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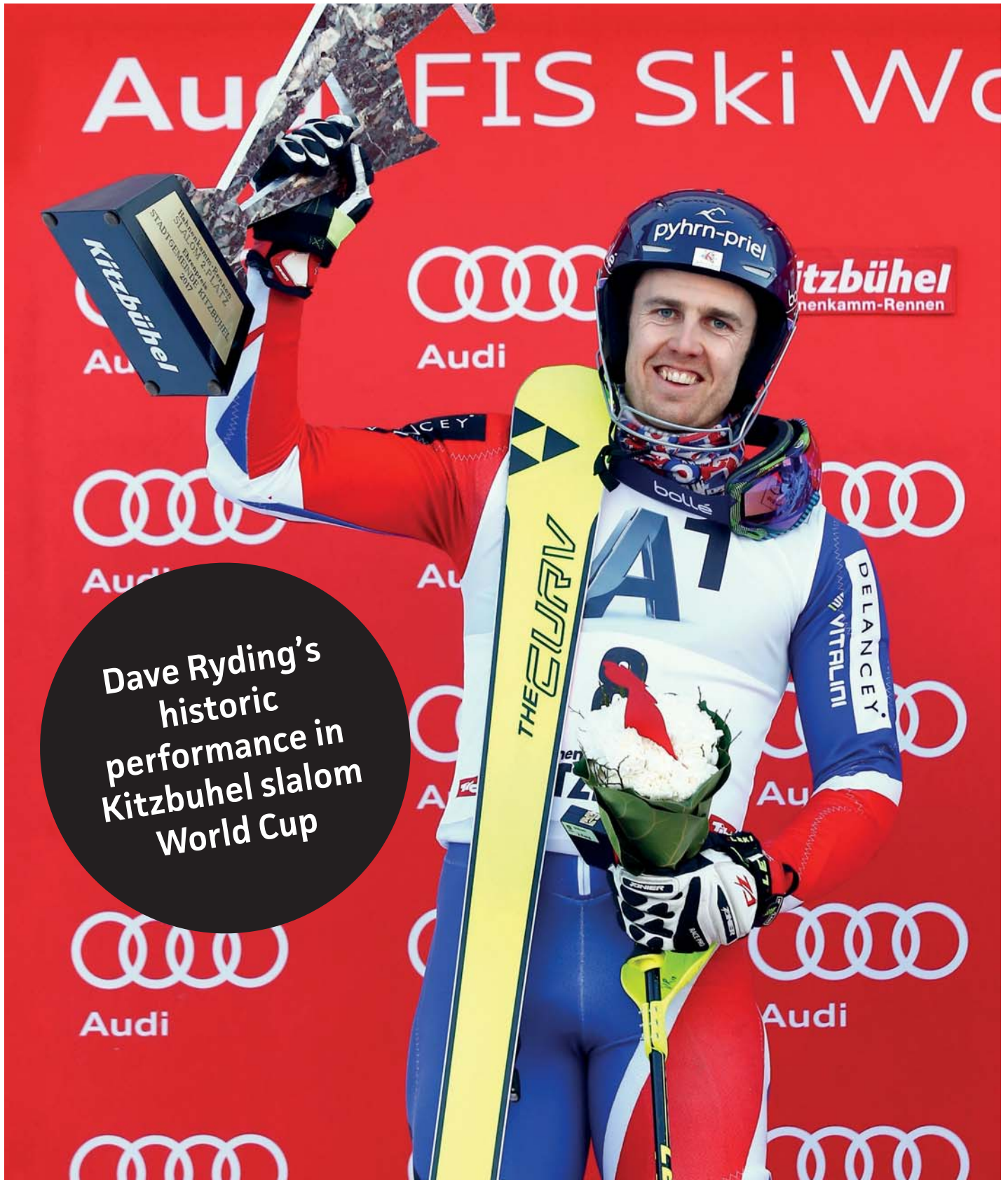
MANAGEMENT

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Dave Ryding's
historic
performance in
Kitzbühel slalom
World Cup



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A new quango?

The sports sector is waking up to the fact it's now partly funding the fight against inactivity, with money being being diverted out of sport as a consequence. Is it time for sport and inactivity to each have their own clear mandate?

Sporting Future signalled Sport England's intention to open its coffers to non-sports organisations able to increase physical activity levels. This effectively split its work between sport and the inactivity agenda.

Its inactivity interventions are being driven by *Towards an Active Nation*, a strategy designed to tackle sedentary behaviour and a £250m fund – most of which will go to non-sports partners. Some of this money has come from cuts to sports budgets.

It's great the government has embraced the need to intervene on inactivity and there's a logic to using sport as the foundation of this push against sedentary behaviour, however, as cuts kick in, the backlash begins.

Commentators such as Andy Reed (see page 31) are asking if it's reasonable for sport to shoulder so much of the burden of funding the fight against inactivity, which is so overwhelming the health service.

It's a fair question, given the size of the NHS budget and the paucity of resources available to sport. Spread any budget too thin and it will fail to make an impact.

The new set-up could look like snakes and ladders in terms of participation numbers, because governing bodies are no longer required to drive participation, as measured by the (defunct) Active People survey, so their power and motivation to do so has been reduced.

Whether any drops in participation caused by these changes can be offset by increases in activity driven by *Towards an Active Nation* remains to be seen.

We could sacrifice sports funding, only to see it swallowed by the insatiable inactivity monster, for which £250m over four years is a light snack.



Should we leave Sport England to focus on sport and establish a new wellbeing quango to tackle inactivity?

There are clearly many challenges inherent in supporting the active and the habitually inactive via the same organisation by partly splitting budgets.

These are such different tasks, there's an argument for leaving Sport England to focus on sport and establishing a new wellbeing body to tackle inactivity.

This new quango would concentrate on prevention, on returning deconditioned people to fitness and reducing and eliminating epigenetic health conditions.

It would have its own mandate focused on things such as ensuring children learn good exercise habits from early years to reverse the decline in the longer term and that people of all ages – including the elderly – have access to the advice and activity they need.

Active People showed us that sport isn't for everyone and now this has been accepted and we're splitting sport from the activity agenda, a separate quango is the next logical step in focusing our efforts on improving the health of the nation through prevention.

.....
LIZ TERRY, EDITOR, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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MIKHAIL ZAHRAICHNY / SHUTTERSTOCK



While some older people run marathons, others may need encouragement to try new sports and activities

Age is no barrier to participating in sport

We were delighted to see the importance of inclusive physical activity for older people highlighted in Liz Terry's editor's letter in *Sports Management* (October 2016).

Exercise is good for physical and mental health, whatever your age, but it's especially important as we get older. Exercise can build confidence and improve wellbeing, help older people to live independently for longer, and reduce isolation and loneliness. However, there is often a lack of choice of physical activities

for older disabled people or providers may not have the training or confidence to work with them.

Over the years, Age UK has run a number of programmes to encourage older people to make friends, have fun and stay active. It's not just about helping those who want to do more, it's about finding those who are most inactive and often most isolated, and helping them to enjoy the joy of movement too, however limited.

Walking-football and other walking sports (such as netball and cricket)

are a great new way of reintroducing older people to involvement in sports. Some of our local Age UK teams around the country have even made it to the Football League Trust's Walking Football Cup finals!

If people would like to know what is going on in their area they should contact their local Age UK or you can find out more information at www.fitasafiddle.org.uk.

Steve Hampson, Age UK head of innovation and programmes

SM PEOPLE

“We have the ambition to make Scotland a really sporty nation, but it’s critical that everyone is involved”

Mel Young, chair of sportscotland

If you want to talk to someone about using sport for social good, you could do worse than strike up a conversation with Mel Young. Described as a social entrepreneur, Young was the founder of the Homeless World Cup, which has been the springboard for hundreds of young homeless people to improve their lives.

He also co-founded The Big Issue in Scotland, and with his recent appointment as chair of grassroots funding organisation sportscotland, he is now in a position to create a sporting landscape that positively impacts the lives of everyone.

After appointing Young to replace Louise Martin as chair in June 2016, former Scottish sports minister Jamie Hepburn commented that Young understands sport’s role in “improving people’s lives, particularly if they come from disadvantaged backgrounds”.

Last month, sportscotland joined forces with the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) to

plough £15m into the development of more than 100 indoor tennis facilities, doubling the current number of 112 to 225 over the next five to 10 years.

Young says he wanted the scheme – which is the biggest capital investment sportscotland has ever made in tennis – to bring venues to areas of the country with hard-to-reach demographics.

Providing opportunities

“We’ll look at some existing sporting facilities that don’t have indoor tennis facilities and bolt that on, and we’ll have a look at areas that don’t have any at all,” he tells *Sports Management*.

“I’m interested in poorer areas of big cities that don’t have anything and where kids don’t get the opportunity. We’re also looking at rural areas where people might want to play tennis but have no facilities.”

Getting children, particularly from poorer backgrounds, to take part in regular



▲ Young (centre) stands with Louise Martin (right), who served as sportscotland chair for eight years, and former Scottish sports minister Jamie Hepburn (left)

physical activity is something of a priority in Scotland, with rising levels of obesity and lower life-expectancy.

In fact, the *Healthy Lifestyle Strategy* published by the Scottish Conservative Party earlier this month – alongside SportsAid Scotland and Youth Link Scotland – showed a 12-year gap in life expectancy between those living in the wealthiest parts of Scotland, and those in the poorest.

A Health and Sport Committee set up by the Scottish Parliament will investigate the barriers to entry that people in Scotland face when trying to participate in sport, meaning Young’s goals should be taken with encouragement. Building new facilities, however, is only half the battle.



World wheelchair tennis number one Gordon Reid helped launch the indoor court funding initiative

Young explains that while it is great that grassroots sporting venues are being built, they must be affordable for everyone in society or the opportunity is lost.

He says: "It's all about how much it costs to get in. If people don't have the money they won't use the facility. So it's all about us working out a way in which everyone can get a shot at this if they want."

"We're targeting school kids; both primary school and secondary school age. If we can also get good coaches in place, I'm convinced people will join in with tennis."

Facilities pipeline

Sportscotland is on the hunt for local authority and leisure trusts partners to

work alongside the tennis scheme, which they hope can provide extra finance, then all the better, says Young.

He reveals that there are similar projects for other sports in the pipeline, and said some of the work sportscotland was doing on impressive national facilities demonstrated the body's commitment to increasing opportunities.

Last year, the ribbon was cut on the £33m Oriam Centre on the Edinburgh campus of Heriot-Watt University. The facilities includes a Hampden Park-standard grass pitch, an outdoor synthetic pitch, a 12-court sports hall, a 3G indoor pitch, Scotland's only glass-back squash court and a 120-station fitness suite.

The Reiach and Hall-designed National Centre Inverclyde is due for completion soon. Young dubs it "one of the best facilities for disability sports in Britain".

Costing £12m to construct, the venue will be used to host para-sport events, and will house sports equipment, facilities and accommodation under one roof.

"There's a lot going on," says Young enthusiastically. "It's an exciting time."

"We have the ambition to make Scotland a really sporty nation. We want to win lots of medals at international events, but I think it's critical that everyone is involved."

"There are loads of issues around inactivity in Scotland, so I want everyone out there playing and having fun."

“The idea was to give therapists an opportunity to spend time out of the clinic, seeing the world and improving their skills”

Tierney Maude, Roadside Therapy

With cycling events, triathlons, marathons and more growing in popularity all the time, there’s also a growing opportunity for support businesses. One such offering is Roadside Therapy, which provides manual therapists to treat competitors at a wide range of sporting events across Europe.

Roadside Therapy is the brainchild of Tierney Maude, who – with a degree in Sports and Exercise Science and a qualification in Sports Therapy behind her – gained several years of invaluable experience on the cycling circuit.

“Through my contacts in the cycling industry, I gained a great deal of

experience, working at many sporting events and training camps with professional teams. Putting in a lot of ‘experience’ hours!” she says.

“During that time I expanded my knowledge through many professional development courses and then opened up my own clinic in South West London, treating mainly endurance athletes.”

On the road

These years of experience gave Maude a good understanding of how large sporting events are run and the challenges organisers deal with. She developed her business idea based on a need she saw for easy-to-hire sports therapists.



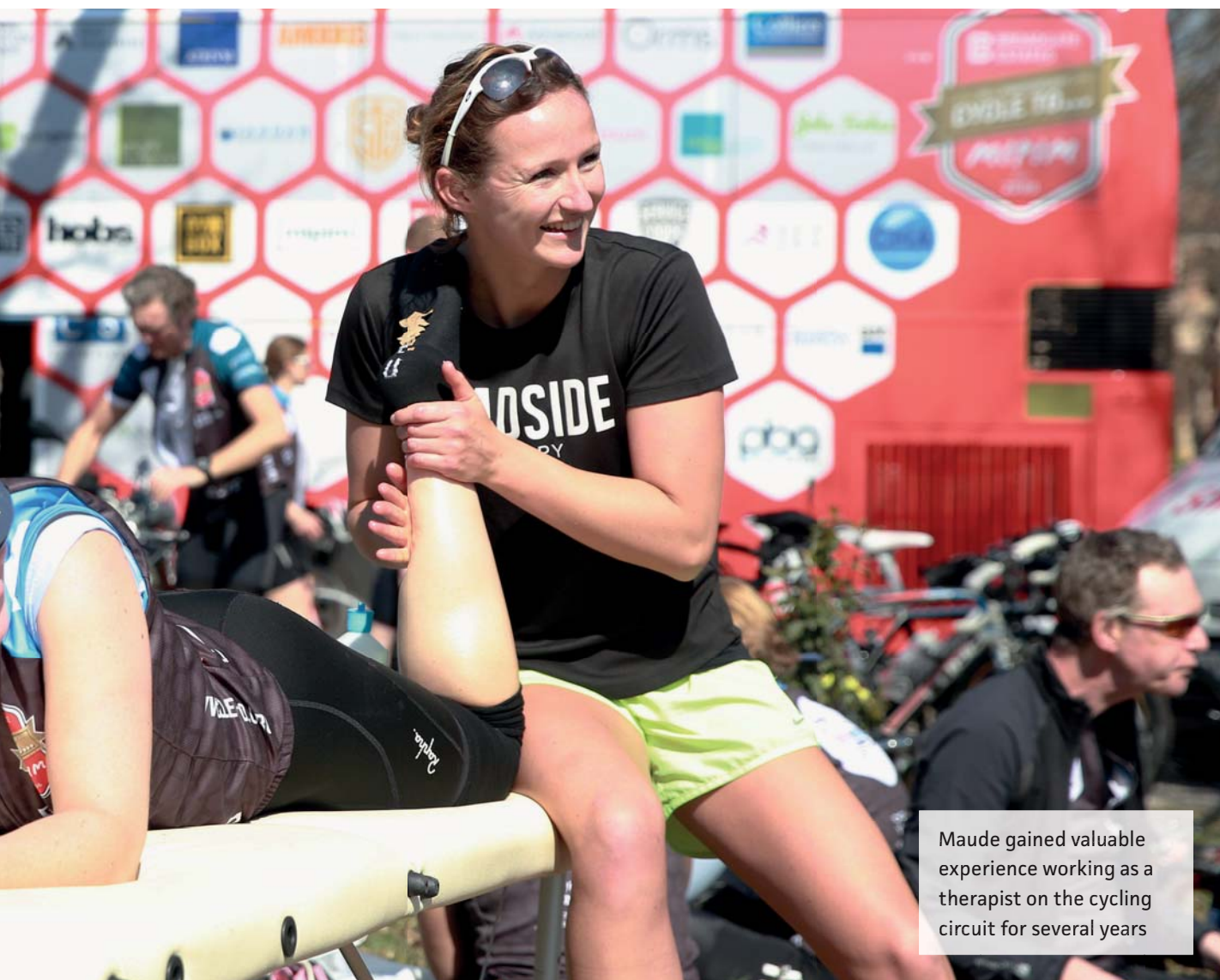
The most important asset for a Roadside therapist is to be friendly, smiling and ready to chat, in addition to having at least two years’ industry experience



“After three years of working at multi-day sporting events, gaining experience and new contacts, I realised the companies organising these events found it hard to source reliable, friendly and professional sports therapists. So I decided to do it for them, and since then we’ve been on some incredible journeys and gained some incredibly talented and passionate therapists.”

Maude started in 2014, offering freelance sports therapists the chance to get out of the clinic and hit the road.

“The real idea behind it was to give lots of therapists an opportunity to spend some time out of the clinic, seeing a bit of the world and improving their skills. For example, at a large event like HotChillee: London to Paris, a therapist can treat up to 90 people in a three-day event, helping them to meet new



Maude gained valuable experience working as a therapist on the cycling circuit for several years

clients, widen their sports therapy skills and have a lot of fun along the way.”

