbeing and bring communities together.

The third thing is the position of women in sport. Just look at female team sports; if, 11 years ago, anyone would've told me how fast women's football would grow, I'd not have believed them.

Women's sport is now covered regularly by all broadcasters, and participation has gone up dramatically. There are now 900,000 more women playing sport regularly than there were 11 years ago.

Your point about sports being good at data gathering is interesting, because there was some criticism of the Active People Survey (APS)

Measuring tools, by their nature, are open to high levels of scrutiny, especially when they're used to determine funding or measure performance. When they reveal things that surprise people, it's not unusual for the method of measurement itself to be questioned.

The Active People and the new Active Lives surveys are great at capturing everything big – national figures, big ports – but for small areas of activity, sometimes the sample size is just too small to provide the full picture. I think we've moved on significantly with the Active Lives Survey, which is a more modern method of data collection, with online questionnaires, rather than relying on telephone interviews as the APS did. ▶

British Cycling has increased its membership from 16,000 in 2005 to 140,000 in 2018

▶ **How has Sport England changed in the past 11 years?**

Our relationship with the sector is now very different. There's now a genuine sense that the funding we provide is an investment and that those who receive it have to deliver on it. Believe me, when we first made the statement, in 2009, that public investment is a privilege not a right, it was a pretty brave thing to say.

There's now also the acceptance that sports facilities should be sustainable and that they shouldn't – unless there are some very special circumstances – need an ongoing subsidy. When I first started, it was absolutely the norm that leisure centres run at a loss and had to be subsidised. That's not the case anymore.

What do you see as the biggest opportunities for Sport England?

The basic job of driving population-wide behavioural change is an enormous challenge – but also one of the biggest opportunities.

Another one is that we now genuinely invest in broader outcomes. The purpose of Sport England investment is no longer just about getting more people to play sport, but to improve the nation's physical and mental wellbeing and to bring communities together to help economic development. And that creates massive opportunities to be innovative.

It's now six years since London 2012 – do you think the opportunities offered by the Games have been fully utilised?

Sport would not have the role it currently has in government policy if we hadn't hosted the

Price was awarded a CBE for services to sport in 2017



© SULLY PHOTOGRAPHY/ALAMY

The way we make participation information available to the public needs to improve, otherwise the physical activity sector risks getting left behind

Olympics. That's probably the single most important thing to have come from the event.

I genuinely feel we did everything we could. We funded every Olympic and Paralympic governing body, and challenged and helped them to take advantage of the opportunity. As a result, there are some fantastic examples of how the Games have made a difference.

Look at cycling – the Olympics played a huge part in its transformation and we funded and supported a lot of that process. The number of people cycling has increased, the role of cycling in people's lives has strengthened and British

Cycling has created campaigns such as Sky Ride; free mass participation events. They showed how you can partner with a sponsor and learn from them at grassroots level. As a result, British Cycling's membership has gone through the roof.

I wouldn't want people to forget just how many improvements there have been in the physical infrastructure of sport, either. We undertook an enormous investment programme into local facilities, upgrading more than 2,000 sports clubs and investing in 1,200 playing pitches. As well as the big injections of money at the local



Price says that This Girl Can, the campaign that aims to get women into physical activity, is her proudest achievement

level, we also built in legacy within the Olympic Park, such as investing in a movable floor at the Olympic Aquatics Centre so it could host lessons.

What could the industry do better?

The way we make information available to the public needs to improve – particularly in relation to participation. When people look for things to do or visit, the first thing they do is take out their phone or tablet.

You can now book a flight or a hotel room in 10 minutes, but you'd still struggle to find a swimming session within a 10-minute drive in 10 minutes. And that is dangerous because if we can't reach people in that way, the sector will never realise its potential.

Producing data that allows people to access opportunities is really important. We need to improve that over the next three or four years, otherwise the physical activity sector risks getting left behind. The work the sector are doing with OpenActive to make activity data publicly available could be game-changing for the way people find a spin class or swimming session.

If you could change one thing to improve grassroots sport, what would that be?

I'd change our industry's attitude towards people who are 'a bit rubbish' at sport. A lot of what the sports industry does and how systems are set up is to find

talented people. We still want to do that, of course, but we shouldn't do that at the expense of everybody else. After all, the 'everybody else' outnumber the talented by up to 100 to one – depending on the sport. We should design our experiences for the many, not the few.

What has been the proudest achievement of your 11-year tenure?

This Girl Can, without a doubt. You know you've made an impact when women come up and say the campaign inspired them, or someone in their family, to take up sport.

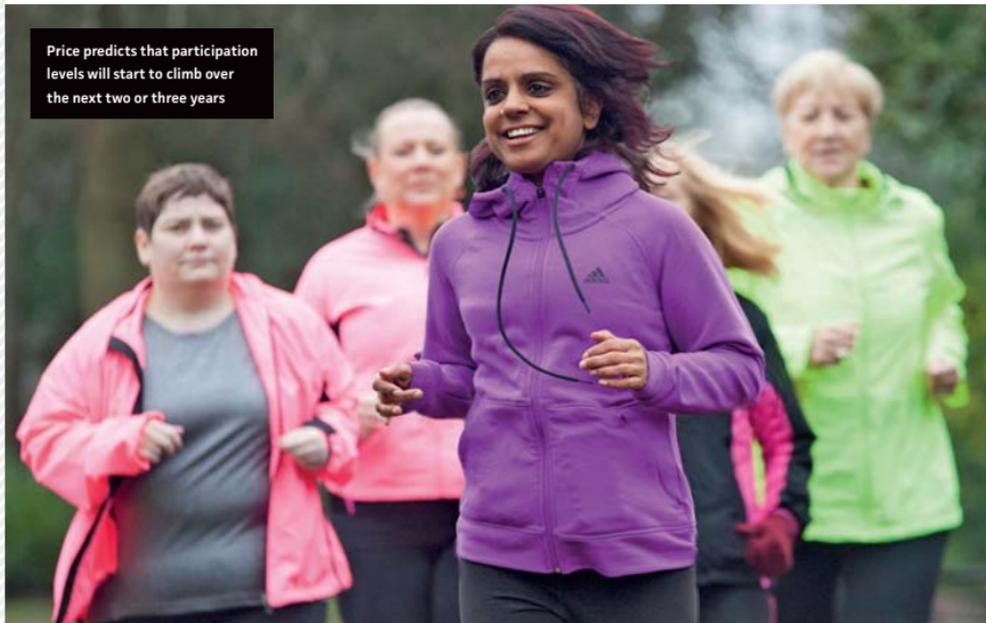
Also, at a time when local authorities are overwhelmed with demand for their services – and when there is increased competition for people's leisure time – we have not only kept participation levels stable, we've managed to increase them slightly. The incremental increases we've achieved are no mean feat.

We've also laid new foundations for the way public money is invested. I think within the next two or three years we will start to see the levels climb – especially if we can tackle the inequalities and get the lower socio-economic groups active.

What about your biggest regret?

That we didn't start launching campaigns like This Girl Can earlier. We launched it seven years after I took up the role. I really regret not starting it earlier. I'd love ▶

Price predicts that participation levels will start to climb over the next two or three years



to do a similar campaign targeting the lower socio-economic groups. I've no idea what that would look like, and it would probably be completely different, but I wish I'd done more campaigns.

And is there anything you would've done differently?

Even though I was an experienced CEO when I came to sport, it was quite a tough experience to enter it 'from the outside'. It took a little while for me to find my confidence and I think if I had been a bit more assertive earlier on, and had trusted my judgement a bit more at the beginning, I would have made more progress, faster.

What do you plan to do after October?

Will you stay involved with sport?

I want to do a mix of things, so I don't want another full-time executive job. I've already got things to keep me busy – I'm chair of the Youth United Foundation and I'll be working with the Cranfield School of Management.

I've also had some fascinating initial conversations since I announced I'd be leaving Sport England, some of which I would have never dreamt of. But I'm giving myself at least a year to find the right mix of things and

I wish someone had told me this – when Sport England says something, it really can influence a big part of the sector. You must use that influence wisely

there will definitely be some sport involved! It's such an extraordinary sector and I've absolutely loved my job.

Any advice for the incoming CEO?

I would keep any advice to a minimum, because I believe the whole point of changing leadership is to benefit from someone else's skills, experiences and perspectives.

The one thing I would say – and I wish somebody had told me this when I came in – is make sure you recognise how much influence you have in sport.

From the first day, I understood the dimensions of the role and the responsibility of having public money to dispense. But what I didn't fully appreciate was that when Sport England says or does something, it really can affect a big part of the sector. You have a lot of influence – use it wisely. ●



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The new CEO of Sport England will be tasked with getting kids more active

What advice would you give the new CEO of Sport England?

Sport England CEO Jennie Price steps down from her role in October, following 11 years at the helm. We asked sports sector leaders for their opinions and ideas on what the focus of the organisation should be under new CEO Tim Hollingsworth

EMMA BOGGIS CEO of Sports and Recreation Alliance

I think it's really important that the next CEO of Sport England does three key things.

Firstly, I hope they will champion and celebrate the wonderful work delivered by the sport and recreation sector, which is absolutely critical to Sport England delivering its strategy: Towards An Active Nation. The small paid workforce and the much bigger army of volunteers need to be valued, supported and encouraged so that more people, from more diverse backgrounds, are encouraged to work and volunteer in the sector.

We were delighted that Sport England committed a significant investment over four years into supporting volunteers, but two years in and quite a lot of that money doesn't appear to have been committed yet, so we are keen to know more about the organisation's plans in this area.

Secondly, I would encourage Sport England to grow its links with other government departments so that the value of all investments into the sector – and Sport England's knowledge and expertise – can be maximised.



Volunteers in sport need to be valued, supported and encouraged so that more people get involved

For example, while we were pleased to see the revision of the Sport England remit down to age five, it came with a clear statement that Sport England was responsible for investment outside of the school curriculum. However, Sport England are investing money in specialist teacher training. That may well be needed, but I'm not sure it should be Sport England funding when the Department for Education is taking money out of the system through changes to the Healthy Pupil Capital Programme.

MARK SESNAN Managing director of GLL

It's important for Sport England's new leadership to restore clarity in terms of its main aim: providing 'sport and physical activity for a healthy nation' by giving transparent industry leadership through a clear, segmented offer. It should support sport and competition, the sports and physical activity infrastructure and the delivery mechanisms – operators, local authorities, clubs and volunteers.

There needs to be clarity and simplicity about what the agenda is. Sport England, as well as the wider industry, would benefit from allying closely and directly with the Department of Health, so that there is only one shared government agenda on healthy and active lifestyles.

It's also crucial that Sport England engages and collaborates



There needs to be a clarity and simplicity about what the agenda is

with existing organisations, and does not overlook the knowledge, experience and resources that exist within successful bodies across the UK.

For example, a clear working partnership with ukactive would allow operators to be engaged at



Sport England needs a clear agenda for supporting sport and activity

the centre of the activity agenda, while County Sport Partnerships would also be at their most productive when remaining in the hands of local authorities.

In identifying the right parties with which to engage, social enterprises can play a key role in ensuring that the needs of sport, activity and health are not compromised in favour of a financial 'race to the bottom'. To do so, social enterprises

should be structured to ensure reinvestment into facilities and services, not to fuel private profit.

