

SPORTS MANAGEMENT

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funding
for sport

Liz Nicholl OBE

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countdown to London 2012

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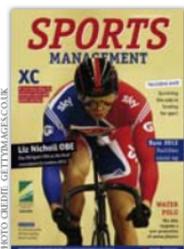


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EDITOR'S LETTER



Liz Nicholl OBE talks about supporting world class athletes like Sir Chris Hoy on page 18

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New for 2012

Welcome to the new-look Sports Management – we've added some new zing for 2012, including more features, in-depth reports, an enhanced SAPCA 'Game On' section and our new Thought Leaders on page 8, which gives a platform for debate.

If you have something you feel passionately about and would like to comment or share your thoughts with other readers, please get in touch and let us know. Thought Leaders will appear in Sports Management magazine's print, PDF and Digital Turning Pages editions and will also feature on our new Sports Management blog, which you can find online at blog.sportsmanagement.co.uk.

We're also celebrating the launch of the Sports Management Handbook, which is in its first edition for 2012 to mark this very special Olympic year. You can view the handbook free via its dedicated website at sportsmanagementhandbook.com or go immediately to the digital edition at sportsmanagementhandbook.com/digital. Print copies can be ordered online at leisuresubs.com.

The handbook complements the magazine as a reference guide for the industry and is packed with research and fact-based reporting, as well as including industry listings, guidelines and a development pipeline, which highlights major infrastructure projects that will open around the world in 2012/13.

We're already compiling the next edition of the handbook, so if you have something to contribute, an idea for content or would like us to cover your research, project or organisation, please get in touch.

When it comes to talent development and competitive sport, the forging of more high-level commercial relationships is vital: PWC makes it clear we're no longer in the age of the amateur

Our lead handbook feature from PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) gives an overview of the global sports market, estimating that the sector will outperform many major economies in the years to 2015, with a projected annual compound growth rate of 3.7 per cent. PwC says a rebound in TV advertising, the migration of sport to pay TV and improvements in sports sponsorship – especially from financial services and car manufacturers – will drive revenues to reach US\$145.3bn (£93bn, €109.3bn) by this date.

It's clear that for a sport to thrive at all levels, from the grassroots upwards, it must have a clear line into TV deals and sponsorship – or both – to drive investment in facilities and programmes.

It's no longer realistic to expect governments to fund sport entirely out of the public purse, and where they do, it's increasingly likely they'll focus on sports participation to help control both obesity levels and expenditure on health services, which are running out of control around the world.

When it comes to talent development and competitive sport, the forging of more high-level commercial relationships is vital: PwC makes it clear we're no longer in the age of the amateur.



We can expect sports governing bodies and leaders to become ever more savvy in grasping the opportunity to build consumer brands and awareness and capture sponsorship revenue, as the continuing development of smart TVs, smart phones and social media creates new channels to access consumers, with all the benefits that brings for revenue generation.

Coupled with these changes, the market for major sports events is maturing and we're seeing the emergence of a global community of experts who can deliver sustainable – sometimes even profitable – events which, as well as being increasingly popular with the consumer, also create wealth for the sports involved via broadcast rights, merchandising and gate money.

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the leisure media company publishes





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SAPCA

Sports Management is a partner of the Sports and Play Construction Association (SAPCA), the trade body for the UK's sports facility construction industry. *Sports Management* and SAPCA work in partnership to promote high standards in the design, construction and maintenance of UK sports facilities.

Do you have a strong opinion about your industry?
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In 2010, nearly half a million people took part in Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile events across the UK

The Sport Relief challenge to run a mile for charity

As the nation celebrates its biggest ever year of sport, we at Sport Relief are encouraging everyone in the entire country to join in the fun from Friday 23 to Sunday 25 March.

As CEO of Comic Relief I have seen Sport Relief grow from the very beginning. It is now a decade old and is a huge fundraising campaign that's raised more than £124m to help change lives in the UK and across the world's poorest countries. The bi-annual campaign involves hundreds of thousands of amazing people getting sponsored to do one, three or six miles at Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile events across the country.

This year, we've got hundreds of events happening across the UK on 25 March, and everyone can join in – from tiny toddlers to top-notch sports pros. The target is to get one million people taking part in the mile – making it the biggest mass participation run ever.

Last time round, in 2010, nearly half a million people took part in the Sport Relief action. The nation came together to raise a record-breaking £44m – just proving that the power of sport is immeasurable and we hope that this year will be no different.

Paving the way, and inspiring everyone to support Sport Relief, are a whole host of dedicated high-profile celebrities. Just a few months ago, David Walliams amazed the nation by spending eight punishing days swimming the length of the river Thames. In 2010, children's TV presenter Helen Skelton kayaked 2012 miles down the Amazon river and this year she challenged herself to reach the South Pole by bike, kite and ski – setting a world record as she went. Within the next couple of weeks, comedian John Bishop will attempt to cycle, row and run more than 290 punishing miles from Paris to London in just five days.



Get sponsored, change lives and have fun!

I hope these incredible feats inspire and encourage you and your family to do your bit too – but you don't need to go to these extreme lengths to raise money, you can just sign up to the Sainsbury's Sport Relief Mile.

Kevin Cahill,
CEO Comic Relief
www.sportrelief.com/the-mile

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INDUSTRY EXPERTS SHARE THEIR VIEWS ON THE CURRENT ISSUES AFFECTING SPORT

ARE WE READY FOR THE OLYMPIC BOOM?

JOHN GOODBODY

Will the clarion call of Jennie Price that the Olympics will generate a unique opportunity for people to embrace physical exercise be answered? When Sport England's chief executive officer told Sporta at the House of Commons in January that the members of the sports trust association needed to be ready for the boom in interest after the Games, there was much self-questioning.

After all, the experience from previous Olympics is that there is no rise in sporting participation in the country hosting the Games. But because legacy has always been at the forefront of London getting the Olympics, more preparations have been made this time.

Take Rochdale. An £11m leisure centre is being opened this summer, just as the Olympic torch goes through the Lancashire town. Craig McAteer, the

managing director at Rochdale Borough-wide Cultural Trust, explains: "A new centre was needed and had been part of the development programme. But the Olympics will hopefully provide the catalyst for an increase in participation."

The trust, which has a 15-year contract to administer leisure and arts facilities in Rochdale, has been touring round schools to generate interest in the new site, which is being put up alongside the 1930s swimming pool complex, which eventually will be demolished. This will include an eight-lane 25m pool; a teaching pool with moveable floor; gymnasiums, including one for children; and a sports hall. McAteer says: "We are optimistic that there will be an explosion of interest off the back of the Games."

In London, Greenwich Leisure, which runs half the leisure facilities in the London boroughs, is equally hopeful that

there will be a boom in the numbers of people taking exercise. Mark Sesnan, its managing director, says: "We've been struggling against the timetable to get everything ready but comprehensive web portals will be up to tell people where they can go and we are constantly looking at better pricing and convenient opening hours. Gone are the days when most borough facilities were run-down. Now they're like private clubs."

The target for the annual users for the Olympic Aquatic Centre (re-opening in 2014) and Multi-use Arena (re-opening next year) is 800,000. The Games will certainly have left a tangible legacy in the capital if that figure is reached.

John has covered 11 successive Olympic Games for the Sunday Times.
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A THINK TANK FOR EFFECTIVE SPORT POLICY

NICK KING

It was with great pride, enormous excitement and a modicum of trepidation that the Sports Think Tank was formally launched at the end of January by myself and my fellow director, Andy Reed.

The think tank is the first in the UK that is wholly devoted to sport and to sports policy making and it aims to fulfil a unique role – sitting in the middle of academics, practitioners, policy-makers, the media and the wider sports world and helping develop the most effective jobs possible.

Research and evidence are central to all successful policy-making and sport should not regard itself as a special case. The think tank will therefore be working to ensure that the best and most up to date evidence from the UK and beyond is central to the policy solutions it recommends.

Much of that evidence will come from sport itself, of course – which is why we are keen to hear from as many people within sport as possible. Dialogue and debate are a key part of our vision for the Sports Think Tank and we anticipate that the website will become a central hub for criticism, comment and a constructive exchange of views.

So far the comments have been entirely positive and we have been delighted with the reception we have received from the world of sport, which has universally welcomed this new venture.

Without this backing our job would be far harder, and we are therefore delighted to have had early pledges of support from high profile figures including Lord Sebastian Coe, Sir Keith Mills and Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson as well as financial backing from a number of committed partners.

The challenge now is to turn support and enthusiasm into action and our plans are designed to do just that. Some of our early research topics include 'Local Authorities and Sport Provision' and 'The Future Funding of Sport' and we plan to kick off our event series before long.

A regular programme of research reports, roundtables and other events aims to produce ground-breaking thinking, to provide opportunities for debate and to put sport centre-stage politically. Beyond that, we want you to contribute to our vision and our strategy. Ultimately we know our success will always be dependent on sport's input and sport's voice being heard which is why Andy and I are keen to hear from you.

Nick King is director of the Sports Think Tank.
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WHAT CHIEF EXECUTIVES WANT

DUNCAN WOOD-ALLUM

What do chief executives and top council politicians want from sport and leisure?

There are a number of emerging themes we've encountered on our travels as strategic advisers. These themes should provide leaders of sport and leisure and their operating partners with a challenge and I hope, a degree of optimism looking ahead.

Targeted, cost-effective interventions that deliver outcomes will continue to be positively encouraged. "Give us bang for our buck," is the chief's battle cry with a challenge to redirect funding to high-value, high-impact activities. You'll be expected to dump the high cost, low impact services if you've not done so already.

Innovation gets you to the top table and keeps you there. Using examples like Birmingham City Council's Be Active programme, you can "lead the cross-cutting

revolution," where sport and leisure has the potential to act as a pathfinder for other larger directorates in achieving outcomes through integrated services.

A big headache for chiefs is the rising cost of social care and health. For many "public health and well-being is the greatest opportunity" for the sector – our role in acting as a catalyst for enabling behaviour change is key to unlocking longer-term savings in spiralling costs of an ageing and unhealthy nation.

The chiefs also want partners who can deliver outside their facilities as well as operate them. "Don't just run our leisure centres" is a key challenge I'm hearing. To create an active borough you'll be expected to animate parks and open spaces, make mass participation events happen, enable schools to open up to the community, engage with citizens in care homes and vulnerable young

people, support sports clubs and inspire major stakeholders to play their part in an holistic approach to sport and physical activity. This is likely to be linked to your wider cultural portfolio of children's play, libraries, parks, museums, tourism and heritage. I'm predicting that those operators that step up to this challenge and innovate, will secure the high value contracts of the future.

Summing up, there will be differences in style and politics, but the savvy service heads and operators are taking a steer from the chief – those that do will be seen as part of the future solution, rather than becoming a sitting duck for further 'efficiency savings'. Quackers.

Duncan Wood-Allum is director of the Sport, Leisure and Culture Consultancy info@sportleisureculture.co.uk



NEWS UPDATE

Liverpool FC opt for original stadium plans

Initial plans for a new Liverpool Football Club (LFC) stadium at Stanley Park, which were drawn up nine years ago, are to be pursued by US-based owner John Henry.

The decision is likely to see alternative plans drawn up by previous owners Tom Hicks and George Gillett ditched and will revive the original plans, drawn up by architects AFL in 2002.

LFC already has planning permission for the AFL plans, which would see the creation of a 60,000-seater 'New Anfield' stadium at Grade II-listed Stanley Park.



Spain's Real Madrid came top of the Deloitte list

European football clubs report revenue increases

The combined revenues of the world's 20 highest-earning football clubs grew to more than €4.4bn (£3.7bn, US\$5.8bn) during 2010-11, says Deloitte.

According to the *Deloitte Football Money League*, the top 20 clubs account for more than a quarter of the European market. Nine clubs recorded double-digit growth.

German club Schalke 04 was the highest climber during 2010-11, moving up six places and into the top 10 for the first time. Napoli of Italy makes its first ever appearance in the top 20.

Gloucester CCC ground plans rejected

Plans drawn up by Gloucestershire County Cricket Club (GCCC) and Linden Homes for a revamp of the county ground have been rejected by Bristol City Council.

The decision has been described as a "massive disappointment" by GCCC chief executive Tom Richardson and means that international cricket matches will no longer take place at the venue.

Richardson also said the council's failure to approve the development proposals had placed the club's future in Bristol in doubt, hinting at a possible move to Gloucester.

Saracens' stadium plans approved

Barnet Council's planning and environment committee has approved plans put forward by Saracens rugby union team for the redevelopment of Cophthall Stadium, north London.

The Aviva Premiership team will move to the venue as part of the project, which has been given the backing of national governing bodies for both athletics and rugby union.

Existing facilities at the stadium will be revamped as part of the £18m scheme, which also includes the construction of new, permanent facilities and the installation of temporary seating.

Saracens will play up to 16 matches a year on a synthetic pitch at the venue, while the local community and athletics club will have the use of the facilities at other times.

The existing main building, located to the west of Cophthall Stadium, is set to undergo a



Governing bodies for athletics and rugby union have backed the project

redevelopment and a new permanent stand will be constructed to the east for use by athletics and rugby union spectators.

Offering fully-covered seating, the total capacity of the east and west structures will be 3,000, while the refurbished west stand would also house facilities for clubs and officials.

Details: <http://bit.ly/wBU90c>

Naming rights offered for Olympic venues

The Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) has launched a formal process to secure naming rights sponsors for the Olympic Stadium, the Aquatics Centre and the Multi-Use Arena.

Greenwich Leisure Limited has been appointed to operate the Aquatics Centre and

Multi-Use Arena, while an anchor tenant for the Olympic Stadium will be announced in May.

Andrew Altman, chief executive of OPLC, said: "This is a rare opportunity to become part of one of the most exciting new places in the world." Details: www.legacycompany.co.uk

Olympic Park MDC decision finalised

London Mayor Boris Johnson has confirmed a decision to establish a new corporation that will take over responsibility for the regeneration of the Olympic Park following the 2012 Games.

The Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC), which will launch on 1 April and continue the work carried out by the Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC), aims to be directly accountable to Londoners through the mayor. It will be called the London Legacy Development Corporation.

Johnson also said that current OPLC chair Baroness Margaret Ford will be interim chair of the new MDC until after the Games.

"Building on the momentum already created by the Legacy Company we are on track



The mayor is to take responsibility for the Olympic Park's regeneration

to grasp this unique opportunity and harness the Olympic legacy," said Johnson.

Baroness Ford added: "The next phase of the legacy work is critical and will require a great deal of attention."

Details: <http://bit.ly/yypzBJ>

Cardiff's ISV moves forward

Cardiff Council has appointed a development partner to deliver the next phase of the city's International Sports Village (ISV) – a new ice rink and waterfront scheme.

Helium Miracle 113, a subsidiary of Wigan-based Greenbank Partnerships, has been selected by the council following a tender process, with design work to start immediately. The project is set to be delivered in phases.

A new twin-pad ice arena and a 150m ski slope will be built first, and will be ready for "all or most" of the 2013-14 ice hockey season. The overall development will take five years to complete.

Later phases will include a hotel; bars; restaurants; and other leisure facilities. As a result of the scheme's commercial elements, no capital funding will be provided by the council.



A waterfront scheme will complement the new ice rink at Cardiff's ISV

Cardiff Council leader Rodney Berman said: "This latest phase of the development will be another cornerstone of the International Sports Village, which is key within the council's plans to further enhance Cardiff's reputation as an international capital and a major tourist destination."

New-look Edinburgh pool nears relaunch

Edinburgh's new-look Royal Commonwealth Pool is due to reopen on 21 March, following a £37m renovation undertaken by Graham Construction.

Funding for the scheme, which has involved stripping back the A-listed building to its bare shell before a complete rebuild, has been contributed by both the City of Edinburgh Council and sportscotland.

Facilities at the new-look Royal Commonwealth Pool will include a 50m, eight-lane pool for community and elite use; a re-orientated diving pool with a moveable floor; a dry dive facility with trampolines and springboards; and a 25m warm-up pool.

Meanwhile, the venue's gym, fitness studios and changing village have been fully revamped and expanded as part of the scheme.



The venue is British Swimming's last training camp before London 2012

Council culture and leisure convener Deirdre Brock said: "This has been an incredibly complex engineering project, which has transformed the Grade A-listed building into a truly world-class aquatics facility."

Details: <http://bit.ly/AneV8w>

Sportivate legacy scheme increases participation

Sport England has announced that 33,000 young people across the country have taken up sport in their free time during the first six months of the Sportivate programme.

Launched in June 2011, the £32m initiative aims to allow 300,000 people between the ages

of 14- and 25-years-old to receive six-to-eight weeks of coaching in their chosen sport.

Sport England has revealed nearly 26,000 of the 33,000 participants have taken part in a sport during the last three months alone.

Details: <http://bit.ly/jjPibi>

Hunt confirms £500m sports funding boost

Culture secretary Jeremy Hunt has announced that sport is to receive £500m worth of extra funding over the next five years, according to the latest National Lottery projections.

Forecasts from December 2011 have shown sport's total income between 2012-13 and 2016-17 is set to increase from £1.3bn – outlined in September 2010's projections – to £1.8bn. The additional funding will be made available as a result of changes to how lottery cash is spent, with sport to receive 20 per cent of returns.

Details: <http://lei.sr?a=j6p5F>



Work is set to start on the £8.3m centre this year

£8.3m Pwllheli sailing centre plans put on show

Members of the public have been given the opportunity to comment on initial plans for the development of a new £8.3m National Sailing and Academy Centre, which will be located in Pwllheli, North Wales.

Gwynedd Council held a consultation day on 17 January to display the plans, which have been drawn up by Ellis Williams Architects and Dobson-Owen Architects.

Construction work is due to commence later this year, with the new facility scheduled to open its doors in 2013. It is hoped the scheme will enable Pwllheli to attract larger and more frequent sailing events.

£2.6m Rossendale leisure scheme commences

Kier Construction has started work on £2.6m-worth of improvements to leisure facilities at Marl Pits in Rawtenstall, Lancashire, on behalf of Rossendale Borough Council (RBC).

Part of a wider £5.6m local authority investment in local provision, the Marl Pits project will widen the range of sports on offer at the venue and enhance the swimming pool. Four five-a-side football pitches and a gym with 45-stations also form part of the work.

Cricket Ireland unveils 'bold' future vision

Cricket Ireland has announced plans to establish a domestic first-class structure and achieve Test status by 2020 in a "bold vision" for the sport's future in Ireland.

A new strategic plan to 2015 for Irish cricket has now been outlined by the body, which also aims to increase participation to 50,000 and reinforce cricket as the country's fourth major team sport.

Cricket Ireland chief executive Warren Deutrom said: "We have set ourselves a very clear long-term ambition – to become a full Test nation by 2020, nothing less."



In-house council architects designed the facility

New £4.3m sports facility opens in East Ayrshire

A new £4.3m sports facility, designed by East Ayrshire Council's in-house architects, has been unveiled by Scotland's national team manager Craig Levein in Stewarton.

Facilities at the new facility, which was constructed by Barr Construction, include a hall with sprung Granwood floor capable of accommodating a range of sports such as badminton and basketball.

The centre also offers a Body Station Gym-branded conditioning suite with CV and resistance equipment, while a dance studio and FIFA 2*-accredited synthetic pitches also feature at the complex.

Treasury: Tax exemption for Glasgow 2014 athletes

HM Treasury has announced that athletes based currently outside the UK and who will be competing at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games will be exempt from paying income tax.

Danny Alexander, chief secretary to the Treasury, confirmed the move in a bid to "spread the long-term legacy benefits of the London 2012 Games into Scotland".

The exemption includes appearance fees and the proportion of global endorsement income related to competing at Glasgow 2014 which would normally be taxable.

Gosport Sports Park work to begin

Work commenced on the new Gosport Sports Park in February, following months of talks between Gosport Borough Council (GBC) and DC Leisure.

At the heart of the planned mixed-use development is a new £7.2m leisure centre to be run by DC Leisure on behalf of the local authority, which will replace the ageing Holbrook Recreation Centre.

Facilities will include a 70-station gym; a 25m swimming pool and smaller learner pool; and eight five-a-side football pitches, as well as a sports hall and a dance studio. Willmott Dixon has been appointed to deliver the development and is scheduled to start on-site on 20 February.

Holbrook Recreation Centre will remain open until the new venue is complete. A second phase of the scheme will then see Holbrook



A new £7.2m leisure centre will boast a 25m swimming pool and a gym

Recreation Centre make way for a 60-bedroom Premier Inn-branded hotel with a pub/restaurant developed by Marston's.

DC Leisure development director Peter Kirkham said: "The park will not only provide great leisure centre facilities but also a wide range of affordable activities for residents in the borough." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=01Coj>

Latest £10m Olympic legacy funding round launches

Local community sports groups across the country are being invited to apply for a share of £10m from the National Lottery under the latest round of the Inspired Facilities fund.