Events range from multi-day sporting events such as Universal Music Ride with Club Peloton to training camps and one day races. Due to Maude’s cycling knowledge, the team is sometimes asked for a full soigneur service, which means the therapist is also involved in all aspects of supporting the cyclists.

Therapy with a smile

By providing a link between event organisers and experienced sport therapists, Roadside Therapy has found its niche, having worked at 25 events over the past two years. The company has 20 affiliated therapists, who are all listed on the Roadside website – allowing event participants to arrange treatments with their therapist after the event.

Therapists are assigned to events based on their experience and availability. While they must have at least two years’ experience in the industry, the number one rule for therapists who work with Roadside is service with a smile, explained Maude.

“All the therapists we use must provide proof of insurance, and we make sure they are adequately experienced to provide the required level of treatment. But most importantly we always expect our therapists to be

wearing a smile, ready to chat and always want to have a good time. So not only do you know you have a safe pair of hands on the massage table, but a friendly face to help you reach the finish line.”

Looking ahead, Maude would like to grow the business and explore opportunities further afield.

“We’re looking at increasing our event portfolio, expanding our therapist database and continuing to have a lot of fun along the way,” she explained.

“At the moment we’re mainly used by event organisers for European events, but we’re always keen to broaden our horizons.”

► Tierney Maude, founder of Roadside Therapy



“As far as we know, it’s the only winter 24-hour mountain bike race in the world”

**Steve McDonald,
Co-founder of Strathpuffer**

What kind of person creates a 24-hour mountain biking event that takes place in the Scottish Highlands in the middle of winter? Perhaps a man who describes himself as “a keen mountain biker who imagines he’s better than he really is”.

Steve McDonald is one of the co-founders of the Strathpuffer, a gruelling event that competitors just can’t get enough of. Keen to encourage mountain biking in the area, McDonald originally envisaged a midsummer race, with little darkness and much warmer temperatures. However, a conversation with Pat Adams, organiser of the hugely popular 24-hour mountain biking event Mountain Mayhem, turned the idea on its head.

“I was thinking of a midsummer race,” says McDonald. “But Pat said, ‘nah – winter! Mountain bikers like a challenge!’”

Evidently they do, as the event is now in its 12th year and sells out within four minutes of opening for registration. McDonald was as surprised as anyone at the instant popularity of the race.

“At first we thought it would be a one-off, but 250 riders entered and it was clear there was a need! Over 12 years it’s grown considerably, and where it once was

a struggle to fund, now we have lots of potential sponsors.”

Planning for the unknown

The event takes place in the Torrachilty Forest, near the town of Strathpeffer, where McDonald and his wife Clancy owned and ran the Square Wheels bike shop until 2016. They joined up with Alasdair and Linda Lawton, who run Hands On Events, to create the event.

Riders can compete solo or in teams of two, four, eight or 10, riding continuous laps of the 11km course for 24 hours, which includes a bleak 17 hours of darkness. This year, approximately 940 riders will take part, proving that the event is a firm favourite within the mountain biking community.

Careful planning is required, says McDonald. “It’s probably not that different from most outdoor events, but we have to especially factor in the weather, as it could be anything from sun to gales to snow. Permissions from the council and Forestry Commission have to be organised, as well as first aid, timing, catering, marshalls, transport, you name it!”

The event, which this year takes place on 21-22 January, has dealt with its fair



▲ Steve McDonald co-founded the event

share of weather-based challenges, including gales blowing away the marquee, two feet of snow covering the track and temperatures of minus 10 degrees. But as the team says on its website, “if we insist on staging a 24 hour event in the Highlands of Scotland in the middle of winter what do we expect?”

A unique offering

The team is always careful to engage with the local community to ensure no one is adversely affected by the event. But as the race has become more popular, hotels and other local businesses have benefited from the yearly influx of visitors.

In growing the event, McDonald says that social media has helped considerably. The Strathpuffer was also listed by US-based *Bike* magazine as one of the world’s top 10 mountain biking races. But the popularity of the event is undoubtedly due to its unique offering.

“As far as we know, it’s the only winter 24-hour mountain bike race in the world,” says McDonald. “It’s become a ‘bucket list’ event for keen mountain bikers. Plus, we have our own beer!” ●



▲ This year, approximately 940 riders will take part in the Strathpuffer

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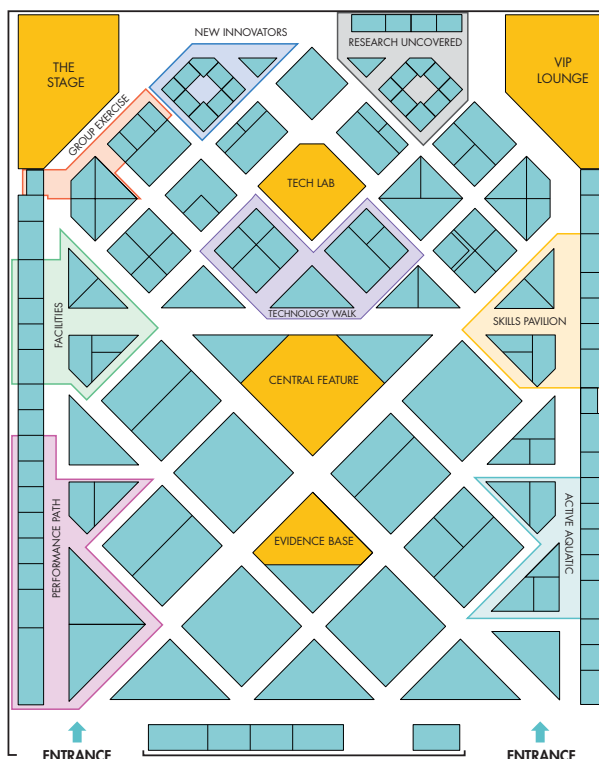
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FUNDING

Sport England shakes up NGB grant model

Director of sport Phil Smith says the 'tyranny of the Whole Sport Plan' is over



▲ Smith said that NGBs can now completely focus on their core markets

Sport England has ushered in a new era of governing body funding, with director of sport Phil Smith declaring: "The tyranny of the Whole Sport Plan and Active People Survey is definitely over."

The DCMS arm's-length body revealed its first batch of national governing body (NGB) funding decisions, with a significantly smaller pot of £88m compared to the £493m reserved for the Whole Sport Plan over the 2013-17 period.

Talking to *Sports Management*, Smith explained that the new method had "changed the game", and rather than putting added pressure on NGBs, the drop in funding has liberated them to "concentrate on their core market".

"We're asking governing bodies to perform a different role," said Smith.

"This is not a donation. All the NGBs understand that if things are not working we will look to be flexible and change investment"

"Rather than be responsible for anybody who might want to play their sport, we want them to concentrate on their core market of regulars. By definition, that's a smaller audience so should result in a smaller investment."

He added: "Some governing bodies understood that strategic point better than others it's fair to say. Some have proposed this very maturely and acknowledged that even though there was less money it gave them a licence to focus on the things they do well."

"Others have seen this as an opportunity to get as much investment as they possibly can and those negotiations have been a bit more tricky. But I think we're in a place where everyone understands why we're doing what we're doing."

However, a narrower focus does not mean that NGBs aren't under pressure to deliver results, said Smith, adding that the least that is expected is for sports to retain the people who play regularly.

"We're looking for results here, this is not a donation," he said. "All the governing bodies receiving investment from Sport England understand that if things are not working we will look to be flexible and change investment."

The number of people taking part in sports will be recorded through the quango's new Active Lives Survey method of measurement.

Smith stressed that there was an opportunity for governing bodies to receive more investment through other pockets of Sport England funding, but doubted that they had the capabilities of adequately engaging with the inactive, and therefore decreasing their chance receiving grants to counter inactivity.

"Most governing bodies will acknowledge themselves that if you're going to encourage someone who is doing to nothing to do something, you wouldn't start by putting them in a team for one of those sports," he said.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=Z007B>

FACILITIES

Chelsea stadium gets local council green light

Premier League football club Chelsea has seen its application to build a new £500m (US\$614.6m, €585.3m) stadium approved by the local council.

The London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham has given the green light for the structure, which will be built on the site of the club's current Stamford Bridge ground.

Herzog & de Meuron – the architect behind the innovative Nouveau Stade de Bordeaux, which was used for Euro 2016 matches – has designed the 60,000-capacity venue. Once built, the stadium will be one of

Once built, the stadium will be one of the largest in the Premier League



▲ The stadium has been designed by Swiss architect Herzog & de Meuron

the largest in the Premier League, rivalling the home grounds of London adversaries Arsenal, Tottenham Hotspur and West Ham.

The former moved into its 60,000-seat Emirates Stadium in 2007, while the latter started playing in the 57,000-capacity London Stadium last summer after leaving Upton Park.

Tottenham Hotspur is in the process of building its ambitious

Populous-designed stadium on the site of White Hart Lane. The venue – which will also be used for National Football League (NFL) matches – will be able to hold 61,000 spectators.

London mayor Sadiq Khan has the last say on whether the building of the venue can commence.

Chelsea will now have to seek a temporary home for a few seasons
Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=g7q6t>

LTA and sportscotland pump £15m into indoor courts

Sportscotland and the Lawn Tennis Association (LTA) have teamed up to launch a £15m (US\$18.5m, €17.8m) project to double the number of covered courts in Scotland.

The ambition is to increase the number of courts protected against the weather from 112 to 225 over the next five to 10 years, with the “end objective” of boosting participation in tennis.

Michael Downey, the outgoing CEO of the LTA, said the governing body wants to capitalise on “an historic year for British tennis”.



▲ Andy Murray was the Wimbledon champion in 2016

In 2016, Andy Murray won his second Wimbledon and Olympic titles and his brother Jamie became the first

British man to become world number one doubles player. “We must create a purpose-built plan to ensure there is a

lasting legacy for Scotland,” added Downey, who revealed last month that he was stepping down as chief executive of the LTA following Wimbledon 2017 to return as chief executive of Tennis Canada.

Community-led bids for the funding will begin being considered in April 2017.

On his impending departure, Downey said that he was “honoured” to have held the position for three years, although ultimately he wanted to return to his home country.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=j6q9M>



▲ Chris Langridge and Marcus Ellis won an unexpected bronze medal at Rio 2016

UK Sport unveils Tokyo 2020 funding plans

Five sports miss out, forcing Badminton England CEO Adrian Christy to label the decisions “incomprehensible” and “catastrophic”

Elite sports funding body UK Sport has left five Olympic sports – archery, badminton, fencing, weightlifting and wheelchair rugby – without funding for the 2020 Games in Tokyo.

Announcing its funding decisions for the next four years, UK Sport said it needs to continue to “prioritise” sports which have the best hope of winning medals at the Games.

In total, the quango will invest up to £345m in 16 Olympic and 15 Paralympic sports for the Tokyo Games – £2m less than the record £347m allocated in the run-up to Rio.

“We would like to invest in every sport, but the reality is that we have to prioritise within agreed resources to protect and enhance the medal potential within the system,” said Liz Nicholl, CEO of UK Sport.

“If we underinvest across the board, then the British teams will ultimately underperform at the Games and medal success will be put at risk. We know what it takes to win and what it costs to win,

and believe these investments will deliver medal winning success to inspire the nation once again in Tokyo.

“We have not taken these decisions lightly and we know that this impacts on the hopes and dreams of athletes,

“How can you return from the best Games in over a decade, only to have every penny of investment withdrawn?”

coaches and support teams that miss out.”

Sports that have had their funding reduced for Tokyo include cycling (£25.98m, down from £30.27m); rowing (down to £32.1m from £32.6m); and canoeing (£19m, down from £20m).

Sports that have seen an increase in funding, following their Rio performances, are athletics (up to £27.1m from £26.8m); swimming (£21.7m, up from £20.8m) and

gymnastics (£16.7, up from £14.6m).

Among the winners was shooting, which nearly doubled its funding – from £3.95m during the Rio cycle to £7.02m for Tokyo.

UK Sport has also confirmed its medal targets for the Tokyo 2020 cycle – it expects to see 51-85 Olympic and 115-162 Paralympic medals being won by Team GB athletes.

However, Badminton England chief executive Adrian Christy said the decision to cut the sport’s funding was “incomprehensible” and “catastrophic” after Team GB pair Chris Langridge and Marcus Ellis won an unexpected bronze medal at the Rio 2016 Olympics during the summer.

“How can you return from the best Games for more than a decade, in a year where our players demonstrated world-class performances and where we can demonstrate the journey to Tokyo is on track, only to have every penny of investment withdrawn?” he queried.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=H0c9X>



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SPORT TOURISM

Sporting events key to day-trip income in 2017

National tourism quango VisitEngland is hoping to capitalise on a bumper year of sport to boost the amount spent by day-trippers beyond the record £45.3bn (US\$55.8bn, €53.1bn) generated over 2016.

The arm's-length body said events such as London's 2017 World Athletics Championships and World Para Athletics Championship in July and August were good opportunities to bring in income from day trips.

"It's great to see more people exploring a huge range of destinations"



▲ London stages the World Athletics Championships in 2017 after Beijing hosted in 2015

Other sporting events highlighted were the 2017 ICC Champions Trophy, which is being played at cricket grounds in Cardiff, London and Birmingham, and the ICC Women's Cricket World Cup final, which will be hosted at Lord's Cricket Ground.

Over the first 11 months of 2016, England experienced the

highest number of day trips since VisitEngland began recording the figures in 2011, with 1.35bn visits.

"It's great to see more people getting out and exploring the huge range of quality destinations on offer right across the country," said VisitEngland chief executive Sally Balcombe.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=N3A4m>

British ski chief: Ryding achievement can thrust skiing into the spotlight

The chief executive of British Ski & Snowboard, Dave Edwards, has hailed Dave Ryding's historic second place finish at the World Cup Slalom 2017, claiming the media generated by the achievement can aid the progress of the sport.

Ryding achieved Great Britain's best result for more than 35 years, matching Konrad Bartelski's second place finish in 1981. Edwards said the positive publicity could lead to more funding, and increase the chances of winning at major events.

He told *Sports Management* that while the governing body was "hoping to convince" UK Sport that it was worth more investment, funding could come from elsewhere as a result of heightened awareness.

Edwards said there was a strategy in place to find more commercial revenue



▲ Ryding became the first Briton in 35 years to achieve second place

to complement the partnership British Ski & Snowboard has with main sponsor Delancey. There is also a facility in place for members of the public to donate to the organisation if they booked ski holidays or purchased ski equipment from commercial partners.

But Edwards added that he hoped UK Sport would take notice after a number of good performances from British skiers.

As well as Ryding's success, snowboarder Katie Ormerod became the first Briton to win the World Cup big air in Moscow in January, while Andrew Musgrave won the Norwegian Championships in 2014.

UK Sport has pledged £4.9m (US\$6.1m, €5.7m) to the governing body for the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic cycle, up on the £1.5m (US\$1.9m, €1.7m) it received ahead of Sochi 2014, although Ryding is not an athlete to benefit from public funding.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=D6k4b>

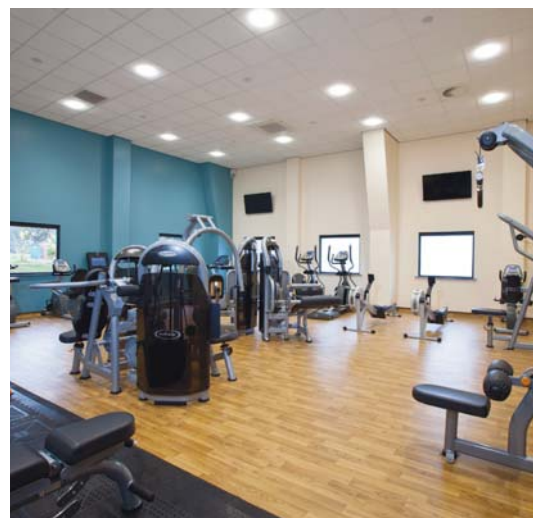
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GOVERNANCE

Sports minister challenges sector to innovate

A year on from delivering the first real piece of sporting policy in a decade, sports minister Tracey Crouch has challenged the sector to grow and innovate following a period of transition.

Crouch revealed the government's 84-page *Sporting Future* strategy in December 2015, which switched the focus from the number of people participating in sport, to holistic measures around the benefits of physical activity, such as improved mental health and social cohesion.

The Chatham and Aylesford MP told *Sports Management* that while the

"We want to make sure people have access to all sports"



▲ Crouch said the foundations were in place a year after publishing *Sporting Future*

first 12 months were about putting the foundations of the strategy in place, the next year is expected to bring "growth and innovation" in the way the sector engages with the public and tries to boost activity.

Technological innovation such as apps were referenced as a way to engage with hard-to-reach individuals.

Organisations have also been encouraged to develop innovative

schemes to make physical activity more attractive to the inactive.