At a time where there is plenty of cause for optimism in sport and physical activity sectors, Sport England can flourish as an industry leader and make a huge impact to lives across the UK, if it correctly engages with operators, industry bodies and the government to fully utilise the resources the UK has at its disposal.



BEN BEEVERS

Associate director at Everyone Active



Sport England need to guide the development of new centres and services

The advice I would give to Jennie Price's successor is three-fold. Firstly, I believe they need to unite the industry under common objectives and encourage greater collaboration. Secondly, I would advise them to ensure that sports and activity providers are working smarter and sharing information to achieve a greater impact. Lastly, they need to guide the development of new centres and services to bring maximum benefits to communities.

I feel that an opportunity

is being missing to share information that will lead to a better understanding of the industry. I would urge the incoming head of Sport England to encourage providers to work smarter together, pooling their insights into a shared resource that highlights key issues and helps us better understand what is needed to tackle them.

Finally, if recent calls for new activity hubs are to be answered, or current leisure centres are going to continue meeting the needs of growing communities, we need to remove the

politicised elements of any investment decision and base it solely on the requirements of that area. Sport England, acting as an impartial advisor, can offer nation-wide insights to community-based organisations, who can transform them into effective local action plans.

In short, my overall advice would be for the new head of Sport England to spearhead a more insightful and collaborative approach between operators and industry influencers, helping us all to better utilise the fantastic information available. ▶

ANDY SUTCH

Member of Sportsgroup and industry veteran who worked for Sport England for more than 20 years

I'd highlight to the new CEO that Sport England should focus on helping to create a better economic, political and social environment in which to sustain and grow sports and physical activity. Do that, and you'll increase participation.

Funding of publicly-provided sport is crucial. At Sportsgroup, we recently undertook a review of local government investment in sport and recreation for the period since 2012, across all the English local authorities. The review was undertaken against a wide range of other indicators, particularly Sport England's Active People Survey (APS) and its more recent Active Lives Survey.

The study showed that in the period since 2012, local government expenditure – based on returns to the Ministry of Housing, Communities &



The delivery of adequate physical activity within schools must remain a high priority

Local Government – has fallen from around £2bn per year to below £1bn. The cuts in funding have affected people's opportunities to take part in sport and physical activity. During that period, only 47

English local authorities out of the 420 or so saw real increases in participation (based on APS).

The delivery of adequate physical activity within schools must also remain a high priority, not only for the direct improvement to the health of young people but to establish behaviours that ensure engagement later in life. Recent figures from Public

Health England suggest that one in five children at the end of key stage 2 are severely obese.

A final implication of reduced expenditure by local government will be on the continued maintenance of open space and grass playing fields, which are essential for community wellness – something that all-weather pitches cannot replace.



Healthy behaviours can be established at a young age

Photo: iStock.com/JohnFitz

JOHN STEELE

Chair of English Institute of Sport and former CEO of UK Sport

Congratulations and welcome! In my view, what you achieve in this role will be dictated by your ability to define a clear *raison d'être* for Sport England and then to stick to it. You will need to quickly decide whether the organisation you lead is about activity and health or sporting opportunity.

The government's *Sporting Future – A New Strategy for an Active Nation* will partly dictate what your agenda must be, but you are also there to challenge and change as well as implement – and that's why you have a royal charter.

You must find a way of balancing Sport England's contribution to the health of the nation with its duty to develop

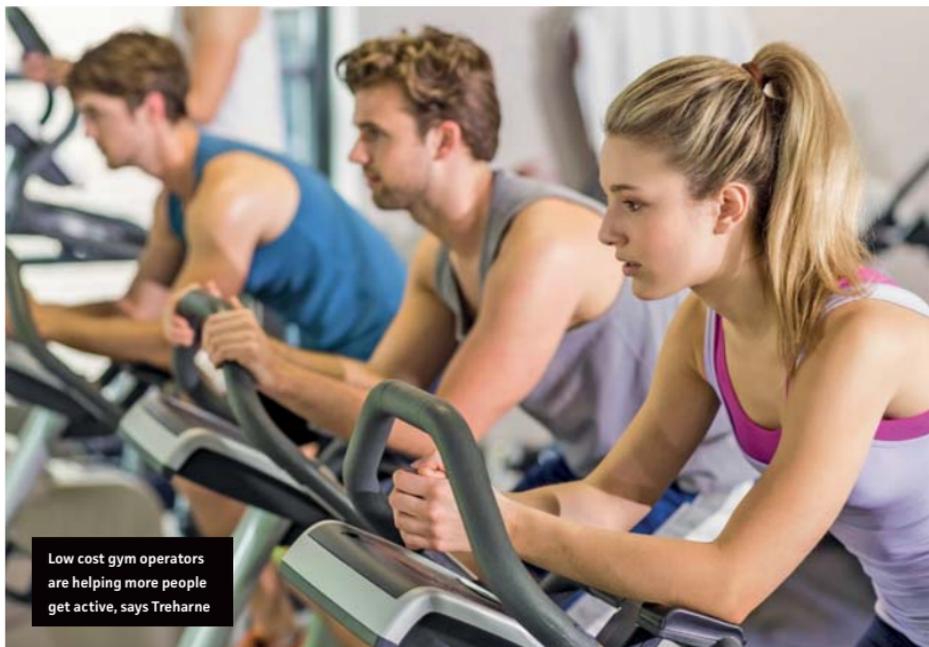


You must balance contributing to the health of the nation with your duty to develop the health of sport

the health of sport. You have an exciting opportunity to make a difference in a wonderful area



of public life. So don't shy away from the hard calls and – above all – enjoy!



Low cost gym operators are helping more people get active, says Treharne

JOHN TREHARNE

Founder and CEO of The Gym Group and former chair of Squash England

I think one thing that Jennie Price did a particularly good job on was to raise the profile of grassroots sport. In the past, when people spoke about sport, it usually meant the elite side of things. There is now a real understanding of the importance of grassroots sport and its benefits – and that it does need funding.

I'm also a fan of Sport England's new Towards An Active Nation strategy – and the shift from focusing simply on participation to public funding being available for any activity providers who deliver results.



It will be increasingly important to embrace tech when looking to get young people active

I think the new CEO would do well to ensure Sport England continues on that path and looks to support participation across all physical activity sectors, working very closely with both private and public operators.

They might also want to look at how the low-cost gym sector has been a major driver of getting people more active. As we know, the cost of activities can be a major barrier in getting people from the lower socioeconomic groups more active.

Also, I think it will be increasingly important to embrace tech when looking to

get young people active. Some sports might be seen as rather old fashioned in terms of how they are run and administered. To get non-sporty youngsters interested in activities might be more easier if they are made to look and feel 'modern'. I think that is where sports could learn a lot from the commercial sector. ●

ANYTHING TO ADD?

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

NIGEL OWENS

At this year's SIBEC UK, Nigel Owens MBE – the first openly gay rugby union referee – shared his very personal story with delegates, imparting the message that our words and actions may affect the people around us more strongly than we realise

Many people tell you that life is what you make it, but I am a firm believer that life makes you at a very young age. As you get to your late teens you have probably become the person you will be for the rest of your life."

International rugby union referee Nigel Owens is addressing a rapt audience at this year's SIBEC UK conference at The Belfry Hotel and Resort, explaining how he came to be where he is today.

"Everyone who's around you when you're young has a huge influence on the person you'll become," he says. "The way you're brought up, what you're taught is right and wrong, the community you're within, the sporting clubs you join, your coaches, the school you attend.

"It's important that we recognise how a person's history can shape their life, and realise the huge influence we have on the future lives of young people as parents, teachers and coaches."

Known on the rugby field for his humour and unique style, Owens has reached the highest level of refereeing. But his journey to the top was far from smooth.

Brought up in a tiny village in West

Wales with a population of just 140, Owens went to a primary school that had a total of 14 children. "It was a very old fashioned, close knit community," he says. "All of my family, 95 per cent of the village and the surrounding villages spoke Welsh as their first language. I couldn't speak English until I was about seven years old."

Moving from a tiny primary school to a secondary school with 1,200 pupils was understandably difficult for Owens, and to make matters worse he became the target of a bully.

"If you've experienced being bullied," he says, "you'll know it brings a horrible sense of shame; as if you're doing something wrong. You feel a sense of weakness.

"That's why lots of people that are bullied don't speak out – because you think there's something wrong with you. When actually there's nothing wrong with you; it's the bully. It was a very difficult time for me and probably affected the rest of my life – it certainly affected my education. I didn't play sport and I began playing truant in school."

Eventually Owens moved to a different school where he was incredibly happy. He started playing rugby and at 16 started refereeing.

FEELING DIFFERENT

At 19 years of age, Owens' life changed forever. He realised he was "different" from other young men of his age and felt there was something wrong with him. He found himself attracted to men, something he describes as "a totally alien feeling".

Having been brought up in such a small village, Owens says he'd never known a gay person. His only impressions of gay people came from the camp characters in the sitcoms of the 70s – but Owens knew he wasn't like that and didn't want to be. ▶



Nigel Owens received an MBE in 2016 for his services to sport



Owens began refereeing rugby union in 1987, and has now refereed 81 international test matches

SIBEC

SIBEC UK 2018 took place on 23-24 May, at the Belfry Hotel and Resort. Over 150 buyers and suppliers from the health and fitness sector gathered to take part in a series of one-to-one meetings.

SIBEC Europe will take place at the Mövenpick Hotel Mansour Eddahbi in Marrakech, Morocco from 7-10 November 2018.

Find out more at www.sibecevents.com

► "I started having mental health issues," he tells the audience of delegates. "Feeling down, feeling scared, worried about what would happen if people found out. What would my friends say? Would I be able to keep going to the rugby club?"

"It put me in a dark place and I started comfort eating and bingeing to cope with these feelings. As a result I put a lot of weight on."

In an effort to lose the weight, but unwilling to address the core issue, Owens became bulimic, making himself sick three or four times a day. Owens admits that he still suffers from bulimia today, albeit not to the same extent.

DARK DAYS

Over six years, his weight plummeted from 16 stone to 11. Wanting to be strong again, he started going to gym, but soon became hooked on steroids, taking them regularly for the next five years until he began having suicidal thoughts.

"A huge side effect of taking steroids is the mental repercussions. So by the time I was 25 years of age I was deeply depressed, I was bulimic, I was taking steroids and I was in a very, very dark place.

"I did something that I'll have to live with for the rest of my life. I left a note for my mum and dad to say I couldn't carry on living. I'll never forgive myself for what I put them through when they woke that morning and thought they would never see their only child ever again."

Nigel's suicide attempt saw him rescued from a remote mountain, where he lay in a coma, having consumed a box of paracetamol.

Thankfully he survived, and realised that he couldn't do that to his parents. However, even after this traumatic experience, Nigel was still unsure whether he

Owens became the first openly gay referee in 2005



Owens says the support he received from the Rugby Union, the players and supporters enabled him to finally perform at his best as a referee

should come out as gay to family, friends and colleagues.

"I felt I had to choose between living a lie in order to do the job I loved, or giving up what I loved to be true to myself. Nobody should have to make that choice. It's only when you are truly happy in your yourself and in your place of work, that you can excel and be your best."

