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VOLUME 15 Q2 2011

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LEO GRYNER

a Rio 2016 Olympic exclusive



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PLAYING ON A DREAM



PHOTO CREDIT: LUKE WEBBER - BRITISH CYCLING

BMX champion Liam Phillips

e-mail: please use contact's fullname@leisuremedia.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Denise Gildea

+44 (0)1462 471930

EDITOR

Liz Terry

+44 (0)1462 431385

MANAGING EDITOR

Karen Maxwell

+44 (0)1462 471920

PUBLISHER

David Hunt

+44 (0)1462 471902

NEWS EDITOR

Tom Walker

+44 (0)1462 471934

JOURNALISTS

Martin Nash

+44 (0)1462 471911

Pete Hayman

+44 (0)1462 471938

PRODUCTS EDITOR

Martin Nash

+44 (0)1462 471911

DISPLAY ADVERTISING

John Challinor

+44 (0)1202 742968

Jan Williams

+44 (0)1462 471909

DESIGN

Ed Gallagher

+44 (0)1905 20198

Andy Bundy

+44 (0)1462 471924

INTERNET

Dean Fox

+44 (0)1462 471900

Tim Nash

+44 (0)1462 471917

Michael Paramore

+44 (0)1462 471926

Emma Harris

+44 (0)1462 471921

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Michael Emmerson

+44 (0)1462 471932

FINANCIAL CONTROL

Sue Davis

+44 (0)1395 519398

FINANCIAL ADMIN

Denise Gildea

+44 (0)1462 471930

Volunteering gets a boost

It's all change again in the world of sport as the new government's policies begin to kick in and the impact of Big Society thinking is felt. We debate the issues this will throw up for the industry in our Talkback feature on page 22 and the general consensus is that sport is well placed to handle these challenges, just as it has dealt with the last 20 years of political shifting sands. More Lottery money coming our way will also help sport ride out the budget cuts better than many other sectors.

Big Society requires that substantial amounts of sports administration and management move into the voluntary sector, both to relieve pressure on budgets and to develop sports provision at a community level.

However, this emerging emphasis on the role of volunteers comes at a time when the volunteering movement is losing momentum and people are less likely to give their time for others. Sport England's Active People survey shows that the number of volunteers in sport is static at best and in some places declining slightly, whereas the government's Big Society ambitions demand it grows and grows quickly.

Reviving the status of volunteering and inspiring a new generation of sport-lovers to get involved has been highlighted as one of the major challenges the sector needs to tackle.

One of the biggest obstacles to be overcome, in relation to recruiting volunteers, is the issue of liability. In an increasingly litigious society where sport has had its fair share of high profile brushes with the law many people are concerned that if they get involved, they may be opening themselves up to unacceptable levels of responsibility and the sector needs to tackle this issue quickly to reassure potential volunteers.

One of the biggest obstacles to be overcome in relation to recruiting volunteers is the issue of liability. Many people are concerned that if they get involved, they may be opening themselves up to onerous risk

Two new initiatives announced this month will strengthen our ability to deal with these challenges. The first is a new initiative from The Sport and Recreation Alliance – The Voluntary Code of Good Governance for the Sport and Recreation Sector, which is explained by chair Brigid Simmonds on page 13.

The code outlines seven principles of good governance and in his foreword to the publication, Minister for Sport and the Olympics Hugh Robertson, says: "It is not for any government to run sport or micro-manage its future. Dedicated professionals working within strong, independent, transparent and accountable organisations are the best way of ensuring that sport is able to reflect the identity and expectations of the whole community." Robertson says core principles are strong, independent non-execs and small diverse boards and encourages the sector to commit to best practice in adopting the code.

This will be great for sport, as well-run organisations have the framework and protocols necessary to protect volunteers from unnecessarily onerous risk, freeing them to get on with their essential work.

Another initiative in the news is the UK-wide launch of charity Sported, which has been conducting pilot studies since 2008 and will now undertake a nationwide roll-out by opening regional offices.

Sported aims to improve the lives of disadvantaged young people through sport by – among other things – acting as a business angel to support sports development projects. Members of the Sported team and volunteer mentors will be aiming to engage young people, deliver activity and offer help with the commercial and administrative aspects of sport.

As one of the challenges for volunteers is a lack of skill in the areas surrounding governance, these launches are most timely and welcome.



Liz Terry, editor lizterry@leisuremedia.com twitter: [elizterry](https://twitter.com/elizterry)

the leisure media company publishes



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Play provision is planned for the Olympic Park

OLYMPIC LEGACY FOR PLAY

The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will be a celebration of the very best in elite sport, but they are also a catalyst to creating a lasting legacy, by inspiring a generation of children and young people into sports and activity.

For Play England, informal play can link children to a love of sport, just as pantomime can inspire a lifelong love of theatre. However, without the time and space to freely play those important gateways might never open. (Research shows that currently only a quarter of children in this country regularly play outdoors – compared to around three-quarters of the young population just a generation ago.)

Play England is working with Olympic

agencies and local communities to help realise a wider vision of what the Olympic legacy will mean for children. Our ambition is that the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park will be a 'playable space' for people of every age and showcase the best of public space design.

The Olympic agencies, London's Olympic boroughs and community-run play organisations support our ideas, and we will be working with them over the coming months and years to make our ideas a reality for local children and visitors from the rest of the country and from overseas.

For more information go to: www.play-england.org.uk/our-work/olympics
Mick Conway, programme development manager, Play England

major event should promote women in sport

It's a strange paradox that while our elite sportswomen are taking on and beating the rest of the world; women's participation levels in sport are falling. In fact currently 80 per cent of women and girls aren't doing enough physical activity to benefit their health.

Last month, leading figures from the world of sport, including Baroness Tanni Gray-Thompson and Olympic badminton star Gail Emms, joined forces with around 20 MPs and peers to discuss how best to boost female participation in sport and how to raise the profile of our elite women.

In a pivotal year, with the launch of the FA's new Women's Super League, the Women's World Cup in Germany and the countdown to 2012, the All Party Parliamentary Group on Sport was a timely gathering that focused on how such high profile sporting events can be used to inspire women to be more active themselves. The opportunity these events bring means the chance to make a real change is now.

We need to shout about the successes of Britain's sportswomen to create role models for women and girls to aspire to. Once demand is stimulated, it's then up to sports NGOs and agencies to channel this interest effectively and convert it into more participation among women. The lack of women in senior positions in most NGOs does make this job harder but we must all be committed to driving this change forward.

Sue Tibballs, CEO Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation



John Goodbody reports on

Independent think tank for sport

It's odd that just when this country is on the brink of such a momentous decade of staging international events and when public money has never before been invested so lavishly in sport – that there is no organisation suggesting, let alone charting, long-term future policy in British sport.

Enter Andy Reed. It was one of the disappointments of the 2010 election that Reed lost his seat in the House of Commons, where he had sat for 13 years as the Labour MP for Loughborough. Irrespective of which political party you supported, British sport has certainly been weakened over the last year by the absence of someone who had made such an understated impact. He has been personal private secretary to Kate Hoey, the former Sports Minister. He developed Supporters Direct in football. He chaired East Midlands Sport, the campaigning voice in the region, between 2000 and 2003 and was being widely regarded as a possible future Minister for Sport himself. Such capable figures are needed in Parliament.

Well now he's back. Reed is already on the board of the Special Olympics and also the Amateur Swimming Association, a sport where a detailed knowledge of grassroots issues is particularly important since so many people participate in the activity for recreation and health reasons. In addition, he is the chairman-elect of the Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA), the one year-old name for what was the Central Council of Physical Recreation, which embraces all the national governing bodies (see p.14). Such positions should aid him in his latest enterprise, an independent think tank for British sport.

He says: "Everyone seems to think that it's a good idea. I have got a bit of time now and I am determined to make it happen." He accepts that universities, such as Loughborough and Sheffield



The aim is to have a long-term look at British sport, whereas most past reports have concentrated on the immediate future

Hallam, have produced valuable reports in the past (and will almost certainly do so again), but by their very nature they are restricted. The membership of the think tank would be more far-reaching including, as well as academics, individuals from the commercial and high performance sectors. Current competitors are notorious for not being readily available (despite their suitability and initial eagerness) but recently-retired leading sportsmen and women could well be valuable assets. It is expected that there would be a high profile president and a part-time director and work would initially be web-based.

"The think tank has to be independent, particularly of the government, let alone of UK Sport, Sport England and even the British Olympic Association, which unlike the two quangos is not reliant on tax-payers' money."

Reed accepts that there have been several useful independent reports on sports policy in the past, such as *Raising the Bar* by two former Sports Ministers, Colin Moynihan and Kate Hoey, in addition to several by government

departments. However, these have been done on an 'ad hoc' basis. The point of the work of the think tank is to have a continuous and sustained look at sports policy as it evolves in the future, examining different areas as they develop.

Reports would be decided by sport itself and certain aspects could be highlighted through lectures. Practically, the SRA would be able to add some logistical support and Reed is confident that initial funding of up to £50,000 can be found and that the venture can be started by the autumn. The aim is to have a long-term look at British sport rather than the present or the immediate future.

The proposed think tank will succeed if it tackles issues that really matter to sport and can really influence policy in the future. Detailed research, together with vigorous lobbying of successive governments, are the keys to its effectiveness. It's a project that British sport needs and it's up to British sport to ensure that it gets the support it deserves. ●

John Goodbody has covered 12 successive Olympic Games for the Sunday Times

Cardiff named European Capital of Sport 2014

PETE HAYMAN

Cardiff Council has revealed that the Welsh capital has been successful in its bid for European Capital of Sport status in 2014.

The decision was announced by the European Capitals of Sport Association (ACES) at an event held in Valencia, Spain, and follows an inspection by delegates.

Cardiff Council leader Rodney Berman said: "This will not only further heighten our status as a top sporting destination, but underline our commitment to sport as a way of promoting health and wellbeing."



Members of the public can now use the facilities

National Golf Centre Academy 'opens to all'

PETE HAYMAN

The National Golf Centre Academy at Woodhall Spa, Lincolnshire, is to open to the public in order to enhance the standard of teaching available to UK golfers.

Under the leadership of new head coach Neil Harvey, visitors are to have the opportunity to benefit from facilities previously only made available to elite players.

A series of new programmes have been created, which are specifically tailored for novices, juniors, and people looking for one-to-one tuition or residential breaks.

Wembley five-a-side football facility opens

PETE HAYMAN

Lucozade Powerleague has announced the official opening of its new Wembley five-a-side football facility in London – the operator's 45th site to launch in the UK.

The 3-acre (1.2-hectare) venue is situated adjacent to Wembley Arena and includes six five-a-side pitches and one seven-a-side pitch – all of which are fully floodlit.

Changing areas and a sports bar are also among the facilities at the new Wembley centre, which forms part of Lucozade Powerleague's UK expansion plans.

£10m to protect playing fields

PETE HAYMAN

Hugh Robertson, the minister for sport and the Olympics, has helped launch a new £10m fund that has been established to help protect playing fields across the country.

Sport England's Protecting Playing Fields initiative will allow communities to improve local playing fields or create new pitches as part of its Places People Play scheme.

The agency will make the funding available across five £2m rounds, with grants of between £20,000 and £50,000 to be awarded to projects that include the reinstatement of disused playing fields; improvements to the condition of pitches; and the purchase of new playing field land.

Every scheme that receives support as part of the programme also includes protection from development for at least 25 years.



Playing fields that receive funding will be protected for at least 25 years

Meanwhile, Sport England has joined forces with Fields In Trust to support the protection of fields as part of the Queen Elizabeth II Fields Challenge. Successful bidders under Protecting Playing Fields that accept a Deed of Dedication of a facility in 'perpetuity' will have the chance to become a Queen Elizabeth II Field.

June launch for £18.5m Billingham Forum

PETE HAYMAN

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council (STBC) and Tees Active have revealed that the Billingham Forum complex reopened on 3 June, following a major £18.5m overhaul.

Main contractor Morgan Sindall completed work on site at the start of May, which enabled preparations to commence ahead of the leisure venue's reopening.

The Devereux Architects-designed Billingham Forum includes a six-lane, 25m swimming pool, with an additional training pool and the retained learner pool.

Refurbished changing rooms and spectator areas, an extended gym to offer 70 stations, a rejuvenated ice arena and a new-look indoor two-lane bowls rink are also included.



Billingham Forum's ice rink has been upgraded as part of the overhaul

STBC cabinet member for regeneration and transport Bob Cook said: "This ambitious refurbishment of the Forum has been a challenging scheme but through working with Morgan Sindall, it is now complete."

New £16.1m Knowsley venue to open in September

PETE HAYMAN

Knowsley Leisure and Culture Park, a new £16.1m complex being developed in Huyton, Merseyside, is to open on 26 September.

Designed by Broadway Malyn, the 6,600sq m (71,042sq ft) complex will feature two

swimming pools, a six-court sports hall, a fitness suite with up to 120 stations, squash courts and dance studios.

A 400m outdoor velodrome and a BMX track will also be among the sporting facilities at Knowsley Leisure and Culture Park.

London scheme moves forward

PETE HAYMAN

Plans for a major new sports complex in Lewisham, South London, have moved forward with the formation of a new foundation to oversee the delivery of the project.

Former transport minister and mayoral candidate Steve Norris will chair the Surrey Canal Sports Foundation, which will ensure long-term sports provision for the site.

A regional centre of sporting excellence – Surrey Canal: London's Sporting Village – will be at the heart of a new community drawn up by Studio Egret West. Renewal is leading the scheme and is working with Sport England in a bid to secure financial support through the Iconic Facilities Fund.

Renewal director Mark Taylor said: "We hope to use the potential investment from Sport England as a springboard for gathering



The home of Millwall Football Club is situated at the centre of the site

the additional funds needed to deliver this special facility for the capital."

New foundation chair Steve Norris added: "Surrey Canal: London's Sporting Village will make a strong contribution towards the 2012 legacy by addressing the lack of high-quality sports provision in inner London."

SkillsActive/IMSPA confirm 'shared vision'

PETE HAYMAN

SkillsActive and the Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (IMSPA) have unveiled a new "shared vision" for the future of the UK's skills agenda.

The two organisations have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) that aims to clarify their roles in supporting the growth of sport and active leisure.

As part of the new MoU, SkillsActive and IMSPA will work to support the introduction of an employer skills protocol and to support progression to chartered status for all. It is hoped the efforts of the two organisations will help bring about national occupational standards covered by the chartered institute membership.



SkillsActive CEO Stephen Studd (left) with Sean Holt signing the MoU

IMSPA chief executive officer Sean Holt said: "Working with the SkillsActive Group, we look forward to delivering inspiring professional development programmes for the workforce of tomorrow."

Rugby union faces £1.1m funding reduction

PETE HAYMAN

Sport England has confirmed that it has reduced the funding available to the Rugby Football Union (RFU) by nearly £1.1m.

The decision, which also affects the Rugby Football Union for Women (RFUW), has come

after research uncovered a fall in participation and following talks between the funding agency and the national governing body.

According to Sport England's *Active People Survey*, participation numbers in rugby union have decreased over the last two years.

New £2.2m tennis centre opens in Telford

PETE HAYMAN

A new £2.2m pay and play community tennis centre has opened in Telford – the first phase of the new Oakengates Sports and Learning Community development.

Launched on 9 April, the facility boasts four indoor and four outdoor courts and will work with local schools and parks to deliver a family tennis programme for all ages.

Telford and Wrekin Council has appointed FirstPoint Tennis Coaching to provide coaching sessions and competitions at Telford Tennis Centre.



© COURTESY OF FIRSTPOINT

The venue's track will be resurfaced this summer

Bright future for London's Herne Hill Velodrome

PETE HAYMAN

Herne Hill Velodrome – the last surviving venue from the 1948 Olympic Games – is facing a brighter future after the terms of a new 15-year lease agreement were finalised.

Site owner Dulwich Estates has reached a deal with British Cycling to enable work to start on the resurfacing of the venue's track, which is set to take place this summer.

In February, the national governing body revealed that concept designs had been drawn up by Mike Taylor of Hopkins, the architects behind the 2012 velodrome.

Anson and Jagger appointed to BOA board

PETE HAYMAN

Andy Anson, CEO of England's 2018 FIFA World Cup bid, and commercial lawyer Denise Jagger have joined the British Olympic Association's (BOA) board.

In addition to his role with England's failed 2018 bid, Anson has also worked at the ATP men's professional tennis tour and Manchester United Football Club.

Meanwhile, Jagger comes from a background in corporate finance and was also a member of the team that helped revive Asda before its acquisition by Walmart.

SkillsActive unveils new officiating standards

PETE HAYMAN

SkillsActive, the sector skills council for sport and active leisure, has teamed up with Sports Officials UK to launch a new set of occupational standards for officiating.

The National Standards for Officiating have been drawn up in order to help boost umpiring and refereeing excellence across a wide range of sports at every level.

It is hoped that the standards from SkillsActive and Sports Officials UK are to assist with the design of officials' courses and other development activities.



FOR ACTIVE LEISURE

Members of the public can now use the complex

2012 white water venue opens to public users

PETE HAYMAN

Lee Valley White Water Centre in Waltham Cross, Hertfordshire, is the first London 2012 venue to open to the public.

Morrison Construction built the venue, with S&P Architects working as the delivery designers for the project. Lee Valley Regional Park Authority will own and run the centre before and after the Games.

Facilities include a 300m competition course; a 160m intermediate/training course; and a FaulknerBrowns Architects-designed facility building.

£13.5m Birmingham pool scheme moves forward

PETE HAYMAN

Birmingham City Council's cabinet is to move forward with proposals for a new £13.5m swimming pool in Sparkhill.

Members backed the launch of a competitive tender process for the design, build and management of the new facility.

A 25m, six-lane pool, a learner pool, a dance studio, a 70-station adult gym and a 20-station junior gym are proposed.

Councillors are also hopeful that savings can be made from the £13.5m estimate. The tender process will launch in July.

Kids 'shunning' physical activity

PETE HAYMAN

New research to mark the launch of the Tata Kids of Steel triathlon initiative has found that nearly four-fifths of UK children spend their free time watching television.

A survey of 1,500 young people aged between six and 15 – commissioned by Tata Steel in partnership with British Triathlon – revealed only a third played sport.

The study also found that 56 per cent surfed the internet; 45 per cent used social networks; and 43 per cent played video games, rather than participating in physical activity. It was also revealed that 15 per cent of children questioned admitted being unable to swim, while one in ten young people said they could not ride a bicycle.

It comes as Tata Steel has pledged to provide more than 50,000 young people aged between



PHOTO: SHOWN BY BUSINESS IN ASSOCIATION WITH BIRNOR.COM

The study found that a third of children play sport in their leisure time

eight and 13 with the opportunity to take part in a triathlon. This summer will see the initiative visit 18 UK locations.

Karl Köhler, chief executive officer of Tata Steel in Europe, said: "This research has highlighted a number of important issues which we hope Tata Kids of Steel will help to address."

Olympic Torch Relay route announced

PETE HAYMAN

Nearly 75 locations across the UK have been revealed as forming part of the route for next summer's Olympic Torch Relay by the organisers of the 2012 Games.

The itinerary was unveiled by the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games (LOCOG) and is also set to include visits to the UK's six island territories.

On 18 May next year, the Olympic Flame is due to arrive from Greece and will embark on a 70-day tour presented by Coca-Cola, Lloyds TSB and Samsung.

The route will start at Land's End, Cornwall, on 19 May and will move through Devon into South Wales within the first week. The relay



The first 74 locations to form part of the 70-day tour have been named

will eventually end in London in late July. Meanwhile, LOCOG has also confirmed that discussions are underway between "relevant parties" with a view to including Dublin, Ireland, in the Olympic Flame's itinerary.

ICC to 'revisit' 2015 World Cup decision

PETE HAYMAN

Plans for a Cricket World Cup in 2015 comprising just the Full Members are to be "revisited" by the International Cricket Council (ICC).

ICC president Sharad Pawar has called on the executive board to re-examine the issue

when it meets in Hong Kong in June, after protests from associate and affiliate nations.

Under the new format for the 2015 tournament, teams including Ireland and the Netherlands will not be able to compete despite having done so in the previous two events.

Leeds: Sandwell plans approved

PETE HAYMAN

A £30.6m wellbeing centre in Leeds and a £15m leisure, health and social care facility in Sandwell are among four private finance initiative (PFI) schemes to be given the green light by the government.

The Department of Health has confirmed support for the projects, which are designed to provide community social care and health facilities.

Plans for Holt Park Active Living Centre are being overseen by Leeds City Council through the local education partnership and Interserve Project Services.

Mentor – a partnership between GHM Rock Townsend and FaulknerBrowns – are behind the designs of the facility, which will boast a 25m swimming pool and teaching pool. A hydrotherapy pool, a Bodyline gym, and a large activity hall are also proposed.



