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S&PA Professional

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THE SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

CIMSPA

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"An intelligence-driven approach to athlete health is a major focus area for the EIS over the Tokyo cycle"





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UPFRONT

EDITORIAL

DeeDee Doke

Get in touch with us



"We want to hear from you, our readers – your news, your photos and your thoughts on how we can best meet your information needs"

T

Welcome to the autumn issue of S&PA Professional!

There's a new editorial team building your quarterly editions of this magazine and the monthly S&PA Extra monthly email update, and we're delighted to be contributing to your bank of knowledge and insight. You'll find a variety of content focused on employment and careers within the S&PA sector in this issue. While nothing is more important than our health and fitness, jobs and careers are arguably our most valuable asset, and for the S&PA industry, the workforce – our people – are certainly our most valuable asset.

Training and retaining the employees who bring out the best in

clients and customers is paramount. At the same time, dynamic start-up S&PA businesses are a source of real energy throughout the sector, and have the potential to provide highly targeted, niche services to otherwise underserved segments of the community.

For such a case, turn to page 8 to learn about Akil Maylor, who started up yoga and martial arts classes in a derelict, long-shuttered shop on a Wolverhampton estate. You'll be inspired.

Especially topical in this edition: the employment of EU immigrants in the wake of June's Brexit vote. While the definitive answers to immigration questions aren't in yet, Steven Bostock

of leading law firm Mishcon de Reya offers food for thought on page 45 and suggests how employers prepare for what lies ahead.

If you're affiliated with a Community Amateur Sports Club, or CASC, you'll want to study the tips from Square One Law's John Hammill on page 43 on how to benefit from certain reliefs offered by the government.

We want to hear from you, our readers – your news, your photos and your thoughts on how we at S&PA Professional can best meet your information needs! Email us: sandpa@redactive.co.uk



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EDITORIAL**Editor**

DeeDee Doke

Art Editor Nicola Skowronek**Production editor** Vanessa Townsend**Picture editor**Chloe Crisford
sandpa@redactive.co.uk**Publishing director**

Aaron Nicholls

ADVERTISING

020 7324 2735

Sales executiveAlex Monteith
alex.monteith@redactive.co.uk**PRODUCTION****Production manager**

Jane Easterman

Production executive

Rachel Young

SUBSCRIPTIONS

S&PA Professional is sent to all members of the Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity (and is available on subscription to non-members). All member enquiries should be directed to CIMSPA. For enquiries from non-CIMSPA members, e-mail

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CIMSPA ENQUIRIES

Chartered Institute for the Management of Sport and Physical Activity,
SportPark, Loughborough

University, 3 Oakwood Drive,
Loughborough, LE11 3QF

Tel 01509 226 474**E-mail** info@cimspa.co.uk**Web** www.cimspa.co.uk

CIMSPA
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S&PA News

A round-up of the latest developments in the industry

CIMSPA MOVES ON AS STALKER LEAVES

Outgoing CIMSPA chair David Stalker is calling on leisure operators, national governing bodies (NGBs) and other groups to “put their money where their mouths are” and formalise their financial commitments to CIMSPA as he leaves after two years in post.

Speaking to S&PA Professional’s DeeDee Doke, Stalker said “the biggest single hurdle” facing CIMSPA is for “all those big groups, NGBs, and all those leisure operators out there who have verbally made their commitment to supporting CIMSPA by firstly, getting their staff, the members, fully trained. They need to go from a verbal commitment to the written and financial commitment – in other words, put their money where their mouths are, and maybe for Sport England to be supporting them and say, ‘This is the one-stop shop for the professionalism of the sector.’”

He went on to say: “Being ‘right there’ is irrelevant if they don’t take that next step.”

Stalker became chair of the board of trustees in August 2014. He had previously served a year as CIMSPA’s independent non-executive chair. At the time, he was also CEO of ukactive.

He is leaving his position on CIMSPA’s board to focus on his trampoline parks business. He departs at the conclusion of what he called a “root and branch” governance review of CIMSPA that will be released this autumn.

Asked to summarise his view of CIMSPA’s current positioning, Stalker said: “CIMSPA has moved into its next part of development. I’m hugely supportive of that, but one, I don’t have the time that [CIMSPA CEO] Tara [Dillon] needs from a chairman, and secondly, my skill set, I think, is galvanising people and doing the groundwork; now it is very much about structure, process and working with Sport England. There are people who are much more able to do that than me.”