COMING OUT

Realising that he wouldn't be able to properly focus on or excel in refereeing until he unburdened himself of the secret he'd been carrying since he was 18, Nigel finally came out in 2005, and became the first openly gay rugby union referee. As it turned out, everyone – from his parents and friends to the Welsh Rugby Union, the players and supporters – was hugely supportive.

This overwhelming support enabled Nigel to perform to the highest level as a referee. He has currently refereed 81 international test matches, a World Cup final, six European finals, a record 108 European cups matches, a record five Pro14/Pro12 finals and 169 Pro14/Pro12 matches.



As coaches, it's important that we recognise the huge influence we have on the future lives of young people



Nobody should have to make the choice between living a lie and giving up the sport they love

"I wouldn't have been able to achieve any of that if I hadn't accepted who I was, and been accepted in my sport, my community and my workplace," says Owens.

"Never underestimate the huge influence your attitude and behaviour have on people around you, whether in your sporting world or at work."

THE POWER OF WORDS

Owens concluded his presentation with a moving story that illustrated the power our words and actions can have on others without us even knowing.

"In 2007 I was one of two shock referees chosen for the World Cup. Although I had come out in 2005, there was nothing in the media about my being gay until I was made a World Cup referee.

"After my story had been made public, I received a letter from the mother of a 16-year-old boy. He had tried to take his own life a few months earlier and they hadn't known why, but they had been worried he would try again.

"When it was announced that I would be a referee for the World Cup, the family were sitting around the dinner table with friends, and one of the adults said, 'Nigel Owens, isn't he the gay referee?' The boy's father answered, 'It doesn't matter if he's gay. It matters that he's good at his job. It doesn't matter what his sexuality is'."

After the friends left, the boy went upstairs and looked up Owens' story. He came back down and told his parents, "I tried to take my own life for the same reason that Nigel Owens did."

"He knew," says Owens, "from the language spoken at that table, that now he could tell his mum and dad who he really was. If that conversation had gone differently – if his dad had said that it was a sin – then he might have acted very differently."

"The way you say things, the way you project things, the language that you use, can all have a huge impact on the people around you. The words you use can hugely impact people that are different to you in the workplace."

"Not only are we responsible for what we say and do in front of others; we sometimes bear more responsibility if we stand by and do nothing at all." ●

THE SCIENCE OF ATHLETICISM

Dallas Cowboys launches 'first-of-its-kind' athletic healthcare facility open to the public. Kim Megson reports



National Football League (NFL) franchise the Dallas Cowboys has partnered with architects Perkins + Will, healthcare provider Baylor Scott & White Health and a local school district to launch a facility dedicated to community health and wellbeing.

The 300,000sq ft (28,000sq m) Sports Therapy & Research complex – which opened on 20 June 2018 on the Cowboys-themed campus The Star in Frisco, Texas – is an educational opportunity for visitors as well as a healthcare destination for recreational and professional athletes, including the Dallas Cowboys themselves.



The facility is Dallas Cowboys-themed

Patients and visitors can observe the science of athleticism and sports medicine. The building has been designed to put "human health and sports performance on public display" – from injury prevention to training to recovery – all in one place.

Access all areas

Features include a light-filled strength-training room, basketball courts and a retractable glass façade that opens to an indoor/outdoor football field. Transparent walls and casual seating areas for onlookers allow the whole process of rehabilitation to be observed by the public, while several areas can be configured into gathering places for community events and performances. Outside, a network of publicly accessible walk, run and bike trails connect the facility with the surrounding Star campus.

According to the architects, the complex has been designed as a fusion of the healthcare, science and technology, sports and recreation, workplace, branded environment, urban design, and civic architecture typologies.

"We want to showcase the link between active lifestyles and physical health so that every visitor leaves feeling more informed and inspired," said Ron Stelmarski, principal at Perkins+Will. "Wellness education and inspiration, coupled with a holistic approach to diagnosis, treatment and recovery, promote the health and wellbeing of a community.

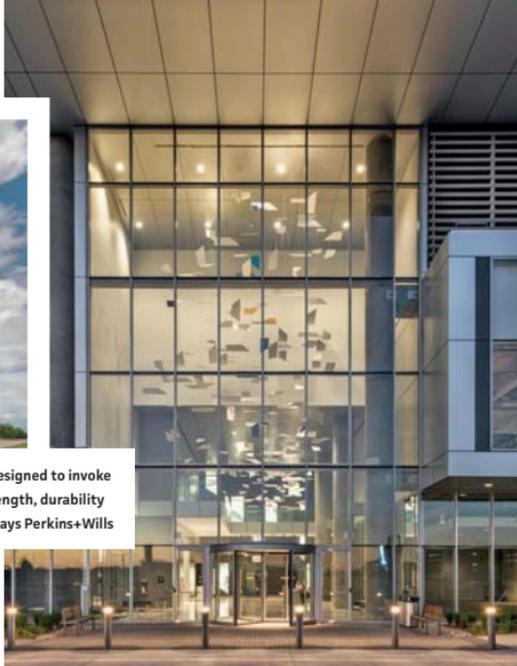
"This is a shining example of a new kind of architecture that supports the improvement of population health through physical fitness."



A network of publicly accessible walk, run and bike trails surround the centre



The centre is designed to invoke a sense of strength, durability and precision, says Perkins+Wills



Don Dethlefs, chair of Perkins+Wills' sports, recreation, and entertainment practice, added: "We're seeing a fascinating trend emerge at the intersection of sports performance and healthcare design – one that we think could start a sea change in population health nationwide. In each case, our clients have shared one vision: help entire communities achieve holistic health by improving individuals' physical fitness."

Other Perkins+Wills projects illustrating this trend include the PPL Center (opened in September 2014); the UCLA Health Training Center, home of the Los Angeles Lakers (opened in August 2017); the University of Michigan Stephen M. Ross Athletic Center (opened in October 2017); the Snyder Center at Phillips Andover

Academy (opened in January 2018); and the Viking Pavilion at the Peter W. Stott Center at Portland State University (opened in April 2018).

Strong design

In a statement, Perkins+Wills said: "The complex is designed to invoke a sense of strength, durability, and precision – attributes of the athletes who seek treatment there and the care teams who provide care. This is accomplished through a crisp, clean material palette composed primarily of concrete, modern glass and metal, and by complementary soothing colour tones and abundant natural light.

"Unobstructed views and easy access to the outdoors create a feeling of revitalisation and rejuvenation. A bevy

of two-dimensional geometric shapes made of painted metal suspend from the ceiling of the four-story lobby like confetti, symbolising fluidity of movement and the legerity of the physically fit body; their organisation appears arbitrary at first, but upon closer examination, the disparate shapes visually coalesce to form the Baylor Scott & White Health logo."

Explaining the extensive use of glass, Stelmarski said: "The transparency helps tell the complex's story. It showcases the human body in motion, creating a 'living brand' experience that celebrates athleticism and physical fitness.

"The openness and visual interconnectivity of the spaces lend a soft, human quality to the otherwise hard, data-driven science of sports medicine." ●

“ We want to showcase the link between active lifestyles and physical health so every visitor leaves feeling informed and inspired. This is a new kind of architecture – Ron Stelmarski, principal at Perkins+Wills

BE A GAME CHANGER

Celebrating the individuals, teams and organisations who are dedicated to improving and advancing women's sport, this year's #BeAGameChanger Awards showcased an impressive group of winners.

We take a closer look at their inspirational stories

Launched in 2015 by the Women's Sport Trust, the #BeAGameChanger Awards celebrate the visionaries who are driving the future of women's sport. They tell the stories of the individuals, organisations and initiatives doing the most to progress

women's sport. These stories set the pace, show what's possible and, most importantly, stimulate other brands, sport and the media to step up and take action. By building this momentum, the awards help to accelerate the future of women's sport.

This year, the stories of a range of game changers were showcased at the event which

took place on the 24 May at Troxy, East London. The audience comprised elite and emerging athletes, media, business people, politicians, sports leaders and grassroots influencers. It was a high energy, collaborative event that was explicitly designed to encourage action and stimulate change.

SPORTING ROLE MODEL – TEAM

England Women's Cricket Team

2017 was a landmark year for the England Women's Cricket Team. They won the World Cup in front of a sell-out crowd of 24,000 at Lords, with 1.1 million watching on television in the UK – by far the largest audience for any cricket match in 2017, men or women – and in doing so inspired a whole new generation of fans.

The players take seriously their duty to help grow the game. So much so that the morning after their World Cup win they were back at Lord's running an All-Stars coaching session for girls.

The team are well known for signing every autograph, replying to every bit of fan mail and chatting to young fans whenever possible. They have appeared in the national media many times and there is significant evidence to suggest that young girls across the country have been inspired to take up the sport because of them.



The England Women's Cricket Team won the world cup in 2017, inspiring new fans

Clare Connor, director of England Women's Cricket says: "The foundations are there already, everyone talks about a watershed and game-changing moment, and this does

feel like that. We knew it was going to be a huge opportunity, and of course it's vitally important we make sure this success inspires and connects with talented girls and boys."



Since 2015, the Crawley Old Girls has enabled older women to learn to play football

INSPIRING INITIATIVE – LOCAL

Crawley Old Girls (COGs)

The Crawley Old Girls was set up in 2015 by Carol Bates to enable older women to learn to play football. Set up with help from the Crawley Town Community Foundation and funding from the EFL Trust, the COGs cater to the 'missed generation' of women who weren't allowed to play when they were younger.

In the last year COGs' numbers have increased significantly. It's attracted women

who are coming back into the game and want to play recreationally. From having 10 ladies on the first night, the team now runs Beginner, Intermediate and Advanced player sessions with over 100 recorded attendees.

In 2017 COGs was featured on a BBC1 programme as well as on the radio. These shows had an amazing impact, inspiring other women to start up their own groups, especially in the South East.



SPORTING ROLE MODEL – INDIVIDUAL

Stacey Copeland

Stacey Copeland is one of only six professional female boxers in the UK. She made her amateur debut in 2011 and became European silver medalist and three-time national champion; she turned professional in 2017 and currently remains unbeaten.

Copeland has been very vocal in the debate surrounding ring card girls, appearing in the national media as a spokesperson, speaking out against objectifying women in sport.

She has given over 50 inspirational talks on women in sport in the last 12 months, including one for the European Parliament.

Copeland has developed the 'Pave the Way' project, which has included an inspiration day for girls, community sports sessions for local groups, domestic violence survivors and refugee women.

AMBASSADOR OF WOMEN'S SPORT

Lorna Boothe

Lorna Boothe is a former Olympic athlete who has risen through the ranks to become the most senior black woman in athletics management.

She currently sits on the European Athletic Coaches' Association and England Athletics Regional Councils. She is the England lead speed coach for the Commonwealth Games.

Boothe is a double Olympian and Commonwealth Gold and silver medalist in the 100m hurdles.

She was part of the team responsible for setting up the IAAF Academy and World Class Coaches Club.

As a member of English Sports Council Racial Equality Advisory Group, she worked with the Commission for Racial Equality to set up the now high-profile Sporting Equals programme and was the European Athletic Coaches' Association's General Secretary as well as on the Board of the Olympians Committee UK.



