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SPORTING FUTURE

New government sports strategy examined

EDDIE IZZARD & THE #BIGHELPOUT

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SPORT FINDS ITS PURPOSE

When a political opposition praises a new government strategy it's a sign it's achieved consensus. *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation* is a masterful piece of work which will change the wellbeing of the nation and see sport take its rightful place in the wider health agenda

What a journey sport has been on over the last 50 years: from amateur to professional and from the private school to the mainstream. It's been quite a ride and we've essentially seen it democratised.

Now sport is taking another giant evolutionary leap forward and joining the mainstream health and social agendas with the publication of the government's report, *Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation*, which lays out plans for the sector.

Most policy documents do little more than gather dust, but once in a generation one comes along which is so in tune with the needs of the times it's both a game changer and a breath of fresh air. This is such a report. It's ambitious, thorough, inclusive and clear thinking.

First observation is that *Sporting Future* has achieved a high degree of consensus by identifying issues and solutions which can be endorsed by the industry and the main political parties: the shadow sports minister was complimentary and both Labour and Lib Dems will see some of their best ideas have filtered in via the extensive consultation process.

In the foreword, sports minister, Tracey Crouch, says the strategy has the aspiration to achieve five simple but fundamental outcomes for the nation – nothing less than "physical health, mental health, individual development, social and community development and economic development."

This broad remit places sport firmly at the heart of the nation's wellness agenda and throughout *Sporting Future*, reference is made to collaboration with a wide range of government departments, private sector partners and quangos, including health and business. It also has social change at its heart.

Everything will be measured and the ways we measure will evolve, with Sport England's behaviour change methodologies being extended to a national scale and new measures being developed in areas such as the impact of sport on mental health.

The Active People research will become Active Lives and be rebuilt to represent a broader definition of activity. Crouch says the outcomes "will define who and what we fund."

So there's huge change ahead. It will no longer be a given that established bodies will get funding if they fail to make a difference, while other organisations – even outside conventional sport – which prove they're driving positive behaviour change and social good in the target populations, will get it instead.

Sport England has retained pretty much all its funding (£1.40bn vs the existing £1.47bn), so the money's there to make things happen, although some councils facing cuts will need to prioritise when delivering on the vision of *Sporting Future.*

> What can we do with a policy like this, a supportive government and the best of ourselves? A great deal of good

One of the most exciting announcements is a Sport England focus on physical activity from the age of five to 18 (currently 14-18). This will get children into good exercise habits at a critical stage in their development and must be delivered in partnership with schools if it is to succeed.

Read the report – it's stuffed full of good things which are far too many for the space I have here: a new Sports Business Council, the revival of the Sport Cabinet of nations, the focus on mental health, the endorsement of CIMSPA as the lead body for the 'sports workforce', knowledge transfer between Olympic and non-Olympic sports, funding for kids' cycling – it's a long list.

Hats off to ukActive, whose pivot to wellness and activity has undoubtedly helped this change along and congratulations to everyone involved in making *Sporting Future* – it's wonderful.

What can we do with a policy like this, a supportive government and the best of ourselves? We can do a great deal of good.

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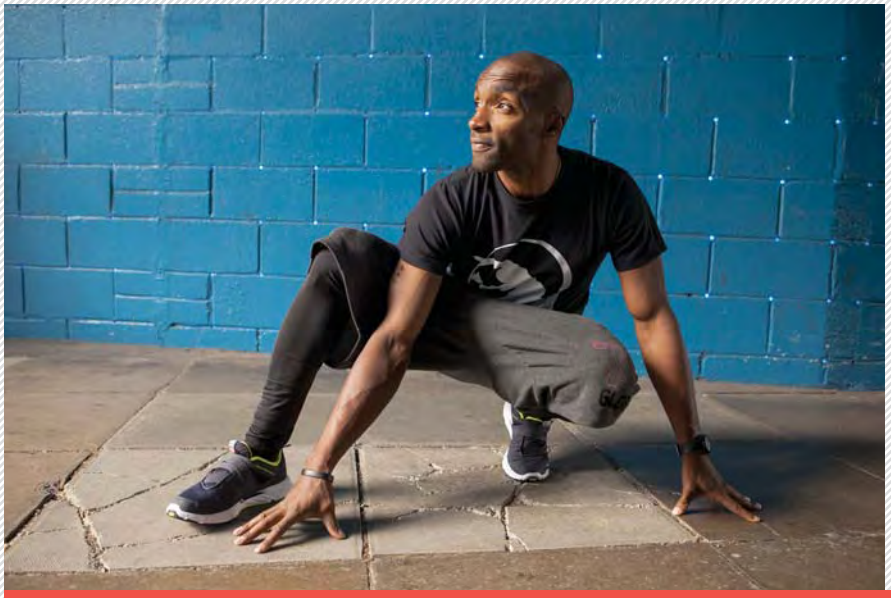

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PEOPLE

> "I think there are many people out there who don't realise how much sport relies on volunteers"
>
> **Eddie Izzard,** Join In ambassador

Eddie Izzard's credentials as a comedian and actor are well known, but his long-standing passion for sport (and particularly running) is perhaps less so.

A few eyebrows – and a lot of money – were raised in the autumn of 2009, when he took a month off his entertainment work and completed an impressive 43 marathons in 51 days for Sport Relief. By the time he had finished, he had raised more than £1.85m for the charity.

A year later, in 2010, he was heavily involved in the search for the 70,000 volunteers needed for the London 2012 Games. To this day he continues to play his part in maintaining the spirit of London 2012 through his work as a high profile patron at the Join In Trust – a 2012 legacy programme aimed at encouraging people to volunteer in their local communities.

"Volunteers are the backbone of sport in the UK – without them, sport just wouldn't be possible," says Izzard. "Behind every sporting champion or grassroots sports club is an army of volunteers who have dedicated their time and efforts to sport. Every Olympic, Paralympic and professional sports star started out at a local sports club or group. Any one of them will tell you how important volunteers are, and the vital role that they've played in their career."

GETTING INVOLVED

Following his record-breaking marathon challenge, Izzard was asked to help with efforts to create a volunteer network for London 2012. Alongside a number of other famous faces, he was part of a team responsible for recruiting members of the public to do their part in fulfilling the Games' legacy pledge – Inspiring a Generation. Being Izzard, his personality and enthusiasm for the cause was an instant hit and he soon became the unofficial "cheerleader" for the famous London Games Makers.

"I was lucky enough to be involved in a small way in the recruitment and training of the Games Makers," Izzard says, playing down his role in his customary style. "And I'm thrilled to see that the awareness of and enthusiasm for volunteering continues to grow in the UK. It was in evidence last year with the Commonwealth Games' Clyde-siders and the Tour Makers during the Tour de France Grand Départ.

"But the big, high-profile events are just touching the surface. Seven out of 10 grassroots sports clubs still need more volunteers. Given that each volunteer creates the capacity for at least 8.5 more participants in sport (yes, eight and a half people!), it's vital that we keep the volunteering spirit alive."

Izzard says his passion for – and understanding the importance of – volunteering was strengthened during his record-breaking marathon efforts.

"When I was running around the UK, in my haphazard fashion, I saw the spirit of volunteering every day. From the outside, running looks like an individual sport but you could not survive without the team you're a part of.

"Your team are the people who sort you out mentally and physically at the end of every marathon and the start of every day. They share the highs and lows with you. It wasn't just the experienced advisers, coach, sports therapist and tour manager who were part of this team either, it

 © Cybertrek 2015

Izzard had a high profile role in recruiting London 2012 Games Makers – work that continues with Join In

was also the people of Britain, and the volunteers who took time out to support me. People I'd never met before."

HELPING OUT

Izzard takes his Join In responsibilities very seriously and regularly appears on TV and other media promoting the push for more volunteers. The latest campaign he's lending his time – and considerable help – to launched earlier this year.

The #BigHelpOut, organised in partnership with the BBC's Get Inspired programme and paralympic champion Dame Tanni Grey-Thompson, aims to find 10,000 new helpers for sport in the lead up to December's BBC Sports Personality of the Year gala.

For Izzard, the challenge is not just to educate people about the joys of volunteering, but to give them the information they need to get involved helping out in the first place.

"I think there are many people out there who don't actually realise how much sport relies on volunteers. Good people who, if we can engage them, would be more than happy to do their bit. There are also people sitting on their couches, wanting to help but not knowing where to start – as they don't have any contact with sports clubs.

"People volunteer because they want to help and when they do they usually find they enjoy it. You don't have to be good at sport to become a volunteer – which comes as a revelation to some people. Therefore, it's important to make sure more people know that their help is needed – and that taking part is something they'll enjoy."

Details: www.joininuk.org

"I first got into cycling because of my injury – but quickly became interested in the business side of it"

Matt Prior, former England cricketer and founder of ONE Pro Cycling

"No athlete wants to retire due to injury," says Matt Prior, England's Ashes-winning wicketkeeper who was forced to do just that in June 2015. "But the decision was taken out of my hands. My body simply could no longer deal with the strain of playing international cricket."

Prior's early retirement was brought on by a persistent achilles injury when he was still at the top of his game. A vital cog in a machine described as one of the greatest ever England cricket teams, the three-time Ashes winner packed his gloves away for the last time after playing 79 Tests and scoring more than 4,000 runs at an average of 40.19.

"I can look back at my career with a huge amount of pride. I played for my country and did so in an era in which English cricket was very successful. I gave my everything for England and, ultimately, that's why I got injured."

Prior was forced to retire earlier this year, but has wasted no time in finding another way to compete at the very top

OUT OF THE PAN AND...

Aged just 33, Prior decided that he wasn't, however, done with elite sport. Rather than follow former colleagues Michael Vaughan, Andrew Strauss and Graeme Swann into the relative safety of cricket punditry, he committed his future to professional cycling. This time, though, he won't be performing heroics 'on the pitch'.

Prior is the co-founder and chief executive of ONE Pro Cycling, a professional team with the bold aim of reaching the World Tour, cycling's highest level. This will mean taking on the likes of Team Sky, Astana and Movistar at Tour de France, La Vuelta and Giro d'Italia.

But how does one go from being an England wicketkeeper to a cycling team owner? Ironically, it might have never happened if it wasn't for the niggling injury which eventually ended his career.

"I got into cycling purely because of the injury to my achilles," Prior says. "Cycling was very helpful for my rehab and it quickly became a passion. So much so that I began to follow cycling and took an interest in it as a sport – rather than just a form of exercise – and eventually got interested in the business side of it too.

"It's funny how, if you play one sport professionally and show interest in another, the word gets round and people start inviting you to events. In my case, it meant I became involved in the cycling world and made some contacts within it."

It was one of those contacts, made while recovering from injury, that would result in setting up ONE Pro.

"When I was forced to pull out of cricket and found some time on my hands, Becky Frewing, who'd previously been involved with British cycling teams, mentioned starting up a new team. At first I didn't take it seriously but after looking into it in detail I could see an enormous opportunity not just to create a UK cycling team, but to create a brand and a company. Following the initial chats with Becky, I then met up with entrepreneur Simon Chappell and he too could see the opportunity. We put our heads together and ONE Pro Cycling was born."

ESTEEMED MEMBERSHIPS

Prior says Chappell, the founder of Leeds-based Backup Technology, has been instrumental in the setting up of ONE Pro. A self-made millionaire, Chappell is now chair of the team and – alongside Prior, Frewing (general manager) and Rob Over (commercial operations manager) – plays a major role in running the team's day-to-day operations. Led by Prior, the quartet has come up with an innovative concept to ensure the economic sustainability of ONE Pro. While most professional cycling teams rely on high-profile, high value sponsorship and naming deals, ONE Pro is looking to create a stable brand – meaning that the team name isn't for sale.

"We've gone about things slightly differently when it comes to our funding model," Prior says. "It started off with an initial fee investment, which we've used to create the brand and hire the team.

"We've been able to get partners and sponsors involved, but we don't want or plan to sell title sponsorship – we want to be called ONE Pro Cycling just like a sports team. We want the name to keep the same and for people to build up allegiance and loyalty to the "club" – just like football or cricket fans would. Hopefully in years to come, a little

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The aim for ONE Pro is to challenge at the major cycling Tours (above). Prior in his cricket playing days (right)

10-year-old will follow ONE Pro Cycling because his dad follows us too."

To promote the sense of ONE Pro being a club, it will offer a wide range of membership packages – so fans will literally be part of it. Benefits depend on the level of membership and include everything from branded merchandise to organised cycling sessions with ONE Pro's professional riders and coaches.

"Another thing we're creating is ONE Pro Cycling House. We already tried out the concept during the final stage of this year's Tour of Britain. We set it up in Piccadilly, London, as a space where all cycling fans could come and have a drink and some food and mix together, while they watched the riders go past."

GOING THE DISTANCE

Listening to Prior describe the new venture in such passionate and detailed terms makes it clear that he is no "ambassador" – merely a famous face recruited to add visibility and credibility to a vanity project. Prior is fully committed to the success of ONE Pro and says reaching the goals set for ONE Pro – to challenge at a Tour de France one day – would rate up there with any of his cricketing achievements. This he puts down to his personality.

"I'm hugely competitive, anything I put my name to I want to do properly," he says. "You can't turn that off. I guess it's a bit of an "all-or-nothing" approach: whatever I end up doing will always be 100 per cent."

Details: www.oneprocycling.com

"Our ambition is to be the number one global sports financing platform"

Gianluca Vialli, ex-Italy and Chelsea FC footballer and co-founder, Tifosy

You're involved in a new venture called Tifosy, what is it?
Tifosy is a crowdfunding platform exclusively designed to help football clubs raise funds online for specific projects. We call it "fanfunding" as it leverages a club's global fanbases. Our mission is to enable everyone to invest in football in a fair and transparent way.

Fans are the backbone of football and we want to give them the opportunity to support their club financially. Clubs have thousands and sometimes millions of passionate and loyal fans, who would love to be able to do their bit to help their club progress and make a real impact. We believe that football clubs who are willing to listen to their fans can realise amazing things.

Why Tifosy?
I've been involved with football for many years. Now I'm 51 years old, I've got to a point where I feel it is my duty to find ways to make the sport of football better.

I first met Fausto Zanetton, the founder of Tifosy, at a talk at the London Business School and we struck up a friendship based on our mutual love of Italian football and interest in making the game better. When Fausto asked me to get involved with Tifosy, I was very willing to say yes, because I think this is a great cause and creates a win-win scenario.

Tifosy can help football – and football clubs – in two ways. Firstly, to make them financially sustainable and able to compete better on and off the field. Secondly, to strengthen the important relationship between clubs and fans. We don't want fans to feel they're simply clients, we want them to feel they have a relationship with their club – that they're partners.

Connecting fans with their club – does that mean the target market is limited?
Actually one of the things that has surprised us with the campaigns so far is how wide the message has spread and how many contributions have come from unlikely places. We launched a campaign for Portsmouth FC for which contributions came from 39 countries.

Of course, the majority always comes from the core of passionate club fans, but football fans care deeply about the game and will often choose to help out a club in need. Our most recent campaign is for the new club Parma Calcio 1913 which was forced to leave the top flight Serie A and accept a demotion to Serie D – the fourth level of Italian football.

It has already attracted support from more than 40 countries. It just shows how strong ties are in the global football family and how fans can be a force for good.

What are your goals for Tifosy?
Our ambition is to be the number one global sports financing platform and we plan to get there in several stages.

Right now our focus is 100 per cent football and so far we've done rewards-based campaigns, where fans give cash in exchange for merchandise or experiences.

The next step will be offering financial products, such as equity and debt, to fund bigger projects and give fans and investors ownership and a return on investment.

Over time we plan to expand beyond our current European focus, and eventually move into other sports.

Of course we've set expectations for growth, but it's important to stress we're focused on quality, not just numbers; we believe in managed campaigns and delivering success, so we look for worthwhile projects of meaningful size for clubs with an honest, open, sustainable approach to development.

Vialli with then Portsmouth FC manager Andy Awford – a successful Tifosy campaign last year raised £270,000, which funded two Academy training pitches at Portsmouth

Details: www.tifosy.com

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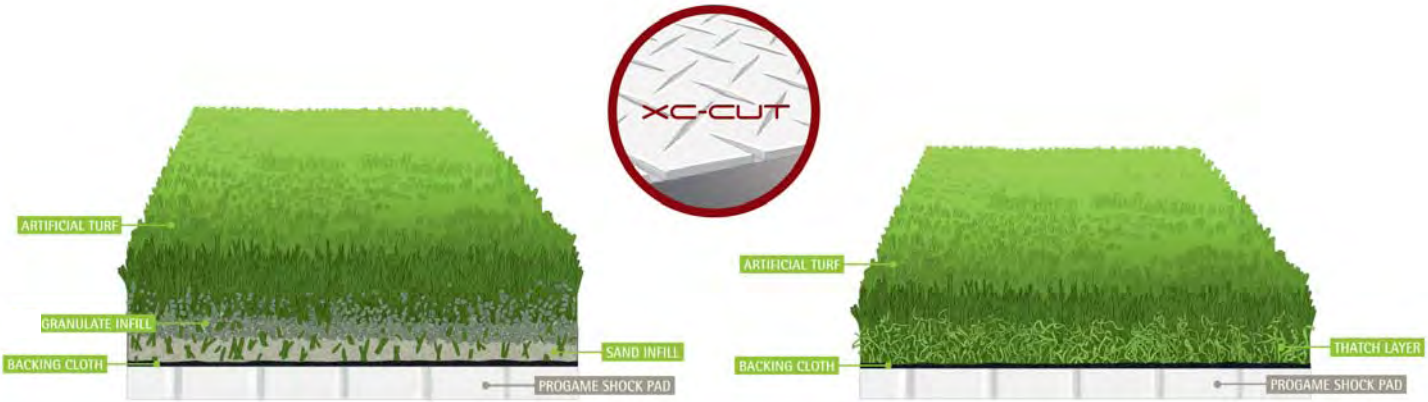

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A game changer – the new FIFA regulations

As readers of *Sports Management* will know, football's world governing body FIFA has issued a major update of its FIFA Quality Programme for Football Turf. These are the requirements which regulate the use of artificial turf in football at all levels of the game.

The updated manuals contain new tests and new requirements all aimed at enhancing the performance and durability of artificial turf used for the game.

What readers should particularly note is a significant big-ticket item – a new accelerated wear machine – which is used to condition the samples being tested by ageing them significantly.

This is a game changer for FIFA Licencees who manufacture these type of products, in effect meaning that all the previous registered 'systems' that FIFA has recorded (reported to be 1,600) will now need to be at least in part re-examined within a year – the grace period given by FIFA to update any turf system which may require field-testing.

There are many changes contained within the new manual – new tests added to the requirements, including samples being tested for the first time for infill splash and the heating properties of the turf system. Those involved in the artificial turf industry should make an urgent point of familiarising themselves with these new requirements.

Eric O'Donnell, managing director, Sports Labs

MIKKEL BIGANDT/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

The new regulations affect artificial pitches at all levels – from grassroots to elite sport

Minister must make good on her promises to sport

Sports minister Tracey Crouch

At goalball UK, we oversee a small but thriving disability sport for the visually impaired. We're expanding rapidly and a fleet of volunteers keep clubs running and tournaments organised.

Our GB teams have achieved success and are aiming for Tokyo 2020.

More importantly, our players benefit from a community which gives them the skills and confidence to thrive. Young players are 47 per cent more likely than the rest of their visually impaired peers to be in full-time employment or education, so for many, goalball has meant the difference between a career and a life reliant on benefits.

I read with interest that minister for sport, Tracey Crouch, reiterated her promise not to measure the success of sports on participation and medals alone. Her view that the government's new sports strategy will look at the overall value of sport, including improving health and educational outcomes, is the right one.

The minister's speech about this could have been written about goalball and if we're to reach more than the 1 per cent of visually impaired people who currently have access to the sport, it's crucial the new strategy reflects the realities of modern disability sport and that her promises become a reality.

Mike Reilly, CEO, Goalball UK

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Strategy hails new era for English sport

Sports minister Tracey Crouch has stayed true to her pledge to "rip up" England's existing sports strategy and replace it with a new, comprehensive one that "involves all in society"

In revealing the new *Sporting Future - A New Strategy for an Active Nation* on 17 December, Crouch said she would make no apologies for its scale and scope, nor its ambition for the delivery of sport and physical activity.

The strategy radically overhauls the way sport is funded in England and is based on three key areas – harnessing the potential of sport for social good, ensuring success at elite level and improving sports governance. There are plenty of changes which echo the government's earlier calls of public funding being "a privilege not a right" and its intention to see a better return on investment for grants made to groups and organisations.

Public investment will be increasingly earmarked for initiatives which encourage physical activity among the inactive, as well as projects that help young people gain skills that aid employment and tackle social exclusion and mental health problems.

Crouch said that the new strategy would ensure sports continued to make "a significant contribution to the economy too", adding the economic contribution from sport is now £39bn a year.

With the wide-ranging new strategy, the government has made sport and physical activity a key policy issue.

Minister of sport Tracey Couch

> "Physical activity adds £39bn to the UK economy each year and half of this comes from individuals' involvement in grassroots sport"

We have picked 10 strategy highlights

1. Sport will play an increased role in preventative healthcare. The Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and the Department of Health (DH) will work together with the NHS and other organisations to promote sport and physical activity into care pathways.

2. Sport England's role will be transformed and it'll set aside specific funding to tackle physical inactivity. The grassroots body has a new brief to invest in physical activity for those aged five to 18, as opposed to its previous obligation of improving participation among those aged 14+.

It will also broaden the scope of those it funds. Geographic areas identified as "physically inactive" will be able to bid for Sport England resources to develop and implement physical activity strategies – with exact plans to be announced in 2016.

3. Sport England's Active People Survey will be scrapped and replaced by Active Lives as the primary source of measuring participation. Rather than just sports, Active Lives will also record activities such as cycling, dancing and walking in order to eradicate the "unhelpful, outdated and irrelevant" distinction between sport and broader physical activity.

As a result, sport funding will be transformed so it's no longer merely about how many people take part, but also how sport can have a meaningful and measurable impact on improving lives.

4. There is a pledge to ensure no child leaves school unable to meet a minimum swimming standard, including disabled children and those with special needs. For this, the government will create a working group which will report a detailed plan in 2016. It is hoped the initiative will, in the long-term, also help stem the sharp decline in the number of people swimming regularly in England.

5. Performance sport agency UK Sport and Sport England are to increase the level of cooperation. The two will devise and commit to a memorandum of understanding on working together on talent and objective metrics by the end of 2016. They will set targets for organisations to reduce the percentage of income they receive from a single public sector source.

The pair will also implement efficiencies outlined by this year's triennial review.

6. The strategy looks to help train and better support those who work in sport.

Sport England, together with CIMSPA, will develop a workforce strategy in 2016 with a clear skills framework for the sport and physical activity sector. Sport England will also undertake a benchmarking initiative in the form of a Sport Workforce People Survey which will be a KPI when analysing sector responsibility.

7. Safeguarding those who take part is also detailed, with Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson chairing a Working Group on a Duty of Care for participants in sport. The group will explore how government and

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The role of Sport England will be transformed and it will now be responsible for those aged five to 18

The strategy looks to secure the future success of Team GB and other elite national teams

sporting bodies can take a new approach to support athletes with qualified instructors and coaches, as well as ensuring they have support once their playing days are over – with opportunities to take up other roles and careers in the future. Exact terms of reference will be agreed by early 2016.

8. The success of Team GB – and other elite-level national teams – features heavily and the strategy pledges to increase exchequer funding to support Olympic and Paralympic athletes through to the 2020 Games in Tokyo – even above and beyond funding levels in the current Rio 2016 cycle.

The government also plans to improve the performance of non-Olympic elite sports teams by facilitating discussions between home nation football, cricket and rugby governing bodies, plus those involved in the success of the previous two Olympic and Paralympic Games.

9. A Sports Business Council will be established in a bid to stimulate further growth and potentially shape policy in the sports sector. The council will work with sporting bodies and firms to help them create business plans, gain access to finance and develop skills.

Membership to the council will be drawn from public and private sector companies working within sport.

10. A new sports governance code will be drawn up, to which Sport England, alongside UK Sport and other Home Nations Sports Councils, will have to adhere by September 2017. If bodies wish to continue to receive public funding they must sign up to the code. ●

THE REACTION

Jennie Price, Sport England chief executive

"Today is a really important milestone for grassroots sport in England. We welcome the increased focus on using sport for social good, and are very much looking forward to developing more programmes and campaigns that tackle the issues that stop so many people being active.

"Our priority now is to work with a range of partners to develop our plans to put this strategy into practice. I'm committed to improving the way people experience sport."