The £30.6m Holt Park Active Living Centre has received the green light

In Sandwell, the £15m Portway Lifestyle Centre will be built on the site of Oldbury Leisure Centre and will be a centre of excellence for disabled and able-bodied people.

Due to open in 2013, it will incorporate a four-court sports hall, a hydrotherapy pool, a climbing wall, a dance studio and a gym.

FA appoints QC to probe FIFA allegations

PETE HAYMAN

QC James Dingemans is to carry out an independent probe into allegations made against four FIFA officials by former Football Association (FA) chair Lord Triesman.

Claims of misconduct on the part of the officials were made under Parliamentary privilege before the culture, media and sport committee on 10 May in relation to the failed bid to bring the 2018 World Cup to England.

Dingemans have compiled an independent report, which was submitted to the FA and FIFA. Due for completion by 27 May, the review's evidence was also made public.

Lord Triesman's claims were made against Jack Warner, Nicolas Leoz, Ricardo Teixeira



Lord Triesman's allegations were made against four senior FIFA officials

and Worawi Makudi. When asked if he had reported his concerns to FIFA when the alleged misconduct occurred, Lord Triesman said: "In retrospect, we would have burned off our chances [of hosting the 2018 World Cup]."

Ebbw Vale sports centre plans approved

PETE HAYMAN

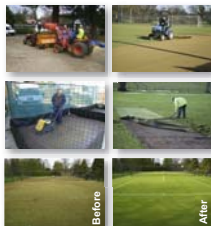
A new multi-million pound sports centre is to be developed at The Works: Ebbw Vale after the proposals were given the green light.

Blaenau Gwent Council's planning officials approved plans for the Cold Mill Plateau site,

after the scheme was initially given the backing of the executive committee in January.

Due to replace the ageing Ebbw Vale Sports Centre, the new complex will boast a 25m, six-lane competition swimming pool, a fitness zone, a weights area and a dance area.

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FA launches new Women's Super League competition

PETE HAYMAN

The Football Association (FA) has launched a semi-professional competition for women – the Women's Super League (WSL).

Chelsea Ladies played Arsenal Ladies in the inaugural game of the league on 13 April, which took place at Tooting and Mitcham United Football Club's ground and was screened live on ESPN television.

In addition to Chelsea and Arsenal, six other teams will compete in 14 rounds of matches – Birmingham, Bristol, Doncaster, Everton, Liverpool and Lincoln.



The venue boasts Essex's first Olympic-size pool

Final cost of hosting 2012 Games 'going down'

PETE HAYMAN

New figures published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) have shown a £35m drop in the anticipated final cost (AFC) of hosting the 2012 Games.

According to the government's *May 2011 Quarterly Economic Report*, the overall funding package for next summer's event remains at nearly £9.3bn.

However, the AFC of the Olympic Delivery Authority programme now stands at £7.266bn – a decrease from the £7.301bn revealed in February's quarterly figures.

Study: Parents 'concerned' about children's fitness

PETE HAYMAN

A quarter of parents and guardians are worried that kids are not taking part in enough physical activity, according to the Lloyds TSB National School Sport Week survey.

More than four-fifths (81 per cent) said they believe sport plays an important role in a child's development, while 92 per cent fully back their kids taking part in sport.

The survey – commissioned to explore attitudes of adults with school-age kids – comes ahead of the Lloyds TSB National School Sport Week from 27 June-1 July.

Glenrothes contractor named

PETE HAYMAN

Graham Construction is to build a £21m sports and leisure centre in Glenrothes, which will replace the existing Fife Institute for Physical and Recreational Education.

Designed by B3 Architects and Crea8 Architecture, the facility will be delivered in stages to ensure minimal disruption to services during the construction process.

The new complex will comprise a 25m x 17m, eight-lane swimming pool with a viewing gallery for 250 spectators.

A 20m x 10m training pool with moveable floor, a 11m x 5m teaching and remedial pool, a strength and conditioning studio and an 80-station gym will be among the facilities.

Meanwhile, a waterside changing area with adjoining health suite, a regional-standard, eight-badminton court sports hall and an



The new Glenrothes facility will include an 25m x 17m swimming pool

aerobics studio are also planned, in addition to outdoor facilities such as an enhanced athletics track and a full-size synthetic turf pitch.

Graham Construction regional director Neil McFarlane said: "The new sports and leisure facility will provide the people of Fife with an important and stunning civic amenity."

Big Splash swimming campaign launches

PETE HAYMAN

Big Splash, a new campaign to increase the number of people swimming and to help improve the nation's health, has been unveiled by British Swimming and the BBC.

The initiative aims to encourage the UK's existing 13 million swimmers and inspire more to take up the sport, as well as helping to improve water safety and save lives.

It is believed that a fifth of adults are unable to swim and a fifth of kids leave primary school unable to swim – two statistics that Big Splash aims to change.

British Swimming chief executive David Sparkes said: "The Big Splash is part of our ongoing drive to increase the participation in swimming. It's got fantastic health benefits



British Swimming hopes the campaign will help increase participation

and it saves lives. Working with the pools and the BBC, we expect to see many more people getting active as we move towards the greatest sporting event in the world, the Olympic Games, coming to London next year."

Pick Everard to work on grassroots scheme

PETE HAYMAN

Pick Everard has been appointed by Sport England to provide procurement support as part of a new £135m grassroots scheme.

The company will work with the funding agency on the Places People Play programme

in a bid to help meet Olympic and Paralympic legacy goals from the London Games.

Pick Everard will be tasked with developing a number of national framework deals that will guide the selection of specialist contractors to deliver modernisation/expansion schemes.

Welsh football centre planned

PETE HAYMAN

A new purpose-built football training facility is to be built at the Newport International Sports Village (NISV) under plans unveiled by the Football Association of Wales (FAW).

Working with the Welsh Football Trust (WFT) and Newport City Council, the FAW has earmarked a location at the NISV's National Velodrome for the scheme.

Dedicated facilities for all FAW and WFT's representative squads and a Centre of Excellence for coach education and sports science are proposed, along with a training facility for international and professional teams visiting Wales.

FAW chief executive Jonathan Ford said: "It has taken us 18 months from agreeing the principle of developing a National Football Centre to deciding that NISV is an ideal site location.



The NISV site has been earmarked for the new national football centre

We visited a number of possible locations and spoke to several potential partners who were interested in helping us deliver the project."

WFT chief executive Neil Ward added: "In time we also hope to build an indoor centre which, together with the 3G artificial pitch, will also be available for community use."

INDUSTRY COMMENT



Brigid Simmonds, chair of the Sport and Recreation Alliance

Governance is one of those things we all know is important but often find difficult to grasp.

But imagine something goes catastrophically wrong at your organisation. A big event fails; some money goes missing; a leading board member lets the organisation down. It's terrible, whatever it is, and for a while it is the most important thing in your professional world. And afterwards, you put measures in place to stop it happening again or to deal with it if it does. Those measures are governance.

Behind almost every significant crisis within an organisation there lies a failure of governance. That means that, at some time, the right processes weren't in place to check, to scrutinise, to provide a balance, to ask the right people or to set an issue in its proper context. And that is why it is so important to have good governance in place before the crisis arises. Equally, behind almost every successful organisation lies good governance structures – and that is no coincidence.

At our conference in May, the Sport and Recreation Alliance launched the Voluntary Code of Good Governance for the Sport and Recreation Sector. The Code offers organisations an insight into what good governance looks like in a sporting context by taking the good practice used in other spheres and making it relevant to them. Its most important feature is that it has been developed by the sector, for the sector. It has not been imposed but instead sport has come together to set up its own standards.

Over the next few months we will help to embed the Code by releasing guidance on its principles and hosting a number of events. Our goal is to encourage as many members as possible to commit to the Code and help themselves to become ever more successful.

SkillsActive welcomes new SPELG report

PETE HAYMAN

A new report from leading sport and active leisure industry employers, which outlines future skills requirements needed to ensure continued growth, has been welcomed by the SkillsActive Group.

The study – from the Skills Protocol Employer Leadership Group (SPELG) in Physical Activity, Sport and Active Leisure – also aims to help the sector have a "direct impact" on wider public health issues.

Over the coming four years, SPELG aims to establish a single qualification structure led by employers, as well as working towards the need for all employees to hold a skills passport.

SPELG will also support the inception of the new Chartered Institute for the Management



The report aims to help the sector have a "direct impact" on wider issues

of Sport and Physical Activity. Meanwhile, SkillsActive has been identified as a "key influencer and driver of change" in the report and its management said its aims complemented the sector skills council's own targets.

Glamorgan unveils 'Kids Go Free' policy

PETE HAYMAN

Glamorgan County Cricket Club (GCCC) has removed entry fees for children aged 16 and under to all domestic games this summer.

The club said the move aims to encourage as many young supporters as possible to attend,

and it started with the LV County Championship match with Gloucestershire on 14 April.

GCCC's Kids Go Free policy will also cover all Friends Life Twenty20 and CB40 limited overs matches, as well as LV County Championship fixtures during the season.



Tim Hollingsworth named BPA CEO

The British Paralympic Association (BPA) has appointed former UK Sport chief operating officer, Tim Hollingsworth, as its CEO.

He was chosen for his business acumen, leadership skills, knowledge of the sporting landscape and experience in managing and influencing complex stakeholder relationships, gained through his previous roles at UK Sport, Granada Media and the Confederation of British Industry.

Hollingsworth says: "With not much more than a year to go before London 2012, there's a tremendous opportunity to maximise our athletes' success and drive a step-change in Paralympic sport and its ability to impact on attitudes and change people's lives."



Newton to review British Fencing

Alex Newton, the first person to take the full-time role of performance manager at British Fencing, has pledged a fundamental review of the sport in the run up to London 2012.

Newton, who brings experience of both the Sydney and Beijing Olympic Games, says she will be reviewing the whole performance programme – including science and medicine, competitions and training programmes to ensure the focus is on the right things and the right athletes.

She has been appointed in time to oversee athlete qualification for 2012 and the senior European Championships – held in Sheffield in July.

New events director for Olympic legacy

The Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) has appointed Clive Little as its new director of events and programming.

Reporting to executive marketing and communications director Karen Webb, Little will be responsible for a range of activities earmarked for the Olympic Park from 2013.

He joined the OPLC from his previous role as global events director at Cake – an ideas and experiential events agency, part of the Havas Sports and Entertainment Group.

Little said: "We have already begun to map out opportunities so we can have a fantastic programme of activities when the park re-opens in 2013."



"This summer we will be calling for applications of expressions of interest to host events ranging from major events to local community festivals on the park."



Reed chairs Sport and Recreation Alliance

Andy Reed has been appointed as the new chair of the Sport and Recreation Alliance. He succeeds Brigid Simmonds OBE who will step down at the organisation's AGM in July, having reached the end of a maximum of three two-year terms of office.

Reed has a strong background in the sector, having served arguably the UK's sportiest constituency – Loughborough – for 13 years. As an MP he served as Parliamentary Private Secretary to Kate Hoey while she was Sports Minister and also introduced the 10 Minute Rule Bill for Community Amateur Sports Club legislation. Now director of his own advocacy company, he leads his local county sports partnership, is chair of the voice

of sports volunteers (SSPV) and of the Volleyball England Foundation, as well as a board member of Special Olympics GB and of the ASA. He also continues to turn out for Birstall Rugby Club where he has played for the last 25 years.

"I've got to pay tribute to the work of the current chair, Brigid Simmonds. She has led the Sport and Recreation Alliance from the front and, like nearly every volunteer in sport, has rarely had the plaudits she's deserved. The Alliance does its best work out of the public eye – building bridges and opening doors – and Brigid has played a massive part in that. I know, having seen that work in and around parliament over the last few years from the inside," says Reed.



James Bulley

Karen Maxwell talks to LOCOG's director of venues and infrastructure about his role as London 2012 disability champion

How are you preparing the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic venues?

We want to ensure the athletes, spectators and the media have the best Games experience possible by planning how these groups will access the venues, safely move around and enjoy the event, while also delivering the best possible facilities for those who are working at the venue.

During the coming year, we'll be testing simulations to ensure we get it right come Games time. We are currently procuring the overlay – such as seats, tents, furniture, fences and sport surfaces – and the majority of these will be installed at venues from next spring.

What does your role of disability champion at LOCOG entail?

I'm responsible for championing disability across the organisation, by promoting diversity and inclusion at work and helping to ensure that LOCOG is as diverse as possible.

I also attend disability events, such as the launch of our disability pin badge and our Diversity and Inclusion board meetings to ensure that disability is high on the agenda.

What lessons have been learned from other Olympic events?

It's been important for us to speak to previous Organising Committees

about what they have done at both the Olympic and Paralympic Games in terms of disability issues, to ensure that we can both learn from their experience and also emulate some of the successful guidelines they implemented.

We have also spoken with a wide range of disability organisations about what disabled spectators would want to have in our venues to ensure an enjoyable Games-time experience.

The Paralympic Games are completely integrated into the Olympic Games – we have one budget, one organising committee and one senior management team for both Games. This means that we can ensure that everything works for everyone involved in both Games.

How have disability issues been addressed for London 2012?

Our aim is to provide a range of services and ticket products for disabled people – tailored to their needs, rather than a 'one size fits all' approach. We want to ensure that disabled spectators have as great an experience as anyone else and we are committed to providing services and facilities that meet all accessibility requirements.

We recently announced Olympic Games' ticket products that meet a variety of accessibility requirements. Tickets will be available at every venue, in every session and across all price categories.

When applying for a ticket, spectators can indicate an additional accessibility need, such as a seat accessed by fewer steps for those who find stairs difficult; a seat on the end of a row for those who need extra room; a seat with a direct view of video information screens for people who are deaf or hearing impaired; or a seat close to the action for visually impaired people.

We will also provide free blue badge parking spaces at all venues; accessible shuttle bus options; a free mobility service to loan out manual wheelchairs and scooters; facilities for assistance dogs, audio description and induction loops; an adult changing toilet which includes a hoist at all venues; and spectator information in accessible formats.

What staff training will be given to enhance spectators' experience?

Volunteers – or Games Makers will go through three sets of training – orientation, role-specific and in-venue training.

At these sessions, they will gain an insight into the Olympic and Paralympic Games, the sports, venues and life as a London 2012 volunteer. Role specific training will allow volunteers to learn everything they need to carry out their role at Games time – from skills and knowledge to how they can best represent London 2012. Finally, comprehensive in-venue training will help the volunteers get to know their venue and find out about the activities that will take place there during the Games, as well as key information such as transport points and disabled access points.

We have spoken to a wide range of disability organisations about what disabled spectators would want to have in our venues

Page and Allen elected at SAPCA AGM

At the Sport and Play Construction Association's (SAPCA) fourteenth AGM, held last month, Eric Page was elected as the association's new chair, succeeding Tony Hession. Nigel Allen was elected vice-chair at the same event.

Page has been in the sports surfacing industry since 1975. He worked for En-tout-cas as both accountant and contracts manager, before forming tennis court specialists Courtstall Services in 1985.

Page says that two of his main objectives will be to ensure the successful completion of SAPCA's strategic review and to continue to strengthen the association's new quality assurance programme.

Allen also brings more than 30 years' industry experience to his new role. He joined Charles Lawrence after graduating as a surveyor and is now a director and shareholder of the Charles Lawrence group of sports and play companies, all of which are SAPCA members. These include Playtop Licensing, Charles Lawrence International and Replay Maintenance.

As well as their wealth of technical knowledge and industry experience, both



SAPCA chair Eric Page will oversee the association's strategic review during his tenure

Page and Allen have been closely involved in the industry's trade bodies since the 1980s.

In addition to these appointments, SAPCA's board of directors also welcomed three other newly-elected members at the AGM: George Mullan of Support in Sport (UK); Mark Murfitt of Murfitt Industries; and Steve Roby of DCM Projects.

Commenting on his new role, Page said: "I will take a very positive lead in tackling the key issues that face the industry and look forward to working closely with Nigel and all the directors to ensure that the association meets the needs of its members and the marketplace – in what are clearly challenging times."

Aston Villa FC Sport Facility Construction event

SAPCA's free, one-day Sports Facility Construction Exhibition and Seminar is set to take place at Aston Villa FC in Birmingham on 7 June.

The event offers a programme of informative seminars, which will provide guidance on the delivery of new and upgraded sports facilities. An accompanying exhibition will feature specialist constructors of sports facilities, suppliers of related products and services and professional consultants offering expert advice on sports facility projects.

There will also be a special focus on the provision of facilities for football, in collaboration with The Football Association.

The seminars will be of interest across a wide range of sports and will include:

- National sports facility strategy and funding
- How to make a successful application for project funding
- Understanding the planning system
- Selecting the right sports surface
- Cost effective renovation and upgrading of existing sports facilities

- Successful sports lighting
- Raising standards of natural sports turf
- Design options for stadium redevelopment
- The selection of indoor sports surfaces
- Structures for indoor sport
- The design, selection and maintenance of sports facility equipment
- Ten steps to successful sports project management

The accompanying football seminar programme will examine the key issues for the development and use of synthetic turf pitches and will include:

- The FA's facility strategy
 - The development of synthetic turf surfaces for football
 - The FIFA-quality latest research on player biomechanics
 - Using performance analysis to assess and compare the playing of the game
 - The financial viability of synthetic pitches
 - Design options for the construction of a synthetic turf pitch
 - The maintenance of synthetic turf pitches.
- Register online at www.sapca.org.uk



The event will offer a seminar on the synthetic turf surfaces for football



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Leo Gryner

The CEO of Rio 2016 talks exclusively to Karen Maxwell on how the Games' transformation plans will deliver broader aspirations for the long-term future of Rio, Brazil and South America



Just the name Rio de Janeiro conjures up an image of sun, sea and a carnival atmosphere – the perfect party ingredients for the Olympic and Paralympic Games when they arrive at the South American city in five years' time.

Rio 2016 CEO Leonardo Gryner smiles at the thought, perhaps pleased that Brazilian marketers of past and present have done well to promote this image worldwide. "The party planning has already begun," he says, "but in a broader sense we want the Games to convey a feeling of celebration for everybody involved, to ensure that all our partners benefit from a fantastic experience."

First and foremost, the plan is to celebrate the athletes "who'll showcase sport in our world-class, city-based venues," Gryner says. To ensure they also share the Rio experience he says the plan is to create Rio's typical 'Carioca' street life within the Athletes Village. Located just 1km away from 17km of beautiful Baha ocean coastline, a section of the beach will be cordoned off exclusively for athletes' use.

With further plans to spread Rio's culture and party atmosphere across the world, Gryner says that US\$45m (£27.7m) has already been pledged to fund the

installation of five 'live sites' [fan zones] across Brazil and at least two in each continent during the Games period. "These 'live sites' will also showcase our sponsors and business partners by offering corporate spaces and allow for public interaction," he says.

Knowledge transfer

Former TV producer, director of sports and director of sports marketing at Globo TV – Brazil's leading TV network, Gryner brings more than 40 years of Olympic Games' experience to the role he took on in May last year. Prior to that he was communications and marketing director for the Rio bid and held the same position for Rio's successful hosting of the 2007 Pan American Games.

However, he appreciates the increasing level of complexity the Games' hosts have taken on in recent years. "Back in 1976, at the Montreal Olympics, there was much more integration between the athletes, the media and the spectators – compared to the complex logistics and security measures needed today," he says. "The sheer number of athletes, journalists, rights holders and spectators at recent Games presents complicated challenges unique to each host nation's

environment. In TV alone, you're talking about 3,000 to 5,000 people working on the host broadcasting – not to mention the rights holders."

"Knowledge transfer is a very important part of the planning procedure," he explains. "We've relied on information coming from London 2012 to help organise the ceremonies, assess the telecom requirements and establish ticketing procedures – to name a few."

Reflecting on the impact of previous Games, he says that the Sydney Games were fantastic for people involvement, Beijing's precision was inspiring and he's in no doubt that London will be amazing – but insists that Rio will have a unique flavour of its own.

Emerging economy

With its bid to host the FIFA 2014 World Cup already secured, the city's successful 2016 Olympic bid mark the first time the Olympic and Paralympic Games will be staged in South America and is testament to Brazil's growing presence on the world's economic stage.

Set to record an economic growth of more than 7 per cent this year and between 5-6 per cent in the years leading up to 2014, Brazil's central bank has

Maracanã is one of four cluster zones earmarked for Olympic development



Of the 34 venues, 18 are already operational, eight will be redeveloped, seven will be temporary and nine will be constructed for permanent legacy



estimated that foreign investment for this year will climb to US\$55bn (£33.9bn). Social progress is accompanying this growth too. From 2003 to 2009 some 30 million Brazilian citizens have risen to join the middle classes and similar numbers are expected to follow in the next few years.