Lorna Boothe is enjoying an impressive career in athletics management



BRAND / SPONSOR PARTNERSHIP OF THE YEAR

Investec is 'Principal Partner of GB and England Women's Hockey'

Investec sponsors the Great Britain and England women's international hockey team

Investec's role in the continued growth of women's hockey in this country simply cannot be understated. As sponsors of the Great Britain and England women's international hockey team since 2011, it has helped contribute to two Olympic medals, including a historic first-ever gold.

In 2017, Investec invested in the Investec Internationals, the two biggest hockey fixtures hosted in this country since the London Olympics.

At grass roots level, Investec employed a digital strategy to maximise its sponsorship of the Women's Hockey League, investing in a creative agency to film games and stream a highlights package live on its social media channels for the first time, reaching more than 540,000 on Facebook and 105,000 on Twitter.

At youth level, Investec sponsored the Girls Schools Finals, England Hockey's elite competition for school girls, with 400 of the country's best participating over two days.

NATIONAL GOVERNING BODY OF THE YEAR

England and Wales Cricket Board

The ECB made huge strides in 2017 in showing that cricket is a game for everyone. England's ICC Women's World Cup triumph was a transformational moment for the sport, attracting a capacity crowd at Lord's and a global TV audience of 180 million. The tournament reached new and diverse audiences, with 65 per cent of ticket-buyers new to cricket, 32 per cent under 16 years old and 45 per cent women.

The ECB used the World Cup to inspire more young girls and women to play, support and watch the game. It ran 250 soft-ball cricket festivals for 9,500 female players, 60 per cent of whom hadn't played any form of structured cricket previously.

Eight hundred kit bags were sent to clubs and teams, allowing women to play the game at times that suited them. The rise of the recreational club game continued with 543 clubs running a women's section in 2017, a yearly increase of over 30 per cent.

The next generation was also inspired, with more than 37,000 children aged five to eight taking part in the first year of All Stars Cricket – a new entry-level programme.

Funding to the Chance to Shine programme doubled, which helped the schools' cricket charity go from strength to strength. 415,000 young people took part in 2017 – with a massive 48 per cent of school participants being female.

INSPIRING INITIATIVE – NATIONAL

England Rugby's Inner Warrior campaign

Inner Warrior is England Rugby's major women and girls campaign that aims to encourage new female players into rugby. Initially, it was part of a four-year strategy to grow female participation from 15,000 to 25,000 by July 2017. Thanks to Inner Warrior, this target was exceeded one year ahead of schedule.

An aspirational brand, Inner Warrior focuses on empowering women and appealing to their inner toughness. The campaign is spearheaded by an emotive film, which asks 18 to 35-year-old women to challenge themselves with a fun and social fitness alternative by signing up to nationwide Warrior Camps – taster sessions for rugby.

The campaign has significantly increased the number of females participating in rugby, smashing the target of 25,000, with 41 new women's teams registered in the 17/18 season alone.

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Yeoman's 'Standing in the Light' project aims to inspire women to follow their dreams

IMAGERY OF THE YEAR

Standing in the Light

Karen Yeoman's photo project 'Standing in the Light' is an ongoing investigation that examines the representation of women in sport and seeks to present an inspiring stage to encourage women to follow their dreams.

Yeoman was shocked by a recent statistic that reported that women are under-represented in photography, with only 5 per cent of the pictures used by leading photography publishers taken by women, and just 2 per cent of female photographers represented by commercial agencies.

She noticed that within the sports/fitness genre of photography her peers are predominantly male, a situation similar to the representation of women in sport. Yeoman questioned how this might affect how women are presented in sports imagery.

Yeoman began the research for 'Standing in the Light' with short interviews, and she now has an archive of women's accounts of their expectations, motivation and challenges.

MEDIA INITIATIVE OF THE YEAR

The Tough Girl Podcast

Sarah Williams started the Tough Girl Podcast in August 2015 with 4 episodes and the sole aim of increasing the amount of female role models in the media. Williams has now interviewed over 150 female explorers, adventurers, athletes, and everyday women, who have overcome great challenges. The Tough Girl Podcast has been downloaded over 500,000 times and is listened to in 174 countries.

In 2017 she started 'Seven women – seven challenges', which follows the adventures of seven ordinary women of different ages, from different backgrounds, who are going after different goals.

On the podcast, Williams talks to the women about their fears, challenges, failures

and successes, and asks for practical tips and advice. Williams is informal, friendly and helps to share the stories that matter.

She not only talks the talk, but also gets out of her comfort zone and takes on big challenges to motivate and inspire other women to do the same. In 2016, she ran the Marathon des Sables, six marathons in six days across the Sahara Desert, which is known as the world's toughest footrace. In 2017, Williams thru-hiked solo the Appalachian trail, 2,190 miles in 100 days, while daily vlogging.

Williams is currently studying for her Masters in Women and Gender Studies at Lancaster University and continues to be a source of inspiration for women and girls. ●



Williams started the Tough Girl podcast to celebrate female role models

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“ The results speak for themselves. We have seen a 25% increase in sales of swimwear and learn to swim products at our leisure centres since installing the new automated stock management system. ”
Kate McKnight, Serco



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PRODUCTIVE PEDALLING

In a time when more jobs are sedentary than ever before, Eric Craig, CEO of free2cycle, is harnessing the daily commute to get workers active – by giving them bikes that they pay for via miles pedalled

When Eric Craig founded free2cycle in 2017 he had one objective in mind; to make the UK healthy again. The endless news stories about rising obesity rates (the UK is now the sixth most overweight country

in the world), poor employee wellbeing and the poor state of the environment made for grim reading and he wanted to change this decline.

Craig set up free2cycle, a new social enterprise committed to transforming wellbeing through cycling, which works in partnership with organisations

to improve engagement, health, wellbeing and the environment.

Sports Management caught up with Eric to discuss what needs to change, and how organisations can better motivate people to swap a sedentary lifestyle and commute for an active one.



While other cycle-to-work scheme bikes end up gathering dust, free2cycle rewards people for using their bikes

Employers provide their team with bikes, which the employees earn by riding them

What is free2cycle?

In today's 'always on' society, people just don't have the time to fit everything they want into their home life and careers. So, they make sacrifices – such as eating healthily or making time for exercise. Organisations can help change this attitude with the old carrot and stick approach.

We know cycle-to-work schemes have had some success and are particularly attractive to higher earners, and we are supportive of any initiatives that get people active. We do need to face facts, however. After being around since the 90s, only around four per cent of

people use their cycle-to-work scheme bike on a regular basis, and that's simply not good enough! It may just be sitting in a garage somewhere, gathering dust. That's why free2cycle is different, it rewards people for using their bike and exercising.

We work with organisations to provide their team with bikes, which individuals earn by riding them rather than paying for them. The individual pledges and commits to cycling at least 20 miles per week. If they achieve most of their pledge, they should never have to pay a penny for their bike and will be offered a new one every four years. ▶



The average UK commute is 29 minutes, making it possible for many to swap to an active commute

- ▶ In order to make a step change, you need to make this a win-win for all and that's exactly what free2cycle is focused on doing. Organisations only fund positive behaviour with measurable results, so they never waste a penny, and with our approach, they earn substantial, direct benefits.

What are you aiming to achieve?

Every day we hear horror stories about the state of the UK workforce. It's unfit, unproductive and unwell. During 2016 to 2017, 12.5 million working days were lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety. Meanwhile, it's been estimated that the NHS could save £11 billion by integrating physical and mental health care. Add to the mix the issues of growing financial pressures, especially on Generation X and Millennials, and the toxic effects of pollution, which now account for 40,000 deaths per year, and you start to build a picture of the dangers individuals face on a daily basis. Something needs to give.

So, together with a great team, I set up free2cycle to drive a step-change in wellbeing, notably focusing on behaviour change around exercise. Cycling is a passion of mine but it's also been proven in countless studies that regular cycling substantially lowers the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer and premature death. I want others to feel the benefits I do.

How can an active commute benefit organisations?

Getting active will solve a lot of the UK's problems, both for individuals and organisations. First off, we're more

Regular cycling has been proven to lower the risk of cardiovascular disease, cancer and premature death

productive when we're fitter. We're also more well in ourselves; which in turn reduces the likelihood of sick days.

A regular exercise routine can also make us happier, smarter and more energetic, whilst also being good for mental health. Aerobic exercises, such as jogging, cycling and dancing have been proven to reduce anxiety and depression, as they cause an increase in blood to the brain and influence the hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal (HPA) axis, which in turn triggers a natural physiological reaction to stress.

The issue for most is fitting exercise into their hectic daily schedules. The obvious, no-brainer solution is to work that activity into a daily routine or the journey to work. We're looking to encourage people to give up the bus or the car and cycle to work instead. The average UK commute is 29 minutes, but many could easily swap gridlocked traffic jams for an active commute, if only they gave it a chance. It would do wonders for their health, and would benefit the environment too.

Our app allows users to log how far they've cycled, either to work or for leisure. This enables them to track the positive impact on the environment, with the app calculating how much carbon has been offset against

The issue for most people is fitting exercise into their hectic schedules. The obvious solution is to fit it into a daily routine

each mile pedalled, via reduced car and public transport journeys. For organisations, this comprehensive reporting provides measurable results towards Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) pledges, along with the associated benefits to local air quality.

How can organisations encourage a healthy lifestyle?

Encouraging individuals to get healthier doesn't necessarily need to centre on the commute – it just so happens it kills two birds with one stone. What organisations need to do is encourage behaviour change around exercise, whether by encouraging a 15 minute lunchtime walk, or implementing workplace exercise leagues. It's about giving individuals the time and opportunity to get fit, as that is how we'll reverse our productivity and wellness malaise. I know the benefits I feel from regular exercise, so if it could help a fraction of people who don't currently exercise but are able to, then that's a start. ●

With free2cycle, individuals must commit to cycling 20 miles per week



CASE STUDY: YELLOWDOG



YellowDog is an award-winning start-up based in Bristol. As a fast growing tech company, its founder and CEO, Gareth Williams, wanted to use employee benefits to recruit, engage and retain his amazing workforce.

The innovative business already offers a range of attractive benefits, including an extra day of holiday for employees on their birthday, fruit in the office, beers on a Friday afternoon, access to SETsquared (the global number one university-backed incubator), training workshops and facilities,

and a generous pension. However, there were no benefits that helped those employees who wanted to be active.

When he heard about free2cycle's proposition, he thought it was "magic", as swapping miles pedalled for a new bike was a great way to engage new people with cycling.

The take-up in his business has beaten expectations. Despite it being introduced in the middle of winter (December 2017), 20 per cent of the workforce has already signed up, with the business now using it as a recruitment differentiator.



YellowDog CEO Gareth Williams offers free2cycle to employees

MAKE YOUR RETAIL SOLUTION WORK FOR YOU

SRS LEISURE USE AUTOMATED STOCK MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

SRS Leisure has combined 25 years of retail experience with new technology to deliver progressive stock management solutions to the industry. Its long standing customer, Serco Leisure, is its latest automatic stock management success story

Technological advancements within our industry are currently being felt more than ever, particularly by retail suppliers operating in front of house areas. Indeed, the traditional reception is now being challenged by a cashless, 'concierge' model. By automating everyday tasks, this model increases operational efficiency, allowing staff redeployment and/or reduced labour hours. SRS Leisure has always taken pride in being the first to market with innovative retail solutions to address challenges and change, and today is no different.

