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EDITOR'S LETTER



Usain Bolt will compete at Crystal Palace later this year (p20)

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

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Julie Albone

+44 (0)1462 471915

EDITOR

Liz Terry

+44 (0)1462 431385

MANAGING EDITOR

Karen Maxwell

+44 (0)1462 471920

PUBLISHER

Nadeem Shaikh

+44 (0)1462 471902

NEWS EDITOR

Tom Walker

+44 (0)1462 471934

JOURNALISTS

Caroline Wilkinson

+44 (0)1462 471911

Pete Hayman

+44 (0)1462 471938

PRODUCTS EDITORS

Martin Nash/Mark Edmonds

+44 (0)1462 471933

DISPLAY ADVERTISING

John Challinor

+44 (0)1582 607970

Jan Williams

+44 (0)1462 471909

Tessa Alexander

+44 (0)1462 471903

DESIGN

Ed Gallagher

+44 (0)1905 20198

Andy Bundy

+44 (0)1462 471924

Claire Toplis

+44 (0)1462 471910

INTERNET

Dean Fox

+44 (0)1462 471900

Tim Nash

+44 (0)1462 471917

CIRCULATION MANAGER

Michael Emmerson

+44 (0)1462 471932

FINANCIAL CONTROL

Sue Davis

+44 (0)1395 519398

FINANCIAL ADMIN

Denise Gildea

+44 (0)1462 471930

Challenging times for sport

Speaking at the recent CCPR national conference in London, chair, Brigid Simmonds, warned delegates that the recession is hitting sports clubs hard and threatening to undermine the sector, with up to 6,000 clubs – 4 per cent of the UK total – threatened with closure.

The Deloitte Sports Business Group researched the state of the market by taking a snapshot of sports clubs in April this year. It found that half have been negatively affected by the recession, over 40 per cent had seen a reduction in renewals and 59 per cent expect membership fee income to fall again next year.

Up to 60 per cent of clubs told Deloitte that they had already started cutting costs or were planning to do so soon – 50 per cent from their kit or facilities budgets, 23 per cent from coaching and 23 per cent from 'grassroots or community initiatives'. In sharing these numbers, Simmonds told delegates that "the recession could become a full-blown disaster for community sport."

While recognising that sport and recreation should 'do its bit' to reduce costs to make ends meet, she lamented the fact that sport – out in the cold politically for so many years – has just started to make inroads as a result of the 2012 Olympics and government prioritising of wellness, only to find its sources of funding under threat: "just as we've stepped over this threshold, after years of slow progress, we've met these new financial constraints. The message coming loud and clear from the Treasury is that they are not interested in talking about anything which costs money."

Simmonds went on to suggest positive ways forward, presenting BingoLotto as a potential funding

Simmonds called for a 'can-do attitude' from government towards sport. "What we want to hear in these straightened times, is 'How can we help?', not 'How can we put the handbrakes on.'"

stream and appealing for a 'can-do attitude' from government. "What we want to hear in these straightened times," she said, "is 'How can we help?' not 'How can we put the handbrakes on.'"

One practical way government can support sport, said Simmonds, is to 'do less' and she called for a "moratorium on the introduction of new regulations, licensing systems or charges which affect clubs, until the UK economy emerges fully from recession." Examples given included waiving a new business rate supplement, making clubs exempt from the community infrastructure levy, and a successful outcome for the current challenge over music licensing. All these things will directly or indirectly help club finances.

The government has made sports governing bodies and clubs the focal point of its delivery strategy and the Deloitte findings raise issues about the future stability of this structure. However, speaking to the BBC during the CCPR conference, Secretary of State Andy Burnham said: "Sport is in a position of fundamental strength [and] is incredibly well placed to get through [the recession]."

Burnham said he's aware government funding going forward may be tight, but he's looking to the richer sports to invest more at grassroots level. "Too much evaporates at the top in payments of wages and to individuals. It does need to come down the system. It's a shared responsibility," he said. Whether the 'richer sports' will be comfortable knowing the government is looking to them for this support is another matter altogether.

In this issue, (page 16) CCPR's Tim Lamb talks about policy and funding and says he's concerned about what will happen post-2012. With public sector funding contracting and clubs feeling the pinch, positive action as suggested by Simmonds is likely to be the most successful way forward.

Liz Terry, editor liz@leisuremedia.com

the leisure media company publishes





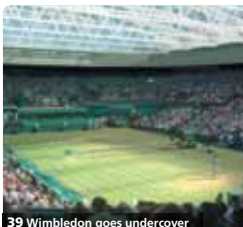
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special olympics raises self esteem



One of the guiding principles of the Special Olympics is that anyone with a learning disability can, with encouragement, support and access to the proper resources, be provided with a positive sporting experience; in turn, raising their self-esteem and the expectations of the community around them. Every day, across 20,000 communities around the world, more than two million learning disabled children and adults, aged 8 to 80, take part in the sports training and athletic competition programme provided year-round by the Special Olympics Movement.

Special Olympics Great Britain was established as part of this unique sport movement in 1978 and we currently serve 8,000 athletes with a learning disability across England, Scotland and Wales who participate in local sports

programmes and regional, national and international competitions. These athletes are supported by a dedicated group of more than 2,000 volunteers in providing the coaching and competition programme. Through the programme, athletes are also encouraged to take on leadership roles such as becoming a sports or athlete ambassador, committee member or coach – allowing for personal growth and development, while maintaining physical fitness through participation in sport.

When the eighth Special Olympics Great Britain National Summer Games takes place in Leicester this July, more than 2,500 children and adults will get to experience the joy of friendship that sport can bring. These participants are a testimony to the fact that sport in its widest sense, by offering everything from friendship to



More than 2,500 children and adults will compete at this year's Special Olympics, which will take place in Leicester in July

physiotherapy, can make a real difference to people's wellbeing. Helping them achieve this will be some 1,200 coaches who have worked with them throughout the year, and a further 1,500 volunteers – a vast network of support. Companies, individuals and most recently, Sport England, through a £200,000 grant, have pledged their financial support to help raise the £2.7m needed to run the Games.

As an organisation, we are committed to the principles of equality and opportunity. Progress is certainly being made within the UK sports landscape to open up more sporting opportunities for people with learning disabilities, but there is a long way to go and I would call on all those involved in running sport to work with us to ensure that everyone can benefit from sport's power to transform lives.

Karen Wallin
CEO, Special Olympics GB

Athletes are encouraged to take on leadership roles, such as a sports or athlete ambassador, a committee member or a coach – allowing for personal growth and development



John Goodbody reports on

Giving girls a sporting chance

At a time when there's concern that so few females hold significant positions in the national governing bodies (NGBs) and that too few girls want to be active, it's odd that there has never been so many talented women in the highest echelons of British sport.

Tessa Jowell is the Olympics Minister. Sue Campbell chairs UK Sport, whose COO is Liz Nicholl. And then there's Brigid Simmonds, who chairs the Central Council of Physical Recreation, representing the NGBs. Other leading figures include Kate Hoey, the former Minister for Sport, now overseeing London's sporting legacy from 2012, while Debbie Jevans is director of sport for the Games. Jennie Price leads Sport England, Sue Tibbals the Women's Sport and Fitness Foundation and Linda Plowright Sports Leaders.

UK Sport is building on the presence of these prominent figures through its International Leadership Programme, in which six of the third year intake of 14 are female. These include Olympic medallists Guin Batten (rowing) and Georgina Harland (modern pentathlon). Ben Calveley, UK Sport's head of international relations, insists there is "no particular policy" of having women on this list but accepts that "if women are selected that can only be a good thing." It certainly follows the commitment to gender equality by UK Sport, which was cheered recently by the appointment of Clare Connor, the former England captain, to the International Cricket Council's Cricket Committee, the first woman to hold such a post.

In its Women and Leadership Development Programme, UK Sport has been further heartened by advances domestically, as its initial three-year course comes to an end. Amanda Bennett, head of policy at UK Sport, says that many of the 15 people on the programme are being promoted, moving jobs or having a



“At the moment we are depriving too many girls of the chance to develop their social and physical potential”

significant impact on their organisation. She says: "Men and women have different styles of leadership."

One member of the 15, Jane Bateman of the Football Association, has been appointed director of campaign operations for England 2018, one of six directors within the country's World Cup bid team.

Hopefully, as attitudes change, these advances at the top will increase the chances of more women getting more positions in the national governing bodies and also in the clubs. This may then persuade more females to take part in sport – an even more important goal, since women know better than men what will inspire or interest them. Of course, it helps with some youngsters if they have role models such as Paula Radcliffe and Rebecca Adlington. However, many teenagers are put off taking part in such sports, because they believe that to succeed they will have to be so committed to their chosen activity.

Perhaps, the concentration should be on making sport fun and socially attractive. How much improving health and fitness actually matter to many girls is

something that needs further research.

Of course, many girls in mixed schools don't want to take part in sport because of embarrassment or even ridicule from boys in PE lessons. The emphasis of the PE staff is on the boys' performances – something that struck me noticeably in the 10 years that I wrote or edited a school sports' column for *The Times*.

Just as girls do better academically in single sex schools (and boys probably do as well), so they have a much better chance of developing their physical potential if they do sport separately. There can then be a concentrated effort on raising the interests and performances of girls without the inhibiting influence of boys. It may be considered too late to turn back the clock, although it should be done.

As it stands, we have to rely on changing attitudes at the grassroots and hope that this will lead to greater participation. But at the moment, we are depriving too many girls of the chance to develop their social and physical potential. ●

Green light for £60m Leeds United plans

Plans for a major new leisure-led development at the Elland Road stadium in Leeds, West Yorkshire – home to Leeds United Football Club (LUFC) – have been given the green light by Leeds City Council (LCC).

The council has passed a resolution to award full planning consent to the £60m scheme, which will be linked to the venue's existing East Stand but does not involve increasing the stadium's 40,000-seat capacity.

Designed by London-based architects KSS, the Elland Road scheme includes two new hotels and an arcade extension incorporating retail facilities, a club shop, a restaurant and conference and banqueting space. The project is designed to provide increased commercial opportunities for LUFC, as well as forming part of LCC's wider regeneration of the Elland Road area. The scheme includes a basement nightclub and new offices.

Shaun Harvey, LUFC chief executive, said: "The development is designed to increase non-matchday income streams



The new facilities are expected to boost non matchday earnings

at Elland Road. These revenues will, in turn, support and supplement the club's efforts on the pitch.

"It will also play a vital part in the regeneration of the area and create opportunities for local people."

James Budd, KSS associate director, added: "We had to closely match the

development aspirations of the club with those of Leeds City Council to achieve planning approval. The building massing constraints negotiated with the council, an architectural design that responded and contributed positively to the existing stadium and phased delivery capability were all key components."

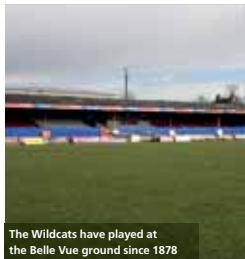
Wildcats stadium plans unveiled

Yorkcourt Properties has revealed plans to build a new 12,000-capacity community stadium in a bid to secure Wakefield Wildcats Rugby League Football Club's Super League status.

The proposed new venue will replace the Wildcats' current Belle Vue ground, which has been the club's home since 1878 but no longer meets the minimum stadium requirements that form part of the Super League's licence criteria.

Plans for the new stadium, which will be situated to the north of the town by junction 30 of the M62, also include the possibility of a local college and university establishing a sports science department at the venue.

Sir Rodney Walker, former chair of Sport England and the Rugby Football League, has been appointed to head a new community trust stadium group, which has been established to help deliver the scheme and take on the ownership and operation of the venue.



The Wildcats have played at the Belle Vue ground since 1878

Walker said: "We've been working extremely hard with all relevant parties to find a solution to benefit the whole community and a new site for the proposal. We're delighted to have found an opportunity with great access and great potential to move sport onto another level in the district."

Multi-million pound windfall for Devon sports facilities

Devon County Council is expected to give final approval for a £10.7m cash boost aimed at improving sports facilities across the county.

Part of the funds, generated from the £48m sale of Exeter Airport, are earmarked for the first phase of the development of a £20m dual-use centre for sporting excellence.

The centre is expected to feature a swimming pool, a 12-court sports hall with an adjacent gymnastics centre, an indoor bowling facility, a fitness suite and a climbing zone.

There will also be coaching and meeting rooms. Outdoor facilities include an athletics track, a cricket pitch, a velodrome and BMX track as well as an artificial turf football and hockey pitch.

A further £500,000 could be allocated to help fund the construction of an outdoor velodrome.

£14m centre for the blind opens

A new £14m sports and complementary therapy centre has been opened at the Royal National College for the Blind in Hereford as part of a £23.5m campus redevelopment.

The 5,680sq m (61,139sq ft) centre, called thePoint4, has been created to improve education and training for people with sight loss. The new facilities feature an IFI Stage 2-accredited, Cybex-equipped gym for students training to work in the fitness industry, as well as a community gym, open to students and members, boasting a total of 75 stations.

In addition to fitness facilities, the centre offers indoor and outdoor sports pitches designed to meet international Futsal standards and a sports hall with retractable seating for 280 people.



Sports provision of the college now includes a fitness club

The centre's wellness provision includes two spa rooms, a fitness pool, massage facilities, conference and meeting rooms and a licensed restaurant.

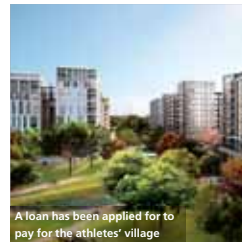
The college has been selected to host the 2010 Blind Football World Champi-

onships in August 2010 and has been accredited as a training camp for the British/English Blind Football Team, England Futsal Team and will also be the venue for both the blind and partially sighted football leagues.

Government questioned over Olympic Village loan

Olympics minister Tessa Jowell has been asked to disclose details of a loan application worth £225m, which has been lodged with the European Investment Bank (EIB) to help pay for the 2012 athletes' village.

The shadow Olympics minister, Hugh Robertson, requested that Jowell reveal the terms of the application – which was lodged with the EIB in February and approved on 7 April – as well as the likely effect it will have on the total cost of hosting the Games in three years' time. According to Jowell, the EIB loan



A loan has been applied for to pay for the athletes' village

has been approved in principle and will be split in two, with part of it set to help meet the costs of building the new Olympic Village, while the rest will go towards social housing.

Jowell said: "Once a decision has been taken about how much of that loan facility will be taken up and applied to those two projects, I will make a statement to the House [of Commons]."

It was also confirmed that the estimated public expenditure on the 2012 Olympics remains within a £9.3bn package announced by Jowell in March 2007.

£1BN REGENERATION OF KIDBROOKE GETS THE GO-AHEAD

Plans for the £1bn transformation of the former Ferrier Estate and neighbouring Kidbrooke area in south-east London, have been approved by Greenwich Council and will include an array of leisure facilities.

As part of the Kidbrooke Vision masterplan, Thomas Tallis secondary school will be redeveloped to include a dual-use gymnastics centre, martial arts

dojo, a floodlit all-weather sports pitch and a six-court sports hall, designed for county and regional level basketball competitions. Theatre and performing arts spaces as well as music facilities and classrooms for adult education are also included.

The development has been designed by architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands to comprise 300,000sq ft of com-

mercial and retail space. There are also plans for healthcare facilities and eight hectares of public open space, designed by landscape architects Gillespies.

The scheme will be centred around a new 130m-wide park for dedicated use such as sport, playing fields, cultural activities, bio-diverse planting and wildlife. It will be linked with green spaces which are currently underused.



The new facility will replace the existing Victoria Leisure Centre

New centre for Nottingham

Plans for the construction of a new £9.2m leisure centre in Nottingham have been given the green light by the city council after a feasibility study ruled that the scheme presented the most cost-effective option.

The decision by Nottingham City Council's (NCC) executive board means that the historic Victoria Leisure Centre at Sneyton Market is set to be demolished to make way for the new facility, which

will open by June 2012. Detailed designs will now be drawn up for the new centre, which will include a six-lane swimming pool with separate children's pool and fun splash play area, a fitness and health suite incorporating sauna and gym facilities and a café.

The site's existing clock tower will be retained as part of the proposals, which were one of three options presented to the council by consultants Levitate.

Football clubs cut ticket prices amid recession

Football clubs have announced season ticket price freezes in a bid to combat the possibility of declining attendance rates during the economic downturn.

Several Premier League clubs have even applied price cuts to encourage increasingly price savvy fans to continue to support their teams and maintain matchday revenues.

Paul Rawnsley, director of Deloitte's sports business group, said: "The key for all clubs is to set prices that deliver strong value for money for fans, which will help attendances stay healthy. More than ever, clubs need to understand the price perceptions of their fans."

"In the current economic climate, supporters are looking for value for money from their season tickets."

Demands for tighter football regulation

A cross-party group of MPs has expressed its concern at the level of debt that exists within English football. The group has published a wide-ranging report that calls for tougher regulation of the domestic game.

The report – *English Football and Its Governance* – was published on 20 April by the All Party Parliamentary Football Group and outlines a total of 27 measures that should be adopted in order to help ensure the long-term financial stability of clubs.

Among the report's recommendations is a reform of the Football Association's (FA) Fit and Proper Persons Test to take into account the business plans of prospective owners looking to invest in English football clubs.

The group has also called for the introduction of a licensing system for clubs from the Blue Square Premier League upwards. The system would limit expenditure by the amount of revenue,



@Futsal opens first site

A company planning to roll out a portfolio of Futsal centres around the UK has opened its first site at an industrial estate in Swindon.

@Futsal has converted a former warehouse into the first dedicated futsal arena in the UK. The facility includes two five-a-side pitches and a smaller youth pitch. The two larger pitches can be converted into a full-sized futsal pitch suitable for international competition. Other amenities at the centre include a penalty simulator, a warming-up area and a physio room.

According to @Futsal, the company is planning to open 30 arenas within the next two to three years.