He continued: “The groundwork has been done. Sport England have rightly looked, questioned, quizzed and reviewed everything. The next stage for CIMSPA is going to be about working with delivery partners in delivering professionals into this industry so it can be rightfully proud of the impact it has on the health of the nation, and that it creates great individuals who are working



from the entry levels to the top levels of a career path, and a future in an industry which is the most crucial of all industries to the UK’s health.

“Without the success of physical activity and sport, we will not have a National Health Service free at the point of entry in the foreseeable future,” he said. “CIMSPA has to make sure it has professionals that can deliver what is an enormous challenge.”

Stalker was also asked to offer his parting advice to Dillon, the board and to CIMSPA itself. “For Tara,” he said, “keep on with the tenacity and professionalism that you have shown to date in what can be a hugely frustrating environment.”

To the trustees, he said: “I think you’re at the point where you all need to look at, ‘How am I helping as an individual, as a trustee, and who should we be getting around the table to fill the gaps in areas where we’re not as strong?’”

For CIMSPA itself, he said: “I think the [governance] review will say that clearly the

skill levels, the expertise, the career paths of our professionals – from joining... to being the CEOs or heads of NGBs – is clear and defined and has underpinned everything else that is happening in sport. That will give CIMSPA the work they need to do. Without that, there is no need for CIMSPA.”

He ended, saying: “I am truly passionate about the success of CIMSPA. CIMSPA is a chartered institute, a Privy Council-recognised badge. As industry professionals, we need to fully embrace that and support it. I’ve been so delighted by the attitude of my colleagues across the sector and how they have come to the table with commitments of numbers as opposed to what it was before, which was just commitment to strategy.

“Finally we are seeing real growth as well as commitment. Now it’s time to see those numbers from every corner of the sector.”

ARE YOU READY FOR THE NEW POUND COIN?

Leisure facilities should take action now to prepare for the new pound coin, to be launched in March 2017, which is unlikely to fit the majority of coin-operated lockers.

The bi-metal, 12-sided design, reminiscent of the threepenny piece last seen in the early 1970s, is being introduced to address the growing problem of counterfeiting. The current pound coin, which has been in use since 1983, is relatively easy to copy, and the Royal Mint estimates that around one in 30 of the coins now in circulation is a fake.

The urgent need to address the negative effects on the economy of the counterfeit coins means that there will be a shorter than usual changeover period. The round coin will be used alongside the new version until September 2017, after which it will no longer be legal tender.

Publicity relating to the change has been low key and the resulting lack of public awareness means that many

organisations using coin-operated equipment are likely to be inadequately prepared come March, says Daryl Gregory, managing director of locker supplier, Solutions for Leisure. "It's been hard work trying to get people to take this on board. When it actually happens, there's going to be a panic."

He advises owners of coin-operated lockers to contact their supplier now to find out how the lockers can be adapted. Some lock mechanisms can easily be adjusted to accept the new coins while in other cases the locks may need to be replaced. Depending on the work needed, cost is likely to be somewhere

between £3 and £30 per locker.

Another cost-effective option is to convert the locks so they can be used with padlocks. Operators can also purchase tokens that will fit the

existing locks, which is a good temporary solution.

The changeover may be an opportune time for a review of your locker provision, adds Gregory. "If you're



looking to the future, you might consider going for a keyless system, and then you avoid the ongoing costs associated with lost keys and tokens."

A number of robust electronic locks are on the market, including digital keypad locks and RFID (radio frequency identification) locks that can be operated by a wrist band or membership card. These can be retrofitted to existing lockers and can be integrated with other systems allowing users to, for example, make cashless payments.

Whatever solution leisure facilities decide to go for, leisure centre operators are advised to act now to avoid a last-minute rush and unhappy customers who are unable to store their belongings safely.

Caroline Roberts



BOLLYWOOD, BHANGRA OR BUST! Participants in a National Fitness Day Bollywood dance instruction at the Atrium Club in Ely, Cambs, last month were energised after their class, led by instructor Kriti Sachdeva (far left and front centre above).

UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS

COMMUNITY LEADS THE WAY

Galvanising the world of sport and physical activity into a career hot spot with opportunity for all was the aim of the one-day The Future of Sport: Employment, Skills and Apprenticeships conference held in Wolverhampton by Why Sports Media Group. S&PA Professional's DeeDee Doke and Graham Simons report

What does the future S&PA workforce look like? And how will the S&PA sector help the UK achieve better health and fitness?

