

SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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Beth Tweddle wins gold at the 2009 World Gymnastics Championships

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Celebrating Loughborough

This year is the centenary of Loughborough University and an opportunity for the industry to recognise and salute the amazing contribution this institution has made to the development of the sporting landscape in the UK and beyond over the last century.

It's no exaggeration to say that sport has been massively enhanced by the work done at Loughborough on so many levels, from training sports scientists, administrators and coaches to researching sport-related issues and from sharing information and best practice with sports professionals across the industry to supporting the training and development of sportsmen and women: 55 past or present Loughborough students were selected for Team GB in Beijing.

Established in 1909 as The Loughborough Technical Institute and renamed Loughborough College in 1920, the institution rapidly developed its reputation for sporting excellence and in 1966, the Charter was signed to establish a university at Loughborough as the first technological university in England and Wales. The original college remains as a further education facility offering full-time and part-time qualifications from 16 plus, with some courses endorsed by the university.

At a time when few had access to proper sports facilities, Loughborough committed to an ambitious building programme. An open air pool was built by staff and students in the 1920s, followed by an athletics stadium and student-designed sports pavilion in 1937, and the establishment of a PE department and a school of athletics in the same year. Facility investment continued with the opening of a new sports

Many national governing bodies, lobbying and research organisations are now headquartered in and around Loughborough, creating an epicentre for sporting excellence based around the university

hall with a gymnasium and state of the art swimming pool in 1939 and new gym and sports hall in 1946.

Investment has been ongoing in recent years with the opening of the Sir John Beckwith Centre for Sport, which is home to the School of Sport and Exercise Science and the Sports Development Centre, along with a new 50m swimming pool and a High Performance Athletics Centre. A National Cricket Academy opened on the campus in 2003 and the latest investment, The Sports Technology Institute, launched in 2008, taking Loughborough further into the sports technology sector, with facilities to develop cutting edge training equipment, coaching aids and clothing and footwear for elite athletes.

Decades of care in developing its infrastructure have given the university an unrivalled position in terms of its overall offer and have acted as a magnet for other sporting interests. Many sports governing bodies, lobbying and research organisations are now headquartered in and around Loughborough, creating an epicentre for sporting excellence, while national team send their

sportspeople to train at Loughborough – one example being our cover star,

Beth Tweddle, who trained at the university while in the junior GB squad.

Combining study with sport at a UK university is a difficult balancing act and many top sportspeople choose to continue their studies in the US, where the system is set up to combine elite sport with academic success.

Loughborough is one of the few places where it's possible to train at an international level via both the Loughborough Sports Scholarship Foundation programme which funds 200 athletes across a range of sports or by getting involved with the intramural programme which ensures students can continue to play sport at a high level while studying.



Liz Terry, editor liz@leisuremedia.com

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2012 community delivery



As excitement about London 2012 builds, it's frustrating that there is no workable legacy plan for community sport or the growing sports and recreation industry.

The sole focus appears to be funding the event and infrastructure, with the legacy of the Games relegated to rhetoric. Where are the innovation, management time and structures to establish sustainable outcomes that will ensure more people are more physically active in the community following 2012?

The culture surrounding the sports and recreation industry, as we prepare for 2012, is one of competition for resources and profile to take forward the objectives of our own organisations, rather than getting behind the delivery of a commonly held vision of legacy.

If we truly want our young people to take up active participation in sport and apply Olympic values to their lives, then it appears that the sports industry and volunteer community sports deliverers are going to have to do it themselves.

Organisations such as Sports Leaders UK, with 200,000 participants annually, meet real needs by encouraging inactive people to participate in sport and assisting them to develop sport in their communities. We have built a sustainable infrastructure of qualification delivery at reasonable prices that are accessible to the majority. We don't see the Games as a means of financing our activities and neither do we think it should. We should ask not what the Games can do for us, but what we can do for the Games.

Collaboration and partnership, with shared power over resources and decision making, are essential if we are to deliver a genuine legacy for London 2012.

Linda Plowright, CEO, Sports Leaders UK



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Funding to create 2,000 jobs in sport

The government has announced that it plans to create more than 2,000 jobs in the sports and active leisure sectors.

Extra funding will be channelled into the government's £1bn Future Jobs Fund, which will be delivered by the National Skills Academy (NSA).

NSA will deliver the initiative in partnership with the Youth Sport Trust, a number of national governing bodies (NGB), the Prince's Trust and the Dame Kelly Holmes Legacy Trust. Together the organisations will aim to create and support new jobs in sport, giving young people the opportunity to develop careers in coaching, leadership and sports development. Sport England is currently working with county sports partnerships and several other NGBs to examine the potential to create further opportunities through the fund.

Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Ben Bradshaw, said: "This is a big boost for community sport. These jobs will create a new generation of tal-



Young people will get to develop careers in coaching

ented sports coaches, administrators and community health workers – exactly the people who will help us deliver a lasting legacy from the London Olympics."

The Future Jobs Fund will provide funding for 150,000 posts – at least 100,000 for young people and 50,000 in unemployment hotspots. Young people

can apply for jobs through the fund after being unemployed for 10 months.

The initiative was announced as Sport England agreed to invest a further £1.38m in SkillsActive over the next two years. SkillsActive will support 46 NGBs in putting in place development programmes and delivering grassroots sport.

New leisure centre for Scunthorpe

Work is set to get underway on the construction of a new multi-million pound leisure complex in Scunthorpe, Lincolnshire, after Sport England handed the scheme a £750,000 funding boost.

Preparatory work is scheduled to start on 26 October at the site of the £21m Pods facility, which will include a 390sq m (4,198sq ft) fitness suite, a 25m swimming pool and a training pool, a dance studio and a six-court sports hall.

A crèche and a café will also form part of the complex, which will be built by Bowmer and Kirkland and will complement North Lincolnshire Council's (NLC) plans to refurbish the adjacent Central Park. London-based architects Andrew Wright Associates designed the centre.

The development of the Pods, which is scheduled to be completed in spring 2011, has also received financial support from the Yorkshire Forward regional development agency.



The new Pods centre is scheduled to open to the public in 2011

NLC cabinet member for sport, leisure and culture, Christine O'Sullivan, said: "The complex will provide very good sport and leisure opportunities for people of all abilities. It will also help us to tackle real health issues such as obesity and heart disease.

"The Pods will encourage more people to exercise – a key component of the government's health strategy."

School sport "reaches new benchmark"

More than half of all English school pupils have taken part in at least three hours of sport a week over the past year, according to new research published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF).

The government's PE and Sport Survey 2008-09 has reported that schools are offering an average of 18.6 sports as part of their PE lessons, with yoga, circus skills and cheerleading increasing in popularity. Nearly all English schools offered football and dance during the academic year, while there has been an increase in institutions offering cycling (50 per cent), golf (42 per cent) and rugby league (34 per cent).

However, the study has revealed a fall in the number of schools providing hockey, fitness, canoeing and rugby union when compared with 2007-08, although longer-term trends have remained stable.

GCCC submits stadium plans

A planning application for a £10m redevelopment of the County Ground in Bristol has been submitted by Gloucestershire County Cricket Club (GCCC) to the local authority.

Bristol City Council (BCC) will now decide whether to approve the scheme, which is designed to ensure the venue is able to comply with the England and Wales Cricket Board's (ECB) criteria for one day international status beyond 2011.

GCCC intends to increase the County Ground's seating capacity to 20,000 as part of the proposals, which also feature a new media centre, improved conference facilities, an upgraded public gymnasium and an upgraded education facility. The club is further planning to include student accommodation for 350



people in order to help fund the scheme, but has been reduced from 550 following the results of a public consultation with local residents and stakeholders.

A spokesperson for GCCC said: "These proposals are crucial to retaining our

one day international status beyond 2011 and essential for the future viability of the club. We've hosted international matches at County Ground since 1999 and we have already secured an international match for 2011.

£0.5m boost for Durham University sports revamp

Plans for the £6.7m refurbishment and development of sports facilities at Durham University's Maiden Castle centre have been handed a funding boost by Sport England.

The funding body has contributed £500,000 towards the scheme as part of its new Sustainable Facilities Fund, which aims to help establish a lasting legacy from the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Durham University's Sporting Futures project includes a new indoor rowing tank, a fencing piste, indoor cricket nets



and a performance analysis suite, as well as new facilities for disabled athletes and an extended sports hall.

The scheme, which is scheduled for completion in October 2010, is set to benefit the 90.2 per cent of university students participating in sport, as well as help the institution's community outreach work.

Emma Hall-Craggs, assistant director of community outreach, said: "We've invested heavily in staff to deliver the three strategic strands of high performance, participation and outreach."

BIRMINGHAM'S SWIMMING PROVISION HIT BY FUNDING SHORTFALL

Plans by Birmingham Council to invest in the city's swimming pool provision may be under threat – owing to financial shortcomings.

According to the *Birmingham Post*, a £73.5m shortfall could jeopardise proposals to improve Stechford Cascades, Sparkhill Baths and Moseley Road Baths and to construct the new Birmingham Aquatics and Leisure Centre.

While the council decides how best to move ahead with the £102m swimming investment programme, £28.5m will be spent on rebuilding Harborne Baths, while design preparations will go ahead at Stechford Cascades, Sparkhill Baths and Moseley Road Baths.

Cllr Mullaney told the local newspaper: "As with any investment,

money will become available as we go through this project.

"Our intention is to deliver all these pools. I know there has been speculation that we are scrapping the Aquatics Centre but that is not the case."

A public meeting will be held on 19 October to discuss the future prospects of the proposed Birmingham Aquatics and Leisure Centre.



The new sports centre will enhance the university campus

New £7.6m centre for Ulster

The University of Ulster is planning to build a £7.6m sports centre on its Coleraine campus.

Architects GM design have been commissioned to design the project, which is to be built near to existing student residences. Professor Robert Hutchinson, provost of the campus, said: "This exciting project represents the largest single investment ever on the Coleraine campus for student support.

"As well as enhancing our campus sports facilities, the new centre will facilitate widening participation and underpins the university's plan of consolidating activities at Coleraine."

The centre will offer indoor training facilities for football, Gaelic games and rugby as well as a gym and a strength and conditioning suite. There will also be facilities for basketball, martial arts and dance.



PIC: WWW.STOCKPHOTO.COM

Welsh judo centre opens in Cardiff

The new £1.1m Welsh National Judo Centre opened to the public at the Welsh Institute of Sport in Cardiff on 29 October.

Facilities at the centre, which was built by Welsh construction company Jehu Project Services, will include international competition-standard facilities as well as a sports science and medicine centre.

Philip Carling, chair of the Sports Council of Wales, said: "Having a dedicated facility for judo in Wales will make a huge difference when it comes to building up strength and depth in the sport."

£23m athletics venue planned for Cumbria

A £23m stadium is to be built at Copeland Athletics Stadium in the Hensingham suburb of Whitehaven, west Cumbria.

The new Cumbria Academy of Sport will comprise a 14,000-capacity stadium linked via a concourse to a leisure centre offering a competition swimming pool and a four-court badminton hall.

There will also be a health and fitness suite, internal and external climbing walls and two dance studios.

A shop, café and conference facilities will also be built.

The trustees of the academy have hired an as yet unnamed, Manchester-based architect to design the stadium. If the scheme is successful, the new stadium is scheduled to open within the next three years.

SE announces sustainable grants

Plymouth City Council has received a £2m grant from Sport England towards the construction costs of the city's new regional sports centre.

The funding represents a fifth of Sport England's Sustainable Facilities Fund (SSF) – a £10m pot for which Sport England received a total of 69 applications. Six other projects across the UK qualified for funding from the SSF, with a further four asked to develop their bids with the view of possibly receiving funding.

Manchester City Council and British Cycling were awarded £3m towards plans to create a National Indoor BMX Centre in Sportcity, while Nottingham Trent University will receive £700,000 towards the redevelopment of the university's sports facilities.

Durham University (£500,000), Paignton Community and Sports College (£300,000), Northrowram Community Sports and Activity Club (£175,000) and Burnage Rugby Club (£120,000)



The Life Centre in Plymouth received £2m of Sport England funding

completed the successful line up for this year's SSF funding.

Richard Lewis, chair of Sport England, said: "These investments will deliver sustainable sporting opportunities for thousands of people across the country.

"The high quality facilities supported through this fund will help us deliver a lasting Olympic and Paralympic legacy of increased participation in sport."

Trump's golf designs revealed

Gareth Hoskins Architects has unveiled the designs for Donald Trump's £1bn golf resort in Aberdeenshire, Scotland.

The Trump International – Scotland golf complex on Menie Estate near Balmedie will include two 18-hole golf courses designed by golf architect Martin Hawtree, which will be separated by a clubhouse open to guests and visitors, a caddyshack, a short-game practice area and a driving range.

Additional recreational activities will include an equestrian centre, an archery range and a tennis facility, while the accommodation offering will comprise a 450-bedroom luxury hotel with a conference centre and a beauty spa overlooking the sea, adjacent to 950 holiday apartments and golf villas.



An artist's impression of the site

A residential village based around a central square with shops, cafés, pubs and playgrounds will also be open to residents and visitors alike. In December, the scheme was granted outline planning approval by the Scottish Government following a public inquiry.

INDUSTRY COMMENT



Tim Lamb, CEO CCPR

The recent announcement by the government that it will introduce legislation to stop OFWAT's (The Water Services Regulation Authority) 'rain tax' and allow water companies to offer concessionary rates could save hundreds of sports clubs from potential closure.

Clubs in some areas have been subject to new charges which, in some cases, have increased their drainage bills by thousands of per cent. Many of these clubs have been in operation for decades, often with large grounds but small premises and they just haven't been equipped to absorb those charges. A change from rateable value of property to surface area could have forced the closure of a substantial number of these clubs.

Ultimately, this is a victory for common sense. Sports clubs are part of the fabric of all of our communities and to treat them like businesses just doesn't make any sense. They don't distribute profits, they are run by volunteers and exist purely to promote activity.

We're delighted that ministers have listened to community groups and been persuaded by their case. It would have been all too easy to sweep something like this under the carpet but they have acted swiftly and decisively to prevent our clubs from drowning.

There is further regulation burdening our sports clubs, but this move shows that lobbying does work and that it is worth working together to ensure a brighter future for sport in this country.

£31m Bolton pool project named

The £31m swimming facility to be built in Bolton has been named, just as the project has reached financial close.

The new centre, which will also boast health and academic facilities, will be known as Bolton One. The name was chosen by Bolton Council, NHS Bolton and the University of Bolton, the three organisations involved in the project.

Bolton One will house an eight-lane, 25m swimming pool with seating for 250 spectators; a therapeutic hydrotherapy pool for disabled people; a health and fitness suite; an aerobics studio and a community gym.

The scheme was developed by the BRAHM LIFT company and will be built by the Eric Wright Group. The centre will be managed by Serco.

FOOTBALL LEAGUE CHIEF ISSUES FINANCE WARNING

Football League chair Lord Mawhinney has outlined his concerns about the long-term sustainability of the domestic game, with clubs "chasing a dream" funded by wealthy owners.

Speaking at the Leaders in Football event at the Stamford Bridge stadium in London, Mawhinney told delegates that the future of football could be at risk as a result of the industry model and increasing player salaries.

According to Mawhinney, unsustainable debt rather than manageable

debt is one of the main problems football currently faces as clubs "defy economic gravity" through the financial backing of rich owners.

Mawhinney said: "As a former government minister, I have had exposure to hundreds of businesses. Very few of them were debt-free because debt is an integral part of running and growing a business. Debt is not the problem in football, unsustainable debt is."

"The pressing question is whether such a system can ever be sustainable."



Wembley Arena is London 2012 venue

Wembley Arena will be used as a venue for two sports at the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games after the Olympic Board decided against the construction of a temporary facility.

A temporary venue on North Greenwich Peninsula had been planned to host the badminton and rhythmic gymnastics events, but 2012 organisers now intend to use Wembley for the sports.

The relocation of the events are subject to approval from the sports' respective world governing bodies.



Clubs will no longer be charged excessively for watering pitches

Clubs welcome rain tax decision

The government's decision to put an end to the "rainwater tax" system of charging sports clubs and charities for water usage has been welcomed by a number of UK sports organisations. (See CCPR comment p.11)

OFWAT, the regulatory body for the water industry, introduced the method in April 2008, which forced clubs and voluntary organisations to cut back on activities due to increased water bills.

However, environment secretary Hilary Benn announced at the Labour party conference that the introduction of a social water charging system will now enable water companies to offer concessionary rates.

Brigid Simmonds, chair of the Central Council of Physical Recreation, said: "Clubs in some areas have been subject to a rain tax, which has increased their drainage bills by thousands of per cent."

Flintshire's £10m House of Sport plans cancelled

The £10m House of Sport facility being planned for Flintshire, North Wales, will not be going ahead as planned due to the current economic climate.

The original plans, as reported in *Leisure Opportunities* in April this year, involved demolishing the existing Deeside Leisure Centre and building a new facility.

However, it was revealed in a Flintshire County Council executive group meeting last month (6 Oct), that the other existing leisure centre will now simply be refurbished.

The minutes for the meeting stated: "In the context of greater financial constraints throughout the economy, it became very clear that such an option was unlikely to proceed as originally envisaged."

Rugby to benefit from energy scheme

The Rugby Football Union (RFU) and energy comparison website uSwitch.com have launched a new partnership designed to raise funds for community clubs across England.