The centre will run a programme of lessons for children

Indoor skiing for Hemel

A new £23m indoor hub for skiing and snowboarding has been constructed on the site of the former Hemel Ski Slope in Hemel Hempstead.

The Snow Centre, which was built by UK-based company Sir Robert McAlpine, incorporates a 160m (525ft) main slope, a 100m (328ft) lesson slope, a Snow and Rock retail outlet, a café and après ski bar and a snow play area.

It is also the only indoor snow facility in southern Britain that holds Centre of Excellence status, which has been awarded by the British Association of Snowsports Instructors (BASi). Links have also been established with the Ötztal region in Austria to ensure it offers the latest Alpine coaching techniques.

SSGB to manage Ilfracombe

Sports and leisure consultants Sports Solutions GB (SSGB) has been appointed to project manage the development of new community sports facilities in Ilfracombe, Devon.

Ilfracombe Town FC will be relocated to Killicleave Playing Fields to make way for a new full-size artificial grass pitch,

changing rooms and a Youth Resource Centre. A feasibility study is underway, to be followed by site plans and the completion of funding bids.

Chris Bevan, SSGB director, said: "Our team's specialist experience in feasibility studies will help to ensure the project is delivered on time."

£10M DIVING CENTRE PLAN FOR SOUTHEND

A £10m dive centre and swimming pool is being planned for the Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre.

Designed by Archial architects, the plans include an eight-lane swimming pool and diving facilities with 3m, 5m, 7.5m and 10m platforms.

Other features at the centre, which is owned and operated by Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, include a leisure pool with water slide, a dry diving training area with a harness and trampolines and a 276-seat spectator area.

Derek Jarvis, the council's executive councillor for culture, says: "The new swimming pool, due to open in 2010, will be a terrific bonus for the town, especially as Southend Leisure & Tennis Centre has already been selected as a potential Pre-Games training camp for the 2012 Olympics."

INDUSTRY COMMENT

One of the great things about sport is that it's dynamic – it never stops moving, it never stops changing. We all have to adapt to those changes, to a new world with fresh challenges.



Sports Minister Gerry Sutcliffe

During the last two decades, we have seen huge amounts of money coming into sport, its globalisation, growing foreign influence on the field, the big bucks from TV and the positive impact of the National Lottery. Government has to move with the times too, which is why Andy Burnham set out a new strategic focus for Sport England last summer, with a clearer responsibility for promoting participation in sport and a fresh relationship with governing bodies.

They are the experts in their fields and now have real freedom to tailor plans to meet the long-term needs of sport – and the wider population – as we seek to deliver on our ambition to get one million more people playing sport regularly.

In this new environment it makes sense to make crucial investment decisions centrally, to ensure they fit with what governing bodies are doing – but it would be wrong not to recognise the huge contribution made by Sport England's Regional Sports Boards (RSB). They played a key role in our drive to increase opportunities for people across the country to get into sport, by helping lay the foundations of the nation's exciting new sports infrastructure.

Over the last five years, the Boards have distributed nearly £200m to grassroots sport by funding creative projects that will have an impact for generations to come.

RSBs are made up of volunteers who give their time, energy and expertise. I know their members will remain passionate and committed to ensuring sport makes a difference.

We should be grateful for what they have contributed so far – and I hope they will continue to champion the cause of sport.



Maze stadium plans shelved for good

Plans to build a 39,000-capacity sports stadium on the site of the notorious Maze prison near Lisburn, Northern Ireland, have been dumped by the Northern Ireland Assembly.

In a statement, Northern Ireland first minister Peter Robinson said that although the redevelopment options for the site will be studied further, all existing plans to build a multi-sport stadium "will not be taken forward".

The stadium was designed by HOK Sport – which recently rebranded as Populous – to host rugby, football and Gaelic football.



Plans for the new centre include a 25m swimming pool

Queens Park plans approved

St Helens Council has approved detailed designs, produced by architects Pozzoni, for a new leisure centre in Merseyside.

The £3.6m project will demolish all but the existing sports hall at Queens Park Leisure Centre to make way for a completely new facility on the same site, considered by the council to be more cost-effective than a full refurbishment of the 118-year-old building.

The new facility will house a five-lane, 25m swimming pool with steam and sauna facilities attached, a two-storey gym, a sports court and a wet and dry changing village.

The existing sports hall, which is relatively modern compared with the Victorian baths, will be refurbished to provide new fitness studios and a multi-purpose function room, as well as a new café overlooking the swimming pool.

Council secures funding for Holt Park centre

Leeds City Council has announced that it has secured funding for the construction of a new leisure and wellbeing centre in Holt Park, near Cookridge.

The Department of Health has confirmed the allocation, in principle, of £32m of Private Funding Initiative (PFI) credits for the new centre, which will combine services provided by Leeds City Council's adult social care, youth and sports services, NHS Leeds and the local community.

The site will be the third facility being built under the council's PFI, called New Leaf Leisure Centres Project, and follows similar £30m developments in Arley and Morley.

The Holt Park facility will include a 25m swimming pool, a sports hall and a Bodyline gym.

SUFC reveals stadium expansion plans

Sheffield United Football Club (SUFC) has submitted its plans to redevelop the Bramall Lane stadium to Sheffield City Council.

The plans divide the redevelopment of the ground into two phases, with phase one comprising the extension of the Frasers Property Kop to increase its capacity by more than 3,200 seats – resulting in a total capacity of 37,000.

A further planning application for phase two of the development is expected in the near future and it is understood that the proposals will include the extension of the Valad Stand and development of the car park, ultimately taking the stadium's capacity to 40,000.

The development proposals also include the removal of columns from the Kop, a new undercover concourse with modern kiosks and toilet facilities, new executive boxes and disabled facilities in the Evolution Corner Stand, a media/business centre between the Valad



The expansion will increase stadium capacity by more than 3,200

Stand and Kop and additional community amenities.

A student residential block will be developed on the corner of Shoreham Street and John Street.

The proposals are intended to provide the club with the flexibility to increase the capacity of the ground and generate additional revenues which can be ploughed back into the first team.



WARNER EXTENDS HIS ROLE AT UKA

The UK Athletics (UKA) members council has voted to extend Ed Warner's contract as chair of the national governing body until January 2013.

He was appointed to the part-time, non-executive role in January 2007 to lead the UKA board, develop the organisation's vision and help develop the international athletics community.

Warner says: "We have an increasingly important role to play in the development of the sport worldwide, not only with the approach of London 2012, but also by working with the IAAF to extend athletics appeal to future generations of athletes and spectators."

baroness to lead 2012 legacy body

Baroness Margaret Ford has been appointed as chair of the recently created Olympic Park special purpose vehicle in the run up to the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Former chair of English Partnerships, Ford will take charge of finding tenants for the Olympic stadium and the £355m media centre as well as the funding and building of 10,000 homes in the east London park.

A school, a National Skills Academy for Sport and Leisure, an English Institute for Sport and a permanent home for



athletics are among the confirmed after-Games uses for the stadium.

There are also suggestions that a university could also be based within the Olympic Park.



CAMPBELL REMAINS CHAIR OF UK SPORT

Baroness Sue Campbell has been reappointed as the chair of UK Sport for the next four years.

She will continue to lend her expertise to the World Class Performance Programme in the run up to the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and will help UK Sport with its investment in world-class sports events.

Meanwhile, Philip Kimberley has become a board member of UK Sport. He is currently non-executive chair of England Hockey, a director of Great Britain Hockey and has been responsible for building the sport over the past six years.

WALKER JOINS MAJOR EVENTS PANEL

Former high hurdler and Welsh rugby union player Nigel Walker has been appointed chair of UK Sport's Major Events Panel. He is currently head of change and internal communications at BBC Wales and has been a member of the UK Sport Board since 2006.

New members to the Panel also include David Collier, CEO at the England and Wales Cricket Board; Tanya Crook, COO at ParalympicsGB and Rob Holt, CEO Ryder Cup Wales 2010.

The Panel makes recommendations to the UK Sport Board on events supported by its World Class Events Programme (WCEP), which distributes approximately

£3.3m of Lottery funding each year to support the bidding and staging costs of major sports events in the UK. In 2009, up to 21 events of World or European level are likely to be supported through the programme.

The WCEP has expanded hugely in recent years; six events were supported in 2006, 19 events in 2007 and six of the 17 supported in 2008 were World Championships. The programme's target is to support up to 90 events in the build-up to 2012.

Walker says he is excited about the opportunity to make a real difference to world-class event staging in this country.



Export Promotion at FSB Trade Fair

As part of its work as an Accredited Trade Organisation with UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), SAPCA has successfully applied for Key Event status for the biennial International Trade Fair for Sports Facilities (FSB) 2009, which will take place in Cologne, Germany on 28-30 October.

SAPCA will lead a group of UK exhibitors at the event and through the association, eligible UK companies will receive financial support from UKTI for exhibition space, stand costs and transport.

UK companies interested in participating should contact SAPCA on +44 (0)24 7641 6316 or info@sapca.org.uk



Thirty SAPCA members made use of the facilities provided by SAPCA at FSB 2007

Sports Facility Construction Exhibitions

The Sport and Play Construction Association (SAPCA) has announced the dates for two Sports Facility Construction exhibitions and seminars in 2009.

- Ricoh Arena, Coventry: Tuesday 30 June
- Twickenham Stadium, West London: Tuesday 24 November

The itinerary at both events will consist of a programme of educational

seminars on the design, procurement, construction and maintenance of sports facilities, together with an exhibition of specialist contractors, manufacturers, consultants and sports organisations.

The one-day seminar at the Ricoh Arena will also highlight a specific focus on the provision of sports facilities in the educational sector, with

participation from both Partnerships for Schools and Sport England.

Both events will be of interest to all those involved in sports facility projects, including schools and colleges, local authorities, voluntary and commercial sports clubs, specifiers and consultants.

Details of the seminar programmes will be announced on the SAPCA website, www.sapca.org.uk

The following members have recently joined SAPCA

Cleveland Land Services (Guisborough)
Specialist tennis court contractor
(Existing SAPCA member for synthetic and natural turf)
www.cleveland-land-services.co.uk

Leigh Spinners
Manufacturers of artificial sports surfaces
www.leighspinners.com

Premier Line Markings
Specialist sports facility line marking contractor
www.premierlinemarkings.co.uk

Recticel NV
Manufacturers of shockpad systems
www.re-bounce.com

SAPCA Certificate in Management and Leadership

SAPCA's new Certificate in Management and Leadership is now underway, with the first intake of 14 candidates from across the industry.

The group is pictured outside the Business School at Loughborough University, where the qualification is being delivered.



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tim LAMB

Karen Maxwell talks to the CEO of CCPR about fine tuning its services for NGB members

The former county cricketer and ex CEO of the England and Wales Cricket Board is a charismatic and diplomatic character who admits to preferring dialogue to confrontation. Which is just as well, because as current CEO of Central Council of Physical Recreation (CCPR) – a large part of his work involves forging sound working relationships with both sporting bodies and government organisations.

Comprising a staff of 19, a board of 12 and financed with less than £2m of subscription-based and contractual funding each year (CCPR handed over its ownership of national sports centres such as Crystal Palace, Bisham Abbey and Lilleshall to the sports councils in exchange for contractual funding), CCPR represents 290 national governing bodies (NGB) in the UK. These include organisations that represent activities from football to folk dancing and rugby to rounders – a network comprising some 150,000 clubs with eight million regular participants in the UK.

The key strands of CCPR's work are to provide member services, to campaign and lobby on members' behalf and to offer an independent voice for sport. "We have an accountability to our members, a duty to represent their interests and we're able to do this free from government control," Lamb explains.

Strategic Planning

When Lamb and CCPR chair Brigid Simmonds joined forces in 2005, the first item on their agenda was to initiate a new strategic plan. "We visited other sport organisations such as Sport England, the British Olympic Association, the Youth Sport Trust, UK Sport and also the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) to discuss what services they offered in order to identify CCPR's role in the sporting landscape," Lamb explains. "This exercise enabled us to fit around other services and also make our specific responsibilities known, so there was less chance of duplication and a waste of public funding."

Four years on and CCPR is in the middle of another fact finding mission, but this time it's the members who are being quizzed on what services they need, use and value. "We're a broad church so it's difficult operating in a generic way on issues that may affect major professional sports bodies at one end of the spectrum and small representative bodies at the other," Lamb says.

The information gained from this membership survey will help CCPR formulate its new strategy, which will come into effect on 1 April next year. "As a precursor in identifying key membership services for implementation during the period 2010-2014, we felt it was



CCPR represents 280 national governing bodies of sport and recreation in the UK

important to carry out this exercise to find out from our members what it is that they require," Lamb says, and adds that previously, the temptation was to offer too much by attempting to be all things to all people. "It's important to pay attention to the issues that really matter so as not to spread ourselves too thin," Lamb explains. "Fine tuning our services will offer a framework for what we want to achieve over the next four years. Our priorities haven't changed, but we're likely to change emphasis in some cases."

Perhaps the biggest change in CCPR's emphasis in recent years has been better communication. "We were doing many good things but we weren't getting our messages out there. So when Brigid and

I sat down to discuss what was needed as regards staffing structure, the first decision we made was to appoint James Stibbs as head of communications to spread the word and improve the quality of our publications," Lamb explains.

Member Services

The list of CCPR's current member services is impressive. Apart from development programmes and training workshops, business support and the CCPR daily news service – a collation of key sport, recreation, outdoor pursuits and coastal access news stories – the CCPR also hosts an annual European Summit, a CEOs' Convention event and the annual CCPR National Conference. This year was the organisation's



“ We help NGBs to help themselves by providing them with the skills and facilities to allow them to make decisions and grow in the direction they want to ”

37th annual event. Entitled 'Running on Empty – Sport in a Recession', delegates saw Culture Secretary Andy Burham and the new chair of Sport England Richard Lewis take centre stage.

Many of CCPR's services, such as a free business support line, are aimed at smaller governing bodies which are often run by volunteers who don't have an extensive knowledge of business management or the luxury of in-house lawyers, IT or human resources personnel. At the other end of the spectrum, the more mature, better resourced members make use of the organisation's up-skilling courses, such as the chief executive workshops – designed specifically for NGBs in association with the CASS business school in London – for aspiring CEOs, as well as the Women in Leadership course, which aims to help more women to move onwards and upwards within the NGB management structure.

The organisation also has a trading subsidiary called CCPR Enterprises, a partnership scheme with around 20 companies that provide members with a whole spectrum of goods and services

– from insurance and travel arrangements to match programmes and VAT advice. "Our aim is to put these companies in touch with members to offer them extra support in creating a long-term viable business," Lamb explains. "This is a revenue raising service, from which we make around £150,000 a year in fees and commission. We call this our 'fighting fund' because it enables us to fund extra activities and projects for members' benefit which we might not otherwise be able to afford."

Lobbying for Change

When it comes to relieving some of the community club volunteers from the burden of red tape and the fear of litigation, CCPR's policy department boasts five officers whose roles include gathering research and evidence to support arguments in policy, advising on whatever tax concessions may be available, dealing with issues that surround sports betting and ticket touting and offering advice on outdoor and adventurous activity issues. "We help NGBs to help themselves by providing them

➔ with the skills and knowledge to allow them to make decisions and grow in the direction they want to," Lamb says.

Dealing with European policy however, needs particular scrutiny. "European issues can greatly affect sport policy in the UK," Lamb explains. "You have to remember that anything from 40-80 per cent of legislation emanates from Europe, which can affect some of our international business – such as facilitating successful bids to stage international events in the UK and identifying sources of potential European funding.

"CCPR is the only national representative organisation within the Brussels-based EU sports office. Our European policy officer, James McDougall, and I are part of a DCMS European stakeholder group as this is an increasingly important area for CCPR. I'm greatly encouraged by the fact that an increasing amount of our members look to us to be their eyes and ears in Europe. We need to have our wits about us and monitor what comes out of Brussels and Strasbourg in case it might adversely impact on sport in this country. Whether it's impending UK or European legislation it's amazing the number of times that the people bringing it forward give no regard to the impact it might have on sport."

A case in point was the recent move in this country to make anyone working in licensed premises subject to licence by the security industry. This was principally aimed at nightclub bouncers. However, it became apparent that it would also have an impact on people that worked in all licensed premises, including sports



“ We are empowered and bolstered by the breadth and strength of our members and that's why I think people sit up and listen to what we have to say ”

clubs and stadiums. This move would have meant that people who may only work a few days a year, say as a steward at Twickenham, would have to pay £300 for a year-long licence – at a cost of millions of pounds to the UK's sporting industry. "You wouldn't believe the amount of work involved in getting in-house stewards exempted during our six-month campaign. We'd be busy lobbying ministers and just as we thought we'd made progress, they get switched to different departments and we'd be back at square one again," Lamb says.

CCPR was also able to use its independent voice for sport to show its concerns over the diversion of Lottery money from grassroots sports to Olympic facilities on behalf of concerned members. "Although the necessary empowerment through government went through, we at least got the government to undertake that there would be no further raids on the Lottery and the Olympic

lottery (scratch card) would be capped at £750m. Our concern was that if this target amount was met early, the government might think it was a convenient way of raising money. The problem being that people who spend money on Olympic scratch cards may not necessarily buy ordinary Lottery tickets, on which so many of our sports depend."

However, Lamb doesn't want to create a dependency culture, particularly with regard to the recent funding NGBs have been given by Sport England to extend sport participation and by UK Sport to sport elite performance. "I do worry about what will happen after 2012," he says. "A lot of money is sloshing around the system at the moment, against a background of a desperately difficult economic environment. One thing we do talk to our members about is the fact that in three years' time, that money is not necessarily going to be available so they need to be thinking about being more financially self sufficient."

"We are empowered and bolstered by the breadth and strength of our members and that's why I think people sit up and listen to what we have to say. I believe we are greater than the sum of our parts. Yes, it is an association which represents the interests of its constituent members but if it harnesses that power and if it operates in an efficient and effective way it has the capacity to make a real difference."