Akil Maylor of Wolverhampton embodies much of S&PA's bold new focus – community – centred and serving typically underrepresented segments of that community in his estate-based project RiseUp Yoga and Martial Arts.

Through these activities, Maylor is reaching out to young and old in one of Wolverhampton's most deprived areas on the site of a former estate shop.

Maylor told *S&PA Professional* the project, launched in February of this year, helps people from all ages and from a range of

cultures out from their homes to exercise and engage with one another.

And it appears Wolverhampton is not the limit for this particular project, as Maylor has one eye on taking the project nationwide and beyond.

"If I could

turn this into a career and continue the work that we are doing and make it go nationwide or even worldwide to show the world this is the way that things should be done. If you look – it works," he said.

But the future S&PA workforce is dependent on a new generation of coaches that have had to take their future into their hands as they set out to build a career in the sector.

For Euan Scott, who is currently combining study at Walsall College with part-time sports coaching in football and handball, this has meant attaining further qualifications and experience to boost his employability in the jobs market.

"I am just looking at what qualifications I can get to further push myself and make myself more employable

and look for any other experiences I can get – either paid or non-paid to be able to get more connections in sport.

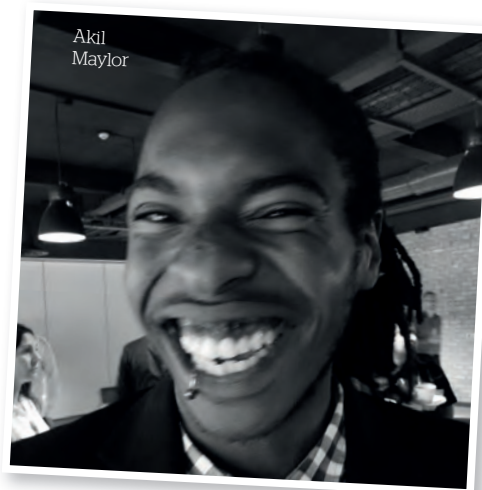
"I am looking at doing my Level 2 in football and quite a lot of qualifications like basketball or dodgeball to get a

variety of sports and make my CV look better and stand out."

Scott adds careers guidance with sports is limited so his own career development rests on building up his own networks.

"When you do have careers meetings, if you say you want to go into sports,

there are only a couple of things that they offer you. It's only until you go into colleges or whatever, and speak to people who have been in sports for a while that you actually find out there are more jobs in there than just coaching," he said.



Akil Maylor



James Gane



Euan Scott

Jamie Gane, a community rugby coach across schools in Pendle in East Lancashire agrees. He told SP&A he has not had any specific career guidance and has had to ask questions of people in the industry so as to guide his own career development.

But whether the SP&A sector can help find the next generation of coaches and sports professionals to boost the nation's health and fitness rests on whether the sector can compete with other sectors to promote itself as a career of choice, Scott says.

"They have days where the Army or whatever goes into schools; they could do with that in sport and just show there are more opportunities out there to go into sport and be involved in things like football where you don't have to play. I think a lot of people get the idea that to get into football you have to be playing the game. There are loads of things that you can do, like you can analyse data, you can become a physiotherapist. I think people don't really realise that they are options."

SOUNDBITES

"I learned everything from losing. I learned nothing from winning"

Geoff Thompson, Executive chair, The Youth Charter

"Awareness of disability is pretty high in this [sport & physical activity] industry, but not enough employers have taken up the next step to employ [disabled people]"

Clare Howard, CEO, the Association of National Specialist Colleges

"A complete transformation is needed in how education and the world of work come together"

Tristram Hooley, Professor of Career Education, University of Derby

REACT QUICKER TO NEW SKILLS

As the highest percentage of sport & physical activity (S&PA) employers are micro businesses, the challenge of having a skilled workforce to up the activity levels of the UK's population, fitness and health will rely heavily on the smallest organisations, interim CIMSPA chair Andy Reed has said.

Of the UK's S&PA employers, 80% are in the micro category with just one to nine employees, while large employers of 250+ workers represent only 4%, Reed told an audience at the Future of Sport: Employment, Skills and Apprenticeships conference in Wolverhampton on 13 September. Small businesses, employing 10 to 49 workers, make up 12% of the sector, with medium-sized businesses of 50 to 240 making up another 4%.

"We will be relying on the micro part of the sector to deliver strategy," Reed said.