Rugby supporters using the dedicated Conversion Zone website to switch their energy provider using uSwitch.com will be able to raise an average of £12.89 for the club of their choice.

According to the RFU, if 100 club members switch to another energy company using the service and each encourage two more people to do the same while nominating the same club, it could generate around £3,800.

Funds raised through the partnership, which will not impose an upper limit on the amount of money that an individual club can raise, will be collected and distributed by the RFU, allowing clubs to choose what to spend the money on.

RFU national clubs development manager, Andy Lees, said: "The more they



Rugby clubs will receive funding through consumer action

encourage their members and friends and family to use the Conversion Zone the more they'll gain. This can only help to ensure that clubs remain sustainable during these difficult financial times."

Steve Weller, marketing director at uSwitch.com, added: "This is a win-win situation for consumers and grassroots rugby. Consumers will raise vital funds for the clubs."

Powerleague sold for £42m



Claude Littner (left), executive chair of Powerleague

Powerleague, the UK's largest five-a-side football operator, has agreed to a £42m takeover offer.

The company, which owns 43 centres nationwide, is being acquired by Patron Sports Leisure – a division of private equity group Patron Capital – which, with a 29 per cent stake, is already Powerleague's biggest shareholder.

Executive chair, Claude Littner, will receive £2.6m for his 6.1 per cent stake. Powerleague was formed in 1999 following the merger of Powerplay Soccer Centres and Anchor International, both investee companies of the 3i Group.

New centre for Ryedale

Construction of a new sports centre in the grounds of Malton School in Central Ryedale will get underway at the beginning of next year.

The £2.4m facility will comprise a four-court badminton hall, a basketball court, a climbing wall and a third-generation

Astroturf pitch when it opens in September 2010.

Funding is being provided by Ryedale District Council, North Yorkshire County Council, Malton School and Derwent Sports Association.

The Football Foundation is yet to decide whether to award £400,000 towards the scheme.

WORK STARTS ON BASILDON VILLAGE

Construction work has got underway at the site of the new £38m Basildon Sporting Village in Essex, which will boast the county's first Olympic-sized swimming pool when complete.

Community Solutions for Leisure (CSL) has been appointed to deliver the complex, which is included in the Pre-Games Training Camp guide for the London 2012 Olympics and is scheduled to open in 2011.

The new sporting village, which will be built by CSL's construction partner, Morgan Ashurst, will include a competition swimming pool, a 400-capacity spectator area, a learner pool, a sports hall, a gymnastics centre and a 100-station health and fitness club. Meeting rooms, a climbing wall, a café and six floodlit artificial turf pitches are also included in the proposals, along with a new 750-seat spectator stand.



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BRITISH CYCLING REPRESENTED ON UCI

The president of British Cycling, Brian Cookson OBE, was recently appointed to the International Cycling Union (UCI) Management Committee at its annual conference in Switzerland.

One of eight nominees for the position, he will now sit on the committee for the next four years.

Commenting on his appointment Cookson said: "This shows how highly regarded British Cycling is at the highest level of the sport and I look forward to developing cycling at home and abroad."

Cookson has been involved in cycling for over 40 years, first as a competitor, then as a volunteer and administrator.



JOHN CROWTHER IS NEW ASA CHAIR

John Crowther has been appointed as the new chair of the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA).

A former chief executive and main board director of the Lawn Tennis Association, as well as a member of the National Olympic Committee at the British Olympic Association, Crowther will also be able to draw on his voluntary experience with Sports Leaders, the England and Wales Cricket Board, North Yorkshire Sport Board and the Central Council for Physical Recreation.

He has a strong background in both sport and commerce in his consultative role at Sport Ambition.

Holmes named Paralympic director

Chris Holmes MBE has been named as the new director of Paralympic Integration.

Having had a distinguished career as a Paralympic swimmer – winning nine Paralympic gold medals, six at the Barcelona Games in 1992 – Holmes will lead on all aspects of London's 2012 planning and organisation for the Games.

Currently patron of the Help for Heroes charity and the British Paralympic Association, he's been on the board of UK Sport since 2005 and was a commissioner on the board of the Disability Rights Commission from 2000-07.



REDGRAVE BECOMES 2012 CHAMPION

Five-times gold medal winner Sir Steve Redgrave has been appointed as the government's 2012 Sports Champion to help drive participation in sport during the run up to the London Olympics.

Commenting on the government's target to get one million adults playing more sport and get young people doing five hours of sport per week inside and outside school, Redgrave said: "2012 is a once in a lifetime chance to change the habits of a nation."

He will be supported in the role by six other medallists, already working as school sports ambassadors. These include sprinters Darren Campbell and

Jason Gardener, heptathlete Denise Lewis, Paralympian Sascha Kindred (swimming), Gail Emms (badminton) and Joe Glanfield (sailing).

● Meanwhile, Michael Williams was recently re-elected as a member of the executive committee and treasurer of the International Rowing Federation.

He coxed the winning Cambridge crew to victory in 1973 and has been active within the sport for over 30 years.

Di Ellis CBE, chair of the Amateur Rowing Association said: "Mike's appointment maintains our aim to retain postholders of the highest calibre who can voice British standards at an international level."

SAPCA UPDATE



Next stop Twickenham

SAPCA's next Sports Facility Construction Exhibition and Seminar will take place at Twickenham Stadium on Tuesday 24 November.

This one-day event is supported by Sport England and comprises a series of informative and educational seminars accompanied by an exhibition featuring the leading constructors of sports facilities, suppliers of related products and services, as well as professional consultants offering expert advice on sports facility projects.

The event focuses on the provision of spaces for PE and sport within the educational sector, in particular the Building Schools for the Future programme.

The seminar programme will include:

- National sports facility strategy
- Building Schools for the Future – the importance of high quality facilities
- Designing spaces for PE and sport in a 21st century school
- Sports project funding
- Design and construction of outdoor synthetic sports facilities
- Choosing the right sports surface – current standards
- Design, construction and maintenance of natural turf pitches
- Options for indoor sports structures and surfaces
- Outdoor sports floodlighting
- London 2012 – sports facilities update

To ensure admission please register for the event in advance. To register online visit www.sapca.org.uk or telephone SAPCA on +44 (0)24 7641 6316.

NVQ Level 3 approval

SAPCA's educational programme received a welcome boost recently with the news that the industry's Level 3 National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) has been formally approved.

The qualification follows on from the Level 2 NVQ that was launched just one year ago – some 80 candidates from the industry have qualified already.

Both NVQs are designed for site operatives, recognising and rewarding competency in key skills. The qualifications are based on workplace assessment and are delivered by the industry's National Training Centre at South Birmingham College.

The Level 2 NVQ follows the installation of surfaces up to base construction, whereas the Level 3 qualification focuses on the installation and maintenance of specific surface types and site supervisory skills.

The mandatory management units help delegates to manage their own resources and professional development, provide leadership, allocate and moni-

tor the progress and quality of work and ensure health and safety requirements in their area of responsibility.

Optional technical units of the course include the installation and maintenance of artificial grass surfaces for sport, polymeric surfaces for sport and play, acrylic surfaces for sport, macadam surfaces and coatings for sport and play, natural grass surfaces for sport and equipment for sport and play.

Water management research

SAPCA's water management research project with Loughborough University officially started in October.

Peter Richards has been employed by the university to undertake the research, he has a BSc and MSc and several years' industrial experience in related fields. SAPCA will continue to disseminate the findings of the research as the project progresses.

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Michal Krejza

Karen Maxwell talks to the head of the Sport Unit at the EU about the current issues that affect European and, more specifically, UK sport



Assuming the Lisbon Treaty comes into force next year, Michal Krejza believes that the Commission's Sport Unit will be extending its role in representing the interests of sport stakeholders in EU policy-making within the European Commission. "There are several wider issues that affect sport in Europe and specifically in the UK and the unit takes its role as the 'first point of call' very seriously," he says.

Currently the only head of unit in the Commission whose team focuses solely on sport, Krejza leads and co-ordinates a team of 12 dedicated people from different European countries and cultures. "We're the sports people who provide the Commission with the necessary expertise on sport issues," he explains.

A Dutch lawyer of Czech origin, Krejza was appointed head of the Commission's Sport Unit in 2006. Having worked at the European Commission throughout the 1990s, he gained experience in a wide range of EU legislation – from trade, internal market and competition to border management, transport, health and education – while he assisted potential future Central and Eastern European member states such as the

Czech Republic, Estonia, Croatia, Macedonia and Kosovo in transforming their economies and societies.

"At EU level, sport is a cross-sectoral field touching upon aspects of many different policy areas, such as free movement of people, competition, health, education, social integration, and media rights," Krejza explains.

This diversity is reflected in the first major EU policy document on sport, the *White Paper on Sport* adopted in 2007, which Krejza himself prepared.

White Paper on Sport

Detailed within the White Paper, Krejza's team made it clear that the role of the European Commission in sport was not to replace the member states, nor to regulate the activity of sport organisations. "The role of the Commission is not to support the views of one sport organisation against others, nor to award to a sport organisation the right to regulate sport without due respect of EU law," he explains.

"Member states approach sport in many different ways. In some countries sport is regulated by law, in others organised sport is autonomous with little or no governmental intervention. We

respect those different approaches and respect the autonomy of sport organisations to run their own affairs.

When we decided to draft the White Paper we listened to everyone who had a say in sport. The White Paper created a useful and pragmatic framework for our present and future activities. We took a commitment to implement 53 concrete actions in a timeframe of five years and more than two-thirds of the actions have been or are about to be completed.

Krejza says that the main challenge, following the Lisbon Treaty, will be to identify areas where the sport unit can help sport by contributing something that member states and sport organisations could not, or not so easily, do on their own.

"We need to build on the diversity of European sport to co-operate and exchange best practice," he says. "This year we've offered a series of grants in order to pilot larger future actions to finance projects in the field of sport. We're selecting projects in the areas of health, disability, education and training, and gender equality and I can tell you that we are delighted with the number and the quality of the proposals."



The sport unit attaches great importance to grassroots funding for European sport

Sporting Issues in Europe

Sustainable financing of sport and the protection of sport organisers' rights – especially in relation to sports betting – are prominent issues on the current EU agenda and the relationship between sport and internal market rules on free movement of labour has attracted a great deal of recent attention.

"One of the biggest successes of European integration is the fact that EU citizens working in member states other than their own have the same rights as the citizens of that member state," Krejza explains. "However, I find it surprising that some sport organisations find it hard to accept this fundamental right, which functions well in every other socio-economic sphere and is greatly appreciated by EU citizens," he adds. "When sport organisations have rules that create direct discrimination between EU citizens based on nationality, it is the Commission's duty to take action in order to safeguard the rights of those citizens."

With regard to the topic of licensing systems for club competitions, Krejza says that the Commission organised a well-attended conference in Brussels in September this year. The event gathered

representatives of team sports federations, leagues, clubs, players and supporters with an interest in licensing systems. "This conference was a good opportunity for participants to exchange views and share best practice in this area," he says. "The concept of Financial Fair Play in football, approved only two days before the beginning of the conference by UEFA's executive committee, was extensively debated

“Robust licensing systems promote good governance in sport, as long as they comply with EU competition and internal market rules”

at the conference. Financial discipline is a key element of licensing systems, both as a tool to ensure that no club drops out of a competition for financial reasons and to promote financial fairness among clubs participating in the same competition. Robust licensing systems are a good tool to promote good governance in sport, as long as they comply with EU competition and internal market rules.”


EU Studies

The EU is currently involved in studies on sports agents, grassroots funding, volunteering and non-nationals in sport.

"The study on sports agents is almost finished and will be available by the beginning of next year," he explains. "This will provide an in-depth view of the issues raised by the activity of sport agents throughout the EU, including their economic and social importance, the applicable legal framework at national level, and the relationship between the activity of sport agents and the EU regulatory framework."

"Grassroots funding for sport is another matter to which we attach great importance, considering that local structures form the basis for the whole sport system in Europe," he says. "We see that economic developments impact on the financing of sport in all the member states and this is all the more true in the current economic recession, which puts additional constraints on sport funding."

"Regarding financing sport, such as developments in the field of gambling, we addressed some of the challenges relating to this issue in our White Paper – highlighting the need for more in-depth review on how to ensure sustainable



The unit will build on the diversity of European sport to help exchange best practice

- funding of grassroots sport in Europe. We committed to contributing to these reflections by launching an EU study. The outcomes at the end of next year should be useful perspectives to further shape the Commission's approach in EU policy areas that affect sport finance."

An Equal Footing

The tender for a study on equal treatment of non-nationals was launched in July 2009 and Krejza's team is in the process of evaluating several offers.

"This study will map the situation concerning discrimination on grounds of nationality relating to access to individual sport competitions in the European Union," Krejza explains.

"My unit receives frequent complaints from EU citizens who live in a member state other than their own and who cannot, for that reason, participate in competitions in individual sports such as swimming or horse-riding. In view of the link between such competitions and regional or national championship titles, this is a tricky subject from an EU perspective. The study will hopefully put forward suggestions for possible solutions that comply with community law and provide an appropriate response to the problems posed by the discriminatory measures identified."

Volunteering in Sport

Acknowledging that volunteering needs greater attention in EU policy-making in view of the benefits for society in terms of cohesion, democracy and citizenship, and also because of its inherent economic value, Krejza says that there's a lack of good and comparable information on this sector at EU level. "We decided to launch a study on

volunteering, including a sector study on volunteering in sport. The specific focus on sport was important because there are structural differences compared with other sectors that we wish to take into account. The study is making good progress and I'm confident that the results and recommendations will help us to launch projects in the field of volunteering in sport in 2010," he says.

“Sustainable funding for sport will remain a top priority when we further develop an EU policy dimension in sport”

European Funding Streams for Sport

According to Krejza, until the Lisbon Treaty comes into force, obtaining financial support for projects related to sport is still very limited at European level. However sport-related projects can sometimes be eligible under the framework of EU programmes established to support other policies – such as regional policy, social affairs, public health, youth, education, civil society and equal opportunities.

If the Lisbon Treaty is adopted, an EU Sport Programme could be used as a tool to provide financial support for

projects specifically related to sport. In the meantime, and in anticipation of the ratification of the Lisbon Treaty, the Sport Unit is implementing a provisional funding instrument, the 'Preparatory Action in the field of sport'.

"The main objective of the Preparatory Action is to lay the ground for future EU sports measures in view of the EU sport competence foreseen in the Lisbon Treaty," Krejza explains. "The aim is to provide policy support and identify future policy actions and test the establishment and functioning of suitable networks and good practices."

"We launched the first call for proposals in May this year and the selected projects will run between December 2009 and March 2011. However, I wish to stress that a preparatory action has, by definition, a very modest budget. We had €4m (£3.6m) available for the first call for proposals in health-enhancing physical activity, education and training, disability sport and gender equality in sport. However, the value of the submitted projects was more than 10 times higher."

"Contributing to the review of sustainable funding for sport will remain a top priority for the work of my team when we further develop an EU policy dimension in sport." ●

To view the Sport Unit's studies and projects in more detail, visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/sport>



John Goodbody reports on

Developing a nation through sport

The success of Rio de Janeiro in being selected to host the FIFA World Cup in 2014 and the Summer Olympics in 2016 may have set a template for future bids for the two biggest international sports events.

Developing countries are heartened by the decisions and will now consider, with new optimism, whether to try to stage these competitions. South Africa, still in the throes of emerging from the years of apartheid, will put on the football World Cup next year, and may think about a bid for the 2020 Summer Olympics. After all, one of Rio's selling points for 2016 was that South America had never staged the event. Well, nor has Africa, and with the International Olympic Committee (IOC) committed to extending even further its global reach, this is a candidate which it would particularly welcome.

What was raised at the recent Global Sports Industry Congress in London, was the belief that sports governing bodies – especially the IOC, with its specific social commitment, were happy to sign up to the desire of countries bidding for leading competitions to use those events as a way of developing a nation.

Jon Tibbs, whose company JTA worked with Beijing to get the 2008 Summer Olympics and Sochi to get the 2014 Winter Games, believes that following the success of Rio, more countries will want a piece of the cake and are coming out of the woodwork for 2020. He says from his experience of working with Sochi that “the Russians viewed the Olympics as part of a 10-year strategy for a new Russia. They believed that what is needed to put on an Olympics is so demanding that it would act as an example of best practice for Russia to follow.”

Two particular tenets of the Olympic Movement are to encourage disabled sports and support volunteerism. Tibbs says the Russians were aware that the



“Countries are bidding for leading competitions to use those events as a way of developing a nation”

disabled in their country “were not treated as well as they could be,” and the Games could act as an example for the Russians on accessibility and treatment and also on participation. Volunteerism was “not something that fits naturally with the Russians” and that at the Games, with the thousands of volunteers needed “this new attitude would spread across the nation.”

Sir Craig Reddie, the British IOC member who played a key role in London getting the 2012 Games, points to the increasing social role of the IOC being recently confirmed by it's being awarded observer status at the United Nations.

In its famous final presentation in Singapore, London emphasised the importance of engaging with the youth of the world and Rio continued this theme by highlighting the large number of young people in South America, who could be captivated by hosting the Olympic Games in their region.

Reddie, recently elected to the IOC Executive Board, its inner cabinet, accepted that there was some evidence that more leading events were going to

emerging nations, citing the 2010 Commonwealth Games in India as another example. He also said that the decision to restrict the size of the Games further helped the emerging countries, as the number of competitors and officials would be well-known in advance.