"We want to make sure people have access to all sports regardless of what they are, regardless of where they live, gender and everything else," she said.

Crouch explained that while *Sporting Future* was a year old, it "effectively starts properly from April" when the new funding streams kick in.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=K5p30>

Parkour officially recognised as sport by government

Parkour will be eligible to bid for government and National Lottery funding after the UK became the first country to officially recognise the activity as a sport.

The Home Country Sports Councils – made up of Sport England, Sport Wales, sportscotland and Sport Northern Ireland – approved Parkour UK's official application of recognition.

Also known as freerunning or Art du Deplacement, parkour is a "non-competitive physical discipline" which sees people run, jump and



▲ Parkour has been in the UK since 2003

climb through any available terrain. The sport has a number of initiatives, such as Parkour for Mental Health.

Eugene Minogue, chief executive of Parkour UK – the body established in 2009 – said the sport had come a

long way since it made its way to the UK in 2003.

"We have built a qualified workforce of more than 600 people, we have led the development of a British, and now European standard for parkour equipment. As a result, there are now more than 50 parkour parks across the UK," he said. "All this in just over seven years is an amazing achievement and testament to the unique and diverse parkour community in the UK, which is world-leading."

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=N3c4Q>



▲ The DCMS appointed Wasim Khan as one of Sport England's board members

DCMS BAME representation in the spotlight

The government department that has published guidelines for diverse sports boards is working to improve its own record with ethnic minority appointments

The government department responsible for publishing the *UK Sports Governance Code* – which has thrown the diversity of sports boards into the limelight – has enlisted the help of senior ethnic minority civil servants to help boost its own representation credentials.

The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) is working with Race To The Top, a network of senior Whitehall officials launched by Sir Jeremy Heywood, to increase ethnic minority representation among staff.

Of the 11 members of the DCMS's executive team, only one individual (9 per cent) comes from a black, Asian or minority ethnic (BAME) background.

On top of that, 64 (17 per cent) of the 380-plus employees at DCMS class themselves as BAME.

However, DCMS's permanent secretary Sue Owens is the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Champion, and the department has committed to name-blind recruitment and

anonymised CVs for hiring procedures. Last year, DCMS's sports minister Tracey Crouch published the *UK Sports Governance Code* which put female and BAME representation at the heart of good governance.

Of the 11 members of the DCMS's executive team, only one individual comes from a black, Asian or minority ethnic background

While there was a 30 per cent quota set for female board members at national governing bodies eligible for government funding, there were no hard and fast targets for those from ethnic minority groups.

Governing bodies, though, are expected to "demonstrate a strong and public commitment to progressing towards greater diversity on boards".

If targets are not hit and progress is not apparent, then bodies could potentially lose public funding.

DCMS also makes appointments to the boards of UK Sport and Sport England – the government's arm's-length elite and grassroots funding partners respectively, and the organisations tasked with putting together the Governance Code.

Both quangos have more than 30 per cent female representation on both boards, although a lack of ethnic diversity is also prevalent.

Of Sport England's 12-strong board, two (17 per cent) come from BAME backgrounds, although the recent appointments of Sported chief executive Chris Grant and Leicestershire County Cricket Club chief executive Wasim Khan was a positive step forward.

Only one of the 10 members that makes up UK Sport's board comes from an ethnically diverse background.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=N7a5R>

FACILITIES

MediaCityUK firm designs Grimsby Town stadium

Fairhurst Design Group, the architect behind Salford's MediaCityUK, have been appointed to design Grimsby Town FC's ambitious new stadium complex.

The Manchester-based practice have overseen the design of the 14,000-capacity stadium and surrounding development, which includes an ice rink, leisure facilities and housing. Extreme Leisure, the sports brand founded by entrepreneur Alistair Gosling, is partnering with the League Two football

A section of the local community has been critical of the proposed location



▲ The stadium will be surrounded by leisure facilities, including an ice rink

club on the £55m (US\$67.6m, €64.7m) project. Full planning permission is yet to be submitted to the council.

A section of the local community in Grimsby had been critical of the decision to propose the stadium for the Peaks Parkway area of the town – south of the town centre – but in an interview with *Sports Management*

Gosling said that he was certain the venue would be “at the heart of the community”.

North East Lincolnshire Council will put some funding towards the development, although a spokesperson said that the level of investment was yet to be determined.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=1w7c8>

Sports venues affected as Manchester City Council proposes £30m cuts

Several sport and leisure facilities in Manchester, such as the National Cycling Centre, Taekwondo Centre and Squash Centre, may be forced to share back office services as the city council attempts to save £30m (US\$36.9m, €35.2m).

Manchester City Council announced a raft of cuts as part of its 2017-2020 budget review after central government's financial settlement fell £1.2m (US\$1.5m, €1.4m) short of what was anticipated.

Sport and leisure was not immune to the cuts, with the council attempting to find £100,000 (US\$122,985, €117,334) of savings by merging the operations of facilities such as the National Cycling Centre, Taekwondo Centre and Squash Centre in East Manchester, which are run by the Eastlands Trust. National governing



MARTIN RICKETT / PRESS ASSOCIATION

▲ The National Cycling Centre is one of the venues that could be affected

body British Cycling is based at the former Wythenshawe Forum, which has a swimming pool, gym and sports hall, may also have to reduce its own back office operations as part of the cuts. Elsewhere, Manchester City Council will reduce

grounds maintenance in community sports pitches by £25,000 (US\$30,746, €29,333). This figure was proposed to be much higher at £100,000, but was met with local opposition during the consultation process.

The largest chunk of savings for the council from the sports and leisure sector will be through the review of the contract for its sport and leisure facilities.

According to Manchester City Council, the agreement of a longer term contract with a facilities operator will save £650,000 (US\$799,403, €762,674), taking into account the current financial success of the centres.

The local authority has also established a money-saving partnership with Sport England to fund the fight against inactivity.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=07e8u>

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DEVELOPMENT

Efficiency key to Ajax stadium revamp

Second-life Nissan LEAF car batteries will store back-up power for the renovated Amsterdam ArenA when it comes on stream in 2020

Dutch architect Soeters Van Eldonk will oversee a “large-scale renovation project” of the Amsterdam ArenA, which will innovate with energy by using repurposed car batteries as a back-up system.

The home to Ajax – the most famous and successful Dutch football team – will undergo its most ambitious revamp since it opened in 1996.

Project ArenA 2020 will occur in three stages. The first stage will see the redevelopment of the east side of the stadium, while phase two and phase three will concentrate on the south side and north side respectively.



▲ The renovated arena will have a convex appearance and more concourse space

“In the past 20 years, the ArenA continued to invest in quality, innovation and sustainability. The renovation fits that vision”

Renovation work will result in more concourse space, additional lifts, toilets, catering points and escalators.

The shape of the arena will also change, from a concave to convex appearance.

However, the stadium’s 53,000 spectator capacity will remain the same.

Sustainability is also a key feature of the renovation. In November 2016, Amsterdam ArenA signed a 10-year deal with car manufacturer Nissan to provide back-up second-life Nissan LEAF batteries.

Previously used for vehicles, the batteries will be repurposed for the

stadium to “draw energy from the grid, providing more control, better value and a more sustainable choice for their energy consumption”.

As well as providing back-up energy, the batteries will be able to power the surrounding neighbourhood if necessary to protect the grid.

“Soon we’ll be able to store generated energy from our solar panels and windmills and put it to use when we need it,” said Amsterdam ArenA chief executive Henk Markerink.

As a result, the Amsterdam ArenA will be the first stadium in the world that won’t use fossil fuels for energy.

“Over the past 20 years, the Amsterdam ArenA has continued to invest in quality, innovation and sustainability. The coming major renovation fits within that same vision,” he added.

“In this way, the ArenA remains up to date and continues to play in the major league of football stadiums.”

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=c3g9a>

◀ Henk Markerink, chief executive of the Amsterdam ArenA

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EVENT HOSTING

Euro 2016 netted €1.2bn for the French economy

Hosting the UEFA Euro 2016 football tournament brought more than one billion euros into the French economy, according to the nation's ministry of sport.

While staging the event cost France €200.8m (£173.9m, US\$211m), its positive economic value far outweighed its expense, with €1.2bn (£1bn, US\$1.3bn) generated over the course of the month-long tournament.

Tourism experienced a €625.8m (£541.9m, US\$656.5m) uplift during Euro 2016, while the 24 participating countries added a further €34.9m

Tourism experienced a €625.8m uplift in France during Euro 2016



VI IMAGES / PRESS ASSOCIATION

▲ Fans contributed €625.8m to the French economy during the tournament

(£30.2m, US\$36.6m). UEFA – the European governing body for football – also spent €360m (£311.7m, US\$378m) organising the 32-team tournament with France.

Accredited persons and sponsors contributed to the total generated, adding €34.8m (£30.1m, US\$36.5m) and €22.6m (£19.6m, US\$23.7m) respectively. In contrast, France's spending was fairly modest, with

€160m (£138.5m, US\$167.9m) spent on the building and renovation of venues, while €24m (£20.8m, US\$25.1m) went towards security – double the expected amount following the high-profile terrorist incident in Paris in November 2015.

The French football team managed to reach the final of the tournament, but ultimately lost out to Portugal.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=0k8g8>

Red Bull Leipzig prepares stadium expansion proposal

The surprise package of this season's German Bundesliga, Red Bull Leipzig, has unveiled plans to expand its stadium to 57,000-capacity after purchasing the venue.

After a meteoric rise from its foundation in 2009 to second in the Bundesliga in just seven years, the club owned by the energy drinks giant is intent on ramping up its growth.

A pre-planning application has been sent by the club to the city of Leipzig, and the expansion is expected to be complete by 2018. An undisclosed purchase price



▲ The Red Bull Arena was built for the 2006 World Cup

for the stadium has also been agreed by the club.

The club's Red Bull Arena was built for the 2006 FIFA World Cup,

which was hosted by Germany, and has a capacity of 43,000.

No architect is currently attached to the project.

When contacted by *Sports Management*, a Red Bull Leipzig spokesperson said it was "too soon to talk about specific details and plans" and that there are "still different bureaucratic steps to take" in the process.

Oliver Mintzlaff, managing director of Red Bull Leipzig, said: "The decision is a clear signal for our fans, the location as well as the city of Leipzig.

"Now it is up to the city to agree to the sale and to make a positive decision on our building request."

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=y9n3G>

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FACILITIES

HKS designs US\$1bn ballpark for Texas Rangers

The architecture firm behind Minnesota Vikings' US\$1.1bn (£905.9m, €1bn) US Bank Stadium has been appointed by Major League Baseball (MLB) franchise The Texas Rangers to design a new ballpark.

HKS will develop a design for the venue to include a retractable roof for climate control.

It will also have a capacity of 42,000, which is down from the 50,000 spectators The Texas Rangers' can accommodate at its current Globe Life stadium, but will put fans closer to the field of play.

"For us to work on this is one of the highest honours we can achieve"



▲ The capacity of the ballpark will stand at 42,000, less than the 50,000-seat Globe Life

The US\$1bn (£823.6m, €951.1m) cost of the stadium will be split between the franchise and the city of Arlington.

HKS is developing a name for working on mega stadium projects. The company has recently been appointed to design the new Los Angeles Rams stadium in Inglewood, which is also expected to cost more than US\$1bn to build.

Arlington mayor Jeff Williams said the Texas-based firm was "first-

rate", adding: "HKS had to prove themselves. They had to come forward and earn the opportunity to work on the new ballpark."

Bryan Trubey, HKS executive vice-president, said the company "feels very deeply about this project".

"For us to have the opportunity to work on this new venue is one of the highest honours we can achieve," he said.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=V5K6r>

Orlando City FC building MLS's first safe-standing section

The first safe-standing section within a Major League Soccer (MLS) stadium is being built in the new home of Orlando City SC.

According to the franchise, the stand will take inspiration from the 'Yellow Wall' in Borussia Dortmund's Westfalenstadion, which creates a loud and intimidating atmosphere.

The steep stand will form part of the club's new US\$100m (£80.6m, €95.8m) stadium, which is being designed by Populous.

Originally designed as a 19,000-spectator venue,



▲ Populous has designed the new stadium for the club

the capacity has since been increased to 28,000 due to popular demand. Orlando City secured the second-highest

average attendance in the MLS in its maiden season (37,400), demonstrating a high demand for professional

football in the region.

Like many of the other German Bundesliga stadiums, Dortmund's Westfalenstadion accommodates safe-standing.

There have been calls for English Football League clubs to introduce safe-standing, but such a policy would have to be brought in by the government and this looks unlikely to happen in the near future.

Orlando City SC has been playing in the MLS since joining in 2015 as an expansion team.

Read more: <http://lei.sr?a=A6T4r>

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Should sport fund the fight against inactivity?

While greater activity is a worthy goal, it should not come at a cost to sport

In 2016, Sport England announced it would spend £250m on tackling inactivity, with its five-year strategy, *Towards an Active Nation*. Kicking off in February 2017

While it's undoubtedly important to tackle inactivity, our work at the Sports Think Tank has made it clear that many within the sports sector want a wider debate on the potential implications of this shift in emphasis.

Over the last few years, it has been agreed that the key to ensuring the ongoing viability of the NHS is to improve the public's activity levels. Sporting bodies wanted to know, therefore, how they could secure funding from the health budget.

Due to financial pressures on the NHS, Public Health England and local government, however, it appears that Sport England is now helping to prop up the physical activity agenda through its exchequer and lottery funding. To put this into context, the NHS spends the equivalent of the combined annual Department of Culture, Media and

Sport (DCMS), Sport England and UK Sport budget every day.

SPORT IS NOT THE ANSWER

In tackling inactivity from a sporting perspective, we need to accept that the terms 'sport' and even 'exercise' may deter some people. I've been in meetings recently where the term 'sport' has been banned because it is regarded as 'toxic'.

Professor Mike Weed recently made the case that sport is an ineffective intervention for the least active people. I accept this argument. The vast majority will not move from inactivity directly into a traditional sport.

In understanding this, it's also important to remember there are many people for whom sport is a passion that keeps them healthy. There are 15 million people in the UK who regularly take part in sport. This network of 150,000 amateur clubs and 3 million volunteers makes a massive contribution to the health of the country.



Andy Reed

A WIDER DEBATE

I fully support the government's collaborative approach to our inactivity crisis. And if resources were being allocated fairly from health, local authority and sport budgets, that would be fine. But in reality, many smaller NGBs are wondering why their already-stretched budgets are being used to subsidise the physical activity agenda.

Our challenge is to get more people active through a wide range of life changes, all the way from gardening through to elite sport. One approach is no less valid than the other and one should certainly not come at the cost of the other.

So while the Sport England budget is to be used to tackle inactivity, the reality is that these people won't be transitioning into sport anytime soon. Nor should we expect them to. An active community is a social good and worth striving for, but should it be Sport England and the DCMS subsidising this activity when it is the NHS and other public bodies that will ultimately be the long term winners? ●

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



EVGENIA FREEMAN / SHUTTERSTOCK

Message rethink: The terms 'sport' and 'exercise' may deter people who are inactive



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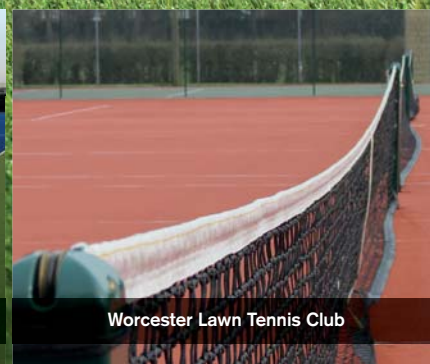
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Where medal winners are made

FaulknerBrowns Architects' Mike Hall reflects on the making of a medal factory and the implications for sport in the UK

The performance of our GB Olympians and Paralympians in Rio was nothing short of astounding. Clearly much has to be attributed to the commitment and determination of the athletes and the essential support and funding from UK Sport throughout the Olympic cycle, but how important has the role of facilities been in this success?

I take pride in the fact that almost half the medalling Olympians based their training at facilities designed by FaulknerBrowns. These include EIS Sheffield, Lee Valley White Water Centre, Weymouth & Portland National Sailing Academy and The National Cycling Centre, Manchester.

THE MEDAL FACTORY

The latter has even been dubbed the 'medal factory', such is the facility's success year-on-year in producing winning athletes. The analogy used here is an interesting one to explore.

Typically, when we think of the term 'factory' we imagine a building that receives raw materials and applies a controlled sequence of processes to

create an end product. Experts in white coats analyse the process to search for incremental improvements and innovations that provide further efficiencies.

SPECIALIST EXPERTISE

If we substitute the term 'raw materials' for 'talented medal prospects', and apply a dedicated four year training process, then the end products we achieve are medal winners. As with the industrial analogy, the role of specialist expertise in the search for incremental improvement has proven key to the success of Britain's athletes.