Gryner attributes some of Rio's success in winning the bid to new levels of co-operation between the federal, state and municipal governments in the country. "For many years Brazil was viewed to be in opposition to the central government so we suffered from a lack of investment," he explains. "However, thanks to this new-found relationship, many infrastructure and social projects are now beginning to take shape."

Around US\$15bn (£9.2bn) in funding – most from the federal government – means that close to 100 per cent of projects to improve infrastructure, particularly in the transport sector, are now being undertaken in readiness for the Games. "This is the combination of two budgets," Gryner explains. "US\$11.6bn (£7.1bn) for the sporting infrastructure and US\$2.8bn (£1.7bn) for the staging of the Games."

According to Gryner, the amount of sponsorship money raised would be capped at US\$1.2bn (£74m), which would ensure that no additional finance would

be needed from the government to run the event. He also stressed that this figure would not be surpassed because the organisers "are not motivated by profits".

"Two deals involving top tier partners in banking and telecommunications have already raised more than US\$600m (£370m) so we still need to raise one-third of the target," he says, adding that he would rather "reduce the number of sponsors to reduce clutter and make it better value for partners."

Admitting that the funding estimate was indeed higher than those submitted by the other 2016 bidding nations, Gryner says the bidding committee was careful to include as many hidden extras as possible in its original figures. "It was difficult to estimate the price of building materials when the bid's budget was calculated in 2008," he says. "But we've planned for inflation along the way and added extras, such as the likely desire to paint the outside of the airport as 2016 draws near."

Meanwhile, a Sao Paulo business school for the Brazilian Sports Ministry

has projected that staging the Games could inject US\$51.1bn (£31.5bn) into the region and add 120,000 jobs annually towards 2016.

Inspired bidding

With Brazil having played host to the South American Games in 2002 and the Pan American Games in 2007, Gryner says winning the right to host the Olympic and Paralympic Games [notwithstanding the additional accolade of hosting the FIFA World Cup in 2014] was the country's biggest prize of all.

Inspired by Barcelona's urban transformation when the Spanish city hosted the 1992 Games, Rio bid (unsuccessfully) to host the 2004 Games, then held back from the 2008 Games to learn from hosting the Pan American Games, before focusing more intently on 2016.

"Transformation became a buzz word for us in the bidding process as hosting the Olympics offered the opportunity to 'transform' our sporting environment, our city and Brazil's image worldwide."

Staging the Games could inject US\$51.1bn (£31.5bn) into the region and add 120,000 jobs annually towards 2016



"The city hadn't witnessed urban renewal for 75 years, so we highlighted the proposed transformation of the city's port area, including the terminals and the three neighbourhoods within, as well as the development of new transport links to the new sports facilities. With this objective in mind we actually developed some sporting facilities to Olympic standard when we won the Pan American Games," he says.

After years of under-investment, Gryner says a key advantage of securing these major sporting events has been to allow Brazil a platform on which to accelerate the development of its sporting infrastructure, its marketing programmes – to help support sport – and an elite performance programme for budding athletes.

In fact, Gryner says the country is already acting upon its legacy commitments from the Pan American Games, with the setting up of an annual School Games Tournament, which he says now involves millions of children across the country. He says the challenge now is to work towards ensuring a minimum standard of regular, compulsory PE lessons in all the country's schools through the Brazilian Ministry of Education.

Transforming the city

Rio's 2016 competition venues will be clustered in four zones – Barra, Copacabana, Deodoro and Maracanã. Of the 34 competition venues, of which 18 are already operational, eight will undergo



Left: Stadium built for 2007 Pan American Games. Above and right: Envisaged transformation of the city's port area. Below left: Olympic sport on Baha beach

extended development, seven will be temporary structures and nine will be constructed as permanent legacy venues.

They will be connected to a high-performance transport system that will enable almost half of the athletes to reach their venues in less than 10 minutes and the rest in under 25 minutes.

Regarding the facility design, Gryner says that since hosting the South American Games in 2002, Brazil has been on a "journey of education" in the design and development of effective, sustainable, sports facilities. "For example, a Brazilian architect helped design sports facilities for the Vancouver 2010 Winter Olympic facilities, another worked in Delhi for the 2010 Commonwealth Games and there's one working in London towards 2012.

"Of course this collaboration works both ways. Australian architects John Baker Associates, direct from the Sydney Olympics, worked on facilities for the Pan American Games."

Another major legacy that came out of the Pan American Games was the transformation of the whole security system in Rio, which has now been adapted into a new way of policing throughout the country. "This included restructuring policing methods, the use of forensic evidence and



the dismissal of 'bad' cops. The result of which has seen crime rates drop substantially, in the past four years, and the area become much safer," Gryner says.

Spreading the impact

Already a major hub for sports provision in South America, particularly in the popular sports of football, volleyball, swimming, judo and sailing, Gryner says that elite athletes from the surrounding area already train in Brazil. So the new Olympic facilities and corresponding performance programmes will enhance elite development throughout the region.

"The foreign office has instigated a sport scholarship programme to fund talented athletes from South America and Africa to train in Brazil, and we also have coaching links where Brazilian coaches mentor sports coaches in other countries," he says.

Regarding service providers for the Games, Gryner says that Brazil and other South American countries are members of a common market in the region and companies within this partnership are encouraged to bid to service the Games.

"The Games will bring social, economic and sporting benefit to Brazil and open up many opportunities for our South American neighbours, but the biggest benefactors will be our children," he says. "Education is now high on the agenda and improving the quality of education for everyone – particularly the underprivileged. And one way to attract the youth into school is through sport."



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Everybody's Talking About ...

The future of sport in the Big Society



The coalition government's Big Society agenda will have a significant impact on both the public and voluntary sectors in sport.

The power shift from government to community will bring opportunities for society to have a greater say on the design, development and delivery of

key services. However, with this comes shared responsibilities to meet the needs of communities, develop a more creative way of thinking and work through the bureaucratic barriers.

Karen Maxwell talks to key industry experts to ask what needs to be done to make it work.

Ian Cooper, director,
Ian Cooper Associates



A new government – a new challenge to local government sport and recreation departments. Sport and recreation employees have shown themselves to be responsive and resilient in interpreting and responding to government initiatives. Since 1988 they have met the challenges of Compulsive Competitive Tendering, Best Value, Comprehensive Performance Assessments and Local Area Agreements by the dozen. Staff have been excellent at reworking programmes to meet key requirements of new legislation.

We start from a position of strength with many exceptional programmes and skilled managers. We have the continuing support of the County Sports Partnerships and operational experiences from a wide range of mass participation/volunteer driven sports events. The sports trusts too are making an impact in the sector with their support of sports development. The government is doing its bit by introducing more grants, some yet to be defined. So far so good. But I have concerns about the ability of sport and recreation staff to meet Big Society requirements.

First, sports staff now work in small teams often in a corner of a larger department without a specialised senior officer who has 'clout' where it matters. Second, direct grant aid and resources to advise on funding applications have been reduced. Councils have less resources to directly support Big Society programmes.

Finally, the Active People Surveys show that sports volunteering is static or decreasing slightly. Capacity and increased commitment in this sector remains a major issue for local government to resolve. Reliable volunteers are hard to find and retain. Hard economic times result in an understandable 'job first' attitude.

Solution? Money and political commitment again – councils need to show commitment to programmes and in-house staff if the Big Society programmes are to be delivered.

Justin Davis Smith, Chief Executive
of Volunteering England



In many ways, community sport is ahead of the Big Society agenda. The vast majority of opportunities to participate in sport are delivered by grassroots sports clubs who are almost wholly reliant upon a voluntary workforce of up to two million adults. There is also much evidence to suggest that sport delivers wider benefits such as improved health, reduced crime and greater social cohesion.

The Big Society will highlight the great work that is already happening in community sport and encourage others to get involved by removing the bureaucracy that can get in the way. But this won't happen on its own; there is a need for greater recognition of the importance of investment in volunteer management and support services to enable volunteering to flourish.

To keep people engaged in sport, clubs must provide a high quality, enjoyable sporting experience. At the same time, they are faced with complex issues around club management, such as community asset transfer, facility management and safeguarding, increasing the need to recruit skilled volunteers from outside of sport. High quality volunteer management will be crucial both in helping clubs to retain existing volunteers and in attracting new ones. National governing bodies will have an important role to play here, but so too will volunteer centres, which can advise on the best ways to recruit and support volunteers from non-sporting backgrounds. In recognition of this, Volunteering England is recruiting a number of volunteer centre sporting champions to provide clubs with the support they need.

The 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games offer a unique opportunity to showcase the value of sport and volunteering to our communities, so it is vital that we continue to make the case for long-term investment in the people and organisations that will drive volunteering in sport forward.



Volunteers in sport allow young people to discover a passion for sport and to connect with adults within their community

Dr Peter Thomond, director of strategy and innovation, SportInspired



Inspired by the impact of the Shoreditch Sharks, a kids rugby club in Hackney, Rich Raynes and I founded SportInspired in 2008 – a social enterprise dedicated to building healthier, happier communities by leveraging the power of sport and the talent and the resources of businesses.

- SportInspired has pioneered a community engagement process called Community Games, which offers:
- fun, local, multi-sport festivals where hundreds of local school children compete in at least eight different sports
 - sports coached by local sports clubs and providers who in turn recruit new members and increase their profile
 - games are delivered in partnership by local young leaders and corporate volunteers
 - free entry, as we provide them as a volunteering or team-building service to corporate partners

By the end of 2011, SportInspired's Community Games will have touched the lives of 25,000 individuals; hundreds of community sports clubs will have new recruits and better profiles and thousands of young people will have benefited from discovering or rediscovering a passion for sport and connecting with adults in their community.

The government's Big Society agenda simply builds upon the rich tradition of community sport and people giving time, talent and resources.

Stepping up for your community should be the norm rather than the exception. We believe that old models of sport or community development, based entirely upon charity and taxpayers cash are not working or broken, which is why we need innovative individuals and social enterprises to challenge the assumptions of market failure and create new ways of delivering the positive social outcomes of sport.

Richard Yule, CEO, England Table Tennis Association



I think sport is already a classic example of the Big Society in action as we know that 25 percent of all volunteering is done in sport.

However, my issue is with the current delivery system – particularly through the local authority leisure and the education sectors – which I believe could and should be more voluntary club friendly.

The Active People Survey results are giving us proof that despite the big investment in sport during the last 30 years – in terms of the numbers of professionals working in the sector and the expansion of local authority and private sector facilities – we've not seen what we hoped for in terms of an increase in participation. Too much of the available resources are being spent on sustaining the existing local authority infrastructure (particularly in the pay and play model) and not enough on encouraging voluntary-run community sports clubs.

Certainly in my own sport the bulk of our voluntary table tennis club infrastructure does not take place in local authority sports centres or schools because cost is a major issue and too often opportunities for social interaction are limited.

It's just as important what goes on off the court of play as it is on it. We are social animals and increases in participation seem to be coming from the engagement in sports and recreation from a social and recreational stance rather than through the traditional sports development model.

We need to look at a different delivery system, which encourages asset transfer to voluntary clubs and encourages local authorities to commission and incentivise new and existing sports clubs to deliver attractive and affordable sport and recreation programmes to young people and 'hard to reach groups'. By increasing the reach of re-energized voluntary club infrastructure we will build social capital and society will reap the benefits.



Why do young people stop participating in sport?

Chris Cutforth reviews a recent SIRC seminar, which highlighted research findings on why the so called 'Wolfenden Gap' between school and community participation isn't narrowing

This feature gives a snapshot of what was discussed by UK practitioners and academics, who met at the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC) at Sheffield Hallam University to discuss the latest data on the drop-off in young people's sport participation.

Peter Taylor, professor of sport economics at SIRC, began by quoting directly from the original *Wolfenden Report* (CCPR's Sport and the Community Report, 1960). He referred to "a manifest break between, on the one hand, the participation in recreational physical activities which is normal for boys and girls at school and, on the other hand, their participation in similar activities some years later when they are more adult."

In the UK we've created a culture of physical inactivity among young people

GEMMA HART – SIRC research fellow focussed on the latest statistical evidence relating to sports participation among 16- to 19-year-olds taken from Sport England's Active People Surveys. Her headline findings included:

- Between 2005 and 2008 there was a statistically significant decrease in sports participation by 16- to 19-year-olds, despite the strong policy focus and investment of public funds during this period into sports programmes aimed at children and young people.
- During the same period, many traditional sports, which continue to receive large amounts of public funds, experienced significant decreases in participation.
- Individual type sports/activities (notably gym-based activities, running and cycling) are showing increasing popularity among young people.
- Sports including badminton and netball, which have developed new, informal participation programmes, appear to have been the most successful in encouraging and sustaining participation by young people.

TESS KAY, professor of sport and social sciences at Brunel University, considered the broader social and economic factors external to sport, which included:

- Britain today is a very diverse, divided and unequal society, socially and economically, with the gap between the most and the least affluent being the largest in Europe.
- In the UK we've created a culture of physical inactivity among young people influenced by the rapid growth of new technology. This is becoming embedded within the lifestyles of many young people (particularly those from the lower socio-economic groups) and is therefore very difficult to break.
- The full effects of the coalition government's anti-recession policies are still

to be seen. However, these effects will have a disproportionate impact on disadvantaged groups in society, including young people, in terms of job opportunities, skill development, income levels, general health and well-being.

- For many young people, sport will be low on their list of priorities when faced with these multiple challenges.

STEVE BULLOUGH, a research fellow at SIRC, highlighted the importance of consultation with young people.

Bullough's work, based on findings from four County Sports Partnerships (CSP), suggests that consultation does not always have to be creative to be effective. The most important thing is that consultation findings are acted on so young people can see and experience how their feedback has been used to create the right kind of opportunities for them to participate in sport. Conversely, a failure to act on consultation findings can generate cynicism and apathy among young people, which can lead to a disengagement from sports participation.

DR MARY NEVILL from the Institute of Youth Sport at Loughborough University described the results of a recent research study conducted on behalf of British Gymnastics into the drop-out of young people from the sport.

The findings presented some interesting challenges to gymnastics, most notably relating to coach education, facility provision, communication with parents and how to give young people more of a 'voice' in the running of their clubs.

How enlightening it was to see a national governing body (NGB) employing a research officer and commissioning research to inform future policy and practice. Perhaps this could be an example for other sports to follow?



Focussed resources on children at an early age may secure long-term outcomes in participation

RICHARD MOORE, a researcher at SIRC, presented a series of case studies on alternative activities developed as part of the Sport Unlimited programme.

All of these projects were designed to be more appealing and engaging to young people. The key messages to emerge from these case studies included: the importance of consultation; effective marketing; the value of rewards and incentives; establishing links to existing sports clubs or creating new clubs to sustain regular participation; suitable opportunities for competition and progression, including leadership opportunities; and the influence of positive role models in encouraging young people to participate in sport.

LAURA GREEN, a part-time lecturer and PhD student at Brunel University and part-time youth worker, described a small scale, action research project concerned with engaging 25 non-sporty young women in sport and physical activity.

The project involved securing the commitment of the young women to participate, then worked with the group to design a programme of activities based on their needs and preferences.

Key learning points included: the need for providers to understand the complex and multi-faceted reasons for disengagement by young women from sport and physical activity as a basis for re-engagement; the significance of language, in

particular the use of the terms 'sport' and 'exercise' which, for most of the women, had negative connotations; and the need to work at their own pace, which sometimes meant taking a step backwards, to enable the young women to deal with current issues which were more important in their own lives than taking part in sport.

SESSION DEBATES

During the day, delegates debated a wide range of issues. The notion of the 'deteriorating service environment' was mentioned, meaning that with recession and the unprecedented public expenditure cuts, it might be considered a success to stop the drop-out in participation from getting any bigger.

Several significant policy dilemmas were identified – most notably, which sports/activities to focus on and for what age groups? Does it make sense to focus resources on those sports that are in decline (and arguably need the support) or those sports showing signs of continued and increased popularity? Sport perhaps needs to learn from other areas of social policy (education, health and social services) which have focussed resources on children at an early age to secure long-term outcomes, albeit with limited success.

Does it make sense to focus resources on those sports that are in decline or those sports showing signs of continued and increased popularity?

The quality and styles of leadership were viewed as essential to engaging and retaining young people's involvement in sport. Linked to this was the need to build an 'experience package' rather than simply focussing on the activity itself. Research suggests this is vital to engaging many young people in sport.

It was thought that PE should be the foundation for participation in sport and physical activity in later life, but in reality this is often not the case. Concerns were also raised about reductions and reshaping of the professional infrastructure of school sport co-ordinators, primary link teachers, competition managers and further education sports co-ordinators, which delegates believed was vital in ensuring the continued provision of quality opportunities.

In this era of localism the future of this infrastructure will largely be determined locally. The question of strategic leadership and advocacy with government for PE and school sport was also raised and delegates expressed substantial uncertainty about who will play this important role in the future.

Chris Cutforth is senior lecturer in sport development, policy and management at Sheffield Hallam University

BASILDON SPORTING VILLAGE

David Thompson reviews the Essex-based, Olympic-standard sporting facility that's set to benefit both elite and community users

As London 2012 draws near, Essex is already enjoying its share of Olympic legacy. Saturday 30 April was the official opening day for Basildon Sporting Village, a £38m state-of-the-art sport and leisure complex, built on a scale matched by very few other sites in the UK.

With approved Pre-Games Training Camp status for Olympic athletics, boxing, fencing, judo, swimming, rhythmic and artistic gymnastics, as well as Paralympic athletics, boccia, goalball, judo, wheelchair fencing and swimming, the site is destined to be a big draw for top level athletes and sports teams and a major sporting hub for the Essex community. In fact, the Japanese swimming team has already signed up to use the village as its 2012 training venue.

Elite athletes, professional teams, amateur clubs and casual leisure centre users have equal access to the village's outstanding multi-sport facilities. And during the lead-up to the Olympic and



Paralympic Games, members will have a unique opportunity to train alongside Olympic and Paralympic athletes as the facility will be open to the public throughout elite training schedules.

"The Japanese athletes have not asked for segregated training so it's likely that local swimmers will find an Olympic athlete in the next lane," says SLM regional director Duncan Jefford. "We hope that these international sportsmen and women, as well as local and regional elite athletes, will inspire local users to be active and make the most of the fantastic facilities on their doorstep."

Starter's orders

A joint venture between Community Solutions for Leisure (CSL) and Basildon Council, the complex is operated by Sports and Leisure Management (SLM) under its 'Everyone Active' national brand.

Built on the site of a former swimming pool and gymnastics club, the village was originally proposed back in 2000, but

it took the success of London's Olympic bid and the resulting increase in interest and funding to get the green light to proceed in 2007.

With funding obtained from Essex County Council, (through the Homes and Communities Agency), Sport England, the East of England Development

A 10m climbing wall offers visitors an impressive entrance into the facility



Agency (EEDA) and the Veolia ES Clean-away Pitsea Marshes Trust, the project has been carefully managed to ensure the right results for all stakeholders.

Basildon Council set out to appoint one company that could take the project from conception to completion and beyond, so CSL was formed by SLM and construction and regeneration group Morgan Sindall to jointly provide design, build and operation services for the sporting village.

S&P Architects and PMP leisure consultants worked closely with the council and the design team to ensure the aim of creating a centre of sporting excellence was realised in a way that would benefit the region as a whole, through consultations and workshops with members of local sports groups to identify and deliver the best outcomes for all interested parties.

"One of the greatest challenges was keeping the key partners happy about their investment in the project, so good internal communications were imperative. However, we also had a responsibility to meet the needs of everyone who used the two previous





EVERYONE ACTIVE SWIMMING PROVISION

SLM has won the ASA award for the 'Facility Operator of the Year' two years running – in recognition of the work the operator does to increase participation in swimming in pools across the UK.

There are currently 77,000 people, from five-months and upwards, being taught each week at over 50 leisure centres by SLM's Everyone Active's ASA-qualified instructors – and Basildon Sporting Village is a flagship site.

The swimming programme at Basildon offers annual, not termly, class timetables, which means that teachers can watch their pupils develop while they get the security of year-round employment. Rookie life-guarding, synchronised swimming and water polo lessons are also available.

Another Everyone Active swimming innovation is the provision of colour-coded swimming caps to denote swimmers' ability levels. As well as the obvious health and safety and pool hygiene benefits the caps are also a progressive reward incentive.

facilities at the site," says Jefford. A major continuity bonus for the community is that most of the original pool and gymnastic club staff have now resumed their previous roles at the new set up.

Something for everyone

A 10m-high climbing wall offers an eye-catching entrance into the sports complex. Designed by Rockworks, the wall includes a 7.4m wide bouldering area and sets the tone of the high standard of other sports and fitness facilities within the rest of the complex.