Liz Nicholl, UK Sport chief executive

"We're delighted that the strategy recognises the excellence of the high performance system and we accept the responsibility to find ways to widen the reach of our 'what it takes to win' approach –and share the expertise that exists within Olympic sports, while not diluting our focus on medal success.

"The new governance code is very timely. There has never before been a more important time to ensure the integrity of sport."

Sport, education and the 4th space

Mike Hall from FaulknerBrowns Architects shares his thoughts on the important relationship between sport, education and community

The huge increase in student numbers over the last 15 years, coupled with the introduction of tuition fees, has driven significant investment in our university facilities.

While much of this has been focused around academic infrastructure, non-academic facilities, such as those for sport, have also benefitted from investment.

Competition on the pitch is being matched by competition off it to attract the best students from home and overseas.

With this in mind, what are the key differentiators for estates directors to consider when planning new facilities?

The traditional benchmark for the quality of a university's sport offering is the performance of the institution's teams in BUCS-officiated competitions (British Universities and College Sport) and a high ranking in the all-important league tables.

Ultimately, the key to achieving that is an emphasis on high quality amenities focused around the needs of teams, individual athletes and their training regimes.

As general awareness of health and wellbeing in student life increases, however, it's becoming clear that recreational sport is now of equal importance, especially with the increasing availability of high quality gym facilities in the private sector.

FORGING CONNECTIONS

This balance between performance and recreation is coming under increasing scrutiny, with a focus on how they can work together to maximise enrolment.

At the same time, universities are using sport to forge closer connections between 'town and gown', by working with the towns and cities in which they are based.

The '4th space' could be a piece of public realm, a social space or a wider concept where the power of sport is harnessed through facility design to deliver social objectives

The Den Haag Sport Campus, Holland – an inclusive centre for sport, education and movement

Operationally this can be good business practice. Sharing the capital and running costs of swimming pools, for example, can create a win-win situation for both parties.

Ultimately, however, it's the overall student experience which is the key factor.

I recently delivered a paper at the IAKS conference (International Association for Sports and Leisure Facilities) in Cologne, entitled 'the 4th space'. This explored the added value that good design can bring to a project when the tryptic of performance, recreation and community are carefully crafted together with a conceptual '4th space', to deliver something special.

This included a recent example – Den Haag Sport Campus in The Netherlands – where an enlightened client saw the synergies between education and sport, and as a practice we were able to harness that to great effect in our designs.

The brief for the Campus was to create a centre for sport, education and movement. A place where both the Hague University's Academy of Sport Studies and city residents of all ages could engage in sport and education together in the same place.

The idea of the '4th space' was realised in a spiralling DNA chain concept for the movement of the different user groups through the educational and sporting environments. This concept influenced the final form of the building.

In other contexts the '4th space' could be a piece of public realm, a social space, or a wider concept where the power of sport is harnessed through facility design to deliver educational or social objectives.

In all instances, architects have an opportunity to work with educational institutions to deliver sports facilities which fully meet the needs of recreational users, elite athletes and the wider community. ●

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The redevelopment work will create three national-standard venues – including a 45,000-capacity stadium and 15,000-seat indoor sports arena

Building work begins on SIP Sports Centre in Suzhou, China

Building work has begun on a multi-functional sports complex in the Chinese city of Sizhou, west of Shanghai.

Designed by architects von Gerkan, Marg and Partners, the SIP Sports Park will include three national-standard venues – a 45,000-seat stadium, an indoor pool with 3,000 seats and a 15,000-seat indoor arena. The sports venues will be surrounded by residential quarters, a hotel and a leisure district offering community sports facilities and public spaces. In addition to the competition and training pools, the swimming hall includes a spa area, leisure pools and sports shops.

The development is being funded jointly by Sizhou City and Jiangsu Regional authorities and when complete, will form part of the larger Suzhou Industrial Park (SIP). Due to open in 2017, the complex has been designed to fit into its surroundings in a city renowned for its natural beauty.

A spokesperson for architects von Gerkan, Marg and Partners said: "Suzhou is famous in China for its landscape design, and the masterplan for this new sports park is based on this tradition.

"In a modern interpretation of the city's traditional gardens, an informally designed park landscape flows around the podiums that rise in straight lines from the surrounding streets and support the stadiums.

"All three stadiums have undulating roofs that make the ensemble into a landmark visible from afar.

"The curved roofs will give the impression of unified pavilions, marking the high points in this landscape.

"As visitors walk along the curved pathways, various vistas open up to water features, pavilion architecture, and the landscape."

Ground works have been completed and the project will open in 2017

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=g7u6e_P

The stadium will feature an artificial pitch – hidden under a retractable grass field – allowing Spurs to host two NFL games each season

Tottenham appoints MACE to build new £400m stadium – reveals detailed designs

Tottenham Hotspur Football Club (THFC) has turned to Mace to create the pre-construction plans for the £400m re-building of its White Hart Lane stadium in north London. Mace has been tasked with developing detailed programmes and working with the Premier League club to produce specialist sub-contractor tenders before work begins.

Building work on the development is expected to be completed by 2018.

THFC plans to demolish White Hart Lane and build a new 61,000 flexible stadium – set to become the largest club stadium in London. The project will include four asymmetrical stands, a stadium wrapped in a sculptured mesh and a glass facade to the new home end. There will also be special design features to allow Spurs to host two National Football League (NFL) games each season under a 10-year partnership signed with the NFL in July.

A retractable grass field, used by Spurs for its home games, will hide underneath it an artificial surface – which will be used to host the NFL games. The artificial playing surface will also be capable of hosting other sporting, entertainment and community events. Plans also show that the stadium will have three tunnels, one for football and one each for the NFL home and away sides.

The stadium will be built on the site of Tottenham's current home, White Hart Lane

The asymmetrical stands will allow supporters to be closer to the pitch than at any other comparably sized stadium, while the home 'kop' stand will be the largest in the country, holding 17,000 fans. Spurs are also planning to establish an entertainment district around the stadium, with plans in place for a 180-room hotel, an extreme sports centre, a "Sky Walk" adrenaline attraction on the roof of the stadium and a "Tottenham Experience" – a permanent visitor attraction and museum charting the club's history.

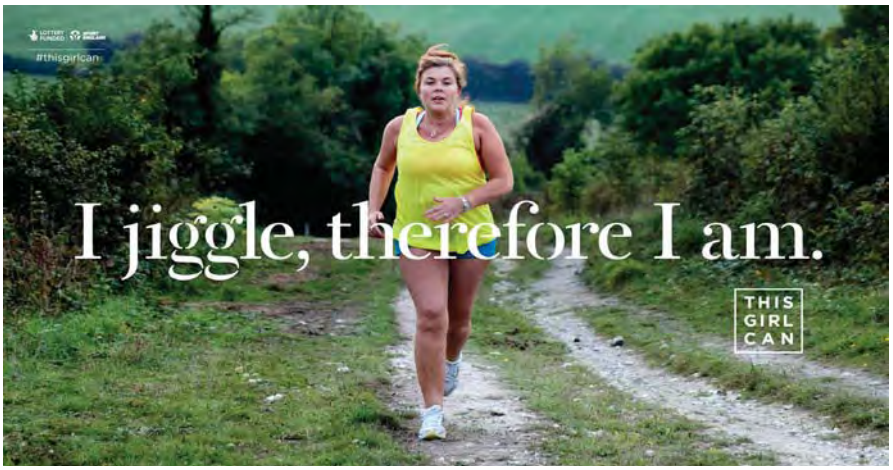
There will also be 579 new homes, a new community health centre and improved street infrastructure to better deal with crowd management issues.

Sports architects Populous have been appointed to design the stadium, the hotel and the visitor attractions, while Allies & Morrison will be responsible for the design of the new homes. Donald Insall Associates have been named as heritage architects. When complete, the stadium capacity will surpass that of Spurs' fierce north London rival Arsenal FC, which plays at the 60,4432-capacity Emirates Stadium.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=F4v2a_P

NEWS UPDATE

Sport England to use behavioural theory and success of "*This Girl Can*" in its future campaigns



This Girl Can contributed to an increase of 148,700 in the number of women playing sport each week

Sport England is gearing up to launch programmes based on behavioural change theory in a bid to boost participation.

The governing body for grassroots sport will implement its strategy, based on the Cabinet Office's EAST model, after data from its *Active People Survey* and supplementary research revealed that behavioural change was a constant journey, and that people rarely fell into categories of 'active' and 'inactive'.

The EAST framework, devised last April, was designed to encourage a behaviour by making it Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely. Sport England is in the process of developing programmes based on this theory. For example, the body is devising an initiative alongside the Amateur Swimming Association to create provisions for towels and hairdryers, making it easy for people to swim and creating little nudges for continued involvement.

CEO of Sport England, Jennie Price talked about the ongoing initiative at the Substance National Conference: A Whole New Ball Game?, in a speech that warned against arbitrary measurements of people's activity. She used Prochaska and Di Clemente's *Transtheoretical Model of Behaviour Change* to illustrate the public's attitude to sport and physical activity.

Sport England chief executive Jennie Price

The model highlights five stages – pre-contemplation, contemplation, preparation, action and maintenance – as the various states of activity the population finds itself in relation to sport. The former describes the state in which people are oblivious to taking part in physical activity or sport, while at the contemplation stage the thought of participating is starting to creep in. Preparation could be signing up to a gym or buying a bicycle, while action is actually taking part.

• The move comes as Sport England is also setting its sights on increasing participation among the disabled and individuals from poorer backgrounds following the success of its *This Girl Can* campaign – which helped spark a boost in female physical activity.

The body's *Active People Survey*, published on 10 December, revealed that the number of women playing sport and getting active once a week increased by 148,700 to 7m in the last six months.

Sport England launched its campaign at the turn of the year, and Price said that the insight and research compiled on barriers to sport for women and girls, which helped inform the strategy, could be replicated to get people from the lowest socioeconomic group and the disabled more engaged.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=y7g6C_P

In total, 2,568 projects will receive funding each year across 428 regions

Tesco to use bag charge money to improve sport

Supermarket giant Tesco has pledged to use the monies raised from the new 5p carrier bag charge to improve grassroots sports and green community spaces in the UK.

A new law which came into force on 5 October means that supermarket customers have to pay 5p for every single use carrier bag. A spokesperson said Tesco – which has more than 3,500 stores in the UK – would pass on all of the revenue to improve outdoor spaces.

"The money raised will be used to pay for local projects to improve green spaces in communities right across the UK," the spokesperson added. "Projects that will get the green light as a result of the funding will include building new pocket parks, sports facilities, woodland walks and community gardens.

Administration of the local funding will be handled by Groundwork, which specialises in transforming local green spaces for the better."

Groundwork is an environmental charity which works across the UK helping communities find practical solutions to their challenges.

Tesco is inviting local community groups and charities to apply for the funding – which will be made available annually to six projects in each of 428 "Tesco regions" (2,568 projects in total).

The amount of funding available for individual projects will range from £8,000 to £12,000. In total, the scheme will invest anywhere between £20m and £31m each year.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=r3M2G

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NEWS UPDATE

All Blacks' brand value could hit US$500m by 2023 Rugby World Cup

The All Blacks – New Zealand's national team – is the most recognised rugby team in the world

The growing popularity of rugby in the US and a string of lucrative commercial deals could boost the brand value of the All Blacks to US$500m (NZ$762m, €468m, £327m) within a decade, according to analysts. International valuation firm Brand Finance has estimated that New Zealand's victory at this year's Rugby World Cup brought its current worth up to US$169m (NZ$251m, €158m, £111m) – but predicts the figure could more than double to US$500m by the 2023 Rugby World Cup.

Bryn Anderson, head of Brand Finance's Sports Marketing unit, suggested that the valuation could be achieved if the All Blacks capitalise on the sport's growing presence, particularly in America, by staging exhibition games or competitive matches in key growth regions, akin to the NFL moving games to the UK. When the All Blacks played an exhibition match against the US Eagles in 2014 62,000 fans attended Chicago's Soldier Field to watch. It was also broadcast on NBC to a large audience.

Anderson also pointed to a string of lucrative commercial partnerships, particularly with Air New Zealand, insurer AIG and designer Bulgari, as key to the team's brand-building capability.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=w4R9s_P

Campaign to 'fix system' and get women coaching

Sports Coach UK has launched its new Reach campaign, which looks to get more women involved in sports coaching. With women currently under-represented in coaching roles, Reach will target women of all ages and backgrounds.

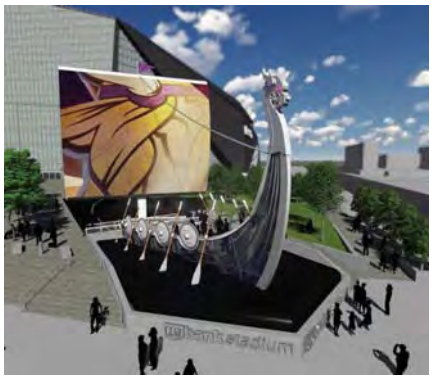
"Reach is about fixing the system and supporting more women in coaching," said Tony Byrne, CEO of sports coach UK.

"We want women from communities across the UK to know that coaching is an enjoyable and social experience while

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=T3e8h_P

Women are under-represented in coaching

Vikings set sail with ship featuring LED screen



The Legacy Ship at the Viking stadium

A 2,000sq ft (186sq m) curved LED screen will be one of the features of a giant stylised ship which is due to be built outside the home of the Minnesota Vikings. The 'Legacy Ship' will be unveiled outside the National Football League (NFL) franchise's U.S Bank Stadium in time for the 2016-17 pre-season.

As well as the giant screen, designed as the ship's sail, the structure will feature 150ft (46m) of linear displays featuring historic Viking moments.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=M3j9d_P

Paschal Donohoe, minister of sport, has launched a strategy consultation

Ireland begins work on new sports policy

Ireland is to get its first new National Sports Policy in more than 20 years. The strategy will look to provide the framework for sport for the next decade and set the agenda for the newly established Sport Ireland across participation, volunteering and high performance sport.

It will also outline the future development of the National Sports Campus and create a new facility strategy for regional and local facilities. A consultation process has now been launched, to which stakeholders in the public and private sector and the general public will be invited to respond.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=J5v3M_P

7,600-seater tennis arena planned for Kuwait

Plans for a state-of-the-art 7,600-seater tennis stadium have been revealed as part of the expansion of the US$4bn (€3.6bn, £2.7bn) 360 Mall in Kuwait.

The Sheikh Jaber Al Abdullah Sabah Tennis Complex will embed seating across two main arenas within the stadium, which will also include eight indoor and eight outdoor courts. The facility is part of plans to expand the 360 Mall, based in the town of Al Zahra, which already houses a cinema complex, 38 restaurants, cafes and sports and leisure facilities, as well as the largest collection of international designer brands in the country.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=r6E6t_P

Minnesota United will join the MLS for either the 2017 or 2018 season

Populous to design Minnesota's MLS stadium

Future US Major League Soccer (MLS) franchise Minnesota United FC has announced Populous as the lead architect for its US$120m (£80m, €114m) stadium.

Earmarked for the Snelling and I-94 site, known as Midway, between Minneapolis and St. Paul, the project wiall be due for completion in early 2018. Kansas City-based Populous will design the 20,000-capacity stadium, which becomes the latest MLS partnership for the sports architecture firm. It also designed Sporting Kansas City's Sporting Park, and is in the process of overseeing plans for Orlando City SC's 28,000 capacity stadium.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=k6K7t_P

The stadium would become the second venue (after MetLife Stadium) to host two NFL franchises

Disney chief backs joint-venture NFL stadium

The chief executive of the Walt Disney Company has given his backing to the National Football League's (NFL) Oakland Raiders and San Diego Chargers as they attempt to build a stadium in Los Angeles.

Bob Iger has been named non-executive director of Carson Holdings – named after the district of LA where the mooted arena will be built – the development company set up by the two franchises. Manica Architecture is behind the designs for the Raiders/Chargers bid. Iger's appointment was announced last week, on the day the teams' US$1.86bn (€1.68bn, £1.24bn) joint-venture was presented to NFL leaders in New York. A rival bid made by the owner of the St Louis Rams, Arsenal Football Club's majority shareholder Stan Kroenke, to relocate to the LA district of Inglewood was also proposed.

In April, Carson City Council (CCC) unanimously approved plans for the joint-venture, but the NFL owners will not vote on the issue until January 2016. NFL rules require that 75 per cent of the 32 owners must approve the move and only one bid can be accepted. According to CBS Sports, 16-20 owners had shown support of the Carson project prior to Iger's appointment.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=M9E9W_P

Arsenal FC to launch soccer schools in China

Arsenal – one the world's biggest football brands

Arsenal Football Club (AFC) has committed to opening soccer schools in at least five Chinese cities as part of a "long-term deal" to develop grassroots football in the country. The Premier League club has signed an agreement with Chinese sports and cultural development organisation iRENA to launch the schools in 2016.

Shanghai and Chongquing will be the first cities to benefit from the facilities, with an additional three unspecified locations due to receive schools.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=B8C4r_P

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NEWS UPDATE

Private sector set to help shape the future of grassroots sport

The success of Parkrun is an example of how private companies can thrive in the sector

Business secretary Sajid Javid has called on companies in the private sector to play a "massive role" in increasing participation rates in UK sport. During his speech at The Premier League and British Sport – The Economic Impact event, Javid said the changing landscape of consuming and playing sport provided an opportunity for private sector firms.

Javid told industry delegates at London's QEII Conference Centre that people wanting to participate in sport had a "wide range of options" and no longer had to join a Sunday league football team or local running club to get involved.

He highlighted the success of five-a-side football franchise Goals, which saw Sports Direct owner Mike Ashley take a 4.94 per cent stake in the business (see story below), and Parkrun as companies that offered sport without the red tape and regulation that come with events sanctioned by a governing body. "Sport is changing," Javid said.

"The kind of sport we watch is changing. The way we consume it and participate in it is changing too, and the private sector has a massive role to play in this."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=v5J8Y_P

Sports Direct takes punt on Goals Soccer Centres

Sports Direct owner Mike Ashley has widened his burgeoning leisure portfolio by taking a 4.94 per cent stake in five-a-side football pitch operator Goals Soccer Centres. Ashley's share will be worth just under £4m via a contract for difference – leading to speculation that the move could be a precursor to a larger deal. Market analysts said a takeover bid could follow, but added that the move may also be a "curtain raiser" to start talks over sponsorships with Sports Direct.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=d2q4N_P

Sports Direct founder Mike Ashley

Rio 2016 organisers cut budget by 30 per cent

Rio 2016 is expected to cost around US$3.6bn

The organising committee of the Rio 2016 Olympic Games is to make deep spending cuts in order to avoid going over its allocated US$3.6bn (£2.4bn) budget for the event. Speaking to the media, communications director Mario Andrada said the "days of lavish spending were over" and that the committee was looking to make cutbacks of up to 30 per cent.

Rio 2016's budget is privately financed but the Brazilian government is liable to meet the cost of any overspend.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=E8C6D_P

When completed, the Khalifa stadium will have a capacity of 40,000

Khalifa Stadium first Qatar venue to be ready

Construction works on the Khalifa International Stadium in Qatar are set to be completed by the end of 2016 – making it the first of the 2022 World Cup venues to open to the public. The stadium, which originally opened in 1976, is undergoing its second major redevelopment, following a restructuring in 2005, when it hosted the 2006 Asian Games.

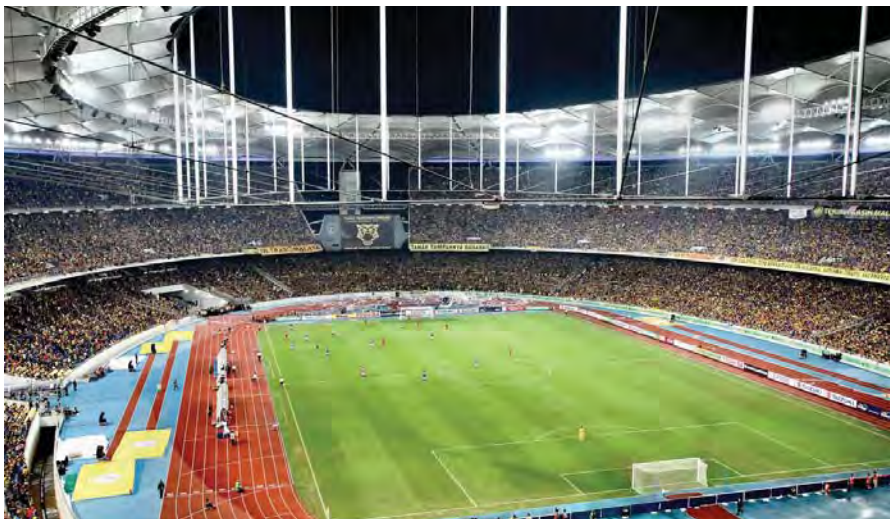
At the time, Cox Architecture and its JV partners PTW and GHD upgraded the open-air facility from 20,000 seats to a partially covered 50,000 seat venue.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=Y4B7B_P

 © Cybertrek 2015

NEWS UPDATE

Kuala Lumpur's Bukit Jalil to be reinvented as KL Sports City



The Bukit Jalil complex includes the Putra Stadium which will host the SEA Games in 2017

Malaysian Resources Corporation (MRC) has been appointed to redevelop the existing Bukit Jalil National Sports Complex – the venue for the 1998 Commonwealth Games – and transform it into a new, iconic Kuala Lumpur Sports City.

The RM1.6bn (US$375m, €344m, £243m) KL Sports City will create a vibrant sports hub capable of hosting elite sports events as well as cater to the local community and recreational users.

Designed by global design practice Populous, the first phase of the work – set to begin in January 2016 and entitled project 1 – will include the redevelopment of the 87,000-capacity Bukit Jalil National Stadium in time for it to host the 2017 Southeast Asia (SEA) Games. Project 1 will also include the upgrading of Bukit Jalil's Putra Stadium, the National Aquatic Centre and the National Hockey Stadium, as well as improving integration to the current and existing public transportation links.

The second phase, Project 2, will commence after the SEA Games in early 2018 and will add the finishing touches to KL Sports City, creating a fully-integrated sports hub, consisting of a Sports Rehabilitation Science Centre and public sports facilities.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=Q6n9N_P

Details of US$1bn Milwaukee arena revealed

US-based National Basketball Association (NBA) franchise the Milwaukee Bucks has released the first interior renderings of its proposed new home; a 17,000-seat indoor arena in the city's downtown.

The images reveal an intimate venue that places the majority of fans in the lower seating tier, close to the action, while members of the fan club have their own exclusive viewing area. The arena has been designed by a team including Populous, HNTB and Eppstein Uhen.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=G9m4a_P

A rendering of the new Milwaukee Bucks arena

Football League rebrands as EFL

The new logo represents the league's 72 clubs

The Football League has rebranded itself as the English Football League and will adopt a new corporate identity from the end of the current 2015-16 season – when the league will adopt the abbreviation EFL for everyday use.

The change is designed to create more interest in foreign markets, such as the US, where most major sports leagues use shortened names. The league has also unveiled a new logo – a football made up of 72 balls, one for each EFL club.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=f7z7f_P

The project will create the Nordic country's first indoor skiing arena

Plans approved for Norway indoor ski arena

Oslo-based property developer Selvaag has been granted planning permission to develop one of the world's largest indoor ski arenas.

Masterplanned by London architects Chapman Taylor, in collaboration with Norwegian architect Thomas Thiis-Evensen, the Winter Village scheme in Ødegården has been designed for cross country, free ski and downhill skiing, and will be the first indoor ski arena to be built in Norway. Offering year-round skiing for local people and elite athletes, the development will include 2.5km of cross-country trails built over three storeys.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=S2D6E_P

NEWS UPDATE

Work begins on 2018 Olympic village

Construction work has begun on the Pyeongchang 2018 Olympic Village in South Korea. A groundbreaking ceremony was held to mark the occasion at the site of the 42,000sq m Yongpyong Dome, located in what will become the mountain cluster for the 2018 Olympic Winter Games.

Designed as multi-functional resort to provide an athlete-oriented environment, the village will include a number of environmentally-friendly innovations and will be fully accessible – as it will also serve as the athlete's village for the Paralympics. The masterplan for the village has been designed by US-based BrentThompson

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=Z6a8Q_P

The figures suggest people living in the east of Europe are more active

Eastern EU countries leading the way in sport

The latest data on physical activity levels in the European Union seem to suggest that countries on the Eastern edge of the EU are more active than those in central Europe and the west. Country-specific overviews on physical activity – published by the European Commission in cooperation with the World Health Organization (WHO) – show that the EU's most physically active countries are Greece and Hungary, closely followed by Slovakia and Romania. According to the report, 85 per cent of people in Hungary meet the WHO recommendation of 150 minutes of moderate activity per week.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=m3Y2F_P

IOC president Thomas Bach (left) with United Nations secretary-general Ban Ki-moon

UN highlights sport's role as a tool for peace

The United Nations (UN) has officially recognised sport as a "valuable tool in the achievement of peace and development" during the 70th session of the UN General Assembly. The assembly adopted a new resolution which promotes the use of sport in promoting dialogue and reconciliation in areas of conflict.