This is evident in the design of our 'medal factories'. The sawtooth roof at EIS Sheffield, which nods to the industrial aesthetic of the Don Valley, may give it the appearance of a factory; however, it's the innovation inside that makes the difference. This facility, and others like it, were built with attention paid to the needs of athletes, the fields of play and supporting areas such as sports science.

Inherent in these designs is the flexibility to accommodate technological advances and changes in training approach, as our understanding evolves.



Mike Hall

It's easy to get carried away when we talk about sports factories and the success of our athletes, but it's also important to consider how this fits with the *Sporting Futures* strategy and a more holistic view of community sport and wellbeing.

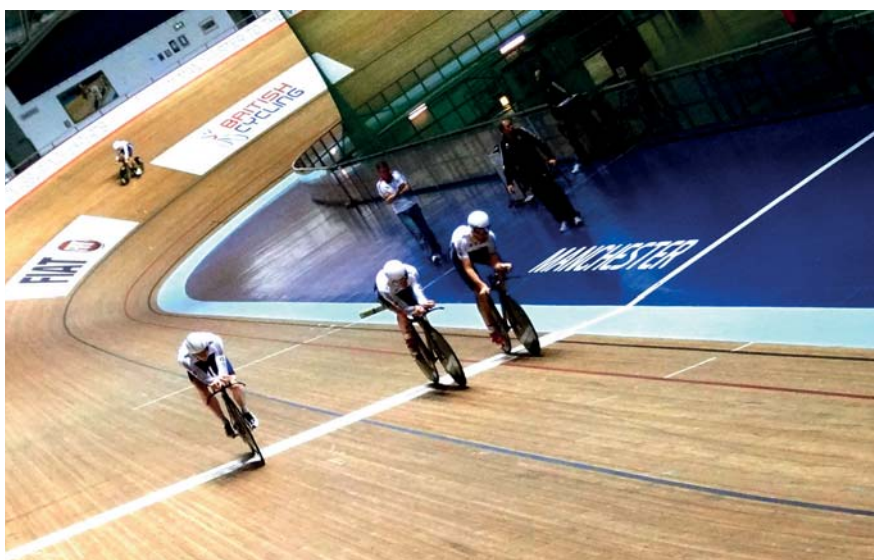
COMMUNITY USE

The reality is that even the hardest working factories for sport have significant amounts of community usage. The secret lies in formulating an approach which allows for the needs of both to be met, with the flexibility to allow different skill bases to coexist in the same building.

While this formula is forever being refined, we have two major facilities opening soon which embody this synergy – the National Indoor Arena in Dublin and Sportcampus Zuiderpark in The Hague. Both are a major base for performance sport and it will be interesting to see if the Dutch and Irish enjoy similar success.

Just like a factory owner, as an industry we must challenge our understanding of the product we produce, to develop innovations that can bring tangible benefits. ●

Mike Hall is a partner at architecture practice FaulknerBrowns. www.faulknerbrowns.co.uk



▲ The successful National Cycling Centre has been dubbed the 'medal factory'

Could investing £1bn in leisure centres save the NHS?

Ukactive chair Tanni Grey-Thompson wants the government to transform the UK's 1970s-era leisure centres into community hubs, which would offer healthcare and physical activity under the same roof. Would the plan work? We asked the experts.

Tanni Grey-Thompson has called for a £1bn investment to be made in the UK's ageing fleet of leisure centres. The Paralympic legend and current chair of ukactive argues that the investment would secure the future of the National Health Service (NHS) by creating a new "preventative frontline" against lifestyle diseases.

Grey-Thompson wants the government to introduce a strategy which would leverage cross-sector funding and transform a number of 1970s-era sport and leisure centres into

community wellness hubs. According to Grey-Thompson, the hubs – combining swimming pools, fitness gyms and sports halls with GP drop-in centres and other services – would create a "network of one-stop-shops for public services" and empower the public to take greater responsibility for leading an active and healthy lifestyle.

She believes that having physical activity and health services located under one roof would make it easier for GPs to prescribe exercise plans for patients battling lifestyle

conditions and signpost them towards wellness professionals – while taking some of the load off hospitals.

The plan attracted major interest and Grey-Thompson appeared on the BBC's *Daily Politics* show outlining her plans.

But what are the leisure industry's views on the proposals? Would it be the best use of resources? Would it effectively activate the desired outcome – to get people more active and take the load off the NHS? We open the debate with our panel of experts.

Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson Chair, ukactive

Putting physical activity – described by the Academy of Medical Royal Colleges as a miracle cure – at the heart of community infrastructure is the only long-term solution to saving the NHS from bankruptcy.

With its unrivalled network of facilities and growing expertise in behaviour change,



the physical activity sector is perfectly placed to take the strain off our overstretched health service.

We've already seen countless

examples of how integrated health and wellbeing services can transform communities

when aligned to the facilities and services of the physical activity sector. That's why I'm calling for the government's Industrial Strategy to lead a £1bn regeneration scheme to transform the UK's ageing fleet of leisure centres into new community wellness hubs.

These wellness hubs would combine pools, gyms and sports halls, with GP drop-in centres, libraries and police services, to create a one-stop-shop for public services.

Yes, it's a big ask at a time of tight budgets. But this level of investment is a drop in the ocean compared to the cost to the NHS of a full-blown inactivity epidemic.

It's a fraction of the cost of the £55bn HS2 project or the £17bn Third Runway, and yet it could save thousands of lives.

The government's Industrial Strategy must recognise that our public health infrastructure is just as important as our train or plane networks. With government borrowing costs at an all-time low, now is the perfect opportunity to invest in our future. Transforming our infrastructure to inspire movement can catalyse the cultural shift needed to inspire a more active Britain.



Wellness hubs could combine gyms and pools with GP services and libraries



Integrating and co-producing services such as fitness, social care, learning and GPs will make them more accessible to all

Charles Johnston

Property Director, Sport England

Baroness Tanni is absolutely right in her call to turn leisure centres into community wellness hubs. It's a sensible use of public money given that 1 in 6 deaths is caused by inactivity – the same as smoking.

In fact, Sport England has been working in this way for over four years. Evidence shows that more people use these facilities and we can lever in up to £10 of additional investment for every pound we spend.

Take the Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub in Warrington. It's much more than a leisure centre. It provides great opportunities to play sport and get active, but that's in



addition to taking out a library book, dropping the kids at the crèche or seeing your GP. It opened in 2012, replacing three tired and costly facilities in the area. Visits are up from 200,000 a year to over 1.2 million, while operating costs have gone from deficit to surplus.

For many people, sports centres can seem like an alien environment, presenting a barrier to participation. And GPs don't always think of physical activity when they reach for their prescription pad. Collaboration and co-location are the ways forward. Bringing the right public services together can be a

game-changer, with incredible results. Sport England wants to continue this work with our partners in local government and the sport and leisure industry.

At Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub, visits are up from 200,000 a year to 1.2m, with costs going from deficit to surplus



Mark Allman

Chair, CLOA

"Tanni Grey-Thompson's call for £1bn to be invested in leisure centres is most welcomed. Virtually every District and Borough Council will have examples of tired, run-down sport and leisure centres that have come to the end of their useful life.

At a time when local authorities have come under unprecedented financial pressure, many may struggle to articulate the business cases to secure investment without somehow bringing into play the wider savings that can be delivered



elsewhere within the public sector system, most notably, but not exclusively, the NHS. We all know that investing in the prevention of illnesses is essential, if the cost burdens on the NHS and wider social care system are to be reduced. By integrating and co-producing key lifestyle services – such as leisure, health and fitness, social care, learning, libraries and GPs – under one roof we can collectively make a bigger impact. We need to go in

with our eyes open to the different challenges within every local authority and clinical commissioning group, as well as factoring in the massive efficiencies that have already been achieved within the leisure and sport sector.

However, the availability of significant levels of government funding has the potential to bring about step change, accelerate developments and encourage longer term thinking within localities, giving us the chance to replicate on a national level some of the fantastic integrated wellbeing centres already dotted around the country.

We must think big. The ambition is to be applauded and CLOA is keen to support it.



Fitness classes will be one part of the new wellness hubs, with individuals being referred to them by a GP or fitness advisor

Emma Hutchinson
Managing director,
LiveWire Warrington

At LiveWire, we believe that wellness services operating from large integrated community facilities can act as the preventative frontline to support the NHS and help to improve levels of inactivity.

We've found that individuals who utilise integrated services are more likely to succeed from their initial referral from a health professional to a consultation with a lifestyle or fitness advisor. This smooth and seamless journey helps individuals reach their end goal quicker, making them more likely to stay on their programme for the long term.

Since our first fully integrated facility, Orford Jubilee Neighbourhood Hub, opened in 2012 more than four million people have



of developing two more neighbourhood hubs in other areas of Warrington.

Thanks to funding from national bodies including Sport England, the Football Foundation and Lawn Tennis Association, we've invested £16m to transform the

come through its door to access leisure, health or library services. Following on from the success of the hub model in Orford, we're in the process

existing 1970s-era Great Sankey Leisure Centre into a fully integrated hub. This will be our first dementia-friendly facility which will support the ageing population in west Warrington when it opens in late 2017.

We have also secured investment for a smaller hub facility to serve the areas of Bewsey and Dallam. This newly-built hub will provide a much needed health and leisure provision for these communities who are among the most deprived in Warrington.

In the future, we plan to integrate even more services into our four existing single-use leisure sites to broaden our offer.

Great Sankey Leisure Centre will be our first dementia-friendly facility which will support the ageing population





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1Life (formerly Leisure Connection) – Head of Fitness, Marketing & Communications

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MONKEY BUSINESS IMAGES / SHUTTERSTOCK

With medical professionals lacking time to advise on patients' lifestyles, hubs may be the key to facilitating individual change

Andrew Boyd

**Clinical champion for physical activity and lifestyle
Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP)**

As the RCGP clinical priority lead for physical activity and lifestyle, I was delighted to be present at the 2016 ukactive Summit where Baroness Grey-Thompson made her impassioned plea for a more joined up, prevention-focused response to the inactivity epidemic. The scale of the problem must not be underestimated, with the UK lagging well behind our European neighbours when it comes to being adequately active for good health.

Grey-Thompson's ambitious plans, calling for the government to invest in hubs where people can seek medical advice, as well as getting their daily 'dose' of activity, very



in the battle against preventable disease. We have already forged strong links with ukactive, the Richmond Group of charities and Sport England, all of whom share the common goal of getting the least active in society more active and will be rolling out resources and initiatives in the near

much aligns with our own aims.

We believe a more joined up approach between the leisure sector and primary care is a vital component

future, aimed at encouraging dialogue and collaborative working between GP teams and local leisure providers.

While we fully support the call for funding outlined by Grey-Thompson it must come as part of a multipronged approach.

GPs are working beyond capacity and don't have the time to effectively discuss physical activity and other lifestyle behaviour changes with patients. Therefore we would add to the call for the creation of wellness hubs the need for a substantial increase in real time spending in primary care focused on educating and empowering patients to take greater ownership of their health.

A joined up approach between the leisure sector and primary care is a vital component in the battle against preventable disease

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Chris Grant

2017 will be a critical year for sport in the UK, as the sport for social development movement gains momentum. Simon Lansley speaks to Chris Grant, the chief executive of Sported and recently appointed board member of Sport England, about the changes he hopes to see

One year ago, the government published its *Sporting Future* strategy, followed six months later by Sport England's *Towards an Active Nation*. Now comes the acid test: the implementation of those strategies.

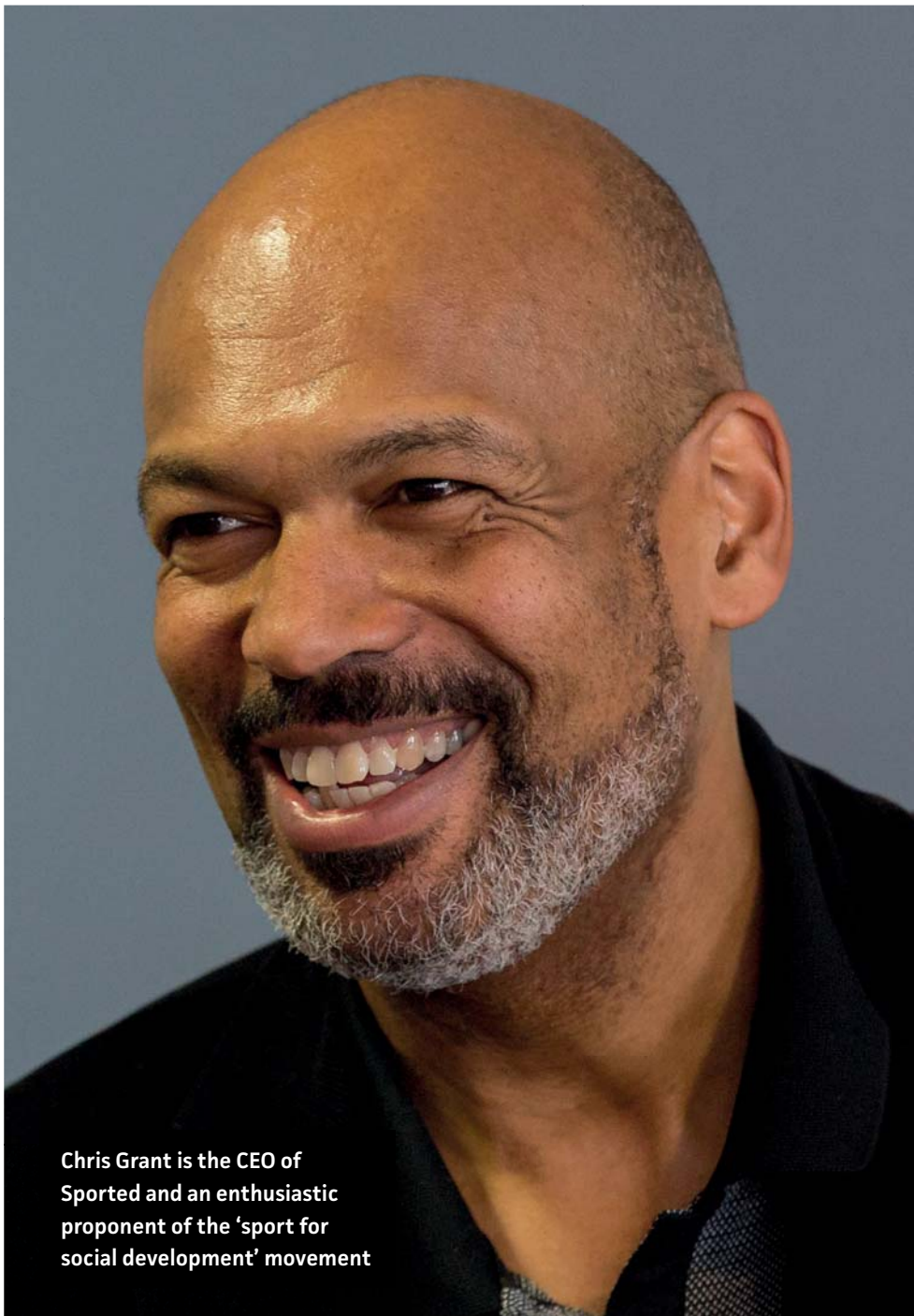
The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) strategy hinges on five key outcomes: physical wellbeing, mental wellbeing, individual development, social and community development and economic development. From this year, any organisation applying for Sport England funding will be asked to become more accountable for their output. Specifically, they will be asked to prove that they are genuinely contributing to the outcomes prescribed by the government.

But can sport really cure society's ills, especially in times of austerity and cutbacks? When policymakers talk about tackling inactivity, aren't some of the issues inhibiting participation social, not sporting? Can the custodians of mass-market sport, from NGBs to CSPs, genuinely be expected to change the habits of a lifetime?

It looks as though they will have to if they want to preserve their funding streams. However, perhaps policymakers will also have to be patient, creative and supportive as different providers grapple with the demands of the government's wish-list.

TIME FOR A REVOLUTION

Chris Grant has been in the vanguard of 'sport for development' since becoming CEO of Sported – the national charity that supports 3,000 community clubs – three years ago. He understands the challenges but is firm in his belief: the clock is ticking and has been for too long.



Chris Grant is the CEO of Sported and an enthusiastic proponent of the 'sport for social development' movement



Sported supports 3,000 community groups that use sport to improve the lives of young people

“I think it needs to be revolution, not evolution,” he says. “People have long been talking about ‘timebombs’ – around obesity, for example – but there has been solid evidence for a long time around how to change certain dynamics in health, education or whatever, and policy still hasn’t applied that evidence.