Sport England chair Richard Lewis and sport minister Hugh Robertson launched the

investment round, which is part of plans to establish a lasting Olympic legacy.

The fund is part of the Places People Play legacy programme and aims to boost run-down facilities that might otherwise be unappealing to participants. Details: <http://lei.sr?a=r3Z3a>

Green light for Ravenhill Stadium revamp

Northern Ireland environment minister Alex Attwood has approved planning permission for the redevelopment of Belfast's Ravenhill Stadium, which is currently home to the Ulster Rugby team.

Renovation plans for the remaining three sides of the venue were lodged in August 2010, which followed the construction of a new stand and improvements to terracing on the Mount Merrion side – completed the year before.

The scheme was awarded a boost last March when the Northern Ireland Executive awarded Ulster Rugby nearly £15m of funding through Sport Northern Ireland towards the redevelopment proposals.

Work will be undertaken in phases and will feature a new Memorial End Stand with



Ravenhill Stadium will have a capacity of 18,200 following the scheme

covered seating for 2,500 people, as well as terracing for 1,350 and an educational centre.

Meanwhile, the Aquinas End stand is to provide a family-orientated atmosphere with seating for 3,200 people; medical and treatment rooms; and team changing facilities.

£6.7m facility opens in Durham

Durham University's new £6.7m sports facility at Maiden Castle, located on the outskirts of the city, has been unveiled by the minister for sport and the Olympics Hugh Robertson. Built by construction firm ISG, the new building houses a £1m powered indoor rowing tank – one of only three such facilities in the UK – and a purpose-built boat house.

The indoor tank will be used to teach sculling and crew skills and is designed to simulate the feel and movement of a boat in water. The water flow can be adjusted electronically.

An extended sports hall for increased indoor cricket provision; a performance analysis suite; physiotherapy treatment rooms; and a 28-station rowing Ergo gallery are also included. Robertson said: "Durham University has a



The centre boasts an indoor rowing tank – one of only three in the UK

strong sporting tradition and this new state-of-the-art centre will help confirm this status in the years ahead.

"This fantastic facility will provide world-class sports facilities for elite athletes and community users alike and help more people to take up sport."

£6m sports complex for Ystrad Mynach

A new £6m Centre of Sporting Excellence for football and rugby union is to be built on the site of a former hospital in Ystrad Mynach under new local authority proposals.

Ownership of the site will be transferred to Caerphilly County Borough Council in mid-February, following the November 2011 opening of the new Ysbyty Ystrad Fawr.

Two 3G surfaces, capable of accommodating both football and rugby union, are proposed

as part of the scheme along with supporting infrastructure such as lighting and terracing.

The council hopes the venue will be able to host matches at the 'highest level', offer performance training and sports science facilities and be available for community use.

The Welsh Rugby Union and Football



The proposals will transform the former hospital site in Ystrad Mynach

Association of Wales have backed the scheme, with Newport Gwent Dragons rugby team and Cardiff City Football Club also in support.

Council leader Allan Pritchard said: "This is a unique opportunity for the council to provide a Centre for Sporting Excellence and could be the best in the country."

Mayor: London's Olympic Park to host 2013 cycling festival

One of the first large-scale events to be held in London's Olympic Park following the 2012 Games will be a two-day cycling festival under plans announced by Mayor Boris Johnson.

Due to take place in August 2013, the event is designed to attract more than 200,000 visitors

to the capital and will include a family fun ride for up to 70,000 cyclists around the city.

The second day will see up to 35,000 amateur, club and world-class elite cyclists embark on a 100-mile course, which is scheduled to begin in the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park.



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Football League to consult over artificial pitches

A formal consultation process is to be launched by the Football League (FL) into the use of artificial playing surfaces for professional first team matches.

The consultation will be open to governing bodies such as the Premier League and the Football Association, as well as a wide range of football stakeholder groups and football clubs. Artificial surfaces were used at four Football League clubs during the 1980s, before a 1989 inquiry banned their use in top flight matches – extended to the top four divisions in 1995.



Plans include a new National Performance Centre

£25m for Scotland's national sports centre

Plans for the development of a new National Performance Centre for Sport in Scotland will benefit from up to £25m of financial support from the Scottish Government's Young Scots Fund.

Shona Robison, minister for Commonwealth Games and sport, also confirmed that the Scottish Football Association chief executive, Stewart Regan, will chair the project's steering group.

This steering group will be responsible for setting out criteria for bids from local authorities that are looking to locate the facility in their respective areas, as well as a timetable for completion.

Council approves Coventry leisure plans

Coventry City Council (CCC) is to close a leisure centre after approving plans to create new swimming and community facilities at Centre AT7 in a "re-provisioning" of services. Under the proposals backed by the council's cabinet last month, a new complex comprising a 25m pool; a leisure and learner pool; and a health suite will be built in north east Coventry.

The project will lead to the closure of Foleshill Sports and Leisure Centre, which the council said had seen participation fall by 60 per cent.

Mace submits Derby arena plans

Plans for the development of a new multi-sports arena adjacent to Pride Park Stadium in Derby have been submitted by Derby City Council's (DCC) project manager, Mace.

FaulknerBrowns Architects have designed the 14,500sq m (156,077sq ft) complex, which features a 250m indoor cycling track and a 1.5km (0.9-mile) outdoor closed cycle trail.

A sports infield capable of accommodating 12 badminton courts and hospitality facilities are also proposed, while the new arena will have a seating capacity of 5,000 for cultural events, such as concerts.

The complex is to be built on the site of the existing park and ride facility, which will lead to 600 new spaces being created between the new arena and the football stadium.

Mace project director David Grose said: "We have designed an iconic building, which will



The complex is to be developed adjacent to Derby's Pride Park stadium

complement Pride Park Stadium, but will also function as a stand-alone facility.

"The sculptured form will be very striking – exhibiting fluidity and movement to reflect the activities taking place inside."

DCC director of leisure and culture Claire Davenport added: "The arena will provide the city with modern facilities to be proud of."

New multi-sports facility opens in Bexley

The new multi-sport Europa Centre, which is to be used as a London 2012 Games Time Training Venue, has opened in Bexley, south east London.

Olympic and Paralympic volleyball teams will use the 3,460sq m (37,243sq ft) facility, which was designed by Formation Architects and Whitecode Design.

ISG Construction and Stace were also involved with the scheme, which provides a new home for Europa Gym Club, Europa Weightlifting Club and Nemesis Boxing Club.

Facilities include a gymnastic hall; a weightlifting and fitness studio; a boxing studio; and physiotherapy and treatment rooms, as well as a mezzanine floor with multi-use space for functions, dance and martial arts.



A gymnastic hall is among the facilities at Bexley's new Europa Centre

Bexley Council leader Teresa O'Neill said: "This centre has secured a future for important community sports clubs and has been chosen as a London 2012 Games Time Training Venue for the Olympic and Paralympic volleyball team." Read more: <http://lei.sr7a=W9M5E>

Manchester in line for £18m leisure investments

Three swimming pools in Manchester that offer "poor value for money" could be replaced with new facilities as part an £18m investment strategy announced by the local authority.

Manchester City Council's communities and neighbourhoods overview and scrutiny

committee backed the proposals before they went before the executive on 18 January.

A report discussed by the council said there is a "compelling case" to replace three outdated buildings at Levenshulme, Miles Platting and Chorlton, which are expensive to run.

£9m Horley Leisure Centre opens

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council's (RBBC) new £9m Horley Leisure Centre has opened on the site of the former Court Lodge School.

S&P Architects designed the new complex, which has replaced the former Horley Anderson Centre and boasts a 25m, six-lane swimming pool and a training pool.

Built by Netherlands-based Pellikaan Construction, the centre also features a 45-station gym with a free weights area; a four-court sports hall; and an exercise studio.

The facility offers separate male, female, family, group and disabled changing areas, while a cycle and car park is to be shared with the neighbouring Horley Town Football Club.

Greenwich Leisure Limited will operate Horley Leisure Centre on behalf of the council, which aims to be accessible to all users and



S&P Architects are behind the design of the new Horley Leisure Centre

incorporates a number of eco-friendly features, such as a biomass heating system.

RBBC executive member for health communities Adam De Save said: "The centre looks amazing and provides fantastic new facilities to help people of all ages and abilities keep healthy and active."

£30m for national sports medicine centre

Health secretary Andrew Lansley has announced £30m of funding towards a new National Sports and Exercise Medicine Centre of Excellence across three UK locations.

Loughborough, Sheffield and London are the planned sites of three hubs that comprise the new facility, which is one of the government's main legacy commitments from the 2012 Games this summer.

The Centre of Excellence will help more people become active and treat injuries caused by exercise and conditions that are associated with a lack of physical activity.

It is hoped the facility will help people suffering from existing conditions, such as diabetes, benefit from exercise, while returning injured people to physical health and work quickly.



The centre is to share research findings and best practice with the NHS

Lansley said: "The Olympics are a once in a life-time opportunity for Britain and it provides a great opportunity for the NHS too.

"The centre will share research findings and best practice with the NHS so the whole country benefits." Details: <http://lei.sr?a=B89A>

Glasgow swimming centre work reaches landmark

Work on the £13.7m Tollcross International Swimming Centre has reached a landmark stage with the installation of a truss.

The truss forms the framework of an extension for the new six-lane, 50m warm-up pool at Tollcross, which will add to an existing

10-lane, 50 metre competition pool – providing a dedicated venue for swimming events at the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.

The design was carried out by Glasgow City Council's in-house design team. Construction work is being delivered by Barr Holdings.

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Hogbin given deputy chef de mission role

Ann Hogbin, the former chief executive of Commonwealth Games England (CGE), has been appointed as the deputy chef de mission for operations for the ParalympicsGB team at London 2012.

Hogbin, who led CGE for nearly 20 years before stepping down at the end of last year, was selected for the role by ParalympicsGB chef de mission Craig Hunter.

The move is no surprise as Hunter and Hogbin forged a successful partnership at the Delhi 2010 Commonwealth Games when Hunter served as chef de mission for Team England. They led the country to third place on the medal table, despite several logistical challenges in the lead up to the Games.



John Steele appointed YST CEO

John Steele has become chief executive of the Youth Sport Trust (YST) following his departure as head of the Rugby Football Union (RFU).

He replaces Steve Grainger who left the YST last March after he was, ironically, headhunted by Steele to become the new rugby development director at the RFU.

The main task for Steele will be to oversee the new School Games – the government's flagship school sport policy – which is due to take place at several Olympic Park venues in May.

He said he admired the YST's work and that part of his motivation for joining is due to its "exceptional record of delivery and expertise".

Warner chairs London 2017 committee

UK Athletics (UKA) chair Ed Warner has been appointed chair of the London 2017 IAAF World Athletics Championships Organising Committee.

Having led the successful bid to host the event in London, Warner will submit a proposed corporate structure and governance framework to the IAAF for approval and will work with Sports Minister Hugh Robertson and London Mayor Boris Johnson to appoint the rest of the board.

Warner said: "I am absolutely thrilled to have the opportunity to fulfil the promises we made in the bid. From the very start London 2017 has been a partnership



between UKA, the DCMS, the Mayor's Office and UK Sport and I look forward to continuing that collaboration as we move into event delivery mode."

CIMSPA national and regional chairs

The Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (CIMSPA) has appointed chairs of its national and regional management boards – to unify a million UK sport and physical activity professionals by representing their interests at a national level.

The boards will be chaired by Lloyd Conaway, director/CEO of team BEDS&LUTON County Sports Partnership. Other chairs include: Ian Phelps, director Serco Leisure; Sheila Forster, director Urban Balance Consultants; Ian

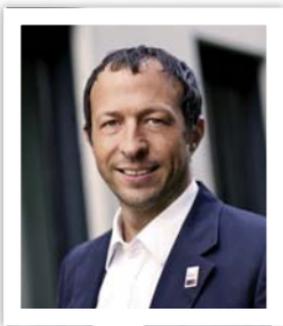
Gray, leisure operations manager Hartlepool Borough Council; Michael Hunt, CEO Leisure in Hyndburn; Paul Lyness, head of leisure services Ballymoney Borough Council; Fiona Grossart, director CoachesInfo.com; John Stride, CEO Inspire Leisure; Lesley Coulton, head of sport and active leisure University of Plymouth; Julian Leybourne, CEO ICON TRAINING; Sue Briggs, sports project manager University of Birmingham Sport; and Lorenzo Clark, director of operations at Sheffield International Venues.

Ian Richie joins the RFU

Ian Richie has left the All England Lawn Tennis and Croquet Club to take up the role of chief executive at the Rugby Football Union (RFU). He also stands down as the independent non-executive director of the Football League and from the board at Wembley Stadium.

Richie said: "I'm very much looking forward to working with new colleagues and partners at the RFU. There's much to be positive about, seeing a new generation of players emerge in the RBS Six Nations and seizing the unique chance to grow the game when hosting the Rugby World Cup in 2015."





Peter Bayer

The CEO of the recent Innsbruck 2012 Youth Winter Olympic Games talks to Karen Maxwell

Can you tell me about your background?

I was born in Vorarlberg in western Austria and hold a Master's Degree in Business Administration from Innsbruck University.

I gained substantial experience as a marketing and event director of large-scale international events for more than 15 years and held various top management positions in different organising committees. I am an expert in music, arts and sports consulting, with a focus on youth-oriented strategies.

In September 2009, I was appointed as CEO of the Innsbruck 2012 Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG)

What did your role involve during the Games?

As CEO I have been overseeing all functional areas to ensure the smooth delivery of the Games. My main tasks were solving problems and taking decisions. Special focuses of my work include government relations, strategic planning, marketing and sponsoring.

What are your views on the success of the Games?

The Games encouraged young people from around the world to celebrate the Olympic values of excellence, respect and friendship. The unique combination of high-level sports competitions and the Culture & Education Programme inspired young people from across the globe.

What was the concept behind the Culture & Education Programme?

Basically, we followed our motto 'be part of it!', which meant that we provided hands-on experiences ranging from digital-media and cooking workshops to Meet the Role Model sessions with world-famous athletes. We offered a platform for youngsters with different cultural backgrounds who spoke different languages to get to know each other through music and art, to build friendships and to spread the YOG message.

What was the facility strategy?

Innsbruck is famous for its affinity with winter sports. Before the Games we had almost all the sports venues ready and being tested regularly at the highest level. Nevertheless, we used the Games as a catalyst to upgrade some venues, such as in Seefeld where a new ski jump and a biathlon shooting range has been built. Through the Games, Kùhtai was able to create Europe's first freestyle park superpipe, a slopestyle course and a boarder-cross course. All these venues will be used for further high-level competitions and as training facilities for our grassroots sports.

How did the young athletes' needs differ from adult athletes?

As far as the basic event organisation was concerned, there was no difference. We offered the same level of competitions,



Youngsters got to know each other through the event's music, art and sport

venues and organisation as at World Cup events. What was different was the atmosphere, the speakers, the music, the look – everything was a bit more colourful, louder and younger.

What was the social media/marketing strategy?

Social media was key for us in order to reach our clearly defined target group. If you want to reach kids you need to go where they are instead of waiting for them to watch the TV highlights. Facebook was part of our daily life – we ran many contests, competitions and activation programmes. We also had live tweets from all sport events, and the Innsbruck 2012 YouTube channel received more than one million views. We developed a digital ski jumping game with Samsung, a digital concierge with all necessary information on Innsbruck 2012, and a USB flash drive called the YOGGER was installed by the IOC to allow athletes and officials to share their profiles by holding their USB flash drives together.

If you want to reach kids you need to go where they are instead of waiting for them to watch the highlights

The CEO of UK Sport talks to Karen Maxwell about the organisation's role in improving performance and providing quality support in the lead up to the London 2012 Games



LIZ NICHOLL

This is it – 2012 – the year we've all been waiting and preparing for. The athletes, the coaches, the volunteers, the event organisers and suppliers – in fact everyone involved with British sport is poised to make the most out of this 'once-in-a-lifetime' opportunity.

So my obvious question to Liz Nicholl OBE, the CEO of UK Sport – the nation's high performance sports agency that's investing £100m a year to ensure our athletes' success – is: "Are we ready?"

"It's going to be a real test of our investment, but yes we're definitely on track," she says. "Every sport has agreed a key performance indicator in every year on its journey through to the Games and

if we look at the collective performances in 2011, we're in a better place than we were prior to Beijing 2008."

Four years ago, TeamGB reached the goal set for London 2012 by achieving fourth place in the Olympic and second place in the Paralympic medal tables.

With less than 150 days before the London Games begin, our high performance sport system is prospering – with a record 23 Olympic and Paralympic sports achieving their targets – thanks to record levels of targeted investment.

"We aim to win more medals across Olympic and Paralympic sports this year – bearing in mind that we won 47 medals across Olympic sports in Beijing and we're currently in a good place," Nicholl says.

However, she warns that there are no guarantees in performance sport. "The athletes are doing well, the coaches are committed, the support teams are committed – so really now it's a matter of continuing to work hard between now and the Games and not getting complacent. It's not easy, our athletes are competing with the world's best, although many of ours are also the world's best. If everything goes according to plan we'll keep that fourth and second position."

OVERSEEING EXCELLENCE

A former international netball player and championship director of the 1995 World Championships, Nicholl was CEO of England Netball before joining UK Sport in 1999. She started out as director of elite sport before progressing to COO in 2009, then took the CEO reins from John Steele



– when he left the organisation to join the Rugby Football Union – in 2010. (Steele has since moved to the Youth Sport Trust.)

During her time at England Netball, Nicholl was credited with steering the sport through a period of successful change, while also holding the roles of vice chair of the CCPR – now the Sport and Recreation Alliance (SRA) – and chair of the Commonwealth Games England.

Looking back, she's quick to point out that it was thanks to a huge team effort. "We all had clear objectives to increase participation in netball, improve performance and provide quality support – and this is still the case today," Nicholl explains.

"We introduced a world-class performance programme, we accessed lottery funding, we recruited a performance director from overseas and the year before I left there was a bronze medal at the Commonwealth Games. Today, England's still up there at number three in the world and vying for second place, potentially first at some point in the future."

FUNDING FACTS

At UK Sport, Nicholl has overseen a similar model to raise the standards set for other sports to achieve success at World, Olympic and Paralympic level, by steering key changes in the performance, investment and governance of the organisation. She says the same team work ethos and the "significant contribution from every individual" – particularly with reference to the creation and implementation of UK Sport's world-class performance system – was vital to its success.

Alistair Brownlee is 2009/2011 World Triathlon Champion





UK Sport's Major Events strategy to 2019 gives athletes and officials home Games experience



Chris Hoy celebrates winning the Men's Sprint Final at the recent UCI Track Cycling World Cup

"The performance system has evolved because of the good coaches that we've been able to attract, the enhanced funding we've had to develop the athletes and the performance expertise that we've aligned with the needs of sports," she says.

According to Nicholl, the funding cycle was key to the system's implementation. After Sydney 2000, the organisation introduced four-year funding rounds, which gave more stability to the performance system. This meant that in the lead up to Athens 2004, sports were able to recruit and retain good coaches and support staff, which Nicholl says "was a crucial part of the sport system development".

"There wasn't much difference between our athletes' performance in Sydney and Athens, where we came 10th on the medal table for Olympics and second for Paralympics on both counts," she explains. "However, by the time we won the bid to host the Games in 2005, the government had more confidence in what we were doing and gave us more responsibility, some of which was transferred from Sport England, alongside an increase in our share of National Lottery money. We then had responsibility for an eight-year investment, instead of four – from talent ID right through to podium.

"UK Sport was then given more exchequer funding in the budget of 2006, to support success in 2012 and investment in every Olympic and Paralympic sport. "

MISSION 2012

Nicholl gives particular credit to UK Sport's director of performance, Peter

Left: Liz Nicholl, Lord Seb Coe and Baroness Campbell – chair of UK Sport and the Youth Sports Trust



Keen, who is the architect of the organisation's 'Mission 2012' approach to world-class system development. This, she says, has "led to significant impact on the way we work and the way sports work with us while reviewing their own world-class programmes on a regular basis".

"Our no compromise approach to funding, which sports' national governing bodies (NGBs) now understand, is about them getting the right support to the right athletes for the right reasons," she says. "We require the NGBs to update us with information about their programmes as well as progress against agreed targets three times a year via a rating system of red, amber, green or gold.

"Gold means the sport is excellent and there is good practice going on there that could be shared with other sports. Green means they're on track and don't need our help. Amber means they know where they are and are working at it, and red means they need our help.

"The principle is that good practice can address the issues that need help. Between the gold and red we probably have about 1,000 pieces of information submitted to us, which our team focuses on to inform their priorities. This really brings to life the benefit of sports working together.