One major attraction is the Olympic-sized pool. Measuring 50m x 21m with a depth of 1.8m, the pool is fitted with a diving boom that can separate the space into two 25m pools, one of which has an adjustable floor system to alter depth, which maximises the pool's flexibility and usability. An additional 17m x 9m teaching pool, with a depth of 0.9m is also included.



Many NGBs are already looking to host regional sports events within the complex. Right: Olympic gymnast Max Whitlock wows the crowds on open day



International standard starting blocks, supplied by Daktronics – identical to those which will be used at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, are attached to the pool edge, along with the touch pads fitted at both ends of the pool to keep both elite and recreational swimmers' training times on track.

Elsewhere in the facility, the gymnastic arena expands across an area equivalent to a 10-court sportshall. Home to South Essex Gymnastics Club, the gymnasium features a full spectrum of Olympic-standard gymnastic equipment including high and floor-based beams, vaults, asymmetric and parallel bars, pommel

➔ horses, a tumble track, a 12m sprung artistic floor and a 13m sq rhythmic floor.

Other indoor facilities include an eight-court, multi-use sports hall/theatre, two multi-purpose studios, a cafeteria, two conference meeting rooms, a crèche with an outside play area and sports therapy treatment rooms.

The fitness suite has been designed for all abilities, with fitness equipment that includes Trixter Xdream bikes, a TRX suspension area, a Zig Zag children's fitness sports wall, Power Plate vibration machines, and a functional training zone, which includes ViPR free weights and Kettlebells. This area also features 90 pieces from Precor's new range of fitness equipment, making the Sporting Village one of just two centres in the UK to offer the full range to its members.

Set in 100 hectares of scenic parkland, the outside facilities are even more impressive. "It's unusual for a local community to have access to such a wide variety of facilities in one venue," says Jefford. "The village offers six 3G synthetic turf five-a-side football pitches, 10 full-size natural turf football pitches, 12 outdoor netball courts, two cricket pitches, a hockey pitch and an athletics stadium – all surrounded by acres of beautiful parkland," he says.

Easy access

According to Jefford, many national governing bodies of sport are already aware of the complex's potential for hosting events. "Within the first week of opening we were able to host an Amateur Athletes Association (AAA) Regional Athletics Meeting at the stadium, where we witnessed more than 800 athletes compete. The site will also host regional competitions in gymnastics, swimming and netball – offering a spectator capacity of 450 in the sports hall, 1,000 in the athletics stadium and 205 in the pool viewing areas," says Jefford.

Its status as an official training site for the Paralympic Games is also testament to the ease of access to facilities for disabled users. "It took a large leap of faith and significant investment to create the type of fully inclusive facilities found

OPENING ATTRACTIONS

The grand opening day saw 10,000 local people visit the village to try out the facilities and meet some of the sporting ambassadors who helped promote the activity options on offer. Throughout the day, children were able to perfect their swimming technique with Olympic swimmers Mark Foster, Chris Cook and Jo Jackson, try synchronised swimming with former GB Team member Jazmine Stansbury and water polo with international player Jake Vincent.

Away from the pool, there were tag rugby and cheerleading sessions with the Saracens, a penalty shootout with Neville Southall, a 'try out the track' with former elite long distance runner Eamonn Martin and junior cricket coaching with Essex cricketers Graham Napier and James Foster. While GB gymnastics Max Whitlock, Danny Lawrence, Meanwhile, Becky Wing and Reiss Beckford opened the gymnasium with an inspiring gym display.



Above: Former Olympic breastroker Chris Cook and Essex cricketer Graham Napier (left) inspire youngsters into sport

at the venue," says former World and Paralympic athlete and Basildon resident Danny Crates. "I do believe that if gyms and clubs invest in such facilities, a wider diversity of members will come. Basildon Sporting Village offers a wide range of accessible equipment and inclusive fitness programmes designed for disabled athletes, and its staff are committed to giving every user the encouragement and training they need."

Progressive programming

With the only 50m pool in Essex, there has been obvious interest from clubs as far afield as Ipswich to get onto the swimming timetable. The decision was made by the Everyone Active team to open the facility at 5.30am for club use before opening to the public at 6.30am to achieve the right balance of public swimming, club use and competitive events within the pool area.

The ASA regional and Essex squads are now both based at Basildon Sporting

Village, along with swimming clubs from Basildon, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Colchester, Epping Forest, Ipswich, Maldon, Redbridge, Romford and Thurrock. The Excel school swimming programme is also on the pool roster and 25 local primary schools also benefit from the huge range of activities on-site.

Other sports clubs that will regularly use the facilities include Essex Netball Club, South Essex Gymnastics Club, Essex County Football Club, the regional water polo squad and the regional triathlon club.

Looking forward, the Everyone Active team has big plans for the centre's first year. It aims to attract up to one million visitors and encourage up to 50 per cent of the local residents to sign up for an Everyone Active card, (a pass that allows casual use of the centre's facilities). Already 3,000 people have signed up as members and 20,000 people have registered for Everyone Active Gold cards.

There are also plans to host national athletics, swimming and gymnastics competitions at the centre, increase the number of under 5s in the learn to swim area and develop key strategic partnerships with more schools, disabled groups and sports clubs – to offer something for everybody. ●

David Thompson is a freelance writer

The greatest challenges are keeping the key partners happy about their investment and meeting the needs of everyone who used the previous facilities

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BMX



Since becoming an Olympic sport in 2008, BMX has flown over the ramps as one of the fastest growing disciplines in the sport of cycling. British Cycling's Pete Maxwell looks at the reasons behind its rising popularity

During the extreme sports boom of the 1970s, BMX riders were just starting to move from the streets and dirt tracks and into dedicated clubs to join up with other like-minded enthusiasts. Fast forward to 2011, and British Cycling is now staging more nationwide BMX races than ever before, has a BMX World Champion, a new Indoor BMX Centre nearing completion and will host the 2012 UCI BMX World Championships in Birmingham – months before the Olympic Games in London.

Somewhere in between though, BMX has been through tough times. In the late 1980s the sport virtually disappeared, and would have done but for the hard work of volunteers who remain crucial to every cycling discipline. While the 1996 World Championships were held in Britain, the sport had already suffered a huge decline, with a steep fall-off in rider numbers, a lack of new blood coming into the sport and existing facilities falling into disrepair.

Building on foundations

Today, the growth of British Cycling as an organisation has been mirrored by the resurgence of interest in BMX. Many factors have contributed to this, but undoubtedly the adoption of BMX as an Olympic sport in 2008 was a major factor.

Due to this Olympic status, funding for new facilities has become available and a new focus and attitude has seen BMX become a creditable sport. Thus



The inclusion of BMX biking as an Olympic sport in 2008 has contributed to its rise in popularity



The concept for Platt Fields BMX track in Fallowfield, Manchester has been devised through British Cycling's Excellence programme

attracting new riders and allowing British Cycling's BMX development to flourish.

Supported by Lottery funding through Sport England, the opportunities provided by British Cycling for people to get involved in BMX are also increasing; the jurisdiction of national-level events being just one part of the jigsaw. Overseeing such events in the UK is an important responsibility for British Cycling. By ensuring that there are national series' across all disciplines that run smoothly and efficiently, means the sport has the chance to continue on its current trend.

British Cycling has clubs in every sphere willing to put on a number of events throughout the country. These are run by a strong group of volunteers allowing both the development and the performance side of the sport to flourish.

World-renowned coaching

Underpinning this success is the delivery of coaching courses that have seen British Cycling's methods replicated by the UCI in Africa and South America for world-class coaching programmes of the highest calibre.

In the last two years, British Cycling has succeeded in engaging with the BMX community – thanks to the launch of the Level 2 BMX Coaching Award. Launched in 2009, those who attend this award are able to go back to their BMX clubs and provide structured coaching sessions to their riders. A considerable amount of investment in terms of both funding and manpower was

GO-RIDE BMX SUCCESS

From 2009 to 2011, British Cycling stationed a Go-Ride coach at Platt Fields in Manchester, who set up multiple youth coaching programmes, such as a weekly youth club and regular holiday camps.

After one year of inclusive coaching, six talented youngsters were in need of additional intensive coaching. After attending these advanced sessions, 13-year-old Valerie Zebrova from Fallowfield in Manchester, won Rounds seven and 10 of the National BMX Series, gained Redline sponsorship and has been invited onto the regional talent programme. Valerie's success shows how structured Level 2 BMX coaching can help to provide a seamless pathway from grassroots to the first step of talent identification.



put into achieving this coaching pathway within a period of four years.

The need to deliver discipline-specific coaching awards at Level 2 and Level 3 was identified within British Cycling's Whole Sport Plan (2008-2013). The focus of Level 2 is very much on coaching techniques to riders, with Level 3 developing this into a race performance context. Thus extending the coaches' knowledge by covering areas such as how to plan and prescribe training, as well as including more advanced techniques.

The Level 3 BMX Coaching Award is expected to be launched next year, with the ultimate aim of continuing to help BMX riders to achieve success at all levels of competition.

It's also recognised that, as well as qualifications, coaches require additional support; therefore joint programmes between British Cycling's Coaching and Education Excellence departments are in place to create a community of practice to help BMX coaches develop further beyond their initial training.

The BMX Coach Academy

The development of young BMX riders is vital to everyone involved in the sport, but to British Cycling's Talent Team BMX coach, Jeremy Hayes, it's his passion. At the top of his agenda, Hayes is planning a structured coaching pathway to help develop the best crop of youngsters for BMX racing. "The first step of the process is to analyse how coaches are working with young people within clubs," he says. "The reason being that at the moment we've got a lot of coaches who are teaching kids at national level and that brings with it new demands."

To deal with these demands, Hayes has already selected an elite team of 16 coaches in five regions, who share ideas and learn new skills. These are broken down into Level 2 coaching modules to coach talented youngsters as a prelude to their entry onto the talent team. The idea is to create a BMX Coach Academy in each region of the UK.

Previously, Hayes ran up to 20 over-subscribed, regional coaching sessions





around the country, which allowed very little time for individual development. The newly structured programme will allow young riders to develop bike skills and an all-round knowledge of BMX racing on a British Cycling platform aimed at developing the very best BMX riders.

Hayes' programme includes a BMX skills award badge system for riders at three different levels; beginner, intermediate and expert. He says these progressive awards increase the riders' skills base and allow regional coaches to "better evaluate riders' progress, while allowing young people and their parents a proper guided pathway for their potential progression to Talent Team and the Olympic Development Programme".

Playground to podium

British Cycling now offers people a chance to develop their basic cycling skills through its Go-Ride national development programme for schoolchildren and club members. Within these sessions, qualified Go-Ride coaches pass on their knowledge and enthusiasm for the sport through interactive activities, which develop bike riding skills and competition.

Links are made with local Go-Ride community clubs to help young people develop their skills across a network of more than 230 clubs around the country. Additionally, with support from principal partner Sky, British Cycling has launched Go-Ride Racing – a new youth entry level competition programme designed to bridge the gap between school/club coaching and open regional competitions. Talented riders are then nominated by their club to attend Regional Schools of Racing, which provide opportunities

British BMX World Champion Shanaze Reade will ride at the 2011 UEC European Championships in Birmingham



Above: An artist's impression of the new indoor BMX centre in Manchester. Right: Building the Redditch BMX facility

for young people to link up with British Cycling Talent Team coaches.

All Go-Ride coaches support BMX through their activities in schools and community clubs. Former world champions, Dylan Clayton and Sam Foakes, act as inspirational athletes for the sport, while a third Go-Ride coach has also been employed through the sport's legacy plan – associated with the BMX World Championships. Organised by British Cycling, UK Sport and Birmingham City Council, the event will be held at the National Indoor Arena, Birmingham two months ahead of the Olympics. It is expected to play a pivotal long-term role in taking the BMX discipline to a new level of public interest.

Building for the future

Birmingham's Perry Park will soon boast a new international-standard outdoor BMX track and will welcome the world's best riders for the 2011 UEC European Championships in June this year – where a young audience will be inspired by the likes of BMX World Champions Shanaze Reade.

The track in Perry Park will be the new home of Birmingham BMX club, while a new BMX facility has also recently opened in nearby Redditch, where it's hoped BMX racing will continue to inspire youngsters for generations to come.

Birmingham's new tracks are just two of British Cycling's most recent investments into cycling facilities. Previously BMX tracks had become unsustainable, due to a lack of funding and investment from local authorities. It wasn't until the inclusion of BMX as an Olympic sport that these authorities realised current infrastructure would not deal with the sport's growth in popularity and investment was needed to ensure the sport moved forward.

Since then, British Cycling has invested its capital funding to establish a network



of national tracks, each requiring funding of up to £450,000 – to provide facilities that include fences, floodlights and club-houses etc. Assistance has also been given to clubs which put a sustainable business plan in place to enable communities and future cycling stars to use the facility for generations to come.

The first facility of this model was Platt Fields in Manchester. Opened in June 2008, in conjunction with Manchester City Council, Platt Fields is now used regularly by the local community and for training purposes by the GB Cycling Team. It's also used to host regional and national events throughout the BMX calendar.

Indoor BMX centre

Funded in conjunction with Sport England and Manchester City Council, British Cycling's biggest facility investment is the £25m indoor BMX centre in Manchester – the first purpose built arena of its kind in the world. Due for completion in August 2011, the venue will be capable of holding major events while catering for the local community and providing a base for GB riders in their preparations for London 2012 and future Olympic Games.

Located adjacent to the successful Manchester Velodrome, which has already earned a worldwide reputation for hosting major events and providing opportunities for people to get involved in the sport, it's hoped that this new BMX venue will enjoy the same success. ●

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Main pic and near right: Built to host the FINA World Swimming Championships, the Sports Complex in Dubai converts to a multi-purpose dry sport/exhibition arena

A LIVING LEGACY

FaulknerBrowns' partner Mike Hall compares the design of two very different wet and dry facilities in which a common philosophy for extended use can be found

With less than 450 days to go before London plays host to the Olympic and Paralympic Games, it's been an opportunistic time for designers and sports planners to showcase some fine sporting venues at the Olympic Park and deliver the legacy that has evaded many post-Olympic cities.

However, the post-Games day-to-day usage of an Olympic facility represents more than 99 per cent of the life of the building and is often on a vastly different scale to usage during the Games. Many designers claim to have designed sports buildings with legacy in mind but, in my opinion, few have achieved it.

Consideration and prioritisation of the critical success factors for any building should ensure that designing for legacy use is inherent within the solution from the outset of the project and not an after-thought.

Take the Manchester Aquatics Centre for example. Designed for the 2002 Commonwealth Games, the task was to reconcile the requirements of a high performance competition pool with those for an attractive and easily accessible public asset after the Games.

A competition pool requires privacy with minimal daylight to control glare, along with large volumes to meet

international standards and large spectator numbers – up to 2,500 for the Commonwealth Games. A community facility, on the other hand, requires public accessibility with intimate volumes and natural daylight to provide a warm and friendly internal environment.

The design of the aquatics centre respected and integrated these two diverse sets of criteria and the success of the building has been proven year on year, since completion, in both competition and legacy modes.

SPORTS PROJECTS

Our practice has recently completed/designed four major sports facilities, all of which have hosted, or will host, world championship events. The critical issue in the design of these venues was to ensure their success for the limited time period of the competitions, as well as the remaining life of the facility. These include:

- Surrey Sports Park for the University of Surrey, UK which hosted the Women's Rugby World Cup in August 2010
- Hamdan bin Mohammed bin Rashid Sports Complex in Dubai, UAE, which hosted, and was designed for, the FINA World Swimming Championships in December 2010
- Omnisportscentrum at Apeldoorn, The Netherlands, which played host to the

UCI World Track Cycling Championships in March 2011

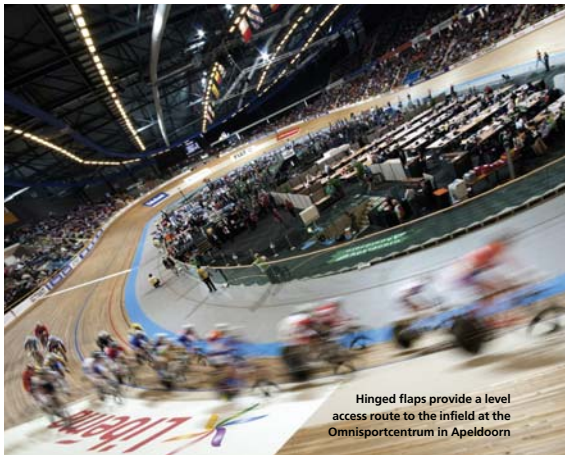
- Valley White Water Centre, Broxbourne, UK for the London 2012 Olympic Games (designed) – which is already open to the general public for use before the Games commence

There are some particular lessons from Dubai and Apeldoorn where technical innovation, combined with a strong operational perspective, has underpinned the desire to achieve the facilities' effective longevity.

HAMDAN BIN MOHAMMED BIN RASHID SPORTS COMPLEX, DUBAI

In 2007, the Middle Eastern region set its sights on hosting major global sporting events, such as the FIFA World Cup and potentially a future Olympic Games. Securing the FINA World Swimming Championships was a further stepping stone in this process and as part of this aspiration the seating capacity of the aquatics centre grew from 6,000 to 15,000 seats during the design process.

Providing a venue for a major international swimming event has, traditionally, gone down one of two routes: a temporary pool in an existing arena, making use of permanent spectator support facilities or temporary seating around an outdoor pool where the climate and



Hinged flaps provide a level access route to the infield at the Omnisportcentrum in Apeldoorn

The collaboration of client, operator, contractor and design team ensured that maximum efficiency of use could be achieved throughout the building's lifetime

space permits, has been a practical alternative. The second approach is to build a purpose-built facility and reduce the seating capacity down to a useable amount after the event – a feat which is very challenging without undermining the long term viability of the building.

However, rather than reduce the spectator capacity of the Dubai Sports Complex, the building was designed to convert into a multi-purpose dry sport, exhibition or concert venue. The pool is configured so that the 50m training pool at the front of the building, which is used as warm up during events, can be a separate day-to-day training facility, while the main competition and diving pools are converted to other uses.

A number of solutions were designed-in to achieve this. Firstly, water – a precious commodity that is extracted from the sea through desalination – can be transferred from the main pool tanks to massive underground storage tanks adjacent to the building. Secondly, a trestle system was designed to sit inside the pool tank to allow the pool to be floored over – providing a 15,000-seat performance/exhibition arena. A third technical innovation was to provide a double-backed diving platform with access to the training tank as well as the main diving tank from a common gantry.

The sports complex now offers the versatility to meet community, training and elite swimming and diving needs, as well as the opportunity to host a variety of other events.

OMNISPORTCENTRUM, APELDOORN, THE NETHERLANDS

Building a velodrome for major international events poses a unique problem for an ongoing legacy. As a large volume, low sporting occupancy venue, they can be expensive to build, operate and maintain.

The continuous banked track or field of play can make it challenging to gain access to the infield for other uses, which is normally provided through a series of ramps and tunnels. However, 6,000 seats for a major event, a velodrome can become an attractive proposition as a multi-purpose event venue. If the issue of access can be resolved. It can actually provide a large flat floor track centre – the equivalent of three basketball courts. The challenge is how to make use of these large assets for uses other than cycling.

The brief for Omnisportcentrum called for a velodrome that could be quickly configured to support other events. Working with Dutch track designer Sanda Douma, a system of carefully engineered hinged flaps was devised that could provide a level access route to the infield

– allowing stage equipment and seating to be wheeled into place relatively quickly. In fact, two flaps are provided – allowing a central axis running through the building, including the track, to provide the required versatility at both front and back of house.

There was some initial concern from cyclists regarding the gap between the flap and the adjoining track and a number of considerations were taken into account, including temperature and humidity, to keep the joint width down to an acceptable 6mm.

The building also accommodates an indoor 200m athletics track to provide a national 'Category A' status for cycling and athletics. This track fits inside the safety zone of the 250m cycle track. The collaboration of client, operator, contractor and design team ensured that maximum efficiency of use could be achieved throughout the building's lifetime.

While fine design is always an architect's aim, and its beauty enhances the lives of those who view and visit our buildings, this will not ensure the lifetime success of an international-standard sports complex. The focus must be on both competition and legacy modes – and designing to deliver the requirements for both. ●



SCREEN TEST

Gone are the days when a cold cup of tea and a meat pie at half-time was the best a football fan could expect from a 'match-day experience'.

Today's fans not only expect to be entertained on the pitch but off it too, in state-of-the-art stadia bristling with the latest multi-media technology. From jumbo screens to concourse and handheld devices, media is being used to engage and entertain fans at every opportunity.