“I wouldn’t argue with the current emphasis on everything being quantifiable, justifiable and defensible; but for me the most valuable part is that we improve, rather than just prove. It’s vital that we help everyone – whether it’s an NGB, the Premier League or a primary school – to do what they

We need to ensure that the right balance is struck between the old world of sport development, and the new world of sport for development

are doing better and stop doing anything that isn’t making any difference.”

Grant would like to follow the example set in performance sport. “It’s now part of their DNA to ask difficult questions of each other and share knowledge where it can contribute to broader success,” he says.

Grant has also played a leading role in

the Sport for Development Coalition, a group of NGOs focused on making a similar cultural shift happen for sport and activity at a community level. Led by Comic Relief, Sported, StreetGames, Access Sport and Laureus, the Coalition created a ‘Shared Measurement Framework’, which will help to measure some of the more intangible benefits of sport and physical activity, such as confidence, motivation and resilience, as well as the broader societal impact and – ultimately – savings to the Exchequer.

Development of the Framework started more than two years ago following conversations with Sport England CEO Jennie Price and former Sports Minister Helen Grant. They wholeheartedly shared the Coalition’s belief in the power of sport to benefit society, but challenged the sector to develop a “common language” with which to build a new strategy.

“Then just as we were getting it developed, we heard that DCMS – now with Tracey Crouch as sports minister – was developing its new strategy, which included



▲ The Sport for Development Coalition measures the benefits of community sport



▲ Riding for the Disabled in Coleraine, Northern Ireland is supported by Sported



▲ The kids at Gleann Amateur Boxing Club are learning important life skills

some 'values' around sport. So we arranged a couple of meetings with DCMS and made sure it was aligned with the Framework," Grant explains.

"Some of the people involved in designing that then helped with the Sport England strategy, and made sure that everything dovetailed with the Framework.

"The Framework is deliberately designed so that anyone can situate themselves within it. They don't have to change their data capture or anything. We want people to use this Framework – say, if they're going to talk to the Department of Work and Pensions, for example – to illuminate and validate what they're saying."

STRIKING A BALANCE

This approach potentially heralds a bright new era for sport as a positive force in society, putting it in stark contrast with some episodes endured in recent years.

Part of the appeal is the strategy's "organisationally neutral" approach, which promises a level playing field to any organisation, be it an NGB, a housing association or local charity using sport to achieve social outcomes. The theory is that if they meet the criteria, they can win funding. In reality, Grant believes a balance between old and new will be required.

"The core market favours the NGBs – and I absolutely understand why we need to

do that. However, we need to ensure that the right balance is struck between the old world of sport development, and the new world of sport *for* development."

BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER

Once the mould is broken, Grant is hugely optimistic about what can be achieved in society through increased participation in sport and activity.

"We can do so much through sport. For large sections of the least engaged young people – for example those who are not in employment, education or training (NEET) or at risk of being NEET – sport captures and holds their attention like nothing else.



Sport teams, such as basketball, help young people build confidence and resilience

"I'm not saying it works for every young person, but so often young people are starved of good quality attention. By giving young people attention, you can work with them. Then when you keep giving them attention, they develop durability."

In a society where 'time poverty' is increasing; attention spans are decreasing, and there are fewer and fewer opportunities for different social, economic or cultural groups to meet, Grant believes sport is one space where the nation still comes together.

"When we get our Sported clubs together, you'll see the riding for the disabled club, the boxing club, the Parkour group and the tag rugby for Autistic kids group all enjoying

each other's company. They have so much to share and yet socially they are from very different backgrounds. There aren't many places where people can meet any more, and that's why we end up with such deeply polarised views, and the tendency to write each other off, rather than look for the potential in other people.

"But what we do have is this huge under-used asset called 'sport' and I think we have to be more ambitious about leveraging it. People who manage pots of investment will sometimes say 'it's not a magic bullet', and it's not – but I can't think of anything that's closer to being one than sport. I believe it's capable of doing a lot more."

A STRONGER NATION

So what will success look like? "I think the tipping point will be when the Home Office, Department for Work and Pensions or other government departments are looking for solutions, they will routinely ask themselves 'what's the sport aspect of this'?"

"Frankly I think we're being under-ambitious about what sport can do in terms of social change. I've always been an optimist about this, but my optimism grew massively when the DCMS strategy was published. This is, undoubtedly, our chance to fully contribute to creating a happier, healthier, stronger nation."

Vive la revolution! ●

The responsible game

The commercialisation of football – and pressure to ‘give something back’ – has resulted in a focus on social responsibility. Tom Walker learns about Responsiball, an initiative which charts the growth in football-related CSR

When Switzerland-based Schwery Consulting – a business that helps sports organisations to devise corporate social responsibility (CSR) strategies – wanted to find examples of best practice in football in 2009, it faced a dilemma. While it was clear that more clubs were getting involved in CSR schemes, there didn't seem to be any resource offering information and detail on the initiatives themselves. So to solve the problem, the company set about creating one.

RESPONSIBLE PRACTICES

“When we started, there really was no entity that was sharing information about how football clubs – or professional leagues and

associations – were delivering CSR,” says Daniel Cade, senior consultant at Schwery. “No one seemed to be keeping records. Not the clubs, not the national federations and not even international organisations. We knew there was some good work being done in football, but it simply wasn't being shared on any platform.”

To tackle the problem, the Schwery team created Responsiball – an online platform which aimed to collect and showcase good practice across the three areas traditionally associated with CSR: environmental stewardship, good governance and community engagement.

“The sector was growing rapidly and we wanted to help clubs and individuals who were looking to find out more about



▲ Daniel Cade is part of the Schwery team that created Responsiball

CSR and what it could mean for a football club,” says Cade. “The aim was to highlight best practice, so people working in the field would be able to see what others were doing and learn from them.”

Following encouraging feedback, the team at Schwery set out to develop the concept further. They came up with the idea of publishing a “social responsibility ranking” for football – a league table that would not merely list and highlight CSR initiatives, but systematically assess and rank the clubs playing in professional football leagues. The goal was to determine how the top clubs worldwide were performing across three key areas – governance, community and the environment.

Funded entirely by Schwery, the first *Social Responsibility Ranking of Football Leagues in Europe* – also known as the Responsiball Ranking – was published in 2012 and ranked 16 top European football leagues according to their CSR performance.

The report showed that while some clubs were getting active in CSR, there was huge potential for improvement. On

RESPONSIBALL RANKING 2016

The Responsiball Rankings are now in their sixth year and are encouraging clubs to tackle their social responsibilities

1 (1)	Netherlands	1	Eredivisie		
2 (2)	Denmark	2	Superliga		
3 (3)	England	3	Premier League		
4 (-)	Sweden		Allsvenskan		
5 (4)	Germany		Bundesliga		
6 (9)	Spain		La Liga		
7 (7)	Scotland		Premiership		
8 (5)	Switzerland		Super League		
9 (11)	France		Ligue 1		
10 (6)	Italy		Seria A		



England and Spurs footballer Harry Kane coaches students in the Education and Football Development Programme

average, clubs scored just 19 per cent on Responsiball's best practice requirements – and 29 clubs out of the 400 featured didn't manage to score a single point on any of the three indicators. It was clear that while CSR was becoming more important, clubs were still unsure of how to deliver it successfully.

REPORT CARD

The first ever ranking was received with intrigue by the football fraternity and the interest shown encouraged Schwery to make the report annual. Now in its sixth year, the latest Responsiball audit was completed in the summer of 2016 and the results were published in August. The format has remained largely the same, although the indicators are reviewed periodically, and the 2016 edition featured 18 leading football leagues. Assessments are made using an online audit, by Schwery's army of analysts.

In the latest report, it is clear that the "bigger" leagues – perhaps surprisingly – have some catching up to do when it comes to CSR. The Eredivisie of the Netherlands was deemed the most

Back to school in Italy

Italian Serie A club Atalanta has created an innovative social cohesion programme in partnership with Italian educational psychologist Lucia Castelli. The 'School Stadium' project is primarily targeted at students in primary and secondary school, but is also open to older children.

Working with local schools, the School Stadium initiative aims to get children more physically active by arranging sports events, promoting

tolerance through anti-racism campaigns and encouraging "fair play" in everyday life through football sessions.

The programme includes a visit to Atalanta's Atleti Azzurri d'Italia stadium where children get to take part in a game on the famous pitch. The game is followed by a teacher-led educational session – which includes

Castelli says pupils learn life skills ▶

**CLUB
ATALANTA
BC**

socio-cultural reflections on football – and a meeting with an Atalanta player.

First launched in 2001, School Stadium has reached out to 337 schools and 17,533 students. The programme also includes educational summer camps.





Working with NGOs is a form of CSR suitable for the larger clubs

socially responsible top league in the world in 2016, followed by the Danish Superliga. As both are considered minnows in the global footballing hierarchy, it suggests that having a coherent CSR strategy isn't dependent on large revenue streams.

Out of the world's leading leagues, only The English Premier League and the German Bundesliga feature in the top five. Despite their popularity and prestige, French Ligue 1 (9th with an average score of 26 per cent) and Italy's Serie A (10th, 23 per cent) struggle when it comes to CSR. Both lag behind smaller leagues with less financial

clout, such as the Swedish Allsvenskan (4th with 40 per cent) and the Scottish Premiership (7th, 29 per cent).

STRATEGIC APPROACH

According to Cade, examining the annual Responsiball results has shown that football clubs – especially those with smaller budgets – are becoming more aware of the importance of having a CSR strategy in place. "There is no doubt that clubs are realising that there are real benefits to having a credible CSR programme," Cade says. He adds that clubs are also waking up to

the fact that there is more than one way to demonstrate commitment.

"At the time when we first launched Responsiball, FC Barcelona was playing its games with UNICEF printed on the front of their shirts," Cade says. "Some clubs saw that and seemed to think that that must be a key component of CSR in football".

"To an extent, they were right, that is CSR – but signing one high profile deal with a global charity or NGO doesn't work for every club. Through the work we've done with Responsiball, it's obvious that clubs have realised there is no template to what CSR is. What works for FC Barcelona wouldn't necessarily work for a smaller club in the English Premier League or a club in the German Bundesliga.

"Clubs are slowly learning that they need to have different strategies based on different factors, such as their location

“Clubs are learning that they need to have different strategies based on different factors, such as their location and who their fans are”

Daniel Cade, senior consultant at Schwery

Access all areas in Switzerland

Swiss club FC Luzern has become renowned for the services it offers for its disabled fans.

Information on accessibility is readily and prominently available on its website – not always the case with sports clubs – and has also been made available in a format accessible for the visually impaired, a factor often overlooked by clubs.

Specially-designed maps and guides on how to access the stadium on match days can be downloaded either on mobile devices or in printer-friendly formats.

CLUB
FC LUZERN



Once disabled fans arrive at the club's Swissporarena, they are greeted by specially designed signage and staff who have received extra disability training. Visually impaired fans are given free access to a specific area at the stadium and a special radio service transmits all matches live to headsets. The 16,800-capacity stadium

▲ FC Luzern has prioritised making its stadium disability-friendly

also has 32 wheelchair spaces – with plans for more.

The investment has resulted in the stadium becoming one of the first sports venues to be awarded the SIA 500 "Barrier-free buildings" standard by the Swiss Society of Engineers and Architects (SIA).

and who their fans are. Being aware of your stakeholders' need is an essential facet of a successful CSR programme in any industry."

Cade adds that as awareness of CSR increases, football clubs are starting to become more innovative in their approaches. He points to clubs highlighted in the 2016 report, that created campaigns targeting improvements to a specific aspect of their club operations and looking to engage a particular fan group or stakeholder.

These include FC Augsburg in Germany, which has introduced impressive environmental initiatives and is now building its entire club ethos around becoming "the most sustainable club in the world".

As a good example of improving community cohesion, Cade points to Spain's Deportivo La Coruña, a club that has devised a very detailed 'code of conduct' for itself and runs campaigns against

discrimination, racism and xenophobia as part of a strategy to improve social cohesion in a multi-cultural setting.

FUTURE STEPS

In the six years since the first annual report was published, the Responsiball platform has built up a reputation for being a reliable and useful resource. The Responsiball "brand" is now recognised throughout the football community and, according to Cade, there are even signs that clubs are now looking closely at the criteria and actively trying to improve their scores.

"A good example of how clubs are using our report is the Eredivisie," Cade says. "In the first year of the report the league ranked fifth. The following year it was fourth. In fact, each year it has jumped one spot higher – and has now occupied the top spot for consecutive years.

"I'm sure that part of the reason for their progress is that the Eredivisie and its clubs watch us closely and have studied our indicators – and try and improve the aspects of their CSR programmes they're lacking in."

Cade adds that the success of Responsiball means that there's increasing pressure on Schwery to keep developing the service – but that the ultimate goal is for the platform and the report to be developed into an independent entity.

"We're often asked who owns Responsiball. Currently it's owned and funded by us. But our long term goal is to make Responsiball a stand-alone, non-profit organisation.

"We're looking for funding so we can make sure that it's a sustainable organisation and that it has funding for the next five years or so. At the moment we're going from one year to the next, funding it with the money we make from consulting." ●

Temporary solutions

South African architect, Ruben Reddy, the masterplanner for the 2022 Durban Commonwealth Games, wants temporary structures to create a sustainable future for sport. Matthew Campelli reports

When *Sports Management* first met the highly-regarded South African architect Ruben Reddy, he had just told a room packed full of football industry bods that West Ham United made a mistaking moving into the London Stadium, that Manchester United should move in with Manchester City, and that football stadiums were, generally, unsustainable.

Unorthodox, but full of logic, his arguments during his panel session at the Soccerex Global Convention made people sit up and take notice. While many sessions and keynotes at



the conference provided moments of insight, Reddy's talk was one of the few to challenge the status quo.

The thrust of his short address centred on the sustainability – or, more accurately, unsustainability – of sport stadiums. He said, if possible, that sports clubs playing in the same city should attempt to share a venue, while all sporting infrastructure for major events should be temporary.

While the latter point will resonate with many, particularly in light of the white elephants that dominate the skyline of Athens, and potentially

now Rio de Janeiro post-Olympics, the ambition appears to be a fanciful one.

Governments with five-to-10 year terms like to build monument when it comes to hosting major events, but with sustainability being a key part of the International Olympic Committee's (IOC) Agenda 2020, combined with the rising cost of staging major events, Reddy is sure temporary venues will become the norm in the not-too-distant future.

"Adopting temporary venues will have to be feasible," Reddy tells *Sports Management*. "I can't see it going any other way."

BURDEN ON THE TAXPAYER

Durban-based Reddy has seen first-hand what a burden on the public purse permanent venues can be. He was involved in the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi and also

◀ Reddy does not shy from challenging the status quo



The handball arena built for the Rio 2016 Olympics was a temporary structure, which became four schools



We learned a hard lesson in South Africa because of the 2010 World Cup. We gave, gave, gave and didn't get a hell of a lot back

had a view of the work that was completed for the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa.

Of the former, Reddy says: "Not a hell of a lot happens in that coastal Olympic Park."

But his main focus is South Africa after being handed the brief to oversee the masterplan of the Durban 2022 Commonwealth Games. He is clear that he doesn't want to repeat the mistakes of the World Cup in a nation that is still developing.

"We're not going to be burdening the taxpayers of Durban Province and the country to upkeep the maintenance of capital projects," he explains.

"We've learned a hard lesson in South Africa because of the 2010 World Cup. We gave, gave, gave, gave, gave, gave and didn't get a hell of a lot back in return apart from a pat on the back to say 'well done'."

He highlights the Durban-based Moses Mabhida Stadium, which cost US\$450m to construct, as an example of a venue which has not been sustainable for the South African government. While the original outlay was significant enough, Reddy is keen to demonstrate that sustainability becomes an issue when considering the ongoing maintenance of the building.

Reddy says: "Building the stadium is only 25 per cent of its life cycle. Keeping the thing to a world-class standard is a constant drain on the budget. Every year that it sits there that money could be used for something else."

"We're a developing country and our priority list is quite long. Never get away from the fact that these events should come to the developing world – of course

they should. They must be global in all their forms and go to far-flung parts of the world."

To create the right conditions for these countries to bid and host these events – without stretching themselves financially – Reddy is an evangelical advocate of the use of temporary venues.

DURBAN 2022

In fact, all of the venues he has designed for the Durban Games are temporary. Facilities for weightlifting, volleyball, hockey, squash and table tennis have been designed by his firm, and will all be temporary, using materials that will be reused following the Games. All the permanent structures that have been earmarked for the Commonwealth Games have been built already.



German supporters cheer for their handball team in one of the permanent stadiums built for the Rio 2016 Olympics

Reddy lauded examples of good practice with temporary facilities, such as the handball court constructed for the Rio Olympic Games. Following the event the venue was deconstructed and used to build four schools, but Reddy reveals Durban's plans are slightly more modest than that.