In setting the scene for the conference, Reed, who served as a member of Parliament for 15 years, raised a variety of challenges facing the S&PA world: creating a professional workforce with the necessary soft skills, developing a workplace culture that aspired to and succeeded at meeting diverse customer needs, and building a rich, multi-faceted industry with jobs and upwardly mobile career paths. "The sector needs a whole variety of skills we don't understand yet," he said.

He pointed out that often aspiring S&PA candidates must find work in other industries. As examples he offered that of a national retail chain, which he did not

identify, which targets first-team rugby captains for regional manager roles, while sports graduates are popular hires in call centres.

Volunteers must also be considered when developing the skills of the total workforce, he said.

Local partnerships are needed to ensure S&PA workforces are sufficiently skilled, he said, adding: "How do we create local partnerships for ensuring national reach to create a professional workforce?"

He emphasised the need for inclusion of all levels of ability in sport & physical activity, noting that S&PA professionals must be sufficiently skilled to reach out to people of all backgrounds and abilities. He reflected that the feeling of being chosen last for school sports and games "never leaves you. It never leaves you".

Reed further said that too little government policy was based on evidence and was instead "pretty anecdotal and often linked to the policy makers' experiences", a situation that has affected how sport and fitness policy had evolved throughout the years. "It's not closely enough linked to evidence and the real world," he said.

Also, he said, employing organisations have to be smarter and faster to react to the changing world of work, he went on to say: "We're competing against a world that's much better at using technology."

During his talk, Reed said that he planned to be CIMPA's interim chair for only six months. Amongst other positions, he is currently a senior advisor at Loughborough University.



Andy Reed

UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS

MOVERS AND SHAKERS

John Bates has been appointed business development director of leisure management service company Places for People Leisure. Bates previously held the role of head of business development for the firm. In his new role, Bates joins the company's board and succeeds Tim Hewett who retired at the end of June.



development of the 87 employed UK Les Mills trainers. As well as being responsible for delivering group exercise classes and training courses, Durnford has also been instrumental in the delivery of key company initiatives, including setting up the trainer team in Russia and developing the presenter team and delivering development sessions globally. Commenting on her appointment, Durnford said she was looking forward to working with the group's recently introduced regional training co-ordinators, who have been supporting the group's trainers and instructors across the UK.

Les Mills, a provider of choreographed exercise-to-music group fitness classes, has promoted **Sarah**

Durnford to head trainer. Durnford's main responsibility will be to oversee the training and professional



Norfolk resort Dunston Hall has appointed **Tom Turner** as director of golf. Turner, who turned professional in 2000, has joined the Dunston Hall team after spending almost 11 years as director of golf at Hallmark Cambridge Hotel & Golf Club. He says



he is relishing the challenge ahead of him adding he has ambitious plans for the Norwich venue after taking up his new position last month. Dunston Hall is part of golf resort operator QHotels.

Coventry sports and leisure provider Coventry Sports Foundation has appointed **Neelam Rani** as lifestyles membership manager along with **Emily Wornum** (right) as swimming



development manager. Rani, who will work across the foundation's three sports and leisure centres – Centre AT7, the Alan Higgs Centre and the Xcel Leisure Centre – will seek to not only recruit new members, but also retain members as part of her plans to grow and enhance the foundation's customer service and experience it offers to its gym users. Meanwhile, new swimming development manager Wornum, who previously worked as a swimming lesson manager at a leisure centre in Southam, is currently working to grow the foundation's swimming scheme by making more lessons available and offering more splash sessions for families and toddlers up to five years old, in an aim to encourage early learning.

CIMSPA NAMES RECRUITMENT PARTNERS

Following negotiations, Leisure People and Leisurejobs.com will become CIMSPA's official recruitment partner, CIMSPA and the recruitment group have announced.

According to a joint statement, the partnership is part of a 'contra' deal that aims to:

- enhance current membership benefits for CIMPA partners and members

- provide Leisurejobs.com and Leisure People's associated jobseekers with insight into CIMSPA's role within the sector
- assist jobseekers in understanding how their career and employment opportunities can benefit from membership with the sector's only chartered institute.

Leisurejobs.com will now manage the CIMSPA job advertising service

and will also power the CIMSPA job search function, the statement said. The partnership will allow CIMSPA partners to highlight their recruitment vacancies on both the CIMSPA website and Leisurejob boards simultaneously.

Leisurejobs.com has over 1m registered jobseekers. Its flagship site Leisurejobs.com is complemented by six niche job boards. Leisure People places professionals into mid-management to director-level roles.