According to Nicholl, this approach allows the organisation to see recurring



UK Sport has a close working relationship with the home countries' sports councils

► themes, some of which may reinforce the need for research and innovation work, and helps to extend the expertise of specialist coaching development.

"Some issues can be resolved quickly, others may need more work from one of our designated team members – who have responsibility for each potential element where a sport may need help – or maybe from our research and innovation team," she explains.

"We can then offer to add value to their work to help improve athlete performance, as well as their health and wellbeing, expanding the sport's system support or improving the climate and culture of their organisation so they can get the very best from their athletes.

"Everybody understands the Mission 2012 process and can see that they are all part of one team, with one mission and that it's within everybody's interests to have an open and honest dialogue with us," she says.

SUSTAINABLE ADMINISTRATION

A recurring theme that's currently being addressed is the upskilling of the people working within the NGBs.

"We're aware that one of the weakness within NGBs is that generally their focus is much more about delivery rather than personal development," says Nicholl. "We have an International Leadership Development programme – the Elite Coaching Apprenticeship Programme. For example, over the past 12-18 months we've been running a leadership programme to support performance directors and will be providing similar programmes for CEOs and chairs." She adds that UK Sport also previously worked with the British Olympic Association (BOA) and the SRA in the setting up of a four-year Women in Leadership programme, to ensure that women were also given the right opportunity within that structure.

Thanks to sports' higher media profile however, Nicholl has noticed that good business people, with a passion for sport, are coming into the boards of sports as independent chairs, which she says could make a real difference to the NGBs sustainability administration post-2012.

This increased media attention is also attracting sponsors, many of which have created a partnership role that could also benefit the sport post-Games.

Sky's relationship with British Cycling, British Gas' link with British Swimming and Siemens' tie-up with British Rowing is testament to this trend. Nicholl also highlights the FSTE 100 companies partnership the BOA has initiated, which she says can offer fantastic business expertise to Olympic and Paralympic sports.

2012 AND BEYOND

Looking ahead, Nicholl says the Mission 2012 model has already been introduced for the Winter Games, so the relationship with the four Olympic and two Paralympic-funded sports for Sochi 2014 is exactly the same as the Summer Olympic and Paralympic Games. And this process will also continue towards Rio 2016.

"We're in a fantastic position for Rio 2016 because we're likely to have about the same amount of money in this funding cycle," says Nicholl. Although she says that there are still some risks because of the 65 per cent reliance of National Lottery funding and exchequer funding is as yet only confirmed to 2015 – in line with government policy.

"You need a compelling goal to continue that 'one team one mission' feel on the journey from London to Rio," she says. "Our ambition is that we'll do what no Summer Olympic and Paralympic host nation has done before, which is maintain some of the great performances achieved at our home Games right through to the next Summer Games in 2016." ●

Our no compromise approach to funding is about NGBs getting the right support to the right athletes for the right reasons



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John Havill also added "Our customers love it, in particular the badminton club, some even hinting this is the best sports hall they have ever played in".

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INSTALL NEW SPORTS FLOOR	£ 28, 153	£ 22, 692	Term – 60 Months
LINE MARKING (8 Game Lines)	£ 2, 290	£ 2, 290	
PROJECT TOTAL	£ 40, 322	£ 24, 982	
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Surviving the cuts in funding for sport

How is the sector bearing up? Is it all doom and gloom, or might some positives come out of the budget slashing? Kath Hudson asks four industry experts

Last year was an extremely tough year for local authority leisure, with the speed and severity of the cuts being unprecedented. The Chief Leisure Officers Association's (CLOA) impact survey in 2011 indicated that one third of authorities were planning savings of 30 per cent across culture and sport services over two financial years.

Sports development and leisure facility operations are bearing the brunt. At a time when there is an increased

awareness of the need to address health inequalities, the less efficient off-peak hours are being squeezed and funding pulled on many initiatives aimed at reaching special populations.

Services are being rationalised, hours reduced and facilities closed, or handed over to the community to run. Staff have been made redundant and posts left unfilled when people have left.

The immediate future doesn't look heartening either: more cuts will be

implemented this year and public spending is set to be reduced by a further 0.9 per cent in real terms in 2015/16 and 2016/17.

However, looking for the silver lining, adversity does breed creativity, and some local authorities and trusts are pro-actively seeking partnerships, acting collaboratively and looking for ways to tap into healthcare funding when it is reformed. Although there will be many casualties of the cuts, hopefully there will be a few phoenixes rising from the ashes too.



CRAIG MCATEER
managing director
Rochdale Boroughwide
Cultural Trust

It's been a difficult time, however income and growth are up. We've invested in three new sports centres which are returning healthy profits and are being used to prop up other services.

When Link4Life took over as a leisure trust in 2007, the local authority had 800 members and direct debits of £250,000 a year. This has been raised to 12,000 members and £3m direct debits a year, as we have attracted users from private sector facilities.

We're having to be creative: we've announced a collaboration with Oldham Leisure Trust so we can share knowledge and have extra weight to apply for funding together as the health budget changes. As a trust, we are also looking at other services which we could run, for example the youth service and adult social care as we could deliver cost savings by spreading overheads.

My main concern with the cuts is that for a short-term fix we are storing up long-term problems and in two years we will unravel all the many years of good work. Shiny new sports centres don't address all health inequalities and it's those pathways that are having to be shut down.



RICHARD HUNT
chair
CLOA

Creating a joined-up approach for community sport in the current climate is essential. Shared approaches will be critical to maintaining a local sporting infrastructure and many authorities are already illustrating this, through asset transfer to community sports clubs, joint facility sports hubs and a focus on enhancing sustainable community use of school sports facilities. Sport England's strategy to create a sporting habit for life will only succeed in driving up participation if it is part of a whole system approach, led locally.

There are two strands to joining up from a local authority perspective: across the community sports sector itself, and for the council to share broader agendas with partners in public health, crime reduction partnerships, children's services and adult care commissioners.

However, the sector does have some windows of opportunity. The transition of public health responsibilities to local government and health reforms present the opportunity to significantly raise the profile of and investment in sport and physical activity. Local leadership will mean working collectively with key sector players in our sport and physical activity networks to make this case.



Sport providers are having to deliver more for less through innovative approaches, efficiencies and partnerships



RICHARD MILLARD
client relations and sports
development director
DC Leisure

Although difficult, it's not all doom and gloom: income and usage is holding up quite well. However, there is definitely the need to get creative.

We're looking at both pricing and programming with our local authority clients. Some are looking to outsource sports development, so we are looking at ways of taking that on, which is a natural progression for us. With public health reform, there is also the opportunity to attract external funding from the PCT sector.

We've looked hard at all our costs: we have a carbon reduction team and the outcome of this is that we avoid energy and waste, but also save money. Other examples are that we are using email more than letters and reducing the need to travel through conference calls.

The usage part of our centres has held up, despite the tough times, but we have noticed people are becoming more price sensitive. One of our policies has been to look after our existing customers even more than ever and all management staff have had to be closer to their business.

I'm still optimistic: I hope it will encourage local authorities to embrace different delivery options, better define their needs and be brave at seeking alternatives.



LEE MASON
Executive director
County Sports Partnership Network
(CSPN)

As a network of independent enterprises working with sports providers to deliver national programmes, such as School Games and Sportivate, we are seeing the impact of financial cuts.

National funding partners and local commissioners are having to make every penny count – leading to an increase in the level of scrutiny of frontline deliverers and demands for value for money. Meanwhile, our delivery partners are being squeezed, with cuts in school sport and local authority sports development, while commercial and voluntary sector providers are struggling to maintain income levels.

As a network we are responding to these challenges by finding new ways to deliver more for less, through innovative approaches, efficiencies through greater collaboration across the network, helping commissioners to use sport to address their priorities, supporting the voluntary sector to maximise its contribution and working more closely with commercial sector partners.

We are delivering genuine return on investment for all our stakeholders and support our teams to ensure they continue to drive the health agenda and deliver a vibrant sport and physical activity landscape.

ACTIVE PEOPLE SURVEY 5



The Active People Survey (APS) provides robust and independent information about adult sports participation in England. Sport England's director of sport, Lisa O'Keefe, discusses some of the findings in the fifth survey



In the most exciting year for sport in our generation, our eyes are fixed on the home Olympic and Paralympic Games and ensuring everyone maximises the opportunities the 2012 Games will undoubtedly bring for community sport. Understanding what's happened in community sport in the seven years since we won the Olympic bid, in 2005, is helping to inform

APS data identifies the barriers that prevent people playing regular sport

decisions and investments to grow participation over the next five years.

The headlines from the Active People Survey (APS) 5 show the number of people aged 16 and over playing sport at least three times a week has risen by around 630,000 since 2005/06 to 6.927 million people. But look a little deeper and we can see that this growth is not being seen uniformly across the population; in fact participation rates among 16- to 19-year-olds actually fell over the past three years.

Addressing that challenge is a major focus of Sport England's strategy for 2012 to 2017. Our ambition is to 'create a sporting habit for life' by ensuring that young people are regularly playing sport and to break down the barriers that, until now, have prevented young people from continuing their interest in sport into their adult life.

The latest survey results also illustrate that the gender gap persists in sport. While the number of men playing sport regularly has risen from 3.73 million to

Team sports	APS1 (2005/6)	APS5 (2010/11)	Individual sports	APS1 (2005/6)	APS5 (2010/11)
Football	4.97% 2,021,700	4.98% 2,117,000	Swimming	8.04% 3,273,800	6.62% 2,809,300
Cricket	0.48% 195,200	0.51% 215,500	Cycling	4.02% 1,634,800	4.15% 1,761,200
Rugby Union	0.46% 185,600	0.42% 178,900	Athletics	3.33% 1,353,800	4.47% 1,899,400
Basketball	0.39% 158,300	0.36% 151,500	Golf	2.18% 889,100	1.96% 833,200
Netball	0.27% 111,700	0.31% 131,700	Badminton	1.27% 516,700	1.20% 510,300



According to APS data, the number of people cycling regularly in 2010/11 grew by 126,400 since 2005/6

4.24 million, women's participation has failed to keep pace. It's clear from this that more needs to be done to make sport attractive to women.

SPORT BY SPORT

With six years data to look at, what do we know about the relative popularity of different sports? Sport England measures the sports it funds on the number of people who are playing the sport at least once a week for 30 minutes.

Among team sports, the picture in 2010/11 looks similar to six years ago; football remains far out in front with over 2.1 million weekly participants, followed by cricket, rugby union, basketball and netball. The most likely change to



CASE STUDY:

ENGLAND NETBALL – USING INSIGHT TO DRIVE PARTICIPATION

The Active People Survey (APS) shows that netball participation has grown by 18 per cent over the last five years, partly due to the success of programmes such as England Netball's Back to Netball. This hasn't happened by chance, but is built on the commitment the governing body has shown to putting their participants at the heart of everything they do – the Participant-Centred Approach.

Over the last 18 months, England Netball has undertaken a huge project to identify the behaviours, motivations, expectations, capabilities and needs of current netballers and potential future participants to help shape their offers, programmes and structures. They have combined information from a wide range of surveys, audits, questionnaires, in-depth interviews and recorded conversations. Through The Big Netball Conversation, the governing body has talked directly to nearly 10,000 netballers.

Data and insight derived from the APS has been a key component of this process. It has particularly supported understanding of the large number of participants accessing netball activities outside the sport's traditional structures. While England Netball has a membership of just over 50,000 adult members, more than 130,000 on average play netball once a week.

The customer-centred understanding is already driving the development of the 'My Game' portfolio of offers for current and potential netball players aimed at offering a game and product of choice for any participant and it will underpin the continuing evolution of England Netball's strategic plan. The sport will also be continuing to talk to participants and building understanding of their needs as new data emerges – as with all successful organisations, the path to success starts and ends with understanding their customers.

that order appears to be among the final two, with netball showing a positive trend and basketball flagging, particularly in the last two years of APS figures. But overall the popularity of these team sports has remained relatively constant over the period.

The picture for individual sports is much more dynamic. Participation in cycling and athletics (which includes running) has increased by around 125,000 and 550,000 respectively, while swimming is down by around 460,000 over the six-year period. However, swimming remains comfortably the most popular sport with around 2.8 million weekly participants. Inevitably the changes in numbers of participants are

largest among the bigger sports, but proportionately there has been some very impressive growth in some slightly smaller sports, notably table tennis and mountaineering.

INCREASING PARTICIPATION IN A CHALLENGING ECONOMIC CLIMATE

So what impact is the challenging economic situation having on people's sports participation?

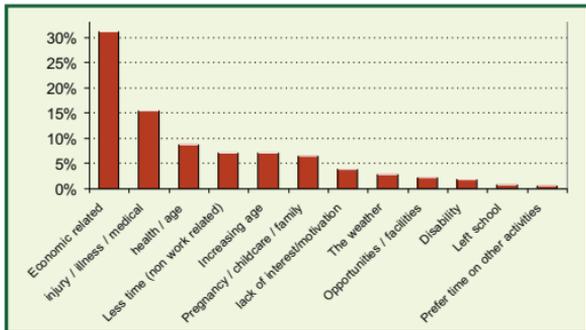
Taking part in sport is a leisure choice involving discretionary spend. If an individual's budget tightens, they will have lower discretionary spend. But do people stop playing sport altogether or do they protect their active lifestyle by switching to lower cost activities? →



► The choice to play sport also involves a time commitment – and the economic situation can have an impact on this. It may be argued that someone who loses their job has more time to play sport, but research suggests that any impact here is short lived, over-ridden in the longer term by increasing social isolation and the negative psychological effect of being unemployed. For a large number of people, challenging economic times mean increased demands in terms of working longer hours and increased pressure in the work environment.

Analysis from the survey, although not able to directly address all the questions raised above, does provide an interesting insight into changing patterns of participation – and the importance of economic

Reasons given for doing less sport now than at the same time last year



APS data helps to inform decisions and investments to grow participation

factors in people's decision to participate or drop out or at least do less sport.

The survey asks people whether their participation rates are the same, higher or lower than at the same time last year. Roughly a half say they're doing the same amount, with about a quarter claiming to be doing more and a quarter saying they're doing less. Those respondents who say they're doing less are asked why this is the case. The table below shows that around a third put this down to economic-related factors. These include specific reason such as: loss of job; less income; too expensive; and lack of time due to work commitments – such as longer hours or a longer commute.

These questions have only been asked since October 2009, but from the evidence

VALUED LOCAL MEASUREMENT

With at least 500 respondents per local authority area, the APS provides a picture of participation at the local level. It's one of the reasons the Department of Health, which helps to fund the survey, has chosen to add new questions to find out more about people's BMI across England.

Local councils tend to focus on a wider measure of participation than the sport-specific figures reported nationally and regionally by Sport England.

In Oxfordshire, all five district local authorities have been working together since 2006 on a strategy for sport and active recreation through the Oxfordshire Sports Partnership.

The partnership's managing director, Chris Freeman, says: "Having a consistent measure of participation means we can benchmark our progress against previous years. APS has helped us to understand participation and we've then used the market segmentation tool to develop the right activities in the right places.

"We've seen consistent increases in participation in Oxfordshire, demonstrating the value of the joined-up approach alongside the support of Sport England and the PCT for our Get Oxfordshire Active programme.

This has increased our influence, with sport now included in the Oxfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy and has led to a successful bid for additional funding for an activator post via the Health and Well Being Board."

of the first eight quarters, economic factors are becoming more important. This is supported by the government's Family Spending Report 2011, which shows that the average weekly spend on 'recreation and culture' has dipped from £70.10 in 2005 to £58.10 last year.

We might expect economic factors to have a greater impact on time-consuming and higher cost sports such as sailing, but we should recognise that the economic situation is part of a complex set of influences that affect people's leisure choices. Sports governing bodies, local councils and leisure operators are working to adapt their sporting offer to reflect people's changing circumstances and lifestyle. For example, evening sessions could mitigate the impact of longer working hours, while pay-and-play or low-cost options could lessen the impact of a tighter budget. ●



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XC

The £5.25m extreme sports facility in Hemel Hempstead combines skateboarding, climbing, high ropes and caving with a one-stop-shop for youth services. Karen Maxwell takes the plunge and talks to its top team

I certainly don't fall into the age range of XC's target audience – adrenaline-seeking 13- to 19-year-olds – however, after throwing myself (quite literally) head-first into some of the hair-raising activities the centre has to offer, I'm likely to don a hoodie and head back for more!

The result of a partnership between Dacorum Sports Trust, Dacorum Borough Council and youth services provider Youth Connexions, the XC houses activities

and services chosen by young people for young people – many of who shy away from traditional indoor sports such as badminton, basketball and netball.

My XC experience

There were no shuttlecocks or shin pads to be found in the retail outlets at the entrance to XC. Instead, rock climbing, skateboarding, BMX biking and scooter equipment filled the shelves – as well as skateboarding brands such as Vans shoes, Emerica clothing and Nixon watches.

On entering the facility, I was greeted by friendly staff in an open-plan, utilitarian reception/café area, which offered floor-to-ceiling views of the climbing wall on one side, and the skatepark on the other.

Double doors at the end of the café area led to Youth Connexions' youth services area on the first floor – comprising a media suite, recording studio and counselling offices – with views to the climbing and skateboard areas below.

The 150m organic, indoor caving system, built into the fabric of the building, and the high ropes obstacle course are also accessed from this part of the building. This

is where I met up with former skateboarder Declan, my caving guide.

After a safety and navigation brief, we switched on our helmet lights and embarked on a 20-minute crawling exercise of twists and turns as we stretched and squeezed ourselves in and out of a network of confined tunnels – at the end of which I was very happy to see daylight!

I then donned climbing shoes, helmet and harness and joined Declan and Chris (ex-skateboarder and climbing enthusiast) in the open- (air) ended 60m x 14m climbing area. Starting with the basics – I placing my feet on nooks and stretching to holds to walk across a transverse wall, progressed onto a bouldering wall and then climbed 12m, while attached to a safety pulley. The final feat was a 12m climb onto a flat ridge before abseiling down – with Declan belaying from the ground.

I'm not keen on heights, but after the climbing and some gentle persuasion, Chris harnessed and attached me to the high ropes obstacle cable system – 12m above the ground – and helped me to sway and stumble through the course.

Once back on firm ground, I reflected on a terrifying but hugely enjoyable experience. I'd had a unique, full-body workout in an open air environment and both Declan and Chris helped me to push myself beyond what I thought possible.



The fibre-glass, pitch black 150m caving system is said to be the largest of its kind in Europe

The High Ropes Course has eight obstacles and hangs in the air space above the climbing wall



Ben Raemer won the National Skateboarding Championships hosted at the XC centre last year

ROGER SHERIDAN DIRECTOR, MML CONSULTING LTD

How did the XC concept evolve?

The idea for XC came from conversations I had with Dave Coe, the chief executive of Dacorum Sports Trust, about the lack of relevant sports provision for young people generally across the leisure sector but specifically in the Hemel Hempstead area.

I was initially engaged to undertake a feasibility study to look at a facility mix, find an existing building to house this provision and look at the business case for providing one.

It was through this process, which involved wider consultation regarding young people's needs, that I engaged with Youth Connexions Hertfordshire to look at combining a new building that met the organisation's aspirations to provide young people with a one-stop-shop for information, advice, guidance and activity.

The feasibility process also confirmed the drop in regular activity of young people within the 13- to 19-year-old age group and the attraction to that group of extreme, individual focused activities such as climbing and skateboarding.



What did you bring to project?

I brought together evidence regarding the lack of provision and activity within the 13- to 19 years age group to make the myplace funding application. This opportunity was introduced to Dacorum Borough Council, which agreed to provide us with the land at a peppercorn lease.

We developed the scheme from scratch, and along with the social and business case, submitted the myplace funding application for a full grant of £5m. The application was successful and was supplemented with a £250,000 pledge from the sports trust.

What did the design process involve?

Before we selected specialist designers, we visited climbing and bouldering centres and skateparks across the country for examples of best practice.

We noticed that out of the few indoor skateparks in the UK most are based in converted, low-rent, low-costs facilities. Our ambition was to provide a high-quality facility that mirrored the standards set for local authority leisure centres, so that visitors could relax in a well-managed, purpose-built space, rather than a building conversion.



Visitors can relax in a well-managed, purpose-built space, rather than a building conversion

The final project offers a clean, modern, light and airy space with high ceilings, open-ended walls and scope for future enhancement/development.

What lessons have you learned from this project?

I have developed a concept model, which embraces some of the things that we've learned and further refined its design where applicable.

I've evaluated another four development sites across the UK. But meanwhile, should local authorities want to replicate the model in a suitable community, we have an excellent starting point from which to begin discussions.