The IOC is keen to see that no ‘white elephants’, particularly unused stadia, are left behind after staging the Games and also that there is a tangible legacy which renews interest in Olympic sport and offers an after-life of improved infrastructure and quality of life.

Many cities bidding for the Games have been prepared not to hide their political and social weaknesses, but instead confront them. Tibbs says that in the run-up to the 2001 vote when Beijing was attempting to get the 2008 Games, it had to confront the challenges of media and individual freedom. He recalls: “Originally it went along with the line that sport and politics don't mix but it was persuaded that the Games would force the authorities to address them and they would improve. The Olympics can and should be a force for good.”



Sports Management asks: How many 50m pools do we need?

Although there are weekly reports of swimming pool closures, there's been a definite increase in the development of 50m swimming pools in recent years.

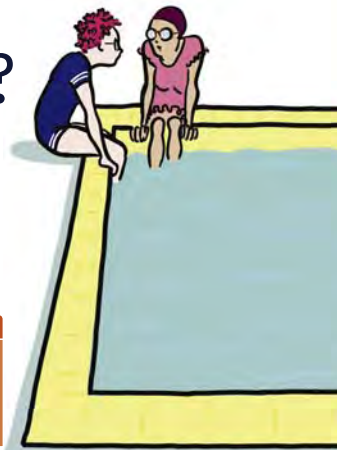
This extended pool size certainly fits the elite training brief for the world's major swimming events – such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games, World Championships,

Commonwealth Games and European Championships – but how does the use of 50m compare to the standard 25m pools at community level and what about the underlying risks and associated affordability?

We ask four industry experts whether 50m pools are the best way to service both elite as well as local needs and how many more pools of this size are actually needed.

Swimming Facts

Throughout the UK, almost 12 million people of all ages and abilities enjoy swimming regularly, whether for fun, fitness or competition. According to Sport England's Active People Survey 2, swimming remains the highest participation sport with a total of 3.24 million adults taking part at a 'moderate intensity for 30 minutes or more' at least once a week.



KEITH ASHTON CHIEF EXECUTIVE, S&P ARCHITECTS



National strategy, facility consolidation, needs analysis, demand modelling and political will often conflict when considering the development of a 50m pool over a 25m pool. In addition to these issues there is the underlying question of risk and associated affordability.

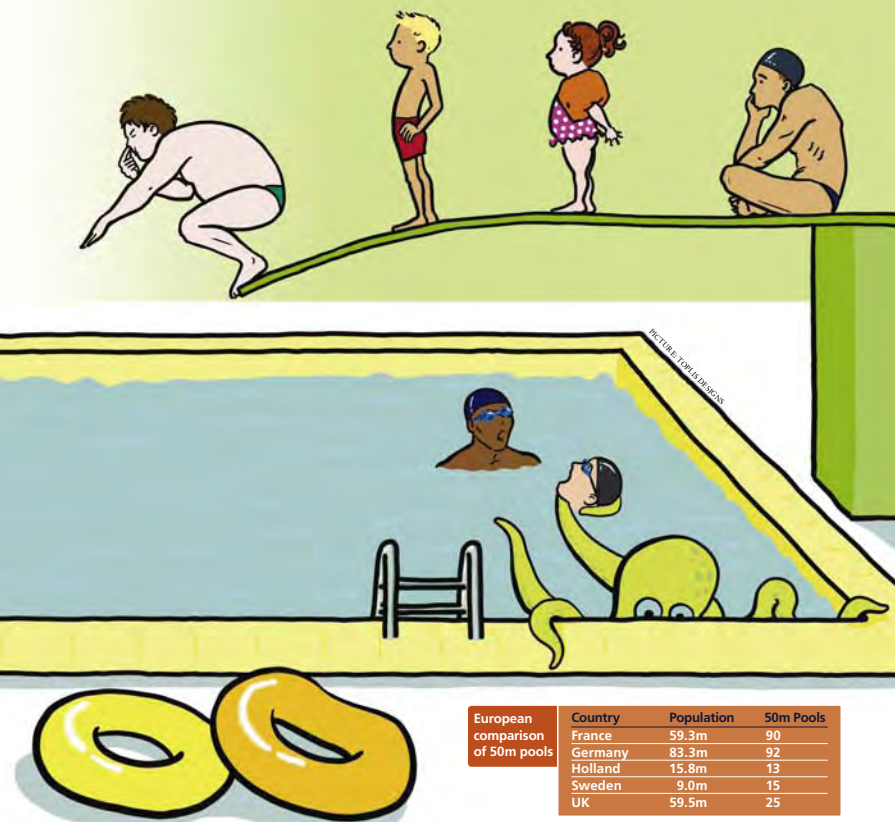
"They're far too expensive to run" is often heard. True, and the rise in energy costs has not helped, however, local authorities now need to assess development based on comparative whole life costs and this is where 50m pools can win the economic argument.

There is a misconception that 50m pools cost twice as much as 25m pools to run. Staffing levels are actually similar and energy costs are only up by 50 per cent rather than doubled. In fact excluding revenues the actual (whole life) running cost of a 50m pool with associated development over a 30-year period is circa £10m, a 25m pool would be £7.5m. The difference in revenues would more than cover this difference. With more than one million visits a year, Crawley's 50m pool facility, K2,

is the exemplar. Efficiencies of scale in design, construction and operational flexibility, linked to technical improvements in insulation, heating, ventilation and water treatment all help to turn economic deficit into a position of being cash positive with the replacement of the existing pool.

When measuring economic and environmental sustainability and capacity for social participation, a regional flagship 50m pool development coupled with consolidated local community 25m swimming provision provides an excellent and balanced solution. People will travel greater distances to the 50m pool and the flexibility of its configuration will mean that full programming of the space is achievable. The local community provision can be scoped appropriately to the local need.

With 2012 motivating participation; prudential borrowing at its lowest level; keen tender pricing in the construction market; improved availability of relevant expertise from operators, architects, the ASA and Sport England and a need to consolidate swimming provision and offer economic efficiencies across leisure provision, there's never been a better time to invest in a consolidated swimming pool strategy with a 50m pool at its heart.



European
comparison
of 50m pools

Country	Population	50m Pools
France	59.3m	90
Germany	83.3m	92
Holland	15.8m	13
Sweden	9.0m	15
UK	59.5m	25

CHARLES JOHNSTON DIRECTOR OF PROPERTY, SPORT ENGLAND



As the country's most popular participation sport, swimming plays a big role in the nation's sporting life.

Sport England works closely with local councils and other public sector agencies to help them strategically plan how to best meet the swimming needs of their communities. A key part of this support is our Facilities Improvement Service, which uses our Active Places database and Active People Survey to help councils understand local sporting demand, map current provision and plan for the future.

In some cases, a 50m pool may be the best way to serve local needs, but we always recommend moveable booms and

floors to allow the pool to be split in two, giving flexibility for both community and elite use. Some 50 local authorities have already taken advantage of this service in developing robust local sport strategies, including Birmingham, Bristol and Plymouth councils – all of which now have 50m pools progressing through planning. Sport England is also investing £40m in the two Olympic pools to secure a lasting legacy.

I believe that the picture of 50m pools in England is an improving one. Swimming in this country has a promising future; the government's free swimming scheme is in full swing and the ASA, with our backing, is driving improvements in the sport. I believe the sport is well placed to get even more people swimming regularly in a world-leading community sport system.

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DAVID SPARKES CHIEF EXECUTIVE, AMATEUR SWIMMING ASSOCIATION (ASA)



We need 50m pools not just because they are a great option for competition or training but because, thanks to moving floors and booms, they are a cost effective solution to water provision in some communities.

A flexible 50m pool can drive up participation and can be the right solution with lower capital and revenue costs than a series of local 25m pools.

This country has many examples of where modern 50m pools serve their communities well. The facilities at Stockport, Manchester and Cardiff offer three excellent examples of well-managed 50m pools that have driven up community swimming in an effective way.

If we want to see more Rebecca Adlington's we should be looking to build more 50m pools. Athletes enjoy competing and training in these pools and it puts them on a level footing with their competitors on the international circuit. The real winner however, is the community.

Pool providers are often reticent to invest in the development of new 50m pools. They think they are for elite swimmers and unsuited to the needs of the community, but the design of public 50m pools in this country has always been based upon meeting the needs of the community, from learn to swim through to recreational swimming for all ages and abilities.

There is no doubt 50m pools are a realistic option for some communities and the ASA has stated in our strategy that we want to see a minimum of 33 50m pools in England by 2013.

TERRY DENISON CHAIR, BRITISH SWIM COACHES' AND TEACHERS' ASSOCIATION (BSCTA)



There's no doubt that the growth of 50m pools in Britain over the past few years has contributed to the success of our swimmers at world level.

In the 2000 Sydney Olympic Games, when we had eight 50m pools available for training purposes, we were not on the medal table. In 2008, with 20-plus 50m

pools available, we gained six Olympic medals, which contributed to Great Britain being placed third in the overall medal table at the 2008 Beijing Olympic Games.

In order to help our young swimmers realise their full potential on the world stage, we need to make community access to 50m pools increasingly available. As the sport achieves more recognition from international success it will inspire more young people to emulate their heroes, encourage them into

regular training and provide the best opportunities for the talented ones. However, the value of the 50m pool doesn't just lie in the realm of competitive swimming. Fifty metre pools with two booms can provide greater flexibility by allowing three different swim activities to take place in the same building at the same time. Different user groups can then be catered for without impeding on one another or lessening the quality of experience of each group.

Thanks to the help of lottery funding and the foresight of local councils, the UK's stock of 50m pools has risen in recent years but we are still a long way behind our major competitors and there are many areas of our country where access to a 50m pool requires long journey times. There is clearly a need to continue with the present process of growth and to encourage every city in Britain to make a 50m pool facility available to its citizens.

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Jon Hurdle – Club support Manager – David Lloyd Centre, Woking



GROWING THE GRASSROOTS

Since its recent restructure, the British Fencing Association has created a sustainable pathway for participants of all ages and abilities to enter the sport and stay with it

FENCING

Although fencing is among the oldest recorded sports and steeped in history and tradition, it is also one of the most modern and technically innovative, with a wide participation age range. Currently, the oldest active member of the British Fencing Association (BFA) is 92 and still fences once a week. At the other end of the age scale, a child can start fencing as soon as the coach thinks he or she can cope – which is often as young as six years old.

History

The BFA, or the Amateur Fencing Association (AFA) as it was known 100 years ago, started life as a sub-committee of the Amateur Gymnastics Association. The first fencing championships at foil and sabre took place in 1898 and épée was added later. In 1900 the fencers and gymnasts decided to go their separate

ways and in 1902 the AFA held its first general meeting with Captain Hutton elected president.

Lord Desborough, the first president of the British Olympic Association and organiser of the 1908 London Olympic Games, was another early AFA president and fenced in the 1906 Interim Olympics. Other well-known fencers include Winston Churchill, who was a schoolboy champion and competed at the Royal Tournament and Bruce Dickinson – an airline pilot and lead singer of heavy metal group Iron Maiden.

An official sport at every Olympic Games since 1896, fencing is a sport where agility and stamina are more important than sheer strength and allows men and women to compete in all three disciplines. Competitions are organised at all levels in both team and individual events. However, when women's sabre was added to the Olympic schedule the

International Olympic Committee stuck to just 10 sets of fencing medals, which means that two events are omitted at each Games in rotation. The BFA continues to campaign for the full 12 events to be reinstated.

Restructure

The last few years have seen root and branch changes in the organisation, presentation and accessibility of the sport – both domestically and internationally.

Children now have the option to learn with a realistic foam and plastic kit when they first take up the sport, while elite



“The development strategy extends beyond 2020, using London 2012 as a springboard rather than an end in itself,”

Left and bottom left:
Two sabre fencers at this year's
National Championships held
at the English Institute of Sport
in Sheffield

Right: Ed Jeffries (left) compet-
ing at the 2008 Eden Cup

Below: A taster session at the
National Championships

PHOTO: GRAHAM MORRISON



CASE STUDY: Samworth Church Academy, Mansfield

In one academic year (2008/09) and with help from the BFA and England Fencing, the newly-established Samworth Church Academy in Mansfield has found fencing to be a popular addition to its activities. The school made a substantial investment in equipment and employs a coach one day a week to offer fencing programmes for pupils in years 10 and 11 (as a GCSE PE module).

School staff and sixth form pupils can also get involved and local primary schools send classes to the academy to participate in five or six week mini-courses each half of a term. A lunchtime club for year seven pupils has been added, as well as an after school club which is open to all age groups.

Samworth has also found success when competing in school mini-fence tournaments and intra school competitions. Simon Fletcher, who counts head of sport among his school responsibilities, is upbeat and enthusiastic: "Given our catchment area, our students would never have had exposure to fencing. The sport's presence in our school is now part of an important strategy to make a difference both in the school and in the wider community."

On the back of this, Fletcher hopes to provide something new in Mansfield; he wants to start a fencing community club for pupils and parents.

fencing presents a television-friendly spectacle with video-assisted refereeing, precise timetables for bouts and superb event presentation.

After his election to BFA president in 2000, Keith Smith has overhauled the infrastructure of the national governing body (NGB) by creating a management group that is answerable to the BFA board. During this restructure, the responsibilities of the BFA and the four home countries were also clearly defined and delineated.

The retirement of the BFA general secretary, Gillian Kenneally, 15 months ago provided an opportunity to change the management emphasis and Piers Martin was appointed to the newly-created post of chief executive officer. The appointment of Ben Campion as national development manager in July this year has completed the NGB's reorganisation.

While the elite group of fencers on the 2012 Olympic Pathway programme are overseen by Graham Watts, the BFA performance director, Piers Martin has addressed the essential task of designing

the overall development strategy towards 2020 and beyond – recognising the London Olympics as a springboard rather than an end in itself.

Sustainable Pathway for Kids

With the 2012 London Olympic Games in sight, the five-hour weekly activity target in English state education (two curriculum hours matched by three hours out of school), has meant that the School Sports Partnerships (SSP) have needed the co-operation of a wide range of sporting bodies and fencing is well suited to this initiative.

The sport has developed a sustainable pathway strategy using the mini-fencing foam or plastic swords and masks as a simple low-cost introduction for primary school participants aged seven and eight. In collaboration with the Youth Sports Trust, the BFA and England Fencing has produced a national framework and plan for school competition.

Following work with competition and development managers, fencing competition formats have now been trialed so

that a regional school-based event can take place in just two hours.

The enthusiasm generated at key stages one and two in primary education can be built upon at secondary key stage three with the introduction of standard metal equipment, at which point either local clubs or coaches provide the kit, or the schools or local authority fund the purchase. One such example is Fence Cornwall – a project started by a small group of enthusiasts who took taster programmes to the county secondary schools. This project resulted in thriving after-school clubs across the county, together with a significant increase in participation among all age groups.

Historically, schools have been an important introductory vehicle for the sport and high performers have been catered for by age-group championships with categories for the under-12s, 14s, 16s and 18s with entry to the finals through regional competitions. These are the British Youth Championships and run parallel to the cadet (under 17s) and junior (under 20s) events.

“ The challenge is to convert spectators and casual participants into regular fencers, club members and volunteers ”



A taster session with foam/plastic swords can encourage kids to work up towards elite level

rectify this; it uses a range of measures, including athletic, technical, psychological and competitiveness to assess potential and assist development.

As well as identifying athletes, the model is also designed to help club coaches, parents and volunteers – all of whom can access in training and education – giving the athlete the best possible environment to succeed.

Competition

So how can keen, young fencers move up the ladder towards international success? Last month saw Britain's leading annual junior event, the Eden Cup foil international take place at Whitgift School, Croydon. The event, which was founded by South London businessman Joe Eden in the 1960s, is the UK round of the Junior World Cup and counts toward international ranking points. Earlier this year, Belfast hosted the World Junior Championships, which saw Britain's Ed Jefferies win silver. Then there's the UK School Games, in which fencing is an integral sport within the national programme.

At this level, fencers usually aspire to enter one of the elite programmes, be it the Talented Athlete Scholarship

Scheme or the World Class Performance Programme – both of which are fully structured and managed to produce international, world and Olympic success. BFA's stated aim is to win one medal at the London 2012 Olympics.

Promoting the Sport

In order to promote the sport to the general public, a structured approach is currently being proposed. This is based on evidence, market information and targeted advertising, which is especially important for the public perception and image of the sport.

As well as the well-trodden media routes, partnerships with leisure operators and holiday operators also offer opportunities. Fencing demonstrations in public areas – such as the Science Museum, supporting their Technology in Sport exhibition and at the Victoria and Albert Museum supporting a Regency evening – has shown fencing to be popular with spectators when well presented.

The challenge is to convert spectators and casual participants into regular fencers, club members and volunteers.

Winning a medal at the London Olympics would bring a boost in participation, but popularity could wane as the medal memory fades. Winning members in the longer term is the challenge to which the BFA's new modernised structures and management is squaring up. ●

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The Design and Construction of Natural Sportsturf

We talk to the chair of SAPCA's Natural Sportsturf Division, Billy Martin, about issues related to the specification, construction and maintenance of sportsturf

Why is it important to seek proper advice before deciding to construct a natural sportsturf facility?