The resolution, entitled *Building a peaceful and better world through sport and the Olympic ideal* calls for cooperation among UN member states and the International Olympic and Paralympic Committees to maximise the potential of sport in contributing to the achievement of the UN's Sustainable Development programme. Thomas Bach, president of the International Olympic Committee (IOC), said the IOC's Olympic Agenda 2020 was fully aligned with the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. Sport, he said, was the only area of human existence that had achieved universal law.

"Regardless of where in the world a sport is practiced, the same, universal rules apply", said Bach.

"That principle of non-discrimination has allowed sport to promote peace and understanding among all people."

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=5n6u9_P

WHO unveils 10-year physical activity strategy

The strategy is focused on increasing activity

The World Health Organisation has sets its sights on overcoming the growing physical inactivity epidemic by outlining a 10-year strategy to get Europeans moving more.

The focus on physical inactivity as a separate issue to obesity marks a significant sea-change in the public health narrative and follows a recent University of Cambridge report that found physical inactivity is killing twice as many Europeans as obesity.

Read more: http://lei.sr?a=3v4g9_P

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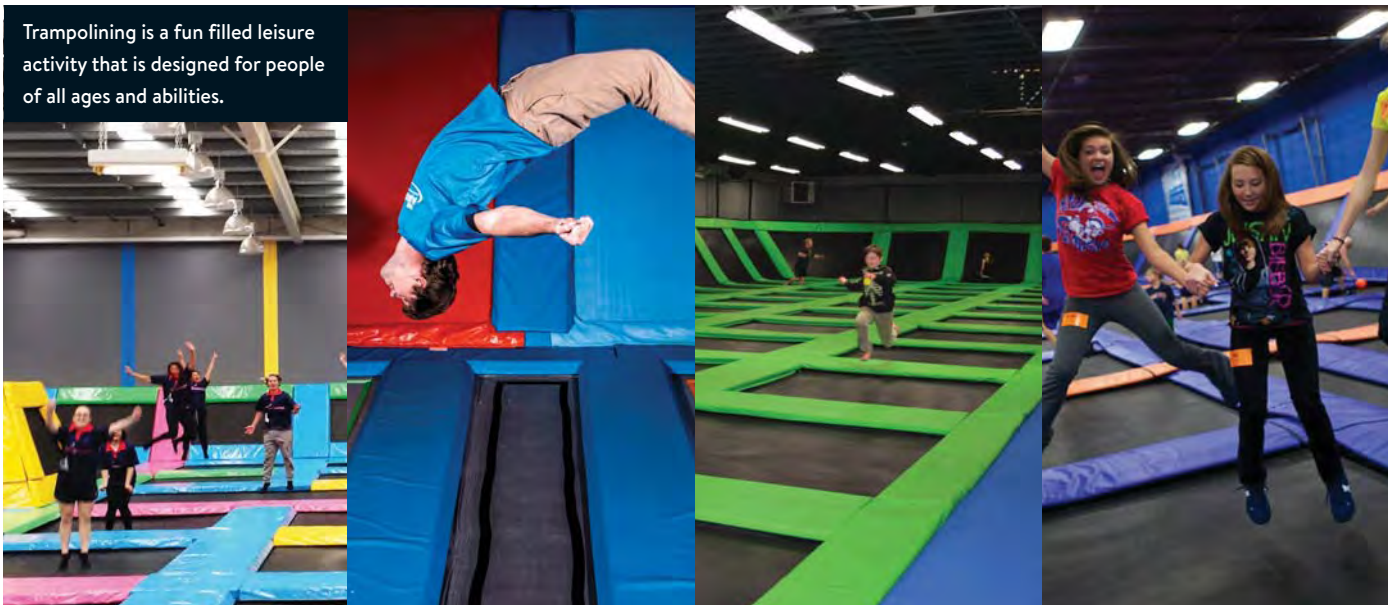


Trampolining is a fun filled leisure activity that is designed for people of all ages and abilities.

GETTING BRITAIN BOUNCING

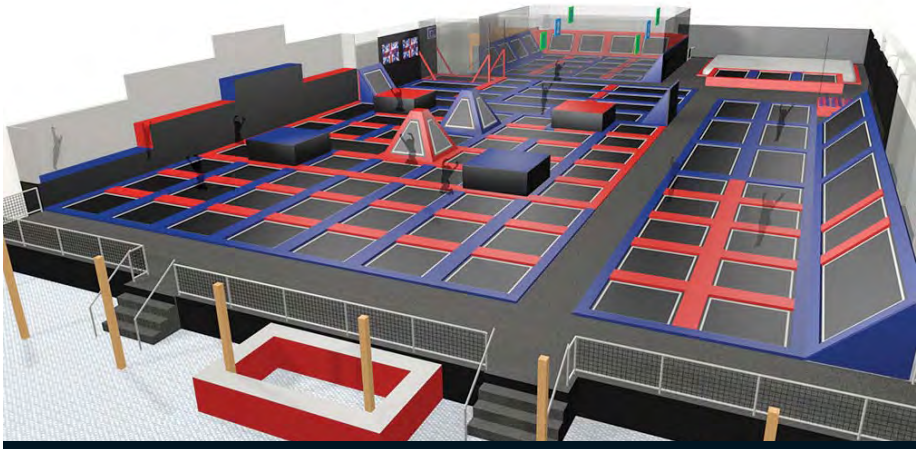
The entertainment industry's fastest growing attraction has arrived in the UK

Indoor trampoline parks have been springing up in the USA and other worldwide destinations over the last 5 years and now they have arrived in the UK.

Multi-bed indoor trampoline parks, typically housed in buildings ranging from 15000sqft to 35000sqft, combine a mixture of flat and angled interlocking beds allowing users to enjoy time with their friends bouncing around the jumping arena and participating in activities including dodgeball, slam dunk or diving into a foam pit or onto an airbag ... great fun!

The health benefits to the trampoline users are all apparent from cardiovascular fitness through to coordination, agility, muscle toning with improved health and stress relief. One hours bouncing burns more calories than running for an hour and organised fitness sessions are proving very popular.

The product has traditionally been transported in from the States but now the UK has its own manufacturer. Based in Yorkshire, Luna Trampolines, a sister company to House of Play, the world's leading soft play supplier has positioned itself to save the air miles. Shaun Wilson, Director of Luna Trampolines said "designing and manufacturing equipment for indoor trampoline parks was a natural extension to the product we have been supplying to the indoor play industry through House of Play for over 20 years and required no additional automation in the factory". The product supplied by Luna Trampolines has been developed to rival that available from the best suppliers throughout the world with safety and compliance a cornerstone. Wilson explains "we have a British manufactured product developed with reference to the available world standards and independently inspected and accredited to British Standards ... you cannot get a better product than that! And there's not a question we cannot answer along the way". Wilson continues, "the journey available to House of Play customers has been mimicked through Luna Trampolines ... we take customers from concept to completion using our in-house skills and direct operational expertise gained from having set up our own multi-visitor entertainment centre".



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Where will the industry go from here? The property agent phones have been red hot with operators trying to find suitable buildings in the race to open a facility and put their flag on the ground and claim territory ... It might be that the many existing leisure operators with readily available space grasp the opportunity and turn potentially low income generating space into an income generating hub of the community.

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PRODUCT NEWS

Arena supplied the Lee Valley Hockey Centre with 1,864 Clearview seats

Arena creates EuroHockey Championships venue

Arena Seating transformed Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre at Queen Elizabeth Park with grandstand seating, media studios and viewing access platforms for the Unibet EuroHockey Championships.

The temporary infrastructure created a venue suitable for the event – and included 1,864 Clearview seats, split between two grandstands, adding to Lee Valley stadium's existing (and permanent) seating capacity of 3,000.

sport-kit.net keyword: **Arena**

The app will provide info on available courts and pitches across 14 sports

Sports booking app launched for London

MyLocalPitch, which offers Londoners the chance to search and book sports sessions online, has expanded its services by launching a mobile app to better cater for people wanting to book facilities "on-the-go".

Applying the location of users, the app will be able to provide information on available pitches and courts across 14 different sports – including football, tennis, netball, basketball and squash.

sport-kit.net keyword: **MyLocalPitch**

The system allows the immediate and accurate marking of outdoor sportsfields in one go

"Pinpoint accuracy" using GPS-based linemarking

Vitax is launching a linemarking machine which uses the Global Positioning System (GPS) to give 'pinpoint accuracy' to the job of laying out a pitch.

The Supaturf Swozi system works with a GPS receptor positioned on the pitch, which 'talks' to the onboard computer via Bluetooth. This triangulates Swozi's position with help from its own GPS unit, directing the linemarking machine to the appropriate line selected.

The machine carries an onboard computer that can be uploaded with software for marking out whichever sports are required. Deviation from the marking map by even a few millimetres triggers the head to adjust to maintain an accurate line.

sport-kit.net keyword: **Vitax**

Premier League's surprise package chooses Dennis

A mower in action at the King Power stadium

Grounds keepers at high-flying Leicester CIty FC have opted for Dennis turf maintenance machines to keep the pitch in top condition for Claudio Ranieri's men – who at the time of writing are defying odds at the top of the English Premier League table.

Seven of the Dennis turf mowers now maintain the club's pitches. Four are based at the club's training ground for the first team pitches and three at the King Power stadium to prepare the pitch for match day.

sport-kit.net keyword: **Dennis**

New shock pad system for sports surfaces

Conica has developed a new shock pad system with independent pre-approval for surfacing contractors. Approved by the Swiss testing house IST Consulting, the new shock pad system consists of Conica SBR rubber granulate and Conica PU binder.

Mark Keal, Conica's technical director, said: "As a company it is highly important that we give sports surfacing contractors a tried and tested system."

sport-kit.net keyword: **Conica**

The system is designed to prolong the pitch's life

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For hundreds of thousands of refugees starting a new life in Europe, football is the only language they share with their new neighbours

Football to the rescue

Tom Walker looks at how football is helping European nations deal with one of the largest global humanitarian crises in history

As hundreds of thousands of refugees continue to arrive in Europe from war torn countries, football – the most global of all sports – is doing its part in making the new arrivals feel welcome and safe. By offering free tickets to topflight games, donating match receipts to charity and setting up new teams and leagues for the displaced, clubs and organisations are using the beautiful game and its universal language to break down barriers and help integrate the new arrivals.

TICKETS PLEASE

One of Europe's leading clubs, German champion FC Bayern München, opened its doors by providing a training camp for young refugees. The camp will offer meals, football sessions and German language classes to help deal with the emotional traumas the children have suffered during their long journeys to safety. In addition, Bayern has also pledged to donate €1m towards projects to help those involved in the crisis.

Karl-Heinz Rummenigge, chair of Bayern, said: "We see it as our social responsibility to help the refugees, needy children, women and men; to help them and to accompany them in Germany."

Other German clubs to set up initiatives to welcome refugees include Borussia Dortmund – which invited 220 refugees to watch their game against Norwegian side Odd in the Europa League in August – and Mainz 05, which gave out 200 free tickets to their home match against Hannover.

Football is helping kids deal with emotional traumas suffered during their journeys

TEAMS ARE BEING SET UP AND GAMES ARRANGED AGAINST LOCAL TEAMS TO FORM FRIENDSHIPS

Elsewhere, clubs taking part in this season's Champions League and Europa League pledged to donate €1 from every ticket they sell to refugee charities – raising more than €2.8m (£2m) in the process.

The campaign, called 90 Minutes for Hope, is based on an initial idea from Portuguese side Porto and backed by the European Club Association (ECA), the independent body which represents elite clubs at European level.

In a statement, the ECA said: "We cannot close our eyes to the dramatic scenes currently taking place throughout Europe. We, the European clubs, understand that our work goes well beyond what we achieve on the pitch and are naturally committed to engaging in social causes."

Other clubs to have set up their own funding initiatives to help refugees include Spain's Real Madrid and France's Paris St. Germain – both of which have made sizeable donations to help charities working with refugee children. Meanwhile, Italian Serie A club AS Roma, pledged €575,000 (£411,000, US$620,000) to its Football Cares campaign.

NEW SET OF CLUBS

All across Europe, clubs are being launched for refugees and games arranged against local teams to promote integration and to form friendships. One of these is Wacker Refugee Club, a team set up exclusively for refugees by German club FC Wacker Munchen. The aim is to give young boys aged between 12 and 18 the opportunity to kick-start a normal life.

Europe isn't alone with its football-related aid missions either. Football Federation Australia (FFA) launched its own Football Cares initiative, designed to help integrate 12,000 Syrian refugees into communities in the country. "Football is the only sport which is universally loved and understood by people everywhere," FFA chief executive David Gallop said. ●

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SEBASTIEN FOUCAN

The founder of freerunning talks to Kate Cracknell about sport without boundaries, the vital need for everyone to move and his new Oxygen Freejumping venture.

James Bond fans will recognise renowned freerunner Sébastien Foucan as the baddie Mollaka from the opening scenes of the 2006 film Casino Royale. Madonna fans might have spotted him defying gravity in the video for her 2005 single Jump; he then toured the world with her on her Confessions tour.

In spite of these impressive CV entries, Foucan remains remarkably down to earth – much more interested in exploring the potential of his art form and passing his passion on to others than he is in superstardom or marking his territory.

"I'm a pioneer, but I don't try to own anything," Foucan explains. "Jumping, running, climbing, swinging… it was all here long before I was born. People will take freerunning and do it their own way, and I'm OK with that. But for me, what I do is a lifestyle – something I do every single day – and it's a constant work in progress. I think that's what happens when you create something new."

He continues: "I moved away from parkour, which I originally founded with my friends in Paris, when I started to feel limitations being imposed on my practice. People had started to say 'It has to be like this, you shouldn't do this, you can't use this, you can't do that', and I found it very restrictive. I'm very into martial arts and philosophy, so I've always been driven by creativity and by being open.

"Personally, I have absolutely no boundaries. Activities are activities. We give names to sports – tennis, for example – but if you put a racket in a kid's hand and they don't know the right technique, they'll just move in whatever way feels natural to them and they'll have fun. That's what I focus on. Activity any time, anywhere – just move your body and have fun. My style therefore began to evolve

Foucan famously starred in the opening scene of James Bond film Casino Royale

 © Cybertrek 2015

Born in Paris, Foucan is credited as being the founder of freerunning and one of the early developers of Parkour

> I deeply believe we can live to 140 years old, but not if you get trapped in the cycle of competitive sport – the cycle of injury and recovery, of winning and losing

into what I eventually named freerunning, which is about expressing yourself in your environment without limitation. If I had to explain the difference between parkour and freerunning, parkour is efficiency – it's getting past obstacles to get from A to B – whereas freerunning is more about flips and tricks and creativity. "But actually the difference is more than that. It's a shift from physicality to musicality."

The Foucan philosophy

The longer you listen to Foucan, the clearer it is that freerunning for him is as much a philosophy of movement as it is a physical act of bouncing off walls and jumping between obstacles.

"For me it's a connection, not just with nature but with the universe. It's being in tune with your body and your surroundings," he says. "The aim of freerunning has nothing to do with being able to jump high. The aim of it is wellbeing, which for me is everything you do that doesn't damage yourself. It's important not to go against your internal music."

He continues: "In freerunning, we don't have a season like a traditional sport might have: there are no competitions, no league tables, no trophies. Instead we follow nature. We adapt to our circadian rhythms, understanding our bodies and creating lifestyles based around natural rhythms.

"In my calendar we have spring awakening, expressive summer, smooth autumn and winter sanctuary. Winter is meant to be more relaxing. Autumn can be things like ice skating – swinging, gliding, less impact on your joints so you can recover. In the spring you start to get more dynamic. That's my concept.

"People come in and want to do the jumps straight away, but as a coach I try to share my bigger concept with them. They need to go through the whole year's journey to progress with freerunning, as well as progressing in their own mindset towards a stage where they can just let their body and mind go.

"The connection between your mind and body is really important. I call it 'horse-mindship'. The horse is your body, and the mind is obviously the mental side of things – and often in freerunning there's a disconnect between the two. You see it a lot when someone's getting ready to do a jump. It's that fight inside: 'I want to do this jump, but I can't do it'.

"Even me, when I was doing James Bond – I was scared. I only had one tiny wire supporting me and my mind couldn't accept that was enough. But you focus and you learn to believe you can do it. That's where I think freerunning has been influenced by martial arts – in that sense of inner focus and concentration and self-belief. In my approach to teaching, if it doesn't happen today, that's OK – you just keep coming back to it and sooner or later your mind and body will just let go. I believe I have the tools to help someone overcome their fears, whatever those fears might be.

"I see a clear difference between traditional sports and lifestyle activities, and that's shaped everything I do. I want my practice to become very educational, with less of what I call lying. You might get an injury playing a sport, but people lie to themselves and to their bodies – they push themselves when they really shouldn't, just to win a trophy.

"In my practice – in my lifestyle – there's no such a thing. If I were in pain, I'd stop. You need to work in harmony with your body. I deeply believe we can live to 140 years old, but not if you get trapped in the cycle of competitive sport: the cycle of injury, recovery, injury, recovery, winning, losing, winning, losing. That destroys your body, as well as your internal armoury.

"That's my philosophy, and that's what I want to bring into my academy. I'd like an area like a martial arts dojo with my philosophy up on the wall. It isn't quite like that yet, but it's what I'm working towards."

Spreading the word

He'll have plenty of opportunity to evolve his academy concept, having joined up

Foucan has made the Oxygen club in West Acton his base and says sport should be all about fun, play and freedom – especially for children

with Oxygen Freejumping founders David Stalker and Fred Turok to launch a Foucan Freerunning Academy in every Oxygen trampoline park. The first Oxygen Freejumping site opened in West Acton, London, this summer, with plans to open another six over the next 12 months.

A further 15 are already in the planning pipeline. "I'm really excited about it, because they just get it. David [Stalker] shares my vision and my passion for activity," enthuses Foucan, who has now made Oxygen West Acton his indoor base.

But does it not matter that the activity takes place indoors at these venues – isn't the whole point of freerunning that it takes place outside? "No, no. Freerunning is everywhere: outside, inside, absolutely everywhere. The world is the playground.

"I could work with anyone, anywhere, as long as they have the vision. It's important to design the room with freerunning in mind though, so participants of all levels can find a creative route through it. At Oxygen, I'm inside for safety purposes and for convenience – especially with children, because I have to be responsible for them. But in my daydreams, I'd have somewhere with a little tunnel where the kids could crawl back and forth between an indoor and an outdoor area. They'd love that."

The main challenge will be how to spread himself across numerous locations. "I'll have to teach the coaches myself, and in fact some of the adults who I've been teaching for a while now have put themselves forward.

"But I have to deliver the quality. I have to define the standards of the Sébastien way, and I've thought a lot about it. I now have a clear idea of what I want, how it's supposed to be, what I don't want to see. So it's coming. We may make a few mistakes along the way, but I'm not afraid of the challenge. I want my legacy to be creating the place I would have loved to have had when I was a kid. A place that will make the word spread like wildfire."

Foucan's new venture with Oxygen Freejumping will see his Freerunning Academy concept spread across the UK

Calling all visionaries

Given the way Foucan embraces freerunning as a lifestyle, does he ever just walk normally down the street?

"I do walk normally, but inside my head it's constant. You look around and you see things differently. It affects you in your lifestyle forever, because you notice when people are putting up boundaries. You notice parents saying to their kids: 'Don't do this, don't climb, don't jump… don't, don't, don't.' Society does that too. I run a class at Latimer Road in London, and every sign there says no freerunning, no skateboarding – and the worst sign I've ever seen: 'No jumping of any kind.'

"That's awful, because there's a huge call for what we do, not only from kids but from adults too – and that's because people want freedom. They want escapism. They want an activity that's fun and social and that isn't going to feel like a chore after work.

"So if you come to one of my freerunning classes, we won't be training. I don't do sit-ups. I don't do pull-ups or push-ups. I hate running – it's boring. We're doing something new, and it's about fun, play and freedom. I believe every park should be full of playgrounds. You have all this space and you should be using it to inspire people to be active.

"I know there are health and safety considerations, but in life, 100 per cent safe doesn't exist. We do our best in our academies, but activity is vitality. People have to be active. So where are the visionaries? I can go to any facility. All I need is partners who are visionaries." ●

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BY KATH HUDSON

GETTING EQUAL

Evidence suggests men still dominate many areas of sport – they participate more, most administrators are men, male athletes receive more sponsorship and men's sport gets the most media coverage. So what's the way forward for women? Kath Hudson reports

"The history and tradition of sport is closely connected with masculinity," says Anita White, a leading academic in the field of women's sport and founder of the Anita White Foundation. "Boys learn to become men through sport and men reaffirm their manliness through it, so broadening the definition to include women has been a challenge."

I've just asked White the reasons why sport continues to be dominated by men. "Sport has been invented, practised and controlled by men throughout history. Women have joined the party later and major social and cultural change has been required for women to participate fully in the sporting world."

Illustrating this point, Pierre de Coubertin, who helped found the modern Olympics in 1894, said: "An Olympiad with females would be impractical, uninteresting, unaesthetic and improper." Fortunately it was only a few years later – 1900 – when women did participate in the Olympic Games, but restrictions have been lifted slowly. Even now women can't take part in the 50k race walk or some shooting, sailing, rowing and kayaking events. According to the Women's Sports Foundation however, there should be gender equity in Olympic participation rates by the 2020 Games.

BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

Everyday participation also shows a gender imbalance. According to Sport England's Active People Survey 2014-15, around 6.8 million, or 30.7 per cent of women play sport at least once a week for 30 minutes, compared with 8.6 million men – or 40.6 per cent of the male population.

However, Sport England's *Habit for Life* survey found there's a huge appetite for more sport, with 12 million women – half of whom aren't active – saying they'd like to do more sport and physical activity.

So why aren't women participating? Some barriers effect both men and women: cost, access to facilities, equipment and clothing. But women have additional barriers: they have more care responsibilities, they worry more about personal safety, and have more concerns about body image, not fitting in and ability levels. Added to this, there's less visibility of sports women in the media and a lack of role models. Females do not grow up with as much encouragement to do sport as males. Research cited by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in its October 2014 interim report of the Women and Sport Advisory Board, says that sport plays a more central role in boys' culture and social identity than that of girls and their popularity is linked – in part –to it.

This continues into adulthood. According to research by Sportswise Sports Fan Panel, 43 per cent of men see sport as a way to spend time with friends, whereas only 31 per cent of women do and 38 per cent of men are encouraged to compete in sport, compared with 19 per cent of women.

FRESH FRAMEWORK?

So if the model, which has been created by males, is what makes women feel alienated from sport, do we need a new one? White explains there was a movement in the mid 1900s for women to create their own sporting framework, based less on competition and more on collaboration, but these initiatives largely failed.

"Girls wanted to be able to enjoy the competition and recognition that their brothers and fathers were getting," says White. "When I played hockey for England in the 1970s, there was a mood of going for a different definition and not aiming for the big sporting events, like the Olympics and I now feel sad that I didn't get to have those opportunities."

Even now, despite the fantastic achievements of the likes of the Williams sisters and Jessica Ennis, women's elite sport doesn't get the same attention as men's. According to the DCMS, women's sport accounts for just 7 per cent of total

Having beginners train together aids confidence

Tips for getting women active

- Run a public event where women can meet coaches and see activity sessions
- Run family sessions
- Link with partnership organisations to reach women from a variety of backgrounds
- Use a variety of media to promote the event
- Offer easy to access information about what sessions entail
- Get coaches to follow up afterwards
- Encourage existing participants to bring a friend
- Reassure novices that other beginners will be present

 © Cybertrek 2015

Anita White, founder of the Anita White Foundation (above), which promotes the development of women in sport

In England, 6.8 million (30.7 per cent) women play sport at least once a week for 30 minutes – compared with 8.6 million men (40.6 per cent)

sports media coverage and the value of reported sponsorship deals for women's sport was just 0.4 per cent from the total in 2013. In the same year, the top five women's sponsorship deals totalled £1.7m – and only three women made it to the Forbes list of 100 highest paid athletes.

It would seem that women are destined to fight for equity within a system which is weighted against them. White thinks a multi-pronged approach is needed for change: "Sport is still facing much the same issues as 30 or 40 years ago. It has to start with families and primary schools, so that positive attitudes to sport are formed early, enabling girls to see sport as a fulfilling and important part of their lives. They need to see sport as an important part of becoming a woman for a variety of reasons: it's fun, it's sociable and it promotes good health."