Importantly for local authorities, the XC model demonstrates that it's possible to deliver top-class, safe and well-managed facilities, that do not require a revenue surplus.

REBECCA HEMMANT OPERATIONS DIRECTOR, DACORUM SPORTS TRUST

How does the partnership between the sports trust, Youth Connexions and Dacorum Borough Council work?

The partnership is about ensuring we achieve the key aims of the project. These include the need to ensure that more young people, particularly the most disadvantaged, have exciting and safe places to go where they can get involved in a range of activities to support their personal and social development and get access to information, advice and support services.


How does the centre meet with users' demands?

It's about providing a hub of adventure, excitement and challenge in a place for young people to 'own'. There's a cool edge to XC and customers, as well as staff, want to be part of something unique. The additional elements of caving and high ropes was fundamental to the core provision to enable a wider group of people to participate at XC.

We got the local skatepark users involved in the creation of the park to ensure we provided something totally unique. Some of the more experienced skateboarders were very vocal in

their design ideas – thus the 9-foot-deep skate bowl was created.

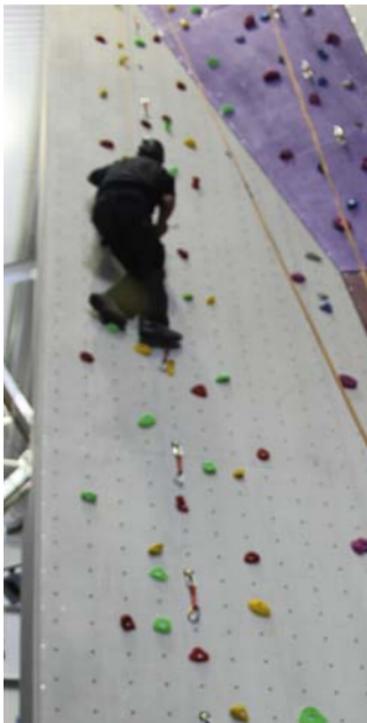
How popular is the facility and how is it marketed?

Current footfall is around 10,000 a month, although this number rises significantly in holiday periods.

The skatepark has been an unprecedented success, however, the climbing section has been a slower burner – perhaps due to the fact that there are a number of local climbing facilities. Although we have a (fake) real rock section, which has brought in climbers from further afield, we recognise the need to attract new local people to the activity.

Our marketing is ongoing, we have support in the specialist skateboard press and we are on the climbing forums as well as the British Mountaineering Climbing site. We've hosted a couple of skateboard events – both of which attracted competitors from Europe and the US. Our next plan is to develop climbing and bouldering competitions too.

The demand for children's parties and group bookings is flourishing. We're currently hosting around 80 parties a month and group bookings for schools, social clubs and corporate activity has also started to take off, which means that there are rarely any off peak times.



NIC ROWLEY UK SKATEBOARD TEAM MANAGER, VANS

What's your background?

I've been a skateboarder since I was 15. I'm now approaching 40 and still skate as much as my body allows. I'm the UK skateboard team manager for Vans – the biggest skate shoe company – and I've been involved in running and judging UK-based skateboard events for the past eight or nine years.


How did you get involved with the XC project?

I was contacted during the tendering process about running skateboard events at the centre and sat in on the user group meetings to check that the building design was in line with what was needed in order to hold successful events.

Why does XC fit the brief for major skateboarding events?

Compared to other skateparks – many of which are located in dark, dirty warehouses on industrial estates – this purpose-built building offers an indoor concrete area in a venue that's bright, clean, new and offers good food in the café area. It's also close to London, there's great transport links and plenty of hotels in the area.

What events are hosted at the venue and how are these marketed?

We ran the UK Skateboarding Championships in October and the Vans Concrete Carnival in December last year. We flew in X-Games winner Rune Glifberg from Denmark and legendary 80s/90s Santa Cruz pro Eric Dresen from California for the Concrete Carnival.


I checked that the building design was in line with what was needed for skateboard events

These events attract around 500 visitors – including 100-150 competitors. You tend to get two tiers of skateboarders at these events – the guys like me who're deeply involved and know everything that's going on and the kids with skateboards who want to skate every day.

Although we promote events through Sidewalk – the only UK skateboarding magazine/website forum – social media is a very effective marketing tool. I have over 2,000 friends on Facebook, so just one message is accessed by 2,000 people.

The 60x14m climbing wall consists of four areas suitable for beginners to advanced climbers



X-Games winner Rune Glibberg from Denmark, in action within the skatepark's concrete bowl



MOHAMED FAWZI DISTRICT MANAGER, YOUTH CONNEXIONS

What is Youth Connexions?

It's part of Hertfordshire Services for Young People and provides youth work/positive activities, information, advice, guidance and support to young people aged between 13 to 19 years (up to 25 for young people with learning difficulty or a disability). It also offers volunteering, training and job opportunities.



Why did you set up the one-stop-shop concept at XC?

It's important to stress that young people are the centre of everything we do in the service, from planning and delivery to evaluation of services.

The one-stop-shop concept at XC was a result of our consultations with young people who wanted all services "under one roof", as previously they had been passed from pillar to post – to and from different providers.

Further consultations highlighted the need for a teen health clinic, counselling provision and an extreme sport facility. This dream became a reality through partnership working with Dacorum Sports Trust, Dacorum Children's Trust Partnership and Dacorum Borough Council and lottery funding from myplace. This ensured that information, advice, guidance, training, volunteering, youth work, positive activities, counselling, a teen health clinic, music and media services and extreme sports are under one roof.

How were young people involved in the project?

Young people were an integral part of the project. They helped to: choose the venue; work on the design with the architects; interview and commission the

Youngsters can get employment advice and a volunteering opportunity in the same building

sub contractors; and were part of the monthly, on-site progress meetings. They also form part of the Youth Management Shadow Board.

What can be learnt from this project?

The myplace Big Lottery fund recommended our consultation process with young people as a model of good practice. This was due to the fact that 14,000 children and young people were consulted through open days, stakeholders events, questionnaires, focus groups and school presentations.

The creative approach of this facility enables young people to prepare their CV, meet a personal advisor and/or an employment training advisor regarding a job or a volunteering opportunity, visit a counsellor, take part in a job club, produce a CD in the music studio, participate in an anger management programme or a workshop on knife and gun crime and then head downstairs to enjoy a skateboarding, climbing or caving activity.

How are you expanding you reach?

Young people visit the XC from all parts of Hertfordshire and as far afield as Scotland. Promotion and marketing is done through tweeting, Facebook, Channelmogo (Youth Connexions' website), open day events, taster days and school newsletters.

We also raise its profile through our partners, which include the police, the primary care trust, the voluntary sector and local faith and community groups.

Outlook for the Global Sports Market to 2015



PricewaterhouseCoopers' updated report on the global sports market predicts that revenues will grow to €93bn by 2015. Julie Clark reports



According to a new report by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), which looks at the global sports market towards 2015, global sports revenues will grow to US\$145.3bn (£93bn, €109.3bn) at an annual compound growth rate (CAGR) of 3.7 per cent. This is attributed to an improved economy, a rebound in TV advertising, the on-going migration of sports to pay TV and the resurgence of financial services and automobile companies interest in sponsorship.

North America remains the largest market throughout PwC's forecasts to 2015, followed by Europe; the Middle East and Africa (EMEA); and the Asian market. Latin America will remain the

smallest market. Growth in the sports market in the BRIC countries (Brazil, Russia, India and China) strongly outpaced the overall global market during 2006 to 2010, but during the next five years this gap will narrow.

SPORTING REGIONS

North America is still the largest market and growth rates will significantly outpace Asia Pacific and EMEA. While the balance of power is shifting to some emerging markets, which are hosting large-scale sports events over the next few years, the growth opportunities in the traditional developed markets are far from over.

Latin America is projected to have the highest growth rate at 4.9 per cent CAGR, partly due to the FIFA World Cup in Brazil in 2014, followed closely by North America at 4 per cent CAGR.

The EMEA is the second largest region with US\$42.8bn (£27.4bn, €32.2bn) or 35 per cent of the total global revenues.

This region is projected to have the slowest growth rate at 2.9 per cent. This figure partly reflects the underlying economic conditions and is a reflection of the timing of major sports events, with 2010 being such a strong year in EMEA – given the South Africa FIFA World Cup – and 2015 being a relatively quiet year.

EMEA shows the most fluctuation over the period, given the 2012 London Olympic and Paralympic Games and the Football European Championships in Poland and Ukraine and then in 2014, the Winter Olympics in Sochi and the Commonwealth Games in Glasgow. If the impact of these one-off events is excluded, the underlying growth rate is 4.6 per cent.

What has been clear however, through this era of economic uncertainty, is that the balance of global economic power is shifting to the East and this will help maintain the internationalisation as sports seek new revenues from the growing middle classes in the emerging nations.

North America is the largest market for sport, while Latin America will remain the smallest



Global revenues split by region 2010

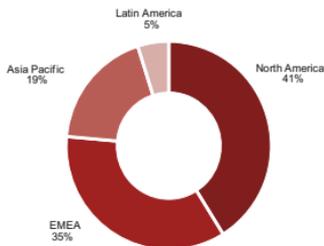




PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Sports organisations need to work towards a sustainable business

CONTINUAL GROWTH

According to the report, despite the world's ongoing troubled economic climate, the global sports industry has continued to thrive – with many major sporting events proving to be more popular than ever.

The popularity of these major events is supported by the on-going improvements in broadcasting and technology, which is allowing for better quality coverage than ever seen before.

At the same time, television companies, sports clubs, governing bodies and even the sports stars themselves, are embracing social media to engage with fans and deliver to them a greater intensity of loyalty experience.

THE SPORTS INDUSTRY BY MARKET SEGMENTS

Gate Revenues: Gate revenues will remain the biggest component of the global sports market. These account for 32.6 per cent of the total revenue (US\$44.7 bn, £28.6bn, €33.6bn) in 2015. They're particularly a key source of income in the regions where live sports events are part of the local culture. However, this mature market will see the lowest growth across all segments of the sports market at just 2.5 per cent CAGR from 2011-2015.

In EMEA, PwC expects modest growth, averaging less than 2 per cent, compounded annually during the next two years, with only slightly higher increases of just over 3 per cent annually for ongoing events during 2013–15. The gate revenue market is effectively saturated



PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Gate revenues will remain the biggest component of the global sports market

for the top events and record attendances have been witnessed at major events this year in the UK.

One unlikely area which could stimulate growth is regulation. In European football, The Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) financial fair play rules are forcing clubs to boost their revenues and are providing an extra impetus for new stadia development.

Changing the format of sporting events is also something which has been tried to make events more exciting and appealing to new audiences. For example, the England Hockey Board has recently announced the launch of Rush Hockey – an indoor or outdoor four- or five-a-side format.

Sponsorship: Accounting for 28.8 per cent of the total sports markets, sponsorship will see an average growth rate of 5.3 per cent to 2015. This will generate global revenues of US\$45.3bn (£29bn, €34.1bn), which is split evenly across all regions.

The structure of sponsorship deals has changed. It's no longer just about brand

visibility and awareness, now it's about gaining a deeper and more emotional engagement with fans and staff – something which some of the newly launched digital technologies are enabling.

Advertisers and sponsors are integrating social media into their sports involvement and through this and smart data mining, they are able to target their messages and content so that it's relevant to each consumer segment and appropriate for each platform and delivery device.

Media Rights: Media rights is the third largest category of revenue and accounts for 24.1 per cent of the total market. It is the second fastest growing sector at 3.8 per cent CAGR. Revenues will see fairly healthy growth from US\$29.2bn (£18.7bn, €21.9bn) in 2010 to US\$35.2bn (£22.5bn, €26.5bn) in 2015. However, these figures mask large year-on-year swings, which reflect the traditionally dramatic impact of major global events held in 'even' years, such as the Olympics and FIFA World Cups.

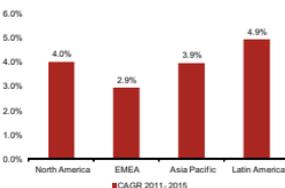


Broadcasting still generates the majority of income from media rights

► Broadcasting still generates the majority of income from media rights, but engagement through different media platforms such as the internet and mobile phones can enhance and expand the fan's experience. Smart use of social networking can add further value for both themselves and the user and many TV companies have invested in interactive portals. This enables them to combine online TV screening with social media, which complements their offering to the market.

Merchandising: Merchandising remains the smallest category of revenue – accounting for 14.5 per cent of total global revenue. However, it accounts for just over a quarter of all revenue in North America. Growth in merchandising revenue is closely linked with consumer spending patterns and overall growth

Global revenue growth by region 2011-2015



“Sponsors will demand sophisticated measurement to demonstrate the returns on their investment”

is similar to gate revenues at 2.6 per cent CAGR, generating revenues of US\$20.1bn (£12.9bn, €15.1bn) in 2015, up from US\$17.6bn (£11.3bn, €13.2bn) in 2010.

Sports clubs are seeing a larger proportion of their merchandise transactions moving online, which allows them to engage and interact with fans who can't attend matches – including those living in other countries. This engagement helps to promote sports brands in those regions and markets and builds demand for media coverage of the clubs involved.

LOOKING FORWARD

With reference to what the future might hold for the sports market in a world of increasing economic and political uncertainty, PwC predicts the following:

- Growth will come from the emerging sports markets in the BRIC countries and the Middle East, which will continue to offer scope for the development of new commercial opportunities – both in domestic and international sports events.
- Sponsors are likely to demand more sophisticated measurement

techniques in order to demonstrate the returns on their investment.

- Sports bodies and associations must, and will, introduce new regulations to control the cost base and levels of debt in their sports – to leave a sustainable business model for future generations.
- Sports bodies must balance the increased commercial demands of their sports with the need to maintain the integrity and unpredictability that make sporting competitions so exciting and appealing to their supporters.
- Across the world we're seeing ever closer convergence between the sport and entertainment industries as both sectors rise to the challenges brought by digital technologies, which are changing and shaping the way we spend our leisure time. This new digital environment is significantly contributing to the globalisation of both the industry and specific sports. ●

Julie Clark is head of PwC's UK sports practice. Email Julie for further information: julie.d.clark@uk.pwc.com



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RUSSIA'S SPORTING LANDSCAPE



JON COXETER-SMITH LOOKS AT RUSSIA'S RECENT SPORTING HISTORY AND THE WIDER IMPACTS OF RUSSIA'S UP AND COMING GOLDEN DECADE OF SPORT

The UK's sports industry has become very familiar with the term: a golden decade of sport – referring to the many international sporting events the UK has been awarded or is bidding to host, during the 2010s – off the back of winning the bid to host this year's Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Looking east, Russia has now embarked on its own version of a golden decade. Through successful bidding the nation is building an enviable international sports event portfolio and is currently busy preparing to host some of the greatest shows on earth.

This new emphasis on developing a sustainable sporting landscape is a relatively new concept for the nation, so how

has Russia managed to assemble this event portfolio and what impact will it make on the nation's sporting landscape and its people?

SETTING THE SCENE

The 1990s and early 2000s was a difficult time for modern Russia. Dealing with the impact of the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 naturally preoccupied the Kremlin government – particularly when the main economic priority was to get inflation under control. This, in turn, resulted in the country's physical, social and sporting infrastructures being neglected and allowed to fall into disrepair.

Saddled with a deteriorating sports infrastructure, naturally the development

of Russian athletes and its sporting performance on the world stage began to decline too. The extent of the decline is illustrated by Russia's performance at major international sports events as a country in its own right. While athletes competing under the Soviet Union flag won 132 medals at the 1988 Seoul Olympics, the 'Russian' national team won just 63 at the 1996 Atlanta Olympic Games and 72 at the 2008 Beijing Games.

On snow and ice, where Russia expects to excel, its decline in sporting prowess was also evidenced by its position on the medal table. A Soviet Union medal haul of 29 at the 1988 Calgary Winter Olympics fell to 13 medals at the 2002 Salt Lake City Games and the 15 medals won at the most recent Winter Olympic Games in Vancouver 2010 suggests improvement has not yet taken root.

TURNING POINTS

According to analysts, 2008 was identified as an important milestone year for the country – one in which inflation fell to single digits. Similarly, on the field of play a significant victory was won that year. On 18 May, in the Pepsi Coliseum in Québec, Canada, the Russian hockey team scored an overtime goal to defeat Canada 5 – 4 in the final of

Figure 1: Russia's Golden Decade

YEAR	EVENT
2013	IAAF World Championships in Athletics, Moscow
2013	27th Summer Universiade, Kazan
2014	Winter Olympic Games, Sochi
2014	Russia Formula 1 Grand Prix, Sochi
2015	FINA World Championships, Kazan
2016	International Ice Hockey Federation World Championships, Moscow & St Petersburg
2017	FIFA Confederations Cup
2018	FIFA World Cup™, Russia 2018



Russian athletes excel at international snow and ice events

Hosting major sporting events, such as the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics, can inspire the Russians to embrace change



the IIHF World Championships. In Soviet Union days, Russia had won seven Olympic and 22 World Ice Hockey titles, an unrivalled record, yet this was its first World title for 15 years. Also in May 2008, the city of Kazan, in Tartarstan, won the rights to host the 2013 edition of the FISU – the University Sports Federation – Summer Universiade.

So 2008 was clearly a year of significance for Russian sport, however bidding committees had, in fact, been working on bids to host major events for some years previously.

This is evidenced in its unsuccessful bid to host the 2012 Olympic Games, work for which actually commenced in 2003 or earlier. For example, the bidding process for its right to host Sochi 2014, won in July 2007, would have commenced two to three years earlier. Meanwhile, Russia launched its unsuccessful bid for Moscow to host the 2010 Youth Olympic Games in 2007, while work on its successful Kazan 2013 Universiade bid, won in 2008, would have begun at least two years previously.

Since many commentators are in general agreement that much of the success in winning these major international events for Russia can be attributed to the personal support of Prime Minister



Russia's Red Square logo launch of the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympic and Paralympic Games



Laura cross-country skiing venue for the Sochi 2014 Winter Games

Sport quickly became recognised as the tool of choice by Russia's leadership, who looked to harness its power to deliver a number of social and political outcomes

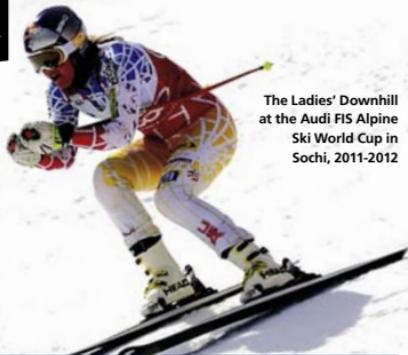
Vladimir Putin, I would argue that there is strong cause to regard the year 2000 – the year of Putin's election as Russian president – as the milestone year. It is apparent too that Putin very quickly recognised the power of sport and the positive impact on the country's image. In August 2000, he stated: "Victories in sport do more to cement the nation than a hundred political slogans".

So sport quickly became recognised as the tool of choice by Russia's leadership, who looked to harness its power to deliver a number of social and political outcomes, as stated in table (Fig.2).

FINANCIAL BACKING

Although Putin has invested much personal energy and commitment into attracting these major sports events and has put his personal reputation on the line, none of this would be possible without adequate financial backing. Even before Putin came to power, following Boris Yeltsin's resignation, he outlined his concept for 'National Champions' by defining his vision for the relationship between large corporations involved in strategic industries and the state.