"We are not an association that shouts from the rooftops, we are a critical friend that tries to find consensus rather than engage in confrontation. We know that in order to make a change in policy we need to sit down and converse through force of argument in a positive and professional manner to keep the door open and keep the policymakers listening to us." ●

Lobbying government for a change in policies that affect sport can be an upward struggle



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CRYSTAL PALACE

National Sports Centre has a new engine

After undergoing major refurbishment and renovation works costing £17m, the National Sports Centre at Crystal Palace is now ready for action. Karen Maxwell checks out the upgraded facility

One of the traditional homes of British sporting events has now reopened for business after a major refurbishment that highlighted some surprising challenges along the way.

Originally operated on behalf of Sport England as one of the country's five National Sports Centres, the London Development Agency (LDA) agreed to take control of Crystal Palace NSC as part of London's bid to win the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and formally took over the lease in March 2006.

Situated in pleasant parkland, overlooking the iconic Crystal Palace Stadium, the National Sports Centre (NSC) has catered for more than 100 different sports and played host to a variety of sporting events during its 45-year history – from local swimming galas and annual events such as the London Youth Games, to the international AVIVA London Grand Prix – which will see the current world's fastest 100m sprinter, Usain Bolt, compete at the stadium later this year.

Challenging Process

In order to bring the building up to standard and extend its appeal to the local community as well as elite athletes training and competing up to and beyond 2012, the LDA enlisted the expertise of

architectural practice Arup Associates. However, while developing the brief for the scope of work required to secure the NSC's long-term future, the surprise discovery of asbestos totally changed the nature of this refurbishment project.

"Due to the scale and variety of problems discovered within the building as works began, the job was split between two separate building contracts: the buildings works and the asbestos strip," Arup Associates' architect Lee Hoskins explains.

Regarded as an influential example of 1960s architecture, English Heritage had named the facility as a Grade II* Listed Building. Its interconnected internal design offers an impressive visual connectivity – allowing visitors to experience the water, arena and sport court activities in a campus-style environment.

However, according to Hoskins, working within this design was a major challenge as there were many internal environmental issues well outside of the normal modern engineering standards.

"The grand central concourse area had to be largely rebuilt following the asbestos strip. Safely achieving these works involved the largest birdcage scaffolding design in Europe and necessitated passing through the window of the façade to the external areas for stability – resulting in a large amount of glass replacement as a consequence."

Work in Hand

The LDA has spent more than £17m on the extended scope of work in the phase one period of the building's three-phase

refurbishment, in which Spie Matthew Hall were the main contractors. These works included:

- Lengthening the 50m pool to add Swiss Timing electronic touch pads, installing a Swiss Timing system and adding Olympic-standard starting blocks. (Chisholm and Winch)
- Refurbishing the diving pool and repairing the Grade I Listed diving board structure
- Removing asbestos from roof voids, the ceiling, plant rooms and lagging
- Replacing the sports arena flooring with Junkers flooring (installed by VA Hutchinson Flooring), which meets national governing body technical standards to allow for a variety of sports to be played at the venue
- Replacing the arena seating with 1,760 Hussey Seatway seats
- Upgrading all wet and dry changing rooms (Chisholm and Winch)
- Re-plumbing and re-wiring the whole building to comply with modern health and safety standards
- Renewing or refurbishing the heating, power and pool filtration plant
- Replacing thermal and acoustic insulation material throughout the building
- Repairing roof joints and windows
- Renewing the lighting and fire alarm systems, including emergency lighting

According to Hoskins, all public areas were also upgraded to enhance the look of the building. This included the circulation areas and corridors, while the floors, ceilings and walls also got a face-lift within the acceptable limits of the building's listed building status.

"Many energy-saving measures were also integrated into the new systems,



such as automatic control of the building systems, efficiencies in the new mechanical systems, increased thermal insulation to the roof and to pipework and intelligent lighting systems," Hoskins explains. The building opened on schedule to host a pentathlon event at the end of April and after a couple of days reacting to expected teething issues, it opened its doors to the public a week later.

Behind the scenes, phase two works will be carried out over the next six-months to upgrade the swimming pool spectator seating, refurbish the outdoor netball courts and complete works to the dry changing rooms. The LDA will fund an additional £5.32m of capital spend for phase three work which will be focused on safety issues and extended on-site security.

"The aim of these works is that now all future investments into the building can be made without compromising the continual use of the centre by the general public," says the director of LDA delivery, Martin Powell. He adds that any future investment in the site can now be made on top of a decent foundation.

Community Links

The LDA is spending around £2m a year on running costs at the NSC, which is operated by Greenwich Leisure (GLL) on the LDA's behalf.

A not for profit social enterprise, tasked with reinvesting any financial surpluses into sports services at the centre, GLL's plan is to build up the NSC's community sports aspect for people living a five- to 25-mile radius of the club.

"We want to develop activity programmes and increase the NSC's capacity



The NSC interior has been brought up to standard for elite and community sports provision up to and beyond the London 2012 Olympics



to host major sporting events and GLL is working closely with the LDA on this objective," GLL regional manager Tony Wallace explains.

One such programme – the Crystal Palace Aquatics Beacon programme – run in conjunction with GLL, Sport England and the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) London region, will operate as a one-stop shop to plug the gaps in training, education, sports science, physiotherapy and other support services for teachers and coaches. Its objective is to enable swimmers to progress from lessons to success at the highest level.

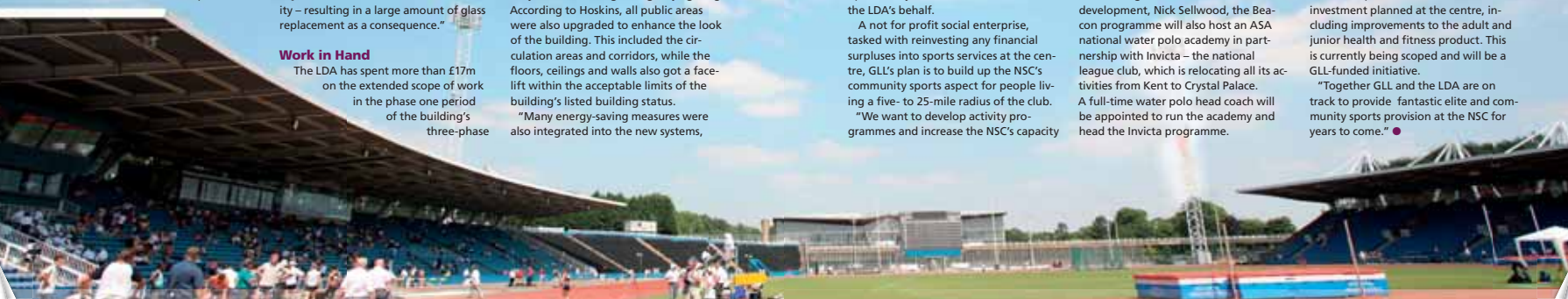
According to head of ASA talent development, Nick Sellwood, the Beacon programme will also host an ASA national water polo academy in partnership with Invicta – the national league club, which is relocating all its activities from Kent to Crystal Palace.

A full-time water polo head coach will be appointed to run the academy and head the Invicta programme.

"We are building on a strong club structure in Invicta which we are now aiming to develop towards becoming a European super-club," Sellwood says, adding that there will also be a diving coaching scheme at the centre under the Beacon remit.

To keep the NSC's regular gym members happy throughout the building work, GLL relocated the gym to the lodge accommodation block. "This, along with reducing our membership prices, allowed us to maintain a strong membership base and lessen the impact on the business when we reopened," Wallace explained. "There is further investment planned at the centre, including improvements to the adult and junior health and fitness product. This is currently being scoped and will be a GLL-funded initiative."

"Together GLL and the LDA are on track to provide fantastic elite and community sports provision at the NSC for years to come." ●



Kate Hudson asks: Should sports at sixth form be compulsory to avoid the traditional drop off in activity?

Traditional school sports like hockey and netball never held much allure for me, but once I started sixth form and found out there were sailing lessons on Wednesday afternoons, I was thrilled. However, a few rainy Wednesdays later, after waving goodbye to my friends in the refectory, I decided, why bother? No one was making me do it and there was the delicious freedom of opting out. So I chose to perfect the art of hanging out.

Now I realise how golden these opportunities were. To gain a basic grounding in those skills while a teenager can be a valuable asset for adult life and will probably stick for longer than the stuff learned in history

lessons. Added to this, there are essential skills to be taken from sport: the development of self esteem, confidence and respect for rules – all personal qualities which can be applied to everyday life situations.

Entering the sixth form coincides with a typical drop off in sport for teenagers. The combination of making life defining decisions, wanting to achieve a degree of financial independence, a fairly heavy educational workload and the burning need for socialising means sport gets sidelined. Also, it's the first time in the educational career that something is optional: so it's just all too tempting not to bother, especially when your friends aren't.

Private schools make sport compulsory, which might, as Brigid Simmonds points out, explain why so many of our summer Olympians were from private schools. The networking, bonding and competitive aspects of sport might also have something to do with the success of private school students.

If sport has the ability to hone important personal skills, major health benefits and enhances life, then why isn't it put on the same important footing as A level subjects in sixth form colleges? Are 16- to 19-year-olds too immature to make a reasoned decision on whether or not to participate in the Wednesday afternoon sports opportunities?

ANNETTE MONTAGUE SCHOOLS DIRECTOR, YOUTH SPORT TRUST



The Youth Sport Trust works with schools and partners to improve the quality and quantity of the physical education young people can access. A high quality school sport experience builds physical and cognitive skills. It also gives young people the opportunity to develop and demonstrate skills in coaching, leadership, teamwork and officiating.

The physical learning environment is different from those in many other areas of learning and provides the chance to demonstrate achievements young people might find difficult in more traditional learning environments.

Young people between the ages of 16-18 have wide and varied interests and are faced with difficult decisions about their priorities. The demands of higher level academic study and paid work commitments can result in them participating in less sport. We know schools and colleges are developing creative solutions with students of this age range to encourage them to participate in sport at a time that suits them.

A solution for some may be to retain PE or sport as a timetable option during curriculum time. However, the Youth Sport Trust does not believe that making sport compulsory would be the most successful way to allow young people to enjoy, achieve and benefit from the experience and thereby nurture a love of sport which results in lifelong participation.

JOHN BANGS HEAD OF EDUCATION, NATIONAL UNION OF TEACHERS – EUROPE'S LARGEST TEACHING UNION



Sport is vital in enthusing and giving a sense of direction to youngsters especially those in their teens. It should be part of an overall strategy for channelling their energy away from boredom and excessive hours in front of the TV and computers and towards healthy and constructive social lives outside school.

The Labour government has invested a great deal in sport which has had a significant impact on the facilities schools have been able to offer pupils, as well as proposing that schools offer up to five hours of sport a week to all pupils. This is important because there needs to be a culture whereby sport

is seen as part of everyday life. For this to occur, children and young people need to have the opportunity to participate in games and sports as early as possible.

It is also essential that this country's youth services are given a financial boost, as they have been in catastrophic decline for years. I believe that building networks of community clubs and ensuring they have a diverse intake and good links with schools, school facilities should be a priority. Achieving this will ensure young people are given the opportunity to take part in school sports. You cannot force young people past the age of 16 to take part in sport but if they are used to taking part in school sporting activity the chances are that many will continue to join in games even when it is not obligatory.



Sport helps develop self esteem, confidence and respect for rules – personal qualities which can be applied to everyday life situations



BRIGID SIMMONDS CHAIR, CCPR



I must admit I had no idea this situation existed. My 17-year-old son is at a private school where sport remains compulsory in the sixth form and all students have to partake on a Wednesday afternoon. This possibly makes sense of the statistic that so many of our summer Olympians came from private schools.

The central issue must be that the government is scoring an own goal if it is concerned about school drop-off post 16, but does not require those who remain in full-time education to take part in sport. There is no doubt that given the choice, the majority of 16-year-olds would do no physical activity at all.

As the CCPR represents more than 270 Governing Bodies of Sport and organisations committed to recreation and physical activity, we have long been a supporter of children being offered a range of sports and recreation at school on the basis that even if they are not keen on team sports, they will find something they like and want to keep doing throughout their life. This could be dance, cycling, swimming or karate.

I am all for more choice at a later stage at school, but the government really does need to reverse this trend and if necessary change the national curriculum, if only to tackle the obesity crisis.



GERRY SUTCLIFFE MINISTER FOR SPORT



I want sport to be so appealing to young people that they will take it up for life, not abandon it when they leave school. Sport should be something young people want to do – the word 'compulsory' needs to be carefully considered because sport should never be a chore.

Millions of young people love sport and take part in traditional games after school and on weekends. This is what I want to see more of, and continuing to improve the quality of what is offered and adding new alternatives.

We have made great strides in school sport. Now, more than 90 per cent of children and young people in England do two

hours of PE and sport every week. We are going even further still, committing to give young people, up to 16, the chance to take part for five hours – and young people aged 16 to 19 the chance to do three hours.

We have a number of initiatives for older teenagers – including offering to put in place a sports co-ordinator for every Further Education college, whose job is to get young people playing and enjoying more sport. But making sport compulsory for this group may not be the best way to increase their participation. I think it would be wrong to focus too much just on young people who are in formal education, as the largest group of 16- to 19-year-olds are at work. That is why our three hour plan encompasses all 16- to 19-year-olds.

Hall Aitken director David Gourlay summarises the company's evaluation of Sport England's national grant programme and how it encouraged people from hard to reach communities into sports participation

ACTIVE ENGLAND

Launched in 2005, Active England was a national grant programme designed to increase participation in sports and physical activity and funded jointly by Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund. It followed the publication of the government's *Game Plan* strategy document (2002). Research into the participation levels in England had shown that these were substantially lower (32 per cent) than the most active countries (such as Finland with 70 per cent). However, a lack of robust evaluative evidence meant that reviews had been unable to show what worked to increase participation. Prior research suggested that approaches to funding sports activity should change, to encourage new people to take up sport and physical activity. It also highlighted that funds did not impact sufficiently upon harder to reach client groups. An innovation fund to test new ideas and approaches was suggested.

Main Objectives

The three main objectives were to:

- Create sustainable, innovative multi-activity environments in areas of sport, social and health deprivation

- Increase participation in sport and physical activity among all sections of society but particularly those under-represented in participation
 - Ensure the sports sector and key partners adopt new ways of working
- The Active England programme funded 241 projects across England. These projects were selected to fit with programme goals and regional strategies. The main recipients of funding were local authorities, other public sector organisations and voluntary organisations.

One of the main aims for Active England was to increase participation among young people aged under 16 and target groups with a lower than average participation rate. Sport England identified these as:

- People with disabilities
- People over 45
- Black and minority ethnic (BME) groups
- Women and young girls
- People from areas of disadvantage

Some 56 per cent of projects funded by Active England specifically targeted one of these groups.

Sport England engaged the consultancy firm Hall Aitken to support projects in monitoring and self-

evaluation. Its role was to help spread learning, build capacity and evaluate the programme.

Key Performance Indicators

The main tool for measuring whether Active England has met its objectives is the data from Key Performance Indicators. The KPIs were chosen to reflect the scope of the programme and Hall Aitken encouraged projects to select a suite of indicators which would reflect what outcomes the project was hoping to achieve. Projects were advised to select from five core KPIs.

Hall Aitken provided all projects with the opportunity to regularly provide monitoring data. They could do this through a web-enabled management information tool called ValueMapping. After support through workshops, visits and

One of Active England's main objectives was to increase participation among young people aged under 16



“Through Active England funding, an estimated 33,000 people will have become actively involved in local sports clubs, groups or physical activity by 2010”

telephone support, a majority (87 per cent) of Active England projects collected and reported some data and evidence about their project.

Most of Active England funding went to projects that combined capital and revenue elements (total value £147.4m). Nearly four times as much went into these projects compared with stand-alone capital or revenue projects. This was largely a deliberate strategy by the regions, reflecting priorities in their regional plans. There was an awareness among the regions that facilities alone would not attract participants and achieve the programme's objectives.

Partnership Funding

Sport England encouraged partnership funding to bring extra finance into the programme. Active England secured significant partnership funding, attracting an extra £132.5m to support sport and physical activity projects across the country. Overall, Active England funded 41 per cent of the total project costs and secured in 59 per cent through partnership funding. There are examples from across the programme where Active England contributed only a

small percentage of the total project revenue. In particular, this included providing more revenue funding to large capital builds. This significantly increased the partnership funding available to the programme.

Findings

HEADLINE OUTPUTS:

- 1.4 million participants
- Enabling around 803,000 people to benefit from coaching
- Supporting 6,600 volunteers to help increase participation

The number of participants will continue to grow as capital projects continue to bring in new people in the coming years.

Each £10,000 of Active England funding has delivered:

- 165 participants
- 1,055 visits to a project
- 13 active members
- 2.1 coaches
- 1.8 volunteers

Increasing the overall rate of participation was a key objective for the programme and, as well as increasing overall figures:

- 173,000 participants had been inactive over the previous 12 months
- Capital and outdoor-focused

projects were more effective at attracting those people who had previously been inactive

- Sports clubs attracted the lowest proportion of new participants
- The programme reached a higher proportion of BME groups than in the population at large (just over 15 per cent)
- Projects targeting women and those in disadvantaged communities attracted more participants for each £10,000 of costs
- Projects have engaged some 24,000 young people at risk
- Projects that have a particular focus on BME groups and people with disabilities produced lower numbers of participants per £10,000; they work more intensively with a smaller number of participants
- Projects targeting disabled people attracted a higher number of volunteers for each £10,000 invested

Key learning points

There are 10 Legacy Reports that accompany the Active England evaluation report, drawing from lessons about effective practice. These will be useful for future projects, planning future programmes



Providing ongoing support beyond the activity programme is key to establishing an exercise habit



“ One of the great lessons from the Active England programme is that simply providing activities and a logical argument about why it is a good thing is not enough ”

▶ and for policy-making. In developing these Hall Aitken concluded that:

- Radical innovation has not been prevalent in the Active England programme although some innovative approaches were observed
- Most projects are run by 'expert' types whereas 'enterprising' types are most likely to innovate
- If innovation is desirable, future projects must be helped to model the 'boundary busters' – those who are more successful at making connections and links
- Organisations running projects should take account of the drivers to innovation and take steps to remove the identified barriers
- People make projects and there are three distinct phases to a successful project, requiring three distinct sets of proficiencies in staff
- Active England projects have made good progress in finding clues and tactics to widen participation
- Active England has shared learning across regions and projects through engagement activities such as themed workshops as well as the Legacy Reports

Club Membership

The active members of a local club or group are the lifeblood of any community-based action. Active members are important role models in their communities and encourage others to join in. Through Active England funding, an estimated 33,000 people will have become actively involved in local sports clubs, groups or physical activity by 2010.