In the current economic conditions however, venues are increasingly looking to see how they can make this new media investment pay its way. Outright capital purchase of technology is hard to

TV monitors in stadium concourses engage spectators away from the pitch



Robin Currie advises on how in-stadia digital solutions, such as HD concourse TV, jumbo screens and digital perimeter advertising boards can deliver maximum return on investment

finance, which means it's hard to justify. Because of this, rights holders need to look at solutions that pay for themselves, even in the short term.

The business model at Sports Revolution has been to partner with BEKO to subsidise the deployment of more than 1,000 screens in stadia across the UK – creating a brand-enhancing platform that generates revenue and provides match-day entertainment.

Obviously this is a model that only succeeds if the screen content can genuinely engage the fans and build an audience that can attract advertising revenue.

It's essential to ensure every aspect of the screen offering is compelling, both commercially for the club, but also in terms of how it enhances fans' match-day experience. For example, it's not enough to install the latest screens if the content doesn't connect with the fans. A one-size-fits-all approach simply won't work.

Fans go to matches to watch games, not ads, so it's important to ensure the screens are full of content they want to

watch – such as player interviews, crucial club information, scores and statistics. It's all about the technology boosting, not interrupting, their match-day enjoyment.

This approach has the potential to create a virtuous circle. If fans, engaged by the content, are watching the screens, brands are keen to advertise on them.

It's also worth noting that some providers have got it wrong in the past from the other side, offering interesting, tailored content, but on poor quality screens. The right model requires sufficient investment in both the content and the front-end technology.

Working in partnership with clubs' media departments is also essential to creating a joined-up communication platform that complements each club's existing media channels.

Camera-facing screens – digital perimeter advertising

In addition to ensuring stadia concourse TV gets it right in terms of the screens and the content, rights holders should



Camera-facing digital media at international and Premier League games has the potential to attract global advertisers

also consider how their screens fit into the wider media mix.

For English Premier League (EPL) football grounds in particular, global TV audiences mean that a sophisticated approach to camera-facing digital media has great potential to attract advertisers from across the world. Digital screens are not only attracting the eyeballs of thousands of fans inside the ground, but millions more on TV. The Premier League is broadcast in over 200 territories and delivers over 120 million viewers each week, so it's an excellent space for major international brands to reach a global audience, as well as consumers in local markets where interest in the EPL is high – particularly in Asia for example.

Media intelligence is vital to understanding how to target and gain maximum value from this approach. Sports Revolution has a monitoring tool called DigitAR, which gives an in-depth insight into how international TV audiences are consuming UK football – allowing for the planning of advertising campaigns on digital perimeter screens with minimum wastage.

Careful targeting clearly trumps a scattergun approach when it comes to ensuring return on investment and extracting full value from digital media.

Mobile opportunities

There is also another opportunity waiting to be realised – mobile. With rapidly



“We need to continue to strive to reach as many people as possible by using technology creatively”

increasing numbers of sports fans owning smartphones, the perennial 'next big thing' in marketing looks to have finally arrived. Of course, sport – and football especially – provides the perfect multimedia content for on-the-move consumers. And it's not just the action itself, but also products and services based around the matches, interviews, scores, stats, betting, promotions, surveys, quizzes, and even mobile game-play based on live games.

Some stadia owners – notably Wembley and the new Olympic Stadium – have already taken this into account in their technology planning, with mobile capacity and coverage able to handle the many thousands of fans now wanting to access the mobile networks simultaneously. Clubs and associations across the country will need to do the same if they're to provide a good service to the fans and tap in to mobile's excellent revenue generating opportunities.

Future developments

Stadia technology is full of exciting developments, and screens are being used more intelligently. However, there's still some way to go before rights holders extract the full value from their stadia media space.

Progress is constantly being made, but we need to continue to strive to reach as many people as possible, by using technology creatively.



LED camera-facing digital media at Tottenham Hotspur's home ground

Certainly, we're more effectively engaging fans and the way we engage global audiences is becoming more sophisticated. But the international value of in-stadia media is huge. With the right technology in place and a more scientific approach to using it, there's an opportunity waiting to be seized. ●

Robin Currie is Stadia Solutions general manager at Sports Revolution

Raising the Game

Pete Hayman looks at The FA's National Game Strategy up to 2012, how it'll be expanded towards 2015, and the NGB's vision for the game in 2020

During the unveiling of the Football Association's (FA) National Games Strategy (NGS) in 2008, the FA's director of football development, Sir Trevor Brooking, said: "We want to raise standards in all areas of football, including at the top. But it's important to get the platform and the base right for that to happen." This comment marked the start of a new approach for the national governing body (NGB) and one that sought to transform England's grassroots environment.

The national governing body proposed an investment of £200m over a four-year period, with four main aims identified: to increase participation; to raise standards; to develop better players; and to improve behaviour and discipline through the Respect campaign.

Although initially drawn-up to cover this time line, the successes of the NGS has led the FA to extend it by a further three years to 2015. Consultation with players,

coaches, administrators, local authorities; education; and referees was a fundamental part in developing the original NGS and will form the basis of the new extension.

Kelly Simmons, the FA's head of national game, explains: "We're very much guided by what our stakeholders want. With the last strategy, we undertook a large period of consultation and research and we're doing the same this time."

A survey of around 13,000 individuals from the national game – *The Grassroots Survey* – is now complete and Simmons says that those opinions will help guide where the FA's priorities will lie over the next three years; improved facilities, addressing poor behaviour and the promotion of the Respect programme remaining at the top of the agenda.

The FA has worked hard to ensure that its investment in the grassroots game has been well spent. Mark Pover, national facilities and investment manager, explains how the FA's funding – managed by the



Facilities need to meet FA standards

Right: Chelsea FC's Frank Lampard at an FA Tesco Skills event. Below: Football is the largest participation sport among women and girls.



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WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE

On 13 April, Chelsea Ladies and Arsenal Ladies met each other at the home of Tooting and Mitcham United in the inaugural match of the FA's new Women's Super League (WSL) – the competition the national governing body hopes marked a milestone in the female game.

Birmingham, Bristol, Doncaster, Everton, Liverpool and Lincoln will also compete as part of the WSL, which has been created with two primary objectives – to professionalise women's football in England, and attract a new generation of female players and supporters to the sport.

According to the FA, football is the largest participation sport among

women and girls and its research has revealed that an additional 180,000 females aged between 16- to 34-years old are considering taking up the sport in the coming year.

Head of the national games, Kelly Simmons says: "It's about putting a platform in place upon which top-level women's football and clubs can help to develop a fanbase, commercial partners and broadcast partners, and ultimately generate revenue to become semi-professional and professional."

"That will be aspirational in terms of girls wanting to play the game and having a clear pathway through, being able to look up and see they can become professional footballers in their own right."

Football Foundation – comes with the proviso that each football project has targets that it aims to achieve.

"Everywhere we put investment, we monitor and evaluate those projects on an annual basis and we'll see a steady growth in the increase in football. Although that's not to say there might not have been some displacement – it's quite a tricky one to manage because football's pretty organic."

Youth development

Moving forward into the three-year extension of the NGS, one of the primary areas of focus is to be the development of youth and mini-soccer. The FA has completed the Youth Development Review (YDR), which outlined 25 recommendations covering grassroots football and coaching and aims to give children 'the best possible introduction to football.'

Nick Levett is the FA's national development manager for youth and

mini-soccer – a role that is to play a crucial part in delivering revised aims of the NGS and the implementation of some, if not all, of the recommendations to come out of the YDR. This month sees the launch of an extensive consultation exercise fronted by Levett, explaining the review's findings.

"Now is a case of implementing the youth development review alongside the NGS," Levett says. "It's a real focus on looking at the player pathway for children and the experience when they come into the game at Under 7 level."

"Last month, we organised 16 national events across the country to highlight the fact that we'd had a year of input, and where we thought football was heading, moving forward."

Although Levett says that nothing has been finalised at this stage, some of the proposals could see a complete overhaul of the youth footballing landscape. A progressive approach from five-a-side



→ formats at Under 7 level up to adult 11-a-side from 2013 to 2014 is mooted, as are changes in selection that could see club age groups determined by the calendar, not academic, year.

Another element of the future vision for youth football is the education of parents and coaches to ensure a more child-centred environment. Levett says it will draw on the Respect campaign and the sharing of good practice: "It's about making sure we share the messages that children are saying about their game and recognise that it's 'their' game – not the adult game."

"Let the kids enjoy it and get away from the win at all cost culture and teach kids to play the game. By virtue they'll win more because they'll get better," he says.

Facility investment

Something that will certainly help facilitate the development of players from an early age is the quality of pitches and training venues – an area, which Mark Pover believes is vital: "It's well understood in football that if you don't have the pitches, you don't have a game. Somewhere along the line, somebody's



There should be a move away from the 'win at all costs' culture so kids can just play the game

got to look at the investment and the stock of facilities and improve them."

Kelly Simmons argues that investment in pitches and facilities has benefited greatly under the NGS, although she says that more can be still be done. Pover backs that sentiment up, saying that there has been nearly £750m invested in facilities over the past decade. However, it is believed that only 5-6 per cent of England's facility stock has been covered with that spending.

With the FA unable to cover the remainder itself, it is looking to support improvement projects being carried out by schools, local authorities and other groups across the country. A Technical Standards document is due to be released later this year, which will contain FA specifications for all aspects of a footballing venue – from pitches, to changing rooms, through to floodlighting.

"We would expect that, if we're not funding it, people would use what the



ST GEORGE'S PARK...

St George's Park is the FA's flagship development – a new national centre for football that will be located near Burton-upon-Trent in Staffordshire. Construction is now underway on the venue, which will provide a base for the FA's coach education agenda and will provide a development centre for refereeing, sports science and administration.

The complex will also provide a training venue for each of the FA's 22 representative teams – including the England senior men's team. The

FA's head of the national game,

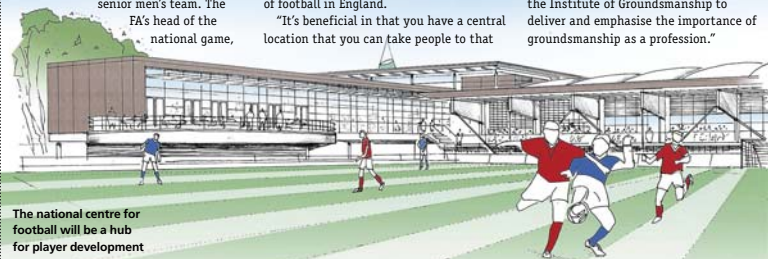
Kelly Simmons, believes its value will be significant: "It's about having a hub that's a real focus for excellence and having the best courses, research and materials and cascading that down through the coaching networks," she says.

St George's Park has been a number of years in planning, but it has been a project that the FA had to put on the backburner due to the construction of the new Wembley Stadium in London. Now, the complex is set to provide a purpose-built venue to improve coaches and enhance the standard of football in England.

"It's beneficial in that you have a central location that you can take people to that

they can train at, and that everything is there that will help and support the development of those players," explains national facilities manager Mark Pover. "You won't just have the pitches and video modules, but you'll also have sport science, rehabilitation – all of the aspects of the professional game."

Pover says the centre could also have a positive impact on groundsmanship: "We'll use Burton as a centre for innovation, looking at new techniques and supporting our partnership with the Institute of Groundsmanship to deliver and emphasise the importance of groundsmanship as a profession."



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JUST PLAY

Earlier this year, the FA joined forces with Mars to launch a new initiative designed to increase the number of adults playing regular football in England. Just Play hopes to tackle a decline in participation, with a target of getting 150,000 more people taking part in football for at least 30 minutes a week by September 2013.

Figures from Sport England suggest that the decline in adult participation is due to the lack of sufficient facilities; apathy; and logistical difficulties. Through the new FA/Mars programme, a total of 100 Just Play centres are to be established across England delivering casual football sessions that benefit up to 50 participants at a time.

The scheme's progress will be measured through Sport England's Active People Survey on a quarterly basis, and

forms part of Mars' continuing efforts to invest in football and to work with the FA. Just Play also forms part of the national governing body's National Game Strategy.

The FA's head of the national game, Kelly Simmons says: "The 150,000 figure represents adults whatever their level or ability playing some form of football. The FA Mars Just Play programme will help us tackle the issues that are currently affecting adult grassroots football.

"This programme builds on our work to encourage as many adults as possible to enjoy a wide range of footballing opportunities in their local communities. We believe its success will open up football to a whole new audience, which might have been put off by barriers such as lack of facilities, time or people to play with," Simmons says.

FA would recommend or certainly build things to the standards that we expect," explains Pover. "If you're putting in an artificial pitch and it's going to be used for football, then you would naturally develop a pitch that meets the FA standards."

Pover explains how artificial pitches has become the first particular aspect of the FA's spending programme to adopt a framework approach – one carried out in partnership with the Rugby Football Union. "We turned the industry on its head a bit by going down a manufacturer-led approach," he says. "Instead of the contractor maybe being in charge

of most of it, or a consultant being in charge of the design and implementation, we're asking the manufacturer to be responsible for the whole thing – from design through to construction, installation and then maintenance.

"We're working with six artificial pitch manufacturers – they are what we now consider to be our partners in the delivery of artificial pitches through the funding that we have available," he adds. The partners are: TigerTurf; Greenfields; SIS; Limonta; Lano Sports; and FieldTurf/Tarkett – selected following an OJEU process and interview/selection criteria.

Moving forward

Pover says that the FA is in a fairly robust position with regards to its ability to continue with its work – particularly from an investment side. While its spending may be more modest amid the current economic climate, Pover explains that there's still money available. Further more, a funding deal with the government – managed through the Football Foundation – has another two years to run.

With that continued investment in facilities, the FA looks on course to continue the progress it has made with the NGS since 2008. "We're currently developing the targets, but it's already a certainty that youth development will be even more of a cornerstone in the NGS's evolution," says Simmons.

In the short term, Nick Levett says that May's consultation into the proposed changes at youth football level will help the NGB explain what is being considered, and the rationale behind it.

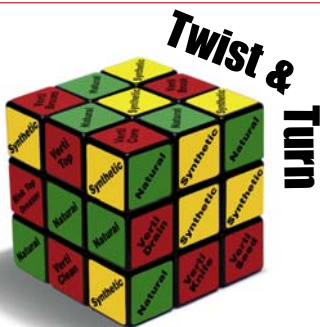
"We rely heavily on volunteers who do a fantastic job in youth football, so we need to make sure we have a sensible lead-in period for those changes to happen. Short term, it's very much about having a debate around youth football.

"Everything that we want to do is about raising standards and I'm yet to find a compelling standard to lower them." ●

Pete Hayman is a Leisure Media journalist



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Reinforcements in natural turf pitches

Paul Flanagan, project manager at STRI, looks at the pros and cons of the different types of reinforced turf for pitch stability and playability

The quality of natural turf pitches has improved tremendously in recent years and, accordingly, the expectations of stadia managers and players continue to grow. Similarly, these pitch improvements can be attributed to a better understanding and management of natural turf specifications, as well as the introduction of new turf technologies.

The modern natural turf reinforcements are one of the key factors driving the standards and tolerances of natural turf pitches forward. The modern stadium can create a heavily shaded static microenvironment in which to grow a pitch. Depriving grass plants of natural light and reduced airflow across the plant leaf can change the photosynthetic rates from high to little to none.

And it's in such environments where natural pitch reinforcements greatly enhance pitch stability and playability. Hence the starting point for reinforcement is the ability of the product to stabilise the surface without grass cover.

The decision to install a reinforced pitch relies on the answers to many questions and differing scenarios, such as the usage levels and expectations; the

existing pitch specification and infrastructure; the geographical climate and the stadium microclimate. It's generally accepted that there is no one single solution that can be provided to solve all of the desirable characteristics required from natural turf reinforcement.

In recent years there have been many types of reinforcement technologies utilised in pitches. Currently the most common technologies are:

- Fibre systems – where various types of fibres and elastic material are mixed into the soil homogeneously and natural grass is grown in.
- Hybrid systems – where fibres are injected or stitched into the surface with the synthetic fibres proud on the surface of the pitch, between which natural grass is grown.
- Filled carpet systems – where a carpet backing supports the fibres, which are in-filled with various products and natural grass is grown in.

FIBRE SYSTEMS

Fibre systems involve the mixing of polypropylene and, in some cases, natural fibres with sand to create a reinforcement matrix. The fibres interlock with the sand,

which the natural grass grows in. These products have been improved in recent years to allow for the addition of elastic polyurethane fibres. These significantly reduce hardness, improve stability and improve grass cover retention. To place and install the fibre on the pitch, specialist installation and finishing is required.

Pros

- Fast to install
- Increases usage levels and stability
- Non weather dependent on installation
- Can be returned
- Can be installed on soil-based lower-quality pitches

Cons

- Higher maintenance than a non-reinforced pitch
- Intensive renovations needed yearly
- Equipment needed for international installations
- Cannot be installed after the grass is growing
- Does not provide a green surface when grass cover is lost
- Surface stability is not as high as some hybrid systems, so more time is needed before play resumes



The Kassam Stadium features a XtraGrass carpet system



A Fibre elastic system was used in the pitch installation at the Aviva Stadium in Dublin

HYBRID SYSTEMS

Hybrid systems involve the injection of fibres into the surface, which stay approximately 20mm proud of the soil surface. The fibre is generally installed to a depth of 120-150mm below the surface.

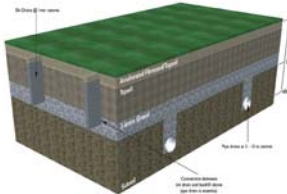
These systems can be installed into existing pitches and involve specialist mobile stitching equipment. The surface needs to be stable to facilitate movement of this equipment. Recent changes to the specification recommended for sand selection and maintenance techniques have meant improvement in the performance of these systems.

From practical experience, the strength and stability provided at the surface with the hybrid reinforcement outweighs that of the other categories. It allows events to be staged successfully on young grass, – some at just four weeks old in situations where grass growth rates are high.

Pros

- Increases usage levels and stability
- Protects grass cover with some protection of the growing point of the plant
- Successful installation is not weather dependent
- High increase in traction at surface
- May allow very young grass pitches to be played on
- Can be installed into existing pitches

Gravel raft profile with slit drains and fibresand



A hybrid system, being installed at Mbombela Stadium for the 2010 FIFA World Cup

- Provides a partially green surface when grass cover is lost
- Very high surface stability provided; allows surface to be used with no grass cover in some cases

Cons

- Higher maintenance than a non-reinforced pitch
- Large equipment importation needed for installation
- Intensive renovations needed annually – particularly to control the build-up of organic matter
- Difficulty experienced in returfing

FILLED CARPET SYSTEMS

Filled carpet systems involve the conventional construction of a suspended water table pitch and the installation of a synthetic turf carpet or punched membrane as a surface layer. Yarn is then stitched to this material and the carpet is filled with selected materials, which can include cork, peat, sand, soil or a rubber mixture. The natural grass is grown in this filled layer and, in some cases, the carpet backing is designed to break down over time, leaving just the grass fibre in place.

The finished surface is a mixture of synthetic grass fibres and natural grass, with the fibres providing apparent surface stability and wear improvements. These types of systems can only be installed in new pitch constructions and cannot be installed into existing grass pitches without considerable work.

Pros

- Fast to install
- International exportation of the product and installation is simple; carpet exportation rather than equipment
- Increases usage levels and stability
- Provides a partially green surface when grass cover is lost

Cons

- Higher maintenance than a non-reinforced pitch
- Backing degeneration technology still being developed; some practical problems have been noted with this in the past
- High weather dependence on installation technique to achieve good levels
- Cannot be re-turfed
- Specialist installation required and annual renovation needed
- Cannot be installed after the grass is growing
- Can pose restrictions to maintenance procedures

CONCLUSION

The addition of a reinforced natural turf pitch to a facility will, in many circumstances, improve the playability and increase the pitch's usage levels. However, the decision to install a pitch reinforcement and choose the right type of reinforcement for your needs should be based on professional expert advice in conjunction with the information provided in this article. ●



The UK might not have produced a Grand Slam champion in a few years, but it's still home to the world's best tennis tournament. Kath Hudson finds out what goes on in the Wimbledon build up

Gearing up for Wimbledon

Green grass, tennis whites, strawberries and cream, Cliff Richard, Murray Mound.... Wimbledon has a massive sporting heritage and is an iconic event for the UK. Even those who don't know Alex Bogdanovic from Rafael Nadal start to show an interest when the sport hits prime time TV in mid June.

The oldest tennis tournament in the world, and widely considered the most prestigious of the four Grand Slams, Wimbledon is the only one still played on grass (the game's original surface). Now gearing up for the 125th Championships, the management at the All England Lawn Tennis Club is continually looking for ways to refine and improve

the experience – making sure it retains its character, but also keeps up with the modern game.