The obligations of these corporations were to make profits and advance



The Ladies' Downhill at the Audi FIS Alpine Ski World Cup in Sochi, 2011-2012



Inga Abitova wins silver for the 10,000m at the 2010 European Championships

Figure 2: Goals for the Golden Decade

OUTCOME	COMMENTARY
Projecting the Nation	<p>China won acclaim through staging the 2008 Olympic Games, which subsequently brought a record 72 million visitors to World Expo in Shanghai. These events could be viewed as marking China's coming of age.</p> <p>The Germany 2006 FIFA World Cup was seen to effectively counter much of the lingering prejudice against Germany, dating from the 1939-1945 Second World War.</p> <p>After winning the FIFA World Cup 2018 bid, Putin stated that the world's view of Russia originated from the Cold War and stressed the importance of showing that the country is open for business and that an international sports event can stimulate 'contacts'.</p>
Economic Growth	<p>Prioritising the development of infrastructure is a standard strategy in sustaining economic growth. Brazil's Growth Acceleration Programme is a good example of how a country has chosen the hosting of major international sports events to guide building programmes.</p> <p>Estimates from the US Department of Transport have stated that each dollar of highways investment leads to US\$6.20 (£3.90) of GDP growth. We can expect that the multiplier will be significantly higher in Russia.</p>
Regional Development	<p>While economic development will naturally start in the principal cities, the host cities and regions for Russia's major sports events are spread across the country. Russia's bid for the 2018 FIFA World Cup includes 13 host cities, including Moscow and St Petersburg.</p>
Improving the effectiveness of Investment	<p>Thanks to its economic wealth, underpinned by oil and gas revenues, Russia can afford to spend money. Its challenge has long been to secure high-quality outcomes from its investments.</p> <p>Good planning has never been an issue for the Kremlin however, problems can sometimes arise in delivery. Analysts claim that it costs ten-times as much to build a road in Moscow as in say, Berlin and, even at this cost, quality is not always up to international standard. Russia's leaders are attempting to overcome this by exposing deliverers to the extra discipline with fixed deadlines; international quality standards, expectations and standards; extreme levels of international scrutiny; high prestige associated with success and conversely damage to a company's reputation in the event of failure.</p>
Health of the Nation	<p>The neglect of Russia's infrastructures during the 90s is also evident in the area of public health. In October 2003, Putin stated that the health of the nation depends directly on the successful development of physical culture and sport.</p>
Inspiration	<p>Russia is aiming to make sure that some of the 'magic dust' associated with major sports events rubs off. This is illustrated in this extract from the Sochi 2014 web site: "The Olympic Games cannot guarantee positive change across all aspects of life, but they can inspire. If every Russian embraces change the Games can become the catalyst for positive change in our cities and the inspiration for our people."</p>

➔ Russia's interests. In return the state would make links with these corporations by providing support so that they could grow and compete with multi-national companies in international trade.

In the early stages of each bid, national champions were recruited as supporters and to provide credible financial backing. During Sochi's bid presentation to the International Olympic Committee two of Russia's richest men, Oleg Deripaska and Vladimir Potanin, sat at either side of the Russian leader.

Potanin is the controlling shareholder of Norilsk Nickel, which has subsequently invested heavily in the finance and construction of the Roza Khutor, the base for Alpine events during the Sochi 2014 Olympics. Oleg Deripaska has bought the local airport then expanded it to accommodate international traffic and built the second Olympic Village for 3,000 athletes in the Imeritinsky Valley.

Another huge corporate Ural Mining and Metallurgical Company (UMMC) is involved in the financing and construction of facilities for the Sochi Games. This is substantially owned by the Russian billionaire Iskander Makhmudov. The Russian news agency RIANOVOSTI reports that way back in 2002 when asked if UMMC would help out in one of Russia's regions, Makhmudov replied "we are all Putin's soldiers".

WIDER IMPACTS

As well as the hosting of international sports events to inspire the Russian



Russian swimmer Anastasia Chaun competing in the 2010 LEN Swimming Championships in Budapest, Hungary

population to embrace change, lifestyle programmes are also in place. Most notably, in the realm of physical culture and sport, is the Federal Programme for the Development of Physical Education and Sport in Russia 2006-15.

While Russia has, to some extent, been affected by the World economic crisis, sports programmes like this have been largely shielded from its negative impact and national expenditure on such has been mostly maintained.

At the 2010 International Sport Forum – Russia is a Power in Sport, held to coincide with the 30th anniversary of the Moscow Olympics, the mayor of Moscow revealed that the number of sports facilities in Moscow had almost doubled between the years 2000 and 2010. The original 5,806 sports facilities had increased to 9,375, within which the number of swimming pools had grown 4.5 times with a doubling of the number of sports halls and ice rinks.

The continued support of Russia's leaders for the programme was made very clear in January 2011, when Putin announced that the year was designated 'Year of Sports' and that Russia would spend some 90 billion rubles (£1.8bn) on the development of sport over the next three years.

The rationale of the programme was again underlined when Putin said: "Currently some 25 million people regularly visit gyms and stadiums in our country. In line with our plans, this number must exceed 42 million by 2015".



FIFA
FIFA president Sepp Blatter announces Russia as host of the FIFA 2018 World Cup

His long-term ambition is to reach levels already achieved by many European countries where, he said, some 70 per cent of the population is regularly engaged in sporting activity".

It's worth noting however, that according to the World Economic Forum (WEF), 42 million represents about 30 per cent of the population so there remains much to be done to achieve the 70 per cent longer-term target.

FUTURE CHALLENGES

It's clear that Russia's golden decade of sport is the product of a careful and deliberately developed strategy.

As a frequent visitor to Russia, I've had the opportunity to meet with many of those charged with executing this strategy and to witness conditions on the ground in many regions. It's clear that things are happening and the programmes are being led by very able and committed individuals – such as Dmitry Chernyshenko, CEO of Sochi 2014 and his counterpart Alexey Sorokin at Russia 2018.

This is a very ambitious plan, it's scale is huge and like any mega-programme so are the challenges.

The implementation of such a programme requires a thorough masterplan and a single body delivery organisation to develop it then continue as its guardian. However, delivery responsibilities are devolved to many separate authorities and entities at state, regional and local levels. So the burden placed on organisation and communication is substantial.

The WEF report highlights that although Russia is a strong and well-advanced economy in transition between WEF's levels 2 and 3 efficiency driven and innovation driven economies, certain pillars, such as the development of the goods and financial markets, institutions and business sophistication lags behind the average levels achieved in level 2 economies.

I can see how these issues are preoccupying people involved in the project as they strive to work out what is required of them and how it all fits together. ●

Jon Coxeter-Smith is a director of Sagacity MCS, www.sagacitymcs.com

EURO 2012

PETE HAYMAN LOOKS AT HOW POLAND AND THE UKRAINE ARE PREPARING FOR THE SURGE IN SPORTS TOURISM FOR THE BIG EVENT, AS WELL AS STADIA INVESTMENT

With just six months until the UEFA European Football Championships get underway in Poland and Ukraine, the two countries are already benefiting from hosting the tournament. More than 20 years after emerging from Communist rule, CNN Go has jointly named the two countries as one of the top places to visit.

Poland and Ukraine were chosen to host UEFA's flagship international tournament in April 2007, despite "limited experience" in organising major events. It isn't the first time it has been held in Eastern Europe

(Yugoslavia 1976), but it's a step change for a tournament traditionally held in the West during its 52-year history.

UEFA's decision has presented the two countries with a catalyst to invest in its stadia, as well as improvements to infrastructure. In hosting Euro 2012, significant economic and sporting benefits will be realised for both countries.

Projected impact

UEFA president Michel Platini believes taking tournaments to new locations, such as Poland and Ukraine, is important:

"We can go back to Germany, Italy and England all the time. Then there will be no problems, and things will come right. But this way won't do. Football must be developed in other regions."

TSE Consulting worked on developing the bid strategy – building around a message that this was a chance to "make a big difference". Securing the event has led to not just enhanced sporting infrastructure, but transport and guest accommodation too.

A 2010 report into the impact of Euro 2012 in Poland revealed a total planned



France versus The Netherlands at the Euro 2008 event, where Spain beat Germany 1:0 in the final

FORUM SEATING

Forum Seating, part of the Grupa Nowy Styl, has played a significant role in preparations at the four Euro 2012 venues in Poland. One of the installations was at Poznan's Stadion Miejski, which has a total capacity of more than 43,000 – down to 42,000 for the tournament – and has seen three Forum products installed.

The standard Sigma chair constructed of polyamide; the Sigma Plus made of polyamide with a durable upholstery padding; and the Oscar VIP armchairs in the Presidential Box have all been installed as part of Forum's work at the venue. The company also worked at Warsaw, Wroclaw and Gdansk.



Forum seating has supplied seats to the stadia hosting the tournament



Poland was chosen as a host nation, despite its inexperience in hosting major sports events

investment of PLN110bn (£21.9bn, EUR26.3bn, US\$34.7bn) – a significant slice of which was for road, rail and air transport improvements. This programme is replicated in Ukraine.

The upgrade of Poland and Ukraine's infrastructure has been crucial to the ability to transport supporters. UEFA general secretary Gianni Infantino said: "We estimate that about 1.6 million fans will visit Poland and Ukraine next June.

"More importantly, the tournament will give Poland and Ukraine the chance to make names for themselves around the world, by increasing their appeal as tourist destinations to potential visitors in the medium to long-term."

Football facilities

Eight stadia – four in each country – will be used during Euro 2012 and all have either undergone a refurbishment or are new-build venues. Warsaw's National Stadium, which opened on 29 January, is the largest of Poland's stadia and will stage the opening ceremony and first match.

Gerkan Marg and Partners (GMP); Schlaich Bergermann and Partner and JSK Architekci worked on the design of the PLN1,915bn (£378m, EUR440m, US\$604m) stadium, which seats 55,000 fans. A notable design feature is an 11,000sq m retractable membrane roof element, unfolding from a 'needle' above the centre of the pitch.

Hightex worked with steel manufacturer Cimolai of Italy and Poland-based Mostostal Zabrze to develop the roofing system, with a radial cable system supporting the 55,000sq m fixed outer portion of PTFE/glass membrane. The retractable element comprises a PVC/polyester membrane and is suspended at 960 points above the stadium floor.

Among the contractors responsible for delivering Warsaw's National Stadium



PITCHING IT RIGHT

Building the new or improved stadia for Euro 2012 has been a main area of focus for Poland and Ukraine. Along with striking architecture and spectator facilities, a crucial consideration in creating high-quality venues is ensuring a playing surface that meets the expectations of an international sporting event.

UK-based STRI has had great success working at three venues in Ukraine – Donetsk, Kiev and Kharkiv – to create pitches poised to impress this summer. Operations director Richard Hayden has been involved with that work and explains how a new STRI system has helped deliver some positive results.

"Pitches at the three venues are absolutely perfect at the moment," says Hayden. "We have temperatures of -20°C and this system – In Situ Air Sparging (ISASS) – allows us to grow and maintain grass at -20°C and even -30°C. This has been proven to work very effectively and we're coming out of the winter season with perfect pitches."

Although STRI has deployed the solution at Donetsk, Hayden says that it was the modification of facilities already installed and Kharkiv is where the system is being showcased. "[Kharkiv is] the

Sports Turf Research Institute (STRI) created the pitch at the Metalist Stadium in Khartiv, Ukraine

one we are focusing on due to the fact that we did the full design and maintenance from start to finish."

ISASS allows for venues to grow grass through pressurisation and heating – or cooling – the surrounding area to create a micro-environment. Hayden is very optimistic about its potential: "To design something that goes from -30°C to +40°C is a big challenge and it's as difficult a design challenge as we've ever had.

"Usually, you're engineering for either very cold or very warm weather. That is why we're excited about the ISASS concept, because we think we're onto something huge. We believe we will be in a position in the near future to have shown that we can grow grass anywhere with this technology."

Hayden is in no doubt that Ukraine – together with Poland – will confound any critics: "Two years ago, everybody was talking about infrastructure not being ready," he said. "But Ukraine has four fantastic stadia and three fantastic pitches. The world will come away with a positive impression."

was Alpine, which was also involved with the construction of Gdansk's 44,000-seat PGE Arena. Designed by RKW, the complex has a facade consisting of polycarbonate panels, with modules becoming more translucent towards the top of the venue.

Also in Poland, Alpine worked on a complete overhaul of Poznan's Stadion Miejski (City Stadium), completed in 2010. Home to Lech Poznan, the facility has a roof area of 52,000sq m of Mehler Technologies PVC-PES with double weldable

PVDF Type IV FR1400. The skeleton was constructed from 7,000 tonnes of steel.

Poland's fourth Euro 2012 venue is the Stadion Miejski (Municipal Stadium) in Wrocław. JSK Architekci devised a concept for the complex that has seen a glass fibre mesh coated with Teflon envelope the entire arena. The venue also has two LED video screens installed by Mitsubishi Electric with Shadok Audio-Visual.

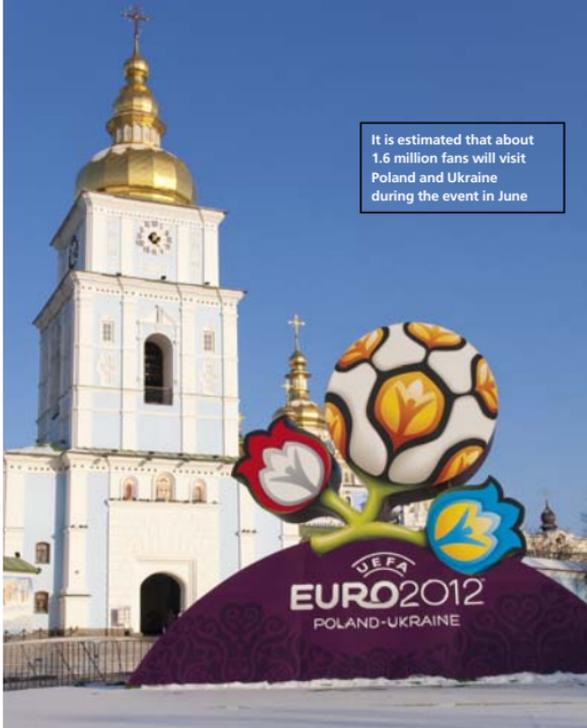
The Euro 2012 final will be hosted at Ukraine's flagship stadium – the NSC Olimpiyskiy (Olympic Stadium). Designed

GETTING CONNECTED

With technology continuing to evolve through the advent of mobile connectivity, stadia are now becoming as much a forum for communication as the workplace or the home. Warsaw's National Stadium has embraced this trend with the installation of Cisco's Connected Stadium solution, a network offering wired and wireless access.

It can be used across operational activities, from security to ticketing and allows fans to share experiences. Dariusz Fabiszewski, general manager of Cisco Poland, says: "Modern stadiums no longer serve as a backdrop for sports events, but are offering more engaging experiences for visitors.

Meanwhile, organisers in Poland have created a first for a Euro event – the Polish Guide, which provides overseas supporters with information detailed in six languages. A smartphone version is also due to launch in advance of the tournament. Details: www.polishguide2012.pl



It is estimated that about 1.6 million fans will visit Poland and Ukraine during the event in June

→ by GMP, seating capacity for the tournament will be reduced by 2,000 to 68,055. Hightex has provided the facility with a 48,500sq m suspended roof comprising translucent PTFE/glass membranes.

The NSC Olimpiyskiy will be a centerpiece of Euro 2012 and is the largest stadium in terms of capacity on the roster. It is one of three in Ukraine – along with Lviv and Donetsk – to offer AG's cashless payment solution.



More can be expected as tourism numbers increase and infrastructure improvements provide a boost across hospitality and transport sectors for both nations

Metalist Stadium in Kharkiv is the second of two venues in the Ukraine to undergo renovations. Work included new stands to the south and east. The DCH Group-funded work also involved seating solutions from Figueras International Seating and Elcon. The new roof can withstand an earthquake measuring up to 8 in magnitude.

Two new-build venues complete the line-up of Ukrainian stadia to be used. The first – Donbass Arena in Donetsk – was designed by ArupSport and was the first UEFA five-star complex to be built in Ukraine. Built by Turkey-based ENKA, it boasts a glazed facade with nearly 2,500 panes covering the whole stadium.

The second new facility is Arena Lviv, designed by Austria-based Albert Wimmer and costing around UAH875m (£68.7m,

EUR79.7m, US\$109.3m). It was built by Altom and has a capacity of nearly 35,000. Seating has been laid out to maximise the view of fans and ensure no 'dead zones' are left in terms of visibility.

A lasting legacy

The opening of Warsaw's National Stadium signalled the last of the eight Euro 2012 venues to be completed. Poland's tournament director, Adam Olkowitz said: "As of now, all of the venues in Poland and Ukraine are ready and we are working hard to prepare them for this big festival of football."

Both countries now have state-of-the-art football facilities, offering an early legacy from Euro 2012. More can be expected as tourism numbers increase and infrastructure improvements provide a substantial boost across hospitality and transport sectors, standing the two economies in good stead for the future. ●

Czech Republic versus Portugal (in white) at the Euro 2008 competition in Austria and Switzerland

Pete Hayman is a Leisure Media journalist

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WATER POLO

With the eyes of the world on London this summer, it's the perfect time for lesser-known sports to bring themselves to the fore. While inevitably much media focus will be on the big names in diving and swimming, such as Tom Daley and Rebecca Adlington respectively, other aquatic disciplines will be showcasing their talents to the world and rightly deserve equal recognition.

Water polo is one such discipline, which will, without doubt, provide an exciting and fast-paced game for Olympic spectators. Combining the skill and tactical elements of football with the aggression and physical contest of rugby, it has officially been recognised as one of the toughest sports in the world.



The ASA reveals its plans to inspire a new generation of potential players to get involved in this fast-paced water sport

Men's water polo was, in fact, one of the first team sports in the Olympics in Paris in 1900, when Great Britain took the lead winning four gold medals. It wasn't until 2000 however, that women's water polo became an Olympic sport. The popularity of the game grew incredibly in other nations, most notably in Eastern Europe where professional leagues were set up and in many countries it became their national sport.

A rising popularity

Approximately 15,000 people participate in the UK, across all levels, and it is predicted that the sport will continue to grow in popularity – especially if our teams do well in London this summer.

With the introduction of mini-polo and other variations of the game, leisure providers and swimming clubs are finding that it is becoming more popular as an alternative to progressing on to competitive swimming. In fact many athletes who have represented their country in competitive swimming are also choosing to extend their aquatic careers by taking up water polo.

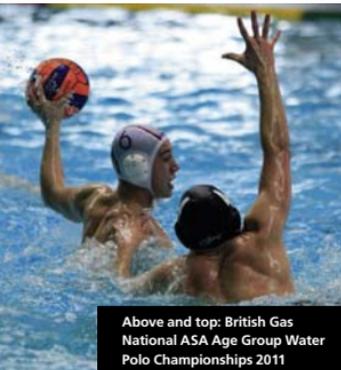
Today, the GB men's and women's teams are enjoying much success in Europe against some of the toughest

nations in the world. In January 2012, the British Gas GBR Women's Team became the first British team since 1997 to compete at the LEN European Water Polo Championships after a successful qualification campaign in 2011. The British are the only confirmed European entry for the women's competition at the London 2012 Olympic Games, with other European teams in with a chance of qualifying at the Olympic Qualification Tournament in Trieste, Italy this April.

Also this year, a British men's team will contest in the Olympic Games for the first time since Melbourne in 1956. The British men have played a number of higher-ranked countries in recent seasons and come away with credit as they continue to improve ahead of the biggest challenge their careers in London.

Developing for the world stage

Some of our top British water polo athletes, such as team captains Fran Leighton and Craig Figes, started in grassroots sport and are resounding proof of the merits of a strong development programme to provide a solid foundation from which elite athletes grow. To ensure that this success continues, the ASA has invested in a number



Above and top: British Gas National ASA Age Group Water Polo Championships 2011



of programmes to establish and develop sustainable water polo clubs and produce players for competition at all levels.

Thousands of children are involved in ASA clubs and there is a clear development structure to progress those that have the potential through to national squads. Once a young person's talent is identified it is nurtured to help them reach their full potential.

Specific talent development programmes take those youngsters who have already shown promise in water polo and gives them access to high-quality coaching, athlete educational schemes and sports science facilities in a training camp environment to prepare them for future international competition.

To be selected, players must reach certain levels of attainment for swimming, basic technique and game awareness. They then receive varying support depending on their level – including training camps, anthropological measurements and lifestyle management.

School and club-based projects

Responsible for delivering and developing new players through robust school and club links, there are established programmes in Manchester and at Crystal

Swimming clubs are crucial in supporting the talent pathway and many water polo clubs are being assisted towards achieving the ASA's swim2 accreditation to raise standards

Palace in London with other centres being developed in locations such as Sheffield and Basildon.

School swimming lessons at Crystal Palace use the British Gas ASA Learn to Swim Pathway, the national syllabus produced by the ASA. Beginning with the ASA Foundation Framework for early years' water confidence, the pathway progresses from stages one to seven for fundamental movement skills and the core development of learning to swim.

Learners progress to the final three stages where specific aquatic skills are developed – including one specifically for water polo called mini-polo. These stages identify young hopefuls from the 800 or so young children who have learnt to swim at the facility.

Programmes such as these are very much a long-term investment designed to produce performance athletes to eventually move into a world-class

programme, which focuses primarily on selecting and preparing the Great Britain national squads for major European and world competitions.

Within schools, the ASA and the English Schools' Swimming Association (ESSA) are piloting a joint initiative to try and expand the sport and encourage participation. Cadet Polo is a small-sided version of the game which has been introduced with simplified rules.

Additionally, a pilot called RAPIDS seeks to involve teenagers in the sport through activities, which first take place in the sports hall – replicating many of the aquatic skills needed so that they can fully appreciate the nature of the game when played in water.

Swimming clubs are crucial in supporting the talent pathway and many water polo clubs are being encouraged and assisted towards achieving the ASA's swim21 accreditation, which raises the standard ▶



Children develop specific aquatic skills in Mini Water Polo programmes held at swimming centres across the country

▶ and quality of coaching through the UKCC coaching certification programme. Interaction between clubs is also encouraged to offer players more water time.