It's essential to speak with someone who fully understands the processes involved. I would suggest taking professional advice from a recognised sportsturf consultant to provide the necessary guidance throughout the whole process. Just speaking to a variety of contractors could be confusing, as each one may offer a different solution to the same problem, with consequent variations in specification and cost.

What does the specification process entail?

There are many pre-contract procedures that need investigation before a specification can be drawn up. Site investigation, which includes topography, investigative dig, survey of levels pre- and post-construction and soil analysis; planning permissions; quantifying scope of works; liaising with the client to ascertain their requirements; understanding and drawing up specifications; Bills of Quantities; overseeing and monitoring construction quality; managing the project finance; evaluating tenders; certifying and carrying out valuations and ensuring post-tender maintenance is carried out correctly – to name a few.

Suitable independent specialists with extensive experience and knowledge of natural turf can be found within the membership of SAPCA's Professional Services Division.

What are the necessary considerations before employing a company to build or upgrade a facility?

A conscientious contractor will thoroughly talk through what the client will get for their money, together with the wear and tear the surface can be expected to cope with and any implications this will have on the required maintenance and its costs.

But beware, in some instances where non-specialist consultants or contractors have been involved, clients have been delivered facilities that are either under- or over-specified in relation to the quality of surface they need or are capable of maintaining. If the client does not have the resources or expertise to undertake the necessary maintenance the sports turf system could fail.

How do turf considerations relate to different climatic conditions around the country?

It's all a question of balance. For instance, it could be argued that if you allow for drainage, you should also allow for irrigation. A well-drained sports field will dry out very quickly in the summer if there is a lack of rain or irrigation, which can lead to the aggregate in the drainage trenches collapsing. This then leads to an uneven and potentially dangerous surface.

Poorly specified pitches can also fail in the wetter parts of the country. Pitches that are drained into heavy soils can suffer from worm casts, which smear over the drain lines – leading





Without the resources or expertise to undertake the necessary maintenance the sports turf system could fail

to a rapid decrease in porosity and wetter soils will often lead to greater worm activity. Sand slits (which are only 50mm wide) can also quickly cap grass growth by producing organic litter, which inhibits drainage. Worm casts, muddy boots, heavy machinery and soil carried in suspension can all accelerate the failure of these narrow trenches.

Can one specification of sports turf fit all climates?

Every site has its own peculiarities, so a site investigation is an essential starting point in a design proposal. However, a design for a field in a wet climate can be similar to that for a site in a drier area of the country; it's often the aftercare in these areas that will be different.

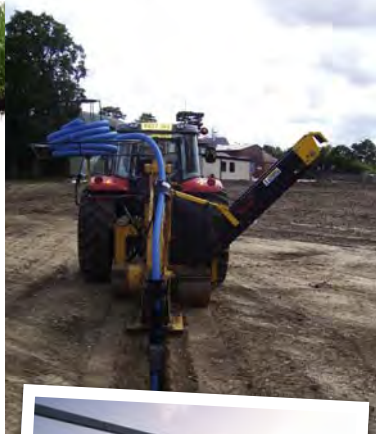
Drainage without the provision for irrigation in drier climes is a potential recipe for disaster. Although water is a scarce and expensive resource, a simple irrigation system can ensure that the drainage system does not break down through the lack of moisture.

In the wetter parts of the country, adding sand to the topsoil during construction can be beneficial, not only for improving the soil structure but also to dilute the fine content of the worm casts. Topsoil ameliorated with sand during construction can create a perched water table effect, which will retain moisture in the drier summer months.

How can I ensure that the construction specification will meet my usage requirements as well as my budget for maintenance?

A good consultant will liaise closely with the client and draw up a design based on the specific needs and budget.

A vital question to ask is: "Will my current maintenance practice be sufficient for the new build?" If the maintenance costs of a new surface are beyond the client's means then the system could fail.



What are the issues facing the industry at the moment?

I believe that sustainability, affordability and being environmentally friendly are big issues within our industry. To address some of these, SAPCA has started a three-year joint research project with Loughborough University that will study the attenuation and management of water in natural sportsturf.

I believe that collectively we suffer from a lack of joined up thinking. We need to resolve these problems by sitting around a table with sports governing bodies, funding agencies, sports councils, consultants, contractors, groundsmen and end users. The development of the SAPCA Code of Practice is an excellent example of the benefits of this approach, which we should continue.

Are there any construction standards currently available for natural sports turf?

SAPCA has been at the forefront of driving up standards in relation to natural sportsturf construction. Over the past two years the association has collected technical information and canvassed opinion throughout the industry and related sectors, including discussions with the key organisations, to produce the Code of Practice for the Design, Construction and Improvement of Natural Sports Turf. The Code is currently under final review and will be published by the end of this year.

Billy Martin is chair of the Natural Sportsturf Division of SAPCA and a director of Kestrel Contractors.
For further reading and advice go to: www.sapca.org.uk



CARDIFF CITY STADIUM

Terry Stevens looks at how Cardiff's sporting landscape impacts on the city's economic vibrancy and looks specifically at its new football stadium

In the new millennium, sport, combined with culture and health, have become central to the new vision for Cardiff – forming the pillars for both economic and social infrastructure – the foundations of which have been set down in a strategy for sport as an economic and social driver over the past 10 years.

The Cardiff Story So Far

The completion of the Millennium Stadium for the 1999 Rugby World Cup and, in the same year, the National Indoor Athletics Centre at University of Wales Institute Cardiff (UWIC) were followed by disappointment with the non-delivery of the International Sports Village (ISV) – arising through the sell-off of Philips International Projects and then the stop-start process of Westminster and the cancellation of its Regional Casino strategy.

Since 2005, however, and Cardiff's centenary celebrations as a city and golden jubilee as the capital of Wales, the vision of a 'sports city' has been delivered with a new energy through strategic partnerships with both private and public sectors alike.

Cardiff Council, working with water sports governing bodies and the Welsh Assembly Government (WAG), has delivered major event experiences within Cardiff Bay, with National and European sailing regattas, round the world yacht races, Formula 1, 2, 3 and 4 Powerboat Grand Prix racing, European and International Rowing events, water skiing, flatwater and slalom canoeing, as well as many community and water-based tuition courses and events.

In addition, the new Olympic-standard competition canoe course and white water rafting centre at ISV will

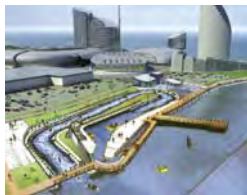
add to and complement the existing water sports mix available. Presently under construction for opening in March 2010, it will be the first of its type in the UK of forced water design by Hydrostadium of France which previously designed the Olympic courses in Sydney and Athens.

2008 saw the opening of the long awaited replacement for the old, worn out Empire Pool, demolished in 1998 to make way for the Millennium Stadium. The new 50m x 25m International Pool, together with the 25m warm-up pool and leisure facilities, opened at the ISV and is operated by Parkwood Leisure on behalf of the partnership.

The first year saw 18 clubs swim every week at the pool, with 733,000 paying customer visits and projected figures for the current year in the high 800,000. More than 40,000 people also attend health and fitness classes each year.



“ Working with its partners, Cardiff has delivered a one stop shop for sport – combining facilities for international events, accommodation and a university teaching hospital ”



The International Pool was followed in May 2008 with the opening of the new SWALEC Stadium at Glamorgan County Cricket Club (GCCC) built on the site of the existing Sophia Gardens ground, adjacent to the Welsh Institute for Sport. This facility was the vision of Paul Russell, chair of GCCC who entered into a partnership with the council and WAG to deliver the stadium for the premier tournament of Test Match Cricket with the Ashes in 2009.

Located in the city centre, this facility has held several one day internationals and the first Ashes Test match in June of this year. After much negative media before the Ashes Test match, it was widely heralded as a triumph by the media, with the press during and after the First Test, proclaiming both the ground and Cardiff as an international

cricketing success and the event as creating a legacy for the future.

Part of this legacy includes the tremendous partnership work being carried out by the club and council in both local schools and communities to support healthy living, team building and the physical and social infrastructure of the city.

Early 2009 saw the opening of the International Athletics Stadium at Leckwith to the west of the city. Delivered as part of the foundation works for the new Cardiff City Football Club Stadium, it replaced the old Leckwith Athletics Stadium.

One-stop Sports Shop

Cardiff became the UK's European City of Sport 2009, combining both the centres of sporting excellence with the

Cardiff City Football Stadium complements the ISV canoe course, swimming pool and the SWALEC

healthy living and community facilities, successfully delivering the major elements of the UK School Games last month. The European Conference for Sport Management is being held in Cardiff this autumn.

Working with its partners, Cardiff has delivered a 'one stop shop for sport', combining facilities for international events and games with disability sport, safe and secure accommodation with a university teaching hospital, with world class sporting universities offering technical and support services such as sports conditioning and nutrition.

This multi-agency support of professionals, academics, health and social





practitioners, local and central government is part of the agenda to develop and promote sport and active lifestyles in the city. It includes not only the sports mentioned above, but many more, such as baseball, gymnastics, weightlifting and such innovative schemes as People Versus Handicap – using international athletes and teams as an example for children to aspire to and for community involvement and participation.

Cardiff is currently working with Matt Burge, chair and owner of the Cardiff Devils ice hockey team, to deliver a new fit-for-purpose permanent ice arena for European ice hockey and with Orion Land and Leisure on new snow facilities and waterfront, all of which should start on site next year.

The year 2010 offers huge opportunities for Cardiff in supporting the Ryder

Thomas, in moving Cardiff's regional rugby team from the old Arms Park to the new Cardiff City Football Stadium.

This new 26,850-seat stadium is the base for both professional soccer and rugby clubs and also the hub for community engagement with rugby and soccer in Cardiff's schools and communities. Cardiff City Football Club's old stadium, Ninian Park, had rapidly become irrelevant to the needs of an aspirational soccer club and an ambitious city.

Officially opened by the Wales First Minister, Rhodri Morgan and council leader, Rodney Berman on 22 July 2009, the new £56m, stadium was built on the site of the former Cardiff Athletics Stadium and now forms part of the larger £100m, 60 acre (240,000sq m) Leckwith development that includes 470,000sq ft of retail development in-

CCFC football stadium will host this month's Wales v Scotland International

Land clearance started in February 2007 and the structure was completed in autumn 2008 with the two clubs, Cardiff City AFC and Cardiff Blues rugby as their tenants. On 13 September 2009 the stadium hosted its record crowd of 25,630 for the Cardiff City v Newcastle United Championship match and in November it will host the Wales v Scotland International.

An Economic Force

In April 2002, as part of the planning process and case making for the new stadium, a comprehensive economic impact assessment was undertaken by Stevens and Associates. The study benchmarked research undertaken elsewhere in the UK; upon surveys of spending patterns by football fans undertaken by the Premier League and the Sir Norman Chester Centre for Football Research, as well as Deloitte's Annual Survey of Football Finance.

In addition, the study was able to draw on Cardiff's recent hosting of the FA Cup and League play-off games that had relocated to the Millennium Stadium during the re-build of Wembley. The hosting of the FA Cup Finals in Cardiff, for example, generated £4.2m in visitor spend for the local economy while the contribution of the then Charity Shield games was £3.6m.

The economic impact assessment, while examining the potential if Cardiff were promoted to the Premier League, based its case upon a successful Championship side. On this basis the findings estimated that the new stadium would

“The new 26,850-seat stadium is the base for professional soccer and rugby clubs and also the hub for community engagement in Cardiff's schools and communities”

Cup taking place at Celtic Manor and in using the world class sports facilities for international events.

Instrumental in delivering this agenda over the last five years have been the council leader, Rodney Berman, and the executive member for sport and culture, Nigel Howells, supported by a dedicated and focused team of officers and strategic partners.

Cardiff Football Stadium

July 2009 saw the vision of Cardiff City Football Club the business acumen of its chair, Peter Ridsdale and the common sense of Cardiff Blues chair, Peter

volving 13 retailers, new housing on the site of the Ninian Park ground and a new road system.

The initiative for a partnership approach to developing the stadium came when the council agreed with the football club a way forward for planning and business development. This resulted in planning approval by the council in August 2003 and Welsh Assembly government support in September of that year.

Three years later, Laing O'Rourke won the contract to build the stadium with Arup Sport and Holder Mathias as the architectural team and PMG Developments as the developer.

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The new stadium provides a shared facility for both rugby and football



- ➔ generated around £24m per annum, of which £14.5m would be retained in the local economy which, through the multiplier effect, would generate an additional £5.5m of indirect spending. In addition the stadium would support 250 to 300 jobs.

A Rugby Perspective

The new stadium, like an increasing number of new stadia these days, provides a shared facility for the city's soccer and rugby union teams. Cardiff Blues was launched in June 2003 as one

of five new Welsh regional sides. Directed by David Young, the Blues played their first game at the Cardiff City Stadium in August when they entertained Leicester Tigers in a pre-season friendly. It is the start of a new era for the region following their move from the Arms Park and Young feels it could also allow them to give free rein to their attacking instincts.

"We've always tried to play a high-tempo, ball-in-hand type of game, but sometimes at the Arms Park it was quite difficult to get that surface as hard and fast as we would like due to it being on a riverbed," he said.

"I feel there will be some better opportunities to play some higher tempo rugby at our new home. It's a great venue with a great surface. The stadium has been talked about for a long time, from design to building – so long in fact that we all started to wonder if it was ever going to happen. Even the biggest critics and biggest doubters about the move only have to come to have a look to be impressed.

"From a playing point of view, there are fantastic medical facilities and changing rooms and an excellent surface to play open rugby. It's a superb arena and the players and coaches are very excited about playing our first game here. If we want to be measured against the best, we have to be in a position where we can stand up on all fronts against the best and I think this

stadium and our new training facilities are up there with anything that anyone in Europe can offer."

Blues skipper Paul Tito believes the move to the new Cardiff City Stadium could be the making of the Blues. The Kiwi second row went through a similar switch during his time with Wellington, who left Athletic Park behind to call the new Westpac Stadium home.

That move provoked a lot of criticism at the time, and discontent has been voiced in a similar fashion in some quarters over the Blues' move away from the Arms Park. But Tito says Wellington benefited hugely from switching to the 36,000-capacity Westpac, which has acquired the nickname of The Cake Tin. He believes the Blues can reap similar rewards from moving to the Cardiff City Stadium.

"I've seen it first-hand and it does work," he said. "I was fortunate enough to play in Wellington when we had the new stadium there. There was a lot of negative press about leaving Athletic Park and going to the Westpac.

"But Wellington RU were in dire straits before they left Athletic Park and now they are one of the richest unions in New Zealand. The new stadium really sorted them out. They had a lot of season ticket holders and everyone got right behind Wellington rugby. I think it was the making of the club. They're now one of the leading provincial teams in New Zealand. So it can make a difference." ●

Dr Terry Stevens is MD of Stevens & Associates leisure and tourism consultants



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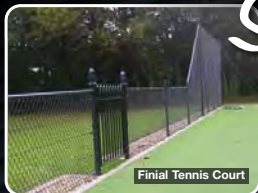
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JUDY MURRAY

Phil Sandilands speaks to Andy Murray's mother about driving Scottish tennis forward from a community-based facility

Despite the millions of pounds pumped into the sport each year, British tennis continues to struggle to develop world-class players. Recent relegation to the third tier of the Davis Cup served to further highlight the lack of top tennis talent in Britain. With only one player in the Men's Top 100 (Andy Murray – World Ranking 3) and three in the Women's (Anne Keothavong (72), Elena Baltacha (93) and Katie O'Brien (98) – all hopes are pinned on the juniors coming through the ranks.

Judy Murray believes she knows where it's going wrong and thinks she has the answer. She knows she has achieved her goal in supporting her sons, Andy and Jamie, as far as she can to reach their tennis potential. With all this experience under her belt, she is now turning her attention to her homeland to help drive forward Scottish tennis.

Access for All

Her ambition is to build and run a community tennis club and plans are already well under way. "This is a huge opportunity to grow the game in Scotland," Murray explains. "There are only five indoor centres offering 28 indoor courts that are open to the public in Scotland and they are expensive – up to £20 an hour at peak times. With the exception of Aberdeen, which has four indoor courts, these are all situated within the central belt, so there are huge parts of the country where tennis can only really be played

for a few months of the year due to the weather. There is no doubt the lack of regular playing and competitive opportunities restrict the attractiveness and growth of tennis in Scotland," she says.

Her vision is to establish a family-orientated tennis club that is accessible to the local community but will act as a hub for tennis in the area. "Over the years, I have gained huge experience when travelling abroad that tells me the successful places for producing youngsters are clubs where there is a sense of belonging and where the whole family comes to play. It's important too for kids to be able to play against adults," she explains. "Nowadays, we've got into a culture where the better children practise and play at an indoor centre with people their own age. That's fine in terms of learning how to hit the ball, but it doesn't teach you how to play the game and this has an impact on producing match winners.

"Tennis clubs provide the means whereby the right development culture can be created, support from local businesses can be achieved and a sense of loyalty and volunteering can be developed. But my vision isn't just about developing young talent. It's important



Left: Judy Murray and Phil Sandilands look over plans



“ We need to ensure that the initial experience of tennis is of a high enough standard for people to want to be part of the sport and the tennis club network ”

- for tennis clubs to be at the heart of a collaborative framework, driving the sport forward but working closely with local authorities, schools and other tennis providers, to grow the sport by maximising efforts and resources.”