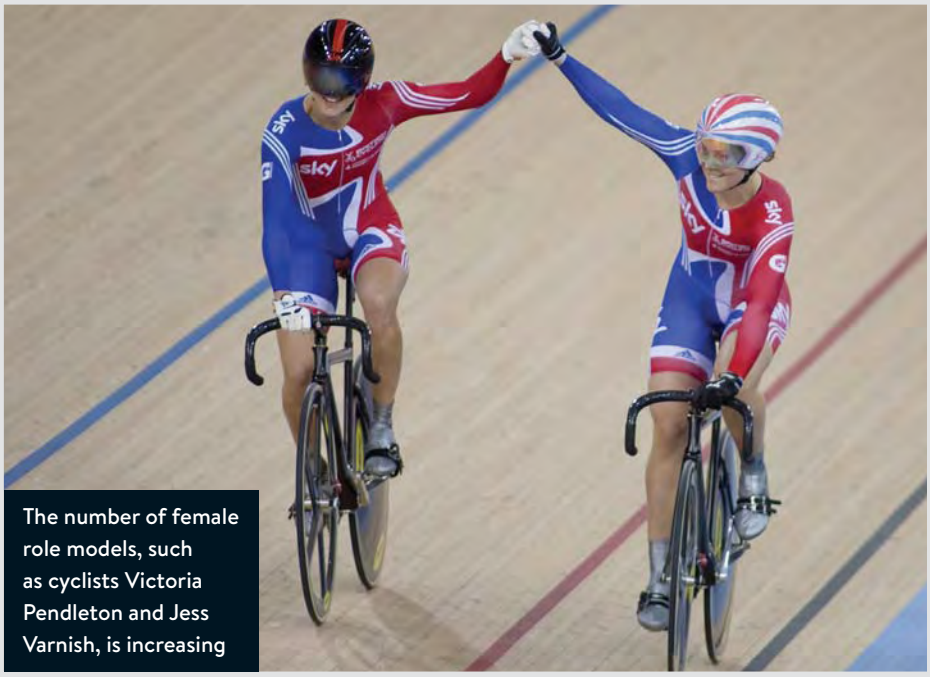
To achieve this, it is important to keep teenage girls engaged. Girls currently tune out of sport for a number of reasons, including inactive social groups, self confidence and personal ability. A study carried out by Virgin Active in 2014, found that 39 per cent of girls were put off by the PE kit. This rose to 46 per cent among 16-year-olds, almost half of which admitted to making excuses to get out of PE.

Women have a strong influencing role within their families – sporty mums can be more influential than sporting heroes so it seems logical for initiatives to target women

FAMILY AFFAIR

According to Sport England, women have a strong influencing role within their families and sporty mums can be more influential than sporting heroes or big sporting events, so it seems logical for initiatives to target women and families. Ruth Holdaway, CEO of Women in Sport, says that women have more caring responsibilities than men, and frequently have more complicated lives, so offering more family activities and appropriately timed sessions to fit in with childcare, are some of the changes they would like to see. "These are just two of a complex set of changes which need to be made in order to improve participation among women," she says. "It is important for sports to understand what motivates women and to adapt to them, not expect women to adapt to the sport."

Some sports are already successfully adapting and offering some great initiatives. The Lawn Tennis Association's Tennis Tuesdays were a great success this ▶



The number of female role models, such as cyclists Victoria Pendleton and Jess Varnish, is increasing

Check list for sports providers

- Is encouraging women's participation part of your strategy?
- Does your club promote equal opportunities for women?
- Are training sessions aimed at a variety of abilities?
- Are your training sessions a mix of skills, drills and match play to attract women and keep them engaged?
- Is there a chance to meet and chat with other players?
- Are training sessions available at a suitable range of times?
- Are the images on your club website suitable for returning players or beginners?
- Do your club's communications motivate people to want to go along for a session?

summer, providing flexible tennis sessions with no need to book or pay in advance. The sessions are sociable, but there is also some skills development for those who want to progress. Similarly, Back to Netball and Back to Hockey have been very successful, offering flexible sessions which involve some skills training, but are mainly about having fun and not tying women into team commitments.

Taking this further, Women in Sport is currently collaborating with British Cycling to find ways of progressing women to a more competitive standard once they have been hooked on an informal basis.

IN THE BOARDROOM

England Hockey is one governing body which is currently performing well at all levels: increasing participation at grassroots level, improving elite performance and getting good female representation in the boardroom. Also, with Sally Munday at the helm, it is one of the 10 governing bodies which has a female chief executive.

Sport England has set the national governing bodies of sport a target to have 25 per cent female representation on their boards by 2017. Women in Sport has been campaigning on this point, but, in light of research which shows that 30 per cent is needed to be effective, they want to see NGBs exceed Sport England's target.

Women in Sport's annual report, *Trophy Women?*, which looks at female representation in the NGBs, boardrooms shows some encouraging progression.

Ruth Holdaway, CEO of Women in Sport

"On the face of it, the numbers look good, averages show that good progress has been made, we're 3 per cent up from last year and pretty much at 30 per cent. Six years ago we were at 20 per cent, so that is good progress," says Holdaway.

"However, looking at averages does mask some of the problems, because those sports which do really well, such as netball and equestrianism, skew the results. Twenty nine of the 46 NGBs are still not meeting the 25 per cent target and they only have 12 months to get there."

Holdaway says it's also disappointing to note that many of the barriers which existed in 2009 remain: timing of board meetings which clash with childcare; lack of senior women as role models and a masculine culture on boards.

"As well as addressing these barriers, we would like the NGBs to be turning their attention to the pipeline of women coming through and looking at what they're doing to encourage talented women to aim higher," says Holdaway. "As well as bringing in independent non-executives from outside the sector, we want them to incubate their own talent coming up through the sport, looking at the structures and making it easier for women to progress. We don't have time to wait for a generation of women to come through, so NGBs really need to commit to change: thinking about the culture of the board, the timing of meetings and recruitment practises to create a level playing field for women."

On the upside, Holdaway says the NGBs are generally open to change, because they have learned from the business world that diversity at board level is not just about ticking boxes, it's good for the success of the organisation. Going forward, Women in Sport will be working with successful NGBs to share good practice through the development of a Checklist for Change.

Finally, there have been two developments aimed at women this year which reflect some fresh thinking. Sport England's This Girl Can campaign moved away from air brushed images promoting sport, while Bury Council's I Will if You Will campaign aims to remove practical barriers to being active, encouraging women to support each other and exercise together. Let's hope they can provide inspiration for many more initiatives. ●

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Jorkyball, a fast-paced form of football, could be just the thing for sports centres looking to fill a small space with something that excites members and generate revenue

BY TOM WALKER

JORKYBALL

When French petrol station manager Gilles Paniez came up with a new form of football in his garage in Lyon in 1987, he probably didn't foresee the impact his newly invented game would eventually have.

For the first three years, Paniez and his friends would be the only people to play jorkyball – a high-intensity version of the beautiful game – when, rather unexpectedly, the sport was exported to Italy, thanks to its inclusion as an exhibition sport at the 1990 FIFA World Cup.

Leonardo Giangreco Biancheri, an Italian convert to jorkyball who had met Paniez, struck a deal to have the sport featured in the fanzone outside the Stadio Olimpico in Rome – the main venue for the event.

As a result, the sport spread rapidly in Italy, and by the end of 1999, the number of jorkyball courts had reached 100.

It grew in France too, with jorkyball clubs popping up in around 35 locations.

For more than two decades, jorkyball enjoyed a reputation as a popular underground sport in both countries, remaining so largely due to having no centralised organisation to develop it.

NEW BEGINNINGS

However, there's now a new push to spread jorkyball globally – a drive orchestrated by the same man who first took the sport to Italy – Leonardo Giangreco Biancheri.

What you need

The court

An enclosed, rectangle space with at least one transparent wall to allow fans and referees to see the action

Length: 9.80m (minimum 9.50m)
Width: 4.80 m (min 4.50m)
Height: 2.70 m (min 2.50m)
Goal size: 110 x 110 cm
The ball: Hand-made felt, weighs 200g
Official supplier: 3bble
Tel: +39 (0)689 277 720
info@3bble.com
www.3bble.com

After introducing jorkyball to Italy in those early days, Biancheri left for London where he enjoyed a successful and lucrative career in banking.

More than 20 years later, he's is back in Italy and in 2014 – with capital raised during his banking career – he set up a company, 3bble, with the aim of introducing jorkyball to new markets.

3bble is the official supplier of jorkyball courts and balls and works closely with the newly established Jorkyball International Federation (JIF) – the sport's world governing body. Thanks to Biancheri's efforts in the past 18 months, the sport is going global and JIF currently has 12 countries affiliated to it.

HOW TO PLAY

The rules for jorkyball are simple and help make it a fast-paced sport. Each match is played inside a "caged" court between teams of two players – consisting of one forward and one defender. The roles are appointed before the match and have to be reversed for each set, the forward becomes the defender and vice versa.

The forward is allowed to move around the entire court, while the defender is not allowed to cross into the opposition half. The walled court measures 9.80m x 4.80 m – so is slightly smaller than a squash court. Matches are based on a best of three sets format, with each set being won by the team to first score seven goals.

"This is a sport for everyone," says Alessio Di Maio, president of JIF. "It's great for children, due to the small dimensions of the court, and perfect for adults who are looking for an intensive sport which will give them a fitness workout. As it's basically football in a small space, the rules are easy to learn and there are no specialist equipment needs."

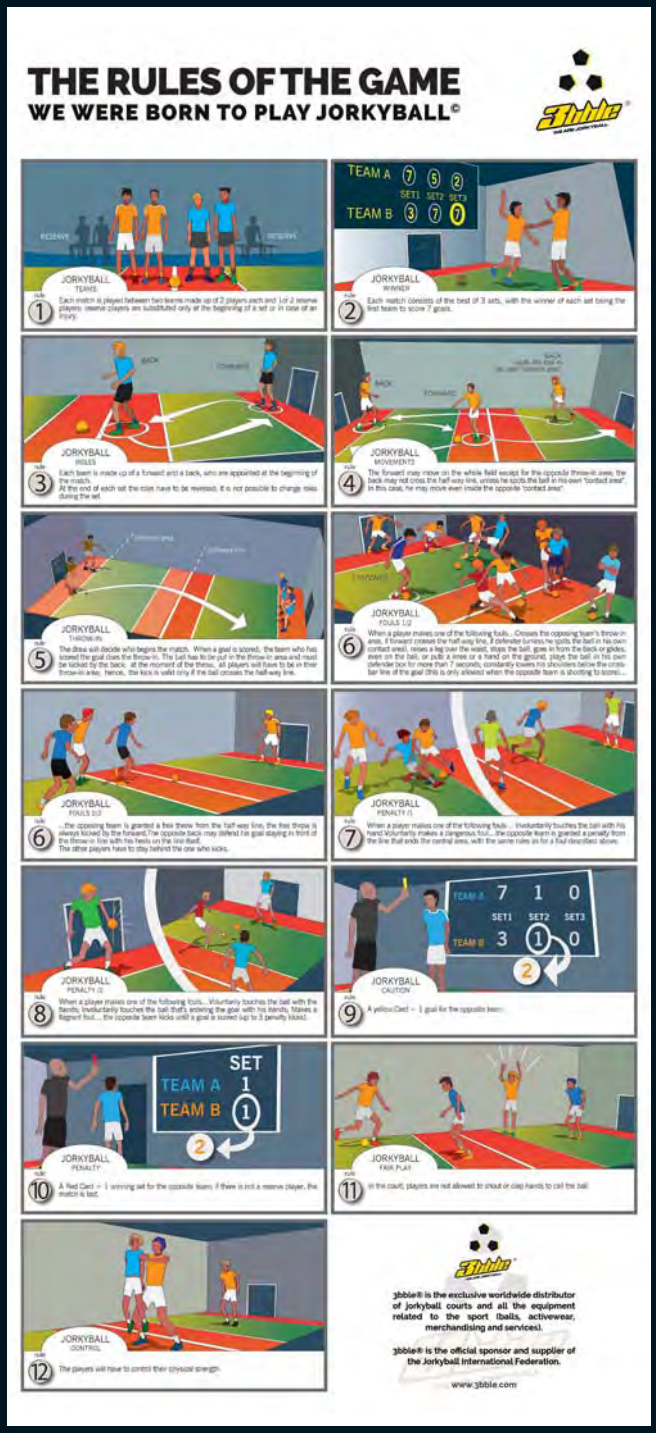
Biancheri adds that jorkyball is a great way to keep fit – for all ages. "Jorkyball is intense," he says. "Playing 50 minutes is equal to playing around three hours of 11-a-side football. There's no let up."

The small space needed also means that a jorkyball court can be fitted pretty much anywhere – and this is where Biancheri sees a great opportunity for the sport

 © Cybertrek 2015

The compact size and shape of a jorkyball court make it suitable for facilities with limited space. The rules (right) make jorkyball a fast-paced sport

Leonardo Giangreco Biancheri (above) is helping to spread the sport



to grow. "As well as the core market of sports clubs, it's perfect for urban spaces in city centres, as well as fitness clubs and hotels," says Biancheri. "Jorkyball can also be used as a great fan engagement tool at events and big football matches. Having a jorkyball court at a fanzone attracts people around it to have a look – so it works perfectly for sponsors who want to create interest at events."

PROFIT-A-BALL

The fact that a 50sq m jorkyball court can be squeezed into a tight space also means that the courts can be a very profitable investment for sports clubs and fitness/leisure operators wanting to expand their offering. According to Biancheri, the profitability aspect is one that has convinced many clubs to install jorkyball courts at their centres.

"You can fit up to 16 jorkyball courts in the space needed for one five-a-side football pitch," he says. "As each jorkyball court takes four players, by doing the maths, you quickly realise that you can fit more than five times as many players in."

In reality, most jorkyball clubs have between one and three courts and in some cases they have been installed to replace underused squash courts.

Biancheri adds that health and fitness clubs have shown particular interest in adding jorkyball courts – not only because clubs often have limited space, but because the sport offers a high intensity workout in a very different way from traditional fitness activities. "From a fitness point of view, what gives it an edge over most other intensive workouts is that it's not just a fitness activity – it's competitive sport," he says. "The more you play, the better you become and you can challenge people and get fit without even noticing!"

MAKING IT WORK

As part of plans to secure more sites for jorkyball in Italy – and to help clubs with the initial cost of installing courts – Biancheri has struck a financing deal with one of the country's national banks. "If a club wants to ▶

JIF hopes that jorkyball will continue to grow as people find new spaces to play the sport

buy a court – which costs around €20,000 – through a three-year financing deal, the monthly payments are only around €370 a month," says Biancheri.

"This means that – with a recommended cost of €8 per person per hour for a jorkyball session – the club only needs to get four bookings a week to break even. Any more bookings than that and the club starts making a profit."

To help each club that buys a court, 3bble also provides support and training in marketing and setting up a loyal user base. Biancheri says that creating an active group of users is beneficial for both the sport and the owner of the court. His aim is to help create local, loyal user groups and add them to the "global community" of players.

"We don't just want to sell courts – we want to make sure that the client is successful in renting the court out and filling it with players," he says. "We don't want to provide courts that stay empty.

"That's why we stress to the clubs which buy our courts that it is not enough to simply install a court and assume people will play – because jorkyball will be something completely new to most users.

"It's important that clubs appoint somebody to look after the court. They need to be on hand to explain the rules, to make sure people play with the right rules, and they also need to organise tournaments and be the contact for both JIF and their own private league online."

JIF

The Jorkyball International Federation (JIF) is the world governing body which promotes, develops and manages Jorkyball around the world. Founded in 2014 it is headquartered in Rome, Italy and its president is Alessio Di Maio.
Tel: +39 06 85358618
info@jorkyball.org
www.jorkyball.org

COMMUNITY MATTERS

To help clubs create a community, 3bble also provides a free software package which enables clubs to organise tournaments and leagues which can be managed and viewed by players and teams online. "It's all created automatically," says Biancheri. "The software has an algorithm which provides points for each game and automatically creates league tables.

"Using the online service, a club can create a circuit which allows players to gain points and track their progress. The points are weighted depending on the importance and size of the tournament or league and players can also earn points by challenging other teams to "friendly" games, which encourages usage of the courts. So in essence, players are able to organise and schedule their own games.

"Players automatically get added to our World Ranking Challenge too – so those who take it seriously can end up playing at the World Masters at the end of each year."

One of the existing jorkyball clubs is Tuttomondi in Chiusi, a town in Tuscany, Italy. The club has two courts and is managed by Giuseppe Daniele, a trained fitness instructor, who decided two years ago to become an entrepreneur and set up his own jorkyball-only club. The club's two courts are fully booked during weekends and weekday evenings up until 10pm.

The club recently hosted the Italian Jorkyball Cup for clubs and the very first U-13 Jorkyball Cup. Daniele says he is particularly keen to get children to play and recently took on the role of youth coordinator within JIF.

FUTURE PLANS

In Biancheri jorkyball has a dedicated ambassador and it's clear the sport will continue to spread in Europe and elsewhere. New countries are joining the jorkyball family at an increasing rate and Biancheri says he is constantly looking to provide the courts to new territories.

"We recently signed a distribution deal with a Japanese company," he says. "They have already set up a national federation and affiliated themselves to JIF, so everything is in place. There are advanced talks with a number of other countries too, so the family is growing." ●

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Strava has turned a small hardcore following in the US into millions of global users

IMAGE: JARED GRUBER

STRAVA SOCIETY

Both riding on, and fuelling, the cycling boom, Strava has inspired people to get out on their bikes, trying to be King or Queen of the Mountain. Strava's Gareth Nettleton talks to Sports Management

What is Strava?

Strava is, at its heart, a global community of athletes. Through our mobile apps and website, we connect, motivate and inspire runners and cyclists throughout their experience, from exploration and adventure to training and competition. Designed by athletes, for athletes, Strava unites millions from around the world every day through the sports they love.

Although we allow people to track their rides and runs, we're much more than a tracking app. Similarly, even though we connect people, we don't describe ourselves as a social network.

Members can make a 'segment', which is a designated stretch of road – usually a hill climb – that they can compete on. People love to blast themselves over the segment. The fastest are named King of the Mountain (KOM) or Queen of the Mountain (QOM) for cycling. Runners are awarded a Course Record (CR). It taps into an innate human desire to compete: there are lots of bragging rights and desires to be that fastest person ever. It's very competitive.

Nettleton: "Strava is much more than an exercise tracking app"

Equally, the data and stats side is as important as the social and competitive side. Some of our members prefer to use Strava in one-player mode: they simply use the tool to get their own stats and track their progress over time. For them, beating their own time is just as motivating as competing with others. We often see this type of behaviour among our female members. However, I feel that Strava is more fun when you have lots of friends and followers who are also on Strava.

When and how did Strava come about?

The two founders, Michael Horvath and Mark Gainey, met at Harvard University in the early 90s. They were in the rowing team together and came up with the vision of creating a virtual locker room: invoking inspiration, motivation and camaraderie. However, the technology

 © Cybertrek 2015

Strava taps into an innate human desire to compete

IMAGE: JERED GRUBER

wasn't there at the time, so the idea was put in a bottom drawer and they started another software company instead.

Fast forward to the mid-2000s: they had moved from rowing to running and cycling, and wanted another venture. With GPS being so accessible, they figured now could be a good time to dust off their original idea. They started off with one hill and gave GPS devices to some friends to test the concept. The feedback was great and Strava was born.

How many users does Strava have now, and how quickly did it grow?

We don't say a figure, because as soon as we do it's out of date. However, it's in the substantial millions and growing by 100,000 each week. On the cycling side, there are more men than women, but the split is fairly even for running.

Initially, in 2009, it was reliant on a Garmin, but it still won a small, hardcore following in San Francisco. Exponential growth came in 2011, when the mobile apps launch made Strava accessible to anyone with a smartphone.

It grew quickly in English-speaking markets from day one. We didn't go into a second language until last year, when we launched in France. Now you can get Strava in 15 languages.

It spreads via a network effect: starting with small communities, who tell their family and friends, who tell their family and friends, and so on.

Who's your target market?

Passionate athletes: not necessarily the most able, but definitely the most keen – those who have a real desire to get out there and be active. So we cut across both sexes and all ages: we have teens and septuagenarians using Strava.

We're not about getting anyone to their first 5k, or getting them off the couch – there are others aiming at that market. We're more about enhancing the experience for the guys who are really into their cycling and running. That said, although we were adopted by the pro cyclists in the early days, we've tried to make the product useful and engaging whatever your ability level. We feel that, if we could make it good enough for the pros, it will engage anyone.

How do you continue to keep your customers engaged?

If people aren't engaged we don't have a business, so that's where we put our focus. Our members are very active and also very engaged: 30 per cent of Strava users are active every single day, and it's through us that they're living out their athletic lives.

We have a mantra which dictates that we have to strive to do three things really well – connect, motivate and entertain. So we try to keep it fresh and continue to develop new features.

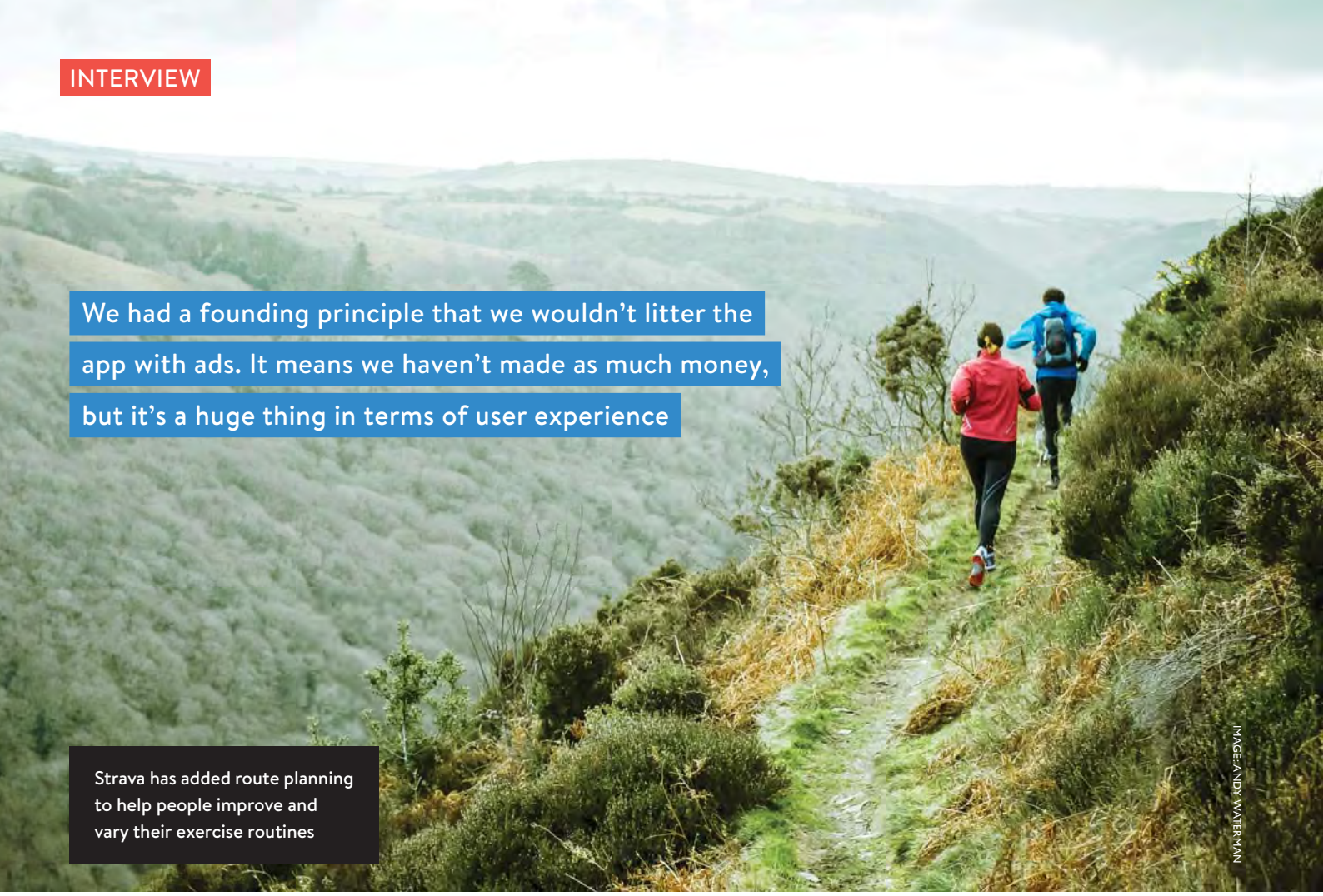
Strava is a much more fun place when you have lots of friends and followers – the social impact of your friends will help to keep you engaged – so we make it very easy for users to grow their own network.