DATA-DRIVEN AUTOMATED STOCK MANAGEMENT (ASM)

Empty shelves, damaged stock and an incorrect product mix are costs that leisure operators cannot afford to bear. SRS Leisure's ASM solution uses data and technology to fully automate stock management within facilities. It takes product data from point-of-sale equipment to measure and analyse stock movements, automatically generating fill-to-maximum replenishment orders specific to an individual facility.

Implementing ASM with Serco Leisure

SRS Leisure has been working as Serco Leisure's exclusive supplier of swimwear and learn-to-swim products for more than 10 years. Over the past 12 months,



Swimwear and learn-to-swim products are available at Serco Leisure's centres and make up a key source of revenue



SRS Leisure has implemented its new ASM system across Serco Leisure's 40+ swimming facilities, changing its goods-for-resale (GFR) operations.

Customisation was the key starting point, as every site was different in terms of visitors, programming etc. This meant that the bulk of the work involved getting the initial stock par levels correct. SRS Leisure spent time working with Serco Leisure to set parameters for each site – parameters as specific as product colours and swimwear styles.

After the initial set-up, an open flow of data was created to allow weekly sales reports to be received from each individual site. This was a vital step, as this data enables uplift to be tracked, trends identified and product listings refined to ensure responsive and exact offerings. Data is knowledge, and SRS Leisure's ASM system builds valuable insight and allows Serco Leisure to be more informed about every single one of its GFR decisions.

The ASM in practice

Weekly replenishment orders are automatically generated to replace stock via a next day delivery service. Fully stocked shelves are more commercially attractive than half empty ones, but effective par levels require a balancing act: shelves should be fully stocked without exceeding maximum values, as this reduces the risk of shrinkage and stock damage.



Serco Leisure has more than 40 swimming facilities across the UK, and each has its own specific customer and visitor profile

The results speak for themselves; we have seen a 25 per cent increase in sales of swimwear and learn to swim products at our leisure centres since installing the new ASM system – Kate McKnight

The automation provided by the system has reduced Serco Leisure's labour costs, as manual ordering and stock checking are substituted by automatic ordering.

Data integrity is critical for this system to work, so cycle-counting is used to back up stock data. Instead of checking shelf stock at every order, SRS Leisure's system handles manual stock level checks every four to six weeks in order to ensure that data is as accurate as possible.

Results: 25 per cent sales increase

GFR sales across Serco Leisure's sites have improved over the past 12 months that the system has been in place. Kate McKnight, head of aquatics for Serco, says: "The results speak for themselves; we have seen a 25 per cent increase in sales of swimwear and learn to swim products at our leisure centres since installing the new ASM system. Our front of house employees have been freed up

from manual tasks such as counting and ordering, so can now concentrate on training and upskilling them to improve the overall customer experience.

"SRS Leisure has acted as an extension to our business, delivering an effective technological solution and driving its implementation. This has resulted in better performance for both of our organisations and I hope to see continued growth over the next 12 months."

KEY BENEFITS OF SRS LEISURE'S ASM SYSTEM

- ◆ Integrates with numerous internal systems, including Legend and Gladstone, because it relies on an open flow of data to SRS Leisure
- ◆ Removes the requirement for purchase order numbers, as the risk of budgets being exceeded with replenishment orders is eliminated. This ultimately speeds up the process

- ◆ Reduces labour costs due to automation of traditional front of house tasks. Staff can instead focus on welcoming visitors and upselling to further drive sales
- ◆ Smart, data-driven inventory management that improves performance of GFR by eradicating out-of-stocks, and reducing shrinkage and the need for price markdowns
- ◆ SRS Leisure conducts initial setup, including par levels and sales forecasting, and ongoing cycle-counting stock checks to maintain data integrity and accuracy. ●

For a free consultation, contact SRS Leisure:

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serco



Mark Gannon is
CEO of UK Coaching

COACHING THE UK

From the first sports lesson all the way to the Olympics, good coaches transform lives. UK Coaching CEO Mark Gannon talks to Kath Hudson about building a robust network of great coaches

UK Coaching wants to get more people active," says Gannon. "Ultimately our aim is to support, guide and inspire people to achieve goals and transform their lives through sport and activity. Great coaches are the key – they can change people's lives."

Hopefully, we're all lucky enough to have fond memories of that coach who changed our lives, either by inspiring us to do a sport that became a habit for life, or by pushing us to reach a level we never thought possible.

Malcolm Brown, for instance, who won the Lifetime Achievement Award at the UK Coaching awards in December for his work with the Brownlee brothers, has created a fantastic legacy, with the Brownlee's success on the international stage bringing triathlon to the forefront.

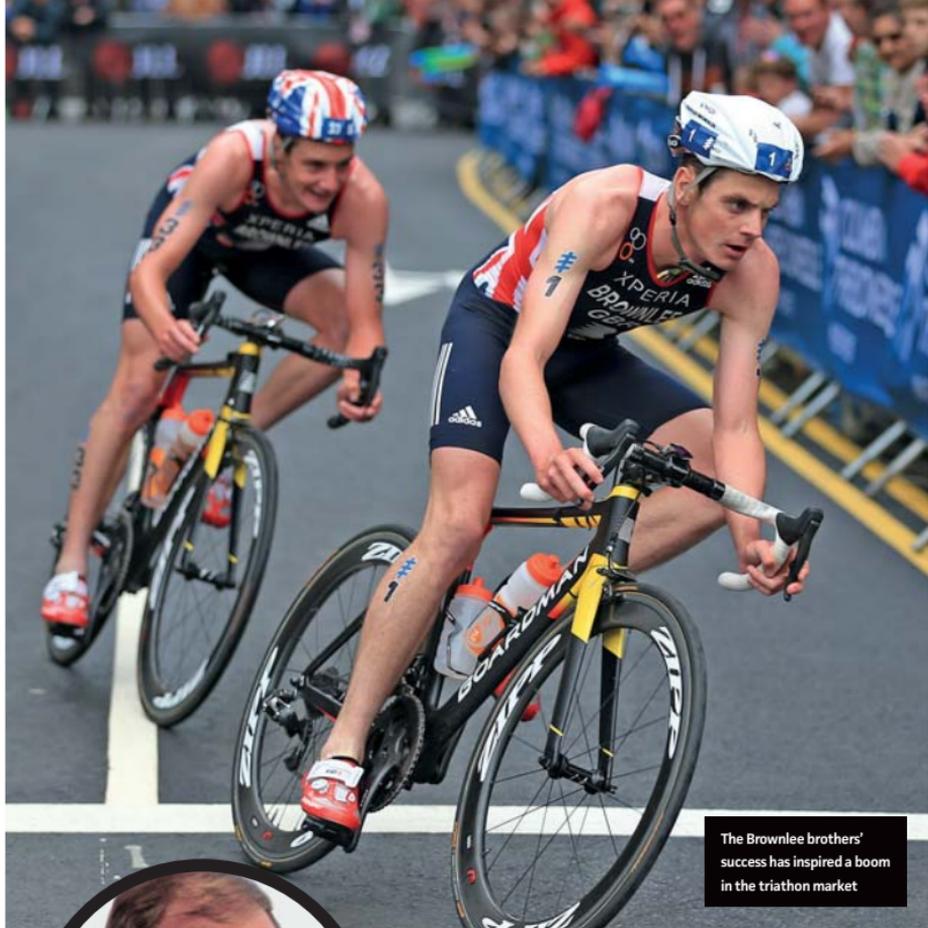
But it's not just elite coaches who transform lives. Gannon says he's inspired by former national gymnastics coach and lecturer, Mike Talbot, who worked with people of all abilities, helping them achieve more than they thought possible – in gymnastics and in life.

Gannon says coaches can make the difference between a community sports club that's sustainable and one that's not. If the coach training the five-year-olds at Saturday morning football shouts all the time, they'll stop coming and the membership will dwindle.

Improving accessibility

UK Coaching's research has found that in any given year, there'll be around three million registered coaches, 60 per cent of whom are unpaid. The coaching population is fluid, and while new people enter each year, others move on. This can be a challenge, as sports that are enjoying surges in popularity, such as gymnastics and girl's football, can find themselves unable to meet demand. Not to mention the difficulty for a club when a favourite coach retires or leaves and must be replaced.

Ensuring good quality coaches keep coming through the pipeline, and stay in coaching, is UK Coaching's primary focus, and the organisation has identified that in order to make this happen, access to training and



The Brownlee brothers' success has inspired a boom in the triathlon market

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© ANDREW MATTHEWS/PA ARCHIVE/PA IMAGES



Malcolm Brown, coach to the Brownlee brothers

“Great coaches are the key – they can change people’s lives by inspiring them to strive

qualifications needs to be easier. “Everyone is time-poor and parents who offer to help with the rugby team don’t necessarily want to go on a three day course,” he says.

“Over the next 12 months, we’ll be investing heavily in technology to provide more online education services, which will allow coaches to undertake qualifications in bite-sized chunks, when it’s convenient for them. We’ve made a significant investment in a new website, which – as well as incorporating learning – aims to build social interaction through a virtual coaching community.”

People skills

In recent years, there’s been a major shift in the focus of coaching qualifications, which now centre around interpersonal skills. This can be seen in UK Coaching’s ▶



Research revealed that people want fun sessions, doing activities they enjoy

► recently developed Coaching Behaviours Framework, which sets out its vision for the future of coaching.

"Coaching has changed greatly during the 30 years I've been involved in sport," says Gannon. "Traditionally it was focused on technique, but now the core element is people skills, because it's people who inspire people. It's people who deliver the experience and make participants want to come back. A good coach has to understand what the participant wants to achieve and also how to get the best out of them."

This approach has the added advantage of opening up coaching to more people, even if they lack some technical prowess. Gannon says people choose to coach for a number of reasons, sometimes they're an ex-athlete wanting to give back, or a youth on a leadership scheme. But often it's just a parent offering to help out, who may not have fantastic ability themselves, but are good with children or have a gift for imparting information.

NEW NAME, NEW HORIZONS

Formerly known as Sports Coach UK, the organisation was rebranded as UK Coaching in order to have a wider focus, beyond traditional sports. Aiming to be the first port of call for all coaches, it receives funding from



UK Sport and Sport England, as well as undertaking revenue-generating activities such as training. It works closely with national governing bodies, county sport partnerships, employers, local authorities and REPs.

“ Traditionally sport was focused on technique, but now the core element is people skills

Diversity and inclusivity

Another focus for UK Coaching is to improve the diversity of coaches. A number of initiatives are underway across four key areas: women, talent, children and lower socio-economic groups. 'Reach' is one such initiative that's aimed at getting more women into coaching. "A lot of women go into the fitness sector and they're great coaches, because they're first and foremost a people person," says Gannon. "But there isn't the same amount of female representation in traditional community sport and we need to address this and get them involved."