Ongoing improvement

All England Lawn Tennis Club chief executive, Ian Ritchie, emphasises the importance of continual improvement: "In recent years we've had a complete transformation of the grounds and ancillary facilities to enhance the customer experience," he says. "We've added the Centre Court retractable roof for use in inclement weather, we've installed wider, padded seating for comfort and now offer a wider selection of catering choices. We've also enhanced the player and media facilities – all of which have improved the tournament immeasurably."

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The All England Tennis Club opens its doors to 40,000 spectators each day of the 13-day Wimbledon tournament

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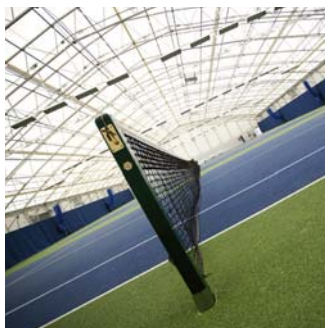
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Centre Court's £80m retractable roof was designed by Populous and installed in time for the 2009 Wimbledon championship

➔ redevelopment in recent years. In 2008, the seating capacity was increased to 15,000 with the addition of a restaurant, bar and waitress service. The most significant improvement however, was the retractable roof installation in 2009, which means that rain no longer stops play.

In 2009, the 4,000-seat No. 2 Court was opened and a 2,000-seat No. 3 Court is being built. Other improvements, which have taken place since include a new No.1 court, a broadcast centre and two extra grass courts, as well as the Millennium Building, which provides extensive facilities for players, press, officials and members.

Gearing up for the big event

Wimbledon has come a long way since the first tournament in 1877. The only event was the Gentlemen's Singles, won by Spencer Gore from a field of 22. Around 200 spectators paid one shilling to watch the final. Now people

WHAT'S NEW THIS YEAR?

- An exhibition at the museum: The Queue
- A range of licensed merchandise featuring the 125th anniversary logo
- New 2,000-seat No.3 Court equipped with Hawk-Eye line technology
- New Court 4 adjacent to No.3 Court
- Competitors' restaurant food court redesigned to provide more space
- Greater range of food for players, including fresh pasta prepared to order
- For Court No.1 there will be two balconies with permanent tensioned fabric canopies for debenture holders featuring a new reception area, a 140 cover restaurant and a new bar terrace
- Sony has signed an official agreement to be Official 3D Partner, with up to 600 cinemas taking 3D coverage of Men's Singles Semi-Finals and Men's and Ladies Singles Finals. Sony 3D coverage will also be taken by a number of the club's global broadcasters.
- A new look website, www.wimbledon.com, has launched with a series of weekly competitions

queue overnight to get tickets to the show courts – Wimbledon is the only Grand Slam tournament where fans can queue for tickets. The best players come from 60 countries and this year the prize money will amount to £14.6m: a 6.4 per cent increase on last year to attract the players with box office appeal. The champions will each go home with

£1.1m. More than 6,000 people work on the championships, including the 250 ballgirls and boys who come from local schools, 330 umpires, 700 security staff and 315 drivers.

The organisation has to be meticulous in order to bring all the elements together. "Having almost 40,000 guests to your party every day, for 13 days does present a major challenge," says Ritchie. "We start gearing up for the tournament in September/October, making reports from all areas and aspects of the event. Between November and February we discuss and plan improvements and from February onwards ➔

"We want media, officials and staff to have the best working conditions possible, to allow them to do their job well and enjoy being part of the occasion"



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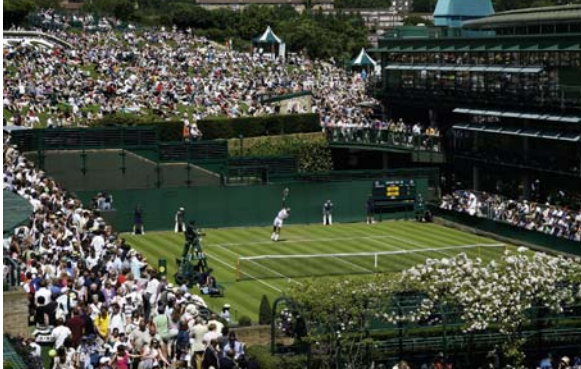
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The turf on Centre Court and No.1 Court is re-sown each year, as soon as possible after The Wimbledon Championships



→ we implement any changes." Throughout the year, there is ongoing dialogue with key groups like the police, local authorities, voluntary bodies, residents, transport providers and other interested parties to consider matters arising and monitor suggested improvements.

"The challenges change each year, depending on what we are doing, but I must stress how important it is to have a well oiled and experienced team," says Ritchie. "When Populous was designing the Centre Court roof, the challenge was to make sure we could still hold the championships each year, while the build was going on, so the building work had to be meticulously planned to get the site ready. Otherwise all improvements require careful dovetailing into the existing plan, so although we have the advantage of being on the same site, we are always changing something and inevitably that can be a worry."

Taking orders

Another aspect of the tremendous organisation is the catering. Head of catering, Jonathan Parker, has the annual challenge of overseeing 1,800 casual staff and feeding 38,500 people each day. "Wimbledon is the best annual sporting event in the world, so everything we do must complement that, because we're part of the experience," he says. "Over the years it has changed from being a picnic society to offering the best of public catering."

Apart from the perennial favourites: strawberries and cream; Pimms; and the Duchy sausage, each year the menu is tweaked and the facilities are extended. New for this year is an Italian restaurant which is part of the debenture restaurant portfolio. Meanwhile the competitors' restaurant has also been improved, to allow for pasta dishes to be cooked to order.

LONDON 2012 OLYMPICS

Wimbledon will enjoy a double whammy next year, with the London Olympics taking place from 28 July to 5 August 2012. Twenty-six thousand spectators are expected each day to watch a field of the world's best tennis players.

Tennis has long been associated with the Olympic Games, being one of the original nine sports, but it was sidelined between 1924 and 1988, when the International Tennis Federation and the International Olympic Committee couldn't agree over the issue of amateur/professional competition. Since its return it has become an event taken seriously by players who work it into their schedules and so the best players are expected to compete at next year's Games.

The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG) will move in as soon as Wimbledon is over to put in its own infrastructure and overlay. LOCOG's director of sport, Debbie Jevans, says: "The fact that it hosts one of the best championships in the world makes it much easier for us. We won't have to do a full test event, which we do for some of our other venues, such as Horse Guards Parade."

The biggest challenge is to make sure that the playing surface is ready. LOCOG has been discussing this with head groundsman, Eddie Seaward, over the past two years. The baselines will be resown, with fast growing grass, immediately after the championships.

"We are very excited about using Wimbledon to host the Olympics two weeks after the championships," says Jevans. "The attention to detail will be the same, but it will have its own look, feel and atmosphere."

Fringe benefits

Ritchie agrees that overseeing one of the world's premier sporting events does have huge payoffs: "The most fulfilling thing for me is that everyone who comes here should enjoy their time. We want our spectators to go away thinking they have had the best possible day, in the finest surroundings, for their money. We want the players to look forward to coming here, knowing they are going to be well looked after and put in the right frame of mind to play their best tennis. And, we want all those who may be working here for the whole two weeks – media, officials and staff – to have the best working conditions possible, to allow them to do their job well and enjoy being part of the occasion." ●

Kate Hudson is a freelance journalist

FREE SPORTS FENCING!

Yes free! Self Funding Sports Fencing...

JB Corrie would like to introduce an exciting new product called **Image Sports Fencing**. Designed specifically for football and multi-use games areas, the fencing incorporates encapsulated rebound boards, which allow for bespoke digital images printed on them – making them ideal for advertising opportunities at your facility

During these difficult financial times, we understand that schools, colleges, universities, councils and volunteer organisations are struggling to grant fund new projects. However, our Image Fencing System helps to bridge this funding gap through advertising opportunities.

An average-sized football area offers space for approximately 45 full-sized boards at 2.5m wide x 1.2m high. These boards are exterior quality birch wood with a special film on one face to allow any digital image to be reproduced. Through innovative design we are able to encapsulate the boards within the fencing without the need for drilling and bolting the boards in place. This means that the boards will not suffer from water ingress and because of this we are able to offer a three-year anti-fade guarantee on the colour printing.

Some organisations may not have the man power or know how to successfully sell the advertising boards so to help kick-start this process we have compiled a database of potential advertisers that may be willing to invest in your project (subject to location/organisation etc.)

A recent JB Corrie customer sold their boards to advertisers for £1,000 each.

This bought each advertiser printed board advertising for their organisation for a three-year period. In today's market there can't be many marketing opportunities with such a low cost! As a matter of fact, why should they stop at one board? They might take one in each of the four elevations to enable reach directly to the sports players and spectators whether it is within a school, a college, a university, a sports/leisure centre or local sports club. Plus Image Sports Fencing offers the added benefit for advertisers to give something back to their community – and helps you to improve your sports facilities.

Local advertisers

Along with our contacts we will also offer your advertising opportunity to local firms. The more boards sold helps towards club funding. For instance if the new fencing cost £30,000 and 40 full boards sold at £1,000 you would not only receive free top of the range fencing but you'll have an additional £10,000 for your funds.

Repetitive revenue earner

The advertising rebound boards can be sold on a time dependant contract. Once this agreed contract is completed the rebound boards would be available to be sold again and again. This could regularly add thousands of pounds to your funds.

How to kick start this process?

Firstly, contact myself and I will arrange for one of our area managers to conduct a free site survey. They will measure the area/s required and report back to our head office. We will then send you a quotation for the fencing / ground works required. If you like what you see we will then contact our extensive list of potential



The Encapsulated rebound boards are ideal for advertising

advertisers and promote your project to them. As soon as we have enough sponsors to pay for the project we will be able to accept an order from you for the works. All you have to do is invoice the list of sponsors and the fencing will be paid for – and quite possibly a large sum of money will be generated too!

The Corrie Image Rebound System is our top of range sports fence

This patented system comprises of strong twin bar Corrie play panels set level and flush over the Image rebound boards. The system is available in multiple heights with single/double gates, goal recesses and multi goal /basket ball sections, spectator / viewing areas. The steel posts and gates are hot dipped galvanised to BSEN ISO 1461 then polyester powder coated to any standard colour to BSEN 6497 for longevity.

The image boards are manufactured in birchwood (From sustainably-managed forests). The boards can have any digital image printed on the inside face – an advert, a school crest or logo etc. The reverse side of the boards are supplied green.

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Building up to the big event

Functional, eye-catching, temporary structures are a vital component to hosting a successful sports event. The following case studies highlight their different uses, set-up practicalities and sustainable advantages



Doha Port in Qatar

NUSSLI develops temporary structure concept for Qatar 2022

In preparation for it's (successful) bid to host the 2022 FIFA World Cup, the Qatar 2022 Bid Committee commissioned NUSSLI to develop sustainable concepts for the modular extension of the country's existing stadiums, in addition to the design for a stadium that will be constructed entirely of modular systems.

The concepts pertain to two existing stadiums, four newly-built football stadiums and the construction of two new track and field stadiums. Bolstered by the addition of modular systems, these facilities will double their hosting capacities as well as the increased amount of spectator seating required by FIFA in order to host this event.

NUSSLI also conducted a study on the sustainable and continued use of the extended grandstands following the international football tournament.

The tournament's most sustainable stadium will be a 45,000-seat structure, positioned prominently on an artificial

island at the harbour of Doha city. This stadium will have the capacity to be completely disassembled and reconstructed elsewhere.

The 2022 Qatar Bid Committee focused its event host candidacy entirely on sustainability: with innovative approaches in regard to climate, where one objective is to promote the generation of renewable energies in the Persian Gulf. The promotion of sports participation in the whole Gulf region was also a key legacy objective linked to the hosting of this event.

Within the conceptual plan, NUSSLI's designs included the intended use of the implemented modular systems at smaller venues in the region after the World Cup event. For example, 99.5 per cent of the 250,000 additional seats created for the FIFA World Cup, will be used in smaller stadiums in the region to accommodate 15,000, 10,000 and 5,000 spectators.

Neptunus' Prestige Ticketing contract at London 2012

Neptunus has been contracted to supply the venue for Prestige Ticketing, the official provider of corporate hospitality ticketing packages, at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Situated just metres from the Olympic Stadium, the three-storey glass-fronted structure will provide an exciting experience for guests at the heart of the action. Construction of the 11,500sq m, 3,000-spectator venue will start in the Olympic Park early next year.

Sue Creed, operations director at Prestige Ticketing, said she was impressed by Neptunus' ability to meet the Games' stringent sustainability policy, in the design and construction of their structures, as well as deliver the project at a competitive price.

April Trasler, UK managing director at Neptunus said: "Our structures are designed with modern recyclable components, which means that at the end of any hire period the equipment is checked, cleaned and returned to our hire stock for the next use."

Meanwhile, Neptunus has recently launched the energy-efficient, semi-permanent Flexolution structure.

This new structure features superior acoustic and thermal properties and offers an A-rated energy performance under the EU Energy Performance in Buildings Directive.

The Flexolution Structure can house indoor sports, such as gymnastics



A marathon job for the Arena Group



Seating was provided for supporters to watch the runners cross the finish line

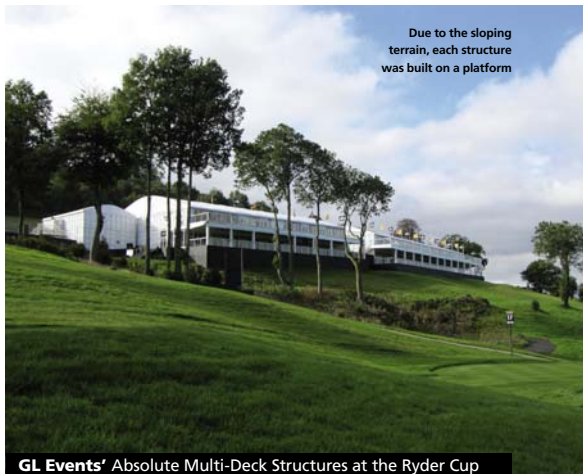
The Arena Group provided 60 temporary tower structures and 1,450 temporary tiered seats overlooking the finish-line in front of Buckingham Palace for the capital's largest sporting event, the Virgin London Marathon, in April this year.

Arena supplied all of the mile and kilometre marker towers along the 26.2-mile route, which the 36,000 runners passed by from Blackheath to the finish line in St James Park. Arena Group built the markers that signified distance achieved, from the first mile to '800m To Go' on the main and Red Route, totalling approximately 60 individual constructions.

Regarding the set-up procedure, Arena's project manager Martin Clark says: "As the marathon route runs straight through the extremely busy centre of London, we needed to ensure the build was quick and efficient with minimal disruptions to traffic and other services. This is why we executed the majority of the build just the day before the race, with a number of our experienced project managers and 62 crew members ensuring the efficient, safe installation and de-rig."

The Arena Group also provided all of the finish line seating, which was situated along The Mall and consisted of 1,450 tiered, covered seats for supporters to watch runners cross the line. The towers and seating provided a platform for the marathon's major sponsor, Virgin, to visibly display branding along the entire route.

All markers were removed immediately after the last runners passed each mile point and the seating structure was removed by late afternoon – ensuring that traffic returned to normal ready for Monday morning.



GL Events' Absolute Multi-Deck Structures at the Ryder Cup

Last year, GL Events Owen Brown erected three Absolute double deck pavilions on Celtic Manor Resort's Twenty Ten golf course at the Ryder Cup.

The structures were used for The Kidwelly private hospitality suite located above the 16th green and fairway as well as The Caerphilly private hospitality suite and The Conwy Club, which is a shared restaurant facility, located above the 17th green.


Due to the sloping terrain, each of the Owen Brown structures were constructed on raised platforms to guarantee guests unrivalled views of

the action on the course. Two-storey kitchen and washroom facilities were attached to the structures. Plus, for the first time, a new automatic guest lift system was installed in each structure, which will now feature in all double and triple deck projects.

According to Darren Woodhouse, events director at GL Events, the continuous rain, before and during the event, made the installation more of a challenge – particularly for the staff on-site, so four crew remained at the course on standby in case there were any operational issues. ●



The two-storey Absolute pavilions allowed guests an excellent view of the course



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Places People Play

After the excitement of London 2012, when the greatest sporting spectacle on earth has drawn to a close, how will the nation have benefited from the mass participation legacy? And how will our sector harness the inspirational power of the Olympics and Paralympics?

Sport England's aim, through our *Places People Play* programme, is that hundreds of thousands more people will have a compelling answer to this question.

Places People Play will bring the sporting legacy to life, delivering better facilities, more volunteers and greater access to a variety of sports across the whole country, not just London. We came together with the government and the Olympic and Paralympic stakeholders to announce the programme – but successful delivery of the sporting legacy will only be achieved through a far broader collaboration that includes everyone involved in the sport sector.

All of the *Places People Play* programmes will be fully inclusive and to that end we are consulting with disabled people and those who support them on how we can best invest in tackling the barriers that a variety of people may face when they want to play sport.

Getting more people to play and enjoy sport is the cornerstone of Sport England's work. It's also the guiding principle of most people I meet in sport.

Sport England chair Richard Lewis explains how the £135m, Lottery-funded initiative will enhance existing investment across the community sports sector, to encourage more people to play and enjoy sport

We are very aware people will be facing tough decisions as a result of the economic climate; we had to make some hard decisions of our own last autumn. This makes it more important than ever that we all secure the maximum possible value from the £135m *Places People Play* initiative – made possible by the government's National Lottery reforms, which are bringing additional funding into grassroots sport.

PLACES

With the construction of the Olympic Park's velodrome complete and the final piece of turf laid in the Olympic Stadium, we need help in transforming places where people play sport in cities, towns and villages right across the country.

Protecting playing fields

Maybe you're connected with a playing field that could do with improvement, such as better drainage perhaps?

This month, we are launching the first of five £2m funding rounds for projects

to protect and improve playing fields. These natural assets are vital to a vibrant grassroots sports environment, yet many are allowed to fall into a poor state of repair and others are earmarked as future development opportunities. This programme will identify and fund projects that help communities realise the sporting benefits of playing field land. We're proposing to invest between £20,000 and £50,000 in sports development-led projects that provide strong evidence of local need. This programme builds on our existing role as statutory consultant on planning applications affecting playing fields and will secure the future of sites for a minimum of 25 years.

Inspired facilities

Do you know of a sports club that could radically improve local sporting opportunities with a relatively modest investment? This programme will invest in the modernisation of community sports clubs and open up facilities for community sport. We want local communities across the country to be touched by the magic of London 2012 in a tangible way, and this investment will bring National Lottery funding to many local groups and facilities that haven't previously benefited from it.

To reduce bureaucracy for applicants, we're preparing a catalogue of many of the standard improvements clubs have told us they would like to make. We will enter into framework arrangements with suppliers to ensure we can benefit from economies of scale. So look out for what's on offer when this fund opens in the summer.

Iconic facilities

We'll also invest in a small number of large, strategic facilities that significantly contribute to an increase in the number of people playing sport across England.



Sport England will invest in facilities that have the capability to attract more participation

A person's chosen sports should suit their abilities and interests



Places People Play will bring the sporting legacy to life, delivering better facilities, more volunteers and a greater access to a variety of sports across the country

Projects supported through this fund will set the standard for future facilities development by providing a network of regional sports hubs to ensure increased participation across a number of sports.

PEOPLE

Do you want to support the legacy by becoming, or deploying, a Sport Maker?

We plan to harness the inspirational pull of London 2012 to recruit, train and deploy 40,000 new Sport Maker volunteers – aged 16 years and over – who will organise and support hundreds of thousands of hours of grassroots sport.

Volunteers already play a massive role in sport – more so than any other sector – and this programme will put us in the vanguard of the Big Society. The network of county sports partnerships (CSPs) across the country are currently working with national governing bodies of sport and other partners to identify the places, projects and activities where Sport Makers will have the biggest impact.

PLAY

Ultimately, the legacy is about taking part – in the sport of a person's choice

in the way that suits their abilities and interests. Sportivate and Gold Challenge will create the sporting opportunities and challenges that give everyone the chance to become part of the mass participation legacy.

Sportivate

This nationwide campaign will give anyone aged between the ages of 14 and 25 the chance to receive six to eight weeks of coaching in a sport of their choice. Delivered through the 49 Community Sports Partnerships and working with a range of local providers, it aims to increase the participation rate of those who currently do not play sport in their own time or spend very little time doing it.

Sportivate will support those who take part to continue playing sport by guiding them into regular participation within their community.

Gold Challenge

This independent initiative aims to motivate more than 100,000 people to test themselves in multiple Olympic and Paralympic sports while raising more than £20m for charity by the end of 2012.

People can choose to take part in five or more sports as an individual or as part of a team. We are supporting Gold Challenge to drive participants towards the high-quality sport offered through national governing bodies and encouraging them to continue playing sport after completing the challenge.