One thing we definitely know from our data: once you've been for three or four rides or runs, you're hooked. We don't tend to lose people, which means the product is engaging enough to keep people motivated. It's a good indicator that, if we can get people into the exercise habit, it keeps them exercising.

What are your current streams of revenue?

At the moment we're not profitable, but we're confident of getting there in the near future. The core experience is free for users, but we also have a Premium level – which offers more features, perks and benefits – that costs £3.99 a month or £39.99 a year. Our aim is to keep growing our Premium member base, so that these members support everything else and bring us into profitability. We're actively working on features at the moment that will further enhance the Strava Premium experience. But equally, when we do come up with a great feature, there's always the temptation to make it available to everyone to help keep our whole user base engaged.

In addition, a small but growing part of the business is letting Strava athletes purchase gear as a reward for completing one of our challenges. This ranges from limited edition cycling jerseys to tech T-shirts for runners. The unique part of our model, though, is that people have to earn ▶



We had a founding principle that we wouldn't litter the app with ads. It means we haven't made as much money, but it's a huge thing in terms of user experience

Strava has added route planning to help people improve and vary their exercise routines

IMAGE: ANDY WATERMAN

that shirt through sweat and hard graft. We think that's much more compelling than a standard shop model.

Strava Metro is another strand. We realised three years ago that we were collecting amazing data about where people run and ride – data that would be very useful to town planners if they were, for example, doing an analysis of where they should be improving infrastructure and making changes. Hopefully the end result of sharing this data will be that roads will become safer.

We talked to the Oregon Department of Transport in the US first, and then the UK's Transport for London approached us. They want to know the main cycling arteries into and out of the city, and which junctions are avoided. Previously the only way to measure this was by standing by the roadside with clipboards, but we can supply them with minute-by-minute roll-ups of any stretch of road.

Q Does the business face any threats?

We're always conscious and aware, but what we've built in the last five years is unique. On the cycling side, we've grown very quickly and critical mass is always a competitive advantage. Running is different: there are lots of running trackers and apps out there and most are older than us. That's why we're always looking for unique features to help us create separation between a Strava experience and the experience available on other sports and fitness platforms.

Equally, we try an not worry too much. We believe that, if we keep doing good work – adding new features and keeping our users entertained and motivated – people will keep discovering us and good things will happen.

One thing that separates us is that we don't have ads in our product. We had a founding principle that we wouldn't litter the app with ads. It means we haven't made as much money, but it's a huge thing in terms of the user experience.

Q What developments are you planning for the future?

We're excited about all the new wearable technology. We try to be device agnostic and make Strava compatible with all hardware devices: we're the Switzerland of fitness platforms.

We generally view it as a good thing, as it provides more ways to upload to Strava. Going forward, we're working on the overall experience so we better serve athletes before and during activities. Historically we've been very strong post-ride and post-run, so lately we've been adding new features to broaden this, such as route planning and training plans, to help people plan their exercise rather than just looking backwards.

Also, we'll be working on our Premium product and putting our data to good use – for example, producing the best running and cycling routes and also identifying top stops, such as views, cafés and bike shops. Our aim is to become indispensable to runners and cyclists.

Q How can the sports industry work with technology such as Strava?

If someone is active, they'll use a number of places and methods to train. Pretty much no-one only runs or cycles – they'll have the appetite to do supporting activity like CrossFit, yoga and strength work, as having a great core is really important for runners and cyclists.

There are huge swathes of the world where people can't ride their bikes outside in winter, but they don't want to be unfit by spring. I'm sure Strava helps to fill group cycling classes all around the world.

What fitness clubs could learn from technology is how to keep people engaged and motivated by using a social element. Gyms can be lonely, whereas Strava has opened up individual sports by creating a community. ●

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BY CHRIS DE VOLDER

The Recreation and Wellness Center in Auburn, Alabama, US, breaks boundaries with its figure-8, suspended running track and communal spaces

GOOD SPORTS

Chris DeVolder, sustainable design leader at architects HOK, explores how designing sustainable sports venues improves communities – and the bottom line

Hundreds of years ago, a sports facility served as a city's hub. It occupied the main public square or area where citizens assembled to support civic activities and housed functions including hospitality, food and retail.

Then, in the mid-20th century, many new sports venues were built outside cities' central business districts. These facilities were often surrounded by parking space and focused on a single use, resulting in disconnection the city's day-to-day life and infrastructure.

Today, many new sports facilities are returning to city centres as part of sports-oriented, mixed-use developments. There's a focus on engaging residents, daytime workers and visitors every day of the week – not just on game or match days.

Developers of arenas in cities including Edmonton and Detroit are following the successful model of the Kansas City Power & Light District and the Nationwide Arena District in Columbus, which integrate sports, entertainment, retail, office and residential. These projects promote related development and maximise return on investment while creating vibrant, sustainable urban communities.

As well as economic sustainability, design strategies related to the site and landscape, and things such as transportation, materials and resources, energy and the indoor environment, can help facility operators minimise impact on the environment while improving the bottom line.

Chris DeVolder

Husky Stadium, Seattle

When it comes to HOK's work, the renovation and expansion of the University of Washington's Husky Stadium in Seattle, US is an example of how client organisations, designers and facility operators can collaborate to create a venue which is both beautiful and sustainable. The new design preserves the history of the 1920 stadium and its sweeping views of Lake Washington and the Cascade Mountains while transforming it into a state-of-the-art, 70,000-seat venue.

Low-flow plumbing fixtures, dual-flush toilets and native landscaping have reduced water use in the building by 40 per cent, while strategies implemented in the design and operations divert 75 per cent of the waste from Husky Stadium.

This is achieved through the strategic placement of recycling and compost receptacles and the ability of the building's loading dock to accommodate composting and multiple recycling containers. There is also a buffer of trees and shrubs which separates the stadium from the wetlands.

Husky Stadium has received Salmon Safe certification through the Pacific Rivers Council, which recognised its pollution capture, stormwater capture and construction activity pollution reduction strategies. It also won the inaugural Sustainability Award from the National Association of Collegiate Directors of Athletics and USG Corporation.

MetLife Stadium, New Jersey

Elsewhere, the 82,500-seat MetLife Stadium is the only US stadium to house two NFL franchises and provides unparalleled flexibility in accommodating the needs and personalities of the New York Giants and Jets teams.

Through a partnership with the design and construction team and the US Environmental Protection Agency, the project has achieved cost savings of

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HOK's renovation of the University of Washington's Husky Stadium in Seattle, US, included the use of native landscaping in order to reduce water use at the venue

approximately US$23.5m over the past five years from green initiatives related to energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, mass transit, waste reduction and recycling.

One of the solutions used is a group of solar panels above the stadium's catwalk, which generates 350,000kW hours of electricity per year – equivalent to powering 34 average residential homes.

The EPA named MetLife Stadium the NFL's "Greenest Stadium," and it has consistently been recognised by the Green Sports Alliance for its leadership in advancing sustainability in sports venues.

Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Atlanta

The Mercedes-Benz Stadium – due to open in 2017 – will become the new home of the NFL's Atlanta Falcons and Major League Soccer's Atlanta United FC.

Already billed as one of the world's most sustainable sports venues, it is targeting LEED Platinum certification and is designed to save 34 per cent more energy and 45 per cent more water when compared with a baseline design.

Rainwater captured on site will be used for cooling towers and for irrigating the landscape, including the edible gardens.

The stadium design team is currently working with dozens of manufacturers to advance transparency in ensuring the sustainability of building materials: manufacturers are required to provide information about a product's energy use, waste generation, chemical makeup and manufacturing processes.

Auburn Recreation and Wellness Centre, Auburn

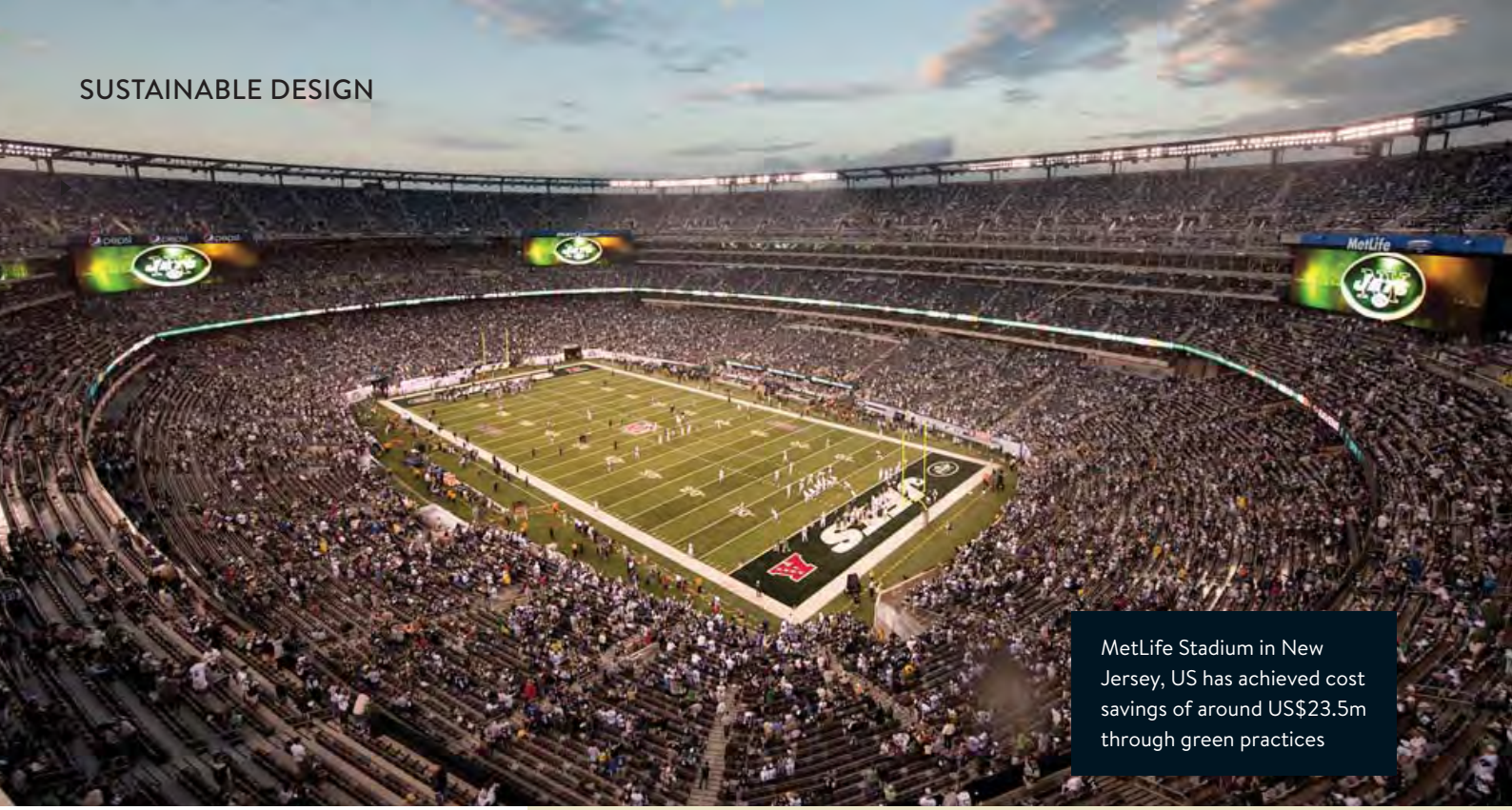
On a smaller scale, Auburn University's Recreation and Wellness Center pushes the boundaries of design from both a sport and a sustainable design perspective.

On track for LEED Gold certification from the US Green Building Council, the centre includes an innovative, figure-8 suspended track, open-air exercise and fitness studio, daylight throughout the facility and exterior courtyards for reflection. It's satisfying that sustainable design strategies in campus recreation centres like Auburn's reflect students' increasing requests for healthy buildings – and it's great to see the desire of administrators to meet their demands.

The Green Sports Alliance

Earlier this year, HOK entered into a partnership with the Green Sports Alliance, an international non-profit organisation which advises professional and collegiate leagues, teams and venue operators about strategies for sustainability.

The Alliance is helping sports organisations understand how investment in sustainability can lead to long-term savings. ▶



MetLife Stadium in New Jersey, US has achieved cost savings of around US$23.5m through green practices

Sports venues will become the focal points of eco-districts where resources are shared among facilities. Excess heat from an arena will be used to heat water in a nearby hotel

With more than 300 members consisting of teams, facilities, leagues and universities from 14 countries, the Green Sports Alliance is already making a difference in developing and sharing best practice in sustainability. In November, the Alliance launched the Corporate Membership Network, which is engaging corporate partners to learn from each other and accelerate the pace of integrating sustainability into their facilities.

The Alliance hosted a Climate and Sports presentation as part of the United Nations Conference of Parties' (COP21) international climate negotiations, which took place in Paris from 28 November through to 11 December.

The panel, which was attended by representatives of European sports organisations, NGOs, government officials and the public, highlighted the opportunities sustainability in sports offers to the wider climate change effort. ●

About the author:
Chris DeVolder, LEED AP, is the sustainable design leader for HOK's Sports + Recreation + Entertainment practice

THE FUTURE OF SUSTAINABILITY

What will the sustainable stadiums and arenas of the next 10 years look like?

Design strategies for the high-performance sports venues of the future will be based on these ideas:

- **Abundance**, not scarcity, is the lens for all design decisions. The venue harvests water, creates energy, turns waste into food, enhances the habitat and adds value for the surrounding community and the owner. Decisions support the common good of the community, not just a standalone project.
- **Projects** feature mixed-use programming that creates an active, engaging venue seven days a week. The space synergies include sports, recreation, entertainment, transportation, food, healthcare, retail, hospitality, conferencing, urban farming, housing and education.
- **The design** creates multiple solutions. A canopy that provides shade for daily activities and game-day parking, for example, has a roof structure with solar panels that generate energy for the building and cars parked beneath.

  The canopy also directs rainwater into cisterns for reuse in the building, site and community. The venue is the focal point of an eco-district, where resources are shared among facilities. Excess heat from equipment in an arena, for example, is used to heat water at an adjacent hotel.
- **The venue** serves as an anchor for a co-op approach to the purchase of sustainable goods and services. It may bring together a ballpark, local school district, hospital system and retail centre, for example, to pool the buying power for green products, renewable energy, commercial composting and local food.
- **Biomimicry** influences how the design responds to the local climate, allowing the building to breathe, provide comfort for every human sense and adapt to year-round requirements.
- **The site's biodiversity** is enhanced through local or adaptive landscaping, edibles and the tree canopy.
- **The venue** generates all its own energy through solar panels, wind turbines or other renewable energy solutions.
- **Future venues** will be net positive when it comes to stormwater, accepting more water than they create, cleaning it naturally and reusing it.

With its mass appeal and ability to unite people worldwide, sport offers a powerful platform for demonstrating and communicating the importance of sustainability.

By establishing new paradigms for environmentally friendly design and acting as a hub for related sustainable development, sports venues can become critical assets for an individual location, a community and a region.

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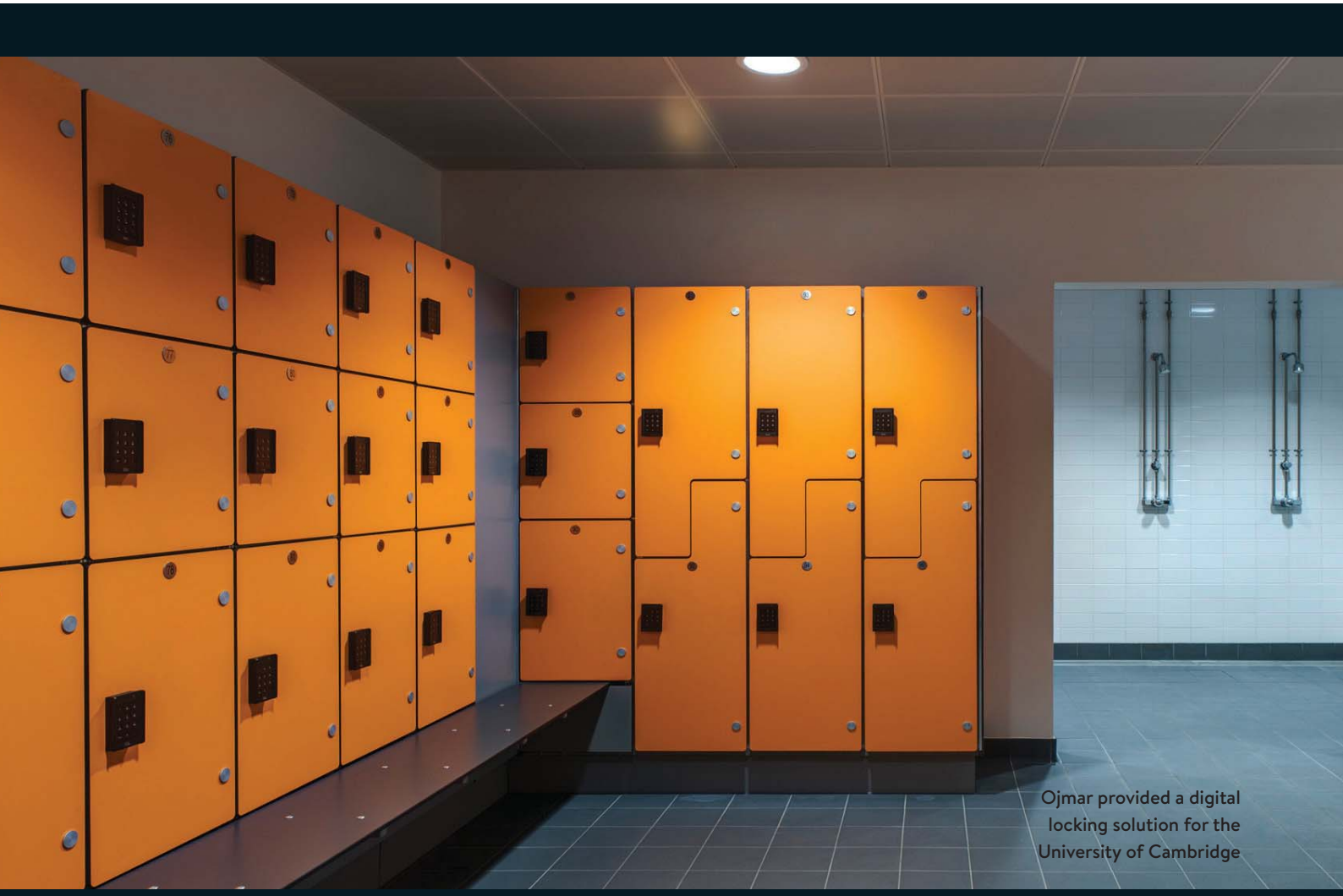

Ojmar provided a digital locking solution for the University of Cambridge

HIGH FLYERS

Universities have unique challenges when it comes to locking solutions. Here's how Ojmar has met the precise needs of some of the UK's leading institutions.

No more locker hogging

The University of Huddersfield recently invested £22.5m in new sports, catering and study facilities. Located in the city centre, the new building has limited space for lockers. Ojmar's brief therefore was to incorporate its OTS RFID keyless locking system into the students' existing ID cards for ease of use, while maximising usage of the 200 lockers from TBS Fabrications. To prevent students from 'hogging' lockers, Ojmar programmed the ID cards to work for three hours ensuring lockers are available throughout the day.

Bath goes card-free

Renowned for its £30m Sports Training Village, the University of Bath has a huge membership and wanted to dispense with the use of cards for students. Ojmar's OCS digital locks were installed on all new lockers and easily retrofitted to the Prospec Lockers already on site. The wipe clean locks are suitable for both poolside and dry areas. They are also easy to use with no keys or cards required. Users enter a four digit code to activate and deactivate the lock. The locks can be configured to open automatically after a set period of time to prevent locker reservations. An LED shows which locks are in use to quickly identify which lockers are available, while the master key system allows staff to open and relock lockers if students forget their codes.

Catering for visiting sports teams

The prestigious University of Cambridge had two challenges to overcome at its new sports centre. The building plays host to a variety of visiting teams so issuing keys or wristbands to access lockers was not viable. Instead, Ojmar's OCS digital locks provided the ideal solution in the team dressing rooms. The locks are robust to withstand heavy usage and users only need to enter a

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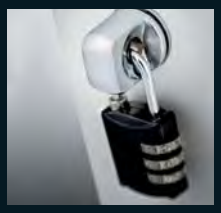
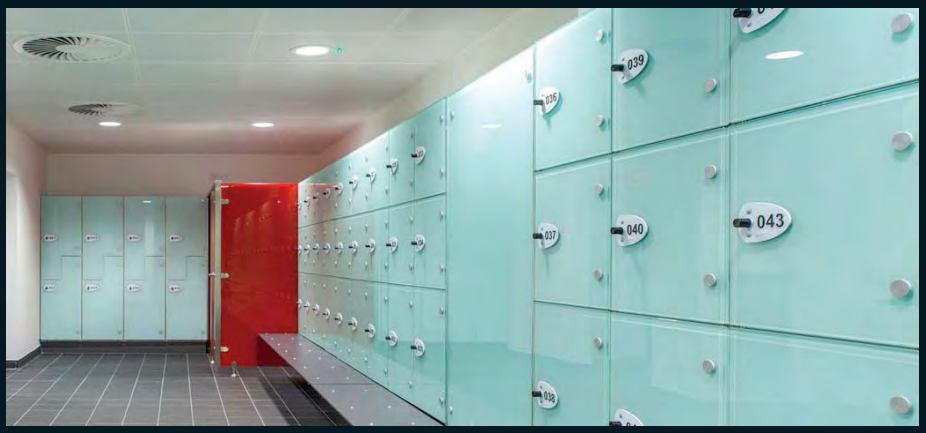
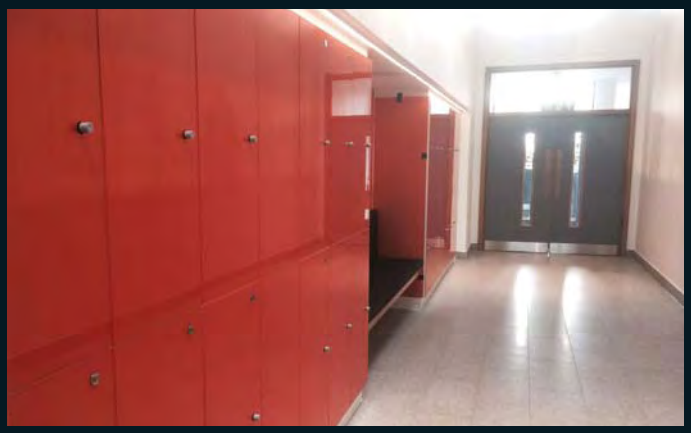



Ojmar's range of innovative locking systems are robust to withstand heavy usage, yet easy to manage and maintain



four digit code once to access the lockers provided by Prospec. The new locks mean the visiting sports teams don't have to wear bands or carry keys, which not only increases safety, but also saves the university money on lost keys.

In the members' changing areas, the university card is used to operate Ojmar's OTS advanced locks. A simple one click operation allows users to activate and deactivate the lock by pressing their card against the nozzle. They can also check which locker they have used via an info terminal thus solving the problem of forgotten locker numbers.

The two systems have an audit trail in real time which is regularly used to check usage levels and to protect the Center from any suspicion of theft. Cards can be programmed at reception via a standalone programmer - a unit designed to record and read proximity cards - saving gym staff valuable time.

Simple locks, stunning design

Innovative locker design combines with a subtle locking system for maximum effect at Edge Hill University's sports complex. The stunning bespoke glass lockers, supplied by LFM, utilise Ojmar's OTS basic locks providing a simple and attractive addition to the large glass fronted doors, which are brightly coloured to match the centre's vibrant decor. Coloured wristbands access the lockers, and are also used to identify the centre's different membership categories such as peak, off-peak, staff and students.

Other university projects in 2015 include:

- University of Birmingham
- Oxford Brookes University
- University of Derby
- University of Warwick
- St Andrews University

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BY RHIANON HOWELLS

UNIVERSITY SPORT SPECIAL PART 2

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

In part two of our series on university sports centres, we look at two universities which have made commercial community usage of their facilities the bedrock of their business models

In part one of our series on university sports centres (see *Sports Management*, Issue 3, 2015), we looked at how three universities – Loughborough, Durham and Sheffield Hallam – were balancing the needs of their students with those of elite athletes and the wider community while also meeting commercial goals.

All of these centres work for and within their communities in meaningful and varied ways, whether through outreach to schools, partnerships with local clubs or by offering limited memberships and pay-and-play options to community users. For a growing number of university sports operations, however, community usage is not only part of the offering – it is absolutely integral to their commercial model.