Regional training

The next step is for a player to attend one of the 14 Regional Training Centres in England and Wales, which currently support more than 250 athletes. After profiling and a short series of tests to comply with entry criteria, they begin a 30-week schedule of training – closely aligned to the national training programme held every month in Cardiff.

A National Academy is held every year for around 200 regional training centre players and coaches. Workshops on coach education, nutrition, sports science and team management are held and the week culminates with a mini tournament and selection for the players on the next stage – the national training programme.

National training

The national training programme consists of monthly weekend camps from September through to the following July, which offer bespoke training around the principles of Long-Term Athlete Development and Long-Term Player Development. Half-term camps are also held and players compete in domestic and foreign events – all geared towards European qualification.

Support for coaches

Dutch coaching supremo Paul Metz, who was instrumental in the gold medal success of the Netherlands Women's team at

2012 will see the launch of an updated regional Water Polo Table Officials course – offering an opportunity for young people to become involved in the administrative side of the sport

the 2008 Beijing Olympics, is delivering a series of coaching workshops in conjunction with the national talent programme. With the aim of implementing a nationwide 'unity in thoughts' training model for water polo players at all stages of the Long-Term Athlete Development model, the workshops will examine the pipeline of athletes from clubs to regional training centres to the national team.

The national team of coaching staff also deliver workshops around the country for swimming teachers, instructors and coaches on Long-Term Athlete Development and the use of the ASA Learn to Swim Framework fundamentals and games to deliver fun and innovative lessons.

Officiating for young people

It's vital to develop a strong workforce of young people to ensure the sustainability of the sport, so it's great news that 2012 will see the launch of an updated regional Water Polo Table Officials course. This new interactive course offers an opportunity for young people to become involved in the administrative side of the sport. Effectively engaging young volunteers in the officiating pathway, it will bring enthusiastic and knowledgeable young people into the sport and

guide them through the roles and responsibilities of a table official. Successful candidates will develop their competence and confidence enabling them to officiate at regional matches.

Looking to the future

Water polo is a fun, social, interactive game that can be played from a young age from mini-polo to masters level. The work to encourage participation across all national age groups has created an upsurge in mini-polo with large numbers now engaged in the sport from a young age.

The exposure of the sport through the Olympic Games will continue to enhance involvement at the local community level and our elite team's performance in 2012 can also act to bolster the aspirations of our junior, youth and academy national teams and give the belief that Olympic competitiveness is achievable.

The ASA is committed to continued investment in the development of club and coach education to provide opportunities for coaches and players to progress along the pathway to world class and ensure the sustainability and success of the sport at the highest level. ●

For more information visit www.swimming.org/britishswimming/water-polo

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KKP's David McHendry discusses the benefits of

choosing correctly-sized indoor sports facilities that work well for indoor sports and offer a sound business model for the operator

To meet participation targets and support athletes, NGBs need access to well specified, correctly-sized facilities



DEVELOPING THE RIGHT SPORTS HALL

How large should a sports hall be in order to offer high-quality sporting opportunity and a decent, sustainable level of return for the operator? This is the question that Sport England has been seeking to address via its 2011 publication *Developing the Right Sports Hall*.

Specialists from the national governing bodies (NGBs) of netball, basketball, badminton, volleyball and cricket have come together to assess whether and how it is possible to specify at the core unit level – a space that enables each of the sports to be played at the requisite level of quality – and to set out the process that agencies should use to assess this.

Knight, Kavanagh and Page (KKP) – an independent specialist consultancy in sports, leisure, culture, regeneration and green spaces – was tasked by Sport England to prepare practical guidance on the sporting and business benefits of the proposed larger hall models. This included direct centre management and business planning expertise, work focused on management, programming and usage flexibility that new specifications may offer, as well as the accompanying fiscal benefits and sustainability.

One size fits all

Historically, sports hall size evolved around the practical space required to

accommodate four badminton courts and in general they have become larger and taller. When the old GB Sports Council's Standardised Approach to Sports Halls (SASH) programme was rolled out in the early 1980s, the recommended specification for floor-space was 32m x 17m. This worked for badminton but left other sports somewhat cramped; the touchlines for a netball court were, for example, virtually on the skirting boards and there was little or no run off space for umpires, scorers, coaches and other team members.

However, these needs have since been addressed and so the 33m x 18m sports hall specification has become the norm.



INTENTION

Assess the market:

- Current sports hall supply in the catchment
- Sports hall stock condition
- Technical quality/relevance/scale
- Current use; fully occupied/spare capacity?

Sporting need:

- Which sports do you want to cater for
- At what level(s)?
- Is there an NGB-identified need in the locality?

Sports status:

- Levels of play in chosen sports
- Facility(s) required to service this
- Level of NGB technical specification required

Quantity:

- How much use can you legitimately predict
- ...in each sport?
- ...at each level of competition/performance?

Specification:

- Is there a facility in place – is it worth keeping?
- What facility(s) is/are required?
- What must the specification(s) be to cater for the levels of play and numbers predicted?

Does it stack up:

- What will it cost to open/run/operate?
- How much income will be generated?
- Is the business plan sustainable?

DECISION

Changing shape

A key trigger for further change was the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme. This incorporated what was called Building Bulletin (BB) '98' guidance which suggested that the minimum size for new school sports halls should be 33m x 18m (594sq m). This guidance was what both developers and the Local Education Partnerships (LEPs) then picked up on and specified.

However, halls of this size are now not considered to be fit for purpose for the key sports they serve and the prospect of allowing another generation of facilities that are just too small has helped Sport England broker an unprecedented level

of co-operation among NGBs to develop mutually agreed specifications.

To meet participation targets, support clubs and leagues and enable talented athletes to train and compete, NGBs need access to properly specified, correctly-sized facilities. The proposed new core specification for community and school sports halls described in Sport England's *Developing the Right Sports Hall* document can work for all of them and, at the base level, optimises potential cross-sports use and income generation.

Development of 4+ halls

In seeking to change the core definition of what we understand to be an

appropriate sports hall, Sport England's document provides excellent technical detail about what is needed to accommodate the various main sports as they are played at present.

It also makes reference to the options that developing various models of larger halls offer to the operator and people delivering recreational, competition or performance-based programmes in various sports. The document is accompanied by business planning and modelling spreadsheets to assist those considering the various scenarios available to them to do so with ease and confidence.

The new core unit (what we are calling the 4+ hall), at a capital cost not





One size fits (h)all :
The new core space will allow for indoor netball, basketball, badminton, volleyball and cricket

substantially greater than the old model, offers potentially excellent value for money and can bring significant community, educational, programming and, most importantly, sports development and participation increase benefits.

However, if schools, local authorities and other operators wishing to develop new or replace existing halls are to get the most out of their investment, consideration must be given to how they (plus clubs and NGBs themselves) look to innovate to seek to attract new participants and to make optimum use of the space they will have at their disposal.

Development of 4+ halls will allow (and should encourage) the smart club, league or operator of the future to take a market-led approach to promote positive, proactive centre programming and use with potentially valuable participation outcomes. Lessons can be learnt from the fact that five-a-side football was not invented by the FA but the market for it has expanded and developed in a sport that was already widely played in another format.

Turn up and play

The larger core sports hall offers the imaginative venue manager 'room for

The larger core sports hall offers the imaginative facility manager 'room for manoeuvre'. There is a real opportunity to innovate

manoeuvre'. There is real opportunity to innovate. For school-based users, it can provide options to deliver new format games as part of the curriculum and an after-school offer. For those programming for the community, the additional space, some innovative court line markings and hall sub-division means that things can be done differently to break away from the static space filling habits that have led indoor football and more recently 'wall-to-wall aerobics' to dominate programming at the expense of other sports, because they generate, in relative terms, good levels of income and are relatively easy to sell.

Successful examples of 'turn up and play' volleyball are already filling various

venues, while new more flexible forms of netball – suited to a small-sided format are being televised. Due to their adaptability these sports are becoming increasingly popular among those entering or 'coming back' to sport, while 2v2 and 3v3 basketball has been played for decades – just rarely in regular participation, structured drop-in and regular league based formats.

What we haven't yet seen is these derivatives properly used to drive up participation numbers (and venue income). However, these correctly-sized facilities better meet the needs of mainstream sport and can accommodate safe and exciting turn-up-and-play innovations.

These have the potential to bring people into these sports (or keep them in) for longer, while ensuring the operator gets an appropriate return on investment. This, in turn, validates the investment in the extra space and the early stage effort needed to do things differently. ● *Developing the Right Sports Hall is available from the Sport England website: www.sportengland.org*

David McHendry is a principal consultant at Knight, Kavanagh and Page. Email: david.mchendry@kcp.co.uk

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FUNDING THE PLACES PEOPLE PLAY

TOM WALKER ROUNDS UP SPORT ENGLAND'S INITIATIVES AIMED AT TRANSFORMING THE PLACES WHERE PEOPLE PLAY SPORT

Places, People, Play is a £135m initiative that promises to bring the 'inspiration and magic' of a home Olympic Games and Paralympic Games into the heart of local communities. It is being delivered by Sport England in

partnership with the British Olympic Association, the British Paralympic Association and with the support of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games (LOCOG).

The initiative has been divided into six separate schemes and sports clubs, local

authorities, charities, trusts and individuals are being encouraged to apply for funding and/or training.

Here we outline each scheme, provide an update of the progress made on each initiative and offer information for those wanting to take part.

ICONIC FACILITIES FUND

The Iconic Facilities fund will invest a total of £30m over the next three years in innovative, large-scale, multi-sport facility projects that are regionally significant for at least two sports and can demonstrate long-term financial viability.

Priority will be given to a small number of strategic facility projects that will significantly contribute to an increase in sports participation.

Facilities that receive Iconic Facilities funding will be promoted as examples of best practice and will provide a network of regional sports facilities – delivering mass participation across a number of sports. Every sports facility that receives funding will carry the London 2012 Inspire mark – celebrating the link to the Games.

STATUS:

The next £10m funding round of Iconic Facilities, which will support multi-sport facilities that help increase participation and deliver a sustainable sporting legacy beyond 2012, will open in Autumn 2012.

HOW TO APPLY:

For the final funding date and to find out how to apply, visit: www.sportengland.org/funding/iconic_facilities

SPORT MAKERS

This initiative encourages people to make sport happen at the local level and embed the Olympic and Paralympic values in grassroots sport.

Rather than investing in facilities, the £4m Sport Makers initiative is creating a network of 40,000 new sports heroes aged 16 years and over. Each Sport Maker will spend at least 10 hours organising or leading community sporting activities for their friends, neighbours or colleagues.

Everyone who chooses to become a Sport Maker is invited by their County Sports Partnership to come to an inspiring workshop near to where they live or work. Here they gain the skills and are supported to find local opportunities that suit them in order to increase participation in sport.

STATUS:

Since its launch in October 2011, more than 10,000 people have signed up. The programme will run until September 2013, at which time it's hoped at least 40,000 people will be making sport happen around the country.

HOW TO APPLY:

To find out more about how to become a Sports Maker, or sign up to the initiative, visit: www.sportmakers.co.uk

SPORTIVATE

An initiative that aims to create the sporting opportunities and challenges that gives everyone the chance to become part of the London 2012 mass participation legacy.

This £32m lottery programme is giving 14- to 25-year-olds access to six-week courses in a range of sports including judo, golf, tennis, wakeboarding, athletics, and parkour or free running.

Sportivate is being delivered by the network of 49 County Sports Partnerships, which are working with local providers and sports clubs to help teenagers and young adults, who aren't currently playing sport in their own time, to continue taking part in an activity long after they have completed their course.

STATUS:

The first six months resulted in 33,000 young people being inspired to do sport. Sportivate will run until March 2015 – giving hundreds of thousands of young people the chance to discover a sport they really enjoy.

HOW TO APPLY:

To find out about Sportivate in your area, visit: www.sportengland.org/about_us/places_people_play/sportivate.aspx and click on the CSP link



Local community groups can apply for a share of £10m from the National Lottery under the latest round of the Inspired Facilities Fund

PHOTO: GUYTON/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

INSPIRED FACILITIES FUND

This fund was set up to make it easier for local community and volunteer groups to improve and refurbish existing sports clubs or transform non-sporting venues into modern grassroots sport facilities. A total of £52m will be invested through Inspired Facilities on at least 1,000 community sports projects between 2011 and 2014.

STATUS:

So far, 350 community sports projects across England have already benefitted from Inspired Facilities, with Sport England dishing out £17.4m to improve local facilities. The second of five rounds of this fund is currently open until 2 April 2012, with the third round opening on 23 July 2012.

HOW TO APPLY:

Sports groups can find out more and bid at: www.sportengland.org/inspiredfacilities.

PROTECTING PLAYING FIELDS

Protecting Playing Fields will see a total of £10m of National Lottery funding being invested in sports playing fields across the country over three years from 2011-2014.

The programme is being delivered via five funding rounds – each worth around £2m.

STATUS:

The first round saw 48 sports playing fields being awarded funding. Round two closed on 12 December 2011 and received 102 bids. Applicants will be informed shortly of the outcome of their bid. Sport England will be running a further three funding rounds, one in the latter half of 2012 and two in 2013.

HOW TO APPLY:

For dates of future funding rounds and to find out how to apply, visit: http://www.sportengland.org/funding/protecting_playing_fields.aspx

GOLD CHALLENGE

An independent initiative that aims to motivate more than 100,000 people to test themselves in an Olympic- and Paralympic-themed challenge by the end of 2012, while fundraising for charity.

Participants register for free and choose one of three Olympic/Paralympic-themed challenges and the charity they want to fundraise for. Gold Challenge has more than 150 UK charity partners and aims to be one of the most successful multi-sport charity fundraisers of all time.

STATUS:

70,000 people have already signed up. The Gold Challenge will run until the end of 2012.

HOW TO APPLY:

To find out more and sign up visit: <http://www.goldchallenge.org/>

Tom Walker is SM's news editor



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TENNIS COURT

ITF Recognition



Jamie Capel-Davies outlines the process and benefits relating to the International Tennis Federation's (ITF) independent assessment of quality tennis courts

Marin Cilic of Croatia in the Quarter Final during the 2010 Australian Open tennis tournament

With an estimated *US\$30bn (£19.6bn) having been invested in tennis court construction worldwide, it is understandable that investors and players are keen to know the quality of construction and, increasingly, how fast or slow a court plays.

In response to this need, the International Tennis Federation's (ITF) science and technical department has established ITF Recognition to provide end-users with an independent assessment of the quality of their court, and offers contractors an opportunity to demonstrate the calibre of their products and installation skills.

WHAT IS ITF RECOGNITION?

ITF Recognition is a test-based programme. To receive One-Star Recognition, the court's key installation properties must meet ITF recommendations.

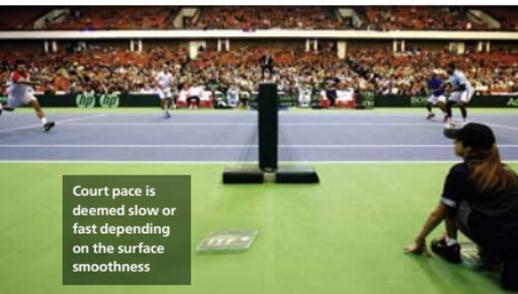
Testing begins with a visual inspection to identify any cracks or gaps in the surface and ensure a uniform appearance. Next, an evenness test measures the size of any bumps or dips in the surface with the use of a straight edge, and the slope and planarity of the court are established with a laser level. Finally, the position of the court markings and net are checked to ensure they are within tolerance.

Two-Star Recognition requires the court pace rating (CPR) to be compared with the ITF-classified value for the surface product, in addition to the One-Star tests described above.

The pace is quantified by firing a ball at the court and recording its speed before and after the bounce. Rougher surfaces, which generate more friction between the ball and the court, reduce the speed of the ball parallel to the ground making a court 'slower'. Surfaces that have a higher bounce also appear slower because players have more time to reach the ball. ➔



A laser level is used to establish the slope and planarity of the court, during the testing of a court against ITF standards



Court pace is deemed slow or fast depending on the surface smoothness

HOW TO GET ITF RECOGNITION

1. Submit an application for One- or Two-Star Recognition* to the ITF and pay the administration fee.
2. Select an ITF-accredited laboratory/ITF-approved surveyor and arrange a test date and test fee payment.
3. Have the court(s) tested and the report(s) sent to the ITF.
4. Receive an ITF Recognition certificate from the ITF and website listing for the court(s)**.

* Two-Star Recognition cannot be awarded without comparison against an ITF-classified surface product. If the surface product is not classified, the product supplier can apply for classification using the results of the CPR test on-site.

** Subject to meeting the relevant specifications.



An evenness test measures the size of bumps or dips in the tennis court surface, using a straight line edge

➤ There are currently more than 200 surface products classified by the ITF. Surfaces are classified into one of five categories: slow, medium-slow, medium, medium-fast and fast, and listed on the ITF website: www.itftennis.com/technical/equipment/courts/courtlist.asp

WHO CAN APPLY FOR ITF RECOGNITION?

ITF Recognition is targeted at venues where the standard of play is high and the quality of the court is therefore most important. These include the Davis Cup by BNP Paribas and Fed Cup by BNP

Paribas venues as well as national tennis centres. To date, One-Star ITF Recognition has been issued to the centre court at the La Caja Magica (Magic Box) stadium in Madrid (home of the Madrid Masters tennis tournament) and two indoor courts at the UK's Lawn Tennis Association's National Tennis Centre in Roehampton.

Two-Star ITF Recognition has been awarded to all nine match courts

installed by Spade Oak at the Eton Manor site in the Olympic Park, and four courts at the Tennis Park club in Moscow, installed by Concept 90.

An application for ITF Recognition can be submitted by any party associated with the tennis facility, for example the owner, the organiser of a tournament held at that facility, or the supplier or installer of the court.

One-Star tests are carried out by an ITF-approved test organisation, such as a surveying company, or an ITF-accredited laboratory. Two-Star tests are conducted by an ITF-accredited laboratory, which are listed on the ITF website: www.itftennis.com/technical/research/recognition/labs.asp

A working group of facilities experts from major tennis-playing nations have helped to design and develop an international Facilities Guide which represents best practice

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CASE STUDY

TENNIS PARK, MOSCOW

Four double, indoor courts at the Tennis Park in Moscow, Russia, installed by Concept 90, have been awarded Two-Star ITF Recognition.

Concept 90 is an active member of the International Tennis foundation (ITF) and the Russian Tennis Federation (RTF). Investing into continuous tennis surface research and development, the company has developed court surfaces that offer players a good standard of play with a minimum chance of injury.

These indoor and outdoor surfaces are suitable for tournament, training and recreational use and include acrylic RuKort, PVC RuKort, artificial turf RuKortGrass and red artificial turf RuKortXClay, which is an imitation of clay court and RuKortTennisit.

The surface installed at the Tennis Park in Moscow is RukortTour, a hard, acrylic surface on 55mm rubber matting. It is ITF certified and used for tennis tournaments across Russia, Croatia and Kazakhstan.

The company designed, built and installed a 138m x 37.5m air hall encompassing 10 courts (four double and six single). The air structure took 25 days to build and the tennis surfacing 15 days. Part of this process involved adjusting the dimensions and marking some of the standard-sized courts to allow for children's



Above: The Tennis Park offers children's tennis lessons and tournaments. Right: The court testing process took a team of ITF technicians two days to complete



competitions within the facility, in accordance with ITF Tennis 10s rules.

Upon completion, the four double court surfaces received ITF Two-Star Recognition after a testing process that took two days. This process involved a team of ITF technicians who visually checked that the court surfaces were uniform, free of gaps and cracks and that there was no deviation of evenness, slope and planarity. Tests were also conducted at key spots across the courts and ball pace was measured.

The Tennis Park markets these courts for use by children, young adults and disabled players. As well as hosting tennis coaching sessions and fun activities, the facility operator also organises regular

tennis tournaments for young players. These include the All Russia Tennis Tournament, which involves 120 players aged between nine and 12 years old and a monthly Tennis 10s tournament for six- to seven-year-olds. An Amateur tennis tournament and the Russia Cup is also hosted at the facility.

Using its links with the Russian Tennis Federation, the Tennis Park is currently planning a children's tennis camp at Tennis Centre Makarska in Croatia.



The ITF charges a US\$500 (£391) administration fee to add a facility (any number of courts at the same location) that meets the relevant specifications to the official ITF Recognition list. The cost of testing is determined by the laboratory and is available on application.