BUILDING ON FIRM FOUNDATIONS

We're excited about the opportunities that will be created through *Places People Play*. But the real key is that this programme is enhancing the progress that is already being made through our existing investment across the community sport sector. Our investment in 46 national governing bodies of sport remains at the heart of this, as their networks of community clubs, coaches and volunteers are key to a thriving grassroots sport environment.

By focussing on the real needs of community sport, investing wisely and promoting best practice, we will have a long-term impact on the sporting behaviours of this generation and the participation of generations to come.

With the right blend of commitment, expertise and a consistent approach, I'm confident that we will deliver a mass participation legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. ●

Despite the harshest winter for many a year Scottish Swimming, the governing body for swimming in Scotland has been reaching out to its distant shores and islands and is undergoing an exciting revival



Swimming in Scotland is alive and splashing!

Scottish Swimming's Learn to Swim and Awards Scheme has been revised and a raft of new awards have been created at the FUNDamentals stage to assist aquatic lesson providers to provide a wide range of swimming lessons to engage young children and to keep them in the wonderful sport of swimming for as long as possible, whether for leisure, health or fun.

Cartoon mascots, Splash and Splish have been around since 2005 to guide children through the challenges and pleasures of learning how to swim and to motivate them as they progress. As if by magic, the charming duo bounced into

life at their first outing in East Dunbartonshire where a whole week of fun, aquatic activities were taken place at their three facilities, organised by David Walker, swimming development officer.

More than 500 children had a great time and had the chance to meet our aquatic double act and have their photograph taken as they were presented with their Kellogg's Scottish Swimming Awards. David Walker said: "East Dunbartonshire Council are extremely proud to be in partnership with Scottish Swimming. The large range of awards now available has enabled us to widen the scope of our lessons and motivate our

swimmers by rewarding them for their hard work; while parents are reassured that we offer a quality programme backed by the NGB. In addition, our staff have become more confident and have learned new skills as a consequence of the support and encouragement from Scottish Swimming."

More recently, we introduced a cute toddler Splish and Splash duo through our AquaFun Awards, aimed at our younger swimmers. Scottish Swimming, in partnership with Glasgow Life, Glasgow Community Health partnerships and local nursery schools, piloted a programme to encourage young children to learn to



Aqua Fun Awards presented at Highlands

"Highland Council's (HC) relationship with Scottish Swimming has really developed at a fast pace. By revising our swimming provision to make use of the enhanced SS L25 structure, our teachers are much more confident in their approach to lesson delivery and progression. This has enabled HC lessons to evolve into a structured Swimmer Pathway that assists each centre to cater for a broad range of customers while encouraging individuals to progress and develop a wider variety of skills."

Jeff Tavendale, swimming development officer, Highland Council



swim; all made possible by support from both NHS Health Scotland and Kellogg's.

The initiative was part of Scottish Swimming's healthy living programme 'Just Add Water' which aims to get more people swimming for fitness, health and fun. Scottish Swimming's Healthy Living manager, Sharon MacDonald explains: "Swimming is a unique life-saving skill. Our vision at Scottish Swimming is that everyone can swim – whatever their age, ethnicity or ability. Being able to swim not only provides children with an essential life skill, it also contributes to a child's health and well-being and at the same time, provides a fun social environment."

"Since January 2010, we have developed the programme in three pools in some of the more socially deprived areas of Glasgow and provided swimming lessons to over 500 children. For many of these children it was their first time in a pool. We believe that by learning to swim at an early age, the youngsters will learn a skill, which will enable them to continue to swim and remain physically active now and in the future."

Health improvement senior, for Glasgow and Greater Glasgow Health Board, John Harkins agrees: "Being physically active at a young age can help youngsters remain physically active as they get older. Swimming is a great way of having fun, keeping fit and staying healthy. Learning to swim now will also enable these youngsters to take part in other water-based activities such as diving, water

Above: Olympian Todd Cooper and Splish and Splash with children from East Dunbartonshire. Right: Splish and Splash keep their eye on young Glasgow swimmers



polo, canoeing and water skiing."

The enhanced Awards Scheme, generously sponsored by Kellogg's, has been implemented in a number of local authorities and leisure trusts across Scotland, namely Argyle and Bute Council, Borders Sport and Leisure Trust, East and West Dunbartonshire Councils, Fife Community Use, Highland Council, Perth and Kinross Council and South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture.

"South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture is delighted to be working in close partnership Scottish Swimming. Our Swimming Development Programme will benefit from this partnership by gaining use of a recognised and structured awards scheme as well as support to deliver national programmes and initiatives."

Andy Figgins, swimming development co-ordinator, South Lanarkshire Leisure and Culture

Scotland does not have a school swimming entitlement, which ensures all young people can swim before leaving primary school. As a result many of young people are leaving school unable to swim. An audit into current school

swimming provision in Scotland – conducted by Scottish Swimming in 2009 – found that despite having taken part in a primary school swimming programme approximately 25 – 30 per cent of children still could not swim.

In September 2010, the Scottish Government announced an additional £800,000 to implement a National Top Up Swimming Programme to help address this matter. This welcome funding assists local authorities in improving the opportunities for primary-aged children to learn to swim and contribute to increasing the number of children who can swim – giving them new skills for safety, fitness, health and fun.

Richard Gordon, director of coaching and development says: "Top up swimming is an intervention to enable every child to achieve the Scottish Swimming National Swimming Award (NSA) at primary school. Pupils are expected to swim a distance of 25m and develop the other range of skills related to the NSA, which are about general water confidence and water safety. We were delighted to receive the funding, this programme will work towards delivering an essential swimming entitlement for the children in Scotland" ● For more information tel: 01786 466520 www.scottishswimming.com



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INDOOR CRICKET

It may be a minority sport in this country, but the ECB's indoor cricket arm is supporting and co-ordinating the game's development as well as the indoor facility provision to increase participation. Tom Walker reports

Indoor cricket is a fast and furious sport that can be played by people of any age. It's hugely popular in countries such as Australia, New Zealand and South Africa but in England it's still a minority sport. However, this is set to change. In 2009, the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) launched a dedicated indoor cricket arm and announced its plans to increase participation. The goal is to achieve similar success to the one the sport enjoys overseas.

WHERE IT ALL BEGAN

Despite benefiting from climates that allow all-year round cricket outdoors, it was the southern hemisphere's cricket-playing nations that were first to truly embrace the indoor game.

By 1984, a nationwide championship had been established in Australia and the sport also became popular in New Zealand. In England the game enjoyed popularity throughout the 1980s and much of the 1990s, but then fell into decline. By the new millennium, the centres where indoor cricket was played, according to the rules set out by the World Indoor Cricket Federation

(WICF), had dwindled from a high of around 60 to less than 10.

Although the sport and its development stalled in England, due to the lack of facilities, it kept expanding overseas. South Africa now has a striving league system, as do India and Pakistan. Sri Lanka and a number of emerging cricketing nations such as Namibia, Zimbabwe and the United Arab Emirates are all member countries of the WICF.

According to former England captain Mike Gatting, now the ECB's managing director of cricket partnerships, indoor cricket's popularity in other countries is down to its inclusiveness – something that the ECB is looking to extend in the UK. "Indoor cricket is a fantastic game that is open to all," he says.

"The game is played by young and old and offers mixed gender leagues, so it's perfect for people looking to 'have a go' at the sport. It's popular with the recreational cricketer who plays in the evenings, there are no weather or light restrictions and a game only takes about 90 minutes to play so it fits well into people's busy lives. Plus it also offers the opportunity for current players to



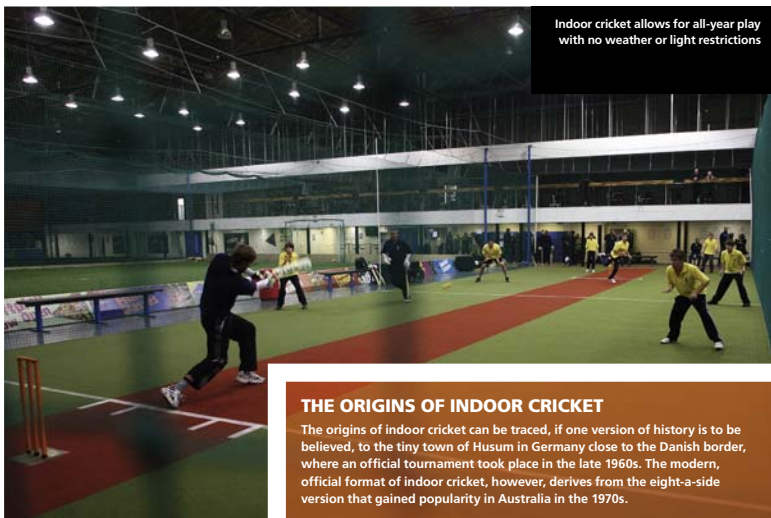
A fully inclusive sport for keen cricketers or those who just want to 'have a go'

keep their fitness and skill levels up through the winter months."

FACILITY FOCUS

Although Australian cricket might be reeling from losing the Ashes at home for the first time in 26 years, the country is still head and shoulders above all other nations in the indoor game. The men's and women's teams are the reigning WICF champions and the league structure is supported by a great network of indoor facilities. In total, there are now 80 dedicated indoor cricket arenas in Australia – with New South Wales alone boasting 30.

New Zealand has also established itself as another powerhouse in world indoor cricket. The country currently boasts 29 indoor cricket centres with plans to further increase the number of arenas.



Indoor cricket allows for all-year play with no weather or light restrictions

THE ORIGINS OF INDOOR CRICKET

The origins of indoor cricket can be traced, if one version of history is to be believed, to the tiny town of Husum in Germany close to the Danish border, where an official tournament took place in the late 1960s. The modern, official format of indoor cricket, however, derives from the eight-a-side version that gained popularity in Australia in the 1970s.

- Contrast these numbers with the fact that there are only nine indoor cricket arenas in the whole of England and it's easy to see that the sport in this country has its challenges – but also a potential for major growth. With this in mind, the ECB set up an indoor cricket arm (ECBIC) to take over the co-ordination and development of indoor cricket

in 2009. The development of new arenas is one of its main priorities.

Garthing says that plans are to improve current facilities as well as create new ones. "We've invested in the improvement plans of existing affiliates with several indoor centres already having received financial support and further facilities will be developed by 2014," he says. "We want to create an all-year-round offer to meet the needs of cricketers who want to keep their skill levels up during the winter and those who wish to play an informal, short format of the game in a safe, fun environment."

OFFERING A HELPING HAND

For those looking to set up an indoor arena capable of hosting cricket, the ECB has worked with the operators of existing indoor facilities to produce a comprehensive guide, which outlines both a business plan and the technical requirements of an indoor cricket arena.

The ECB's Indoor Cricket Facilities (TS7) document comes in two parts: *A quick Guide To Getting Business Started*; and *Design Guidelines*. The former sets out the business plan for aspiring operators while the second offers technical requirements for a fully-fledged indoor arena – the guidelines of which were sourced through consultation with the Sport and Play Construction Association (SAPCA).

According to Garthing there is a large support system to help operators and developers get involved in indoor cricket. "The ECB can assist in the development of projects both technically and in terms of business planning via national and county officers," he says. "If centres affiliate to the ECBIC a full explanation of the relationship is stated within the agreement so centres understand and are supported in their development. The ECB will then employ a national manager to support the development of the plans for indoor cricket centres and the relationship with existing and future affiliates."

WHAT'S NEXT?

Looking towards the sport's future, Garthing sees the limited number of facilities as an opportunity rather than a hindrance. He says that the ECB is fully committed to developing new facilities and improving existing ones, but that it will need the support of dedicated operators to do the ground work. "The growth of centres across the country is not just dependent on investment, but also on people wanting to take up the business opportunity of running an indoor sports centre," he says. ●

Tom Walker is the news editor at Leisure Opportunities





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Safe, comfortable landings

"The comfort levels in sports flooring is often overlooked," says Peter Daly as he summarises recent flooring research undertaken by the University of Poitiers in France

When an educational establishment or a local authority draws up plans to build a sports hall, as floor manufacturers we are usually asked the standard questions: "How durable is the flooring? Does it stand up to tables and chairs? What's the bounce like and what maintenance is needed?" While all of these are important, often the key issue of safety and protection is not the first question that comes to the buyer's mind in the decision making process. However, this is understandable, when you consider the fact that the vast majority of people involved in choosing a sports floor will only do so perhaps once in a building's 25-year lifetime.

While one can, and should, refer to biomechanical or injury prevention studies that already exist, it is also the responsibility of the sports flooring industry to educate potential buyers and assist them in making the best possible choice for the floor users.

The profile of these users, and indeed all facility users, needs to be clarified in order to make the right flooring decision. Ultimately, the ideal sports floor should be one that best accommodates and protects players from short- and long-term injury.

Sports flooring research

Regarding safety, the 'Berlin Athlete' apparatus is used to measure force reduction – commonly referred to as shock absorption. The sports flooring industry frequently refers to this piece of apparatus, as it simulates the forces exerted on a sports floor by a national level sprinter, weighing approximately 11 stone.

Sports floors can be classified according to the force reduction properties of the floor, but the bigger question is whether a national level athlete is actually representative of the average profile of the people who regularly play sport in a particular sports hall?

In 1996 Müller and Denoth (Biomechanics, ETH of Zurich) presented their

findings on sports floors and force reduction. The study differentiated the force reduction qualities of sports floors and asked whether wood (area elastic) or synthetic (point elastic) was the best material. The study's objective was firstly, to show in what situations a sports hall floor can, and should, undertake a protective function and secondly, to contrast the mechanical properties of wooden and synthetic floors – particularly in regards to adult and children.

The protective function of a sports-hall floor is the basic requirement of any sports surface. However, the effects of the upward forces a body incurs depends on the duration of play and the physical structure of the person.

The mechanical properties of area elastic floors (typically wooden sprung floors) and point elastic floors (usually cushion-backed synthetic floors) also differ greatly. Given the differences in size and weight between adults and children, impact velocities are obviously varied. So consequently, the force of the impact is not always absorbed by an area elastic and a point elastic floor as it will react in a similar manner to children and adults – whether the force of impact is high or low.

Engineers at the University of Poitiers developed a spherical impactor, filled with sensors to enable researchers to measure the comfort of sports floors



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A comfortable floor is a key factor when choosing a sports floor, as it helps prevent injury

→ Sports specific research

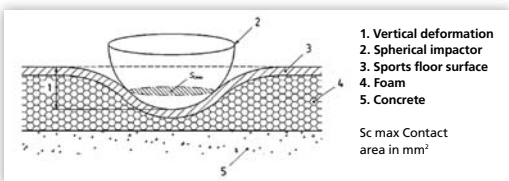
Gerflor – the Flooring Group has played an active role in the development of flooring standards and player protection, with one of the most recent being the EN14904 European sports flooring standard. While this stipulates that a sports floor in any of the European Union countries must offer a minimum of 25 per cent force reduction to those who will use the facility, it does not in any way quantify the notion of contact with the floor (impact comfort) – which is particularly important for young users between the ages of two and 11 years.

A key issue has been to establish a way in which one could quantify the different levels of comfort (as opposed to force reduction) of the various point and area elastic floors commonly found in the market place. This research was carried out by the biomechanics department at the University of Poitiers in France, from 2007 to 2011.

The first challenge the research engineers were faced with was measuring the level of comfort of a floor. To this end, engineers at the University of Poitiers developed a spherical impactor filled with sensors to enable researchers to measure the comfort of sports floors.

This spherical apparatus, with varying weights, simulates different parts of the body such as the knee/elbow versus the head. The apparatus, through different impact velocities, also simulates the different types of users in a sports hall or playground – from young children to seniors as defined by the ETH of Zurich. (See diagram 1 below)

Diagram 1: Simulating different types of floor users



Consequently, engineers were then able to determine the comfort levels of different types of sports floors – ranging from timber sprung to several different types of synthetic sports flooring. These included:

- **Area elastic floors** such as sprung timber with force reduction >50 per cent
- **Point plastic floors** such as poured urethane, PVC and rubber

The comfort index is the intensity of the force on impact. The intensity of impact depends on the contact area. The higher the contact area, the lower the intensity (pain, risk of bruising and fractures) and the greater the comfort.

Consequently for harder floors, even though the force reduction properties of a floor may be very high, the surface area of the spherical apparatus remains relatively low compared to softer floors.

(The classification of the comfort index is illustrated in the table below)

| Level of Impact Comfort of a Floor | Impact Comfort Index |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|
| Comfortable | <15 |
| Medium Comfortable | ≥15 - ≤35 |
| Uncomfortable | >35 |

The research findings showed that 'comfortable' floors (ie Impact Comfort Index <15 per cent) to be, systematically, point elastic sports floors with a force reduction of >45 per cent (according to the Sports Flooring Standard 14904).

Findings also showed that when encountering elbow or head impacts, children and adults experienced a greater comfort from point elastic floors compared to area elastic floors.

Currently the French Ministry of Education is keen to promote this type of sports floor testing – particularly when used in playgrounds or small sports halls in primary schools and crèches. The ministry recommends comfortable floors with an Impact Comfort Index of <15 per cent combined with a force reduction of >45 per cent.

Study conclusion

The conclusion of the study is that comparing the force reduction properties – while being essential in the determination of a safe sports floor (ie protection against long term injuries) – is not necessary the only comparison that needs to be made in the choice of adapted sports floors for use by a particular user profile.

The comfort properties of a floor should also be taken into account as it's a crucial factor for protection against immediate injury risk, such as bruising, and even more importantly when for use by younger players. In my opinion, the comfort levels of a floor is a factor that is often neglected, basically because of the difficulty in determining "what is a comfortable floor?" ●

Peter Daly is Western European sales manager at Gerflor

Ask any female relative in your family and they will have probably played netball during their school years, but did you know that many are heading back to the sport in later life? In fact the sport is now played in 70 countries by over seven million people and its profile is gaining momentum

The Netball Revolution



The 2011 season will soon be at an end for the Netball Super League (NSL) with nine franchises fighting it out for the championship title. And this year the sport's profile has been given a tremendous boost with the announcement of car manufacturer FIAT as a main sponsor and the introduction of a brand new Taraflex™ sports surface for televised games.

Andy Crook, NSL general manager tells us why: "We needed to improve the profile of the sport," he says. "Sky Sports are the best in the world at televising 'live' sport and we wanted to deliver a product to live audiences and direct into the home that is high quality, consistent and reflective of our ambitions for the game."

Part of the solution was to sign a partnership agreement with Gerflor to supply two brand new portable



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According to Andy Crook, the feedback so far from the players, coaches and umpires regarding the surface has been very encouraging. "It looks great on TV and we feel it will have a positive effect against some injuries usually sustained when playing on timber," he says.

World class Irish tournament

Taraflex™ was also the preferred surface at the Home Nations Internationals, played at Antrim Forum in Northern Ireland, between England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Commenting on the flooring choice Netball Northern Ireland's Clare McCauley says: "In order to host a world class tournament we needed a world class

surface. For us, that meant Taraflex™.

Gerflor assisted in the event planning, the bespoke court manufacture, the logistics, the branding and even the sponsorship needed to help deliver a top class Northern Ireland event."

It's no surprise then that Gerflor is the approved manufacturer to both Netball England and Netball Northern Ireland.

Gerflor's service commitment

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ON YOUR MARKS

**Want to help your club members improve their running technique?
Kath Hudson looks at some of the options open to operators**

For someone who could never be described as a gifted runner, I've always been of the belief that the world is made up of heavy-footed plodders or light-footed bambis. Not so, according to the running experts. Running is a skill, like any other sports skill, and working on the technique can improve speed, ability, enjoyment, stamina and also reduce the risk of injury.

Perfecting running technique is still a fairly niche concept. It's rarely taught in PE lessons at schools, and even running clubs tend to focus on conditioning rather than technique. However there are a growing number of running specialists who are starting to reach out, both geographically and in terms of target audience. Everyone – children, older people, elite athletes, recreational runners, post rehab clients and the de-conditioned market – can benefit from improving their running technique.



Star Track Coach offers personalised treadmill workouts featuring US running coach Kimberley Shah

Expert events

Physiotherapist, author and eight-time marathon runner Paula Coates works at London's Balance Performance Physiotherapy, which offers expert advice to everyone from novices through to Olympic athletes. She says it's difficult for

sport clubs to offer specialised running programmes unless they have an experienced physiotherapist or podiatrist on board who can assess the biomechanics of the lower limb and spine.

"Teaming up with local clinics or freelance physiotherapists and podiatrists could be an option however," says Coates. "Or perhaps setting up in-club clinics where members can have an assessment and learn about technique."