He explains: "The total infrastructure spend of a Commonwealth Games is around eight per cent of the Olympic Games. The temporary facilities we'll look at will be standard stock and not on the same level as Rio."

But the principle remains the same, says Reddy, and stresses that it should be implemented at every major event. However, difficulties occur when governing bodies, such as FIFA, promise broadcast rights-

holders that each stadium will have at least 45,000 spectators to attract sponsorship.

"What do you do afterwards with a building of 45,000 seats when your average gate for the local club is between 5,000 and 10,000 spectators per game?" he asked.

FIFA and the IOC "have to take the lead" on stadium sustainability, he says, adding that the latter must now "operationalise" its Agenda 2020 plan and "take the actions required in order to make the policy work".

Government, says Reddy, should not view the hosting of an event as a "big megalomaniac ribbon-cutting opportunity", but need to be supported by the sports governing bodies to make the right decision for their nation's society and economy.

CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE

Reddy's fellow architects also have a responsibility to drive the agenda forward, but he doubts many of his contemporaries will have a similar stance.

"Why don't architects promote temporary facilities? You have to be a stupid architect like me who has talked himself out of a job," he says, tongue in cheek. "Why would any architect want to tell you not to build something, when their living is premised on the fact you have to build? Maybe I'm a pioneer or maybe I'm a village idiot."

Architects with a differing opinion can point towards sustainable practices when building, with several new stadiums being awarded the Leadership in Energy and



LUMAS SCHULZE / PRESS ASSOCIATION



▲ All venues for the Durban 2022 Commonwealth Games, such as the table tennis arena, squash venue and beach volleyball stadium, will be temporary structures

Environmental Design (LEED) certification. But Reddy is sceptical the award means anything substantial. He says: "LEED is suppose to be the thing that everyone hangs their hat on, but how is it possible when you can build a 40,000-seater facility, upwards of 180,000sq m? How can that be sustainable? It doesn't matter what technology you add to save on water, electricity and heating.

"If we take the ridiculous end of sustainability – not to build at all – my argument is closer to that than saying 'let's build it'."

Brave words from a man who makes his living designing buildings, but it may just take renegades like Reddy to make sport infrastructure more economically and environmentally sustainable. ●

Building rugby across the pond: US development on the agenda at Rugby Expo 2016

While domestic growth is still a priority for those in charge of English rugby, the sport's great and good were keen to highlight the opportunities in the US. Matthew Campelli reports

During the final few weeks of 2016 Coventry's Ricoh Arena became a haven for the sport of rugby. Originally developed as a purpose-built football ground, the Ricoh is now very much a rugby-first venue thanks to its acquisition by Wasps in late-2014.

That new status was reflected when the stadium hosted the Rugby Expo conference on 3 and 4 November – the first of a three-exhibition deal it signed last year – and the rugby league Four Nations double-header between England, Scotland, Australia and New Zealand on the following Saturday.

For Rugby Expo veterans, the move 100 miles north from Twickenham, the home of rugby in England, to the unfamiliar surroundings of the Ricoh Arena may have felt like a bit of a departure. The Ricoh is no doubt an impressive arena for a rugby union club, and was more than capable of hosting such an event, though.

Unfamiliar territory was somewhat a theme of the first day, with America and the merits of developing its rugby market dominating the discussions.

NEW YORK EXPERIMENT

A Q&A with Premiership Rugby chief executive Mark McCafferty kicked off proceedings, and his take on developments across the pond would have interested newly-instated World Rugby chair Bill Beaumont, who was absent due to ill health.

McCafferty spoke generally about the growth he thought the league could continue to make in terms of television deals, sponsorship and spectator numbers. But the US was highlighted as a key area of growth – indeed the nation was described as McCafferty's "number one target".

In March, Premiership Rugby took a Saracens and London Irish league fixture to New York in a

bid to generate interest, particularly among the expatriates with ties to the latter. The match sold just over half the tickets for the 25,000-capacity Red Bull Arena, and despite the demotion of London Irish from the league, McCafferty is optimistic inroads can be made.

His optimism, he said, stems from two factors. The first is the level of interest had in flagship international matches which have been staged in Chicago. When New Zealand defeated USA Rugby 74-6 in November 2014, more than 60,000 people came to watch. Similar numbers attended when Ireland avenged the US by beating the All Blacks in the Windy City in November.

McCafferty is also encouraged by the perceived decline of the National Football League in the States, and feels that rugby may be able to fill a gap.

NFL DECLINE

He said the NFL had been having a hard time, and in terms of televised viewing figures he'd be right, with double-digit year-on-year declines. The sport is also suffering with an image problem with a number of ex-professionals expressing health concerns, particularly in terms of head damage.

McCafferty's sentiments were echoed by a panel of chief executives who took the stage after his session. Heath Harvey,



▲ Premiership Rugby chief executive Mark McCafferty said that making rugby a big sport in the US was the organisation's "number one target" internationally





Premiership Rugby chief executive Mark McCafferty addressing the crowd

chief executive of domestic and European champion Saracens, commented that his contacts at Microsoft in Seattle were “blown away” by the inclusive grassroots nature of rugby compare to the “elitist” NFL.

Glasgow Warriors CEO Nathan Bombrys, who is an American, added that the “high

scoring nature” of rugby would engage US sports fans. “If you look at participation sports in the US, it’s all about lacrosse and rugby. Everything else is struggling from a viewing perspective and participation perspective,” said Harvey. “NFL is having a hard time at the moment, and that creates a

vacuum which we would all like to see rugby step in to.”

He added: “They contrast rugby with NFL, which is a very elitist sport where 160 guys go into a college football programme and 0.5 per cent of those athletes will leave college and work in the professional game and the others will get jettisoned to work in Starbucks or Costco.”

Harvey’s club has already dipped its toe in the

water, with three international branded clubs, with one in Seattle. The club is also expected to play another regular season match in New York next March.

However, challenges remain. Of a country with a population 320m, there are only 115,000 registered rugby players with 2,588 clubs. That said, the USA Eagles, as they are known, are 17th in the World Rugby rankings although the team performed poorly at last year’s Rugby World Cup, losing all four games and coming bottom of a group that contained Japan, Samoa and Scotland.

USA Rugby League bid for the 2021 World Cup, and although the nation lost out to England, it looks likely that it will host the following tournament.

A festival of rugby like that could give the game a boost, but with almost 10 years until that happen there is much work to be done to cement the place of the game in the hearts of millions of Americans. ●



▲ Coventry’s Ricoh Arena, home to Wasps, was the new venue for this year’s Rugby Expo conference



The Sports & Leisure Facilities Forum – dates and format confirmed for 2017

This year's event will bring together a variety of people from all sports and fitness backgrounds for seminars, pre-matched meetings and networking opportunities

The Sports & Leisure Forum is back for 2017 with a new approach, evolved to be more in touch with your industry for the creation of long-lasting business partnerships.

Previously known at the Sports & Leisure Facilities Forum, the event will be hosted on June 19th & 20th at the Radisson Blu London Stansted Hotel, focused on an intimate audience of Operations, Facilities and Estates Managers from all sport and fitness backgrounds; gyms, local authorities, sports trusts, stadiums, hotels, wet leisure, spas, leisure centres and more.

Current attendees include Ahoy Centre, Ealing Council, Rendcomb College, The Hurlingham Club, Erith School, Balance Health Clubs & Spa and more. They have submitted their interests to ensure the supplier meetings at the event are the most suitable for their upcoming projects.

This year's format promises the same exponential opportunities as were available at the 2016 event; a bespoke itinerary will be created for each delegate and supplier, full of pre-matched meetings based on mutual interests, in addition to an unrivalled amount of valuable networking interactions over meals, including lunches, coffee breaks and dinner.

This year will also see a refreshed approach to the guru-led seminar programme, with each session offering

a Continuing Professional Development certification, giving an additional benefit to attending this complimentary event.

If you're a delegate or supplier looking to meet and network with senior executives and managers from across the fitness spectrum, make sure you don't miss out, by contacting the Sports & Leisure Facilities Forum team to secure your place.

The Sports & Leisure Facilities Forum is hosted by Forum Events, who offer a range of b2b events in various industries.

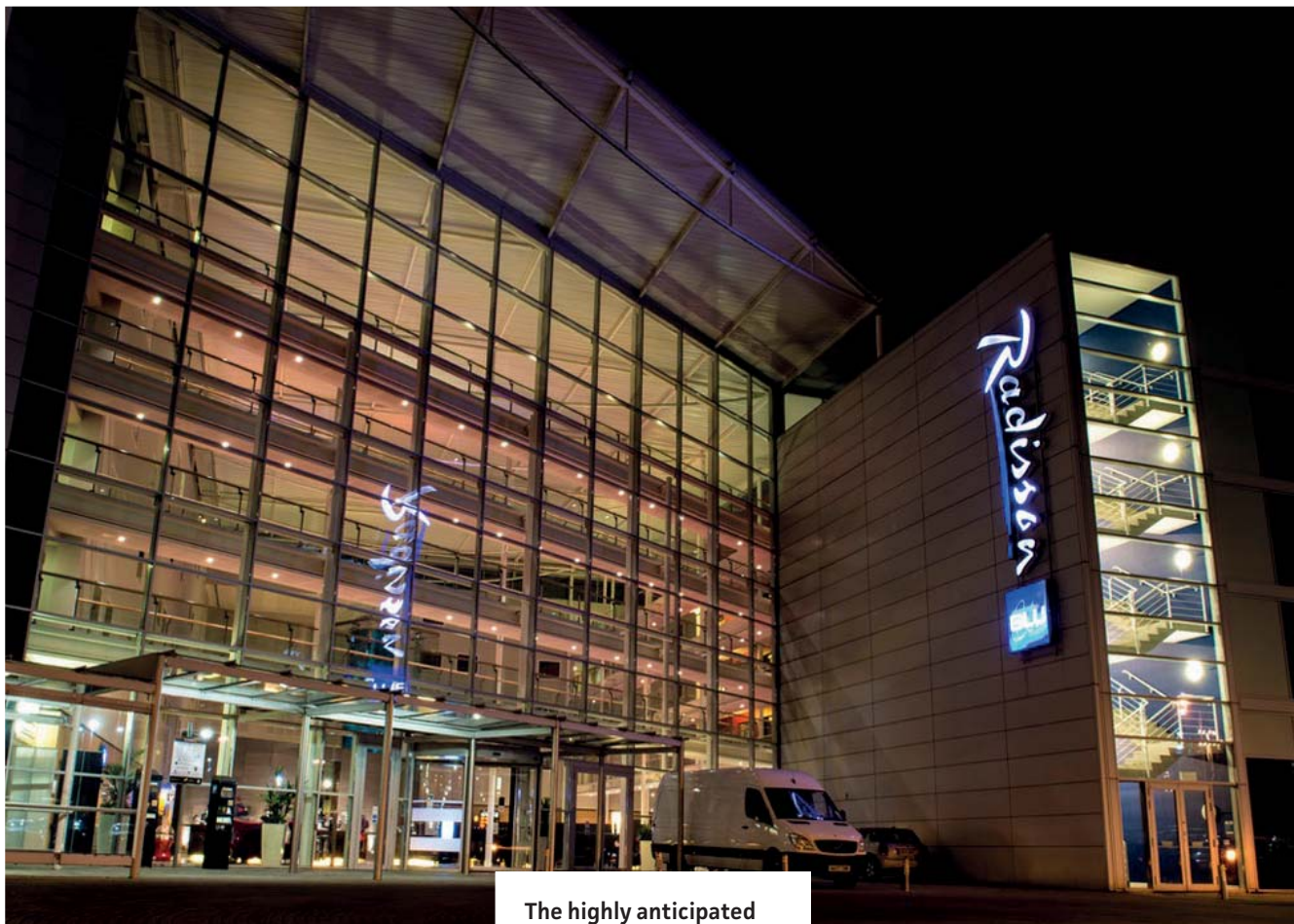


To find out more information on how you can attend the re-launch of this highly-focused event, please contact **Event Manager Gillian Small**

Tel: 01992 374073

Email: g.small@forumevents.co.uk

Web: forumevents.co.uk



The highly anticipated 2017 event is set to take place at the Radisson Blu London Stansted Hotel



Horsing around

Skiing behind a horse might sound bonkers, but skijoring is an ancient sport with a small but loyal following. The sport is gaining fresh momentum in some surprising ways. Kath Hudson reports



“The sport of Skijoring is exhilarating and raw” says Loren Zhimanskova, the founder of representative body Skijor International. “This applies whether you’re riding the horse, being pulled on skis, or simply standing alongside the racetrack feeling the thundering of the hooves on the snow as the competitors fly by.”

“The sport involves the unusual juxtaposition of two counter cultures” she says, “cowboys and skiers. You might describe it as rodeo meets the X Games.”

From its origins in 1950s Leadville, Colorado – home of extreme sports – a racing circuit has developed in North America.

Horses with ice shoes are ridden at top speed along a straight track, with skiers towed behind on a 30 foot rope at speeds of up to 40mph, negotiating slalom gates and jumps, and grabbing rings as they go.

“The events appeal to experienced skiers, looking for a different thrill, as well as rodeo riders and ranchers who want to do something with their horses in the winter,” says Zhimanskova. Race partnerships are often made at the pre-race party the night before, where the beer flows freely.

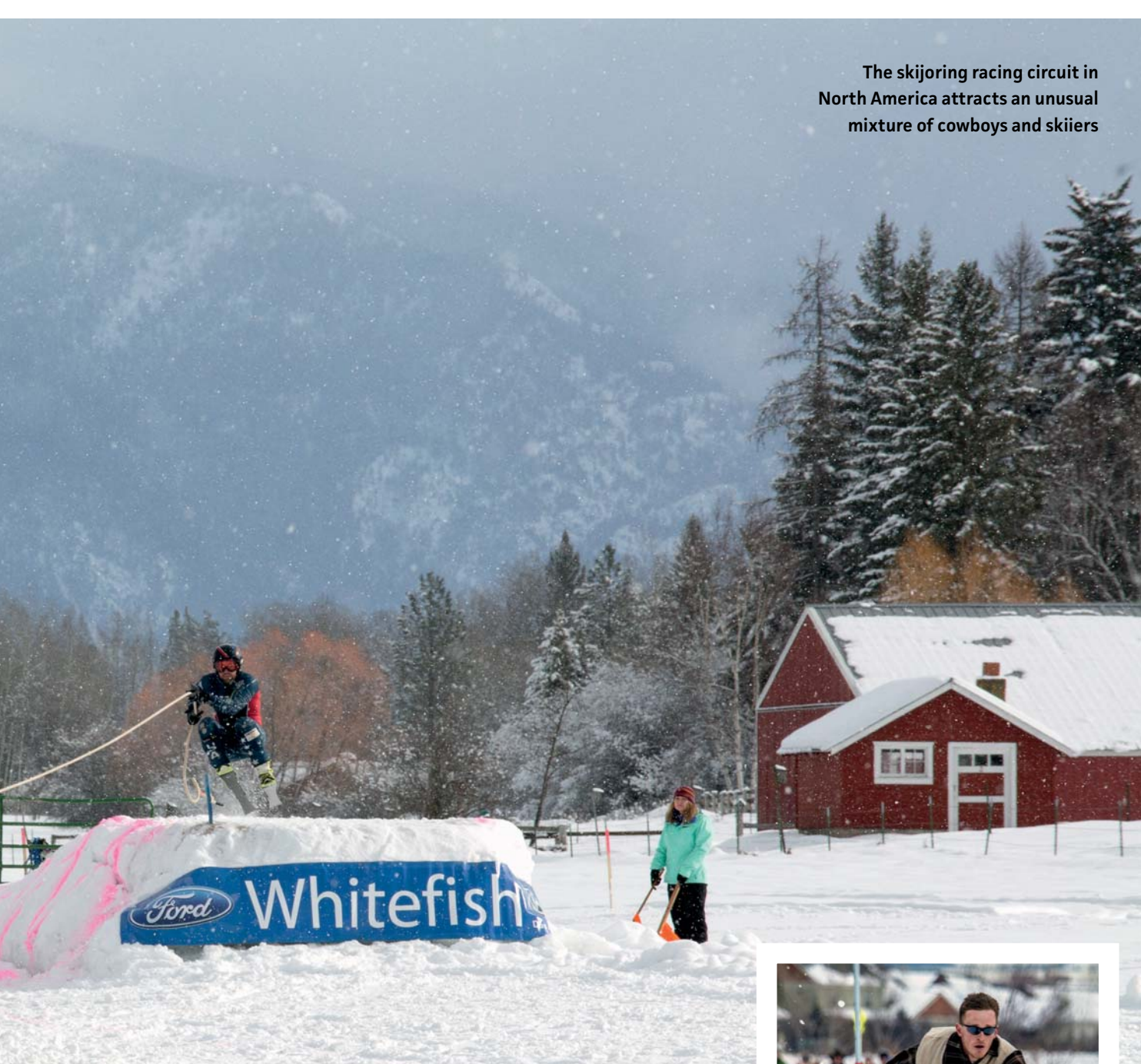
GROWING THE SPORT

Although the sport is practised in a number of other countries, including Poland, Latvia,

Norway, Sweden, Finland, the Ukraine and Russia, there’s only one elite race in Europe. White Turf is held annually in St Moritz. Sponsored by Credit Suisse and BMW, it’s a prestigious affair, where the horses are controlled by the skiers who race side by side around a horseshoe shaped course. This differs from the straight US-style time trials where riders control the horses.