Coaches, instructors and leaders play a critical role in promoting and supporting sport and recreational physical activity. We estimate that Active England funding has supported around 8,400 coaches, each of whom works with a further 96 participants on average. This would mean that up to 803,000 participants will have benefited from coaching to some extent. Around 36,000 of these coaches (42 per cent) were coaching regularly within projects; at least once a week over 12 months.

Revenue v Capital Projects

Across the programme as a whole we found that revenue projects were more effective at attracting and keeping participants than capital funded projects. Revenue projects appear to be more effective at encouraging repeat visits – throughout for revenue projects is 864 for each £10,000 of project cost compared to 585 for capital projects. Revenue projects employing staff can engage with more people one-to-one and therefore these projects can be more effective in bringing disadvantaged people in. However, capital projects may have taken longer to set up and will bring in more sustained throughput over a longer timescale.

Evaluation data suggests that projects that only received capital funding have been most successful at attracting new participants. Nearly a quarter of participants and throughput within projects were identified as new to sport. However, these figures are based on returns from only half

of the capital projects. Most of these organisations are either trusts or charities where they are more likely, by the nature of their interests, to be targeting hard to reach groups.

Engaging People

Organisation type has an impact on the proportion of previously inactive participants that projects engaged with. Local authority-led projects appeared to be the most effective with 16 per cent of participants being new to sport. However, clubs, associations or trusts have one of the lowest proportions with just 5 per cent of participants from this group. Investment in these organisations, particularly clubs, appears to have benefited existing participants rather than brought new people into sport.

One reason that some projects are successful in engaging the hard to reach is that they spend time listening to them. They understand the barriers faced and that perceived barriers which may have no foundation in reality can be just as powerful as more tangible barriers such as affordability.

Often people from hard to reach groups will find difficulty in staying with an activity for a sustained period. Some research suggests that it takes eight weeks to establish a habit. Even where people have enjoyed their activity they find it difficult to stick at it for all sorts of reasons. These could be low self-esteem, no experience of embedding structure into their chaotic lives or cultural pressures.

Providing ongoing support beyond the formal programmes of activity is key to getting hard-to-reach groups to continue long enough to establish a habit. It is a way to positively reinforce and reward achievement.

Trying to tell people what to do doesn't work very well. People who have been inactive for a long period need some encouragement. An effective way is to apply the technique of motivational interviewing. This has been shown to be a useful approach with people who accept that they need to change their behaviour, but may be at different states of readiness to do so. The interviews try to increase a person's awareness of the problems, consequences and

risks faced by continuing their current course of behaviour. People are encouraged to picture a better future and become motivated to achieve it. Motivational interviewing focuses on the client and while being semi-directive, in that it actively encourages them to make a change, it creates an internal motivation for the client.

Once a group accepts the programme, it becomes a new source for referrals to it. Some Active England projects have shown that it is possible to engage with informal groupings if they take the right approach and the results can be just as effective as with formal groups.

Programmes with a specific focus on target groups have been more successful in securing a greater number of volunteers for each £10,000 of funding than the programme average. Targeting these groups means drawing on existing networks of people that can then support recruitment on to the programme. The greater number of volunteers in projects with a particular focus suggests that these projects are more successful in also using these networks to attract volunteers.

The really successful projects are led by outstanding people. These are people who have something more than simply technical competence or a specialist skill. Special people can do a lot with very little. But special people are hard to find and can be expensive to pay for when you do find them. It may be that a project has to call on several people to pull together all the qualities needed to make a project successful. Just

occasionally one person will have all these to some degree.

Lessons Learned

One of the great lessons from the Active England programme is that simply providing activities and a logical argument about why it is a good thing is not enough. It is encouraging that many projects have tried to go beyond this premise in an attempt to uncover some clues and develop tactics to engage more people.

Across the programme we found projects focusing on specific groups built up a wealth of expertise in targeting these groups. This includes:

- Getting the activities right – assessing the needs of the target group and offering activities that match their needs and aspirations
- Packaging activities with more of a fun element for some people
- Making the activities accessible – activities must be local, run at the right time and be at the right price and transport might be included
- Communication, outreach and marketing must be suitable for the target group
- Being aware of the social and psychological reasons that may motivate or put off a target group
- Choosing the right staff

The 'Widening Participation in Sport and Physical Activity', 'People and Proficiencies' and 'Engaging Hard to Reach Groups' Legacy Reports identify further ways of increasing participation. ●

David Gourlay can be contacted at david.gourlay@hallaaitken.co.uk



ATHLETICS

England Athletics looks beyond 2012, towards future generations of successful athletes



Young athletes are put through their paces during the McCain Athletics Networks launch

The year 2012 has become a buzzword across sport in the UK and any mention of this date or the word London is rarely made without the mention of legacy.

For England Athletics (EA) the challenge is to consider life beyond 2012 and what the sport will look like once the London Olympic Games have been and gone. Head of marketing and strategy at EA, Chris Jones, explains: "In essence the challenge for us is what happens after the last light is switched off at the end of the Games."

"Is what we have built up going to give the sport a vibrant future? Or will it fade as the Games becomes a past event? London 2012 does give sport a great springboard – a talking point, a focal point and unifying goal – but the challenge is to build something that will last beyond 2012."

Athletics Networks

The twin priorities for EA are clubs and coaching. Clubs are the environment in which athletes are recruited, inspired, trained and developed. Coaching expertise is essential if ambition and aspiration are to be turned into competitive results. EA has created the McCain Athletics Networks as part of its drive on these two fronts.

Chris Jones explains the concept: "The principle is quite simply that by pooling resources, clubs can become more effective. They don't have to lose their individual identity, but they can achieve far more by sharing expertise or facilities, by getting athletes and coaches to work together, by partnering with other agencies and providing a unified front when seeking additional funding."

The athletics networks scheme enables funding to be given to groups of clubs which are working together to develop

the sport in their area. A key focus of the scheme is to improve the provision and development of high quality coaching, in particular implementing the high quality coaching systems and structures that will grow and sustain participation in club athletics.

This will underpin many of the other network objectives. Ten networks have already been selected and the process to choose a further 15 from submitted applications is now underway.

The first wave of projects have goals and plans which include bringing more children into the sport, developing road running, identifying and developing talent, improving the provision of disability athletics, encouraging participants in mass running events to become more involved in the sport and supporting the recruitment and training of officials. The networks will improve availability and development of coaching and bring other multiple benefits to the sport in their respective areas.

The Athletics Network project is being funded by McCain and Sport England. McCain is putting £300,000 into the first wave of schemes which will also look to bring in more than £250,000 in additional partnership and match funding. Over £3m will be invested by EA into this programme in the years leading up to 2012.

Jones says: "Athletics Networks are part of our strategy of supporting and empowering clubs and coaches. We are encouraging them to take a leading and innovative role in the future of athletics in England. While the funding is an important aspect of enabling the clubs to do more, it has also acted as a catalyst

to clubs sharing ideas and resources in ways that do not necessarily require much funding. We are seeing increased co-operation in sharing facilities so that they are better utilised, as well as the sharing of coaching expertise between clubs and co-operation in promoting athletics in schools.

"Athletics networks mean we get more impact for the money spent, which is good news for our sponsors too. We also hope that the effect on the culture within our sport will be tangible by 2013."

"We want to see innovative clubs growing the sport, athletes staying with the sport and being given every opportunity to excel. The effects should also be felt in the wider aspects of the sport with recruiting, retention and the standards of coaching and officiating also driven upwards."

Each of the networks will also be able to call upon the support of their local club and coach support officer, part of the EA team who support clubs nationwide.

Hertfordshire Network

One of the first McCain Athletics Networks is Hertfordshire. Malcolm Wallace, Hertfordshire development chair and chair of the network says: "The networks are something new and in many respects ground breaking. Our destiny is in our hands. In the past there have been issues about clubs thinking 'we can't do this' or 'we can't do that'. Now we've got the funding, but it is about more than that, the network has got the clubs together, got the coaches together and there is a feeling that we can develop and achieve."

"The clubs in Hertfordshire have always been close, now we are closer than ever. We now have a combined Hertfordshire Junior team and that's working ▶

“Plans include bringing more children into the sport, developing road running, identifying and developing talent and improving the provision of disability athletics”



The athletic networks will strengthen co-ordinated school's competition programmes

➔ well and helping to keep youngsters interested in the sport.

"It is good to get together and get coaches working together. We now have coaches passing their knowledge on to other coaches."

The first 10 Athletics Networks

AVON – The proposed activities of this network include increasing the number of school children active in athletics, supporting the work done in South Gloucestershire and North Somerset in talent identification and development, encouraging novice participants in mass participation events to sustain their involvement in distance running and ensure regular coach and officials' development courses and seminars are held within the county. It will also hold regular days to bring athletes and their coaches from the county together.

ARMADA (based in the Plymouth area) – The activities proposed by this network include the introduction of a park-based series of road races, the delivery of faster recreational sessions at community events and town centre sites and coaching/officials courses as well as coach mentoring. It will also work with the women's running network to develop ladies from jogging to competition level and encourage cross club coaching with the Flying Coach programme to help provide mentoring and support.

BLACK COUNTRY – This network aims to improve collaboration between clubs and schools and support the training of teachers through the Elevating Athletics scheme. It will increase coach recruitment and development and will link up with the University of Wolverhampton to provide sports science support for top athletes within the network.

CALDERDALE – This network will deliver faster sessions in schools, deliver athletics coaching sessions in socially deprived areas and establish pathways for new participants into clubs. Pathways for local disabled athletes will also be established to aid progression to higher level squads. It will also increase the number of coaches and develop their skills.

COUNTY DURHAM – Proposed activities include strengthening links with local schools, increasing the number of curriculum time and after school coaching sessions and establishing a disability athletics section within Chester le Street and District Athletics Club. It will also fund the purchase of a pool of equipment to improve the quality of athlete development, provide opportunities for senior athletes from member clubs to compete in higher level competition, hold joint training sessions involving athletes from all network member clubs and increase the number of young volunteers.

DERBYSHIRE – The Derbyshire network proposal included activities such as developing and strengthening a co-ordinated schools competition programme for children up to the age of 16, establishing Focus Clubs for disability athletics and developing disability athletics competitions. It will also work with event specific groups in all clubs to enhance coaching standards and establish county-wide workshops for coach development. **HERTFORDSHIRE** – The proposed activities include building on the existing work between clubs and schools, providing disability athletics equipment in athletics clubs, a shared coaching scheme, talent identification events, holding county performance squad training sessions specifically for athletes with disabilities and providing extensive coach development and mentoring opportunities.

MANCHESTER – proposed activities for this network include improving club and school links, providing a street athletics programme, deploying coaches and co-ordinators into targeted areas, establishing university and college support programmes and creating coach education opportunities. It will also carry out work with gifted and talented athletes from schools and colleges and hold event specific workshops for athletes.

NEWHAM – This network will run disability athletics sessions, provide faster sessions, increase opportunities for young people to get involved in athletics, implement talent identification and development schemes and hold Olympic and Paralympic open days. It will also recruit young officials and increase the number of female coaches.

SUSSEX – In Sussex the proposed work includes the creation of a Run England Race series and 5K time trials, as well as expanding its Fun Run and Fun XC Leagues. An officials recruitment, coach development and support programme (including bursaries) will be created and a Flying Coach scheme will assist athletes at clubs and schools.

Wider Impact

The impact of the template for Athletics Networks is set to widen as UKA – the governing body for the sport in the UK – will work with other home country associations in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to implement a similar strategy to develop club infrastructure. The new model will be rolled out across the Celtic regions over the course of the next 12 months.

The sport has recognised a clear need for change in order to provide the legacy of a healthy future. UKA also recognises that such change can be hard to take at times but with clear lines of support from a professional staffing network, clubs will be able to move forward confident that they will better prepared for life post-2012. ●

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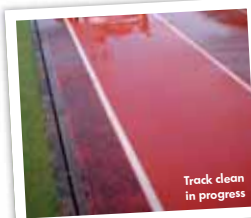
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We now have a new indoor track washing machine, which has already shown amazing results and recently used this machine to wash and dry the track at Sutton Arena in London.

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White Line Services has been involved in many interesting and varied sports projects, including:

- Pressure cleaning the track at Crystal Palace Stadium to ensure a safe, new look for the 2008 London Grand Prix



Track clean in progress

- Surface cleaning, repairs and relining the track at the Birmingham Alexandra Stadium in time for the GB Selection trials for the 2008 Olympics
- Cleaned, repaired, red texture-sprayed, surveyed and painted track lines at South Leeds Stadium for 2008 track events
- Washed and remarked the track at Stoke Mandeville Stadium – the official training venue for athletes preparing for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games
- Washed, red texture sprayed, surveyed and line painted Kirkwell Athletic Stadium in the Orkney Islands, Scotland
- Remarked the tarmac tennis courts at Roedean School in Sussex

RECENT NEWS

These are some of the recent projects we have been or are currently involved in:

- Installing, surveying and marking the Victoria Stadium track in Gibraltar in 1989, replacing the track for The Island Games in 2000 and relining the track in 2008
- Painting an eight-lane athletics track to IAAF Class 2 certification in Mexico in December 2008
- In early 2009 we completed work on two nine-court sports halls in HM/YOI Feltham Young Offenders Prison
- Currently cleaning, partly-resurfacing and line painting an athletics track at Spennborough Pool and Sports Complex in North Yorkshire.



Sports hall markings at Trinity School, Croydon



Half-way through cleaning the track at the Paralympics headquarters at Stoke Mandeville Stadium



A cleaned, resurfaced, surveyed and painted track at Kirkwell in the Orkney Islands

CONTACT:

White Line Services International Ltd
205 Hollye Road, East Grinstead
West Sussex RH19 3ER
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The PWTAG Swimming Pool and Spa International Conference 2009

Brian Guthrie, technical secretary for the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group, reviews the conference highlights

The third International Pool and Spa Conference, organised by the Pool Water Treatment Advisory Group (PWTAG), attracted 200 international delegates to London in March this year. The first of these biennial conferences was held in Budapest, Hungary in 2005; in 2007 delegates gathered in Munich, Germany and this year the conference was based at the Royal College of Physicians' headquarters in Regent's Park.

Noted for its international importance in the pool water treatment sector, delegates came from Austria, Bahrain, Belgium, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Germany, Greece, The Netherlands, Hong Kong, Hungary, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Malaysia, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, the UK and the US – all of whom enjoyed three days of papers from international academics, public health professionals and consultants.

The delegates addressed international pool management issues in an open forum

In addition to addressing urgent issues of the day – such as cryptosporidium and asthma – there were many technical papers on disinfection by-products and pool management, as well as a sneak preview of the future of international co-operation in pool water research and standards.

Conference Content

The conference was divided into six sections: infections, water treatment, risk management, technical management of hygiene, health impact of disinfection by-products and the open forum. Thirty-five papers were delivered – representing the work of more than 100 researchers.

Infections

Cryptosporidium, the number one cause of gastrointestinal illness from water, was one of the main topics. This protozoa is a gastrointestinal parasite that survives in chlorinated water, so can be spread in drinking water and pool water. A contribution from the US Centers for Disease Control

and Prevention underlined the importance of acting quickly when Cryptosporidium cases appear and anticipating problems in the outbreak season by taking preventive measures. These measures include warning the public and stepping up water treatment.

Although it was clear from other conference papers that Cryptosporidium can be readily found in a proportion of pools and that swim diapers do not keep it out of the pool, work done on behalf of PWTAG reinforces confidence that it can be removed by good filtration and coagulation.

Infection problems from mycobacteria and fungi in pools were also discussed.

Water Treatment

There has been considerable interest around the world in both improving conventional water treatment and finding an alternative to chlorine disinfection. This conference seemed to encourage the first aspiration but not the second. Speakers from Germany and Denmark spoke of the application of membrane filtration to pools: although

“Dutch water scientists reported on their analysis of different disinfection systems as an alternative to chlorine – the best involved sodium hydrochlorite with UV or ozone”

there might be a financial price to pay – both upfront and in running costs – some delegates envisage these membranes might eventually replace sand.

As for alternatives to chlorine, Dutch water scientists reported on their multi-criteria analysis of 12 different disinfection systems. Some – copper/silver ions for example – fell at the first hurdle because they didn't pass the microbiological effectiveness test. Taking every available factor into account however, the best systems all involved sodium hydrochlorite, mostly with UV or ozone.

This section of the conference also included an informative talk from the Olympic Delivery Authority and water treatment designers, regarding the challenges involved in building the aquatic centre for the London 2012 Olympic Games. Some of the challenges include the logistics of getting a big pool into a tight space, on a contaminated site with a river running through it, how to deal with the tens of thousands of removable seats and supplying high-quality water to the two 50m pools and diving pool.

Risk Management

Risk management was also the theme for an interesting series of papers. The database of pool performance results that Hungarian authorities are currently setting up was viewed as 'too authoritative' for some in the audience, but a systematic approach to bathing loads pioneered by Dutch researchers was intriguing.

Using a controlled shower cabin they were able to measure the effects of dirty bodies on the pollution load entering the pool – and the beneficial effects of showering. The dirtiest bathers could carry 26

times as much pollution into the water as the cleanest. On the positive side, showering removed 80 per cent of the pollution. Interestingly, this echoed work done less formally by PWTAG more than 10 years ago.