As more universities fund new sports facilities with NGB and/or Lottery grants, many are signing up to Community Use Agreements (CUAs) which require them to place community usage, not at the sidelines, but front and centre of what they do. But how do these models work in practice? And what benefits do they bring?

A community use agreement prioritises general public over university use at the UEA

UNIVERSITY OF EAST ANGLIA

Opened in 2000 and still the largest Lottery-funded indoor university sports centre in the country, the University of East Anglia's Sportspark was one of the first to prove the potential of this kind of community-focused model.

As a predominately Lottery-funded facility, Sportspark is bound by a CUA until August 2018, which requires it to prioritise community over university usage – the rule of thumb is 80:20 – albeit that for the purposes of memberships and pay-and-play access, UEA students are counted as part of the community.

Membership numbers also reveal the emphasis on community, with 8,800 community adult members, 2,800 junior members and 1,900 student members. While community members pay monthly, from £5 for a pay-and-play discount card to £40 for peak all-access membership, students pay a one-off annual fee ranging from £135 to £300, depending on usage.

In addition, pay-and-play visits will exceed 1.4 million visits this year and

 © Cybertrek 2015

Facilities at the new £50m Birmingham centre will include a 50m pool (above), a 220-station health club and sports hall

"The university sector is good at sitting back and saying 'operationally we're very good aren't we'. But there are many things we can learn from the commercial sector"

approximately 9,000 students have an activated campus card giving them discounted pay-and-play access (the student population is around 14,000). Further to this, 42 of the university's 65 sports clubs make regular use of Sportspark facilities, alongside the top regional swimming and athletics clubs. According to UEA's director of sport, Phil Steele, the programme is managed to ensure there are always slots available for members and pay-and-play users, as well as club- and performance-related activity. There is inevitably some conflict, particularly when hosting large-scale events, but careful planning keeps this to a minimum.

The benefit of the model to the university is clear, says Steele: "It cost the university £2m [initial capital spend] for what is now a £30m facility, in terms of what it's cost to build and extend. If we had to build it now, it would be £60m."

Crucially, the CUA also allows any surpluses from the commercial side (Steele receives a grant from the university to subsidise student use) to be reinvested in facilities or programming.

With regard to performance, Steele admits UEA is not yet an elite sports university, although he hints plans are afoot to offer more support to its talented athletes. In terms of facilities, a £1.5m refurbishment project completed last year included more performance-oriented training equipment and a studio for higher-intensity training, while specific strength and conditioning and targeted training sessions have also been introduced at the request of university clubs.

When it comes to staying ahead of the game, Steele sets much store by Quest, Sport England's national quality scheme, which functions both as a badge of accreditation and a tool for continuous improvement. Sportspark received its first accreditation – Quest Entry, a one-day assessment – in January this year, and Steele now wants UEA to be the first university to get a Quest 'Excellent' rating at the Quest Plus level, which involves a two-day assessment plus a mystery visit. "The framework it creates ensures we continuously reflect on service delivery and review impact and outcomes, something that commonly gets overlooked," he says. "This in turn should drive improved customer satisfaction and a more consistent level of service, both of which help us to be more financially successful."

UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

At the University of Birmingham – which next year will replace its existing indoor centre with a new £55m facility – the practice of catering for community users alongside staff and students has an even longer history than at UEA. According to director of sport Zena Wooldridge, the UB Sport team has been juggling the needs of these different groups for 40 years. But while management and staff are adept at managing the inherent challenges, the ▶

Adding to the 1,900 student members, there are now 8,800 community adult members and 2,800 junior members at the UEA Sportspark

existing centre is now simply too small and inadequately designed to cope with what is being asked of it. "It causes huge problems in terms of where we put everyone," says Wooldridge. While extending opening hours, ruthless policing of time slots and creative use of dead space – the conversion of a storeroom to a group cycling studio, for example – papered over the problems for a while, it eventually reached a tipping point, says Wooldridge: "As a leading sporting university we were falling behind, in terms of the expectations of our students and our profile."

While redeveloping the current facilities to 21st century standards would have cost around £30m, the university was persuaded to make an even bigger commitment – £52.5m, with a further £2m in Lottery funding and half a million in alumni donations. What the extra investment has done, says Wooldridge, is allow the university to build the new centre big enough to increase participation and therefore revenue. This will not only help subsidise student- and performance-related activity, but will also enable the facility to be self-sustaining.

COMMUNITY BENEFITS

In place of a conventional CUA, the university has agreed a community use "in principle statement" in consultation with Sport England and Birmingham City Council. According to Wooldridge, the statement "simply reflects what we were intending to do anyway", but by enabling the university to demonstrate the extent of its current community provision and planned future provision, it has proved "a useful perception-changing exercise."

As well as being significantly bigger, the new centre – designed by architects Lifschutz Davidson Sandilands and AFLS&P – will have less wasted space and greater accessibility, not only for disabled people but also for transgender and religious groups. Facilities will include a 50m pool, two sports halls, a 220-station gym, six squash courts, five studios, a high performance centre, a climbing wall, sauna, steamroom and a café. This is in addition to the university's outdoor tennis courts and multiple grass and synthetic pitches.

The centre, says Wooldridge, will "serve a wide range of users, from early years' swimming to retired groups, and absolute beginners to world-class performers." As well as catering for 15 community clubs, 55 student clubs and a 2,500-strong intramural programme, it will offer a wide range of memberships and pay-and-play options. Membership estimates are 6,000 for students, 1,650 for staff and 2,500 for community members. Community members will pay, on average, between two and 2.5 times as much as students (student memberships currently start at £104 a year). While the opening of the new facility will naturally lessen demand on available space, some continuing tension between different user groups is inevitable. The key to managing this, says Wooldridge, is good advance planning and communication: "For example, our student clubs understand that their subsidies are to a large extent dependent on our members gaining use. As long as we share that, and they understand that, it does generally work."

Birmingham will open a new £55m indoor sports centre in 2016

Like Steele, Wooldridge also puts faith in the value of external accreditation and benchmarking schemes. In 2012, UB Sport took part in the National Benchmarking Service – administered by Leisure-net Solutions in partnership with Sheffield Hallam University's Sport Industry Research Centre – "because it's a valuable benchmark against industry standards and informs us how much we need to improve in the lead-in to a new facility."

Like UEA, UB Sport is also one of seven Quest-accredited university sports centres, and the first to achieve Quest Combo, which assesses both facilities and sports development. The motivation, says Wooldridge, was to help operational staff to "understand the standards to aspire to if they are to be the best in the industry."

"The university sector is good at sitting back and saying, 'operationally, we're very good, aren't we?' But there are a lot of things in the commercial sector we can learn from. Our students and members come to us from private clubs: that's what their expectations are, that's what we have to deliver. It's very easy for [staff] to get comfortable and not necessarily see that. So all Quest does is it changes the lens through which they see the world." ●

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TOM WALKER, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

Figures show that 52 per cent of 11-year-olds entering secondary school are able to swim

NATION'S FAVOURITE

Despite falls in the number of regular swimmers, visiting the pool is still the most popular form of sport in the UK. We look at what is being done to get even more people to jump in at the deep end

Since Sport England's Active People Survey began 10 years ago, swimming has remained the most popular sport in England.

Swimming's unique ability to appeal to both genders, all age groups and fitness levels, as well as to those with physical challenges or health conditions, means the potential for engagement in the sport is huge. But outdated facilities, rising costs and a perception with that swimming hasn't moved with the times, have seen numbers begin to fall and there are now moves to turn this situation around.

TURNING THE TIDE

Over the last year the national governing body for swimming, the Amateur Swimming Association (ASA), has gone through a period of change, bringing in new leadership and investing in an insight team to help the organisation – and the wider industry – better understand the needs of the swimmer. This insight has been central in shaping the ASA's new Participation Strategy which, according to CEO Adam Paker, will improve swimming from its foundations and encourage more people to return to the water.

"Swimming is a great activity which can be enjoyed with friends, with the family or individually", enthuses Paker. "It is also incredibly versatile, providing opportunities for people to stay active regardless of their fitness levels or personal goals.

"But there is a lot of choice out there when it comes to physical activity and people are rightly wanting more from their swimming experience. Over the last year we have improved our knowledge of what motivates people to swim and, perhaps more importantly, what is stopping people swimming more often.

Learning to swim

Any attempt to increase participation has to start with swimming lessons. Last year more than 2.4 million children and 100,000 adults learned to swim. While seemingly impressive figures, recent research by the ASA shows that only 52 per cent of children at Key Stage 2 are able to swim the minimum requirement of 25m unaided and one in five adults cannot swim at all.

"Ensuring that all children have the opportunity to take part in high quality school swimming lessons is not only paramount to growing participation, it is also a key lifesaving skill that can help to prevent drowning," says Adam Paker.

"School swimming lessons were first introduced 125 years ago, yet only half of our children are able to swim the length of a pool.

"More than 500 schools have signed up to our School Swimming Charter, which is great, but we all need to work together – government, schools, operators – to make sure all primary schools have the resources available to ensure all children have the opportunity to learn to swim."

 © Cybertrek 2015

Since 2013, the average number of swimming lessons made available to primary age children per year has risen from 16 to 18

"Our strategy is centred around improving swimming from its foundations by making it more visible and relevant to people's lives, ensuring facilities are best in class, and providing experiences which genuinely meet people's needs."

We have many examples of well-run pools, but we also have the challenge of an ageing pool stock and an economic climate which is squeezing everyone's purse strings

MAKING SWIMMING VISIBLE

The ASA's five-year strategy, which is supported by Sport England, aims to return swimming to its heyday of attracting more than three million adult swimmers every week. One of the people brought in by the NGB to help do this was Nick Caplin, former director of communications at Sony Computer Entertainment Europe.

As the ASA's director of participation, Caplin has been integral in developing the new strategy. "What we've done is spend time really understanding the market. What's clear is that there are many different reasons why people go swimming; what motivates one person is very different from the next, but there is a huge latent demand we need to tap in to."

Increasing the visibility of swimming through a national marketing campaign and improved digital presence is one of the first areas the new strategy will tackle.

"We need to be better at reminding people why they should go swimming," says Caplin. "Every day you see people out jogging or cycling, but by its very nature swimming often happens behind closed doors. If you ask someone on the street why they don't swim more often, their response is usually, 'because it never crossed my mind'. We want to change this by putting swimming at the forefront of people's minds and showing why it should be integrated into their weekly routine."

Like many other sports, one of the key challenges for the ASA is around facilities. With an ageing pool stock – and 65 fewer pools across 87 fewer sites than in 2013 – the public perception is that many facilities are not up to scratch. The ASA plans to support facilities by introducing best practice endorsements and hygiene support services, as well as new ways to accurately measure who is using the facilities. All of which will help to raise the perception of swimming.

"We have many really great examples of well-run pools," explains Caplin, "but we also have the challenge of an ageing pool stock and an economic climate that is squeezing everyone's purse strings. By working together, combining our expertise, and supporting smaller facilities, we will be able to modernise swimming."

The third key area of the strategy focuses on tailoring the swimming offer for different needs. The ASA has seen great success with Swim Safe – its annual open water safety programme for children – and initiatives such as the Dementia Friendly Swimming Project which is aimed at supporting people living with dementia to continue being active.

Over the next two years the ASA will be developing new programmes to encourage more people to get involved. These range from mass-participation challenges – such as timed 500m swims – to new aquacise classes aimed at different levels. Underlying all this will be the integration of new swim-logging technology.

Caplin is quick to stress that none of this can be done by the ASA in isolation and requires all stakeholders in the swimming industry to work together. ▶

Talent pathway – the 12-strong England swimming squad which competed at the Samoa 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games

"Our research showed that what swimming needed was a whole new approach. This strategy looks at the overall swimming experience, so we were keen to consult with all of our partners across the aquatics industry to enable us to improve cooperation."

Kayle Burgham, technical manager for Aquatics at STA – an awarding body for swimming teaching and lifesaving in the UK – concurs. "A united and coordinated approach to swimming and water safety education in the UK is needed, with the main aquatic and lifesaving bodies working more closely together to tackle all these important issues," she says. "One of our greatest aims is to address the shortage of qualified swimming teachers in the UK. Our recent survey found that difficulties in recruiting trained swimming teachers is creating widespread problems – 72 per cent of swim schools in the UK have a waiting list for lesson spaces, but just over 81 per cent said they could not find appropriately qualified swimming teaching staff to meet this demand. This is majorly impacting on the opportunity for children to learn how to swim. In response we will be piloting a Swimming Teacher Apprentice Course in 2016."

GROWING THE TALENT

One area which has seen continued growth is club swimming. The ASA has more than 200,000 members at 1,095 affiliated aquatic clubs. Volunteers remain an important part of the sport, with 45,000 regularly involved in clubs and at regional and national competitions.

The healthy nature of grassroots swimming has created a pool of exciting young athletes that the ASA's talent pathway scheme, England Programmes, has been able to support.

This investment in identifying and developing young swimming talent continues to reap rewards, with the 12 athletes selected to represent Team England at the 2015 Commonwealth Youth Games in Samoa claiming 25 medals and finishing second in the medal table.

With 12 of the 15 English swimmers selected to be part of British Swimming's 2016 Podium Potential squad, the ASA is confident that English swimmers will continue to play a big part in the future of British international success.

With the rollout of the ASA's work to increase participation, coupled with London hosting the 2016 European Aquatics Championships and anticipation of the Olympics, 2016 promises to be an exciting year for swimming. ●

Swimming and the health agenda

A key selling point for swimming is that anyone can take part. It's often been described as a great leveller because once you are in the water, the relatively weightless environment helps to support the body. This is particularly helpful for disabled people or those with health conditions. It has also been shown to be beneficial for a person's mental health. As news stories abound of problems in the NHS, rising obesity levels and an ageing population, swimming is increasingly being highlighted by health professionals and referral agencies as a good way for people to stay positive and active.

Last month, the ASA's Dementia Friendly Swimming Project was rolled out to a further six locations. The initial results have been extremely positive and the project is supporting even more people to enjoy swimming in a safe and friendly swimming environment. The ASA is also piloting projects in Peterborough and Kirklees focused on improving the experience for disabled swimmers.

 ©Cybertrek 2015

Retain young swimmers with Rookie

Declining swimming numbers could spell disaster for pool operators. Fortunately, the RLSS UK's Rookie Lifeguard Programme can help.

Working with the industry, the RLSS UK has developed a number of initiatives specifically designed to help operators attract new swimmers and retain existing pool users.

The highly successful Rookie Lifeguard Programme has proved to be a particularly useful tool for retaining younger swimmers, allowing operators to keep children coming to their centres for longer. More than this, operators implementing the nine core awards over one 10-week term can potentially achieve a gross income of £3,000.

Wolverhampton Swimming and Fitness Centre has run the RLSS UK Rookie Lifeguard Programme for more than six years. Operated by Places for People Leisure in partnership with Wolverhampton City Council, the centre has four swimming pools comprising a 25m main pool, a 15m pool, a toddler pool and a leisure waters pool.

The centre runs a comprehensive programme of swimming lessons accommodating some 3,000 children. Rookie Lifeguard has proved a useful way of retaining children after its learn to swim programmes. Designed for eight to 12 year olds, the nine awards teach a variety of life-saving skills including survival, rescue, life support and water safety. These skills can not only save lives - one girl prevented her baby brother from choking to death by using the techniques she'd learned during Rookie Lifeguard - the programme also allows operators to retain children for an additional three years.

The centre runs five, 30-minute Rookie classes each week, 50 weeks a year.

"Rookie has been very successful for us. It's not simply an income generator; we retain children in our aquatics programme, and introduce life-saving skills to them. Rookie is viewed as a natural progression from our swimming lessons and we also pick up children from other centres in Wolverhampton that don't offer the programme," says Donna Bristoll, operations manager at Places for People Leisure.

The programme also helps to retain staff. Those holding a Level 2 Swimming Teacher qualification and a Lifesaving/Lifeguarding qualification can qualify as a Rookie Lifeguard Instructor.

"Rookie is a great way for our teachers to develop and add another string to their bow. All they have to do is apply for the instructor pack available from Lifesavers Direct (RLSS UK's online store) and complete the conversion. It's an easy way to get more skilled and happier staff," says Bristoll.

ROOKIE LIFEGUARD FACTS

- The scheme begins with Stage 1 of the Bronze Award and progresses to Stage 3 of the Gold Award, starting off at an ability level suitable for new swimmers and progressing to the level where Rookie Lifeguards perform life-saving tows.
- Rookie Lifeguard is part of the National Plan for Teaching Swimming (NPTS) developed by the Amateur Swimming Association. It can also be run as a stand-alone course by junior lifesaving clubs, leisure centres and swimming schools and as part of school swimming lessons. The Rookie Lifeguard Water Safety Award fulfils all of the Key Stage 2 water safety elements of the National Curriculum.
- Many Rookies progress to RLSS UK's Survive and Save Lifesaving programme and some even continue the pathway to become RLSS UK pool lifeguards, completing the National Pool Lifeguard Qualification (NPLQ).

For more information contact Danielle Peel at:
E: mail@iql.org.uk **T:** 01789 773 994
Or visit: www.rlss.org.uk

BY TOM WALKER

This year's show was the best attended in history, with 2,804 delegates from 82 countries

SOCCEREX 2015

Tom Walker reports from the Soccerex Global Convention, where the future of FIFA, artificial pitches, advances in player metrics and fan engagement were on the agenda

The Soccerex Global Convention – now in its 20th year – attracted a record-breaking 2,804 delegates from 82 countries to the Manchester Central Convention Complex in September. The key meeting place for football professionals, the three-day programme of seminars and keynote speeches was supported by a show floor packed with 163 exhibitors – ranging from architects, designers and technology providers to marketeers and F&B suppliers.

In total, there were 45 conference sessions spread across three stages. The Studio was home to interviews and sessions involving the heavyweights of world football – such as FIFA presidential candidate Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein, MLS commissioner Don Garber and Football Association (FA) CEO Martin Glenn. The second stage, called The Academy, was a hub of learning, insight and creativity and hosted 20 individual workshops focusing on finance, social media, law, match day operations and sponsorship. Finally, making its debut, the conference's Corporate Social Opportunity (CSO) Zone – delivered in partnership with child rights organisation Terre des Hommes and charity Back In Football – showcased how football can be used as a tool for social development.

Describing the addition of the new CSO area, Soccerex marketing director David Wright said: "We're always looking to highlight the social issues affecting football and the CSO Zone allowed us to devote more time and space to such an important and diverse area within the industry."

Towards a new FIFA

The conference opened with an interview with HRH Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein, former FIFA executive committee member and the sole challenger to incumbent Sepp Blatter at this year's FIFA presidential election. Ali described the world governing body – and its brand – as being 'extremely damaged'.

"We have to change the entire way FIFA is run and the way that it conducts itself," Prince Ali said. "As much as people love football, the feelings toward FIFA are precisely the opposite and that is a real shame. The whole football world is suffering because of what is going on with FIFA and it's no longer a matter of simply changing the leadership. The FIFA brand is repairable, but we need to take a strong stand and we need to start the action now."

He added that he "wasn't confident" that UEFA president Michel Platini was the right man to lead FIFA forward.

The topic of FIFA's future loomed large above networking discussions at Soccerex, and most delegates welcomed the news that former International Olympic Committee director general François Carrard had been appointed to lead a new FIFA reform taskforce. Carrard will chair a 12-member panel that will present reform proposals to the FIFA congress in February, the date when disgraced FIFA president Blatter will relinquish his grip on the organisation he has led since 1998.

Football Association CEO Martin Glenn speaking at Soccerex

 ©Cybertrek 2015

The convention attracts a number of leaders and former players who now work in the sector – such as Peter Reid and John Barnes (left and top left), Sir Bobby Charlton (above) and Peter Shilton (right)

> During the conference, delegates learned how technology is changing the way football is played and managed – and how it's followed and consumed by fans

Move towards artificial pitches

Another hot topic of conversation was the increased popularity of artificial pitches – especially in climates less favourable for the year-round growing of grass.

The recent success of the Iceland national team, which secured qualification to Euro 2016, was cited as an example of how talent can be nurtured when it's provided with modern training facilities and heavy investment in youth coaching. Iceland, with a population of 300,000, has 20 full-size artificial pitches and more than 150 small-size pitches to cater for its 20,000 registered players, for example.

Speaking at Soccerex, FA CEO Martin Glenn re-iterated the FA's intention to increase spending on artificial pitches for grassroots football. "When it comes to artificial pitches, we are way behind other northern European countries with similar climates," he said, adding that there are many examples of countries seeing an upturn in fortunes after well judged investment in artificial pitches.

"Over the past two years there has been a realisation that we need to spend much more on grassroots facilities – and more specifically, to increase the number of artificial pitches. We're in a situation where English kids play on quagmires for two months – which means conditions benefit strong rather than skilfull kids," he said.

Technological advances

The many ways in which technology is changing the way football is played and managed – and how it's followed and consumed by fans – were also debated during many of the sessions. Delegates heard how many professional clubs are now adopting a more evidence-based, sabermetric approach to team management and player recruitment, partly thanks to the publication of two influential books – Michael Lewis' *Moneyball* and *Soccernomics* by Simon Kuper. Delegates were also given insights into how technology isn't that far from being able to broadcast real-time player and physiological data back to coaching teams. It's predicted that by 2030, team sports (not just football) could see miniature cameras being introduced to every players' shirt to track their views and to cover their every move.

It's not just player analysis and coaching which will be transformed by technology. The way referees work will change, with the introduction of impact sensors and cameras, while fans will be able to literally feel what it's like to be a top player by using sensory data transmitted by an electronic tattoo layer worn by players.

During the conference, it was announced that the Soccerex Americas Forum 2016 will take place on 11-12 May in Mexico City. The global convention will be held in Manchester from 26-28 September 2016.●

BY TOM WALKER

The design was inspired by Quebec's cold climate

FROZEN DREAMS

The opening of the Centre Vidéotron in Quebec could return a professional ice hockey team to the city for the first time in 20 years

Canadian cities Quebec, Toronto and Montreal are often considered as being the most ice hockey-mad towns in North America – if not the world. In all three, hockey is more than just a sport. The players are idolised and arenas treated almost as places of worship.

For the past two decades, however, Montreal and Toronto have held a distinct advantage over Quebec – a team to support in the National Hockey League (NHL).

While Montreal is home to the famous Canadiens and Toronto has the Maple Leafs, Quebec's beloved Nordiques were forced to relocate to Colorado in 1995 due to the "financial environment".

The problem was that having a successful team on the ice wasn't enough to sustain the financial goals of Nordiques' then owner, Marcel Aubut.

The team was forced to play at the ageing, 15,000-capacity Colisée de Québec and Aubut wanted the city council to part-finance a move to a bigger, modern arena where it would be easier to create and operate alternative revenue sources, such as retail operations and a casino. When a deal couldn't be struck with city officials, Aubut sold the franchise to COMSAT Entertainment Group based in Denver, US and the Nordiques became the Colorado Avalanche. It was a devastating loss for the city of Quebec.

CENTRE VIDÉOTRON

Architect/design team: Populous, ABCP Architecture, GLCRM & Associates
Project manager: Genivar
Structural engineers: Thornton Tomasetti and M-E Engineers
Services engineer: SNC-Lavalin
Contractor: Pomerleau
Operator: AEG Facilities

The arena sits within Quebec's ExpoCite

RETURN TO BASE

For the past 20 years, the Nordiques faithful have been campaigning to bring an NHL team back to the city. In September this year – after a number of false starts and dashed hopes – those efforts finally took a huge step forward thanks to the opening of the Centre Vidéotron at Quebec's ExpoCité district. The 18,200-capacity arena was too late to save the original Nordiques, but is seen as the missing piece in putting a solid a case for the NHL to finally award a franchise to Quebecor – the telecommunications company which part-owns Centre Vidéotron (along with the City of Quebec) and has been actively seeking to secure an NHL team since 2011.

For Populous, the architects appointed to design the arena, there was never any doubt who the intended permanent tenant would be. "This is absolutely a hockey-first design with the intention of securing an NHL franchise in the near future," says Kurt Amundsen, principal at Populous. "The size of Vidéotron and the facilities within the venue mean that this is a major league arena."