Murray's concept is for a modern, welcoming tennis club for the local community with an integrated tennis academy that aims to establish an international reputation for developing world-class players over time.

Such an academy could preclude the need for future tennis champions to train abroad, as Andy did. Murray believes that the window for developing co-ordination in young players is between the ages of eight and 12, so the right talent identification system, coaches, facilities and regular competition at a local level is essential.

“Being a member of a club, kids have a sense of belonging,” she says. “They have club teams to aim for and be part of and they have a huge pool of sparring partners, young and old.”

However, Murray is aware that developing young talent is only one facet of a successful tennis club. “We need to ensure that the initial experience of tennis is of a high enough standard for people to want to be part of the sport and tennis clubs. This means modernising the club business and facilities, promotion within the community, having the right coaches and competitive opportunities and adopting an appropriate fee

structure, particularly for children and juniors. It's only then that a strong tennis club network can be developed in Scotland,” she says.

Working Model

Believing that a stand-alone academy would not survive in Scotland, Murray says she's found a good working model of her aspirations in Belgium. “The place that interested me most in terms of concept was Justine Henin's club in Brussels. It has 500 children in its programme and the coaches go out to support other clubs and schools. Henin's has the look of a house and a friendly, family atmosphere and there is a good core club programme for kids, adults, team and social events as well as the high performance element within the club. This is exactly how it should work,” she says.

When it comes to what facilities her club should offer, she has specific requirements: “Indoor courts are essential for all-year-round play and a combination of indoor and outdoor clay and acrylic courts are needed to deliver a comprehensive competitive and tournament programme. Mini tennis courts and a small multi-use games area complement the tennis areas. A gym, aerobics studio, dining and social facilities, seminar rooms and junior study facilities are also included in the plans. Other activities to support tennis may also be needed – depending upon the final site selected.”



Justine Henin's club in Brussels has a family-friendly sport environment



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➔ Site Specific

There has been much speculation about the location of the club, with various towns and cities claiming to have secured it. However, Murray is quick to point out that no decisions have been made as to the location, although she does have a preference: "Ideally it will be near to my home in Dunblane. Within the Stirling catchment would be ideal as I know the area well but the club has to be viable and so to ensure all options are identified I have recently advertised for sites and potential development partners within the Scottish central belt. There have been more than 80 positive responses to the concept, within Stirling and further afield and I am currently reviewing all the data," she explains.

This could be a lengthy process, but Murray's keen to get the project moving forward as quickly as possible. "If I want to have the club opened during 2012, there is urgency in selecting a site and development partner, but as both are critical to success I will take time to ensure I get it right," she says.

Financial Support

Then there's the question of funding. To realise Murray's vision will cost several million pounds, so where will the money come from? "Obviously I'm hopeful the LTA will provide financial support," Murray explains. "Roger Draper – chief executive of the LTA – has been incredibly helpful in getting the project to its current position and I am very optimistic that the Scottish funding agencies will

get behind it too. Alongside this, I have also had a great deal of support for the concept from individuals and companies who are keen to invest in tennis. In summary, I'm hoping that substantial funding can come from grants and from benefactors so we can minimise any borrowing required to build it."

Murray's two sons, Andy and Jamie, are strong supporters of this initiative: "They have discussed the concept with me and believe that the type of club I propose would have been very beneficial in their earlier years of development. They are obviously keen to help promote the club and I'm sure they'll be popping in from time to time when it opens."

Given Murray's undeniable focus and commitment to make things happen, this may not be a one-off project. Indeed, she believes her approach could be replicated in other cities and towns of a certain size and could be rolled-out if the initial project proves successful. "I'm not trying to build a club that makes a fortune for me," she says. "I want a club that is accessible, affordable and self-supporting and brings enjoyment to kids, pride to adults and maybe produces some exceptional talent as a result of the culture created within it." ●

Phil Sandilands is director of specialist sports consultancy TrioPlus and is working with Judy Murray on this project



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OLYMPIC OVERLAY

Crispin Andrews looks at how existing venues will be converted to host the London Olympics

Despite the superb sporting spectacle and the fabulous feel good factor it provides, in the long run, whether an Olympic Games turns out to be a blessing or a millstone for its host country tends to rest on financial considerations.

After the 1976 Olympics in Montreal, the city faced debts for 30 years. Taking over construction when it became evident in 1975 that work had fallen far behind schedule; the Quebec provincial government mandated the city to foot the billion dollar bill in full. The C\$1.61bn (£950m) costs of the Olympic Stadium or 'big owe' as it became known, were not met until 2006. Even then, the stadium didn't actually get an effective retractable roof and the tower wasn't completed, until after the Olympics had finished.

Other Games have been more successful – the 1984 Los Angeles showcase ended with a US\$250m (£156m) surplus, Seoul was US\$300m (£188m) in the black

after the 1988 Games and Sydney realised a AUD\$300m (£166m) profit after the 2000 Games.

With 2012 firmly in its sights, London already possesses a host of high-quality sporting facilities and many other areas that organisers hope will, for a short time, become extremely atmospheric Olympic venues. Making existing stadia such as Lord's Cricket Ground, Wimbledon and Earl's Court, as well as iconic sites such as Greenwich Park, Horse Guards Parade and the Royal Artillery Barracks fit for purpose, holds the key to a successful and financially viable Olympic spectacle in three years' time.

Temporary Venues

There's more to overlaying temporary structures at these venues than installing a few thousand seats and lining up a couple of car parks with portable toilets however. Not only must the playing arena be of a high enough standard to house a sport's Blue Riband event, but the needs

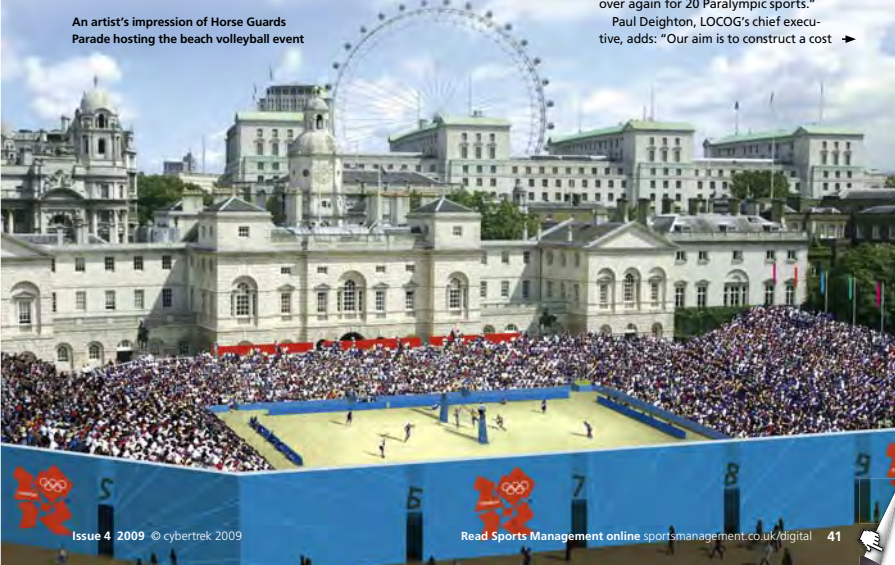
of competitors and their support staff, the world's media, heads of state and other VIPs from around the globe – not to mention thousands of enthusiastic supporters who will be pouring through the turnstiles – also need to be met. All of this must be done in a way that doesn't bring the capital to a grinding halt and allows each venue to continue to carry out its day job without too much disruption when the Games are over.

Utilising temporary venues outside the Olympic Park will also be crucial to ensure the sustainability of the new build venues post 2012.

"This is not just a Wimbledon fortnight or a one-day FA Cup Final, what is in essence the world championships of 26 sports will be taking place all over the city simultaneously in 34 venues," says James Bulley director of venues and infrastructure for the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG). "And three weeks after the Closing Ceremony we'll be doing it all over again for 20 Paralympic sports."

Paul Deighton, LOCOG's chief executive, adds: "Our aim is to construct a cost →

An artist's impression of Horse Guards Parade hosting the beach volleyball event





Above: Artist's impressions of fencing at ExCeL and equestrian at Greenwich Park (below)

➔ effective portfolio that demonstrates London's design capabilities, meets our vision for sustainability and provides a model from which other cities can learn when they plan major events in the future."

Just a few items on the list of things to consider include: catering for 20,000 media representatives in the main press centre and international broadcast centre as well as 17,000 athletes and officials and 70,000 volunteers; the supply of 200,000 temporary seats, countless metres of temporary fencing and tonnes of sand; and then there's the additional power and public transport to facilitate the events to take into consideration.

Design Issues

John Barrow, senior principle at Populous design practice, which has been chosen to provide the architectural and overlay design services lead for the Games, says: "To mix the traditional Britishness of London with the hi-tech world of international sports design, while looking after customers from all over the world in the way they would expect requires a great deal of design flexibility.

“To mix the traditional Britishness of London with the hi-tech world of global sports design, while looking after international customers requires a great deal of flexibility”

"Greenwich Park is a heritage site, much of which has remained unchanged since it was built by great architects like Inigo Jones in the 17th century," Barrow explains. "It must be treated with a light touch so that its essence remains untouched for many years to come after the 23,000-seater temporary dressage arena and accompanying support structures are taken down."

He explains how temporary fencing around the venues should provide an

organic or hi-tech feel and make people feel invited in, not held back and how developing additional transport solutions is an important part of overlay.

"At ExCeL – where seven Olympic and five Paralympic events will take place – a one-way rail system is being planned with spectators coming to one and leaving at the other of two Docklands Light Railway stations that already serve the venue. Three additional carriages per train should increase the railway's capacity by 50 per cent and shuttle buses are being planned to ferry spectators from nearby underground mainline Canning Town."

Building Challenges

Mike McNicholas, project director for London 2012 at engineering services provider Atkins, explains how increasing the capacity of existing venues also provides major engineering and construction challenges. "How, for example, do we provide Horse Guards Parade with enough electricity to put on beach volleyball for 15,000 spectators, competitors and the world's media?" He asks. "Do we upgrade the local grid or bring

in our own generators – and what effect will this have on noise levels? Similarly, what increase in power capacity will a venue like ExCeL need? What kind of contingency and resilience do we need to put in place and what modifications will need to be made to ensure optimum air flow, temperature and lights?

"Of course, it also goes without saying that we have to be very aware of minimising our carbon footprint at all the venues," he adds.

TEMPORARY VENUES

River zone venues

- **ExCeL London**
Olympics: boxing, judo, fencing, taekwondo, table tennis, weightlifting, wrestling
Paralympics: boccia, powerlifting, table tennis, judo, wheelchair fencing
- **The O2**
Olympics: basketball, gymnastics
Paralympics: wheelchair basketball
- **North Greenwich Arena 2**, temporary arena
Olympics: badminton, rhythmic gymnastics
Paralympics: volleyball
- **Greenwich Park**, temporary arena
Olympics: equestrian, modern pentathlon
Paralympics: equestrian
- **Royal Artillery Barracks**
Olympics: shooting
Paralympics: shooting, archery

Central and other London venues

- **Lord's**
Olympics: archery
- **The Regent's Park**
Olympics: cycling
- **Hyde Park**
Olympics: triathlon, 10km open water swim
- **Horse Guards Parade**
Olympics: beach volleyball
- **Earls Court**
Olympics: volleyball
- **Wimbledon**
Olympics: tennis

Outer London venues

- **Hadleigh Farm, Essex**
Olympics: mountain biking
- **Broxbourne White Water Canoe Centre**
Olympics: canoe slalom
- **Eton Dorney, near Windsor**
Olympics: rowing, canoe sprint
Paralympics: rowing

Phase One

According to James Bulley, LOCOG, the Olympic Delivery Authority and their partners are already understanding the nature of the sites and venues. Layouts have been mapped out and operational plans are being delivered with input from the police and transport organisations.

"The temporary structures will start to go in eight months before the Games, although some venues have other events during this period, so we have to work around their schedules," Bulley explains.

Tendering for furniture and equipment is already underway. For commodities and project management the process begins next year, while tenders for other miscellaneous work will be issued throughout 2010 and 2011. ●

Crispin Andrews is a freelance writer



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Long-term Benefits of MAINTENANCE

SAPCA's Colin Young outlines the importance of regular sports surface maintenance and discusses the key principles and benefits from a financial and longevity perspective



The use of synthetic sports surfaces has grown significantly in the UK since the 1970s, but the misconception remains within certain sections of the marketplace that they require little or no maintenance. Not only is this detrimental to their playing quality, but through premature ageing and replacement of sports surfaces it inevitably also reduces the effective benefit of investment in sports facilities.

Maintenance is of vital importance if a sports surface is to remain good to look at, to perform consistently at the required standard, to retain its permeability and last a long period of time. Indeed, the surface's guarantee will usually be conditional on the maintenance requirements being carried out with reasonable diligence. The recommendations of the surface installer or manufacturer should be followed at all times as they will have the best knowledge of their

specific product and its specific needs. Companies should always provide clients with a handbook (operations manual) outlining the particular maintenance requirements of their surface.

Basic Principles of Maintenance

Maintenance processes will differ between surface types but the basic principles and objectives are the same:

- Remove detritus from the surface
- Apply treatments to reduce/impece the growth of plant life
- Clean and power wash the surface to remove plant life, dirt and other contamination
- Re-distribute the loose elements of the surface (filled surfaces only ie synthetic turf or clay)
- Repair broken elements of the surface
- Ensure the equipment (goals and netting etc) is safe and in good working order

The maintenance requirements will differ according to the type of surface and its usage. The usage of a facility should be carefully planned to ensure one particular area is not overused, such as the goal mouths of a football pitch or the inside lanes of a running track. While this is sometimes unavoidable, care should be taken to use the facility evenly as far as possible. If some areas are used more frequently than others the maintenance at these locations should reflect these variations. ▶

The usage of a sports facility should be carefully planned to ensure a particular area is not overused



- There are different types of maintenance that can be carried out on the surface, ranging from routine cleaning and brushing to more advanced treatments requiring specialist equipment and chemicals. Simple routine maintenance can be conducted by the groundstaff but more advanced procedures are often undertaken by specialist companies with bespoke advanced equipment which can add new life to an ageing facility.

Keeping the surface clean

Leaves, tree flowers, pine needles, dirt from users and other detritus should not be allowed to remain on the surface for any length of time. If this does happen, they rapidly rot down to form a drainage-inhibiting 'skin' within the surface and provide a growing-medium for algae and moss.

A wide, soft broom or a rubber-tined rake is ideal for removing vegetable matter and other rubbish. Better still, a mechanical leaf-sweeper or vacuum cleaner will greatly speed up the operation. The equipment should be well maintained and carefully operated to avoid contamination of, or physical damage to, the surface.

The provision of litter bins and an information board outlining key dos and don'ts will also help to keep the surface clear of rubbish brought on by players and users of the facility. It is strongly recommended that the surface should be treated as a no smoking area, as a dropped cigarette can damage the surface resulting in unsightly marks. Chewing gum should also be banned for this reason.

Brushing

Brushing the surface is a crucial operation if premature deterioration of the playing characteristics, appearance and drainage properties are to be prevented. Apart from freshening up the look of the surface, the purpose of regular and fairly vigorous brushing is to prevent the formation of a compacted and impervious skin on the top of the surface.

This is especially noticeable on a synthetic turf surface with a sand or rubber infill. By constantly disturbing and moving the upper layers of the surface, brushing can delay the time when problems of reduced drainage start to develop by several years. It is common to use a drag brush which is pulled by

CASE STUDY – THE INFLUENCE OF MAINTENANCE



Specialist maintenance provider Technical Surfaces was keen to evaluate the influence of its maintenance techniques on playing surfaces. The firm commissioned the Sports Technology Institute at Loughborough University to investigate the role of their equipment and in particular the effects of brushing on the wear of synthetic turf. A novel robotic device was developed (see picture) to simulate brushing in order to investigate several scenarios using different pieces of equipment. Simulations were conducted on the surfaces to replicate high-intensity maintenance over a 20-year period to demonstrate a worst case scenario.

This independent research showed that the levels of wear caused by the brushes used by Technical Surfaces to maintain sports surfaces were insignificant. Dr Paul Fleming, the lead researcher for the project, states: "The summary results clearly show a low level of wear that was observed to be caused by the brushing alone. The life of 20 years was used to represent a period of time longer than most artificial surfaces survive in practice. In reality, the effects of surface usage for playing the sport or training (total weekly hours at Loughborough University for example, is around 50-60 per week on the soccer/rugby surfaces) and environmental effects are considered to be the main contributors to wear."

Full details of this innovative research project can be found on the Technical Surfaces website www.technicalsurfaces.co.uk

a small tractor unit with low-pressure tyres. This type of maintenance will help ensure the performance characteristics of the surface are maintained.

Power Brushing and Decomaction

This is a common procedure for synthetic turf surfaces. The principle involves the use of a powered brushing machine, often with contra-rotating brushes, which ensures that the synthetic turf fibres remain upright and the infill remains mobile within the surface. This is normally undertaken by specialist companies; its



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frequency is dependent on the amount the surface is used and its surrounds. This could be as much as monthly for very high usage facilities or just annually for much less well-used surfaces.

Deep and Power Cleaning

If, in spite of the regular maintenance described above, or as a result of a lack of it, a surface becomes dirty – or in the case of synthetic turf – over-compacted and impervious, these conditions can often be corrected by appropriate treatment involving the use of specialist machinery. The type of cleaning will depend on the surface type.