Another option for an in-club clinic would be to host a visiting Feldenkrais teacher. The UK is some way behind the US and Europe in embracing Feldenkrais – a mind-body approach to movement developed by an Israeli doctor of physics and structural engineer, Moshé Feldenkrais, in the 1940s – but it offers an interesting opportunity for club operators.

According to long-established practitioner, Vreni Booth, Feldenkrais looks at how the human skeleton functions in the field of gravity. "To cope with an injury, Feldenkrais sought a different way of moving, so he studied how the bones are linked and how the skeleton works as a self-balancing structure. It also teaches moving with awareness," she says.

Left: The Running School analyses and reteaches running technique.

Below: Self-balancing the body





Below: MP3 programmes, such as Audiofuel, can create bespoke running and training programmes



For example, back and knee pain when running can be alleviated by bringing the hip joint into awareness and engaging it. "Pain means over-burdening one area because somewhere else isn't doing anything," says Booth. "It's like drawing on a bank account and pushing it into the red, when there is another account with a lot of money in it. My job as a Feldenkrais practitioner is to look at the discrepancies of over-charging one area and under-using another."

The goal of Feldenkrais is to make the body move as well as it functioned as a

child. Booth says she can work with any body, but not any mind. "It does require an open-minded person to make changes. However, those changes can then be profound," she says.

Franchise approach

The Running School, which started in London 10 years ago, launched a franchise business at the end of last year. Those buying into the franchise are trained to use the protocols developed by company founder Mike Antoniadis, which were tested on elite

athletes, recreational runners and children for eight years prior to

the launch of his business. Franchisees are also taught how to approach clients and how to help them change and achieve their running objectives.

"Most people think they naturally know how to run, but they don't. Also, sitting down for 10 hours a day turns a lot of muscles off. The Running School reteaches movement and has developed accelerated learning techniques," says Antoniadis.

"The common problems we find are that people don't know how to use their arms, they land badly and shuffle rather than use rear muscles." One of the techniques used by The Running School to correct this is biomechanical analysis.

"It's the same technology that some sports shops offer when fitting trainers," explains Antoniadis. "But the Running School assesses the whole body rather than just looking at people's technique from the knee down."

"Our programme has widespread appeal," says Antoniadis. "This morning, for example, I've worked with the one of the country's top sprinters and a 70-year-old woman who only started running 10 years ago." ●

Kath Hudson is a freelance journalist

EMMA MATTHEWS – FIRST-TIME MARATHON RUNNER

Having enrolled for the Paris Marathon, I started to get the jitters about getting an injury, so was keen to get my running technique checked out.

I went to the original Running School in west London. To start with I was observed, and videoed, running on a treadmill. Watching it back was truly cringeworthy! My assessor, Michael Nicholls, the operations director, paused the video at several points to make comments on my style.

There was a wallchart with about 15 different running styles on it and I recognised myself as a shuffler: I don't lift my feet up far enough, or push off from

my toes to power myself forward. On a long distance run this would result in my legs getting fatigued, as I put too much pressure on the front muscles. Also, I moved my arms from side to side, rather than forward to help power the body. My core isn't strong either, which resulted in my left hip dropping.

I felt inspired after the session. I had moments of doubt about my ability, but this session gave me confidence. I now know that I have to take this new way of running on board and concentrate on my technique during my practice runs rather than just trying to get from A to B.



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In light of Westminster Council's launch of its flagship parkour facility last summer, the founder and director of Parkour UK, Dan Edwardes, talks to Magali Robathan about the urban sport

RUNNING FREE

WHAT IS PARKOUR?

Parkour is a training discipline based on moving over terrain with your body. It involves running, jumping and climbing. The aim is to get from one point to another safely, efficiently and gracefully. It's about physical completeness, about being strong, fit, fast and dynamic, and being able to go anywhere you want.

With that comes the accompanying philosophy of being free – both physically and mentally – because Parkour requires a lot of mental strength in order to overcome fear and inhibitions.

Participants develop a kind of freedom of mind. They start realising that things they saw as obstacles become stepping stones that can be used to get to where they want to go. It gives practitioners a liberating view of the world.

WHAT IS THE HISTORY OF THE DISCIPLINE IN THE UK?

Parkour started in France about 20 years ago by a group of young men who called themselves the Yamakasi. The sport became known outside of France through a 2001 Luc Besson movie about the group.

In 2002, the BBC ran a trailer featuring David Belle, one of the sport's founders. The Channel Four documentaries *Jump London* and *Jump Britain* in 2003 and 2005 launched the sport outside of France on a big scale.

The first practitioners in the UK were people who'd found out about Parkour through other means – there were literally a handful of us. We started communicating with some of the French

Dan Edwardes,
director,
Parkour UK



founders. People started setting up internet forums to meet up and practice together, and the Parkour community began to grow.

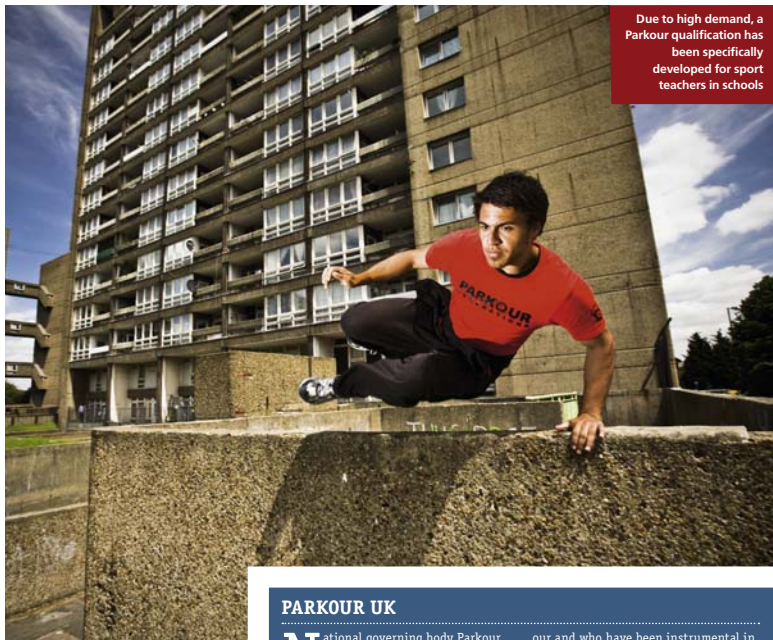
After *Jump London* and *Jump Britain*, these forums were suddenly inundated with people wanting to practice the sport. It was pretty chaotic until about 2005, when the first organised classes were launched in London by Parkour Generations, an organisation dedicated to teaching the sport worldwide. Some of the French founders came over to the UK to teach Parkour the original way, and that's how the discipline's popularity started to grow.

The first classes took place outdoors, then Westminster Council and a couple of other councils got wind of the idea and thought it could be a good way to engage young people in exercise. They asked Parkour instructors to teach the sport in leisure centres and in schools. Once the councils had got behind it, it really started to gain momentum.

Parkour participants can develop a freedom of mind



Due to high demand, a Parkour qualification has been specifically developed for sport teachers in schools



ALL PICS © WWW.PARKOURGENERATIONS.COM

WHAT DOES PARKOUR OFFER PARTICIPANTS?

It has great physical benefits – it helps people lose weight and become strong and flexible. It's a natural, holistic type of training. Young people move around in this manner anyway, so it can focus their natural desire to explore their surroundings.

It also has mental benefits. Because you start to do things you didn't think were possible, you develop confidence and an improved sense of self. You realise that your potential is much more than you thought.

A lot of the young people who get involved in the Parkour classes in schools aren't that confident, and are often not keen on team sports. They come to Parkour, which is not competitive or team based and is very much about self-improvement, and they like that. They begin to see they have a physicality, which they may not have explored, and their confidence starts to skyrocket.

WHAT ARE THE AIMS OF PARKOUR UK?

Parkour UK came about as a result of its mainstream attention. The UK sporting

PARKOUR UK

National governing body Parkour UK (PKUK) was established in 2009. It is a not for profit organisation responsible for the administration, development and promotion of the discipline in the UK. It officially became a member of Skills Active in July 2010 and it is also a member of the Sport and Recreation Alliance.

This vision is fuelled by a team of full-time practitioners and part-time volunteers who share a passion for Park-

our and who have been instrumental in introducing the regular teaching of the sport in nationwide schools and local authorities during the last four years.

Parkour UK is in charge of the administration of the ADAPT (Art du Deplacement and Parkour Teaching) qualification programme, which has been developed with 1st4sport Qualifications – the awarding body for active learning and leisure.

Details: www.parkourgenerations.com

statutory boards saw its potential for growth and wanted to see some sort of national governing body in place to regulate the coaching of the sport as well as the development and promotion of it.

A few of the senior instructors in the UK, including some of the French founders, decided to create a national governing body that would regulate, promote and maintain the ethics and standards of the discipline.

WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FACING THE SPORT?

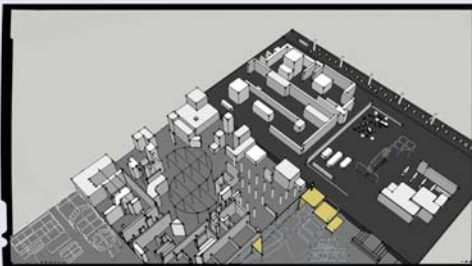
One of the biggest challenges was getting recognition that Parkour is not a crazy sport that's about jumping off

buildings, but is a very rigorous mental and physical discipline that's about self-improvement. That's pretty much been achieved, and most of the councils, schools and governing bodies are now happy to work with Parkour UK.

The main challenge facing us now is getting enough qualified coaches, because there's a massive demand. These statutory bodies have told us they would like Parkour to be offered in every secondary school in the country. However, there's nowhere near enough coaches for that at the moment.

We need to try and get as many good practitioners as possible to become qualified via the new recognised coaching

FLAGSHIP FACILITY FOR WESTBOURNE GREEN



Participants focus on their desire to explore their surroundings

In June last year, Westminster Council announced plans to build an outdoor managed Parkour facility in London's Westbourne Green.

The site aims to mimic an urban landscape and will contain dozens of objects commonly found in a real city environment including walls, rails and stairs that Parkour or freerunning practitioners can use to practice their sport within a safe environment.

The new facility, which will be based at Westminster Academy in Westbourne Green, will feature obstacles for individuals of all abilities and ages and at its heart will showcase an 80m free flow area where practitioners

can combine a range of moves and test their skills to the limit.

Users can either prove their competence to qualified instructors from Parkour UK in order to use the facility unsupervised, or attend classes which will run at least five nights a week in addition to classes for schools. Anyone over the age of eight can attend the classes, which will start at £1.

Up to 100 people can use the facility at any time with the maximum capacity of the junior area being 60 people and 40 are allowed in the more advanced area.

Westminster Council has invested £90,000 in the facility and the London Marathon Trust £80,000.

➔ qualification so that they can meet the demand. That's a big challenge and it will take several years to fill that shortfall.

Sport England would very much like to see Parkour spread as it recognises the benefits in the schools it's already taught in. More and more schools want it: it ticks all the boxes for what the government wants to see in sport education in schools now. And the kids like it, so it's a win-win situation.

WHAT IS PARKOUR UK WORKING ON DURING THE NEXT 12 MONTHS?

The main focus is getting as many people qualified to teach Parkour as possible so that the sport can develop in a positive way. The Level One ADAPT (Art du Deplacement and Parkour Teaching) instructor qualification programme launched in January 2010, and the Level Two course launched in the summer of that year. We've done about 15 Level One courses since it launched. It takes

a long time to get these things going, and it took quite a while getting the qualifications officially stamped and recognised by all the sporting bodies in the UK but we're there now.

We want to get as many dedicated people doing the Level One qualification as possible, and expand the number of Level 2 courses accordingly. One of the projects is the development of a qualification specifically for sports teachers in schools because there's a huge demand among PE teachers to be able to deliver the basics, and that will begin to be delivered this year.

WHAT'S THE FUTURE FOR PARKOUR?

We'd like to see the discipline continue to spread in a good way, so that the original spirit of Parkour isn't diluted or lost and it continues to grow in popularity. ●

Magali Robathan is managing editor of Leisure Management magazine



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Wicksteed enters the urban world of freerunning with their Parkour zones

Wicksteed enters the edgy and exciting world of parkour with schemes designed by the world's leading professionals - Parkour Generations.

Also known as freerunning, this exhilarating sport is beginning to take off in the UK - both in schools and community areas. Wicksteed's specially designed zones - for free use of all budding parkour lovers - are set to draw in practitioners from far and wide!

Parkour engages, inspires and motivates young people for whom more traditional sports and physical education has less appeal.

Wicksteed's parkour training facilities have been designed to comply with the proposed British Standard tabled by the National Governing Body.

So, if you want to see people from all walks of life out there practising their Tic Tacs or polishing up their Speed Vault techniques, get a Wicksteed parkour facility sorted!

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Ryesport signed up for Everton

British Seed Houses' (BSH) A20 Ryesport has been selected to keep Everton's Goodison Park pitch and Finch Farm training ground green – despite a punishing schedule for the premiership club. BSH identified the perfect sports ground solution in the four-rye blend, as it offers a high tolerance to wear, a rapid establishment and great winter colour.

sport-kit.net KEYWORDS

british seed houses



Shock news from Trocellen

New from Trocellen is its ProGame brand, a system of shock pads designed to maximise the stability and long lasting performance of artificial turf installations. Presented on a roll, the pads offer constant performance across the whole installed area – independent of weather conditions. It also meets the requirements of differing systems, such as sand and rubber infill – and even those without infill.

sport-kit.net KEYWORDS

trocellen

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Arena seats Docklands squash classic

Arena Seating supplied 200 seats on three tiered grandstands for the annual ISS Canary Wharf Squash Classic that took place at East Wintergarden, London's Docklands in March this year.

By carefully constructing the grandstands surrounding the court's glass walls, Arena was able to offer spectators the best possible comfort and viewing experience as the world's greatest squash players fought for the title of champion – eventually won by England's Nick Matthew.



sport-kit.net KEYWORDS

arena seating



sport-kit.net KEYWORDS

wicksteed playscapes

A concrete proposal from Wicksteed

Wicksteed Playscapes has entered the exciting world of parkour, with schemes created in conjunction with leading designers Parkour Generations. The company's parkour zones are designed using a mixture of pre-cast concrete walls and galvanised steel bars – both which fit into a 15m x 10m space. Constructed to BS8110 standard, the walls range in height from 0.5m to a maximum of 1.2m with widths ranging from 100mm to 150mm. A thorough site survey is required first, but the zones are designed to be installed into a range of different surfaces, for which all applications can be catered.



sport-kit.net KEYWORDS
tarkett sports flooring

Front line support from Tarkett

When the old floor of the gym at the RAF Odiham front-line helicopter support base in Hampshire needed replacing, a Tarkett Sports Flooring System was found to be the best solution. Incorporating InstaSport sprung sub-floors, the system is ideal for use where the subfloor is not level or the height of the finished floor needs to be raised. When combined with a Tarkett vinyl or engineered wood sports surface, the system is fully compliant with EN14904.



Weatherproof sport

Norseman Structures has supplied a new Jubilee Dome indoor sports facility for Spratton Hall School in Northamptonshire. Included within the 19.8m x 34.7m structure are netball, tennis and volleyball courts, together with four badminton courts. The facility provides a building solution that enables sports activities and lessons to continue throughout the year – even in poor weather.

sport-kit.net KEYWORDS
norseman structures

Twice the productivity with the Double Renew2

Artificial Grass Maintenance has launched The Double Renew2. Based on the original Renew2 modular design and developed for sand dressed, sand filled and 3G surfaces, it offers twice the productivity, ideal for full sized pitches. An increased working width brushes, decompacts, distributes and finishes a full-sized pitch in 45 minutes. Special brushes lift the pile and loosen the infill, while fully adjustable angled tines offer accurate depth adjustment – giving a softer rejuvenated playing surface.



sport-kit.net KEYWORDS
double renew 2



sport-kit.net KEYWORDS
lappset playworld

Lappset's urban inspiration

New from Lappset Playworld is Lappset Parkour Solutions, a range of urban-inspired recreational equipment. The Pyramid Climber is ideal for practising vaulting; the Spider Cage (left) allows users to try different moves on one piece of kit, including underbars and wall runs; and the Tic-Tac Cube forms the basis of many parkour routes, allowing practitioners to jump to and from it. Both the Spider Cage and the Tic-Tac Cube are available in a range of sizes. The equipment is made from high quality materials and mounted securely in concrete.



Hippo combines the highs and the lows

Hippo Leisure has installed a new water play design at Concordia Leisure Centre in Cramlington, Northumberland. Combining low and high level features in vibrant colours, the feature creates water action in two main areas and mixes different interactive elements to provide an inclusive play scenario for all ages and abilities. The equipment is surrounded by an Aquatrol pregated safety surface.

sport-kit.net KEYWORDS
hippo leisure

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The Sports and Play Construction Association, SAPCA, is the recognised trade organisation for the sports and play facility construction industry in the UK. SAPCA fosters excellence, professionalism and continuous improvement throughout the industry, in order to provide the high quality facilities necessary for the success of British sport.

SAPCA represents a wide range of specialist constructors of natural and synthetic sports surfaces, including both outdoor and indoor facilities, from tennis courts and sports pitches to playgrounds and sports halls. SAPCA also represents manufacturers and suppliers of related products, and independent consultants that offer professional advice on the development of projects.

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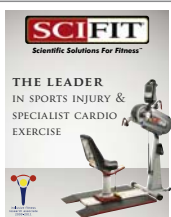


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DIARY DATES

3-5 JUNE 2011

Grassroots Football Live

The NEC, Birmingham

This event offers something for everyone involved in football – including players, managers, coaches, referees and volunteers. It features practical demonstrations and inspirational discussions presented by football experts Chris Coleman, Peter Taylor, Tosh Farrell, Bill Beswick and Richard Beale.

www.grassrootsfootball.co.uk

7 JUNE 2011

SAPCA Exhibition

Aston Villa FC, Birmingham

This free Sport and Play Construction Association (SAPCA) event offers educational seminars, which provide guidance on all aspects of the delivery of new and upgraded sports facilities. It also includes an exhibition featuring specialist constructors of sport facilities and suppliers of related products and services.

www.sapca.org.uk

7-8 JUNE 2011

UK Coaching Summit

Europa Hotel, Belfast

An annual opportunity for sporting NGBs and public and private coaching providers to share best practice and focus on the common coaching agenda.

www.sportscoachuk.org

14-16 JUNE 2011

Stadium Business Summit

Hesperia Tower, Barcelona, Spain

In partnership with the city of Barcelona, leading football clubs FC Barcelona and RCD Espanyol and a host of industry backers, this event will explore the critical issues facing the stadium and major sports venue sector.

www.stadiumbusinesssummit.com

15-17 JUNE 2011

Stadia & Arena Marseille

Marseille, France

Playing host to the 2016 European Football Championships, the French Football Federation bid included 12 stadiums, of which four will be new and seven requiring major renovations – including a major renovation of Marseille's Velodrome Stadium. Construction work should have commenced by June 2011 and delegates will have an opportunity to view its progress during the event.

www.sam.uk.com/2011

21-22 JUNE 2011

PlayFair 2011

Stoneleigh Park, Warwickshire

The UK's trade event for all those involved in the selection, purchase, upkeep and replacement of children's play equipment. This outdoor event is totally dedicated to the play sector. It's free to visit and offers a series of seminars designed to keep delegates up to date with the latest thinking and demands affecting the country's play spaces.

<http://2011.playfairuk.com>

5-7 JULY 2011

CIPFA Annual Conference 2011

Birmingham ICC

The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy's (CIPFA) conference will explore the full consequences of the spending cuts as the new public services landscape takes shape. Speakers will include Rt Hon Eric Pickles MP, political broadcaster Daisy McAndrews and Richard Koo – chief economist of the Nomura Research Institute.

www.cipfaannualconference.org.uk

6-8 SEPTEMBER 2011

IOG SALTEx

Windsor Racecourse, Berkshire

Organised by the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG), this outdoor show highlights fine turf, sports surfaces, maintenance equipment, children's outdoor play and safety surfacing, landscaping, commercial vehicles, outdoor leisure and facilities management, as well as software and security equipment. It's attended by managers of open spaces – including groundsman, greenkeepers, contractors, local authority and leisure facility managers.

www.iog.org

20-22 SEPTEMBER 2011

Sport (at LIW)

The NEC, Birmingham

Formerly known as Sport Development week, this event offers an ideal meeting place for the UK sports industry to network and look into new ways to extend sports participation. The show's new Youth Engagement Zone will highlight innovative ways to engage children in physical activity and the Flow Rider artificial wave machine will make its second annual appearance at the show.

www.liw.co.uk

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| Wales | Cardiff, Cardiff City FC Academy | Football |