"Part of this comes down to changing the culture of sport – some golf clubs have only just started allowing women into the clubhouse. If more women and people from diverse backgrounds start coaching, those clubs will become more inclusive, but we have to support coaches better to enable them to thrive in these environments."

The organisation was awarded UK Sport's Intermediate Level of Equality Standard in 2017 for its commitment to equality and diversity, and is currently working with a number of clubs that understand the benefits of being more diverse. The aim is to use these clubs as case studies to bring more people on board.

Over the next three to four years, UK Coaching will be looking to train more coaches in hard-to-reach



© SHUTTERSTOCK/MONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES

communities, including areas of socio-economic deprivation. "We already have good examples of where we've supported people from deprived areas, training them as coaches, and they've gone on to set up sporting activities in that area," says Gannon (see case study).

"Sport is competing with other sectors, such as electronic gaming, so to engage people, we have to provide a great experience. And this comes back to the coach, as they create the environment. If you can work with someone inactive and give them a good experience, they'll become an ambassador for that activity."

Going forward, Gannon advocates further collaboration with a variety of sports and also the health and fitness sector, with the organisation working with CIMSPA to develop professional standards for coaching. "Sports can learn a great deal from health and fitness, where instructors have raised their game in order to earn a living from coaching. They're all about offering a great service and experience to keep people coming back."

It's an exciting time for coaching, with fresh thinking and new approaches being embraced. Hopefully the end result will not only be greater participation numbers in a variety of sports, and from a wider spread of the population, but also a population with improved physical and mental wellbeing and positive outlook on life. ●

UK Coaching is working to bring more women into sports coaching

CASE STUDY

COACHING BIRMINGHAM

The Birmingham Way, an initiative led by UK Coaching, is an example of how it's engaging hard-to-reach groups. Research showed 80 per cent of Birmingham residents were inactive, a situation that was costing the NHS around £20m a year: forty per cent of people in the city are in the top 10 per cent of most deprived households in the country.

Insight work revealed delivery needed to change, as the traditional, one size fits all approach was considered boring. People wanted fun sessions, doing activities they enjoy, near home and led by people like themselves.

UK Coaching used different recruitment tactics to find people with the right values and then provided them with flexible learning and training opportunities. Once they started coaching they were supported through mentoring.



MAKING IT COUNT

In the second of this three part series on fitness for people with disabilities, we explore common marketing mistakes and how, with just a few tweaks, operators could more accurately target guests with physical challenges and long-term health conditions

The population of people with disabilities presents a big opportunity. As we covered in the last issue, almost 14 million people in the UK – that's not far off one in five of the entire population – have a physical impairment or long-term health condition, and nearly half of these are physically inactive. What's more, seven in ten disabled people want to be more active, but feel facilities aren't doing enough to highlight what's on offer for them. And with annual spending power of £212 billion, disabled people and their families are also valued consumers.

Some people equate disability with poverty, but many disabled people are prepared to pay

– Ian Warren, Right Directions



What's the situation with concessions?

Ian Warren is head of health and safety at specialist quality management company Right Directions, which delivers both Sport England's quality assurance and continuing development programme, Quest, and the Inclusive Fitness Initiative's IFI Mark accreditation. He says: "Some people always equate disability with poverty and assume customers with disabilities would visit under a concessional or free membership.

"Sometimes this is the case, and operators do a wonderful job of supporting people in these circumstances, but often disabled people are prepared to pay to be members, and once operators realise this is the case, they're more likely to view them as a market."

Dawn Hughes is national partnerships advisor for Activity Alliance (previously the English Federation of Disability Sport). The charity has been supporting facilities to be more welcoming and accessible to disabled people for more than 10 years through its IFI Mark. "It's a large community, where almost 50 per cent of people are in work," she agrees. "But people in employment may not qualify for concession schemes, so it's a strong market to invest in."



Seven in ten people with disabilities would like to be more active



Operators should ensure disabled people know they will be welcomed and that staff will know how to support them

Where do I start?

Six in 10 disabled people claim either a lack of activities or not knowing about the opportunities open to them is a barrier. And with a simple online search for local leisure activities it's not hard to see why.

Caroline Constantine, managing director of Right Directions and Quest's operations director explains. "Part of the problem is that the images used in marketing all depict young, very fit members. It's a real problem we have as a sector. Even if your centre is accessible, your staff are all appropriately trained and your equipment is inclusive, if you market your centre based on this imagery, most of the general public will assume it's not for them. Disabled people may too wonder if they will stand out, be stared at, if staff will know how to help or whether they can access equipment. This can be enough to stop them trying."

"On the flip side, imagery can be part of the solution and can play an integral role in making your facilities more inclusive – very quickly and easily changing people's perceptions of your organisation."

But it's not just the marketing imagery, says Hughes.

If people see disabled staff working in your facility, they will immediately know it must be accessible – Dawn Hughes, Activity Alliance



Dawn Hughes of Activity Alliance

"If people see disabled staff working in your facility they will immediately know it must be accessible. You don't have to say any more. They will know staff are approachable too. A lot of this is about trust. Sometimes word of mouth is enough; from another member with an impairment for instance. You can say 'we welcome disabled people' in your marketing, but ultimately they need trust before they make that move."

Last year, the Activity Alliance teamed up with Right Directions to deliver its IFI Mark accreditation. Under the partnership, Right Directions facilitates the IFI award either standalone or for free, as part of Quest.

"Unless operators step out of their comfort zone and test how they're performing for disabled guests, how ▶



Sport for Confidence offers sports sessions designed for disabilities

► will they improve?" says Warren, who travels the country assessing leisure centres for their IFI Mark accreditation. "The IFI module is a great opportunity for operators to focus their attention on the key criteria, so they realise that having a hoist in the pool and disabled parking bays isn't enough. Many centres are inadvertently excluding a large proportion of the community – many of whom are likely to benefit most from the facilities."

Reach out

"We want disabled people to be saying, 'that centre understands my needs,'" continues Warren, who advises approaching local disability and community groups such as Mencap, Scope, AgeUK, the Stroke Association and Mind to let them know what's on offer and that they are all welcome. "Quite often I assess fantastic facilities that have everything in place to welcome disabled guests but it's nowhere to be seen on their marketing or their websites. They're not reaching out to local community groups to tell them what's available for their members, either. It's a simple but effective marketing activity!"

Part of the problem is that marketing images depict young, fit people

Caroline Constantine,
Right Directions



People with disabilities can benefit hugely from leisure centre visits



Positive first experience

Reaching out to local groups and health teams is a key priority for Basildon Sporting Village's Sport for Confidence programme, which was started by Occupational Therapist Lyndsey Barrett three years ago.

The programme, which has been widely celebrated in the local press, recently won the Inclusion and Disability award at ukactive's Active Uprising Awards and Barrett has also received recognition, including a Merit award from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists and an Innovation award. Currently engaging with around 400 participants across five Essex leisure centres each week, Sport for Confidence enables disabled and non-disabled people to get involved in sport together and offers sessions that have been developed in consultation with customers, including swimming, boccia, trampolining, gymnastics, athletics, fencing, cricket and curling.

"I set up the programme after working in the NHS for 18 years, as I saw the benefits sport and physical activity could have as part of the assessment and



Sport for Confidence currently has 400 participants across five leisure centres



All people have different needs – we view everyone as completely unique

– Lyndsey Barrett, Sport for Confidence



intervention process,” says Barrett, who is based at Basildon Sporting Village two days a week. “As a health professional working in the centre I can make adjustments to the environment to make sure it’s inclusive and creates a positive first experience.

“We don’t refer to our programme as disability sport, we talk about being physically active and use the term inclusive, so reaching people with disabilities can be difficult. One of first things I did was form relationships with local health teams that are already providing a service to these hard-to-reach people, such as residential homes and day centres; forming links with everyone involved on the ground to let them know we exist.”

Barrett says it’s now the norm to find more people in the centre’s café with diverse backgrounds and a variety of support needs than without and celebrates the great atmosphere and relationship between staff and customers. She continues: “What I love about the team at Basildon Sporting Village is that they were brave enough to have me there in the first place and believed

me when I said I could transform how disabled people access a centre. It’s all about changing the culture.

“They’re customers not patients. If you join via a GP referral scheme you come with the patient label. But what one person needs is different to the next, so rather than everyone having to fit into one box, we view everyone as unique. In just one session I can see 40 people and at least half don’t call themselves disabled. If they don’t view themselves as disabled I’m certainly not going to place that label on them.” ●

GET INCLUSIVE!

A number of useful resources are available on The Activity Alliance website, including its Inclusive Communications Guide and Engaging Disabled People resource, which can be found in the resources section: www.activityalliance.org.uk/how-we-help/resources

MISSING A TRICK?

In response to our Talking Point: 'Are councils asking too much of contract operators?' and our editor's letter on the same topic, Duncan Wood-Allum, managing director of SLC, shares his thoughts on the future commissioning and delivery of leisure services

The leisure operating market has never been in such a dynamic state of flux. Continued austerity, major budget cuts and polarisation of political philosophies on

how services should be run all add to an environment where, more than ever, leisure operators have to be on their toes.

In the *Sports Management* Talking Point, a number of operators and advisors shared their views on whether the market had

The article was in
Sports Management
Issue 2, 2018



overheated and councils were demanding too much from their contracts.

The article was right to note that in some instances, councils (which sometimes take the wrong advice or do not take any advice) are seeing leisure contracts as cash generators only, rather than a sustainable market intervention to contribute to a number of wider strategic outcomes.

With borough treasurers putting the pressure on councils to find savings, revenue-positive leisure contracts can be seen as a potential 'easy win'. However, I believe council officers and members should establish a joined-up approach to commissioning, identify their community's needs, facility requirements and investment opportunities, and set sensible and achievable affordability levels. They then have the option to select the optimal management model – often over a period of two to four years before procurement – to enable them to achieve both their financial goals and deliver significant social value.

A BROADER ROLE

A key factor missing in the article was the broader strategic role of leisure in contributing to agendas such as adult social care, regeneration, economic development, placemaking and social cohesion. Leisure cannot continue to try to justify itself for its own sake – it needs to co-create local solutions to bigger issues that can act as a catalyst for partnership working, combine funding through joint commissioning, and leverage investment from regeneration. This can often lead to co-location of new facilities with other functions and services, making better use of scarce resources.

The transformation of our town centres and cityscapes is paving the way from a retail-based core to a mixed economy of retail, leisure, community, commercial and housing. This creates huge opportunities for developing new models to support people's changing lifestyles, health and wellbeing needs. Local authorities have an opportunity to leverage the expertise of the leisure sector to bring investment that will inject life and atmosphere back into these town centres. But I'm not convinced anyone



Duncan Wood-Allum is managing director of consultancy SLC



Group exercise for older audiences can be a good revenue stream for operators

in our sector has fully clocked onto this huge opportunity yet.

The experts commenting in the *Sports Management* article indicated that there are two core income streams – gym memberships and swimming lessons. In my view, this is missing a huge opportunity and reinforcing a myth.

ADAPTING THE OFFER

Those operators that are succeeding in developing new revenue streams are leading the way, as well as winning and retaining more contracts. These revenue streams can be linked to children's activities, commissioned health interventions, youth offers, active play and group-based exercise, as well as on-demand fitness and wellbeing classes.