Zhimanskova dedicates her time to running events and working to get the sport to the Winter Olympics and X Games. She’s keen to generate more media interest to raise participation at both elite and entry level, and create a youth division to encourage the next generation of riders.

The skijoring racing circuit in North America attracts an unusual mixture of cowboys and skiers



Skijoring America, formerly called the North American Skijoring Association, is also working to create a buzz about the sport by organising races and raising awareness. Spokesperson Matt Cossett, who came across the sport when filming a documentary, thinks the secret to growth is getting a bigger fan base, so more people come to watch the races. This will attract sponsorship, which will make the prize pots bigger and attract more teams to compete.

"We'd like to see the sport expand and grow – the location doesn't need to be limited to the mountains," he says. "It's a great sport and it involves a mix of extreme athletes and crazy guys. I love these people

who are willing to put their lives on the line for the pure feeling of adrenaline."

RECREATIONAL SKIJORING

Zhimanskova, however, believes that real growth and sustainability will be driven by recreational skijoring in ski resorts. "In North America, races are held in five Western states, but there are few places offering recreational skijoring," she says. "It is a delightful and exhilarating experience to partner with a horse in a snowy, alpine setting. This doesn't require nearly as much snow, since the horses are not running at a full gallop and the course can be built through the trees, where it might be easier



SKIJORING AMERICA

▲ Competitors must negotiate gates and jumps, grabbing rings as they go



▲ Teams can compete in beginner, amateur or pro event classes

► Both ski tips and both boots must go around each obstacle when racing

▼ For their own protection, horses cannot run in more than two races per day



to groom and retain the snow. I intend to put together a business plan and approach resorts in a more formal manner."

Recreational skijoring, involving a meander through alpine forests towed by a pony, is gaining traction in Europe. Some French resorts are offering it, including Les Arcs, La Rosiere, Avoriaz and Chamonix, as well as Nax in Switzerland.

Jacques Fillietroz, who owns Le Centre équestre Ranch El Colorado, based in Bourg St Maurice, is the pioneer of the sport in France and has been offering it for 30 years.

"Skijoring appeals to people who come on skiing holidays and like horse riding and

skiing. It's not dangerous – it's safer than skiing on the slopes – and you don't need to be a great skier, you just need some experience," he says. "It's becoming more popular and numbers are growing steadily."

Requiring snow, horses, courage and skill, skijoring is unlikely to ever become mainstream, or very accessible. "Skijoring is not growing quickly now, never has and perhaps never will," says Zhimanskova. "Global warming isn't helping either, since a solid snow base is required for events. This can be a major safety factor, especially for the horses, and is a grave concern for those involved in the sport."

However, the speed, excitement and novelty might be enough to give the sport the impetus it needs, and people will find ways around the barriers. This might mean swapping horses for dogs or motorised vehicles. Or swapping skis for a mountain board, as seen in a new British sport, known as horseboarding.

A BRITISH ADAPTATION

Professional stunt rider and keen skater and surfer Daniel Fowler-Prime had the idea of towing a mountain board behind a horse some 12 years ago. It took a few years to perfect the technique, and veered



Unlike equestrian events, which judge appearance and technique, horseboarding is purely about speed

STUART KURT / HORSEBOARDING UK

into something like horse surfing (think kitesurfing, with a horse rather than a kite.)

The end result was an adrenalin-pumped sport, which is gathering a niche following among horse riders who are fed up with the dressage or show jumping circuit, and who have mountain boarder mates. Just as skijoring is typically Western, horseboarding is British at its wonderful, eccentric best.

There are two types of horseboarding competitions – a drag race along a 100m strip, with two teams going head to head in knock outs. Or arena horseboarding, which involves negotiating gates placed on a twisting course, against the clock.

Boarding sports and equestrian sports might be at opposite ends of the sporting spectrum, but Fowler-Prime says horseboarding brings the two disciplines together in a fun, unsnobby union. “We’ve been clear from the outset that it’s non-

judgmental. It’s not about how pretty your horse is, or how well you can ride, it’s about how fast you can go.”

Currently all competitions are organised by Fowler-Prime and his brother, Tom Kilroy, under the auspices of Horseboarding UK. They are keeping a tight rein on the sport to ensure it grows safely.

“It was initially difficult to get insurance, but with a good safety record we have built up trust with our insurers,” says Fowler-Prime. “We’re very aware that we can’t afford to have any accidents, as that would reflect badly on us, so we’re growing the sport within a tight structure. To offer it more widely, we’ll need to create a qualification for riding instructors, so they can offer it safely at equestrian centres.”

At the moment, competitions tend to be run as spectacles at county shows, so the organisers pay Horseboarding UK a fee to

run the event. There are currently around 70 teams on the circuit – up from six in 2013 – with around 20 teams at each event.

Even without the need for snow, the barriers to entering this sport are high. Your own horse is needed, which must be trained to drag (Fowler-Prime runs training days) and then teamed with an accomplished boarder. Again, it’s not likely to become mainstream, but as riders and boarders are always looking for the next thrill, it is starting to grow. Fowler-Prime says he is receiving enquiries from all over the world.

With skateboarding on the bill for the Tokyo 2020 Olympics, it’s not beyond the realms of possibility that these exciting, spectator-friendly sports could grace our TV screens and the Olympic Games in the future. In the meantime, it’s great to see different sporting cultures combined in an adrenaline-fuelled mash up. ●

Laying the foundations for success

When Huddersfield Leisure Centre needed a quick flooring solution ready for the New Year, TVS took up the challenge, providing a specialist compound that minimises noise

With the crucial January gym sales period just weeks away, Huddersfield Leisure Centre urgently needed a speedy yet sustainable flooring solution if the gym was to start 2017 with a bang.

Luckily for site operator Kirklees Active Leisure (KAL), TVS Group was on hand with a fast and highly effective solution to the challenge of resurfacing the 400sq m free weights area in just seven days, preparing it to attract a raft of new year members.

"TVS came highly recommended and were very quick to set the wheels in motion with a series of meetings and thorough consultations," says KAL business development manager Barry Turnbull.

"Time was of the essence, and TVS worked with us to find the most cost-effective solution for our needs and then quickly got to work to complete a complex project in just a week."

REDUCING NOISE

With January the busiest time of the year for gym operators, it's no surprise that December is the time when TVS is most in demand to get sites looking their best. Having started in 2009, the company has developed a slick operation that meant it was able to meet the unique challenges of the project despite the tight deadline in the middle of a busy period.

"It was a case of making sure we were really shrewd with our logistics and ensuring we had adequate labour on the job to meet the requirements," explains TVS group sales manager Andy Roberts.

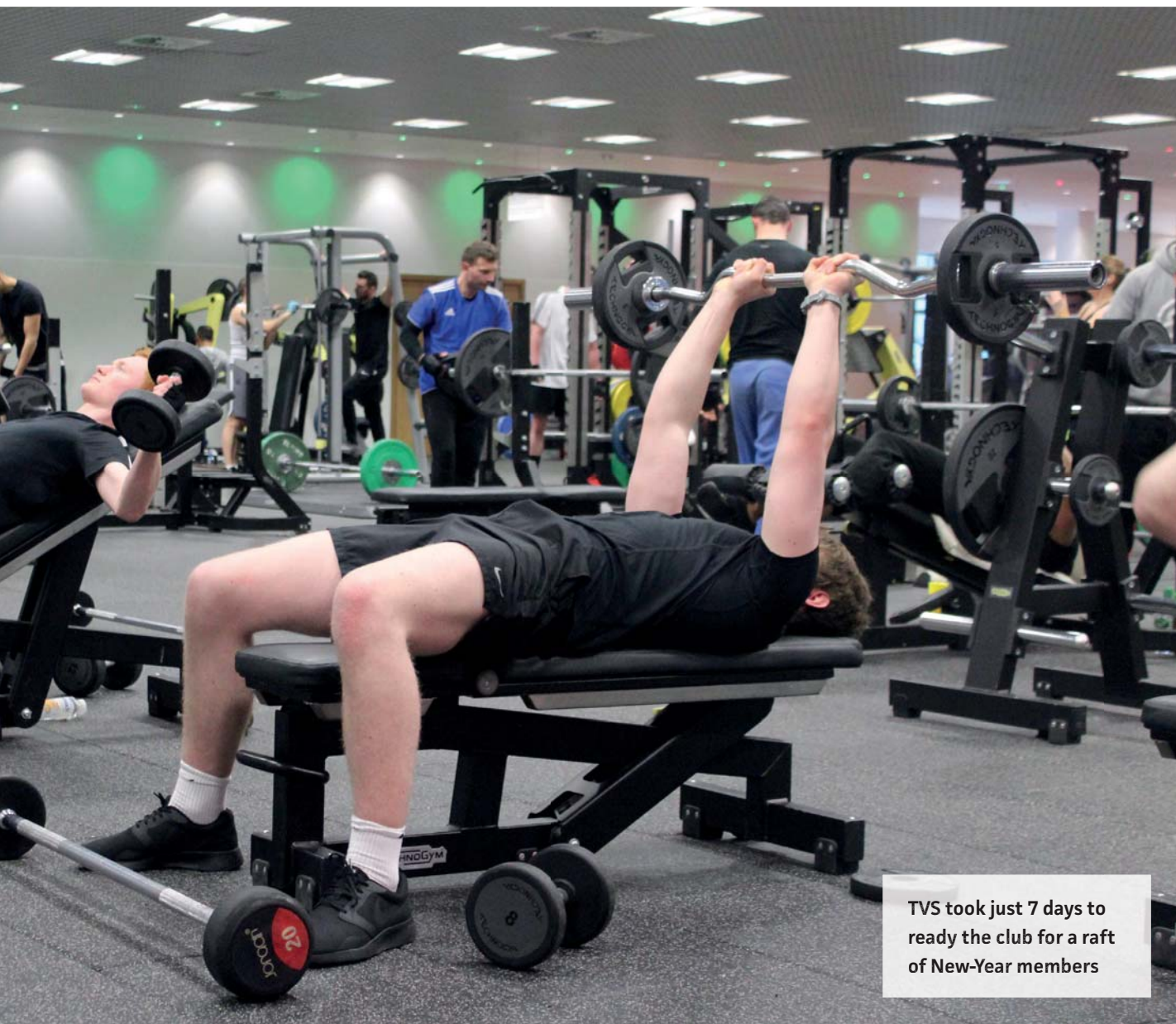
"We know from experience that it's vital to co-ordinate phased deliveries in the correct sequence and quantities, to ensure a continuous and efficient process."

Roberts adds: "Staff at the gym have said that the new flooring solution has helped reduce noise and vibration throughout the building, which is an additional benefit of the specialist rubber compound.

"Our background is in acoustic solutions and that helps us. It's a factor that's often overlooked, but with property at a premium, many gyms are only viable because they have specialist acoustic solutions in their free weights and functional areas that minimise disruption to the rest of the building. It's a very technical area, but gym owners certainly can't afford to get it wrong."



▲ The new floor minimises noise and vibration originating in the free weights area



TVS took just 7 days to ready the club for a raft of New-Year members

THE CLIENT'S VIEW

Turnball says: "TVS worked with us to find the most cost effective solution and after discussing various pricing options, we settled on the solution we installed.

"We needed the new flooring ahead of the busy new year period and were highly impressed with TVS' speed and efficiency.

"We found the sales support from Andy very responsive and we're delighted with the finished product. I can see why TVS came so highly recommended."

SECTOR ANALYSIS

Roberts adds: "The fitness environment has traditionally been our heartland and we're seeing a notable increase in the size of free weight and functional areas, as

in Huddersfield Leisure Centre. We also supply custom-designed sprint tracks and we're putting a lot of prowler lanes into functional training spaces right now. Obviously that's a wider industry trend that has been taking shape for a while, but in terms of our work pipeline, it's showing no sign of relenting in the UK market.

"We're also seeing huge demand for our sports flooring solutions, so we've recently appointed an outdoor surfacing specialist whose key role is to service our clients in the outdoor sector.

"Right now, this covers EPDM rubber surfacing solutions (a synthetic rubber) for outdoor multi-use games areas (MUGAs) and there's also a growing appetite for our indoor sports hall systems.

"Additionally, our unique expertise in the technical market of 3G and artificial turf systems means we're supplying shock attenuating elastic layers for a range of sports, as well as cork infill materials. It's safe to say we've started 2017 in the same busy vein we ended 2016 and we can't wait to help more people get active."



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Talent spotting

The World Cycling Centre was set up to find and nurture talent from developing countries. Tom Walker finds out how indoor, static bike technology is at the heart of the centre's ability to produce a long line of world champions and Olympic medallists

Located in the town of Aigle, close to the banks of Lake Geneva in Switzerland, the World Cycling Centre (WCC) is an elite coaching and training centre for some of the most promising young cyclists in the world. Launched in 2002 by cycling's world governing body, Union Cycliste Internationale (UCI), WCC's mission is to identify talented athletes from around the world and help them realise their potential in the four main cycling disciplines – road, track, BMX and mountain biking.

A vast majority of the athletes who train at WCC are from countries whose cycling federations lack the resources needed to help talented youngsters reach the very top. "The WCC was established as part of a UCI strategy to make sure

that every cyclist – no matter where he or she comes from – has an equal opportunity to reach their full potential," says Belinda Tarling, high performance manager at WCC. "We focus on developing nations, those UCI member countries that simply can't offer talented individuals the infrastructure and amenities they need. The WCC has been built to provide athletes from those countries with an opportunity to compete on an equal footing with riders from more developed countries, who already have access to many first class services."

Facilities at the WCC are impressive and include

a competition-standard, 200m indoor velodrome, a BMX racing track, an athletics track, artistic gymnastics and trampoline hall, a fully equipped health club and a 500m running track. There is also an onsite laboratory, enabling WCC sports scientists to conduct anything from bioimpedance tests and spirometry to lactate testing and bike fitting. Additional facilities include a restaurant and conference rooms. WCC is also the home of UCI – the federation's HQ is located within the compound.

Since its launch, WCC has built up a great track record in finding and developing world class talent. Athletes who have trained at WCC have achieved 34 UCI World Championship titles and three Olympic gold medals and a total of 39 assorted UCI World Championship and Olympic silver and bronze medals – as well as countless national

► **Belinda Tarling is high performance manager at WCC**





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Coaches use the Wattbikes to test and compare athletes

championships. At the Rio 2016 Olympics, 14 of the riders across the four disciplines had trained at WCC.

UNEARTHING GEMS

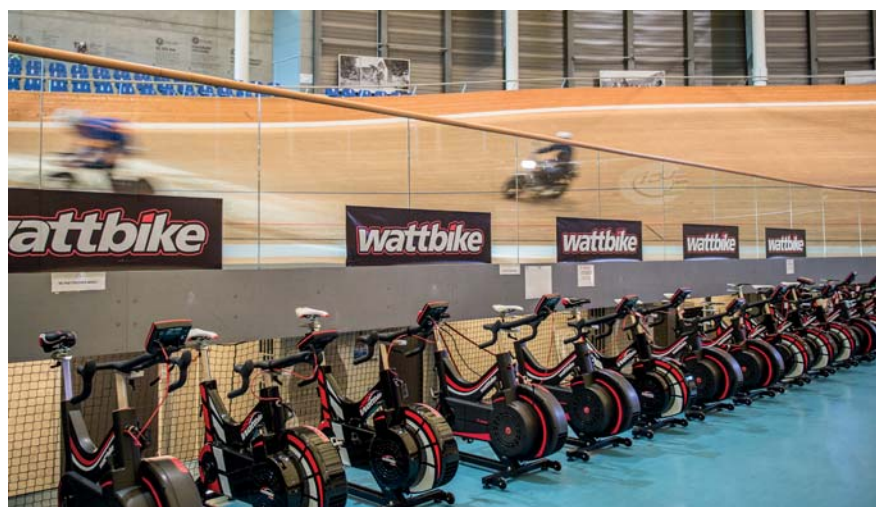
The WCC concept is based on identifying raw talent from across the world and bringing it to Switzerland, ensuring promising cyclists benefit from first-class coaching, training and sports conditioning. To help with this, WCC operates five satellite sites – in

Japan, South Korea, India, South Africa and Argentina, which act as ‘talent spotters’.