LIFE AFTER COMPETITION

Ex-professional and elite sports people are using the skills and knowledge they picked up in their careers after they stop competing to raise standards and levels of professionalism in the sports and fitness sector. However, the picture is patchy, and some sports could do more to tap into this wealth of expertise and knowledge, according to some who competed at the highest level.

Julian Goater, ex-world class long-distance runner and world duathlon champion in 2001 and 2005, who runs Feelgood Factors, a fitness consultancy focusing on running and triathlon, said the insight provided by being a top-level performer is invaluable in driving up levels of expertise and professionalism: "It's not the same as being coached by someone who has read about it but not experienced it themselves. They may have done the coaching courses but they don't really understand, [the sport]."

He said those with top level sporting experience can design fitness and coaching programmes that really work rather than ones that "seem quite a good idea". Ex-elite sports people are also better able to understand and tap into the competitive instincts of those who "don't just want to do a fun run". Goater bemoaned the lack of a clear career pathway for elite athletes to make a

career in the sport, and said that if more was involved to encourage them and to tap into their expertise it would raise standards. As it is, he said, former world class athletes such as middle distance runner Steve Cram and hurdler Colin Jackson end up as media commenters.

In contrast, Steve Charmley, general manager of Rugby League Recruitment, a company that matches rugby players and rugby clubs, both league and union, around the world, said: "There are huge opportunities out there as rugby becomes more professional." The range of roles available includes coaching, physios, nutritionists, fitness and strength conditioning, as well



as managerial roles. "Rugby has become a big industry," said Charmley, adding that ex-rugby players, whether they be ex-professionals or semi-professionals are ideally suited "to pass on their knowledge and experience".



Not only do they "understand how rugby clubs work", they can advise existing players to look after themselves throughout their careers, and help them have greater longevity in the game. As well as contributing to the coaching on the pitch, ex-players are also ideally placed to advise on "the mental and lifestyle aspects of the game", he added.

Hockey Olympian James Tindall, who represented Team GB at both the Beijing and London 2012 Olympics, and is now director at finance and project management recruiter Ad Idem, said that after the 2012 London Olympics, lots of opportunities were "floating around" both for himself and former team mates to build a career in sport. "Quite a few went into coaching, either at school or club level," he said. He said one reason stopping ex-players going back into hockey is the relative lack



of financial rewards: "You wouldn't go into hockey for the money, you would do it for the love of the sport and the job."

Rob Steed, founder of Laps. Careers (Life After Professional Sport), which is due to launch a job board as part of an online platform providing career advice for sports people in early October, said that players' representative bodies, had an important role he play to keep professional sports involved in the sector. He cited the Professional Footballers Association, who run "really good education programmes", and provide career advice, as a prime example.

IN DEPTH

JON



ARGENT

The national partnerships director of GLL, which operates leisure centres on behalf of local authorities, started his career in leisure 30 years ago. He looks back at how training and development has influenced his professional journey

What was your first job?

My first job was working as a casual leisure attendant at the Dolphin Leisure Centre in Haywards Heath, Sussex for Mid Sussex District Council in 1986. After finishing university, I worked in Mogadishu, Somalia as assistant director of an orphanage. I returned to England and embarked on the process to join the Police. This took a long time, and as I was a fairly strong swimmer, I went to the Dolphin Centre to earn some money while I waited to get in to the Police.

From the first day I really enjoyed working in leisure, and when the next full-time leisure

attendant job came up I went for it and was successful. I obtained my Pool Bronze and first aid at work certificate soon after starting work.

How did your career progress?

I applied for a supervisor's job at the King's Centre in East Grinstead and after a year requested a move to Burgess Hill, a split facility, for more experience. In 1988 I took on my first manager's position in Eastbourne. Being ambitious, I changed roles roughly every three years, moving a young family around the South-East. In 1992, I went to Edenbridge Leisure Centre as manager; then to Ashford Borough Council in 1995 to head up

the DSO; and Colchester in 1998 as general manager of Leisure World. In 2002 I was appointed founding chief executive of Halo Leisure. I stayed until February 2014, when I took up my current role as national partnerships director with GLL.

I've really enjoyed being an assessor for Quest since its inception, chairman of Social Enterprise West Midlands and supporting Sporta as vice chair for several years too.

Which training has benefited you most?