Another interesting session was when Representatives of the Federation of Tour Operators described how they co-operated with the Spanish government after a series of major cryptosporidiosis outbreaks associated with hotel pools in 2000 and 2002. This highlighted the need for some unified guidance on how to operate the pools, especially in the event of an apparent outbreak. Incidentally, and apparently by coincidence, there have been no major outbreaks since, to test the new guidelines.

Technical Management

The section of the conference on technical management opened with a brave attempt by Gordon Nichols of the UK Health Protection Agency (HPA) to start assessing quantitatively the disease burden from swimming. This difficult work is still some way short of suggesting intervention strategies. An HPA colleague spoke of the more immediate problems raised by the proliferation of interactive water features. Unless they include decent water treatment, he said, there is a very real risk of infection.

Disinfection By-products

Asthma was the cloud hanging over the section of the conference that dealt with disinfection by-products. Two separate papers from CREAL in Barcelona suggested first, that lung damage was by no means as clear-cut as Belgian studies had suggested. Secondly, a survey of more than 3,000



FM Schets of the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment and PWTAG chair Howard Gosling

school-age children was unable to find any association between swimming and asthma. On the other hand, toxicological work from Germany did suggest a link. There was also interesting data from an Italian study comparing the lifetime exposure to disinfection by-products in competitive, frequent and occasional swimmers.

Open Forum

The conference closed with a challenging open forum on how to build on the common purpose that manifests in this type of international conference. It was agreed that there was a need to share knowledge and develop some common parameters that would be applied to the necessary research. There were many volunteers from all the countries represented to develop an internet-based forum for this work.

The conference also marked the launch of the new edition of PWTAG's guidelines, *Swimming Pool Water: treatment and quality standards for pools and spas*. This offers 200 pages of updated and new material covering subjects critical to healthy swimming. There are also new chapters on swimming pool basics and dealing with outbreaks in spas to interactive water features.

For more information visit www.pwtag.org



Claire Mollet discusses the power of the family pound when visiting wet play facilities as the Free Swimming initiative is rolled out at pools across the country

PLAY PAYS

Children have long been able to influence what their parents have bought on their behalf, extending way beyond demands for toys, clothes and food to hobbies, days out, holidays and family entertainment.

Like any parent, I am frequently the victim of my children's choices and am more than familiar with their 'pester power'. With the increased pressure on parents to juggle the work/life balance, fuelled by the ubiquitous press coverage on achieving a more active family lifestyle, parents are more likely to take the demands of their children more seriously to help achieve this balance.

Choice of their local leisure centre is one such example. As a mother of two, I know that getting children excited about swimming and taking part in physical activity is made so much easier when there is an exciting carrot to dangle. I often use a trip to our local leisure pool as a reward

after a good week of school work where they can race down the flumes, ride the waves and play safely and happily under the interactive water features. It always amazes me how the children never tire of doing this three or four times a month and I am often instructed as to which leisure centre we visit.

Water slides, wave machines, mushroom showers, multi-level play structures, tipping buckets, pipe falls, spray rails, throw in floats – a multitude of features are available from simple pool toys to more complex structures. The presence of even the simplest of water features at a pool facility will hold the imagination and interest of this powerful age group.

Family Swimming

Free swimming has created many opportunities for leisure centres and their public this year. The increased press coverage, together with the might of the 2012 Olympics, have pushed swimming back into the eye of the general public. Corporate promotions are also encouraging us back into the pool

through initiatives like the Kelloggs and Schwepps free swim vouchers.

With this positive momentum it's down to the leisure managers to be creative and increase their appeal to the crucial family market by providing solid entertainment and family fun sessions to attract, draw and keep this revenue.

So how can this be achieved when competing with other local activities and leisure centres? What compels and excites children of different ages? What investment can be made to offer a long term appeal and how can a leisure centre become a phoenix?

Spectrum Success

A prime example of continued rejuvenation is Guildford Spectrum, one of the UK's most successful leisure centres. Manager Simon Tomlins attributes a £1m per annum income to the variety of equipment the centre has installed, together with bright and colourful theming. Continued investment in the regeneration of its existing features sustains good attendance.

Their Whizz and Surf flume rides are exciting and crowd pleasing for the eight years plus age group, offering both a tyre ride and a competitive three-lane slide. Together with the wave machine and multi-slide, there is constant activity and things to do. The little ones are catered for by specialist toddler-friendly slides, a single-level pirate ship and gentle water features.

Future consideration is being given to the addition of interactive features for the flume rides such as sound, light and a racing scoreboard to encourage competitive

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“There has never been a more opportune time for managers to stamp their personality on their jobs and communities as more families head to the pools,”

use and thrill. However, as much as Tomlins would love to see a big signature ride installed at the centre, for now at least, he is turning his attention towards the young family market and will continue to build on their existing comprehensive water play equipment to retain appeal to this audience.

By teaming up with his suppliers, Tomlins is able to plan future phases of toddler play by reusing existing water supplies, building on their theme and keeping the equipment well-maintained.

Flume fun

It is important not to overlook the potential a flume slide could bring to any swimming pool. Matt Clark, technical sales manager of flume expert Loyal Grove Leisure, has been retro fitting flumes for several years.

As a leading company in its field with possibly the largest waterslide mould store in Europe, Loyal Grove Leisure has installed many flume slides in the UK and continues to support and maintain them.

“Flumes can be configured to suit most building designs with careful consideration



given towards a water source and the most suitable route for supply pipework,” explains Clark. “There are numerous types of waterslides, including fully enclosed tubes, open slides – which are more appealing to the younger children – multi-lanes for competitive family riding or adrenaline rides such as kamikaze drop slides, space bowls and black holes.

“The average life span of a well maintained flume is approximately 15 years, although we still service some that are several years older. The longevity of the slide gives each centre the chance to maximise potential income streams by maintaining both the internal and external surface. Not to mention the addition of interactive features such as sensor operated traffic lights, water sprays, lighting, sound, smoke and even moving images,” Clark explains.

Guilford Spectrum has enhanced its £1m per annum income by offering imaginative water play equipment

Additional cover prices can be charged for flume entry and some flumes have even been sponsored by local businesses.

Never has there been a more opportune time for leisure managers to stamp their personality on their jobs and local communities. More and more families are going back to swimming. It doesn't break the bank and it's a great day out. Swimming is part of the Great British culture, no other country is quite like it when it comes to the quality or locality of our leisure amenities. ●



By installing a wet pour safety surface around the equipment, the pool has a new clean edge to it and finishes off the area properly.

After only a few months, Kavangh has seen a tangible increase in revenue. Her weekend and holiday programmes incorporate an immense range of activities all carefully targeted and regularly fully booked. The party spirit is evident throughout the centre and her team of lifeguards are critical to the success of their Wave Rave events – spraying the children with water and creating the perfect disco atmosphere for the eight- to 12-year-olds. This is in direct parallel to the Relax and Unwind sessions held once a week for the adults to enjoy classical music and mood lighting.

Kavangh will continue to building on her theming ideas to incorporate the flume slide and other areas of the pool.

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CASE STUDY SERCO LEISURE, TENTERDEN LEISURE CENTRE

When Donna Kavangh joined Serco Leisure as manager of Tenterden Leisure Centre, she quickly saw that she could build and improve on her existing leisure pool set up. Armed with a mushroom shower, flume slide, wave machine and some squirting penguins, she invited companies to come up with ideas for adding more interactivity aimed at young families yet still providing compelling action for the eight- to 12-year-olds.

Unable to take advantage of any funding streams, Donna worked with her Trust to create a budget of £30,000 with the objectives of increasing casual swimming patronage and providing a fun environment for families.

Donna's investment gave her a revitalised mushroom shower with four interactive arms housing tipping buckets, water wheels and a themed shower, all of which can be changed and swapped around in the future. A new water arch stretches across the pool creating a natural entrance to the features and spraying visitors from a waterwheel and spray rails but also providing a water feed to an area which can be utilised at a later date. The toddlers can play safely on the double lane, pirate themed, foam constructed water slide and even the over 60s sit under the squirting treasure chest relaxing after a casual swim.

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TENNIS



UNDER COVER

Rod Sheard, senior principal of Populous (formerly HOK Sport), discusses the design challenges associated with the retractable roof at Wimbledon's Centre Court and highlights a similar development in Queensland, Australia



If it rains in southern England from 22 June to 5 July this year, it won't stop play at one of the world's most famous international tennis tournaments. At this year's event, Wimbledon officials will be able to close the recently installed retractable roof to the elements in under 10 minutes. No mean feat, but designing a sustainable closing roof over a grass tennis court with 15,000 spectators around it on a very tight site, has required the use of all our design skills.

First and foremost we needed to preserve the identity and history of the world's most iconic tennis stadium, yet redefine a coherent building. Other briefs within the stadium included the fact that Centre Court had to be larger and more comfortable, which meant increasing the seat widths and adding seat padding while increasing the capacity from 13,800 to 15,000.

Improved spectator experience and entertainment was also essential to the success of the project, which meant

creating a world-class venue by improving bar and dining facilities in both Centre Court and within the grounds as a whole. This meant creating a series of terraced balconies to house restaurants and bars in the new east wing. However, the most defining element of the whole redevelopment was the retractable roof.

This was the most exciting part of the design for me, as it was technically complicated and involved many years of research and experiments – including two years of light studies. A key element was to allow natural light to reach the grass, so it would develop in a healthy manner. These exhaustive light studies showed the fixed roof had to be as large as possible and the retractable roof as small as possible to allow sufficient light levels to maintain grass growth, not only for centre court, but the grass to the courts north of centre court.

Roof Design Issues

We had to use all of our ingenuity and approach the issues in some very

A key element of the roof was to allow natural light to reach the grass





“ The folding fabric concertina roof was an ambitious solution, the scale of the roof needed was huge and a project of this size had not been undertaken before ”

► different ways – from the actual folding mechanism of the roof covering, to the cooling and humidity control systems.

The traditional approach for moving roofs on stadia is for one or – more often – two sliding panels, which cover the opening in the fixed roof. But if we did this at Wimbledon's Centre Court, it would have meant the sliding panels would over-hang the fixed roof, outside the footprint of the building, which would have looked inappropriate and would also affect the grass growth in the courts north of Centre Court.

The folding fabric concertina roof was an ambitious solution; the scale of the roof needed was huge and a project of this size had not been undertaken before. But what it meant was that the roof could be folded into a very compressed area when not in use

The folding fabric concertina roof is four times smaller than the roof area – allowing it to be folded into a compressed area



over the court. The eventual solution was a folding fabric concertina roof, four times smaller than the area of the roof opening itself.

The roof fabric had to be translucent enough to allow large amounts of daylight to pass through so it would feel open even when it was closed, to retain the feel of an outdoors event, and be crack resistant. A fabric became available during our research period which was made from 100 per cent PTFE (better known as Teflon), which does not crack when folded and unfolded. It's also waterproof, strong, highly flexible and translucent. It offers protection to the grass in all weather conditions and actually improves growing conditions throughout the year, particularly at the southern end of the stadium, which has the benefit of extra light.

The structure and folding mechanism for the fabric was also technically complicated as the trusses had to span 75m. The solution was a retractable roof

divided into two sections, with a total of nine bays of structural fabric – four bays in one section and five in the other.

In preparation for closing the roof, one section is parked in its folded state at the north end of the court, while the other is parked at the south end. A combination of hydraulic jacks and arms form the mechanism for closing the roof. One bay, or field of fabric, is opened at a time, from the north and south simultaneously. The bay is forced open by electro mechanical actuators which act like hydraulic jacks opening up the end arms, which are like giant hinges linking the trusses together. When the first bay is fully open, the end arms lock the trusses apart and the next field begins to open, and so on, until the two sections meet in an overlapping seam above the middle of the court. The whole process takes only a few minutes.

Controlling the Environment

The final design aspect was the environmental control. When the roof is shut, it encloses up to 15,000 spectators, which creates moisture in the air and a dew effect on the court – making it unplayable.

To dry the air sufficiently for play to resume, large air handling units and ducts were incorporated into the fixed roof structure. These blow cool, dry air over the spectators and dry out the court surface. There are approximately



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CASE STUDY QUEENSLAND TENNIS CENTRE

Completed in December last year, the Queensland Tennis Centre in Brisbane can comfortably host tennis tournaments in Australia's hot and balmy summer. With court temperatures that can soar above 50 degrees, its Centre Court fixed roof solution permanently shelters the 5,500 spectators from the elements, while maintaining the atmosphere of an outdoor event.

The AUD\$82m (£40m) centre, owned by the Queensland government and managed by Stadiums Queensland, is linked to a residential and parklands riverfront development, which provides an ideal training ground for Queensland's future world tennis champions, as well as an international standard tennis facility.

Situated on the site of the decommissioned Tennyson Power Station, the centre held its first international tournament in January 2009, the Brisbane International, a major new tournament associated with the Australian Open Grand Slam.

Elite Facilities

Populous (formerly HOK Sport Architecture) formed a part of the design team to ensure the tennis centre was benchmarked against the best tennis facility designs in the world. The result is a purpose built facility that features 22 match and training courts on three Grand Slam surfaces – grass, clay and cushioned acrylic hard court, as part of a 12 hectare residential, recreational and parklands hub, including river-facing frontage, with public access to the Brisbane riverfront.

“Corporate boxes can be dismantled for larger function spaces and media facilities converted into internal coaching spaces”

The key to this centre is its flexibility and connection to its local community. In event mode, the tiered centre court is capable of hosting state, national and international standard tennis events on all surfaces and the everyday cushioned acrylic hard court surface can be easily adapted. The new centre is also the headquarters for Tennis Queensland's administration and development programmes. Tennis administrators and advocates believe the game has to be more accessible, particularly to children, so the nursery is a vital element, providing an academy that draws in children from across the state.

Community Tennis

When not in event mode, the facility operates as a leisure tennis centre. Improvements have been made to the local infrastructure



Brisbane's Queensland Tennis Centre is under cover

including pedestrian access along the riverfront and connectivity to the existing Brisbane City Council bikeway network for cyclists, as well as improved local access to the Yeerongpilly Railway Station. Parking has also been improved with the construction of an internal road and on-site parking to minimise traffic on local streets.

During events, the main thoroughfare is closed to traffic, creating a pedestrian boulevard, which can be dressed with pageantry and lined with food and beverage stalls and merchandising outlets. As part of the community facility there is also an interactive museum, with memorabilia celebrating the rich history of tennis in Queensland.

Under Cover

The roof is designed to maintain an outdoor atmosphere and tournament classification while providing permanent shade cover. Players and spectators need protection from the heat and sub tropical storms so the roof solution acts as both a parasol and an umbrella.

The fixed roof is partially solid (metal sheet panels) and partially fabric (PTFE fabric). Insulation within the metal sheet panels keeps the arena cooler and drier in summer and cuts down the noise from outside. The open umbrella design allows for the best possible use of natural light as the essence of the sport is all about being outdoors.

Long-term Sustainability

Environmentally sustainable elements include underground water tanks to capture and store up to one million litres of water, essential in the everyday maintenance of high quality tennis surfaces. Many of the specific function spaces for major events are adaptable for everyday living. Corporate boxes have demountable walls and can be dismantled to make larger banqueting or function spaces and facilities used by the media can be converted into internal coaching spaces.

The long-term vision is to develop the space around the stadium, such as a community square, for weekend markets etc. The museum will help create this area, as will the public work of art, which provides a signature point for the stadium.

of excessive moisture – unlike a rugby union or football stadium where the condition of the grass surface is less crucial. At Wimbledon, if the roof was closed, we needed an air conditioning system which would be able to remove the condensation from the ball, the grass, the air, the players and even the spectators, before play would resume.

Wimbledon has become the benchmark for owners of sports facilities around the world – who now recognise that if Wimbledon can roof its grass Centre Court, then how can they maintain the unique aspect of their venue. ●



Wimbledon officials can close the retractable roof in less than 10 minutes

▶ 600 air conditioning nozzles in the roof, pumping air at high velocity.

Although we have designed a number of moving roofs at various sports facilities – such as the Etihad Stadium in Melbourne, Australia; the Millennium Stadium in Cardiff and the Reliant stadium in Houston, Texas – Wimbledon now operates one of the most technologically advanced roof structures in the world.

This project differed because not only did we have to solve the problem of the roof design itself, but we had to develop an air conditioning system that would provide a perfect surface, free

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FOOTBALL ACADEMIES

Crispin Andrews takes a close look at the value football academies bring to both the club and the player and looks at how these facilities are kept secure

Alan Hansen once said that you never win anything with kids. Famously, the former Liverpool FC captain turned BBC pundit was proven wrong and even though clubs look to all corners of the globe for ready-made players to bring instant success; when an academy produces a star, it can either make or save the club millions of pounds.

If several players come through the ranks at once, it can, as was the case with Manchester United FC in the mid-nineties, provide the springboard for many years of success.

Ryan Giggs, David Beckham, the two Neville brothers – Phil and Gary – and Paul Scholes were the bedrock of a side that between 1995 and 2003 won six league titles, three FA Cups and the Champions League. Add to the list players such as Wes Brown, John O'Shea and Darren Fletcher who have gone on to play elsewhere; and it becomes clear that even for the richest and most successful clubs, an academy can make excellent business sense.

Jonny Evans and Danny Wellbeck are the latest academy startlets to break into the Old Trafford first team and their coach, Dave Bushell, explains that good staff working with good players in a high-quality facility will give youngsters every chance of making the grade. "You want players with character who will work through the hard times to be the very best they can," he says.

Personal Development

West Ham academy director Tony Carr believes an academy should be an enjoyable and developmental experience for young players. Over the years, Carr's academy has produced players of the calibre of Paul Ince, Frank Lampard, Joe Cole, Rio and Anton Ferdinand, Michael Carrick, Glen Johnson and Jermaine De-foe. With many of these players moving on to bigger and better things, the club itself has become known as "the academy".