FACILITIES GUIDE AND DIRECTORY

The ITF has established a working group of facilities experts from major tennis-playing nations to design and develop an international Facilities Guide, which represents 'best practice' from around the world. It's a simple reference for

The position of the court markings and net are checked to ensure that they are within tolerance

those wanting to build a tennis court and offers information about layout design and choosing and maintaining surfaces: www.itftennis.com/technical/facilities

The Suppliers' Directory allows users to search for tennis facility products and services and identify ITF-Recognised suppliers: <http://tds.itftennis.com>

For more information, please email technical@itftennis.com or visit the ITF website: www.itftennis.com

** US\$30bn (£18.9bn) is a ballpark figure produced from an estimate of 750,000 courts worldwide at an average cost of US\$40,000 (£25,000) per court. The number of courts is based on a survey of the ITF member nations in 2004/2005.*

Jamie Capel-Davies is science and technical manager at the ITF



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Andy Spetch

A year in the life of a volunteer groundsman

As an ex-rugby player, an active club member and armed with a bit of soil and grass knowledge, my life as a volunteer groundsman began at Bury St Edmunds Rugby Club five years ago.

The Haberden's playing fields and clubhouse has been home to Bury St Edmunds Rugby Club since 1963. During the 1970s, the club raised funds to rebuild its playing facilities and redevelop the clubhouse, which was further extended in the 1980s. In 2006, with the aid of a grant from the Rugby Football Union (RFU), the club added a three-quarter-size 3G synthetic pitch to its existing three full-sized pitches and introduced mini rugby into the club on the six acres of surrounding playing fields.

Today, the club encompasses a first, second and third 15 squad, the Bury Foxes Ladies team, as well as a veterans team and a youth section.

The first 15 pitch hosts 30 games a year, plus first team run throughs on a training night, pitches two and three accommodate 84 games each season, plus mid-week training, while the 3G pitch is used for training. The club also hosts the ULR7s – the biggest Rugby Sevens event in the East of England.

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

When I took on the groundcare role, I decided to sit in on club committee meetings to better understand the club's

RECENT IOG VOLUNTEER GROUNDSMAN OF THE YEAR

WINNER, ANDY SPETCH, SHARES HIS ANNUAL SPORTS

PITCH STRATEGY AT BURY ST EDMUNDS RUGBY CLUB

sports surface needs and objectives and subsequently developed a strategy to achieve the club's ambition to become a premier club in the eastern counties.

This strategy addressed the need to extend our existing knowledge – by enlisting help from club contacts to secure a pitch budget, develop a maintenance programme and establish a pitch policy.

As well as receiving support from club suppliers, colleagues and fellow club members – including plumbers and farmers who were happy to offer their equipment – I also received invaluable training and support from the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG).

EXPERT ADVICE

A big turning point in my turf education was meeting turf consultant Alex Vickers, while attending an IOG Winter Games pitch level 1 course.

The three key issues that stuck in my mind thereafter were:

- the importance of a pitch maintenance plan
- the need to aerate pitches on a regular basis
- the need to provide proper irrigation

to ensure good root establishment and growth.

Addressing these issues, I was then able to design an annual maintenance budget and present it to the club committee. The £6,500 budget included £1,000 to self-install a pop-up irrigation system and £5,500 for spring maintenance. This plan was based on saving the club money in subsequent years by reducing seeding costs through increased turf emergence, establishment and growth.

THE STARTING POINT

In February 2007, a verti drainer was used to break up both surface and deep compaction. This then allowed for the planning of end of season maintenance for that first year, which included:

- over-seeding all pitches at a rate of 25g/m² with a dwarf perennial ryegrass
- topdressing at a rate of 80t-100t per pitch with an 80 per cent sandy loam dressing from British Sugar TOPSOIL.

The top dressing was applied after seeding to cover the seed and retain moisture around the seed. Because of budgetary restraints no fertiliser was



Bury St Edmunds first 11 versus Eton Manor on their home ground, cared for by Andy

Volunteers: the linchpins of the groundcare industry

According to Geoff Webb, CEO of the Institute of Groundsmanship (IOG), Andy Spetch is one of thousands of like-minded volunteers (at the last count an estimated 20,000) who diligently work 'under the radar' on sports playing surfaces throughout the country.

"Often working within minimal budgets and with the bare necessities of essential equipment, these willing volunteers play an indispensable role in ensuring that a wide range of sports are played

on first-class surfaces week in, week out throughout the year," says Webb.

"Many are retired grounds professionals or ex-sportsmen, such as renowned England cricketer Ray Illingworth – or, like Andy Spetch, involved in sports clubs or connected to the industry via their day jobs. Their IOG membership benefits offer a broad spread of services and information sources, substantial discounts on training and education and access to the recently launched Turfcare Advisory Service.

Visit www.iog.org for further information



Regular aeration encourages deep roots, which helps the grass recover from damage

applied in this first year and later that summer, with help from club members, a pop-up irrigation system was installed.

Since 2007, the savings made in seeding has allowed the groundsteam to fertilise the pitches with (typically) a spring dressing of a 12.6.6 blend at a rate of 30g/m² followed by a further dressing, at a rate of 35g/m² of the same blend in the autumn, which has helped promote healthier growth. This application rate was based on soil analysis that I've done independently and having the soil tests has allowed me to shop around for prices.

I've also varied the depth and type of de-compaction by alternating between using a verti drainer and a groundbreaker – as I find that their different modes of action complement each other.

MECHANICAL ASSISTANCE

In 2009, the club made its first purchase of turf care equipment. This was a 24hp mower tractor with rear lift arms. This second-hand unit cost £3,500 from a local John Deere agent. Previous to buying the mower, all the pitches and surrounding grass areas were regularly cut by a local contractor at an annual cost of around £4,000.

Having rear lift arms on the tractor has enabled the club to buy a tool bar, which can hold either a slitter or a scarifier. This means that mowing and slitting can be done together, which has saving a huge amount of time and labour.

The slitter helps to relieve surface compaction to a depth of 6cm. The scarifier is used to remove debris on the natural turf pitches and to de-compact the 3G pitch.

THE OUTCOME

By working in accordance with the annual maintenance plan we have seen spring maintenance budgets reduced from £5,500 in 2008 to £4,000 in 2011. The bulk of these savings have come from a reduction in the amount of seed required each year. The seed rate has been reduced from 25g/m² to 10g/m² on the first 15 and the second team pitches.

The pop-up irrigation system has ensured that the maximum germination and establishment of the seed is gained.

The regular aeration encourages deep rooting and healthy grass, which is better able to survive and recover from damage. Aeration to depth and surface slitting also stops water-logging and promotes a drier, higher-quality playing surface. ●

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Karen Maxwell talks to the newly-appointed director of Play England about why children's needs should be at the heart of a community

CATH PRISK

Can you tell me about your career background and your interest in play?

I was assistant director to Adrian Voce (former director), we then job shared for six months before I took over as the full-time director of Play England in September last year.

Prior to this, I was deputy head of two children's centres in Hackney and worked for Lifelong Learning UK as policy manager. Before that, I spent six years in the

London and the Southwest Regional Development Agencies – looking at skills policies and programmes that brought together different local partnerships to deliver region-wide projects to support people and skills.

I also set up the consultation process that set the priorities for skills that underpinned the parameters for the last round of European Social Funding in London and supported the government in developing the FE workforce strategy for the previous administration.

I started my career as a primary school teacher in North Yorkshire.

What's Play England's vision for play in this country?

Our vision is for England to be a country where everybody can fully enjoy their right to play throughout their childhood and teenage years. We look to work with local, regional and national partners – and families – across England to increase children's freedom to play, focusing on time, space and opportunities.

I've always been interested in how different groups come together to make a community work and how children are always at the heart. It takes a village to raise a child – an old saying, but it's as true today as it ever was. Children need to grow up somewhere where they feel safe and secure, where they know their neighbours and have space to roam.

It's not about diving in with loads of money to solve big problems, it's about

getting everyone to work together to help each other. Tackle the little problem of whether your kid can play out on the pavement and you are on your way to building a more child-friendly community.

Can you explain your recent call for community action to help children embrace outdoor play?

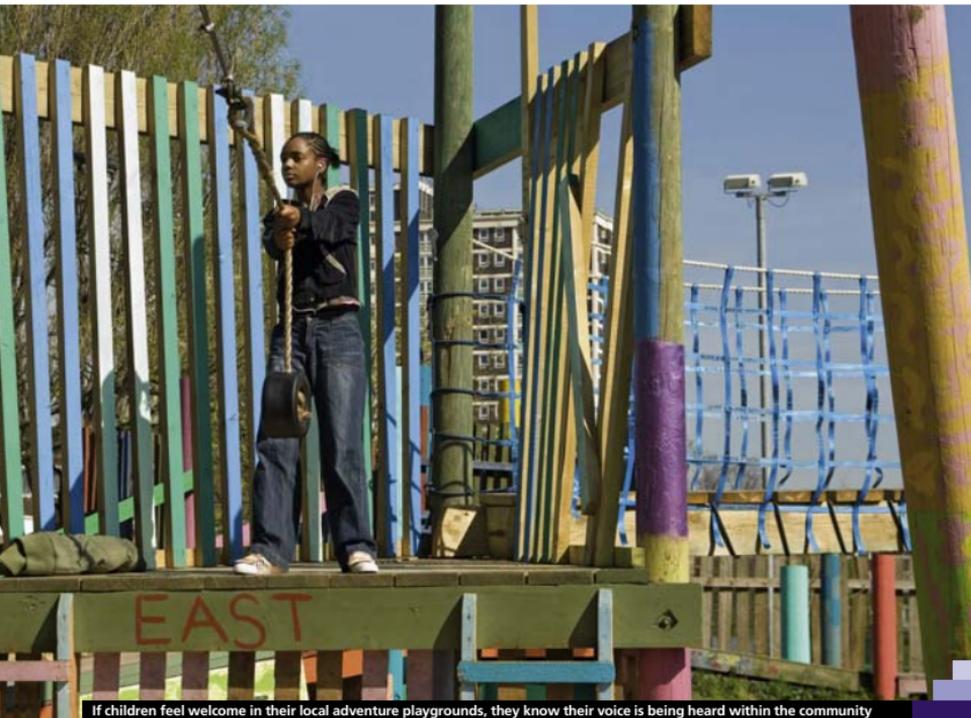
We want today's children to have the same opportunities to play outdoors that their parents did. Play is essential for children's health and happiness, for making friends, building skills for the future and feeling part of the community. Research shows however, that just 21 per cent of children play outdoors every day compared with 71 per cent of their parents when they were young. One third of today's children say they've never built a den, 32 per cent say they have never climbed a tree and one in 10 children has never ridden a bike.

As part of the Free Time Consortium, we've been awarded £2m from the Ministry of Civil Society to get more people involved in creating invaluable opportunities for children to play outside.



Play is essential for making friends and building children's skills for the future





If children feel welcome in their local adventure playgrounds, they know their voice is being heard within the community

© NATIONWIDE PLAY SCHEM

Our aim is to make it easy for people to find out where they can volunteer or get involved in making their own neighbourhood a better place to play. The campaign – Love Outdoor Play – is backed by the Get Involved in Play programme, which will generate more than 20,000 opportunities to get involved – ranging from an afternoon helping out to long term volunteering placements.

I think that society is changing, but there's a recognition that we went too far with the 'health and safety gone mad' brigade. Increasingly it's acknowledged that children need challenge and opportunity – but they also need to be part of a loving community. We all know plenty of single mums who have good, strong networks and we also know two-parent families who don't.

If children and young people feel welcome in their streets, in local adventure playgrounds and parks; have places where they can climb trees, try parkour and learn to skateboard – they know their voice is being heard and that massively reduces the likelihood of anti-social behaviour. This is further enhanced by

police support and the introduction of play rangers into parks that make places playful, and increase children's and young people's sense of shared ownership.

We're also very aware of the success of intergenerational projects. There's a genuine warmth about the place when the

“It's important that young people feel secure in these community environments to help them build better relationships in the future”

whole community gets involved in a project – such as people volunteering their website expertise or gardening skills.

It's important that young people feel secure in these community environments to help them build better relationships in the future and many older people find it a real lifeline to engage with youngsters.

We launched Love Outdoor Play, the public-facing campaign in January and already have more than 1,000 new supporters. The loveoutdoorplay.net blog site is developing as a community space, providing examples and encouragement to all those who believe children should be outside more. We'll be putting up stories about the difference volunteering around play can make to communities and individuals – including blogs about celebrity volunteers including P Diddy at Toffee Park in Islington, London and the singer from Alabama 3 at the Triangle Adventure Park in south London.

How is the play sector coping with the government's funding cuts?

The play sector as a whole is facing a very difficult time. This was made harder when the funding for the evaluation of the previous investment in play was cut, so we can't show the hard evidence of the difference it is making.

We know that children are using neighbourhood play areas, playgrounds and child-friendly parks more often and that they're making the communities feel



Children should be allowed to take part in risky play to develop essential skills



Local authorities need to address children's needs in the outdoor environment

➤ safer and nicer places to live in, but we don't have the 'hard' statistics to prove it.

While we had the national play strategy, we knew that all 364 district and unitary councils had a play strategy that brought together their built environment planning strategies and their child care and out of school strategies. I can't emphasise enough how important it is for a local authority to have some thinking about how the needs of children and young people are met in the outdoor environment. We want to know that all departments link into a play strategy, not just the children's services teams.

The Play England team did an 'unscientific' ring round every local authority we've had a relationship with and we now think that just 20 per cent still have a play strategy in place. That could be cut again this summer with the next round of redundancies.

However, these lean times are also virtuous to some real innovation. Dudley, which at the height of the play strategy in 2009 was awarded a £2.5m government grant and leveraged a further £8m investment from health, housing, section 106s and private sector investors, developed a wonderful playground that catered to both able-bodied and disabled children. Faced with redundancies when local authority funding was stopped, the playground manager set up an on-site catering business to run private parties and rent out the space to local schools, conference organisers and team building challenges. Consequently the play area now generates a turnover of £120,000 a year.

This sort of entrepreneurialism won't be right for every community play space, but it's what the community around that playground chose as the means to ensure the

adventure play sessions after school and in the holidays remain free for all children.

So how can a community make the most of its play provision?

It's important that a community rallies around their local provision and finds the right way of investing into it. This might mean setting up a strong community committee, which can apply for local or voluntary sector trust funding. It might be that local businesses club together because they recognise the benefit of increased footfall in that area.

Last year we worked with 20 local communities to think about how they could come together to retain and sustain their local play provision. On the back of that we developed a practice guidance for parish councillors on how to look after play, form 'friends of the parks' groups and how to use social media to raise awareness of the play provision. We've got some great practice guidance for communities on our website at: www.playengland.org.uk.

What are the plans for play provision in the Olympic Park?

The Olympic Park Legacy Company (OPLC) has assured us that eventually the

whole park will be child-friendly and that at least 20 play spaces will be built across the whole area, with the Play England Design Guide and Managing Risk in Play Provision Guide shaping the design and development of each space.

The Park's North Hub will offer a destination site for older children aged eight to 15 years and this will include a community centre and café area. The South Hub play provision will be located near to the Anish Kapoor Sculpture and will offer play structures for younger children.

More bridges are being built to provide easier access to the Park from surrounding boroughs and we're looking at ways to support local play associations and others in ensuring that there are safe, playful routes in and out of the park for post-Games use.

While the future of some development platforms within the Park are being decided, we'd like to see temporary adventure playgrounds erected in these spaces. These could be designed by the whole community and could potentially allow for play features to run along a play route that stretched from Tower Bridge, through the Olympic Park and out through Epping Forest – making it the world's biggest and best play facility. ●

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The API runs under the umbrella of the Federation of Sports and Play Associations (FSPA)

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Photo: Seamus Ryan. Sport Relief is an initiative of Comic Relief, registered charity 326568 (England/Wales); SC039730 (Scotland).



With the growth of triathlon participation increasing at both amateur and elite levels, there's a clear opportunity for leisure centre operators to introduce triathlon training and events within their facilities. Nicola Joyce reports

TRIATHLON TRAINING

Official figures from the British Triathlon Federation – the sport's national governing body (NGB) – suggest a large proportion of a leisure centre or health club's members will train for at least one triathlon this year. The fastest-growing sport in Britain, triathlon's popularity shows absolutely no sign of waning, with London 2012 predicted to boost interest at amateur level.

In 2010/2011, British Triathlon recorded a 15.7 per cent increase in membership numbers, with a surprisingly equal split across genders (59 per cent male, 41 per cent female). The largest age group represented is the cash-rich, goal-focused 35- to 44-year-old category.

Driving loyalty

Although triathlon is an outdoor sport, training lends itself well to a club setting. Triathletes need to train in indoor pools and can benefit from indoor cycling sessions and running training on a track or treadmill. Outdoor bike and run groups also need a base, as do existing local triathlon clubs, which are often keen to partner with facilities that have a pool.

According to Mark Barfield, director of development at British Triathlon and director of operations at Triathlon England: "Operators can offer their facility as a meeting point for bike and run sessions and, if they have a pool, that's an obvious benefit. Access to pool time is, he says, always an issue for triathletes.

"Offering sessions across any combination of the swim/bike/run trio will attract those interested in triathlons.

"Additionally, operators could use strength and conditioning sessions, Spinning and pilates as a draw. Triathletes are a very dynamic group of people – typically ABC1s – who are willing to embrace any new idea which will help them perform better."

For those not yet involved in triathlon, to whom it can be a daunting prospect, offering a first step within the familiar surroundings of their existing leisure centre or health club removes the pressure of committing to an event or joining a triathlon club as a newcomer. This can help build confidence and a sense of community – key to the success of an in-club triathlon club.

Operators across the country are already grasping the opportunities presented by the public's passion for triathlon. Barfield has spearheaded a triathlon partnership with David Lloyd Leisure (DLL) and is keen to partner with any operators who want to tap into triathlon. "By supporting the development of in-club triathlon clubs, we can generate new training environments and the operators can attract new participants," he explains. "The initiative with DLL is still in its infancy, but anecdotal evidence suggests that clients will use the gym more often and are more likely to renew



Outdoor bike and run groups need a base, as do existing triathlon clubs who are often keen to partner up



Not all clubs are able to offer a pool as part of a triathlon training programme, but those who can stand to benefit



Triathlon – combining running, cycling and swimming events – is the fastest-growing sport in the UK

NOLAN DUNN/ALAMY/ALAMY

Triathlon gives people the chance to be part of something that becomes a lifestyle



BETTO/GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

their membership, if they take part in other activities offered within the club."

Not only that, but members of in-club clubs also take part in social activities, building a sense of community and buy-in and further boosting retention.

"Triathlon gives people the chance to be part of something, which then becomes their lifestyle. This can only be a good thing for club operators," says Julian Nagi, the British Triathlon Federation Level 3 coach who heads up the in-club triathlon club at The Park Club, part of The Hogarth Group. "Our triathlon set-up helps with club loyalty. There's no question that it keeps members coming back for more, renewing their membership fees each year and passing on positive word-of-mouth recommendations."

Training and events

Andrew Taylor is sports manager at DLL Hampton. His club offers a weekly swimming session, plus another session in the week that covers either running or cycling on a fortnightly rotation. There is no additional charge to members. "We see the triathlon club as another benefit to DLL members who are looking for more intensive group training," Taylor says. "As we do not charge, we receive no direct extra revenue. However, we believe that the extra sense of achievement will encourage participants to keep their membership."

British Triathlon is keen to work with any venue wishing to run multi-sport activities. We're happy to help any club operator generate a triathlon club

Taylor believes the main considerations for operators wanting to set up an in-club triathlon group are time, space and credible trainers. "As long as you have cycles or Spin bikes and treadmills, you can do this," he says. "I'd advise operators to look at peak and off-peak membership and consider whether to offer sessions for both. We have no specific zones as we do the training at a time that won't affect other gym users. Outdoor sessions can also be done if the trainer and members are happy to do so."

"Having a pool is a big help, although you can just offer training for run and bike. Staff don't need to have specialist training for run and bike, although it helps if they have some experience, as members will have more belief in the trainer."

"Not all clubs will have a pool," agrees Nagi. "They could offer specific running or Spinning sessions, or recruit triathlon coaches to organise outdoor group bike and run sessions. Duathlon (run/bike/run) is a good way to encourage people to try multi-sport. Some may then want to move onto triathlon."

As Barfield suggests, facilities can also offer triathlon events themselves or in partnership with local triathlon clubs, providing an opportunity to drive revenue as well as retention. "The multi-sport nature of triathlon lends itself to many opportunities: a dry triathlon challenge in the gym, an aquathlon (swim/run), a full triathlon or any combination of the three sports," says Barfield. "British Triathlon is keen to work with any venue



→ wishing to run multi-sport activities. We're happy to help any club operator to generate a triathlon club. Our partnership with DLL is non-exclusive, and we've seen the in-club club model work across diverse locations. We can offer training for coaches and best practice guidance."