Polymeric surfaces (and some macadam surfaces) will require cleaning with high-pressure jetting apparatus, which might include detergent and fungal inhibitors to remove dirt and prevent moss and algae growth.

Synthetic turf surfaces require different machinery depending on their design. Generally machines vary from simple scarifiers to more elaborate proprietary machines that remove a proportion of the infill (containing almost all the filtered dirt) from the upper part of the synthetic turf. This is then replaced with new (or cleaned) infill. The best of these processes will improve the play characteristics, ball roll and surface/foot interaction and will prolong the useful life of the pitch by a number of years.

It is essential that any scarification or very deep penetration of the surface is only carried out by experienced operatives and, if still under warranty, approved by the installer or surface supplier.

Benefits of Maintenance

The long-term benefits of maintenance may be becoming better understood, but all too often little provision is devoted to it. Maintenance should be budgeted from the outset of a new project and included in the business plan and sinking fund provision. It should start from the first day after the handover of any new facility. The roles and responsibilities should be clearly identified, including in-house provision and the role of specialist companies as required.

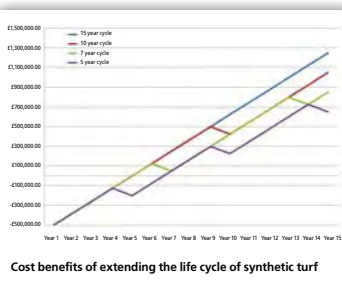


Severe pitch problems can be corrected with specialist machinery

Maintenance should be budgeted from the project outset and included in the business plan and sinking fund provision

Potential Cost Saving

Detailed on the right is a worked example illustrating the cost benefits of extending the life-cycle of a synthetic turf pitch from between five and 15 years. The graph shows the income generation over the full life-cycle. The negative sections highlight the cost of a replacement synthetic turf system after five-, seven-, 10- and 15-year cycles.



It has been shown that maintenance can significantly extend the useable life of a synthetic sports surface. The illustration above demonstrates the positive implications this can have for the facility and its sinking fund provision.

Maintenance Competency and Training

SAPCA has developed a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) in Sports and Play Installation which has a maintenance route. This qualification allows

companies and individuals to demonstrate their knowledge and competency for the first time within a nationally recognised framework as part of the National Occupational Standards and is independently examined by the awarding body EdExcel.

SAPCA's Code of Practice for the Maintenance of Synthetic Surfaces provides more detailed information on each type of surface. It is available to download free of charge from the technical guidance section of the SAPCA website, www.sapca.org.uk.

If you would like further information on any aspects of surface maintenance or qualifications contact Dr Colin Young of SAPCA at colin@sapca.org.uk or telephone 024 7641 6316

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Jean Tomlin

We talk to Jean Tomlin, director of human resources for the London 2012 Organising Committee (LOCOG), about how the general public can get involved in the Olympic volunteering programme and what skills are needed

Why are volunteers such a key part of delivering the Olympic and Paralympic Games?

Every Olympic and Paralympic Games needs volunteers in order to deliver the events and London 2012 is no exception. We anticipate requiring up to 70,000 in a variety of different roles. About half of these will come with specialist skills that we need to help deliver the Games.

When and how will you start to recruit volunteers?

The application process will open in the summer of 2010 and we will then assess and interview successful applicants throughout 2011.

This process will be supported by an online application form and clear information as to what the roles are, what we are looking for and what each applicant can expect from the experience.

What kind of roles will there be?

There will be a wide variety of roles, but most will include helping with spectators around the venues. However, we will also require volunteers with medical skills, technical skills and those with language skills too. Importantly, we want these people to come from a wide variety of backgrounds and to represent all the UK's communities.

Will people need prior experience?

No prior experience is required but we think it is a good idea if people have been involved in some kind of volunteer activity in the past as this gives them a real understanding of what it's like. And of course all volunteering work is good for local communities too.

Will there be roles created specifically for the London Games?

Outside requirements at our specific venues, it's expected that there will



Track official volunteers: keeping time at Lee Valley Athletics Stadium

also be a variety of city volunteer programmes – based at key points around the cities and towns near venues to give local information.

Are there any schemes people can get involved in now?

We have a small office-based volunteer programme called Trailblazers, which allows people to come and give their time to help us prepare for the Games. People are welcome to apply for any of these roles, which are posted on the London 2012 website at www.london2012.com/trailblazers.

There's also an official London 2012 pre-volunteer programme called Personal Best that runs in London, as well as the South West, the West Midlands and the North East of England. This scheme is designed to encourage people who are not working to get active and learn new life skills through volunteering.

All those people that graduate from Personal Best and meet our minimum

requirements will be guaranteed an interview for a Games-time volunteer role.

How should people express their interest in becoming a volunteer?

People who are interested in volunteering at the 2012 Olympic or Paralympic Games should register their interest at www.london2012.com/volunteering. We will be in touch over the coming months advising them of how our application process is shaping up for next summer.

Will there also be a scheme for selected volunteers to link up with NGBs, sports events and community sport after 2012?

We are keen that the London 2012 volunteer programme inspires lots of people to get involved in volunteering across the country. We very much hope that those that do, then stay involved – either through existing volunteer bodies or via specific sports clubs and associations.



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4. PETER, TIES	1:13.00	1:13.00
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6. SMITH, JONATHAN	1:15.00	1:15.00
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Tracking SUCCESS

Pete Hayman looks at some of the recently developed or refurbished athletic facilities that are available to help in the sport's continual growth over the coming years

With less than three years to go until the start of the London Olympic and Paralympic Games, the Olympic Park is not the only place where the construction of venues is in full flow. Sports clubs and local authorities across the UK are also engaging in projects to provide new and upgraded facilities that will form the basis of a lasting legacy beyond the 2012 Games and contribute towards efforts to get more people participating.

Athletics – a large part of the Games – are one of the many sports that is in line to benefit, and UK Athletics' (UKA) facilities manager Peter Sutcliffe believes that the opportunities are now in

place for the sport to continue its growth over the coming years.

"The advent of the London Olympics and the government's Building Schools for the Future project have created a growing interest in sport generally and athletics in particular," he says. "Both UKA and England Athletics are well aware of the opportunity which has been presented to them and there are signs that participation levels are improving."

Sutcliffe explains that UKA has a strict certification system in place to ensure that upgraded athletics facilities meet certain standards for training and competition, while new builds are subject to scrutiny at the planning stage. However,

just as crucial to the development of athletics in Britain is ensuring that existing facilities are also kept up to standard.

"Perhaps more important than the provision of new facilities is the maintenance of existing ones," he explains. "Facility providers find it increasingly difficult to fund the upkeep and refurbishment of athletics facilities."

"Poorly maintained tracks do not encourage usage and can lead to track closures, loss of local amenities and job losses. Those responsible for budgets need to ensure that adequate provision is made for capital costs, running costs, equipment costs and the refurbishment of track surfaces."

QUEENS PARK TRACK, INVERNESS

One athletics facility that has recently benefited from a major renovation is the Queens Park track in Inverness, north Scotland. A new eight-lane Polytan all-weather track has been laid adjacent to the Inverness Leisure complex as part of a £135,000 revamp funded by Inverness Common Good Fund and the Highland Council.

A photo finish system and seating for 300 spectators are also on offer at the facility, which aims to capitalise on the recent media coverage of Jamaican sprinter Usain Bolt's record-breaking runs at the World Championships to captivate local young people to take up the sport.

James Martin, Inverness Leisure's general manager, says: "It's been absolutely fantastic to watch up and coming athletes running the first few laps on the new track at Queens Park. After the widespread media interest in the World



On your marks at Queens Park's renovated facilities in Inverness



Championships in Berlin where the 100m record was smashed, we are hopeful that this profile raised along with the developments at Queens Park, may encourage more children to take up athletics and support the growth of the Inverness Harriers and other athletics groups in the longer term."

BASILDON SPORTS VILLAGE

Construction work is now underway on a major sports village development in Basildon, Essex. The Gloucester Park site already boasts a Grade 1 eight-lane track, upgraded two years ago, but the £38m scheme includes a 750-seat spectator stand and has been included in the Pre-Games Training Camp guide for London 2012.

Basildon Council's cabinet member for leisure and the arts, Kevin Blake, says that the new Basildon Sporting Village will not only support the existing facilities, but also aims to increase participation among local residents.

"We are committed to raising the participation levels of our residents in sport and encouraging them to live healthy lifestyles," he explains. "The sporting village is being built to the side of the current athletics track as part of our ongoing commitment to leisure investment."

"The Sporting Village will provide an improved home for Basildon Athletics Club. It will also include the only 50m swimming pool in Essex and transform sport provision in the Basildon area – encouraging the community to get involved in sport and fitness."



PALMER PARK SPORTS STADIUM

Another facility to undergo refurbishment in recent weeks is the athletics track at Palmer Park Sports Stadium in Reading, Berkshire. A £137,500, 10-week revamp has been carried out by Polytan to provide the venue with an upgraded athletics and cycle track. New netting for the hammer cage, a high jump landing area, pole vault upright poles and sand pit covers have also been provided as part of the scheme, with Stadia Sports supplying the equipment.

Reading Borough Council's lead councillor for culture and sport, Graeme Hoskin, says: "Palmer Park stadium provides extremely important facilities for athletes and racing cyclists. As a council we're working hard to promote exercise and sport for all and this work is part of that objective."



ABERDEEN SPORTS VILLAGE

The August 2009 opening of the £28m Aberdeen Sports Village (ASV) in northern Scotland was the result of a partnership between the University of Aberdeen, Aberdeen City Council and SportsScotland to provide high quality sports facilities for students and the local community.

Located at the site of the Chris Anderson Stadium, the village offers both indoor and outdoor athletics facilities; the original stadium has been revamped to provide a 400m running track together with jumping and throwing areas designed to host a range of events. Meanwhile, the complex also boasts an indoor 135m, six-lane running straight with purpose-built areas for throwing and jumping events.

George Yule, ASV chair, says: "The Aberdeen Sports Village is a fantastic facility which really is for use by everyone and will be an asset not only to the people of Aberdeen city and shire but also to the north-east region of Scotland. This local sports facility has been designed to international standards, with the London 2012 Olympic Games and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games in mind."

Louise Martin, chair of SportsScotland, added: "The opening of the Aberdeen Sports Village marks another important milestone in improving sports provision in Scotland as part of the Scottish government's National and Regional Sports Facilities Strategy."

RYLAND CENTRE, BROMSGROVE

The Ryland Centre in Bromsgrove, Worcestershire, is set to undergo a £700,000 scheme to upgrade the track and field events areas to ensure that local athletes are provided with high quality facilities in the lead up to London 2012.

Bromsgrove and Redditch Athletics Club uses the centre and a club spokesperson expressed hopes that the scheme will help to increase participation and develop local talent.

WYCOMBE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Wycombe District Council has unveiled its plans to build a new community athletics track and pavilion at the Sir William Ramsay School in Hazlemere – to replace the existing facilities at Wycombe Sports Centre. Although the project is still at an early stage, the council has already consulted with local residents over the proposals, which include a new eight-lane all-weather track, a hammer cage, a discus and javelin area and jumping facilities, along with a pavilion.

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

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- Surface cleaning, repairs and relining the track at the Birmingham Alexander 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

RECENT NEWS

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

- NEW FOR 2009 When cleaning your sports surface we now rinse out the track edge drains and vacuum out the drain traps.
- We have just completed 23 new courts at Canterbury Christ Church University Sports Centre on a Gerflor surface.
- Painted 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 HMYOI Feltham Young Offenders Prison
- Spring 2009 we successfully completed cleaning, partly-resurfacing and line painted an athletics track at Spensborough Pool and Sports Complex in North Yorkshire.



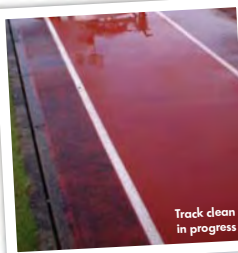
Half-way through cleaning the track at the Paralympics headquarters at Stoke Mandeville Stadium



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



Sports hall completed in Canterbury July 2009



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Birmingham Half Marathon

Organising a mass participation sporting event can involve years of meticulous planning by armies of people. Running concurrently on 11 October, the Birmingham Half Marathon and the International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) Half Marathon attracted 200 elite athletes and thousands of other enthusiastic runners to take to the streets of Birmingham.

Four races were run: the elite women's, the elite men's and the wheelchair race for the IAAF, as well as the Birmingham Half Marathon, which received 12,500 entries.

Kath Hudson talks to Birmingham City Council's race director, the marketing and events manager for the official timing partner Seiko and the head of competitions and international relations at UK Athletics

MAIN PIC: MARK SHIRMAN

Julie Burden: Race director for Birmingham Half Marathon and the IAAF Half Marathon.

My main responsibilities are looking after the athletes while they're running, ensuring the course is laid out properly, taking care of health and safety issues and the traffic arrangements and making sure all the anti-doping measures are in place.

The week running up to the event is a challenging one: we have the grade one course measurer in to check the course through the night on Tuesday and on Friday evening we put the blue line down for the athletes to follow. We work day and night on Saturday to get the start

and finish gantries and the barriers up, as well as to sort out the water stations, as each world athlete has a specific drink at each one. Road closures start at 7pm

With the extra race, we were expecting upwards of 60,000 spectators

on some of the lesser roads, but get going in earnest at midnight.

The CIS screens, which give results for the whole of the race and Seiko, the

timing company, also arrive on Saturday, so we have to make sure their needs are met, including providing their power.

A massive medical programme is put in place, involving the West Midlands Ambulance Service and St John's Ambulance – 80 or 90 medics go out on the course. We have ambulances and paramedics at the end and also work with the fire service and the police to ensure crowd safety. Last year 50,000 people lined the route. With having an extra race this year, we were expecting there to be upwards of 60,000 spectators.

Susan Boobyer: Marketing services and events manager for Seiko UK

Our role was to time the elite athletes. As two separate events were running concurrently, it meant having two sets of personnel and equipment, which was a big challenge.

The first procedure on the day is to attach a small transponder chip to the athletes' front bibs. All the athletes have to be checked to make sure they have the right bib, with the right transponder, and that the front bib corresponds with the back. Then we lay out the transponder pick up mats on the start and finish lines and install the equipment necessary for that.

We have a whole bank of master and back up timers and when the race starts we send somebody ahead of the athletes on a bike with one of these timers. They visit each of the 5km measuring points, synchronising the start time with the other equipment on the course.

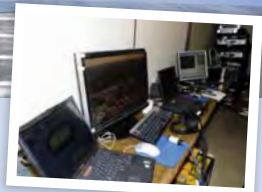
When the athletes approach each of the transponder mats, their chip is picked up by our system, their unique identity is transferred down the ADSL line to our control centre at the start/finish line. We put all that data together and make a data stream, which goes to the results company, who are also located in the start/finish line, so they can generate the results. All this happens



The elite athletes are timed by Seiko and the mass participation race by HS Sports

within a split second, so television viewers see the results in real time.

Because the transponder time can be the official time for the IAAF events, it has to be very accurate, as records and money are involved. Our system is very expensive, with each chip costing around US\$15 (£9), therefore, the transponders are collected at the end of each race. We also have lead cars with clocks driving around the course and a sophisticated camera system at the end to ensure each athlete is accurately measured.



Our partner company, HS Sports, managed the timing for the Birmingham Half Marathon. For the mass races an approximation of the time is fine and it is less critical if not every athlete is captured. The chips are less expensive and factored into the cost of the entry fee. They don't have any of the 5km markers, all they need is the transponder mats at the start and the finish.

Cherry Alexander: Head of competitions and international relations at UK Athletics

Part of my remit is to prepare a strategy for the next 10 years to looking at the major events we want to host, then approaching the world and European governing bodies to bid for them. Once they are secured, we see which cities would be interested in hosting them. Nine times out of 10 we're bidding against other countries, especially for track and field events. We won the right to host the World Half Marathon in April 2008.

We chose Birmingham as the host because UK Athletics (UKA) has a fantastic partnership with the city council: we've hosted the World Indoor Championships and the European Indoor Championships with them, as well as the National Championships. They were really pitching for events at that time, as they had received feedback that people in Birmingham

weren't participating in enough sport, so they wanted high profile sporting events to inspire them.

Once an event has been secured, my role changes slightly because I then be-

Birmingham City Council wanted to host high profile sporting events to inspire its people

come the link between UKA and the city. A Local Organising Committee (LOC) is set up to organise the event, which is made up of myself, the championship director (normally a city employee) and then a number of chairs each

taking responsibility for an area, such as finance, accreditation, medical and accommodation and transport. The LOC has to feed back to the executive steering group, which is made up of local MPs and the UKA chair or chief executive.

What made the workload of this race huge was that the plans we made for the World Half Marathon also had to relate to the mass race. However, the link between the two races and our promotions pushed the entries up for the Birmingham Half Marathon from 8,000 last year, the first year it was run, to 12,500.

The major stress for me before the event is making sure all overseas athletes have their visas. On the actual day, the medal ceremony is the hardest thing to deal with, as it's critical to get this done before the cameras go off air.



TARAFLEX Competitive Advantage

The 2012 Olympic Games, the 2014 Commonwealth Games and the British public's insatiable appetite for sporting events are generating a large increase in enquiries for portable sports flooring solutions across the UK

Hosting a sports event can take a lot of planning and preparation and can be unnecessarily costly if mistakes are made. However, Gerflor has the perfect flooring solution. "We work with our clients to ensure a bespoke package that fits with their individual needs," says Gerflor sports manager Darren Wood.