The identification process is innovative and mixes traditional sports conditioning with performance data analysis. At the heart of it are the satellite centres and a network of indoor conditioning bikes, supplied by UK-based Wattbike, installed at each centre.

“A couple of years ago we decided we needed to have a more structured approach to our testing and talent identification,”

We wanted a more scientific approach to the identification of athletes and their progress



▲ UCI entered into a partnership deal with Wattbike early in February 2015

says Tarling. “We wanted a more scientific approach to development and the identification of athletes and their progress.”

As part of efforts to improve structures, UCI signed a partnership deal with Wattbike, which resulted in the WCC coaches and technical team working together with the supplier to come up with a unique testing protocol tailored for UCI’s needs. The protocol allows the WCC team to assess and compare data of cyclists from around the world to identify extraordinary talent.

“We came up with really nice test which works really well for us,” says Tarling. “The sports scientists at Wattbike, led by Eddie Fletcher, were able to help us to work

SPORTS CONDITIONING

out how we would add algorithms and extrapolate data from the test.

“They also took time to talk to different teams here, such as our BMX coaches. They analysed the BMX starts and came up with a test of optimum length and resistance.”

Tarling adds that the data mined from the Wattbikes during testing can also be used to identify which riders are demonstrating the right underlying physiology to excel in a particular cycle sport, from BMX to track cycling – a unique tool in the sporting world.

COMPARING NOTES

“We now use the Wattbikes to test every athlete that enters the system,” says Tarling.

“We now have comparative data from several hundred athletes over the last two years. The great benefit for us is that we can ask



**18-year-old
Batsaikhan entered
the WCC in 2016**



Talent in focus Tegshbayar Batsaikhan

A good example of the talent unearthed by WCC is Mongolian rider Tegshbayar Batsaikhan, who first attended a training camp for cyclists at WCC’s satellite centre in South Korea. After posting some impressive figures using the UCI/ Wattbike test protocol, he was invited to train at the WCC in Switzerland.

After a period of intensive training on the WCC track and benefitting from WCC’s coaching, Batsaikhan became the junior world champion last year.

“Mongolia has no history of track riding, and Tegshy was a complete novice

to the discipline,” WCC high performance manager Belinda Tarling says. “In the five months since he arrived in Switzerland, our track coach has worked on both the technical and physical aspects of his training. He’s a quick and motivated learner who showed he has the talent to compete with, and beat, the best riders of his age in the world.

“It’s a great example of what can be done with a motivated and talented young athlete who’s taken out of their environment – and what the WCC set-up is capable of producing.”

our coaches to test a promising athlete at a satellite centre – say, in Argentina or Korea – and we can have the data from that athlete’s performance immediately. We can then compare it to existing data sets and if it’s good we can start looking at them more closely with the view of possibly bringing them over to Switzerland to train.”

Fred Magné, director of UCI World Cycling Centre, adds that the influence of the Wattbike partnership on WCC operations has been “astounding”. According to Magné, it shows how a well-planned sports science and conditioning programme can help in other areas of operations.



The WCC provides training and development to around 100 athletes every year

"It has completely changed our strategy going forward," he says. "It allows us to be more ambitious and reliable in our identification of talent on a global scale. For the first time in cycling history, we can legitimately compare performance data from all over the world, allowing us to reassess what constitutes world class talent.

"With the use of the Wattbikes, we are now able to identify talent in nations where it previously would have been impossible. It has opened doors that were once closed and we are very excited to see what other advancements we can make in the sports science world in the future."

RIDING AHEAD

Around 70 per cent of the centre's funding comes from direct grants from the UCI, the rest from private companies and other sponsorship and partnership deals. Since 2002, WCC has welcomed more than 1,000 cyclists from around the world.

"Keeping an athlete here for a month costs around 9,000 Swiss Francs – for the training, the coaches, equipment, food, accommodation and medical costs," says Tarling. "A huge percentage of our athletes receive nothing from their national federations for their attendance here – they simply can't afford anything."

The partnership deal with Wattbike also means that for riders arriving from different environments – UCI has 180 member federations across all continents – the transition is less challenging.

"Standardising our operations has not only helped with identifying talent," Tarling says. "The bikes also help with acclimatising. We're in Switzerland but our athletes may come from Africa or South America in March – when it's -7°C here. So we don't like them to go straight out into the freezing temperatures because they would just get sick. We can run the first week of training happily on the Wattbikes." ●



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Data shows that
983,000 people
regularly sail in the UK

Selling Sailing

Winning two gold medals and one silver medal at the Rio 2016 Olympic Games, Great Britain placed as the most successful country in the sport. Suzie Nation-Granger from the Royal Yachting Association discusses the body's strategy for ensuring future success and opening the sport up to new members

“While sailing as a means of transportation predates written history, sport sailing – or yachting – seems to have originated in the 17th century in Holland. From there it was introduced into England by Charles II, and eventually spread to the American colonies. Then, similar to today, it was common for sport sailors to join together for social and recreational purposes in groups known as yacht clubs.

Today the sport is popular with both competitors and spectators around the world. Great Britain is currently a sailing superpower, winning 12 medals in the last four Olympic Games. In order to maintain

this strong position, the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) is dedicated to growing the grassroots of the sport.

GRASSROOTS STRATEGY

There are 983,000 people regularly sailing in the UK. The RYA sport development team is looking closely at insights and data in order to gain the clearest picture of participation in the sport, including the types of people who take part and the barriers preventing others from getting on the water.

Although we only have a certain amount of resource, we're focusing our efforts on exposing young people and families to the sport using a targeted digital communication strategy.



▲ Nation-Granger says the RYA has a new, targeted digital strategy

OnBoard introduces
youngsters aged 8-18 to
sailing and windsurfing



We haven't previously advertised our sport, but with the growth in digital and social media we plan to use these channels to promote the sport to different groups. The RYA is also planning a more customer-focused 'shop window' online for clubs wanting to promote their activities.

QUALITY FACILITIES

Our feedback has taught us that the quality of facilities is hugely important. Better

We currently have over 800 RYA affiliated sailing clubs and 2,500 RYA recognised training centres

facilities create more satisfied customers, leading to an increase in membership. For this reason, we work with clubs to offer the best experiences to members. The RYA provides clubs with the insights and information they need to help them understand their membership profiles, as

well as factors that restrict growth, such as limited boat parking or water access.

RYA regional development officers encourage clubs to think and plan for the future and to create five year plans to ensure they continue to increase and sustain their membership. In the past two years, we believe the top reasons for declining membership are ageing members and work and family commitments. Clubs are, therefore, being encouraged to ensure their facilities and activities are suitable for attracting younger members and families.

The RYA also supports clubs to apply for grants and funding to update their equipment and improve their facilities and advises them on any licensing or rent issues.

In terms of new sailing clubs, we're geographically limited to navigable waters but we do take advantage of new sites when we can. We currently have over 800 RYA affiliated sailing clubs and 2,500 RYA



▲ The RYA sees open days and taster sessions as a key way to grow the sport



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GROWING THE GRASSROOTS



▲ Half a million young people have been introduced to sailing since 2005

recognised training centres that run courses from RYA Start Sailing to Yachtmaster level.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

Sailing is a fantastic sport for young people and often appeals to those who struggle to connect with more conventional school sports. The RYA works hard to give as many youngsters as possible the chance to experience the enjoyment of the sport and develop it into a lifelong hobby.

OnBoard is the RYA's national programme which introduces sailing and windsurfing to youngsters aged eight to 18 years of age through schools, youth groups, community centres and sailing clubs. Created in 2005,

windsurfers to develop their racing talent, while looking toward elite and Olympic sailing. RYA is also lobbying to get sailing and windsurfing back on the school curriculum.

ATTRACTING MINORITIES

Sailability is the RYA's national programme enabling people with disabilities to sail. There are over 200 sites for disabled sailing throughout the UK. Sailability clubs have hoists, launching ramps, adapted changing rooms and qualified instructors. The sailing equipment is specifically designed to meet the needs of disabled people.

The RYA regional teams continue to develop strategies to engage with different

The top reasons for declining membership are ageing members and work and family commitments

OnBoard has already introduced over half a million young people to sailing, with well over 10 per cent continuing to sail regularly.

Since 2000, the RYA has operated the world's most comprehensive sailing talent development programme – British Youth Sailing. In the last five years alone British Youth Sailing has won over 150 World and European Championship medals at junior and youth level. The programme provides opportunities for young dinghy sailors and

ethnic minority groups. In Birmingham, RYA regional development officer Gareth Brooks created a link with the local Bangladeshi community. Sailing taster sessions were provided at a Bangladeshi boat race with support from Legacy West Midlands. Those who were interested in taking up the sport were connected to their local sailing club.

Many clubs are also running women-only sailing sessions to encourage more women to get out on the water. Chelmarsh SC has a



‘ladies wot launch’ club, which has attracted many females to go sailing on a weekly basis.

CURRENT PROJECTS

We've seen that advertising, word of mouth, open days and taster sessions are the top ways to increase sailing club memberships.

Push the Boat Out (PTBO) is a national campaign run by the RYA which takes place in May, right at the beginning of the sailing season. Clubs and centres open their doors during this time and offer open days or taster sessions, which allow everyone to experience sailing at their nearest venue. The RYA provides campaign resources and the event is supported with a strong



The RYA wants to attract more young people, women, families and minorities to the sport

national and regional PR campaign which includes digital advertising and social media.

After a new member's initial experience, Start Sailing programmes offer a series of 10 beginner sessions that allow newcomers to learn and develop their skills. Go Sailing is a series of 10 sailing sessions suitable for those who want to gain further confidence or perhaps return to the sport. There are similar sessions for racing practice.

In 2016 alone, almost 500 PTBO open days were held at 300 sailing clubs across the UK, and over the past four years more than 66,000 people have gone out on the water to try sailing at a PTBO event.

As a result, over 6,000 individuals have signed up for club memberships, and nearly 4,500 families have joined sailing clubs.

Despite these initiatives, there are several factors that may deter people from getting involved in the sport. Weather is a huge issue for us – sailing season is roughly April to October but this is very much dependent on the weather patterns each year.

Sailing is also reliant on the wind. Too much or too little wind can make it impossible to sail. Another factor is the amount of time that sailing requires. It's not something you can just go out and do during your lunch break from work!

Our research around club membership shows that 41 per cent of RYA affiliated club members have taken a break from the sport for 18 months or more since starting out. This could mean a huge number of people taking a break from the sport at one time.

It's important for us to communicate regularly with these people to understand more clearly what is keeping them away.

OLYMPIC GLOW

During the summer of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games more than 6,000 people tried sailing and windsurfing at taster sessions.

The RYA Sail for Gold Roadshow toured the country during the Olympics, stopping at eight venues that have a special connection with our Rio Olympians and Paralympians.

Hundreds of volunteers at the host clubs and centres helped to get newcomers afloat, and British Sailing Team members attended every Roadshow to celebrate the achievements of their teammates in Rio and inspire the next generation. ●

Product innovation

Tom Walker takes a look at the latest technology and innovation currently making waves across the world of sport



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

Intel continues expansion in sports with Voke deal

US-based tech giant Intel has acquired virtual reality live streaming company Voke as it continues to strengthen its presence in the sports technology market.

California-based Voke, which specialises in live streams of sports events, uses a stereoscopic, panoramic camera system to broadcast live 3D events which can be broadcast to any VR device.

Voke's technology offers multiple viewpoints, so viewers can choose where they want to "sit in the crowd".

The acquisition is part of Intel's plans to broaden its



interactive and immersive services in the sports broadcasting market.

James Carwana, general manager of the newly created

Intel Sports Group, said: "Sport is being revolutionised by data and the ability to capture, connect, analyse and interact with it. Voke's technology lets fans be

Voke's device offers multiple viewpoints, allowing viewers to choose how they watch

where the action is without leaving their living rooms.

"At Intel, we're building a broad portfolio of best-in-class solutions that will deliver new, immersive experiences for athletes, fans and content producers."

Intel created the Intel Sports Group in the early part of 2016, following the US tech company's acquisition of immersive sports video specialist, Replay Technologies.

Sport-kit keyword Voke

Orbi to start production of first ever 360-degree video eyewear

Wearable tech startup company Orbi is ready to begin production on the new Orbi Prime — the world's first 4K, 360-degree video recording eyewear.

In November, the company successfully completed a crowdfunding campaign on the Indiegogo platform — securing pledges worth

US\$103,000, surpassing its initial funding goal of US\$75,000 — paving the way for a manufacturing push.

Acting as a "regular" pair of sunglasses, the Orbi Prime offers hands-free recording technology as well as a polarised, eye-level point of view — meaning that "what you see is what you record".

Featuring 1080p resolution,



The recording glasses will appeal to the adrenaline sports market

90-minute recording time and water resistance, the product will be launched to target the adrenaline sports and outdoor adventure

market.

The company was founded by a team of veteran hardware and software engineers — who in their freetime double up as photographers and outdoor enthusiasts.

Tired of missing shots during activity, they created Orbi Prime as a solution.

Sport-kit keyword Orbi



The robo-runner hosts 5km group runs for up to seven participants

Runner robot to act as matchmaker

Racefully, the social running app connecting runners through virtual racing, has announced the launch of its first in-app running robot, Runbot 1.

Running at a pace of 6min/km, Runbot 1 mimics human running experiences –

centred around competition and motivation – and has been designed specifically to connect beginner-level runners with each other.

The robo-runner hosts 5km group runs for up to seven (human) participants at a time, and launches a new race every

15 minutes. The app tracks the race and lets users know how they are doing against their robotic running mate – and anyone else participating. To join a run, a user taps the robot's next run on the list.

Racefully co-founder, David Naylor, said: "Starting out

running can be pretty daunting – and beyond those first steps, just sticking to a schedule can make or break a fitness goal.

"We designed Runbot 1 to inspire new runners to run for the first time and meet other runners in the process."

Sport-kit keyword Racefully

FitBit links up with video game to offer in-game activity rewards

US-based video game publisher 2K Gaming is encouraging gamers to become more physically active by offering in-game rewards for real exercise.

The company has teamed up with wearable tech firm Fitbit to set up a rewards system for players of its new NBA 2K17 game – the top-selling basketball game simulation.

Gamers who achieve 10,000 steps in a day – tracked with their Fitbit device – will receive a temporary attribute boost to their MyPlayer in

the NBA 2K17 game, enhancing their performance on the simulated court.

Once users connect their Fitbit tracker with NBA 2K17 on Xbox One or PlayStation4, their real-world step activity can start working toward the 10,000 steps per day goal for receiving in-game boosts.

As users reach the steps milestone, their MyPlayer will improve its ability across categories such as agility, layups and dunks – significantly improving performance for the next five games played that day.

Sport-kit keyword 2K Gaming



Users can earn boosts when playing NBA 2K17

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Managing Director Parkwood Leisure

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Parkwood Leisure operates 90 leisure facilities in England and Wales including local authority leisure centres and sports facilities, theatres and outdoor activity centres. We are seeking a Managing Director to lead Parkwood Leisure and ensure its continued success.

Reporting to the Executive Chairman, you will be responsible for the strategic, operational and financial management of the business.

This is an outstanding opportunity to successfully deliver the commercial business strategy and identify and develop the company into new markets in the sport and leisure sectors.

The Managing Director will provide strong leadership and ensure that business objectives are achieved whilst an excellent service is delivered to all customers. A natural leader with a proven track record in managing complex, multi site, customer focused businesses, you will be commercially astute, a good negotiator and able to deliver profits. The energy, drive and commitment to contribute to the future of the business are essential. Experience in a senior role in the leisure services market would be advantageous.

Based in Worcester, UK wide travel will be required.

Excellent package commensurate with the level of the role.

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Sports Development Manager

Location: South London

Salary: £35,000 per annum, plus company car and other benefits

idverde is Europe's leading parks and green spaces maintenance provider. A key element of our service provision is the generation of income from our clients' assets such as sports pitches and outdoor leisure facilities. We are looking for a highly motivated individual with excellent commercial skills to create and develop this exciting service offering.

The successful candidate will ideally possess the following skills and qualifications:

- Leisure Management Degree or similar
- Strong track record of delivering financial targets
- Experience of event or activity promotions
- Experience of communicating to a range of corporate and community levels
- Experience of managing a team

Main responsibilities

To be responsible for the development and delivery of outdoor recreation service, reporting directly to the Account Director. Taking full profit and loss responsibility for all outdoor recreation and additional income generating activities; ensuring the delivery of first class levels of service, creation and maintenance of effective working relationships with key stakeholders, achievement of financial targets and driving the development of the outdoor recreation service across a number of locations.

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