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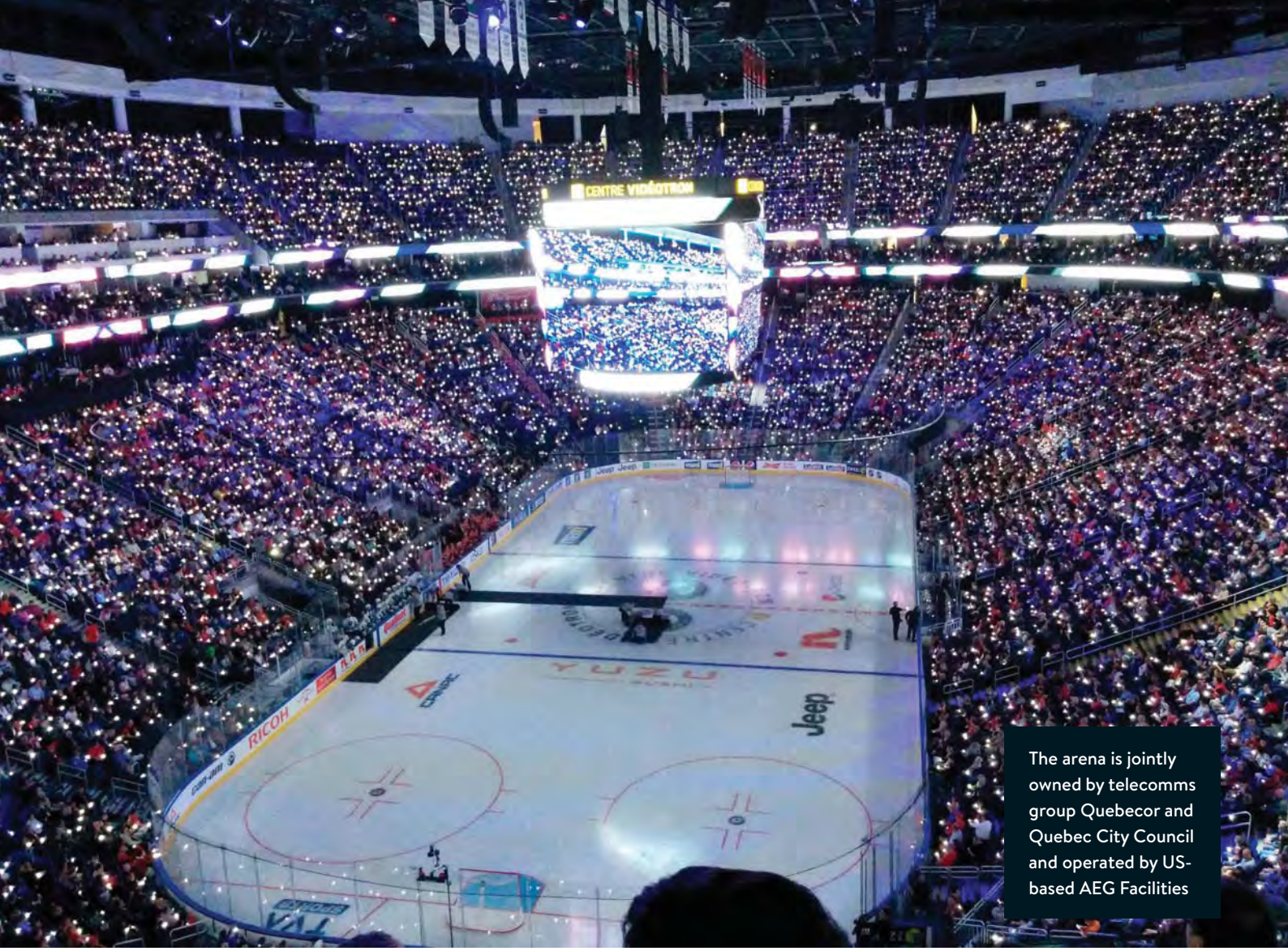


The arena is jointly owned by telecomms group Quebecor and Quebec City Council and operated by US-based AEG Facilities

We were driven to design a very intimate bowl to provide fans with the best possible sight lines – we wanted to place them as close as possible to the action

NEW SPACE

The CA$380m Centre Vidéotron is located adjacent to ExpoCite – Quebec's 4 million sq ft business district which hosts trade shows, events and business gatherings – and the arena has been designed as a flexible, iconic and accessible space.

With a capacity of 18,259 for hockey games, Centre Vidéotron would rank as the 15th largest of the NHL's 30 arenas, behind Montreal (the largest in the league with a capacity of 21,273) and Toronto (18,800) but ahead of those in other established and larger hockey markets, such as Boston (17,565) and Edmonton (16,839). While primarily designed as a hockey venue, the main amphitheatre's flexible design allows seven different stage configurations to accommodate a multitude of events, from an intimate 3,700 theatre experience to a 20,000 centre stage concert.

DESIGN

According to Brad Clark, senior principal of Populous, the design was influenced as much by Quebec's extreme climate as it was by its rich hockey history. "One of the biggest influences on the design was the way the city and its population celebrate the winter months and the cold," he said.

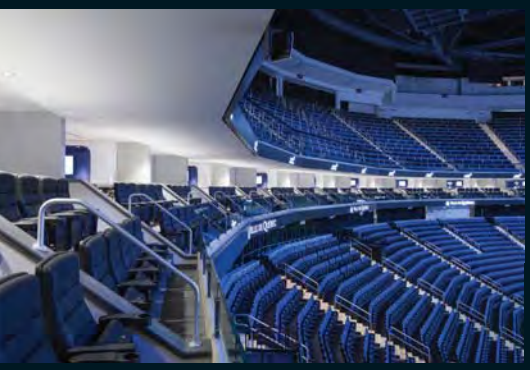
"Early in the design process, we established that we wanted to capture the sentiment of the cold Canadian climate – the ice and snow – along with the warmth of natural wood to speak to the area's booming timber industry. We really wanted to incorporate maple wood and timber in some meaningful way.

"We were creative in using affordable and sustainable materials and natural materials were central to bringing the story to life. Centre Vidéotron is probably one of the first – if not the only arena – which incorporates wood into the primary structure. All of the exterior framing of the exterior skin is glue and wood, as is the main atrium curtain wall framing along the south side. Wood is a very prominent material in this building, more so than any arena that we have done to date."

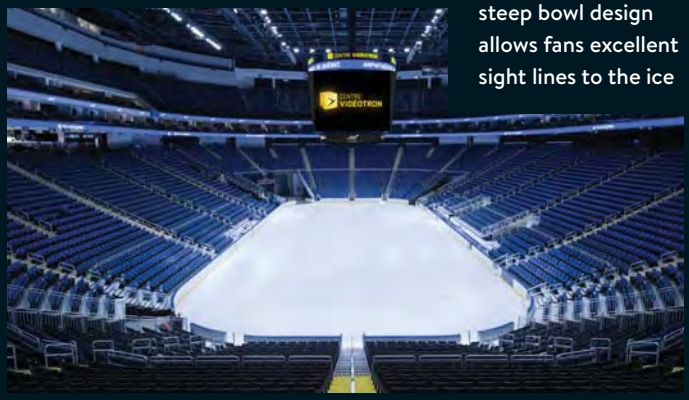
CLOSE TO THE ACTION

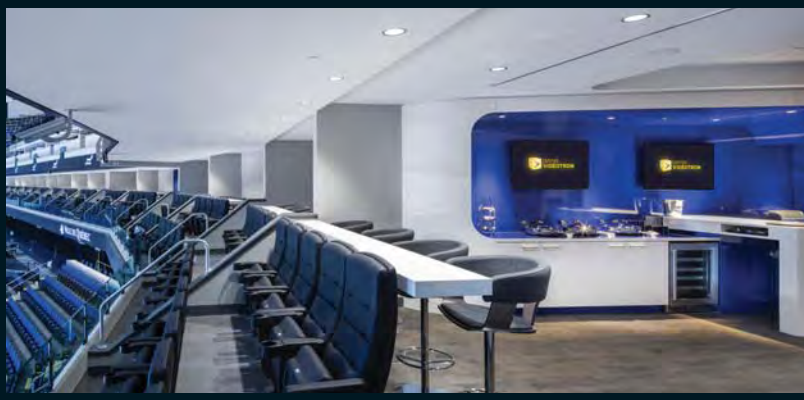
Perhaps the most innovative aspect of Centre Vidéotron is the way the seating bowls have been designed. The brief from Quebecor was clear – seating was to be as steep and tight as possible, in order to get the fans close to the action and create an unforgettable atmosphere.

"The mentality in Canada is quite different from that in the States when it comes to sport, especially ice hockey," says Clark. "For Canadians, attending a game is all about the sport and seeing the action, much more so than in the US, where there is a lot of secondary activity going on. In the US, going to a live sports event is seen more as entertainment, an experience, a ▶



The VIP boxes are located on the upper bowl (left). The steep bowl design allows fans excellent sight lines to the ice





spectacle. At US arenas, we spend a lot of time designing secondary experiences. In Canada, it's all about the sport.

"From the get go, we were really driven to design a very intimate seating bowl, to provide fans the best possible sight lines onto the ice. We wanted to place them as close as possible to the action and make the seating bowl as deep as physically possible. The seating bowl is designed in a way that it's probably less accommodating to get to and from your seat – but once you're in, the sight lines are amazing."

In other words, Populous' design fits with the Canadian way of viewing hockey. Fans are knowledgeable and want to enjoy the game in close quarters and they tend not to get up from their seats for food or drink during the game.

The efforts to place the spectators at the heart of the action has also affected the way the arena's premium seating and VIP boxes have been designed. Rather than place the corporate boxes at the top of the lower bowl, as most arenas do, the VIP seating areas have been placed at the bottom of the top bowl – which is often seen by fans as "less desirable".

Therefore, the entire lower level is designated to "normal" seating and can accommodate up to 10,010 people – more than 55 per cent of the total capacity.

"This is one of the first facilities where we've incorporated a premium seating product in the upper bowl," Clark says.

DESIGN

Quebec City is known for its extreme temperatures and quick-changing climate, which inspired Populous to play with the theme of hot and cold. Throughout the site, visitors can experience the warm, cozy atmosphere of chalets, seamlessly blended with sleek, chic spaces using materials such as steel and wood. The metal coating used in construction reflects light, mimicking snow or the waves on the river, while the blue and white colours throughout pay tribute to the world-famous Quebec winters.

"The entire upper level is located above the corporate suites and lounges and has a capacity of 6,940 people. The design allowed us to use a steep seating rig, which still brings those premium seats and suites close to the ice and provides some really incredible sight lines."

The 80 corporate suites are located on two separate levels and include a wireless network and a remote connection to the concession stands. All suites are accessible through the corporate lounge corridor and by a separate, VIP elevator. There is also considerable disabled access, with the lower bowl offering 26 and the upper 28 wheelchair-accessible seats.

SUSTAINABILITY

The Vidéotron Centre has been LEED certified at the silver level, thanks to its many sustainable solutions – which include energy-saving practices and reduced water consumption across the venue.

Vidéotron has adopted an innovative approach to controlling and managing rainwater, with the aim of limiting pollution of natural waterways by reducing impervious ground surfaces, increasing ground infiltration and reducing or eliminating pollution from rainwater runoff. The building envelope has also been equipped with air and vapour barriers, protecting it against air leakage and diffusion and ensuring its longevity.

IMPACT

Centre Vidéotron has had an immediate impact on Quebec's entertainment landscape. It hosted its first major concert on 16 September – when rock band Metallica played to a capacity audience – signalling its new role as the city's leading indoor venue. The centre has also secured a permanent ice hockey tenant, giving fans a taster of what a future NHL franchise would mean. The Quebec Remparts – who play in the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League – will play its home games at the new venue at least until the return of a professional team. For the people of Quebec, that moment can't come soon enough. ●

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DR JULIE BRUNTON, VICE CHAIR OF THE ESDN

ESDN CONFERENCE

Understanding behaviours and how to change them was among the key topics at the sixth annual conference of the European Sports Development Network (ESDN) – the event which brings together sports academics and practitioners

One of the main purposes of European Sports Development Network (ESDN) is to give academics and practitioners an opportunity to share knowledge and discuss the advancement of sport development. This year, the conference's main topic was sports participation – particularly timely, considering that Sport England and the British University College Sport (BUCS) are currently in the middle of consultations which will result in new strategies on participation for both.

INSIGHT TO PARTICIPATION

The day started with two keynotes with contrasting perspectives – one from Lisa O'Keefe, director of insight at Sport England and the other from Fred Coalter, professor at Leeds Beckett University.

O'Keefe talked about the current picture of participation in England, describing the need to understand behaviour, design and delivery for the particular target audience, and finished with an illustration using a case study from This Girl Can.

When it comes to behaviour change theory, there is a myriad of theories and models. Sport England is linking its insight to Prochaska and DiClimente's (1983) Transtheoretical Model that identifies a staged approach to behaviour change. While it has had mixed success, it can help those delivering sport to understand that behaviour change is complex and often involves a number of processes that individuals go through before they become physically active.

Sport England highlighted the need to design sports offers with specific target audiences in mind, to understand the barriers faced by a particular audience, what motivates them and the context they are in. There is also a need to understand more about behavioural techniques of how to achieve change, as well as how can will educate people better around coping strategies to improve maintenance.

Knowing about barriers and motivation won't necessarily lead people into action and maintenance, but improved knowledge of behaviour change techniques and planning for dropout prevention might.

Sport England's This Girl Can campaign illustrated excellent awareness-raising and stated motivation. However, to move people who need "a push" to get active is another complex challenge that requires better understanding of what will move these 'intenders' (those who need to be motivated to be active) into action. More work is needed to link university academics with sports policy makers and deliverers to help 'try and test' more theory-based interventions to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

INEQUALITY IN PRACTICE

Keynote two, presented by professor Fred Coalter, reviewed the data representing the inequalities in sports participation. Although changes in data collection have made longitudinal analysis difficult, relationships between age, sex and social class and sports participation remained relatively unchanged from 1987 to 2014.

Sport England's This Girl Can campaign was designed using a staged behaviour change methodology

Getting people more physically active is about much more than just market segmentation and the targeting of certain social groups

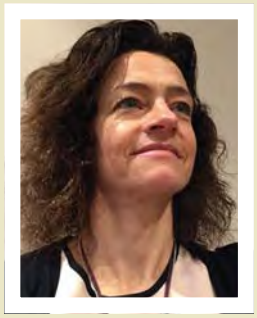
The different cultures of the Scandinavian countries explain their high sports participation rates

Coalter argued that the comparisons made between the UK's levels of participation and those of Scandinavian countries are spurious. He said we fail to understand that the different socio-economic structures and cultures of these countries explain their high sports participation rates.

Drawing on the analyses made by authors Richard Wilkinson and Kate Pickett in their seminal *The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone*, Coalter argued that general inequality is the key to understanding differences in sports participation and their meaning.

Differences in the distribution of wealth, income inequality, educational access, social mobility and the differing social and economic position of women serve to explain different levels of sports participation. Important to note too, that the UK is lagging far beyond on most measures of equality. Unequal societies such as the UK are much less cohesive and inclusive and because of the negative and socially fragmenting socio-cultural and socio-psychological effects of inequality (such as status anxiety and stigmatisation).

Therefore, getting people into sport is about much more than market segmentation and the targeting of certain social groups. Coalter concluded by arguing that the factors influencing sports participation may be well beyond the control of sports policy.



Julie Brunton (left), chair of ESDN and keynote speakers Fred Coalter and Lisa O'Keefe

CHANGING BEHAVIOURS

With this in mind, how can this context be considered to help people change their behaviour – can people still be helped to change? From a theoretical point of view the answer has to be yes, but there isn't one simple answer and it would require tailoring of resources to reach the people who need help the most. This of course, from a population perspective, becomes the issue for sports policy and practice.

Workshop areas addressed the different populations covering young people, university sport and wider communities. 'Women and Girls' is ever present as an on-going research area given the persistence of the sizable gender gap in participation and also referred to in Lisa O'Keefe's keynote with 1.75 million more men active than women. While this topic can seem a little 'tired' for some, it continues to be an essential area of focus.

University and college sport is also a particular area of need for research in the UK and this is timely, following the Active University Projects and continued Sport England funding into the university sector with the Sport Activation Funding.

It was clear also that more work is required on intervention design and evaluation in all populations when trying to increase participation in sport.

The conference summarised thoughts for future research and practice. Three key areas that emerged throughout were:

1) The extent of inequality and what we should do about this.

2) Behaviour Change – do practitioners and policy makers really understand the nature of this area to the extent that they are able to effect change?

3) Should sport be focusing on the inactive or issues around health and if both, how can they work more effectively?

Details for the 2016 conference will be announced in the new year, while presentations from this year's event can be found at www.esdn2015.com ●

BY KATH HUDSON

DAVID MANICA

The founder of Manica Architecture has come up with a concept which could shape the way major events build their venues in future. Kath Hudson talks to him about his approach

Can you explain your SEED stadium concept and how it works?

The concept is part of an evolution of R+D ideas we've been focusing on in relation to creating more successful legacy conversions for major stadium events.

Most legacy conversions try and figure out what to do with a stadium once it's no longer needed for a major event. The innovation of the SEED concept is that it works first toward the legacy solution as a starting point, and then reverse engineers it.

So in summary, we design a development concept that benefits the city, with low income housing, hotels, conference facilities, office and retail, parking, theatres, parks, and even terraced urban gardens – and then find a way to collect those buildings together temporarily for use as a stadium for a one-off event.

The concept is yet to be realised, but I think it makes sense and will be implemented, to some degree, in the near future.

What are the biggest trends in sport and architecture at the moment?

Current trends include heightened awareness of IT and technology, as well as environmental sustainability. I'm also seeing a larger variety of seating types and offerings in each new building that opens.

I think sport architects are collectively pushing the boundaries of the building type further and further along. Each new building which comes online is a clear evolution of what came before it.

I'm pleased and proud to be part of a small group of people in the world who are changing the building type forever.

Manica's projects include the new home of the Golden State Warriors in San Francisco, US

How does the design of a sports building effect the fan experience?

A successful design can unlock the greatest fan experience and the greatest revenues: both of which are critical when it comes to long term sustainability. The guest experience is choreographed by the architect as they are designing the building, so fantastic and creative design is essential.

What are you working on right now?

We have multiple projects on-site around the world. Our mixed-use sport park – including a small arena, conference facility, hotel, ballroom, natatorium, and parking structure – is about to open just north of Hong Kong in China.

Our VTB Arena project in central Moscow – a singular facility which individually houses both indoor hockey, outdoor football and a retail shopping mall – is under construction. And we're currently leading the design of the new San Francisco multi-purpose arena, which is due to open in 2018, as well as the new Los Angeles NFL Stadium in Carson for the Chargers and Raiders bid to move there, which will open in 2019.

What have been your career high and low points?

Winning big projects is always a thrill. But seeing them realised and open is what we do as architects. So some of the

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The VTB Arena in Moscow, a 15,000-capacity indoor arena in the heart of Moscow, is set to be completed next year (2016)

highlights were seeing our first three arena projects open in China. A recent high point was the win in Los Angeles for the NFL stadium, because we were up against three established companies, and we were selected as the lead design architect.

How do you judge whether a building is a success or not?

First of all it must be built! Nearly anybody can draw a creative building on paper, but it takes a completely different kind of focus, and a strategic sense for compromise, to get a building out of the ground.

Once built, my gauge for success is based on the people who use it. If the building brings people true joy, and it's a place they want to return to again and again, then this is the final and most important factor in identifying which buildings are successful.

What is the best part of your job?

One of the best parts is walking into the studio every day to greet my team for what I call "another day of awesome".

The entire team is talented and driven, and it's an honour for me to lead, work with, and learn from them every day. And although it is challenging and tiring, I consider myself lucky to be able to travel the world to do these projects. I meet the most amazing people, make lifetime friends and end up working on a building which will last for generations in the process.

What is the worst part?

I despise chasing projects. I don't do it often because many of our clients come to us. But on occasions when we have to pursue projects through a formal interview process, the effort is excruciating, it's time consuming, a risky use of precious time, and can be very stressful.

I sometimes pass on projects because I don't feel like going through the pursuit.

Which other architects do you admire?

I admire many of my peers and competitors. We're all in the same trenches working hard every day to do something special. When I see an idea from them that makes me think,

Manica is working on a new home for a future NFL team in Carson City, Los Angeles

> Most legacy conversions try to figure out what to do with a stadium after the event. The SEED concept works out the legacy solution and reverse engineers it

"Wow! That's really cool. I wish I'd thought of that", my reaction is to feel admiration rather than jealousy.

The same holds true really for any building, not just sport. I may not know them by name, but when you see a unique idea executed in somebody else's work, I appreciate the time and effort it took to get that idea to come to life.

Architecture is hard, because it takes an unbelievable amount of compromise and balance. As designers, so many of our ideas are limited by simple things, like gravity or building codes, so when I see an idea that's pure in thought and elegantly executed, I admire the designer that took the time to bring it to life.

The Manica-designed main sport and entertainment facility at Shantou Sport Park, China

Why did you become an architect?

I used to draw pictures of houses when I was a child. When I realised that there were people who did that for their work, and that they were called architects, I decided that's what I wanted to do with my life.

As I grew older, I became interested in classical music, learned the trumpet and went to university on a music scholarship.

I decided I could be an architect and still play the trumpet, but of course, I was wrong. There isn't enough time in the day.

I eventually stopped practicing trumpet, but I'm very happy with my decision to become an architect and I love what I do.

What's your career background?

I graduated from the University of Kansas in 1994, with the aim of working in a large practice doing larger projects.

In Kansas City, if you're an architect at a large company, there's a good chance you'll be working on sports buildings, because it's the US home of sports architecture.

Two weeks after I graduated I went to work at what was then HOK Sport. I focused on 3D design and graphics.

At that time, computers weren't heavily used in our industry, so the work my generation of architects was doing gained a lot of attention. This gave me the opportunity to work on interesting projects with great mentors very early in my career.

I worked my way up to managing director of design as a principal in the office and then in 2007 I started my own practice. ●

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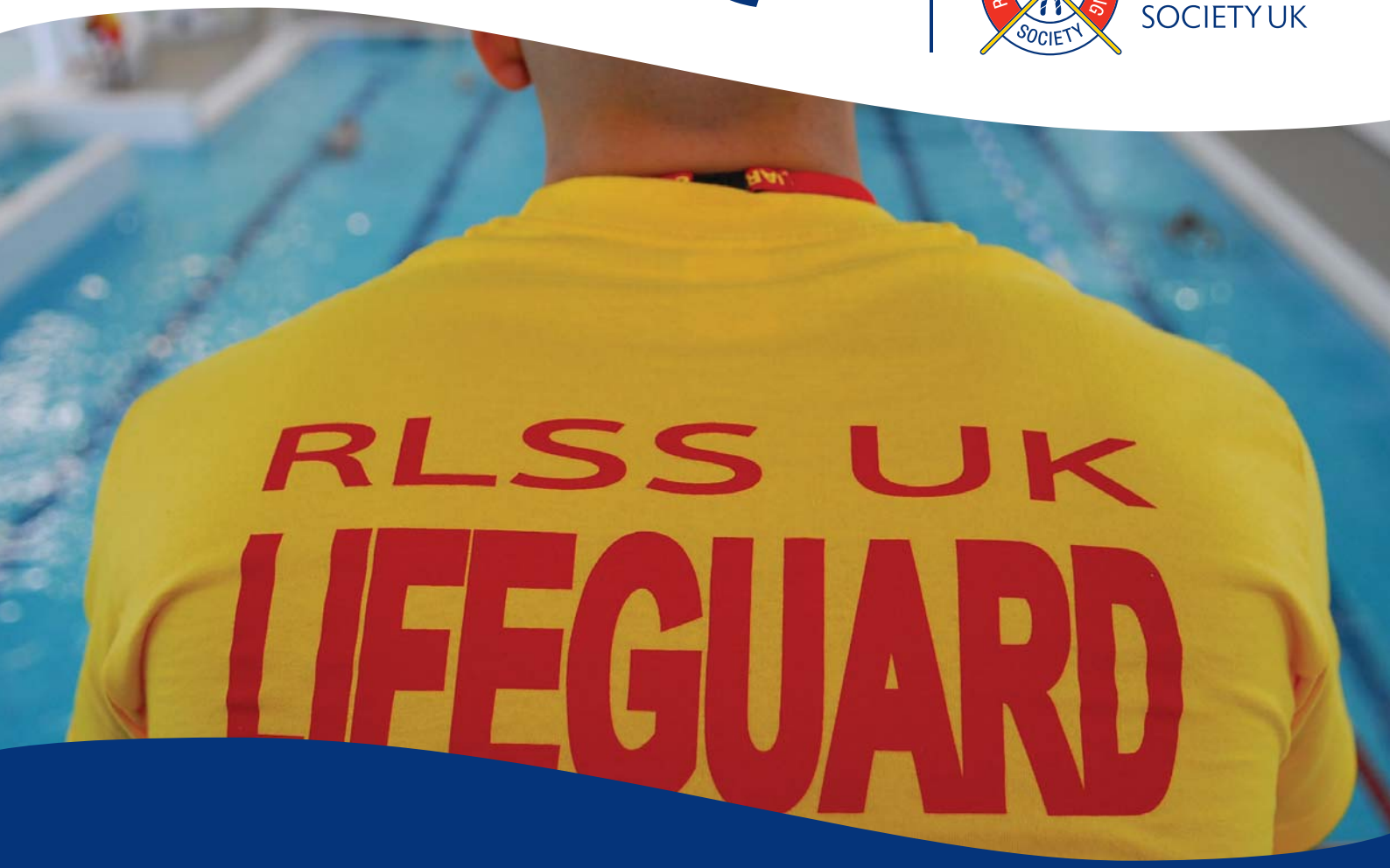

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Rooms at the Southampton Hilton Hotel overlook the pitch at Ageas Bowl

FLEXIBLE DESIGNS

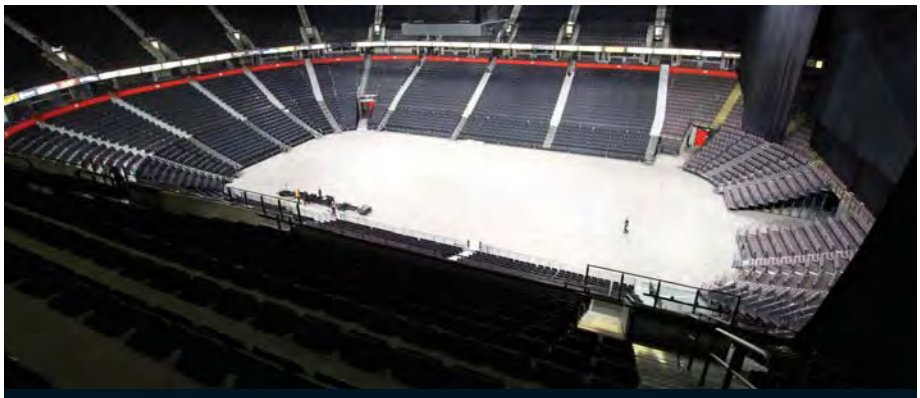
As sports venues look to use the space available to them more efficiently, suppliers are answering the call and delivering innovative and flexible structures and solutions

TOM WALKER, SPORTS MANAGEMENT

Project: New seating system for Manchester Arena
By: Audience Systems

Manchester Arena is, according to US-based *Billboard* magazine, the world's third busiest multi-use venue – behind Madison Square Garden in New York and London's O2. As well as concerts, it hosts a hectic schedule of sports – ranging from WWE wrestling and boxing to BMX, basketball, netball and ice hockey. The SMG-operated venue attracted 1.05 million attendees across 122 events during 2014.