Nagi suggests operators begin by working with triathlon coaches in their area, who will be full of ideas and contacts. "You need someone with vision to get things moving," he comments. "We have an amazing facility here, with an outdoor and an indoor pool, huge gym and beautiful grounds with a running trail. We have all the ingredients to make it work. We now run three triathlons, a duathlon and two children's aquathlons every year."

Revenue driver

Everyone Active (SLM) is the first leisure management group to work with Triathlon England on a national level, cross-promoting its in-house triathlon initiative with the NGB. Group exercise development manager Michelle Bletso pioneered the relationship, and feels that working in partnership with an NGB allows the group to offer more to members. "Everyone Active has started to train staff to run official triathlon training sessions at our centres with a view to rolling this out across the group," she explains. "We will also have an interactive online programme with downloadable triathlon training plans for members."

"In addition, Everyone Active provides local triathlon groups with pool and studio training space, so they can grow the number of training sessions they run. This is a great way of generating income for the sites during downtime, while providing a service for winter training. We have also been asked to host the county Aquathlon Championships in 2012, which will have a number of schools taking part. All the children's activities work

As triathlon clubs grow in size, there will be further commercial opportunities for the host training facility

The multi-sport nature of triathlon lends itself to many event opportunities

do makes us perfectly placed to introduce further activities to school groups."

Meanwhile, Leisure Connection partners with existing local triathlon clubs by offering venue facilities for training and events. The Lord Butler Centre in Essex has run the Walden Triathlon for 11 years. "The centres get revenue from the triathlon clubs when they hire the pool and sports hall," says Kevin Grant, contract manager. "Some of the triathlon club members are also members of the centre and use the facilities in addition to their club nights. Good relationships with such clubs is fundamental for our success and integral to our values as a PFI site."

Grant says relationships with successful external triathlon clubs are easy to maintain. "They are serious about their training. As long as excellent customer service is always present, there is no reason for the relationship to falter. As triathlon clubs grow in size, there will be further commercial opportunities; increasing the amount of pool space they use and the frequency with which they visit the centre. It's a great revenue-generation tool."

Clear benefits

With around 350 triathlon clubs affiliated to British Triathlon, and 14,298 NGB members recorded in 2010/2011, it's clear



that triathlon represents exciting opportunities for member retention and revenue, not to mention less measurable – but no less valuable – benefits: customer loyalty, improved club visibility and strong links with the community. With the 2012 Games almost upon us, there's never been a better time to get involved in triathlon.

"The London Olympic Games is predicted to generate a 10 per cent rise in the numbers of people wanting to get involved in triathlon and multi-sport, whether mass-participation races or amateur training," says John Lunt, triathlon manager for the London 2012 Olympics. "This represents a huge opportunity for club and gym operators who have time and space at their facility that could be used for multi-sport sessions."

"Triathletes tend to be affluent, group-focused, sociable people who are highly committed to their training and to the sport in the long-term. It is my view that any gym offering in-house triathlon club sessions will not only benefit in terms of revenue and retention, but will also deliver an important bonus to its membership. In turn, operators will help us make triathlon more accessible." ●

Nicola Joyce is a freelance journalist

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World record holder on board with SAPCA

Former 5000m world record holder and Commonwealth gold medalist, David Moorcroft OBE, has joined the Board of SAPCA (The Sports and Play Construction Association).

Moorcroft is best known for his world record-breaking exploits on the athletics track – breaking the world record for 5000m in 1982. Since then, he has covered athletics events for the BBC, developed the Coventry Sports Foundation – which owns and operates three major sports facilities in the Coventry area – and led UK Athletics as its chief executive. He is also the chair of the West Midlands Leadership Group for the 2012 Games, an organisation set up to lead and drive forward 2012 activity in the region.

CEO of SAPCA, Chris Trickey, said: “As an independent director David will represent the voice of sport on the SAPCA Board – a role for which he is ideally suited with his extensive experience in both athletics and the boardroom.

“He also brings a passion for ensuring that quality sports and play facilities should be available throughout the UK and will draw on his experience of sports administration, funding and developing top quality sports amenities.”



Former Olympian David Moorcroft OBE will raise SAPCA's profile in sport

Moorcroft will take up his role with immediate effect. Commenting on his appointment, David said: “I have known SAPCA for several years, as a result of my development of indoor facilities on behalf of UK Athletics, and I have always been impressed with its drive and enthusiasm in raising the quality of construction standards in the industry.”

“My role will be to ensure that the profile of the organisation and its relationships with external bodies is good and that there is open dialogue. I want to ensure that the sporting world always refers to SAPCA when developing its facilities.”

SAPCA is the recognised trade association for organisations involved in building sports and play facilities. Its role is to raise standards, regulate the industry, improve skills, promote research, liaise with sports and governing bodies, and be the voice of the industry. Its aim is to ensure that only high quality facilities are built at all levels of sport, physical activity, recreation and play.

The move to recruit Moorcroft to the SAPCA Board follows an extensive strategic review by the organisation, the results of which was unveiled at its Annual Conference in January 2012 and highlighted by SAPCA chair Eric Page (opposite).

SAPCA continues to grow

With more than 240 organisations now members, SAPCA continues to demonstrate that fostering excellence, professionalism and continuous improvement reaps benefits – not only for sports and play construction companies but, more importantly, for the specifier, buyer and user of sports and play facilities

THE LATEST NEW SAPCA MEMBERS ARE:

ABG Ltd – manufacture and supply of geosynthetics

ACT Global Sports BV – international manufacturers of artificial turf

Ecosse Sports Ltd – specialists in sports surfacing installation

Genan A/S – manufacturers of high quality rubber granulate

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Global Maintenance Ltd – specialists in sports surface maintenance

R&J Hill Engineering Ltd – manufacturers of sports equipment

Reflex Sports Ltd – design, testing and supplier of timber/ hardwood and PU sports flooring

Sekisui Alveo AG – providers of high-performance polyolefin foam

Specialist Sports Surfaces Ltd – installers of synthetic surfaces

Verde Recreo Ltd – artificial grass design, construction and refurbishment

The University of Nottingham – physical recreation and sport department



For details of all SAPCA members, scan the QR code or visit www.sapca.org.uk



Valuable resource for the sports and play industry

The new SAPCA website is a valuable resource for anyone involved in specifying, designing, building, buying and maintaining sports and play facilities.

The website, which has been totally re-designed, includes codes of practice for the construction and maintenance of different sports and play facilities, information leaflets and guides, details of forthcoming events, help with finding a supplier or product and training scheme or qualifications information. Visit www.sapca.org.uk

New sports facility shows announced

SAPCA has announced the launch of the Sports Facility Show – a new event aimed specifically at those who buy, design, operate or maintain sports and play areas.

The Sports Facility Show will be replacing SAPCA's long running Sports Facility Construction events and will be taking a new format – details of which will be announced shortly.

The first event will be held at Cheltenham Racecourse on Tuesday 15 May 2012. The second event will be at Salford City Stadium in Manchester on Tuesday 12 June 2012.

More details are available by emailing info@sapca.org.uk



UK expertise leads the world

A contingent of overseas UK Trade & Investment (UKTI) officers recently visited the UK for a week's insight into the sports facility and equipment market – an area of particular British expertise.

Hosted by the Sports Technology Institute (STI) at Loughborough University, the trade officers attended from as far afield as Russia, Brazil, the UAE, North Africa and Canada, where they work to promote British expertise and source business opportunities for British companies. SAPCA, which works with the Global Sports Projects team at UKTI, presented a one-day seminar to the group. The delegation also visited the sports facilities for both London 2012 and the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games.



Nine months into his role as chair of SAPCA, *Sports Management* asks Eric Page what we can expect to see from SAPCA in the future

turning a new page

What are the highlights of the last eight months?

The main focus for the board has been the review of SAPCA's strategic direction. It's vitally important that the association continues to develop with a clear vision, agreed objectives and a sound business plan. As a membership body representing more than 200 companies and organisations, it's essential that we fully understand the needs and views of the industry, in order to prioritise our future activities – especially at a time when the marketplace faces new challenges.

As part of this work we undertook valuable market research with sports bodies, consultants, specifiers and a cross section of member companies. In essence, we proposed that SAPCA's strategic direction should be re-focused around its vital work to raise standards of sports and play facilities, the strengthening of the association's Quality Assurance system and more effective communication of SAPCA's work across the marketplace to members' customers and to the various sports, play and funding bodies.

How do you propose to raise quality standards?

It's SAPCA's responsibility to ensure that our members perform to certain standards. To do this we ask all members to work to a Code of Professional Conduct and we are constantly adding new Codes of Practice for the design and construction of facilities. Again, all SAPCA members adhere to these codes.

In these uncertain times we also now undertake credit checks of all members once a year, which hopefully helps to give our members' customers peace of mind. The scheme, operated through Experian, provides a financial stability figure for each member. Any member not reaching the minimum figure has their membership of SAPCA withdrawn.

During 2012, we'll be strengthening this system even further. We're launching a track and pitch registration scheme, which is great news for the industry and will be invaluable to members as a means of adding value to their projects.

Can you give more details of the Pitch and Track Registration Scheme?

All members within the Pitch and Track division of SAPCA will have to register any pitches (more than 3,000sq m) and athletics tracks that they build. SAPCA will then contact the end customer to advise what will be expected from the SAPCA member in terms of quality standards and Codes of Practice.

SAPCA will independently inspect a percentage of these projects at random times during the build, ensuring that these standards are met. If customers are unhappy at any point

SAPCA IS RAISING THE GAME WITH REGARD TO QUALITY – ENSURING THAT ONLY THE HIGHEST STANDARDS OF SPORT FACILITIES ARE BUILT BY OUR MEMBERS

they can contact SAPCA to discuss the issues. At the end of the project, SAPCA will contact the customer for feedback.

The scheme is a great example of how SAPCA is raising its game with regard to quality and we want to show the sports sector that SAPCA does have teeth and will use them to ensure that only the highest standards of sports and play facilities are built by our members.

Exciting times then?

Definitely – we are looking to make SAPCA an even more respected body within the sports and play facility industry. And, with the addition of Dave Moorcroft to the board, we've added another dimension – someone that will be the voice of sport and can help SAPCA with lobbying and linking to key sports bodies. I'm very much looking forward to the future of sport and SAPCA's role within it.

IS THE GRASS ALWAYS GREENER?



The use of synthetic turf in football continues to generate much debate, particularly with the growing interest from professional clubs. SAPCA CEO Chris Trickey offers guidance on its development, performance standards and long-term benefits

Synthetic turf pitches could be making a shock comeback if some Football League clubs get their way. The debate has begun to heat up following a decision by clubs such as Wycombe and Accrington to investigate reintroducing synthetic turf pitches. A subsequent Sky Sports debate called *Turf Wars* fuelled the debate and all 72 Football League clubs are now being asked to discuss the issue in three divisional meetings.

SAPCA, the trade body that represents sports and play facility construction in the UK,

helps the sector to separate the facts from the myths regarding this contentious subject.

MYTH – Artificial turf pitches are hard and plastic

The most significant change over the last decade has been the much greater use of 'third generation' or 3G synthetic grass surfaces, using relatively long-pile, and very sophisticated, yarns with rubber and sand in-fills. These surfaces have been developed to replicate the playing performance of high-quality natural

turf surfaces and have become very popular for both football and rugby. Needless to say, they perform very much better than the old sand-filled surfaces installed at a number of professional football clubs in the 1980s.

There have been very significant advances in the yarns and fibres used for synthetic turf surfaces. There is now a much wider range of yarns available, with different profiles, shapes and thicknesses, which make it easier to achieve the playing performance needed for individual sports, and with greater consistency. Fibres are now also more durable, enabling surfaces to achieve longer life expectancy.

MYTH – Natural turf is always better

The choice of surface is sometimes presented as a battle between natural and synthetic turf, but few would argue that most players would prefer to play on a top quality natural pitch, if they can. FIFA's Quality Concept (see box out) seeks to promote football turf mainly in regions where the climate makes it impossible to play matches on good natural turf all year round.

A quick look at old footage from *Match of the Day* will highlight that the quality of natural turf pitches at the top level of the game has improved dramatically over recent years and are a great credit to the groundsmen

Natural turf is preferred by many sports, but year-round quality can be challenging



Barcelona FC forward Lionel Messi plays on synthetic FIFA football turf

FIFA QUALITY CONCEPT FOR FOOTBALL TURF

The game of football in particular has been quick to recognise the benefits of the new synthetic surfaces.

Both UEFA and FIFA took a keen interest when the first 3G surfaces appeared on the market and in 2001 FIFA launched its 'Quality Concept' for what it termed 'football turf'. In 2004, the International Football Association Board decided to include football turf in the Laws of the Game. This allowed matches between national teams (whose associations were FIFA members) and international matches between club teams to be officially staged on artificial turf.

At the heart of FIFA's Quality Concept are performance standards for football turf. The international body has used test results, player surveys, medical research and information from the industry to develop its own standards, with the aim of satisfying the most rigorous demands in professional football and further improving the playing conditions and safety of artificial turf pitches.

The International Rugby Board (IRB) has also embraced the use of synthetic turf in the official laws and regulations for the sport, allowing the use of synthetic surfaces that comply with the IRB Artificial Rugby Turf Performance Specification, alongside the permitted playing of the game on grass, clay, sand and snow.

working on them, but the demand for synthetic turf in the UK will continue to be led by football clubs and other facilities where there is a practical requirement for more intensive usage – for football and other activities – and a need to boost revenue, to help to ensure financial viability. It is inevitable that the argument for synthetic pitches to be used at all levels of football will continue and eventually there will be more regular use of 3G surfaces in the professional game.

MYTH – Players get more injuries on synthetic grass pitches

In research undertaken among 290 players from 10 elite European football clubs and more than 200 players from the Swedish Premier League, the incidence of injury during training and match play was no higher on artificial turf than on natural grass!

THESE SURFACES HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED TO REPLICATE THE PLAYING PERFORMANCE OF HIGH-QUALITY NATURAL TURF SURFACES AND PERFORM MUCH BETTER THAN THE SAND-FILLED SURFACES INSTALLED IN THE 1980s

MYTH – Artificial turf pitches don't need maintaining

If only this were true! In the very early days of synthetic turf surfaces they were often poorly maintained. However, all artificial grass pitches do need some routine maintenance and these costs should be included within the project budget.

Where clients do not have the expertise or willingness to undertake routine turf maintenance, the pitch contractor or other

specialist maintenance companies can provide a professional service.

SAPCA represents suppliers of both natural and artificial grass pitches and has further information at www.sapca.org.uk about both options. SAPCA also has Codes of Practice for both the construction and maintenance of both synthetic and natural turf pitches – recommended reads for anyone considering specifying, buying, operating or maintaining such sports facilities.



SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE FOR SPORTS SURFACES

SAPCA is working with Loughborough University on this water management project, Murray Simpson talks us through the issues

With changes in planning rules and implications of climate change, the management of drainage from sports pitches is fast becoming an issue for the sports pitch construction industry. The treatment of sports surfaces as impermeable areas and the tight discharge consents granted by local authorities often means that costly attenuation systems have to be included in sports pitch construction. But, are these complex systems really necessary and could the money be better spent within the project?

ADDRESSING THE ISSUE

Loughborough University is currently conducting a research project – supported by SAPCA, the

Institute of Groundsmanship and Sport England – to assess the drainage behaviour of pitches. The project is investigating the fate of rainfall as it infiltrates through sports pitches en-route to the drainage system and aims to provide useful guidance for future pitch design.

At present, pitch drainage systems design is based on the potential for all the rainfall that hits the pitch surface to be discharged via the drainage system. This criterion, which is imposed by planning authorities, is a means of restricting significant volumes of surface run-off entering local drainage systems and possibly leading to flash flooding. This frequently sets low site discharge rates and often means expensive attenuation systems have to be specified within the pitch design. However, there is potential for sports pitches to act as potential sinks for drainage water due to their attenuation properties.

PROJECT AIMS

Loughborough University's School of Civil and Building Engineering is currently one year into a project that is looking into the drainage behaviour of pitches by applying the principles currently used in the design of Sustainable Urban Drainage systems (SuDs). The aim of the project is to understand in detail the drainage behaviour of pitches and to produce some design guidance to allow the true drainage behaviour and

The quality of natural turf surfaces affect the standard of performance

properties of the pitch to be accounted for in planning and design assessment.

The work involves three phases: the construction of an advanced computer model of pitch drainage behaviour, laboratory tests on material drainage properties and scale pitch tests as well as monitoring full pitches by measuring rain fall and drainage discharges.

Field monitoring is carried out by installing a rain gauge and a flow meter (designed by Loughborough University) at the pitch. This allows the volume of water 'in' to be assessed relative to the volume of water 'out'.

GOING FORWARD

As the project enters its second year, the project team is looking to collect as much information and experience as possible from the sports industry. The team is currently installing monitoring equipment at sites across the country, but is looking for more sites to take part in the research. If you have a sports pitch that may be suitable for evaluation contact m.simpson2@lboro.ac.uk.

Murray Simpson is a PhD research student at Loughborough University's Department of Civil and Building Engineering



Typical catch pit for installation of monitoring equipment

SAPCA DIRECTORY



The Sports and Play Construction Association, SAPCA, is the recognised trade organisation for the sports and play facility construction industry in the UK. SAPCA fosters excellence, professionalism and continuous improvement throughout

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

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DIARY DATES

3-4 MARCH & 7-8 MARCH 2012

LG Group/CLOA Culture, Tourism & Sport Conference

York, England and Cardiff, Wales
With the Olympic/Paralympic Games, Diamond Jubilee and Cultural Olympiad, 2012 is a huge year for culture, tourism and sport. But coming hot on the heels of the tough budget restraints. This event will look at how to exploit these opportunities, adapt to budget pressures and work with volunteers, social enterprises and the private sector to improve efficiency.

www.cloa.org.uk/events

7-9 MARCH 2012

Global Sports Forum Barcelona

Palau De Congressos, De Catalunya
An exchange platform attracting sport administrators and personalities, including Eric Cantona and Oscar Pistorious, who come together and debate economic, social, political and cultural issues relating to sport.

www.globalsportsfourm.org

12-30 MARCH 2012

CIMSPA Home Nations and Regional Event Roadshow

Various locations across the UK
These half-day events overview the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity's (CIMSPA) work through the new national and regional management boards. Each will discuss an issue of specific local relevance.

www.imsa.co.uk

28-29 MARCH 2012

Soccerex European Convention

Manchester Central, UK
This forum is a must attend event for anyone in the football business industry. It offers an ideal setting to do business, source new contacts, discover the latest innovations and meet business objectives.

www.soccerex.com/events

25-26 APRIL 2012

IHT Sports Business Summit

Ritz Carlton, Istanbul
The European Capital of Sport 2012, Istanbul is investing billions in its sports infrastructure as Turkey readies itself for an Olympic Games bid. Join the International Herald Tribune (IHT) and sports industry leaders to find out how economic and technological changes are creating opportunities in the global sports industry.

www.ihtsportsummit.com

8-10 MAY 2012

Stadia Design and Technology Expo

Los Angeles Convention Centre, USA
The USA's annual convention for the design, build and operation of a sporting venue. It will showcase revenue-generation technologies; innovative capacity-boosting concepts; environmentally conscious building materials and operational efficiency-enhancing technologies.

www.stadiadesignandtechnology.com

15 MAY 2012

The Sports Facilities Show (SAPCA)

Cheltenham Racecourse, UK
This show replaces the Sport and Play Construction Association's (SAPCA) long-running Sports Facility Construction events and will be taking a new format - details of which will be announced shortly at the following address:

www.sapca.org.uk

15-17 MAY 2012

Stadium Business Summit

Juventus Stadium, Turin, Italy
Stadia owners, operators, designers and suppliers will congregate for debate, knowledge-sharing and networking in a venue that heralds a new breed of stadia design. The theme for this year's event will celebrate the fact that stadia are at the point of convergence between the broadcast event and the live experience.

www.stadiumbusinesssummit.com

20-25 MAY 2012

SportAccord Convention

Quebec, Canada
This six-day gathering of more than 1,500 leading representatives from international sport offers the sports family a powerful opportunity to come together in an exclusive and authoritative networking environment, to build relationships, share knowledge and develop ideas that will benefit the community.

www.sportaccord.com

20-27 MAY 2012

Brrmb Grassroots Football Live

NEC, Birmingham
The 20,000sq ft event include 3 vs 3 playing areas and cross bar challenges, workshops and best practice in coaching techniques, a football products exhibition and a kids zone. Guest appearances include Newcastle's Chris Hughton and ex-England manager Graham Taylor.

www.sportaccord.com

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