In her editor's letter, Liz Terry says that "if councils push too hard, they will spawn a whole raft of competition, as management contractors throw in the towel and decide to compete instead". I believe those operators are the ones that have not adapted and innovated.

Many councils (and most of SLC's clients) no longer want to work with 'bog standard' operators – they're looking for partners



Most councils are looking for partners that add wider social value

that not only know how to drive an asset commercially, but add wider social value through outreach, innovative approaches to concessions and partnering with other agencies such as Public Health, Adult and Social Care, Children's Services, Community Safety teams and the voluntary sector.

With increasing interest in in-house services and an aversion to what is deemed to be 'privatisation' from a number of Labour administrations, the market needs to take heed of this change by shifting the emphasis to promoting and leading activity beyond the traditional leisure centre setting. More of a 'Community Activity Contract' than a 'Leisure Management Contract' perhaps?

GOOD POINTS

Chris Marriott of the Sports Consultancy was right, in his comment, in highlighting the

golden period of aggressively bid contracts. Yes – it was close to overheating but has calmed down and operators are being more circumspect in qualifying bids and selecting which ones to compete for, particularly where there is a strong incumbent or where there is no 'hook' to add value through a different, innovative approach to service delivery.

Peter Gunn rightly highlighted the weaknesses in some procurement processes and the need for councils to be very clear in their financial and social objectives. Justin Jardine from GLL noted the "forward-thinking" approach by councils that involves setting "affordability thresholds in tenders that are realistic and achievable for operators".

The trust sector has an opportunity to look at how it could use its collective reach and buying power to provide an alternative to the bigger players, but that will require transformative change that may be resisted by the individual leaders and boards of those trusts.

I understand there are some exciting partnerships being explored in Greater Manchester, which is really encouraging.

The article highlighted a concerning trend from some procurement advisors that are ▶



PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

► encouraging councils to 'have their cake and eat it' as regards to transfer of risk. This has and will result in some contracts not receiving bids. I suggest those councils be wary of advisors that over-promise on financial outcomes. Ultimately, the market dictates the value of a contract and the council sets the conditions and affordability levels for that contract.

Tackling inactivity

One area I was surprised and disappointed not to see more of in the article is the role of councils in providing leisure services

Using their legal powers, councils, can provide market interventions the private or voluntary sectors are unable to deliver.

Given the pressing need for the nation's inactive to get moving and improve their health and quality of life, it's concerning that many contributors to the article (advisors and operators) overlooked this core reason for local government leisure provision.

Budget gyms will not address the needs of the 70 to 80 per cent that want to move more, make social contacts, improve their mental health and make lifestyle changes.

There is still a huge opportunity for operators to innovate and create deep

Operators can redirect surpluses back into outreach programmes

connections with the communities they serve, regardless of management model, as recently demonstrated by an independent trust, Stockport's Life Leisure, which secured a publicly tendered leisure contract at Barrow BC, an authority looking for added value, rather than just a leisure operator.

Opportunities to thrive

Carefully considered and planned leisure partnerships with the right investment, linked to the strategic priorities of councils can deliver these objectives and run services at a surplus in many parts of the country. To achieve this, securing political commitment is vital and often takes time. Recent procurements that SLC has supported have demonstrated this with some outstanding examples of achieving both financial outcomes, improved services and enhanced social value. Many of our clients have redirected

surpluses back into outreach and targeted interventions, rather than taking a saving.

So, to conclude, I'd like to emphasise that leisure operators can thrive in this challenging environment, by delivering localised solutions effectively, having a sensible balance and allocation of risk, sustainable business plans and investment strategies. Natural selection will play a part, as some of the traditional operators who have failed to see the opportunities presented by the public sector step aside for those that do. Getting it right isn't easy, but the outcomes for all partners and the communities they serve can be well worth the effort. ●

Duncan Wood-Allum is managing director of the Sport, Leisure and Culture Consultancy www.slc.uk.com 01444 459927 duncan@slc.uk.com



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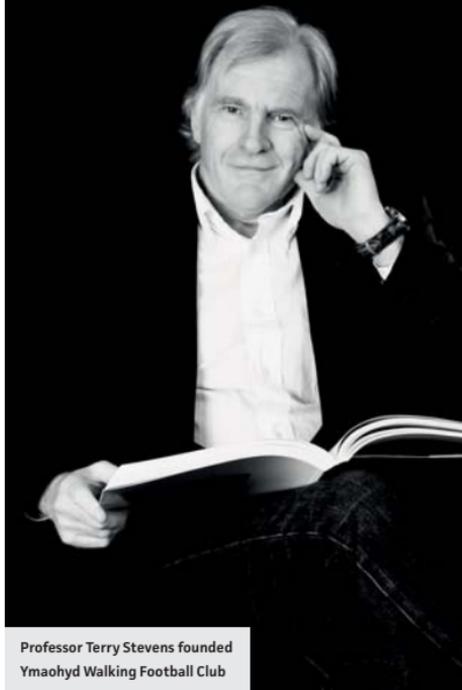


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WALK THE WALK

Originally developed to provide a social and physical outlet for older men, walking football is steadily gaining popularity among people from all walks of life. Professor Terry Stevens, founder of Ymaohyd Walking Football Club, discusses the appeal of this new sport



Professor Terry Stevens founded Ymaohyd Walking Football Club

Is 'slow' the new trend? We have slow food, slow travel, slow money and slow fashion. So, when you hear about 'walking football' you might naturally assume it is part of this overall slowing down phenomenon. But it's far from it!

Walking football is not only one of the fastest growing sporting activities for

both men and women, it is also a sport that's surprisingly fast moving, physically challenging, skilful and technical. Designed and adapted for those who can't play or aren't interested in playing mainstream soccer, this more controlled game has many tangible health benefits for people of any age. Indeed, being physically active as we get older is a

critical factor associated with personal physical and mental wellness and health.

Led by researchers at the University of Aston in Birmingham and The University of Brighton, there is now a growing body of demonstrable proof that playing walking football can help:

- Build strength in bones, connective tissue and cartilage
- Improve posture by strengthening musculature
- Increase core stability
- Decrease fat stores by burning calories
- Improve balance and coordination
- Normalise blood pressure, improve blood flow and reduce stress
- Lower blood sugars
- Strengthen the immune system
- Improve social life, combat loneliness and support collaborative networks

It is widely accepted that walking football was conceived by Chesterfield Football Club's Community Trust in 2011



The sport was developed to give older men a physical and social outlet



The sport is played with two teams of five or six players a side and does not allow running



Players can improve strength, posture, immune system and balance

“ As a result of television coverage, walking football is now becoming a spectator sport as well as a participation sport

as a participation sport, designed to help older men find a way out of loneliness and isolation. Today there are over 1,000 walking football clubs affiliated to The Walking Football Federation, the national governing body for the sport in Great Britain, with almost 2,000 members.

The sport, which teams play with five or six players a side, has very specific rules that outlaw both running and physical contact. There are also a number of very specific technical regulations now codified by the various national football associations.

GETTING POPULAR

The meteoric rise of walking football over the past six years is due to a number of factors. In 2014, Barclay's Bank ran a television advertisement that featured the sport. Then in 2015 walking football was introduced in the FA People's Cup as part of BBC's 'Get Inspired' initiative.

In 2017, the Football Association of Wales and UEFA included a walking football competition in the celebrations held in

Cardiff for the Champions League Cup Final, and the same year Sky Sports began televising national and international walking football tournaments.

As a result, walking football is now becoming a spectator sport as well as a participation sport. It is commanding the respect of national football organisations, with professional clubs across Europe establishing walking football activities for their community outreach programmes. And a growing number of walking football clubs are being established around the world.

This is inevitably generating demand for local, region and international tournaments, which have been held in Majorca, Brittany, Italy and the Netherlands. In 2017 Swansea University hosted the International Super Veterans five-a-side tournament and in Autumn 2018 the first official 'home nations' competition between Wales, England, Scotland and Northern Ireland will be held.

The first women's walking football competition took place in Preston in July

2017 to commemorate 100 years of the Dick, Kerr Ladies Football Club – one of the earliest known women's football clubs in England.

WALKING THERAPY

The sport was originally aimed at tackling physical inactivity, loneliness and depression, issues that are often experienced by men of age 50-plus. But it soon became apparent that it appeals to a much broader range of markets, including women, younger people, ex-professional footballers and other ex-athletes, those recovering from sporting injuries and those looking for relief from stress and anxiety.

As Paul Murtagh, a 43 year old former local Shropshire league player who snapped his knee playing football when he was 20, told the *Guardian* newspaper recently: "Nobody stops playing football because they don't like it anymore; they stop because they think their time is up, whether through age or injury".

For Dean Curtis, a forty-something former soldier, life has been transformed through ▶



Walking football provides opportunities for frequent participation, community-building and cross-generational involvement



The British national governing body for the sport has 2,000 members

▶ playing walking football every Friday night with the Welsh club Ymaohyd.

"Two years ago I was in a very dark place with declining physical and mental health, few friends and little desire to socialise," says Curtis. "I can now count on over two dozen good mates."

ENTERING THE MAINSTREAM

Inclusive and open to all, walking football is an enjoyable form of exercise with multiple benefits. One of the leading

advocates of the sport is Harry Hubbard from the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, who highlights the opportunities for "frequent participation, team and community-building and cross-generational involvement."

While still in its infancy, there are real opportunities for the sport to enter the mainstream. The media is taking notice and, increasingly, sponsors are being attracted to the access to interesting markets. As walking football picks up steam, it's time for

the general public to become more open minded about the range of people who can benefit from playing walking football, and to embrace it as a serious sport. ●

Terry Stevens is MD of Stevens & Associates, a member of the Executive Board of the School of Management at Swansea University and founder of Ymaohyd Walking Football Club.

THE STORY OF YMAOHYD FOOTBALL CLUB

BEGINNINGS

"There has to be more to Fridays nights than this!", was the consensus of 12 fathers (all ex-soccer or rugby players). They started Ymaohyd Football Club in 1982 for exercise, fun and to develop the use of the Welsh language in sport.

SUCCESS

During the years from 1982 to 2014, the club enjoyed its glory days. Over 300 players had become involved. The club was unbeaten in over 30 friendlies.

DESPAIR

In 2014 injuries, old age, and grandkids to look after meant that numbers dwindled. The suggestion to try



Ymaohyd FC has a proud history of playing football and socialising

walking football was initially met with scorn, scepticism and derision, but finally the club decided to give it a go.

REVIVAL

Soon ten players grew to twenty, the club received a Heritage Lottery grant to play walking football, the running football was revived alongside the new sport and the club's strong social environment was restored.

TRANSFORMATION

Ymaohyd's walking football team quickly climbed the ranks, making it to the final of the FA People's Cup in 2015 and the semi-final in 2016. They won the FA Wales People's Cup, which was played in front of 5,000 people before the Champions League Final in Cardiff, and were 2018 winners of the Swansea City FC tournament.



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CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

The United Kingdom Sport Development Network (UKSDN) 2018 Conference took place recently, with delegates discussing community sport development research, policy and practice. UKSDN chair Dr Chris Mackintosh reports



On 2-3 July 2018, over 60 key policy makers, practitioners and academics met to discuss, frame and shape the landscape of sport development at Hartpury University Centre in Gloucestershire supported by the United Kingdom Sport Development Network (UKSDN) partnered with ConnectSport. It is now over ten years since the network was founded.