Right: Tony Carr believes an academy should offer an enjoyable experience
Above: Wolverhampton academy players



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has produced the likes of Marcus Gayle, Marcus Bent and Michael Dobson. The club also runs a scholarship scheme for 16- to 18-year-olds and its under nine- to 14-year-olds play friendly matches against other Football League clubs. "Individual player development is more important than results at schoolboy level," says centre manager Barry Quin.

Football Facilities

All Chelsea players from football in the community through to Didier Drogba use the club's Cobham training ground. One hundred and forty acres of prime Stockbroker belt make up a campus facility – built not long after the arrival of Abramovich and his billions.

Thirty playing areas including three phase one pitches, covered in a blanket heating system and a fibre sand construction to mimic conditions at Stamford Bridge, are supplemented by a host of support facilities. These include a swimming area complete with steam-room, hot and cold plunge pools and a sauna, as well as a sizeable pool with a moveable floor – allowing the depth of the pool to be altered according to players' exercise requirements.

An additional hydrotherapy pool has a variable speed underwater treadmill which allows players to 'run' without their full body weight bearing down on them. The HydroWorx pool also features directional resistance jets and a video monitoring system. The entire floor doubles as an 8ft x 12ft variable speed treadmill that smoothly increases from night to 8.5mph in safe 0.2mph increments. Underwater cameras allow trainers to observe movements and diagnose gait irregularities.

Chelsea FC's academy building is adjacent to the first team base and contains 12 changing rooms as well as relaxation and pool areas. The treatment rooms, gyms and rehabilitation rooms are all designed with the younger generation in mind. It is important, apparently, that lower teams aren't too pampered. Even Frank Lampard has expressed concern that any young person seeing Cobham's fantastic facilities might think they've made it and lose their hunger.

Academy players do however get to

ACADEMY ACCESS CONTROL



Reading FC is surrounded by a Beta Pro Mesh security system

Although Chelsea FC's Cobham training ground backs onto Cobham and Stoke D'Abernon railway station, it is a 10-minute hike through leafy suburbia to get into the ground. The gate, through which you can – with permission from security – leave the ground, remains securely locked making sure that all visitors to the ground enter through the access control point at the front of the facility.

Public and press have separate entrances and the media has its own area – adjacent to but out of sight of the first team's training pitch. Players have their own entrance with biometric access – allowing them to open the door with a thumb print.

After thieves broke into the Springfields training ground last October, Preston North End FC installed a remote, monitored CCTV system that records to a Vista Smartdisc and transmits images to a monitoring station. Facilities manager Vincent George has access from his desk at the stadium and at home so he can instantly check the site if an alarm is activated.

The perimeter of the Springfields site is protected by a Redwall system to detect intruders before they reach the training complex and a Paxton access control system is installed at both the training complex and stadium, linked to a central FM server. "This provides control over which staff can enter the complex and at what times, it also links into the CCTV and alarm systems," says George. Email or SMS/text messages are sent to advise when the building is opened, closed or if an alarm is activated.

Two years ago, Reading FC installed a Beta Pro Mesh system to completely enclose its training ground in fully welded panels (pictured above). The fence panels have a mesh size of 200 x 50 mm, formed from 5mm and 6mm diameter wires, fully welded at every intersection. The horizontal 'V' profiles add to the rigidity of the panels and create an attractive feature to the system once installed.

eat with the first team in the club's canteen. Former Chelsea star Graeme Le Saux says: "There's a huge difference from when I was playing. Those wind-swept training days near Heathrow are a thing of the past."

Dave Parnaby agrees that when academy players brush shoulders daily with first teamers, a club's sense of community remains strong. At Middlesbrough, youngsters train indoors in a sports hall with a synthetic field-turf surface.

Outdoors are two field-turf floodlit pitches and 10 grass pitches. A sports science area and a medical and physical development unit support the work done on the field of play.

Wolves academy players train alongside first teamers at the club's Compton Park facility and also at the nearby Aldersley Sports Village, which contains an indoor dome with six sets of goals on a third generation indoor turf.

The redeveloped leisure village includes arena indoor facilities for badminton, five-a-side football, basketball, table tennis, indoor bowls and a Fitness Junction fitness suite. Outdoor facilities include floodlit synthetic turf pitches for football and hockey, floodlit



Coaches should be positive and allow players to think for themselves

tennis courts, floodlit netball courts, natural turf football pitches, an athletics track and cycle velodrome. There is also an aerobics dance studio, Pickets bar and conference and training facilities.

The flooring of the indoor gym is padded and sprung to withstand free-weight training and the gym is equipped for all age groups to work on their strength, speed, flexibility and stamina. A 6ft x 6ft hydro pool is also featured within the rehabilitation area.

Further Education

Stories about callous football clubs letting go heartbroken youngsters with dashed aspirations and no alternative career path, mean clubs are now more inclined to cater for the holistic needs of their young players. "There can be so many reasons why a player doesn't make it – injury, reaching a growth plateau or just a dip in form," says Bushell. "It's up to the club to help prepare the youngsters for later life whether that is inside or outside of football."

Manchester United has joined up with local school Ashton Upon Mersey to offer its young scholars a complete educational package. Some take BTEC sport or business qualifications, while others



can study for A-level qualifications. English speaking courses are also available for overseas players who need to brush up on their language skills.

"Courses are modular to enable players to catch up after international duty and fit in alongside training and fitness routines," explains Bushell. "It's about giving the youngster some back-up should they not make the grade as a player."

Other clubs extend the academy principle into their surrounding communities. League Two side Wycombe Wanderers has developed a football scholarship with the nearby Mandeville School Specialist Sports College. Local youngsters can now use their interest in football to continue in education post 16. As well as the BTEC sport, Wycombe scholars take coaching, first aid and refereeing qualifications, while developing their skills under the guidance of qualified coaches and playing for the club in

the Conference Junior League.

"It's ideal preparation for a career in coaching, sports development or PE teaching," says Mandeville's director of specialism Kevin Ford.

For all clubs, academies are first and foremost about long-term player development. "We want good all-round players who can pass, move, go forward, who want the ball and have the capability to play in a number of positions," says Bushell.

For Dave Parnaby it's about providing an enjoyable educational experience. "It might sound like common sense," he says. "But it's certainly worked at Middlesbrough."

Manager Gareth Southgate, like Bryan Robson and Steve McClaren before him, must agree. Fourteen of this year's first team squad at Middlesbrough are academy graduates. How much would they cost to replace? ●



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2012 PROFILE



Jim Johnston

Advantage West Midlands (AWM) is one of the nine regional development agencies (RDA) in England charged with encouraging sustainable economic development. Karen Maxwell talks to AWM business manager - 2012 Games Jim Johnston about his role in promoting 2012 business in the region

What does your role entail?

The government is anxious to spread the benefits of the London 2012 Games across the country and one of the easiest ways to do this is by firms in the provinces winning tenders to supply London 2012 with goods and services.

Compared with countries like China (Beijing Summer Games) and Canada (Vancouver Winter Games), Britain is a tiny country, so it is easier for companies outside London to win business from the 2102 Games.

Advantage West Midlands has around 300 employees. I am based in the Tourism and Leisure Unit, but I am the only person working on maximising economic benefits for the West Midlands, by encouraging firms to bid for and win tenders from London 2012.

My job is to:

- Identify economic opportunities arising from the London 2012 Games
- Communicate opportunity information to West Midlands' companies
- Work with firms, largely through intermediaries, such as the Chambers of Commerce and Business Link, to try to ensure this region wins at least its fair share of business from London 2012

How do you update local businesses on 2012 opportunities?

We run workshops, seminars and conferences for businesses, alerting them to the range of opportunities arising from the London 2012 Games and how to access these.

We have just agreed a three-year contract with Business Link West Midlands, to organise and deliver the following services: opportunity awareness workshops; procurement readiness workshops; one-to-one specialist surgeries; supply chain events; sponsorship support for smaller meetings; direct podcasts or e-shots; sector



Birmingham will be an Olympic venue in 2012, with Villa Park hosting matches in the soccer tournaments

specific e-zines, printed materials, web campaigns and radio advertising. We actively follow up every business that expresses interest or attends the opportunity awareness workshops.

The chair of the Olympic Delivery Authority, John Armit, is also visiting the West Midlands this month to host a series of meetings with key business and political leaders in the region.

In addition, we also offer to West Midlands businesses a range of free 2012 Opportunities Sector Reports. These are available to download from the "London 2012 Games" page at www.advantagewm.co.uk. Plus we promote the London 2012 CompeteFor system - a free service where companies can access opportunities.

Is the West Midlands already benefiting from the 2012 Games?

Yes, in as much as Birmingham will be an Olympic venue in 2012. Villa Park will host matches in the men's and women's soccer tournament and the USA track and field team is virtually

certain to use Birmingham as an advance training and preparation camp, ahead of the 2012 Games.

We are aware of around 40 firms in the West Midlands which have already won direct and indirect contracts from London 2012. Three examples include: Zaur Fencing of Wolverhampton - which will design, manufacture, supply and install a new high security fence and gates around the 17 kilometer perimeter of the Olympic Park site in Stratford, east London. Barhale Construction of Walsall has won a multi-million pound contract to design and install the sewage system and pumping station on the Olympic Park; and JCB earth-moving equipment, based in Staffordshire, will be used on the Olympic Park. JCB is also helping the Olympic Delivery Authority with use of their machines in the Plant Training Centre on the Olympic Park and has signed a £23m deal to provide hundreds of their machines to help build the infrastructure needed for the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. ●

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SMASHCOURT TENNIS COURTS FOR ETON

Trevor May has recently completed work on converting 10 ageing tennis courts at Eton College to the Smashcourt surface.

A porous macadam surface, the courts were built on a porous stone foundation to provide a stable, free-draining base. Designed to play like a natural clay court with slow and high bounce, the surface enables play all-year round and its fast-draining properties allow play immediately following rainfall.

The Smashcourt surface requires no irrigation, so there is less capital outlay to begin with and water bills are reduced. Maintenance is intended to be simple through the use of drag brushes – designed to keep the surface flat and true – and these come as part of the Smashcourt package.

The work was the second stage of a contract that Trevor May had agreed with the college, which also consisted of the conversion of five courts into an impervious acrylic surface.

Since the work has been carried out, the number of pupils playing tennis at Eton College on a regular basis is said to have increased significantly.

sport-kit keywords: trevor may

3G SURFACE INSTALLED BY AMB

Seven Kings High School in Ilford, Essex has recently purchased a 3G synthetic pitch (pictured) for use by the school's PE department, its pupils and other schools in the local area.

Installed by AMB Sports, the school selected a Tiger Turf 65mm 3G synthetic grass surface to provide a football and multi-sports surface that is suitable for all general sports training.

One of the key objectives for this installation was to encourage every pupil to use the facility during school breaks and encourage sports participation by pupils at other local schools.

With a project cost of £318,000, the six-month pitch installation started in October 2008 and was completed



in February this year. AMB Sports has also been involved with installations at other prestigious sports facilities including Loughborough University, the Roehampton Club and Crystal Palace Athletics Stadium.

sport-kit keywords: amb sports

CHARLES LAWRENCE RESURFACES

Charles Lawrence Surfaces has recently undertaken resurfacing projects at three pitches that were originally laid well over a decade ago.

Situated at the University of York, St Neots Leisure Centre and Framlingham College in Suffolk, the surfaces had been in place for 12, 14 and 18 years respec-



tively. With regard to the resurfacing, all three sites have had the Grasshopper HF23P sand-filled surface (pictured) installed, which is designed to be long-lasting as well as being suitable for a range of different sports.

The company has also been selected as the preferred contractor for the construction of both an outdoor and an indoor pitch at Aston Villa's newly rebuilt Bodymoor Health site.

The two pitches included engineered bases, shockpads and a 3G playing surface. The full-size outdoor pitch has also been independently tested and approved to FIFA's two-star standard for synthetic playing areas.

sport-kit keywords: charles lawrence

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LANO PROVIDES A TWO SPORT SURFACE

Football and hockey players at Holyport Manor School and Cox Green School in Maidenhead, Berkshire are now enjoying their recently installed synthetic pitch and the benefits of Lano Sports latest product, The Interplay System.

Interplay has passed both the 2008 FA Performance Standard and the International Hockey Federation (FIH) standard. Manufactured using a unique blend of two-tone crimped monofilament fibres, the 3G pitch is able to satisfy the needs of both sports.

Football and hockey are typically difficult to combine as these sports require very different surfaces – a forgiving, longer and more open pile is preferred for football, while a firm, shorter and denser pile is best for hockey.

Interplay brings these two sports together on one surface through a blend of curled fibres that form a covering on which the hockey ball can roll smoothly, while also allowing enough in-built flexibility to make the surface forgiving underfoot for footballers.

sport-kit keywords: lano sports

sport-kit.net

LOW MAINTENANCE, NOT NO MAINTENANCE

Although it is important to select the right synthetic surface, it is arguably even more crucial to maintain the surface throughout its lifespan.

According to turf consultant David Rhodes, synthetic pitches that are fitted and then forgotten about could lead to a shorter life of an expensive facility, and even worse, injuries to players. Although a study has shown that 2G synthetics cost facility managers more per annum to maintain than grass, it is also pointed out that synthetic surfaces are often used up to 10 times more than natural turf pitches.

To help maintain a synthetic surface, Charterhouse offers a range of equipment. The Verti-Brush and Verti-Broom level and redistribute the infill as well as sweeping the turf, while the Verti-Top (pictured) lifts the top layer of infill and filters it before returning the clean sand or rubber to the pitch and brushing in.

The company recommends brushing the surface around twice a week, with the infill being recycled, brushed and filtered approximately four to six times a year.



CLS WINS STOCKTON PITCH CONTRACT

Cleveland Land Services (CLS) has recently been awarded the contract to install a synthetic pitch at the Bede Sixth Form College in Stockton, Teesside.

The company is installing the first Desso Ambition pitch in the UK. This 3G pitch is designed to allow football players to perform sliding tackles without fear of friction burns.

Said to provide optimal grip and traction, the monofilament surface has a turf height of 30mm and is claimed to give both a natural appearance and high-

shock absorption. The decision to use the Desso Ambition pitch was based on the previous success of the surface at sports facilities throughout Europe – including a pitch example at a sports facility in The Netherlands.

Apart from Desso Ambition, Cleveland Land Services also supplies Notts Sport's range of sand-filled 3G surfaces.

As well as installing and laying synthetic pitches, the company can provide fencing around the area in addition to pitch maintenance and line marking.

sport-kit keywords: cleveland land services



LINING UP IN LIVERSEDEGE

West Sussex-based company White Line Services has recently completed a refurbishment project at the Spensborough Athletics Stadium in Liversedge, West Yorkshire.

Work at the stadium included cleaning the entire track surface with a high pressure Aquavac machine, which clears the track of grime and dirt one lane at a time. Sections of the track were also repaired as part of the project, which included the starting area for sprint events (pictured). In addition, the pole vault area – which had been unusable for the previous two years – was also resurfaced, allowing a full programme of athletic events to take place.

Established 30 years ago, White Line Services performs a variety of tasks, including track cleaning, as well as athletics tracks and sports surfacing repair and line marking.

Recent projects include cleaning the Crystal Palace track before the 2008 London Grand Prix meeting and cleaning and lining the 400m indoor Olympic Oval in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA.

sport-kit keywords: white line services

LINKING CHILDREN'S SPORT, PLAY AND FITNESS

At Appleton Primary School in Oxfordshire, S & C Slatter has helped achieve a positive link for sport, play and fitness through the provision of a multi-functional area.

This small village primary school has limited dry play space, so maximising every square metre was an important consideration for the school.

The facility installed by S & C Slatter comprises an open multi-functional sports area which is linked to a trail of climbing and balancing equipment. The playing area is not fenced off, which allows for a natural link onto the surrounding playing field when conditions allow, which encourages a variety of playground and field games.

Using the porous VHAF® NottsSward® surface, which is said to be more child-friendly than concrete, asphalt or rubber, the schoolchildren now use the area as the schools' main playground, for organised PE lessons and other activities.

The contrasting colours of the surface also allows the formation of a net-ball court as well as creating zones for games of tag and an array of ball games.



sport-kit keywords: s & c slatter



EIS GOES WITH NEW MONDO TRACK

The English Institute of Sport at Bisham Abbey and Newham Indoor Athletics Centre have both chosen the new Mondotrack surface to be installed within their training facilities.

The Mondo surface has been chosen for its reliable performance and was seen as the ideal surface to carry out various biometric studies.

The new Mondotrack surface was used during the 2008 Beijing Olympics and was praised due to the results it produced as well as the soft elastic feeling the athletes gained from the new hexagon backing.

This backing has been modified by increasing its length and decreasing its width – resulting in a track surface which returns its energy in a more focused, directional manner. This then leads to the Mondotrack being more elastic and more responsive, which improves athletic performance.

The track was also chosen by the sports centres because of its suitability for indoor use in terms of its ability to withstand hours of year-round training.

sport-kit keyword: mondo

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SOLVING THE SYNTHETIC PITCH PUZZLE

Interlock, a synthetic lawn consisting of puzzle-shaped pieces that lock together, has been launched by Replay Maintenance under the Quickturf brand and is claimed to form the perfect alternative to natural turf.

Designed to be simple and easy to lay, the only requirement prior to laying indoors is having a flat surface. The pieces are then connected together to form what is described as, a 'stable, anti-slip surface' that can also be used outside.

Additionally, with deep cushioning layers, Interlock is intended to be a safe surface for children to play on.

For outdoor installations, all that is required is the removal of any existing turf, the application of sand to ensure the surface is level, the laying of a weed membrane to prevent weed penetration and then the Quickturf is laid on top.