"We also work with the National Governing Bodies (NGB) on sport events in the UK as a Taraflex temporary court installation helps to raise the bar and ultimately the standards of play," he adds.

Two NGBs that have recently benefited from their partnership with Gerflor are British Handball and Scottish Volleyball. In the case of British Handball, its primary responsibility is to ensure the success of the British Team in 2012. A secondary responsibility is to promote the sport of handball nationally.

Paul Goodwin, CEO at British Handball, says: "Obtaining a portable court was important for us for a number of reasons. It allows us to present our sport

in the best possible way and to create a spectacular experience to those watching. The court also offers us the versatility to play competitions in venues that are not dedicated to handball or even sport," he says. Recent international competitions using this type of flooring have taken place at the Liverpool Echo Arena and the Crystal Palace National Sports Centre.

Scottish Volleyball decided on a Taraflex court for use at the Scottish Finals at Wishaw Sports Centre in June this year. The event was a great success and the Taraflex installation team offered practical on-site training to Scottish Volleyball volunteers to enable them to install the flooring for future events themselves.

Margaret Anne Flemming, CEO at Scottish Volleyball, says: "It would not have been possible to deliver the competition to the standard that we did without the commitment and enthusiasm of the Gerflor team."

Commitment and enthusiasm

Gerflor also installed three sports courts, together with line marking and logos across a total of 2,300sq m of exhibition

space at this year's Grassroots Football LIVE at the NEC in Birmingham. Attracting thousands of players, coaches, managers and anyone who has an interest in football, Bob Rosen, MD of show organiser VCM, says that sport surfaces play a very important part in the show. "We were delighted with the bespoke solution that Gerflor provided and the Taraflex sport team installed a world class floor ahead of schedule," he says.

In another branding exercise, Gerflor came up with a flexible silicone paint solution when the Glasgow Rocks basketball team wanted to use their logo on court at the Kelvin Hall International Sports Arena.

Taraflex by Gerflor is an internationally acclaimed sports flooring solution and has been used at every Olympic Games since 1976. Gerflor provides portable, temporary and permanent sports flooring solutions for:

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Gerflor floors the Grassroots show

Gerflor's Taraflex sports flooring was used for all the playing surfaces at this year's Grassroots Football Show.

A total of 2,200sq m of Taraflex provided flooring for training and coaching sessions, along with various demonstrations throughout the three-day event at the NEC in Birmingham.

Gerflor has also provided permanent flooring solutions for the Commonwealth Games, Davis Cup, international handball events and every Olympic Games since 1976.

The surface will feature again at next year's Grassroots event in June 2010.

sport-kit.net keyword
gerflor

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Mondo tracks Millennium Bridge



Mondo was able to install a temporary athletic surface onto London's Millennium Bridge – thanks to the company's Everlay loose-lay isolating membrane.

Laid to coincide with the announcement that Adidas is the official sportswear partner of the London 2012 Olympics, the surface was demonstrated by US sprinters Allyson Felix and Tyson Gay.

The Everlay membrane provides a barrier between the aluminium decking of the bridge and the rubber track and can be used to protect the track from any underlying contamination, such as moisture, that may affect flooring adhesives.

Everlay can be used as a base for any sports or commercial floor.

sport-kit.net keyword
mondo



Conica running track at Prague O2 Arena

The O2 Arena in Prague, Czech Republic, hosted the debut of Conica's mobile running track.

Consisting of 1,680 separate parts, the track can be installed and then taken apart within 48 hours before being transported to its next venue. The track has also been certified as

an Indoor Track Facility by the IAAF, meaning that it is suitable for use at Indoor World and European athletics championships.

Over 10,000 spectators attended the Championship athletics meeting.

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Game Solutions supplies hockey pitch

Game Solutions has supplied a Sport Court™ Response 6.0 surface for the England Hockey National Finals. Held at Birmingham's National Indoor Arena, 1,100sq m of the polypropylene surface was supplied and installed in three hours.

A modular tile system, the surface comes with a force transfer system to give both vertical and lateral suspension across the floor. This helps to reduce stress and strain on the hockey players' ankles, knees and lower back.

Sport Court™ also offers a multi-purpose ATAK surface for indoor use, as well as an outdoor PowerGame surface. All three surfaces can be laid over any existing flat, hard surface either as a permanent or temporary installation.



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game solutions



TactTiles' multisport floor

A temporary sports hall at St Damien's College in Ashton-under-Lyne has recently been installed with a TactTiles multi-sport surface.

The Swedish modular system acts like a sprung floor and provides consistent bounce and resilience.

In situ for the next two years, the surface has been marked up to provide a games area for basketball, netball and indoor football games and also offers two badminton courts.

Once the building of a permanent sports hall has been completed, the TactTiles surface can then be relocated and used as an additional outdoor or indoor games area.

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tacttiles

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IDASS interlocking mats are a quick and easy way to floor outdoor events and children's play areas. Measuring 1sq m with a 20cm depth, they are available in three densities – soft for use with children, firm to support heels and tables and super-firm for areas that suffer heavy usage. They are available in a range of colours.



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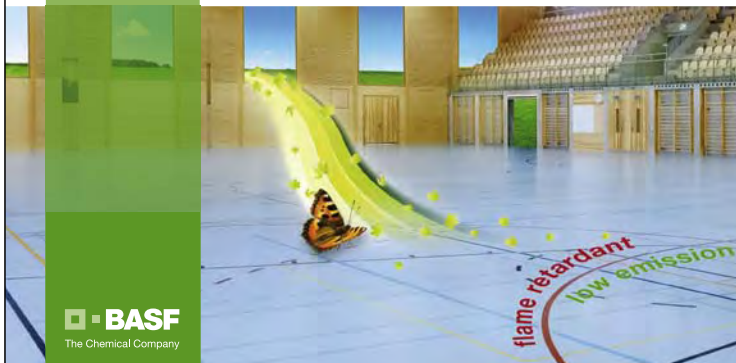
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NGB RESTRUCTURING

We look at how some of sport's National Governing Bodies are reviewing their internal business structures to increase the nation's participation in sport

Sport England's key to delivering the grassroots sporting legacy attached to London 2012 was to put sport's National Governing Bodies (NGBs) at the heart of the strategy.

Using the NGBs' networks of community clubs, coaches and volunteers to help drive delivery, most of the £480m Whole Sport Plan funding has now been awarded by Sport England, giving the chosen NGBs greater autonomy. Alongside this they also have greater responsibility for effective delivery against Sport England's key targets: to help their sport grow, sustain and excel.

Helping NGBs to reach the participation, satisfaction and talent development targets, Sport England's Sport Directorate department has been offering hands-on advice through relationship managers. In addition, its national partners, the

Women in Sport and Fitness Foundation, Sports Coach UK, Streetgames and SkillsActive are also delivering specific services that underpin the NGBs' work and help them tackle specific issues. SkillsActive, for example, is helping them to work towards their workforce development plans (needed to acquire funding) by upskilling NGB volunteers with the required qualifications.

"The objective is to ensure that everyone who plays sport has the best possible experience and makes sport a life long habit," Sport England's director of sport, Lisa O'Keefe, explains. "That's why some of the NGBs we are investing in are using our financial and professional support to develop their capacity to offer high-quality sport. The result will be a community sport system capable of continuing growth for many years to come."

BADMINTON ENGLAND

Adrian Christy, chief executive, Badminton England

BADMINTON England is looking forward to the opportunity to further grow the sport during this current funding period and beyond, with growth and sustained participation at the heart of our 10-year strategy – a Decade of Delivery. With the eyes of the world focusing on sport in this country as part of our collective legacy aspirations, we've set about ensuring that we can rise to the exciting challenge facing our sport.

In recent years we've demonstrated significant growth in participation as a result of the tremendous efforts of our staff, volunteers and the partners we've worked with. We've recently undertaken a process of ensuring an absolute focus on delivering success against some key business outcomes around growth and sustainability of activity.

This has involved realigning the roles of our development network by employing a team of regional officers. Each has

specific responsibilities – including participation, coaching and competition – while also addressing the challenges of access to more court time – a real barrier to overcome if we're to realise the objectives we have set.

But it's not just about paid staff. No matter how much investment we receive from government, it could never recompense the time and effort of our volunteers and no sport should lose sight of the value of this resource places in our ability to deliver long-term participation. We're therefore making a considerable effort towards ensuring our volunteers are very much part of the vision for badminton and we look forward to their continued support for many years to come.

We shouldn't lose sight of the value of volunteers in our ability to deliver long-term participation in sport

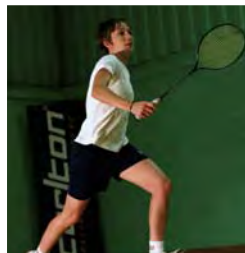


PHOTO: WWW.BADMINTONENGLAND.CO.UK



Kelsi Fairbrother (top) and Huw Goodwin (below) are members of the GB squad (both wearing white)

ENGLAND HANDBALL

Stephen Jones, general secretary, England Handball

If you were to ask what the England Handball Association (EHA) was like prior to the awarding of the London 2012 Olympics, I would probably have described it as a committee responsible for running the national leagues. It would have been hard to differentiate the British Handball Association (BHA) and the EHA as they were really one and the same. I would also have called the organisation as a Blazer Brigade, a gentlemen's club with pipe and slippers and happy with their lot – although a tenacious bunch when challenged to affect change.

Then London won the bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games and Sport England introduced a fresh dynamic process to engage the NGBs and, more importantly, the imagination of club membership to build a sport worthy of the greatest event in the world.

The BHA had already received £3m to support handball's elite men's and women's teams. So it was now up to the EHA to embed handball into the school curriculum; increase the number and improve the quality of leaders, coaches and clubs; develop competition and performance from the bottom up and create a sustainable performance programme that supports the elite side of the sport.

In order to achieve these goals, the organisation consulted with handball club members across the country – giving them an opportunity to vent their frustrations as well as harness their imagination as to how they would like their sport to look in and beyond 2012. We identified potential leaders as part of this process and set up a working group to capture and collate this information.

Taking advice from Sport England, we then drafted a strategic plan and shared this with our members. This was the

precursor to developing a structure that could take the organisation forward and make it fit for purpose with detailed spending plans for the next four years.

This process has involved a split in the organisation so that the EHA is now separate from the BHA. The BHA's main focus is on elite teams and the EHA concentrates on development. Now that England Handball is a limited company, it is operating on a professional footing, guided by company law and financial regulations and the board is made up of elected members and will be appointing independent directors from commercial enterprises to bring in business expertise.

During this process, the BHA has also established development groups within the organisation that focus on different programmes – such as handball development, schools participation, community and club development.

Regarding the workforce, we are currently running development programmes for referees and officials, as well as for leadership and coaching and the sport has been selected onto the UK Coaching Certificate (UKCC) for national engagement sports, which is a huge endorsement for the work we have been doing. We also have a governance group – which offers independent scrutiny to ensure that the organisation is fit for purpose.

Next on our agenda is to establish a business and finance development group and set up a marketing and promotion group.



We consulted with club members – giving them an opportunity to vent their frustrations and harness their imagination

ROUNDERS ENGLAND

Alison Howard, chief executive, Rounders England

This year has been a year of big changes for Rounders England. After 65 years, the National Rounders Association was rebranded as Rounders England. We also received a huge 450 per cent increase in funding from Sport England, as a result of the positive development the governing body has already made. Over the next four years the £2.2m funding will be invested in rounders to help grow and sustain participation.

Participation among adults has increased to 43 leagues in many areas of England and the latest Sport England figures show an increase in participation of 79 per cent between the *Active People Surveys* 1 and 2. Over 58,000 adults now regularly play the game and participation in schools has also increased by 5 per cent since 1994, with 89 per cent of schools now offering rounders to boys and girls.

Over the next four years, we aim to increase participation by 13,800 by delivering relevant, innovative and targeted projects.

The first project is to support development in other areas

Developing a professionally-trained workforce of coaches, tutors and assessors will provide high quality courses, events and competitions

by strengthening the infrastructure and corporate identity of the organisation. Staff numbers increased in April 2009 from four to 12, comprising of HQ and delivery staff in three carefully prioritised regions; the East and South East of England and the London area. A new corporate identity has also been introduced – bringing with it plans to develop the website, data management systems and introduce new communication methods, which will help the game to appeal to a broader audience and ensure a consistent and strong brand presence across all Rounders England activities.

Other projects include developing our coaching courses, where Rounders England intends to produce 370 new coaches this year alone. Developing a professionally trained workforce of coaches, tutors and assessors will help us



to provide a higher quality of courses, events and competitions that will help to meet the needs of players and help grow and sustain participation.

We will provide more playing opportunities by developing STAR (Satellite Training Academies for Rounders) centres and an indoor rounders game, so people can play all year round. Increasing participation will also provide more opportunities for competitions at both adult and younger player levels – resulting in a larger talent pool and a higher profile of the sport.

The challenges and changes facing rounders over the next four years are huge, but with the support of Sport England and other partners – including SkillsActive, SportscoachUK, the Youth Sport Trust and the County Sports Partnerships – rounders is well placed to deliver.

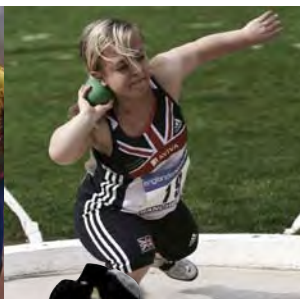


NETBALL ENGLAND

Paul Clark, chief executive, England Netball

The Whole Sport Plan (WSP) funding (2009-2013) allowed England Netball to significantly grow its organisational structure to meet our grow, sustain and excel strategic outcomes.

To maximise our impact at community level we have recruited a team of 50 county-based netball development officers (a combination of part- and full-time posts), to work with our volunteers and partners at a local level to deliver increased participation in the game, a stronger presence in schools, more and better quality junior clubs and a more effective link between the latter two. This is based on the core assumption that to significantly grow participation in the sport we must have a stronger presence (volunteers and paid staff) at grassroots level. This has virtually doubled the size of the organisation.



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More than playgrounds

Richard Newson of Play England looks at the need for local authorities and their partners to embrace the bigger picture when planning for children's play and introduces an innovative new project, Play Shaper, that helps them to do this by making communities more child-friendly

Until recently, play was often considered something that children just did: beyond the scope of legislation and government interest. But as the pressure on public space has grown, exacerbated by the ever-increasing number of cars on our streets, the space available for children to play has started to disappear.

At the same time, a heightened sense of the dangers that children face means that, as adults, we are increasingly reluctant to allow our children to roam freely. Similarly, professionals providing play opportunities may feel so constrained by health and safety concerns over accidents and injuries, that the play areas we do provide lack the challenge and excitement that children need.

Child-friendly Communities

Against this backdrop, the government decided to ask children themselves what they thought could be done. Nearly 10,000 children came forward to participate in the Fair Play consultation and have their voices heard in Westminster. The main reason they gave for not playing outside was a lack of places to go and things to do. They wanted bigger and better play areas with more exciting, challenging and varied equipment. They wanted to feel safe and be able to travel easily to and from places to play.

In response, the government produced the first national Play Strategy in December 2008 and earmarked £235m for improving play space across England. The lion's share of this money has been allocated to local authorities to refurbish and develop play facilities.

However, the Play Strategy has a greater ambition: to make play an ongoing priority not just for local authorities but for the whole range of organisations

that have a stake in designing, planning, building and managing our communities. Instead of thinking of play in terms of providing a scattering of sites where children can play in parks and playing fields, the objective is to make whole communities child-friendly.

To meet these aims, the Play Shaper programme was created by a partnership led by Play England with Playwork Partnerships and SkillsActive. Play Shaper brings together professional people working in diverse organisations across a local area. The idea is for them to explore the importance of children's play and then look at what each can do within their own professional sphere, to enable and create more child-friendly communities.

The Benefits of Play

The rewards to society for waking up to the potential of children playing actively are staggering. For a start, there is an obvious contribution to the objectives of health professionals keen to halt the year on year increase in obesity in children under 11 years old. This is a pressing concern, confirmed by the findings of research conducted recently by the British Heart Foundation, which found that out of 4,000 children, one in three are physically active for only one hour per week – as opposed to the hour per day recommended by the British Medical Association.

Similarly, targeting play facilities to specific areas can help address problems of anti-social behaviour. In a recent letter to their members, the Association of Chief Police Officers emphasised that 'good play and recreational facilities contribute to reduced youth crime, help build safer communities and tackle the problem of social exclusion'. The letter



goes on to ask for community-based officers to actively feed into the plans of local authorities, play partnerships and third sector groups and to take an active role in the design of play areas and the routes used to travel to them.

The list goes on: play and active travel can help excluded youngsters feel part of a community, reduce carbon emissions, provide local employment opportunities and increase residents' satisfaction with the places where they live. In fact, it has been estimated that by making communities more child-friendly we can contribute to around 43 of the national indicators used by government to measure the performance of local authorities.