New themes

The purpose of the two day conference was to revisit the founding principles of the collective, which has engaged over 1000 delegates in community sport development in ten years at multiple higher education institutional (HEI) settings. Sport Development is an HEI undergraduate

course provided at over 50 universities, in over 130 derivatives of the course.

As the network now includes over twenty international collaborators and over 40 of the 50 providers of HEI sport development that have engaged with us, growth of the industry was not the theme of the conference. Instead, fiscal tightening, renewed focus on budgets, targets and performance of key agencies in this domain are drivers of our industry.

Sport for social development

The keynote presenter that opened proceedings was Professor Rosie Meek, an advocate for considering the role of sport in prisons and prisoner rehabilitation. Fresh from undertaking a government review of the role of sport, Rosie offered 12 key areas for improving prisons' use

of sport and physical activity. The clear parallels with wider social objectives were immediately apparent and alongside talks from The Alliance of Sport, Street Games and others working in this field we saw the powerful synergy of researchers and practitioners, and embraced Rosie's 'call to arms' for new ways of collaborating, creating projects and collating information to develop evidence.

Numerous PhD students embedded within practice illustrated how the traditional PhD is increasingly available in more innovative practice-facing or even policy-led ways. This three-year model of sustained research that aims to understand, evolve project learning and draw upon and use theory to drive effective outcomes was apparent in diverse fields within the industry.



Over 60 delegates attended the two-day conference

THE UKSDN:

is a collective of NGB, CSP, third sector, HEI and community sport development organisations that offers a series of symposiums, and annual conference and face-to-face networking for professionals looking to bridge the academia-policy-practice gap. For further information on its work, contact c.mackintosh@mmu.ac.uk or follow us on Twitter @UKSDN



The conference took place at Hartpury University Centre in Gloucestershire

Keynote presenter Professor Rosie Meek offered 12 key areas for improving prisons' use of sport and physical activity. She called for new ways of collaborating and collating information

Integrating academics

Research was favoured over 'insight', as a broader term that encompasses the PhD and market research surveys from private industry, through to advisory collaborations between HEIs and NGBs, CSPs and the third sector.

As more sports and physical activity organisations have non-executive directors (NEDs), there was a plea for more academics to be engaged by the industry in such roles, to make their expertise available to decision-makers.

Furthermore, the question was raised as to why there are still longstanding perceptions and stereotypes in sport of 'the ivory tower academic' that don't exist in other vocational fields. Sport, and now physical activity, were considered alongside 'evidence-based policy, which needs to be replaced with considerations of 'intelligent policy', according to Dr Haydyn Morgan from Gloucester University.

This was a theme of multiple other papers, including research by Emma Staples, who shared lessons of how to build, transform and challenge culture around LGBTI in cricket development.

Across the UK and Australia it is apparent that lesson learning is available. The question is whether there is capacity or indeed inclination from government to challenge the status quo – given the funding pressures and rapidly shifting agendas of community sport.



Evidence is essential

For too many community sport organisations, from the RFU through to England Golf and back again to micro initiatives within housing trusts, the NHS, workplaces and the voluntary sector, there remains a need to evidence 'what works'. Perhaps, as many delegates commented and engagement on Twitter suggested, the time is right for allowing practice 'experts' to draw upon community sport researchers in HEIs to co-produce intelligent policy from the bottom up, rather than top down. In too many cases it was apparent that the pressure to 'prove', fulfil funding 'evidence box ticking' and show 'effect' is generating a new industry in sport management.

For some, perhaps this is the insight industry, while others note the growing body of expensive consultants and

contracts in commissioned research. The Alliance of Sport, Connect Sport and other information and evidence 'portals' are superb examples of just where duplication of effort in austere times can be avoided.

The link with academia, peer reviewed research and information must be made stronger. This seems to be the gap.

Developing knowledge

The current obsession in HEIs driving towards the juggernaut of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) asks academics to focus on producing internationally renowned and 'rated' research papers. This sits a long way from the role of the public academic I value.

With an estimated 10,000 students and 500 academics across the UK, we have a key role to play in shaping agendas and supporting communities in developing knowledge about what works.

We see this as the start of a conversation with organisations, individuals and communities. Dropping in and collecting information to publish a paper that sits behind a university library firewall is not public knowledge engagement. We saw in our two days of conversations, just how powerful meaningful sport and physical activity research can be. ●

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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Jones went from complete beginner to running seven of the world's toughest marathons in one year



KEEP ON RUNNING

Precor AMT helps non-runner Laura Jones to complete seven marathons in just one year

Less than two years ago running didn't feature in Laura Jones's life. Now the 29 year old has completed an epic charity challenge to run seven marathons around the world within a year.

Jones started training from scratch in August 2016 with the help of a local beginners running group as well as working with staff at SturFit, a not-for-profit community gym in Sturminster Newton. She said: "When I signed up to run the Everest Marathon I wasn't a runner. I turned bright red and my lungs exploded just running 1km."

Jones loved using the Precor treadmills at SturFit to improve her cardio fitness, but as time went on it was the award-winning Precor Adaptive Motion Trainer (AMT) that became her best friend. She said: "As I increased the miles and started running marathons the AMT became a great way to keep my fitness up without the impact. I was especially grateful after returning from my third marathon with



I hope my story will encourage others to break down their barriers and overcome their fear of judgement

a knee injury, as the low impact meant I could still do a challenging workout without the worry of further injury."

Highs and lows

Jones built up her distances at local events before completing the 2017 London Marathon. She then participated in the World's Highest Marathon, 5,300m above sea level at Mount Everest Base Camp in temperatures of -10 degrees C.

A fortnight later, while running the Banff Marathon in Canada, Jones suffered a knee injury that forced her to retire from the race and undergo rehabilitation.

Anything is possible

After finishing the Rottneest Island Marathon in Western Australia in temperatures of 30 degrees C, Jones moved on to the Seattle Marathon and then the Yukon Arctic Marathon on the frozen Yukon River with average temperatures of -20 degrees C, finishing her challenge with the hot and humid Kilimanjaro Marathon in March.

She said: "I wanted to demonstrate that no matter what your current level of ability, anything is possible. I hope going from a complete beginner to running seven marathons in a year will encourage others to break down their barriers and overcome their fear of judgement. With enough determination, self-belief and commitment, you can achieve anything!"

Jones has raised more than £7,500 towards her causes; The Jonny Wilkinson Foundation and The Scout Association. ●

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PRODUCT INNOVATION

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



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



Players can adjust the speed, pitch and direction of the ball

Batfast makes cricket more accessible, says former professional cricketer **Runish Gudhka**

Batfast, a UK-based sports simulation company, has created an innovative cricket simulator that is designed to increase entry-level participation in the sport.

Founded by childhood friends Jignesh Patel and Runish Gudhka – a former international Kenyan cricketer – Batfast aims to make cricket accessible for players of all ages and abilities.

Suitable for both entertainment and training purposes, the immersive simulators are built to a small footprint and feature



Runish Gudhka, co-founder of Batfast and former cricketer

a large projector screen displaying a virtual bowler, which can be customised to feature real-life players.

Players can adjust the speed, pitch and direction of the ball via a phone or tablet.

“Across the UK and globally, player participation in sports is declining while interest and the number of fans is increasing,” says Batfast co-founder Runish Gudhka.

“The solution is to make playing sport simpler and more accessible. We’re aiming to inspire people to play more regularly.”

SPORT-KIT KEYWORD

BATFAST

Live streaming can help grassroots sports generate revenue, explains **Dave Roe**

Specialist sports filming company FilmMyMatch is helping to raise awareness and boost revenue for grassroots sports by providing affordable live streaming opportunities for sporting organisations and teams across the UK.

Matches are captured using mobile HI-POD equipment, which is capable of filming 25ft (7.6m) above pitch-level, offering an optimal view of the action unfolding on the pitch. The match footage is then uploaded to the FilmMyMatch online sharing platform

where it can be viewed, shared and downloaded.

The company also offers a broadcasting service allowing teams to stream games live using multiple 4G networks.

Other services include live commentary and graphics that enable organisations to deliver high-quality live productions.

“There’s a real buzz around live streaming and its future



Dave Roe, director of FilmMyMatch

potential, in terms of team and sport awareness and the revenue it can help generate, which can be reinvested to drive further growth,” said Dave Roe, director of FilmMyMatch.



Matches can be filmed from up to 25ft above the pitch

SPORT-KIT KEYWORD

FILMMYMATCH

Rewards4 meets demand for fan loyalty initiatives, according to **Ian Lancaster**

St Helens RFC has partnered with Rewards4, a sport-based rewards programme, to launch the Rewards4Rugby League programme, a new loyalty initiative to reward its fan base.

Designed specifically to help fans save money, Rewards4 has more than 4,500 brand partners that allow fans to collect points on their everyday shopping. These points can then be redeemed against

club purchases including match tickets, season tickets and merchandise.

This will be the first time Saints fans will be rewarded for money spent outside of the club.

Dave Hutchinson, general manager of St Helens RFC, comments: "This will allow us to step up our offering, delivering the best sports-based rewards programme to our fans, rewarding their loyalty and helping them save money on purchases they are already making."

"It was so simple to integrate Rewards4's platform into our membership programme, and the fact that it's free for both us and our fans meant



Rewards4 director and co-founder Tom Cowgill

there were no barriers to entry," he concludes.

Director and co-founder of Rewards4 Tom Cowgill says: "Our platform provides clubs with a bespoke rewards and loyalty solution that requires little or no resource from the club."

SPORT-KIT KEYWORD
REWARDS4



Saints fans will be able to redeem points on club purchases

Smart glass sports floor is the future, says **Dean Averages**

Beard, an Oxford-based construction firm, has installed an innovative smart flooring system at the University of Oxford's new multi-million pound Acer Nethercott sports centre.

Enabled by embedded LED lights, the smart floor can be adapted to any sport, with users able to change its markings at just the flick of a switch, only illuminating the markings when needed.

The solution is fully customisable and can incorporate specific logos, branding and colour schemes.

Working closely with hi-tech sports floor specialist ASB, Beard installed the 700sq m (7,535sq ft) multi-sport performance flooring over a period of six weeks.

"We're delighted to have been involved in the construction of this cutting-edge sports hall,



The smart floor's markings can be changed in an instant

which is a first of its kind in the country," says Dean Averages, director of Beard Oxford.

"As specialists in the delivery of sports centres, we believe these smart glass sports floors are the

way of the future, offering a sustainable hi-tech solution that outperforms traditional sports flooring," he adds. ●

SPORT-KIT KEYWORD
BEARD



Dean Averages is director of Beard Oxford

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

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

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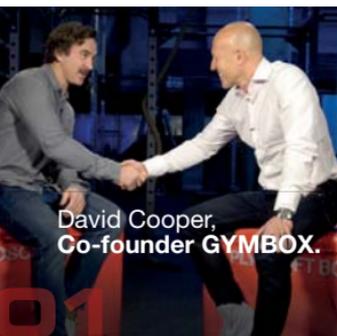


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