After nearly 20 years of busy use, the arena's seating system was in need of replacing. To ensure that the arena would keep (and where possible, improve) on its flexible seating system, SMG appointed Audience Systems – which had installed the original seating – for the project.



The system has added capacity and flexibility to one of the world's busiest indoor venues

Due to the arena's busy schedule, the refurbishment programme had to be organised around events and functions, requiring forensic project management and coordination between arena staff and suppliers. In just 44 days the arena was cleared, cleaned and refitted with 28 new retractable systems and 11,600 new chairs. The chairs were fitted with a protective plastic panels to protect upholstery and to increase durability.

New, improved engineering systems allowed Audience Systems to reconfigure the retractable units in order to increase the number of seats in the arena by 345, meaning increased revenue potential. An additional 5,551 chairs are also on hand for configurations which need seat flooring.

Audience Systems' sales director, Gary Pillinge, said: "This has been a really complex job, but one with amazing results. Having installed nearly 12,000 seats, on a mixture of fixed tiering and 28 retractable units – while taking into account the need for slick transitions between set ups – meant it was a challenging project."

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Project: Converting hotel balconies into hospitality areas for cricket
By: Arena Seating

The unique setting at Southampton's Ageas Bowl cricket ground – where a hotel overlooks the field of play – offers great potential for large scale events. The flexible design incorporated into the hotel rooms facing the cricket field means that they can be used as hospitality suites during high-profile games, such as England's one day internationals against Australia and New Zealand earlier this year.

While all beds are removed from rooms, almost all of the other items of furniture are utilised in the hospitality layout.

According to Stuart Robertson, AGEAS Bowl's commercial director, the conversion from hotel room to hospitality suite is quick. "It only takes about an hour per room," he says. "The additional spectator seating built on the balconies, however, means that the room is off sale for two to three nights around the game."

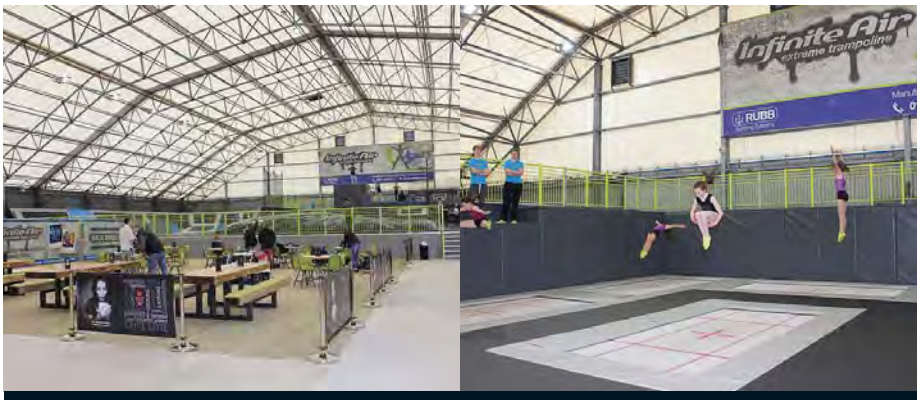
Following the conversion of the room, the balconies are installed with tiered seating. Arena Seating supplied 10 clearview seats, mounted on bespoke frames, for each balcony which can be converted into a hospitality box. Arena lifted the seats into place using a boom lift from the outside, limiting disruption to hotel guests. In total, 17 rooms were converted for the game against New Zealand and 24 against Australia.

Project: Infinite Air, the UK's largest trampoline and freerunning park
By: Rubb Building Systems

When a pair of entrepreneur brothers were looking to set up an adrenaline sports facility in the north east of England, they needed a flexible space to fit it all in. The Infinite Air extreme trampoline park, covering 35,000sq ft at the Soccarena in New Ferens Park, Durham, features more than 80 interconnected trampolines, dodgeball court areas and basketball lanes as well as a planned area for free running.

The £600,000 facility is the brainchild of Richard and Chris Knowles, co-owners of Coretech Sports. The pair approached Rubb to design, manufacture and install a flexible space – including the framework and trampoline systems – within the Soccarena facility. Rubb has also provided platforms, dodgeball and basketball equipment, netting and handrails.

The main trampoline arena includes a 'fast track', rebound walls and flat-padded sections along with interconnected individual trampolines for 'free jumping' and fitness sessions. Three 'Slam Dunk' trampoline basketball lanes have NBA-standard backboards and hoops. Wall-running trampolines have been installed and individual coaching will be offered to help people improve their bouncing. The park will also have a gymnastic 'tricking and tumbling floor' where people can learn new tricks and a purpose-built area dedicated to the modern sport of free running.



The 35,000sq ft space features more than 80 interconnected trampolines and other facilities

The Cranford Superdome in West London

Project: Cranford Superdome
By: Collinson

Queens Park Rangers Football Club (QPR) has opened the Cranford Superdome in partnership with Cranford Community College (CCC). The dome, located within the college campus in Cranford, West London, will be available during the school day for use by CCC pupils and other schools. It will be used by QPR's academy players mainly in the early evening, and will be available for hire by members of the community in the late evening and at weekends.

Supplied by Collinson, the new 4,680sq m AirDome houses a full-size 3G football pitch with a 3m roll off area. The translucent double skin membrane allows sun light to permeate into the facility to create a light, airy playing environment whilst the innovative design of integral air pockets provide insulation, making savings on energy.

Mark Donnelly, QPR chief operating officer, said the project took Collinson just 15 weeks to complete. "From order to completion the project has run like clockwork," he said. "The AirDome is a great coaching environment, during the harsh winter it will allow our training sessions to continue, helping to develop and progress players' skills from an early age."

As well as providing QPR with an all-weather training location for its young stars, the dome will allow the college to carry out football and rugby training whatever the weather – a huge bonus for sports which have previously had limited indoor space in the area, often resulting in the cancellation of games.

Kevin Prunty, executive headteacher at CCC, said: "The Cranford Superdome is an amazing structure which will inspire all who use it. Not only is this a welcome addition to Hounslow's sports facilities but we are investigating its use for a range of events and activities."

The EuroHockey tournament took over London's Olympic Park for 10 days

Project: Temporary structures for the EuroHockey Championship 2015

By: Neptunus

The Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London is living up to LOCOG's legacy pledge of turning the vast park into a venue able to host a varied range of elite competitions. In August, the park hosted the Unibet EuroHockey Championship. For the competition, the organiser, England Hockey (working in partnership with event specialist ICON), needed flexible, easily constructed facilities in order to transform the Lee Valley Hockey and Tennis Centre within the Olympic Park into a competition venue. Temporary structure company Neptunus was called in and given just five days to deliver and build 2,460sq m of structures at the park. Working on behalf of long-term client ICON, Neptunus supplied a number of its clear-span Alu-halls to form the venue's main entrance, main retail area, public catering structures and the players, friends and family clubhouse and museum.

Neptunus also provided the venue with a VIP Pavilion, ticket check-ins, retail outlets and information points across the park for the tournament's 30,000 spectators.

To help protect the all-important landscape of the iconic Olympic Park, all of the structures were self-weighted with concrete floors – with some featuring bespoke entrance ramps and staircases.

April Trasler, managing director of Neptunus UK, said: "As the structures were situated at various locations across the park, our technical team meticulously planned the delivery and build to ensure our onsite crew of 12 could complete the venue in just five days."

Project: Seating for the new main stand at Rovaniemen Palloseura

By: Stechert

When Rovaniemen Palloseura (RoPS), one of the northernmost top-level football clubs in the world, decided to build a new main stand at its Keskuskenttä home ground, the architect had to take into account the fierce climate and limited space. Located above the Arctic Circle, temperatures in Rovaniemi, Finland, can drop to -47C (-54F) during winter months. An added complication was the tight space allocated for the new stand – squeezed between the pitch and a public highway running within 20m (22yds) of it. As a result, German-based Stechert was brought in to design a flexible seating solution which would maximise the space available. Stechert used its Berlin range of folding tip-up seats to create a 2,000-capacity stand.

The new stand has been designed to cope with Rovaniemi's extreme climate

"We had to take into account the extreme weather, which can place a huge strain on the seats, so the durable Berlin products were a perfect fit," says Kay Habermaier, Stechert's sales manager.

The main stand designer, Finnish architects Artto Palo Rossi Tikka, picked the seat colours to feature RoPS' traditional blue and white as well as the city's official colour green. The new €4.8m stand will increase the stadium's seating capacity to 2,800 and total capacity (including standing) to nearly 5,000. According to RoPS CEO Petri Jaatinen, the added capacity could see average ticket revenue increase by €10,000 per game.

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GAME ON

THE LATEST NEWS FROM SAPCA AND ITS MEMBERS

New online guidance published for outdoor sport and play

New benchmark guidelines for the design of spaces for outdoor sport and play have been published.

The document, *Guidance for Outdoor Sport and Play: Beyond the Six Acre Standard*, will be a crucial tool for all local planning authorities, developers, planners, urban designers and landscape architects, when designing sport, play and informal open spaces.

This guidance has been produced by SAPCA member Fields in Trust (FIT), the only independent, UK-wide organisation dedicated to protecting and improving outdoor sports and play spaces and facilities. It reflects a new planning policy landscape, including changes to the National Planning Policy Framework (2012), the introduction of The Localism Act (2011) and the phased introduction of the Community Infrastructure.

This updated guidance, which no longer differentiates between urban and rural areas, identifies benchmarks within the current policy framework for informal open space – places for recreation, not involving organised sport and play – and includes parks and gardens, and natural and semi-natural habitats. The guidelines are provided as an interactive PDF on the Fields in Trust website www.fieldsintrust.org/guidance

Fields in Trust CEO, Helen Griffiths, believes everyone in the UK should have access to free, local outdoor space for sport and play

Playing fields can save the nation millions

Preserving playing fields could save the nation millions of pounds in health care costs

A report commissioned by SAPCA member The London Playing Fields Foundation shows how playing fields make a major contribution to cost savings for both local and central government.

The *Fields of Dreams* impact report demonstrates the social, health and educational impact and cost savings attributed to the clubs and organisations based at just one of its playing fields in Walthamstow, north east London.

The research focuses on 16-25 year old users of the Douglas Eyre Sports Centre in Walthamstow and considers the playing field's positive impacts on community safety, health and wellbeing, educational attainment and economic regeneration. It shows that savings of nearly £5m could be achieved through proactively engaging with the local community.

At a time of increasing pressure to build new homes on green space it has been very difficult to resist the loss of playing fields. Over the past 25 years, the number of grass cricket wickets in London has fallen by 41 per cent and grass football pitches by 20 per cent. Previously, it has been difficult to prove their wider community value, but the report makes a compelling case for the protection and full use of playing field sites. The full report: www.lpff.org.uk/About/Reports/Fields-of-Dreams

Success at Salford Sports Facility Show

The recent Sports Facility Show offered a series of informative seminars at Salford's AJ Bell Stadium. Attended by architects and delegates from sports clubs, local authorities, schools and sports governing bodies, the event featured a keynote speech by funding advisor Karen Wolland on the current sources of financial support available – and how the funding landscape is likely to change in the future.

The day consisted of seminars on a range of subjects including; the maintenance of synthetic surfaces, effective marketing for sports facilities, understanding the construction of bases for outdoor sports, maximising the benefits of play and raising the standards of natural turf pitches. Presentations can be found online in the events section at www.sapca.org.uk

The networking space at the Facility Show

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To find out how your project can benefit from choosing a member company or to get the pitch on the benefits of membership call us now on **024 7641 6316**, email **info@sapca.org.uk** or visit **www.sapca.org.uk**.

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ARE YOU RESPONSIBLE?

Tim Freeman, vice chair of SAPCA's tennis division, explains how recent changes in health and safety legislation will impact sports and play facility owners and operators

If you are planning to carry out construction works, or have asked contractors to quote for an upcoming project, you need to be aware of your responsibilities under the new Construction, (Design and Management) Regulations 2015 (CDM 2015).

The CDM 2015 places legal obligations on you (the client), as well as on the designers and contractors involved in a construction project, to ensure the Health and Safety (H&S) of anyone who may be affected as a consequence of the works.

What kind of a client are you?

A "domestic client" is defined as an individual having work done at their own home, provided it is not for a business purpose – such as coaching or for let. Domestic clients can transfer their duties to others. Guidance on CDM 2015 refers to other clients as "commercial clients" being an individual or organisation having work done for a business purpose.

The regulations themselves, however, only make reference to clients and domestic clients. So while it might be argued by some sports clubs and others that they are not operating as a business, it would be prudent to accept that the client's duties will have to be fulfilled in these cases too.

CDM 2015 duties associated with the client role cannot be transferred to other duty holders. You can obtain guidance from those with the necessary knowledge and experience, but the legal duty remains with you.

How does this affect sports and play facilities?

If your sports club, school, parish council or any other form of client body is planning to carry out construction work to provide new or improved sports facilities at premises under your ownership or control, you have statutory duties as the client for that project. You're not expected to manage or supervise the works, but you are best placed to ensure that only suitably qualified designers and contractors are appointed and that adequate time, finance and resources are allocated to the project to allow it to be completed safely.

What are these duties?

You must appoint a principal designer and a principal contractor – where more than one contractor is being employed – or a contractor for single contractor projects.

The appointments must be of a person or company with the necessary skills and knowledge to carry out the duties that go with these roles. Appointments should be made as early as possible, so health and safety considerations are part of the pre-construction, as well as construction phase.

You must also ensure the project team is adequately resourced, with access to competent health and safety advice and is fully briefed about the project. The team must be provided with all relevant pre-construction information about the site.

The client must provide information on any hazards present on the land

How might this work in practice?

It's a good idea, having found suitably qualified designers and contractors, to formalise their appointment in a way that details the role they are to fulfill as far as CDM 2015 is concerned. In this way you can be seen to have carried out your first duty under the regulations.

Resources proportionate to the work being undertaken must be allocated to the project, including specialist advice if there is a need for it, for example if the site poses

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No matter how large or small the project, the client will have statutory responsibility for the works

challenges that are beyond the everyday experience of the construction team.

You must provide information about the hazards present on the land to your contractor. This is very important, especially in the area where construction will take place or on the access route to it. In particular tell the contractor about underground cables, underground voids (septic tank, old wells, swallow holes etc.), contaminated ground or asbestos, unstable structures or trees – anything that may be dangerous to those surveying the site, carrying out the construction or undertaking subsequent maintenance.

Sufficient time must be allocated for the works to be properly planned and then safely executed. Do not impose contract terms that require the construction team to work to an unrealistic deadline to start and/or complete the works or without provision for progress to be delayed if conditions are unsafe for them to continue.

Your contractor should provide you with a copy of the job-specific health and safety plan, which shows that the risks associated with the works that are going to be done have been assessed and a safe method of working established in advance of that work starting. It'll also detail how suitable welfare facilities are going to be provided. Until the plan is sufficiently advanced and the welfare facilities have been set up on site, the client mustn't allow work to begin.

Sufficient time must be allocated for the works to be properly planned and then safely executed – do not impose unrealistic deadlines

The health and safety file must contain information for those undertaking future projects at your premises. Having agreed the format before work started you should ensure it is handed to you by the time the works are complete.

Strictly speaking, projects where only one contractor is appointed do not have to provide a health and safety file, but it's a good idea to have a record of what was done, what materials were used and outline any hidden hazards that could catch someone out in the future.

Still unsure about what to do?

It's understood that for many small projects clients will not be experienced, so one of the legal duties of your contractor under CDM 2015 is to check that you are aware of your duties as the client.

So if you have appointed a competent contractor, the company should be able to assist you. If they don't raise the subject with you or are unclear on what's required when asked, you need to remember your first duty is to appoint a contractor who does have the necessary skills and knowledge of these health and safety matters.

■ For further information on the new CDM guidance, visit the HSE website: http://www.hse.gov.uk/construction/cdm/2015/responsibilities.htm

SPOTLIGHT ON SAPCA

Sports Management speaks exclusively to SAPCA chief executive Chris Trickey about the association's priorities for 2016.

Q Facility owners are increasingly asking how they can be more environmentally friendly. How is SAPCA guiding the industry to a greener future?
We recently produced important guidance for the industry on the handling and disposal of old synthetic sports surfaces. This is something we'll build on by examining alternative methods of re-using and recycling surfaces in our Technical Programme in 2016.

Upcoming projects include the completion of a number of new and updated Codes of Practices, for bases for sports surfaces, MUGAs, synthetic pitches, athletics tracks, natural sports turf and sports equipment.

In 2016 we'll also strengthen the programme of technical inspections in our Quality System, which ensures SAPCA members deliver high standards of workmanship and service.

Q What plans are in place to streamline the export process for UK businesses?
We work closely with UK Trade & Investment to promote export opportunities for British businesses within the sports sector, and SAPCA is now officially recognised as a Trade Challenge Partner. Having created a new Export Group, in 2016 SAPCA will launch its new export strategy with UKTI to help sports companies increase their international trade. There will be a dedicated export promotion workshop at the SAPCA Conference on 8 February 2016.

Chris Trickey, CEO of SAPCA, predicts an exciting year ahead for the industry

Q How do you plan to expand the membership base moving forward?
SAPCA's membership has grown steadily since its formation in 1997, to more than 230 companies across the sports and play sector. In 2016 we'll launch a new Individual Membership section to improve professional standards. The initiative will include a new programme of educational and training opportunities, and will provide a new range of membership benefits and opportunities for individual members.

Q How are you rewarding innovation and the success of your members?
Our members work hard to design new products, introduce new innovations, embrace new technology, and ultimately deliver great sports and play projects. In order to recognise these achievements and to illustrate the best that the industry has to offer, SAPCA is introducing a new annual awards programme, which will be presented to the winners at the SAPCA Annual Dinner.
Members are invited to share their success stories from 2015 at the SAPCA Conference on 8 February 2016 and delegates will be able to vote for their favourite entries.

Q What does the next year have in store for SAPCA?
There will be some exciting changes in 2016! The annual programme of one-day Sports Facility Shows will be replaced with a series of new themed events, to target different sections of the marketplace.

Delivered jointly with one of SAPCA's media partners, Wildfire Communications, this will include a new conference and exhibition specifically for the UK's education sector.

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

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

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SAPCA regional exhibitions featuring the leading constructors of sports facilities and suppliers of related products and services, together with seminars on key aspects of sports facility design and construction.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS:

SAPCA Conference and Annual Dinner
08 February 2016 - Chesford Grange, Kenilworth

MORE INFORMATION:
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Spatex 2016

Ricoh Arena, Coventry, UK
Spatex is an international swimming pool and spa exhibition which gathers together – and represents – sectors of the wet leisure industry from pools, spas, saunas to hydrotherapy, steamrooms and children's play equipment, in both the domestic and commercial arena.

Primarily a trade show, it also welcomes members of the public.

The show's seminar programme features workshops organised by the Institute of Swimming Pool Engineers (ISPE), which pass on business and technical expertise. The show is also the industry's networking event of the year and social events include the annual SPATA and BISHTA Industry Awards and Gala Dinner.
Tel: +44 (0)1264 358 558
www.spatex.co.uk

SAPCA meets in February 2016

08 FEB 2016

SAPCA Conference and Annual Dinner

Chesford Grange Hotel, Kenilworth, UK
The role of the conference is to help members gain the knowledge they need to deliver excellence in their products and service and to support them in building successful businesses.

The conference programme provides a series of sessions and workshops on a variety of key areas, from the government's new strategy for sport and the latest standards and policies of individual sports, through to subjects such as planning law, skills training, lighting, waste and recycling.

This year's event will carry the theme "Knowledge, Excellence, Success" and will also include the annual dinner.
Tel: +44 (0)24 7641 6316
www.sapca.org.uk

09 MAR 2016

Why Sports Annual Conference

Emirates Old Trafford, Manchester, UK
Participation in sport and physical activity offers a wealth of social, economic and health benefits. The Why Sports Annual Conference will serve as a platform to promote professional dialogue via presentations, while dissecting and debating current issues and problems faced.

The conference will provide opportunities for leaders from central and local government, the education sector, sport governance, coaching and elite development share their domestic and international experience. Workshops will also evaluate the available funding streams for those looking to drive greater participation across all sports in the UK.
Tel: +44 (0)843 504 1234
www.wsmg.co.uk

27-28 APR 2016

active-net 2016

imago Burleigh Court and Holywell Park, Loughborough University, UK
active-net is a buyer meets supplier event, combining one-to-one meetings with seminar and networking programmes.

Now in its third year, active-net is aimed at operators and suppliers with a focus on the public sector whether it be trusts, local authorities or universities/colleges. Last year, the event attracted a total of 65 buyers and 71 suppliers to Burleigh Court.
Tel: +44 (0)1603 814233
www.active-net.org

04-05 MAY 2016

Elevate

Olympia, London, UK
Elevate is a cross-sector event bringing together academia, healthcare, government, the physical activity sector and performance experts to focus on an increasingly important and complex societal challenge: turning the tide on inactivity.

Taking place in central location, Elevate will explore the ways in which exercise, health and performance connect Registration to attend is free.
Tel: +44 (0)1737 855012
www.elevatearena.com

09-12 MAY 2016

16th Conference on Sports: Economic, Management, Marketing & Social Aspects

Athens, Greece
Organised by the Athens Institute for Education and Research and the Pan-Hellenic Association of Sport Economists & Managers, the aim of the conference is to bring together scholars and students of all areas of sports.

Participants can present on sports topics within broad streams of research areas. All conference presentations and discussions are conducted in English.
Tel: +30 210 36 34 210
www.atiner.gr/sports

The next Soccerex will be held in Mexico

11-12 MAY 2016

Soccerex Americas Forum

Camino Real Polanco Hotel, Mexico City, Mexico
The Soccerex Americas Forum will bring together senior decision makers from football clubs, leagues, governing bodies, brands and suppliers from the Americas for two days of insight, networking and business.

The event combines a conference and exhibition, with the aim of connecting football business in the Americas.
Tel: +44 208 742 7100
www.soccerex.com

20 JUN 2016

Sports & Leisure Facilities Forum

Wokefield Park, Reading, UK
An event for development and procurement managers from stadiums, leisure facilities, arenas and local authorities to find inspirational ideas.
Tel: +44 (0)1992 374 100
www.forumevents.co.uk

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SOCCEREX EVENTS IN 2016

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