Greater Collaboration

The importance of engaging a wide spectrum of people in such work is emphasised by Liz Kessler, the public space co-ordinator for EC1 New Deal for

“Play and active travel can help excluded youngsters feel part of a community, reduce carbon emissions, provide local employment and increase residents' satisfaction”



The relevance of good play and recreational facilities can be emphasised to professionals ranging from police officers to housing managers, transport planners and community health managers



Communities, who has made significant progress in making streets more child-friendly in parts of the London Borough of Islington. "Research shows that only 12 per cent of the time children spend playing outside actually take place in designated play areas," Kessler says. "Once you realise that children play wherever they are, the challenge becomes to create a vision for an area that is more playable across the board. Then you have to get everyone involved to buy in to this vision: planners, builders, housing managers, transport planners, highways engineers and local residents.

"The results can be impressive; for example, four estates in Islington have effectively become home zones where the street layout has been modified so motorists have to drive more carefully. The aim is to get a better balance between vehicular traffic and the other people using the roads, such as pedestrians, cyclists and children playing. We've

also linked the places where children live to their schools and play spaces with safer routes, which encourage them to move about under their own steam and are really play spaces in their own right."

Greater collaboration in providing play provision is a statutory requirement set out in the Department for Children, Schools and Families guidance to Children's Trusts. But making it happen among professional people who may not associate their role with children's play, sometimes requires a helping hand and that's where Play Shaper comes in.

Play Shaper Seminars

During the series of country-wide, one-day Play Shaper cross-professional events, most participants embrace the new thinking around play and the design of playable communities. By the close of the day, participants – attending together with partners from various services in the same local authority – suggest an

array of actions to take forward. These could include writing playable space into masterplanning exercises, developing more free play in schools' extended services, building play opportunities into local obesity strategies, building closer links between open space strategies and their Children and Young People's Plans, or redrafting health and safety guidance.

After the initial Play Shaper event, local authorities are encouraged to embed the Play Shaper programme into their own training and development schemes, so that the relevance of play can continue to be emphasised to professionals ranging from police officers to housing managers, transport planners to community health managers.

Let's hope that this vision will result in England being the best place in the world in which to grow up. ●

For more information on Play Shaper visit www.playshaper.org.uk or email playshaper@ncb.org.uk



LET IT SNOW

in Hemel Hempstead

Hemel Hempstead's 30-year-old dry ski slope has been given a £23m makeover to become The Snow Centre, the first in a proposed chain of indoor snow slopes

Although Hemel Hempstead's dry ski slope had earned a reputation for providing good instruction and turning out good skiers and snowboarders, the advent of artificial snow ski centres meant there was a limited future for dry slopes. The launch of Xscape at Milton Keynes, just a stone's throw away, added to the problem. Although lesson bookings remained buoyant or even increased, there was a dramatic fall in people using the slope for recreational skiing and boarding.

Owner operator David Surrey, who developed the Hemel slope with his father, had a choice of ticking along or creating an ambitious, next generation centre. He took the latter option, putting together an experienced board and enlisting the expertise of Pete Gillespie as snowsports director. Now Xscape may have caused

for concern, since The Snow Centre is 30 miles closer to London and may stem the flow of visitors to Milton Keynes.

CREATING THE SNOW CENTRE

"We decided we wanted to create a training academy and a centre of excellence, not a theme park," says Gillespie. "We went around all the snow centres and took the best of the key things and designed out what we thought didn't work. We wanted a big nursery slope, as most people come for lessons and we wanted it to feel open, with wide slopes and a high roof."

To animate the space, the walls are decorated with mountain vistas: floor to ceiling photos of Austrian scenery. Gillespie contacted the Austrian

Tourist Office to ask if any of the ski regions were interested in sponsoring the walls and two regions, Oetztl and Zillertal, took up the offer. The back wall is sponsored by Columbia, which also provides all the clothing, and the equipment is sponsored by Head Tyrolian.

The Snow Centre has been five years in the making and opened for business in May this year, giving ample time to sort out any teething problems before winter. "There were a few planning issues," says Gillespie. "This is quite a funky building to be situated right in the middle of a residential area, this site was always designated for sports and recreational use. The town is being renovated and the council is keen to make it more of a destination, so it was generally enthusiastic about creating an exciting venue to bring extra revenue

People can learn to be ski instructors or take refresher qualifications



“The first year target is 300,000 visits, with a £6.5m turnover, extending to 500,000 visits in a few years' time”



FACTS

- Cost £23m to develop
- 8,000sq m of real snow slopes
- The main slope is 160m long
- It has the UK's largest indoor lesson slope: 100m x 30m
- Snow play area for kids under six years, with ringos and toboggans
- Rails and freestyle features
- Snow and Rock store
- The Edge café bar
- Three conference rooms
- 120 BASI-qualified instructors



The wood and slate within the design gives the centre a homely Alpine feel

to the town. We did have to make some changes to the initial plans; to start with it looked a bit like a massive shed, but the council told us we had to be more eco-friendly so we've now got one of the biggest cedar roofs in Europe."

AMBITIOUS TARGETS

The operating costs are high, so the stakes have been raised considerably from the projections of the artificial slope. In the first year, targets are 300,000 visits, with a £6.5m turnover. This compares with just 30,000-40,000 and £1m turnover for the original dry ski slope.

"It was a worry opening in the middle of the recession, but we were already committed," says Gillespie. "However, we have been overwhelmed with the response and the level of success. We are on schedule at the moment and looking like we will achieve our year-end target."

The centre is being marketed via a website and email marketing, as well as ski and snowboard and lifestyle magazines. "Although ski and snowboard fanatics are



MY EXPERIENCE

As a ski and snowboard addict who has been deprived for the past few years, I was excited about the prospect of getting a fix at The Snow Centre.

It's an impressive building which flows well. The café bar, with its views of the slopes, has enough wood and slate in the design to give it a homely Alpine feel. Although it was good to see Glühwein on the menu, I was disappointed not to get a crepe.

Much time and money has been invested in the manufacture of the snow and the quality was good. Probably good enough to live up to the tongue-in-cheek strapline of "the best snow this side of the Alps."

I was pleasantly surprised at the standard of the tuition. My snowboard instructor, Tom, was extremely likeable and I was impressed with the subtle changes he made to my rusty technique. He gave me digestible advice and by the end of the hour lesson I was snowboarding 100 per cent better and with more confidence. It would have been an excellent pre-holiday refresher, if only I had a holiday to look forward to!



obvious targets, the marketing is focused on reaching new people, such as the family market," he says. "Most of the visitors are As and B1s: this area has six million people within 45 minutes travel time. Fanatics come from further afield – two to three hours drive – on a monthly basis. In a few years we hope to be getting 500,000 visitors a year.

CENTRE OF EXCELLENCE

The level of tuition is the USP. It is the only British Association of Ski Instructors (BASI) accredited Centre of Excellence in the south. Not only are lessons offered

to people learning to ski and snowboard, but people can learn to become instructors, take refresher qualifications, or adaptive training, for those who want to teach people with disabilities. The up-take has been excellent, with all of the instructor courses already sold out.

Surrey and Gillespie have high hopes for the business: "The concept is to get it up and running as quickly as possible, create the best business model in the world and then open the next one. We are already doing feasibility studies," Gillespie says. ●

Kath Hudson is a freelance journalist



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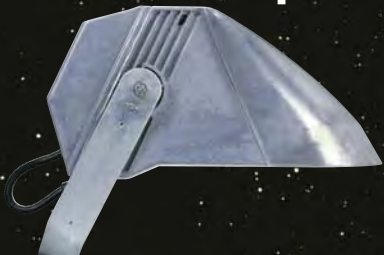
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THORN

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All lit up at The Snow Centre

Thorn Lighting's Hugh King explains how the difficult task of lighting the Hemel Hempstead Snow Centre was handled using a floodlighting approach to enhance the shadow and detail of its snowy environment

Britain's latest indoor real snow slope – The Snow Centre at Hemel Hempstead – is a spectacular attraction by any standards. Constructed by Sir Robert McAlpine, the building boasts a 160m-long, 30m-wide, main run of real snow for regular skiers and boarders and a 100m-nursery slope for beginners. Snow cannon fire cooled water into the air that is chilled to cover 8,000sq m of the ski box in perfect, real snow.

Lighting Issues

There are several fundamental problems in lighting such a structure. The main run starts 32m above the building's

ground floor level at a pitch of 15 degrees. The slope ranges from almost horizontal along parts of the training slope to what feels like near vertical down the main run. This meant whichever lighting was chosen, it had to illuminate the ribbon-shaped surface while providing a pleasant and visually comfortable environment for all Snow Centre participants.

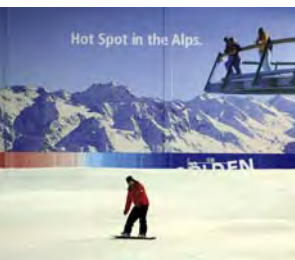
Further problems included a 60m-long centre wall before the main slope opens up to accommodate the training area, the high luminance of the snow, limited mounting heights, the alpine environment and the need for access for future maintenance.

Conventional symmetrical-beam floodlights at the relatively low-mounting height of 10m would not have been entirely satisfactory.

To provide visual comfort for participants, an asymmetrical beam, useful for lighting areas rather than small points, with effective cut-off was required. Thorn has had such a floodlight in its sports lighting armoury for a number of years. It is known as the Contrast C. At the centre, 154 floodlights are used, equipped with 400W metal halide lamps.

Aside from high luminous efficacy the metal halide lamp brings good colour rendition, high colour stability and a cool white appearance, which is ideally suited to the snowy interior. The floodlights are mounted just below roof level on a central lattice truss in two rows (one row by the central wall). The truss was supplied with mounting holes for the floodlights pre-drilled.

Few indoor sports demand better eye-hand-body co-ordination and overall balance than skiing and snowboarding, so quality of vision is essential



The Snow Centre walls are covered with continuous views of alpine peaks, which were floodlit to correct specification



► It's all in the Detail

Few indoor sports demand better eye-hand-body co-ordination and overall balance than skiing and snowboarding, so quality of vision is essential. In nature, daylight has a generally downward bias, forming tiny shadows, which help skiers to pick out surface details on snow and orientate themselves. The lighting designer's aim was to mimic this effect using the floodlights from above to give skiers visual contact with the slope. The final aiming pattern used a combination of narrow vertical beam floodlights, for long throws to the sidewalls, and a wider-angle version, for the nearside areas, to give an average of 400 lux.

By controlling the vertical and horizontal distribution, any tendency for the lighting to flatten the surface with little discernable detail was avoided. Additionally, the use of beam diffraction attachments, which aid uniformity, was rejected. By using the floodlights raw, the peakiness of the contrast beam added to the highlights and shadows to enhance the pattern and detail of the snow.

Some floodlights throw light up to the ceiling to bounce back onto the slope



Power supply dips can be a problem for sports facilities – allowing lighting levels to fall by 40 per cent. However, correctly sized conductors limit the voltage drop to 3 per cent

The problem of glare was resolved by careful aiming – making sure that no excessive amounts of light (hot spots) were present – and most importantly, by the use of indirect light. Roughly a third of the floodlights throw light up to the ceiling to be bounced back onto the slope. Uplighting has the intrinsic virtue of eliminating sharp shadows from the surface and producing a pleasing effect with no high luminance reflections. This technique is also aesthetically satisfying – after all, the client is delivering an authentic resort feel rather than an industrial shed with snow inside, as well as being energy efficient.

A major concern was that the single row of floodlights along the 60m central wall (positioned high up the slope) was mounted on the outside of the truss – to light across the slope and thus overhang the wall. At such a close distance it was impractical to mount floodlights back under the truss, yet light was required as one of the chair lifts operated between the truss and wall. The solution was to install a continuous row of ColdForce enclosed fluorescent luminaires to the underside of the truss.

Early Briefing

It is rare for lighting designers to be involved in the issue of room surfaces,

which is unfortunate when the characteristics of these backgrounds affect glare, modelling and lighting system efficiency as well as the appearance of the space. However, at The Snow Centre the lighting team was briefed at an early stage that the walls were to be manifested with continuous views of alpine peaks (sky and mountains). A section of the manifestation was measured at Thorn's lighting laboratory to obtain the correct reflectance factor, which was then used to establish the exact number of floodlights required.

Also included in the brief was a maintenance factor to allow for a loss of light due to residues and icicles on the front glasses, between cleaning intervals. The floodlights are sealed to IP65 to prevent any snow or moisture from entering the body.

One of the problems that confronts any major sporting event or locale is power supply dips affecting the lumen output of metal halide lamps. In such a scheme lamps could extinguish and lighting levels fall by 40 per cent. In this application the contractor used correctly sized conductors to limit the voltage drop to 3 per cent or less. Selected floodlights also incorporate an additional halogen lamp to allow for safe stopping of activities in the event of mains failure.

The lighting design was by Mark Mattimore of Thorn Lighting and Acer Snowmex Consultants provided design and specialist engineering advice.

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Shrewsbury FC's head groundsman, Richard Barnett, has chosen a Dennis Mower for pitch care at the club's new Pro Star Stadium.

Having used the company's Premier mower at the old Gay Meadow ground, which produced an excellent finish on the traditional soil pitch, Barnett chose the Dennis G860 light-weight machine for work on the new stadium's Fibresand pitch as it required a different approach.

Barnett says the machine is so easy to operate and comfortable to use that he's bought a further second-hand model.

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Overseeding works well on golf greens

An ongoing programme of overseeding with British Seed Houses' AberRoyal Browntop Bent has proven the key to re-vitalising the greens at Vicars Cross Golf Club near Chester. Originally constructed on heavy blue Cheshire clay, a renovation scheme on the parkland course has seen all of the greens gradually rebuilt to USGA standards with 70 per cent sand.

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PAS currently supplies teams in the Premiership and Football League, as well as the Welsh Rugby Union and is the official sports nutrition partner to Cardiff Blues, Scarlet's and Biarritz. The com-



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pany also works with Nathan Cleverly (British and Commonwealth Light Heavyweight Champion), Andy Turner (400m hurdles), Paul Casey (golf) and Paul Nixon and Monty Panesar (cricket).



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Record RSS

Record RSS has a sting in its tail

Having previously launched innovation play equipment at the 2007 and 2008 IOG SALTEX events, this year was no exception for play provider Record RSS with the introduction of the Scorpion.

Commenting on its unique design, which allows two users to twist 360 degrees at speed, sales and marketing director Doug Belfield says: "The Scorpion shows our continual dedication to innovative, quality design and I'm confident that it'll influence the future development of outdoor play."

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DIARY DATES

10 NOVEMBER 2009

Sports Event Management (SEM)

Novotel, St Pancras, London

Now in its fourth year, this event is the major annual meeting for Local Organising Committees, International Federations and leading figures in the sports event management industry.

Tel +44 (0)1264 852016

www.sporteventmanagement.com

11-12 NOVEMBER 2009

ISRM Conference and Exhibition

Alton Towers Resort, Staffordshire

In this tough 'credit-crunched' environment, this conference presents a unique opportunity for delegates to focus on the key issues affecting the sports industry, explore new ideas and listen to creative and innovative solutions from expert speakers.

Tel +44 (0)1509 226474

Email info@isrm.co.uk

www.isrm.co.uk

12 NOVEMBER 2009

BISL Annual Conference

Lord's Cricket Ground, London

Aimed at the leisure, gaming, sport and hospitality sectors, conference attendees are promised a day that will get them thinking about how to ride out the recession and to start planning for future growth. Keynote speakers will include Minister for Sport Gerry Sutcliffe, MP and Magnus Sheving – who, as creator of television programme *Lazy Town* has created a worldwide health-focused brand for kids.

Tel +44 (0)20 8255 3782

www.bisl.org.uk

17-18 NOVEMBER 2009

National Sports Development Seminar Ponds Forge, Sheffield

This ISPAL event will provide best practice examples of how to use the Olympic platform to widen sporting opportunities in your region or local community. Key speakers, group discussion and debate will provide practical support and industry updates that will be key to managing and delivering sports development in the UK. Excellent networking opportunities will also be at the forefront of the programme.

Tel +44 (0)118 929 8355

Email joanna.rola@ispal.org.uk

www.ispal.org.uk

24 NOVEMBER 2009

SAPCA Sports Facility Construction Exhibition and Seminar Event

Twickenham, London

This one-day event offers a comprehensive seminar programme that includes a special focus on the provision of space for PE and sport within the education sector, in particular the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Tel +44 (0)24 7641 6316

www.sapca.org.uk

8 DECEMBER 2009

UK Coaching Awards 2009

Old Billingsgate, London

A presentation to honour coaches who have achieved outstanding success over the past 12 months.

Tel +44 (0)113 204 3518

www.sportscoachuk.org

18 JANUARY 2010

SAPCA Annual Conference 2010

The Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon

This conference and annual dinner is open to all SAPCA members and invited guests.

Tel +44 (0)24 7641 6316

www.sapca.org.uk

19-21 JANUARY 2010

Harrogate Week

Harrogate International Centre

This BIGGA-organised event offers visitors an unrivalled opportunity to gather the latest information, to improve their education and to network with colleagues from around the world.

Tel +44 (0)1347 833800

Email paoline@bigga.co.uk

www.bigga.co.uk

10-11 FEBRUARY 2010

Sports College Conference International Centre, Telford

This conference will look towards the journey to 2012 and beyond. Celebrating the achievement of having more than 500 schools with a sport specialism at the heart of 450 School Sport Partnerships, the conference will showcase the best of the schools' work, with both inspiration and ideas about how to maximise learning and achievement for young people in the new education and sporting landscape.

Tel: +44 (0)1509 226600

Email info@youthsportstrust.org

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