The Quickturf collection consists of five artificial grass carpets, with pile depths ranging from 7mm–30mm. These have been manufactured to suit all requirements and budgets.

sport-kit keywords: replay maintenance

sport-kit.net



MCARDLE'S SIX-WEEK TURNAROUND

Wallingford Hockey Club in Oxfordshire has had its existing synthetic pitch re-surfaced by McArdle Sport-tec, after playing on the previous surface for over 13 years.

The club chose an 18mm sand-dressed polyethylene surface. The overall project took six weeks from design to completion at an approximate cost of £125,000.

McArdle's surface has National FIH (International Hockey Federation) accreditation – offering a quality surface for both club and international hockey matches.

The surface has allowed the club to train and play all year round and provides an additional revenue stream by enabling the club to hire out the pitch to local five-a-side teams for weekly training sessions.

The company, which in addition to hockey, supplies synthetic surfaces for athletics, rugby and football, has recently completed pitch installations at Manchester United Football Club's Training Academy and sports facilities at the University of Kent and the University of Worcester.

sport-kit keyword: mcardle

PLAYRITE SURFACES MEADOWBANK ARENA

The new Meadowbank Sport Arena, currently the largest of its kind in Europe, has seen the installation of more than 9,000sq m of Playrite's multi-sport system Match-Winner with a Match Pad shockpad surface.

Situated in Mid-Ulster, the arena is said to provide the widest range of premium indoor and outdoor facilities for community sports and events.

Installed in partnership with local sports surfaces supplier Laydex, the total surface measures 137m x 70m on which a large variety of sporting activities can take place simultaneously.

In a single session, a full size hockey / football pitch, plus four mini-pitches (all badminton court-sized) can be used.

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turer to offer customers a choice of needlepunch, tufted or woven sports surfaces, allowing the supply of indoor tennis courts, children's play areas or full-size outdoor football pitches.

sport-kit keyword: playrite

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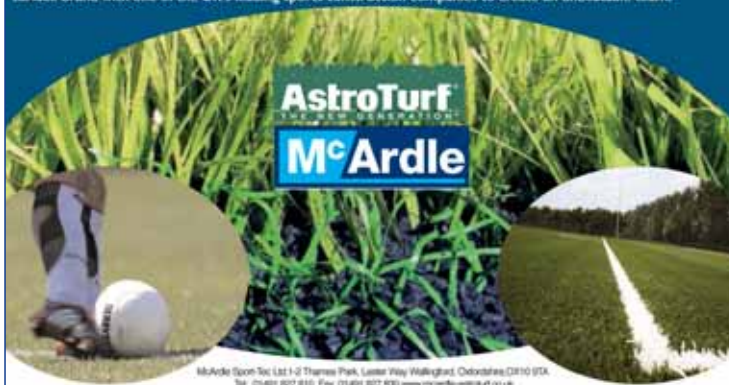
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NATURAL TURF

Maintaining Natural Sports Turf Pitches

After consultation with SAPCA members, groundsmen, NGBs and Sport England, a new code of practice for natural turf will set the standard for the industry. Colin Young reviews the document and provides insight into its production, technical content and future benefits

Natural turf sports pitches are an important and essential resource for many of the most popular sports in the UK and can therefore significantly help promote a more active lifestyle.

There are many competing pressures which impact on the funding that is available for natural turf facilities for schools and local authorities. The Sport and Play Construction Association (SAPCA) believes it is essential that well-constructed and well-maintained facilities are provided; consequently it commissioned a review of the existing documentations and subsequent drafting of a new code of practice for the Design, Construction and Maintenance of Natural Sports Turf Pitches.

These minimum design and construction standards will help to provide natural turf pitches, cricket and tennis facilities of the right quality that are sustainable, affordable and responsive to good quality maintenance. The implementation of the minimum standard will help ensure funding for facility improvement and construction work isn't unnecessarily wasted.

Natural Turf Durability

Playing fields can only accommodate a restricted amount of use while still maintaining adequate playing quality. Winter games pitches, which are well constructed, drained and maintained should be able to accommodate approximately seven hours a week of the varied type of use expected.

It should be noted that this is dependent on the pitch being of the requisite quality and receiving an appropriate level of routine maintenance. Pitches which do not meet such a standard cannot be expected to accommodate such high

levels of use and national audits have highlighted that a large majority of natural turf school pitches would need improvement in order to accommodate such levels of use.

The amount of use the pitch will be able to withstand relates to a number of variables. These are mainly:

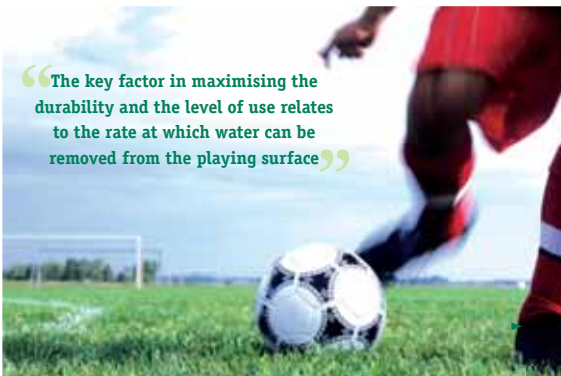
- Weather conditions before and during use
- Turf density and rooting depth
- Grass species and varieties
- If weather dependent play is required – whether it is possible to restrict pitch use during poor weather conditions
- Pitch usage pattern
- Pitch maintenance

Although a good standard of construction is required to enable seven hours per week of use to be attainable, it must be noted that an adequate and appropriate standard of construction

may not be the primary factor relating to pitch usage levels.

The key factor in maximising durability and the level of use relates to the rate at which water can be removed from the playing surface through the pitch profile, which in the majority of cases will be related to a pitch drainage system.

A playing surface which remains saturated during use will – over a very short period of time – lose turf cover and result in a muddled, smeared and uneven surface which in turn will be susceptible to compaction. If an adequate drainage system has been installed, the rate of movement of water from the pitch surface to the drainage system will, in the long-term, be related to pitch maintenance practices. If thatch is allowed to accumulate on the surface, the topsoil remains compacted, slit or band drains are not top-dressed



“The key factor in maximising the durability and the level of use relates to the rate at which water can be removed from the playing surface”

and become capped over, then the surface drainage rates will become greatly reduced, resulting in the rapid deterioration of the playing surface.

Improving Standards

SAPCA considers that it is now time for the industry to improve standards and embrace recent and future innovations, which will ultimately lead to greater British sporting facilities and success. Past problems often encountered in the design and construction of natural sports turf facilities include:

- Insufficient site assessment
- Poor and inappropriate specifications
- Poor and inadequate construction monitoring
- Poor site management
- The use of inexperienced contractors
- The use of inappropriate and/or potentially hazardous construction materials
- The construction of facilities at the wrong time of year
- The overuse and poor maintenance of new or upgraded facilities

A combination of the above factors normally results in the failure of newly constructed or improved facilities and the long lasting impact on a local community can be very disruptive.

SAPCA has begun producing the new code of practice in response to these common problems to provide industry professionals with up-to-date guidance on the basic requirements and specifications to be employed in the construction of more sustainable and easier to maintain natural turf sports facilities. It is recognised that future developments and innovations will improve standards further and it is the intention to update and improve the code of practice so that it remains relevant and useful.



The guide is primarily applicable to grassroots sports natural turf facilities

“A combination of factors could result in the failure of newly constructed or improved facilities and the long-lasting impact on a community can be disruptive”

The design and construction of natural sports turf facilities require specialist skills and expertise. Due to the site-specific nature of natural turf pitches the new code recommends that a specialist natural sports turf consultant is employed to assist with the feasibility, design, construction management and aftercare of new or upgraded facilities.

The code is prepared as a benchmark standard for the sports turf industry and the marketplace. It aims to enhance the quality of natural turf sports facilities by making information relating to sports turf facility construction more accessible. It is a guide which is primarily applicable to grassroots sports natural turf facilities

and contains recommendations for general briefing requirements and guidance on current best practice and minimum specifications.

The code has been led by the Natural Sports Turf Division of SAPCA with Jon Smith of GeoTurf as the lead author. It is currently undergoing a comprehensive peer review from experts within the industry, from key governing bodies (including Sport England, The Football Association, the Rugby Football Union and the England and Wales Cricket Board) and from leading groundsmen to ensure the document is robust and appropriate. It is anticipated this review will be finished shortly and the code published well before the end of 2009.

Once published the code will be available for download from the SAPCA website (www.sapca.org.uk). **● SAPCA has published many technical publications and codes of practice to improve the quality of sport and play infrastructure across the UK. For more information contact Dr Colin Young of SAPCA on +44 (0)24 7641 6316 or email: colin@sapca.org.uk**

CRICKET EMBRACES CONTINUOUS GROWTH

David Carpenter highlights some of the facility issues being tackled by the England and Wales Cricket Board in relation to the delivery of individual county cricket board facility strategies

As the England team gears up for another Ashes confrontation with Australia, cricket clubs throughout England and Wales are bracing themselves for a further surge in participation and increased pressure on available facilities.

The Ashes series in 2005 was the start of a remarkable increase in activity – particularly among the young. Chance to Shine, the project sponsored by the Cricket Foundation, targeting schools in conjunction with clubs, and programmes generated by the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the 39 county cricket boards, have sustained the initial impetus. Since 2005, participation at local level has risen by more than 30 per cent, with club membership also up 16 per cent. In 2008 alone, Chance to Shine coached 226,000 young people, of which 102,000 were girls, with the objective of sustaining interest through local clubs.

The brunt of this welcome increase has been felt by the 1,364 ECB-accredited focus clubs – the network of clubs minded towards further development and expansion and on which the ECB has largely focused its available resources.

Alongside this surge has come a series of issues for both existing facilities and future provision. Increased participation by young people has resulted in a greater demand for matches requiring increased use of pitches. More participants also means more practice, placing pressure on available nets and indoor training time in the winter. The ECB plans to considerably expand the women's and girls' game, not least building on the very recent success of the England Women's team winning the World Cup in Australia. This will result in further demands on playing facilities but also highlights the need in most cases to improve clubhouse and changing facilities which, traditionally, tend to be male orientated.

Facility Strategy

Building on its National Facilities Strategy, the ECB has recently been working with the County Cricket Boards to produce individual county facility strategies for the five-year period from 2009 to 2014. Working to ECB minimum quality standards, each county has undertaken a detailed audit of existing provision to determine quality and identify gaps in provision.

Bruce Cruse, ECB funding and facilities manager, says: "We've always worked closely to the priorities identified in the National Facilities Plan. There's some further work to do before all counties have fully comprehensive plans but we can now speak locally on an authoritative basis – having clearly identified need across the focus club network."

Cruse is keen to see the standard and quality of facilities steadily improve: "We



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Last year, Chance to Shine coached 226,000 young people in England and Wales, of which 102,000 were girls



clubs, however, at present, only approximately 50 per cent have any Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG) or other recognised qualification. Traditionally the 'tic' required to tend the ground has been handed down but as products, machinery, technology and health and safety issues advance rapidly in the grounds management industry, the ECB will ensure that training and education features more prominently in future.

Poor Practice Culture

Somewhat surprisingly, the average English club cricketer does not seem to pay sufficient attention to practice and this attitude is perhaps reflected in the fact that practice facilities are considered poor at more than 40 per cent of focus clubs. Poor or non-existent non-turf wickets and netting are common throughout all clubs.

For many county boards, this is a key area for attention and investment over the next five years, but to achieve both a cricket return and investment value, a change in culture is required.

A Force for Cricket

One of the most innovative programmes introduced by the ECB is NatWest Cricket Force; an annual programme that takes place during the first weekend in April. This is effectively a co-ordinated club spring clean, with associated benefits such as ECB and sponsor support, services and supplier discounts and allows the clubhouse a make-over with improvements and alterations.

Clubhouses have generally been reported as being adequate but there are still challenges ahead. In almost every county, four or five clubhouses have been deemed to need replacing, with an individual estimated cost of £350,000 upwards – a considerable bill just on its own. There are many fine examples of new provision where the club has raised funds for its existing site or indeed, until recently, taken advantage of market conditions, sold up and moved to a new, improved and often expanded site with money in the bank.

Perhaps the more pressing issue is that many existing clubhouses are outdated and most need some modernisation to meet the minimum quality standards for changing and showering facilities. The rapid development in the women's and girls' game means the clubhouse amenities will need to adapt and improve.



Main: Ryan Sidebottom at Abbeyfield Park
Sheffield npower urban cricket arena
Right: Shepperton CC Surrey
Right lower: Truro College Indoor Cricket
Centre under construction



Sustaining the Sport

One area of the audit that attracted a good deal of interest relates to the future security and sustainability of clubs. Just over one-third appear to own the freehold to their ground, a further third have leases in excess of 10 years, the final third appear far less secure – having leases to renegotiate in the near future or only being on annual licence. For the latter cases, it makes future investment almost impossible and raises questions about whether those clubs will have a long-term future in the focus club network.

Some clubs are reliant on local authority facilities where fine turf management is under increasing budgetary pressure and where innovative solutions, such as Adopt a Wicket, which is being trialled by Nottinghamshire Cricket Board, may become the order of the day. In Nottinghamshire, after the local education authority was forced to reduce its grounds maintenance budget, local focus clubs took over the responsibility at six schools in an effort to preserve and maintain cricket activity.

The positive side is that with the rapid expansion of the sport, many focus clubs have either had to find second or even third grounds, or are seeking out other local ECB-affiliated clubs, to see if some sharing of facilities and expertise is possible.

Building new partnerships

The ECB is steadily guiding the county boards towards new partnerships where facility provision is involved.

In some urban areas, such as Nottingham, Leicester and inner London, there is a lack of focus clubs, so the opportunity to play cricket is not currently at its full potential, and these are areas where demand is potentially high. Only through closer engagement with partners, such as local authorities and other development and regeneration agencies, will potential schemes come to fruition.

Similarly, indoor training provision is largely provided through educational or local authority facilities. The pattern varies from county to county and there are some excellent new examples of ECB-supported specialist facilities, including those at Truro College and Exeter University. Equally, many facilities used by clubs require improved lighting and matting, as well as new nets.

Given that many of the indoor training facilities are based at secondary schools, Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is becoming an important programme for cricket. Some county boards such as Shropshire and Staffordshire are already active at the planning stage. As the waves of BSF roll out, other counties need to positively engage.

"The ECB has recently further strengthened its funding and facilities team," Cruse explains. "So we are now better placed to take advantage of opportunities that arise and provide a more involved service to county boards and individual projects."

Rapid expansion has put pressure on the focus club network, but the ECB, the county boards and the individual clubs have risen to the challenge. ●

David Carpenter is a director of TrioPlus, which was recently appointed by the ECB to assist county cricket boards with their facility strategies. www.trioplusonline.co.uk

The funding and facilities team has steered £36m of ECB investment into new projects and developed new quality and performance standards and technical specifications

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RETRACTABLE LIGHTING

Karen Maxwell looks at telescopic lighting at sporting venues and highlights the advantages

Case Study 1: Abacus lights up cricket

Client: Two of England's historic cricket grounds, Lord's Cricket Ground in North London and the Brit Oval in Vauxhall, London, have semi-permanent telescopic floodlights to enable the venues to host one-day cricket matches late into the evening.

International Cricket Council rules stipulate that a ground hosting a Twenty20 match needs floodlights that meet both England and Wales Cricket Board standards and the requirements of broadcasters. Both venues will host games during the World Twenty20 tournament, which begins on 5 June when England meets the Netherlands at Lord's.

Design: Previously, the use of temporary floodlights caused problems for residents with lighting overspill and excess glare. These were fitted with 15 floodlights on each structure and the elevated floodlights led to high vertical overspill, which could not be adequately controlled.

The £3.7m contract will see Abacus manufacture and install four of its telescopic masts at each ground. Unique to cricket, the masts will telescope up to a height of 45m and have the ability to retract down to less than 30m when not in use to reduce their visual impact. At the end of the cricket season the 8m by 6m head frames can be removed and stored.

Equipment: The updated telescopic mast head frames have been designed to hold up to 110 2kW Challenger 3 floodlights, which incorporate precision reflector systems to ensure tight beam control, reduce overspill and direct light only where it's needed. The telescopic mid assembly is supplied complete with the multi-core electric cables so the floodlights can be managed internally using an energy chain system. This system is plug and play, to reduce the on-site wiring time. The masts are operated using a double acting hydraulic ram and can telescope up to full height in 10 minutes.



The floodlights incorporate a reflector system to ensure tight beam control, reducing overspill

Case Study 2: The Retractable Lighting Company allows for night time netball

Client: Lavant House School, a girls' day and boarding school near Chichester, wanted unobtrusive lights for its tennis and netball courts. Used primarily during evening practice and match play by school boarders and local league netball clubs, the lights are attached to the surrounding fence posts and are virtually invisible when not in use.

Equipment: Each unit has twin 500w QT-DE 12 lamps mounted on top. These compact Thorn floodlights are made from SC1 class back die-cast aluminium body with a flat glass enclosure. The luminaire is adjustable on a stirrup fixed by a single bolt through an 8mm hole. It weighs approximately 1.32kg.

Control and Maintenance: The process of raising and lowering each pole is quick and easy via a winch method. When fully extended these directional lights reach up to a height of approximately 5m and offer virtually no light spillage into the night sky or surrounding area.

The bulbs are easy to replace, the aluminium light handles won't rust, the wiring is simple and the power is supplied from the school building.



On court night lights allow for year-round sports provision

Case Study 3: Luminance Pro Lighting Systems' coin-operated lighting control

Client: Thorpe Bay Tennis Club in Southend-on-Sea had struggled to get planning permission for a four-court floodlit tennis project for 15 years, until Luminance Pro Lighting Systems engineered a design that satisfied planning requirements.

Design: The system is supported via the company's own HiLux Controller. This is a mini computer (or PLC – Programmable Logic Controller), which operates the column and lighting system and collects system usage information. When a token (coins may also be used) is inserted, the air-driven telescopic column automatically rises from 3.3m up to a height of 10m and the lights switch on for a set period of time. When the token time runs out, two out of each of the court's four lights switch off, leaving the other two lights on for a limited period to enable players to leave the court safely. The columns stay up for 30

minutes to allow for another player's token. This reduces the need for the column to move up and down unnecessarily. After this 30 minute period has elapsed the columns lower automatically. Working on compressed air makes the system almost silent in operation.

Equipment: The telescopic columns can support Thorn and HiLux sports lights and provide solutions for 400 lux or 500 lux, which are designed to meet the Lawn Tennis Association's lighting requirements.

Maintenance: The recommendation is that the columns have a simple service three times a year.



Case Study 4: Kingfisher illuminates Alexander Stadium

Client: Kingfisher Lighting recently designed, supplied and installed a £150,000 lighting system at Birmingham's Alexander Stadium – home to the Birchfield Harriers. The system allows for evening practice and adds versatility and accessibility to the venue for athletics training and competitions such as the Midland's Masters and the Aviva World Trials and UK Championships, which will be hosted in July this year.

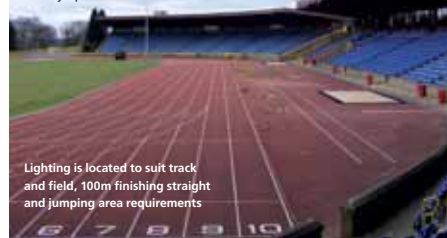
Design: The scheme involved designing two switching levels to accommodate the lighting levels for training (100 lux) and competitions (200 lux), with consideration to the individual requirements of specific areas such as track and field, the 100m finishing straight, the 100m back straight and jumping areas.

Equipment: Although not necessary retractable, the 18m-high mid-hinged mast system, is located around the perimeter of the track to minimise intrusion and a canopy lighting system is situated off the main grandstand to illuminate the 100m finishing straight.

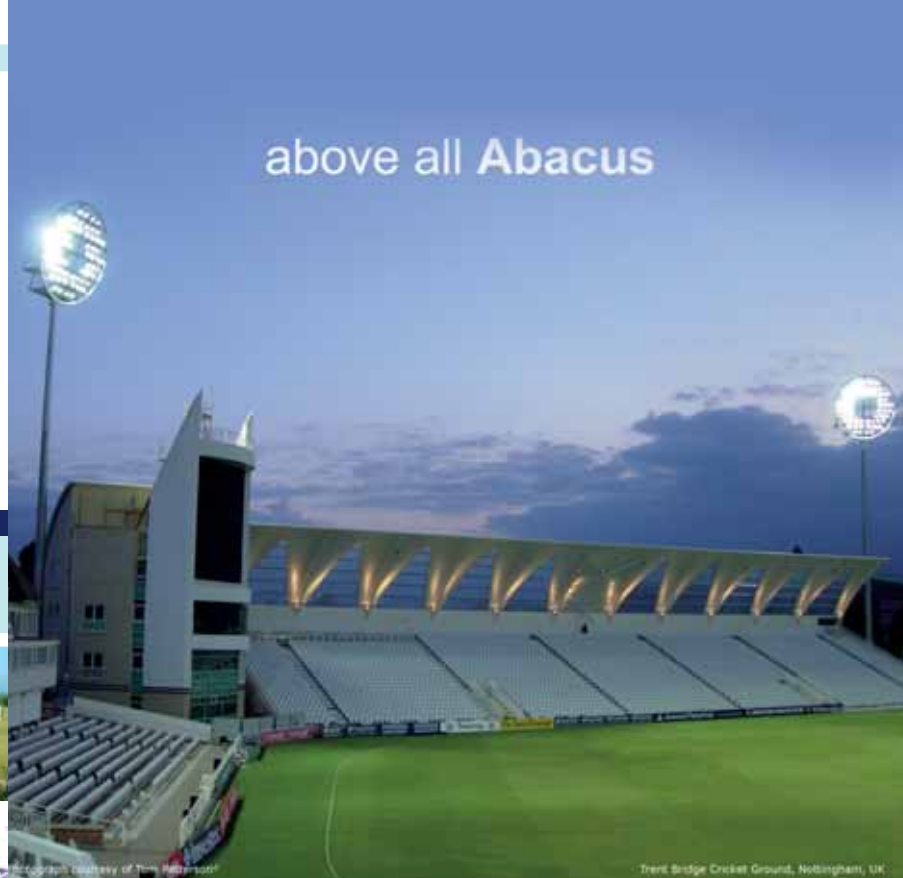
A Sport asymmetric floodlight was fitted with a 2KW long arc metal halide lamp, specified with either a narrow or a wide beam distribution. With a near flat glass working elevation and

a maximum intensity of 65 degrees, the sport floodlight balances performance with control over glare, overspill and upward light.

Maintenance: The mid-hinged mast system can be lowered to ground level by means of a manually operated winch.



Lighting is located to suit track and field, 100m finishing straight and jumping area requirements



Photograph courtesy of Tom Robinson

Trent Bridge Cricket Ground, Nottingham, UK



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MEDWAY PARK

JUDO CLUB

Karen Maxwell takes a look at this new purpose-built facility – the first phase of the £11m Medway Park regional centre of sporting excellence – and finds out why the club has already achieved Gold Clubmark accreditation



As Birmingham NIA prepares to play host to the GB World Cup for Men and Women – the biggest judo World Cup ever held in Britain – a purpose-built judo club at Medway Park has opened its doors to judo enthusiasts in North Kent – proving the sport's steady rise in popularity at both the elite and community levels since its inclusion in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games.

The newly-opened judo facility – the first phase of the ambitious £11m Medway Park development – encapsulates the ethos of the project as a sporting centre of excellence with the needs of the community at its heart.

Once completed in the spring of 2010, the full Medway Park development – which is currently under construction on the site of the Black Lion Leisure Centre – will feature a 12-court sports hall, an eight-lane athletics track, a gymnastics centre, specialist sports science and sports therapy centres and other upgraded facilities to benefit local residents and elite athletes up to and beyond the London 2012 Olympics.

“ Medway Judo Club has always offered that little bit extra – that’s what’s so special about it and why the Gold Clubmark accreditation was much deserved ”

The park has also been earmarked as an Olympic training site and will host major sporting events such as the Modern Pentathlon World Cup in 2010 and the national Butterfly Grand Prix table tennis tournament.

Purpose Built

Rainham Judo Club, renamed Medway Park Judo Club after taking residency at the new facility, brings a long history of sporting accolades and coaching expertise to its new home. Founded in 1964 by current chair and head coach Terry Malkinson, the club has attracted a cross section of members over the years; some of whom have gone on to represent the club, the county and Great Britain – helping to raise the profile of the club and the sport at a local and national level.

According to Malkinson, who is also

a technical coach for the British Judo Association (BJA), the club officials will continue to provide a safe, friendly atmosphere for local judo enthusiasts, from the clubs' new home. The club coaches will ensure that every participant has the chance to take the sport as far as they can. For some, including Medway elite athlete Sam Malkinson and Medway Project 2016 athlete Chelsey Edwards, this is to the national championships and to national squad selection.

Clubmark Status

The club's work, spanning more than 40 years, has recently been rewarded with Clubmark's Gold award – the Sport England accreditation system for recognising sports clubs that provide a safe, friendly environment, particularly for junior members. It shares this status with just four other judo clubs in the country.



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Karen French, BJA development officer for the south east, who has worked with the club for many years and helped the club attain its Bronze and Silver Clubmark awards, says that Rainham has always been one of the BJA's flagship clubs. "It's a club that has always done that bit extra. That's what's so special about it. Winning the Gold accreditation was much deserved."

According to club manager Wendy Malkinson, the club's 12 volunteer coaches and helpers worked hard towards achieving this status. "The Clubmark is a series of quality standards within the club's organisation that proves to parents that their children are in safe hands," she explains. "We have staff that are CRB checked, qualified in first aid, offered quality coaching and had the ability to work with vulnerable adults. To reach Gold standard we also had to have female coaches and a child welfare officer," Malkinson explained.

Top Facility

According to French, the old venue didn't allow for growth, but the new building took the club's needs into account during the design process and adheres to health and safety issues within the building structure.

The new facility offers a reception area where members' records can be updated and securely stored, dedicated changing rooms and toilets and plenty of storage. "Adequate storage facilities makes life much easier for the club volunteers so that when they enter the facility to prepare for a judo session they are not having to dismantle multi-purpose equipment and activity areas," French explains.

A viewing gallery also allows for a small number of spectators. Although this isn't big enough for major events, French believes that there will be scope for large judo competitions and displays to be hosted in the larger Medway Park development, once this is completed.

Regarding the flooring specification, an Awards for All £10,000 grant funded the mat area, while the club and its 150 members raised the £12,000 needed for the sprung floor, which was installed by United Flooring.

The two permanent G-MAT mats cover the whole Dojo area – leaving a metre of carpeted area around the edges for walking on. They meet the BJA's mat requirement of 40mm thickness with a density of 230kg-m3 for specific judo use and are of international standard, which allows for integration into the BJA's elite performance structure.

Karen French says: "Judo mats have to be the right density in order to take the impact out of falls, to prevent stress to



Above right: Peter Cousins, World silver medalist and Olympian. Above left: Club chair Terry Malkinson with Cllr. Howard Doe, Medway Council's Portfolio Holder

the body. Judo flooring has to be a taut surface with enough 'give' to cushion a fall and of course all members know to never walk on a judo mat with their shoes on."

Looking Ahead

In response to the government's Physical Education, School Sport and Young People (PESSYP) strategy to encourage more young people to become physically active, the BJA has launched a School 2 Dojo programme.

Designed around three strands of this strategy, the programme offers intra/inter school competition and junior volunteering through strong links with accredited judo clubs.

According to Malkinson, the 150-member Medway Judo Club is already working towards strong links with local primary and secondary schools by offering school-based, curriculum-related lessons, taster days, breakfast clubs, lunch clubs and after school activities.

"We are now building relationships with the schools local to our new premises at Medway Park to encourage children to visit the club. We've identified funding to offer free taster lessons to children who already come to the Black Lion Leisure Centre to swim, so we can extend their sport activity to the recommended target of five hours a week. In addition, we are also aiming to get adults back into activity by tying up with the local army barracks and the University of Kent to offer combined exercise programmes," Malkinson says. ●

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SPREADING THE WORD

Karen Maxwell looks at how the latest technology in timing and scoreboard equipment will measure this year's sporting performances and share the experience with audiences around the world

Seiko and the IAAF

Seiko is the main partner of this year's IAAF athletics events, which include the World Youth Championships in Bressanone, Italy; the World Athletics Championships in Berlin, Germany; the World Athletics Tour Final in Thessaloniki, Greece as well as the World Half Marathon Championships in Birmingham, UK on 11 October this year.

The Seiko Timing Computer is central to the total athletics operating system (TAOS). It connects track timing and measuring systems, manages the data and controls what is being displayed on the track-side clocks and wind-speed displays.

Two times are provided by Seiko; the unofficial time which is displayed on the TV screen and on the track-side clocks and the official time which comes from the Seiko Photo-finish system a few seconds later.

Recent technological advances include electronically controlled systems linked together in one secure network to allow the flow of data between all parts of the Seiko operation and set-up. Online links to results, TV, scoreboards and the internet



Event spectators and home viewers can see real time action

are also available to allow all participants at the venue or at home to know what is happening in real-time. Developments in scoreboard and display technology include using colour in different areas to allow for a more dynamic presentation and more data to be displayed.

The ability to track every athlete electronically via transponders is the big revolution in event timing. Active transponders now have their own power source, they are front bib mounted and time and positions are generated for athletes at more points on the course, which are transferred to TV and results in real-time via moving tickers.

Synchronised support from Daktronics

Daktronics UK supported the 21st LEN European Junior Synchronised Swimming Championships 2009 at GL1 Leisure Centre in Gloucester in April this year, where 20 teams from across Europe battled it out for the honours.

These championships are critical in the development of the junior athletes and are an important opportunity to expose British officials and volunteers to international competition as the nation prepares to host the Olympics in just over three years' time.

Supplying the PT10, this mobile and modular video wall, measuring 4m wide by 3m high, displayed instant video replay and live coverage of the event.

Constructed on a purpose-built frame, the video screen was located behind the winners' rostrum. Suspended above the video screen is the AE3140 display. This



Instant video replay at the venue

Amber Monochrome Alphanumeric screen is perfect for use within a 25m swimming pool environment as it can display the competitors' names, sequence, country and judges' scores.

Daktronics' Venus 7000 software controlled the PT10 while the broadcaster connected directly through a V-Link 4500.

All information is controlled from the OmniSport 2000 –

Daktronics's timing console – along with the Pro 2000 Interface and V1500 editing software. The V1500 controlled the display, allowing the operator to show animation, graphics, programme sequences and schedule live results.

Judges used the Daktronics JC-100 J-pad, which is capable of either wireless or wired communication back to the OmniSport 2000, so the points from each judge where calculated to show results and totals on the AE3140 scoreboard.

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Panasonic displays for indoor athletics

Panasonic was the official screen supplier at the Italian Indoor Athletics Championships and the European Indoor Athletics Championships at the Oval Lingotto in Turin, Italy earlier this year.

Approximately 550 athletes from 45 countries competed at the European Indoor Athletic Championships, which were broadcast by 33 European broadcasters and by three non-European TV stations – allowing for the promotion of athletics to young people and enhancing the sport's popularity overall.

Providing its Astrovision LED screen technology, which was also used at the 2006 Winter Olympic Games and the University Olympics in 2007, three screens were installed at the Oval Lingotto Stadium, enabling thousands of spectators to share in the athletes' emotional experiences.

Featuring variable dimensions from 12 to 28sq m and with LED technology, the screen delivered clear visibility to stadium



LED technology delivers clear visibility to stadium spectators

spectators with wide-angled, 5,000cdsq m of brightness and a dust- and waterproof performance.

Panasonic's large screen displays employ pure red, green and blue SMD/LEDs in unique pixel arrangements that can be configured in any shape or size display. Advanced image processing capabilities can generate 1.6 trillion brilliantly illuminated colours.

Hawk-Eye on tennis

Three Hawk-Eye officiating systems will be in force at this year's Wimbledon tennis tournament – one in Centre Court, another in Court No 1 and the third in Court No 2.

Each tennis system has 10 cameras positioned around the court, usually located high up in the stadium seating area. Hawk-Eye then operates the system from a control room



Hawk-Eye operators have a birds eye view of the game

within the stadium. The data from the cameras is sent via several computers to create a 3D position of where the ball landed, this is then converted into the virtual world to display an output on the big screen.

The system can add an exciting dimension to TV coverage by converting tracked data into statistical patterns to demonstrate trends, comparisons and speeds.

Working alongside TV broadcasters, Hawk-Eye provides calls that are not challenged (or close calls if the official system is not in place) and statistics to improve the overall viewing experience. The software has recently been expanded to improve the virtual image to allow a bank of graphics to assist TV commentators and producers in expressing different ideas and feedback on the game.

This ball-tracking system passed stringent International Tennis Federation (ITF) testing in accuracy, reliability and practicality. During ITF testing in 2006 – both indoor and outdoor, on all surfaces and in variable weather and light conditions – it scored 100 per cent accuracy.

Creative Technology highlights the PGA European Tour

Since the company was founded in 1986, Creative Technology (CT) has worked with sports federations, promoters and production managers on major events such as Wimbledon, the Ryder Cup, the Tour de France, the Olympic Games, the Rugby World Cup and many world championships.

CT believes its technology and expertise improves the visual experience of sports presentation, enhancing communication with the audience by allowing different aspects of the event to be viewed on the same screen.

One of the company's current contracts is a four-year agreement to run Tournament Television, an integrated scoring and information package for the PGA European Golf Tour, which includes 42 events in Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

This contract will see the company provide a real-time production system that takes in live information from a scoring and results database (provided by Unisys) and combines it with real time graphics and images for broadcasting onto large

format video screens, temporary televisions installed around the course and the clubhouse and the on-course hotel televisions.

The set-up includes the installation of up to 100 on-site televisions, while 5km of military specification fibre network runs the signal through an IPTV network in a closed ring around the entire site, with network switches at each of the key points where there is a hospitality cluster.

Whatever the display used – from CT's fully branded LED trailer screens to packaged televisions – full screen high-definition images dramatically improve the quality of the image and allow more information to be provided on screen.



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SLAZENGER S1 SERVES UP A HIT WITH SPORTS

Slazenger S1 has expanded its hypotonic sports drinks range with the introduction of a powdered format stick. Available through Aimia Foods, it is available in 31g stick sachets in raspberry and orange flavours.

These new portion-controlled sticks are quick and easy to use by simply adding 500ml of water – avoiding the need for measuring scoops, shakers and blenders. The sticks are a light-weight alternative to ready to drink sports drinks and a convenient hydration boost on the go.

Slazenger S1 is also fast becoming a regular sports drink on the major sporting event scene, following the announcement of a sponsorship deal with the England Basketball League. It was the official sports drink at last month's national Final Fours Championship at Manchester's Axa Arena Basketball Centre.



sport-kit keywords: aimia foods

LLANELLI'S GOT SOUND

Vaughan Sound Installations (VSI), in conjunction with Whitehead Building Services, has completed the supply and installation of a full public address and voice evacuation system at the recently opened home of Llanelli RFC, Parc y Scarlets.

A total of 39 R series loudspeakers have been fixed to the underside of the grandstand roof structure. The main amplification racks are located in the stadium's IT room. The audio offers clarity for speech and a wide range of music for a variety of events.

sport-kit keyword: vaughan sound

NEW JUNGLE CLIMBER FROM PLAYDALE

Developed specifically for the eight-plus age group, Playdale's new Jungle Climber range allows children to encounter risk and challenge in a natural play environment.

The design was inspired by the traditional activity of climbing trees, which helps a child's physical and mental progression. It also promotes unstructured play as it allows children to explore different routes throughout the frame. The company conducted extensive market research which confirmed a requirement for this type of product in the marketplace. There are five different configurations of the climbing unit to suit varying budgets and requirements.



sport-kit keywords: playdale

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