That's a good question. All training is beneficial. So, from the old Pool



JON'S ADVICE FOR THOSE STARTING THEIR CAREERS

- Have a positive attitude
- Seek out strong role models
- Set out a career pathway based on best industry practice; ask for support from your organisation. Bear in mind that the pathway will probably change so keep it relevant and up to date
- Engage in leisure forums and groups
- Request constructive criticism and take notice of it
- Work hard and be flexible
- Take risks
- Travel confidently

Bronze, pool plant operators and ASA teacher's certificates and a variety of other role-related qualifications, through mentoring to an academic doctorate, I've valued every training intervention I've ever undertaken. Continual learning and a desire to engage is really important. And you can't beat time-served experience – one of the few benefits of getting older!

What is most challenging about your current role?

As a sector we face many challenges, but there are also benefits and opportunities in equal measure. The key issue is to think and act strategically and not succumb to short-term, operationalised actions exclusively which, albeit understandable, is a major risk. We need to lift our heads and not let the urgent drive out the important.

My current role is fundamentally creative and very positive. I'm working with a number of partners

who share a common purpose and desire for doing things well, consistently. The need to think and act differently is understood by most organisations that I speak to, and while the national discourse is often gloomy nowadays, we're a positive bunch in leisure, and working with

others who share this 'can do' philosophy is energising.

What skills do you need most in your role?

What may be described as soft skills such as strategic awareness capability, strong leadership, being

a good communicator, resilience and tenacity and the ability to build relationships and trust through openness and integrity. A good

knowledge of the sector and the broader social agendas that we can impact positively is also important. Many of these skills are intuitive or acquired over time through seeking to emulate inspirational leaders, pursuing new experiences, taking risks, and making mistakes and learning from them.

How has training changed since you started your career?

My recollection from decades ago was that training courses were

plentiful but not always linked to professional pathways and service needs. You could go on a course for pretty much anything! The Investors in People framework is one way that training and development has advanced and progressed the

industry's approach to focusing and aligning training and development to pathways for individuals and teams. CIMSPA now offers a significant opportunity to develop a professionally led, national training and development programme for the whole sector, an opportunity which we cannot let pass us by.

If you could start your career again, what would you differently with regards to education and training?

I would make learning and development a constant, essential part of my working life – actually, I'm pretty comfortable that I've done this. Whilst I'm not a Luddite by nature, I would certainly place more attention to IT skills! ●

"A good knowledge of the sector and the broader social agendas that we can impact positively is also important"

"CIMSPA now offers a significant opportunity to develop a professionally led, national training and development programme"



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IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

KEITH SACH REMEMBERED

A popular and highly respected health and safety expert, Keith Sach died this summer following illness. We look at the impact of his successful career



national governing bodies, sector institutes and government agencies on water safety, including the ASA, the Sports Council, the RLSS, RoSPA, ISRM and HSE.

It's little wonder then that Keith is so fondly remembered by his industry colleagues.

"Without Keith, I couldn't possibly be in the role I am today. Many of the systems, disciplines and planning that Keith established live on in our organisation's health & safety culture," says Andy Read, head of safety at PfPL. "Keith encouraged PfPL to lead the sector in introducing automatic defibrillators at our sites, an initiative that has saved at least 15 lives."

Tara Dillon, CEO of CIMSPA and former executive director of RLSS UK's training arm IQL UK, says: "In addition to his vast knowledge, Keith was extremely erudite and an extraordinary raconteur. He was a charismatic figure in the sector and I'll always remember him for his entertaining conversations and his penchant for wearing red socks!"

As an independent safety consultant, Keith was regularly called upon as an expert witness in court cases. He served as a justice of the peace and sat on the bench at several magistrates courts in South Warwickshire. He was also High Sheriff of Warwickshire 2013/14.

Keith was chairman of IQL from 2001 to 2006, a co-author of the current version of *Managing Health and Safety in Swimming Pools* and a regular contributor to many RLSS UK and IQL UK awards and qualifications.

"Keith played a huge part in the society's history and progress over the years and his impact will always be remembered," says Di Steer, CEO of RLSS UK.

Keith is survived by his wife Elizabeth, daughters Katie and Alexi, and son Jonathan. ●

K

Keith devoted much of his life to drowning prevention and lifeguarding training, playing a fundamental role in professionalising lifeguarding and improving standards across the sector.

Born in 1948, Keith's interest in lifesaving and lifeguarding was sparked as a child when he took the Royal Life Saving Society UK's (RLSS UK) Lifesaving award at his local swimming club in Hounslow, Middlesex. This interest continued throughout his successful career, which started in education as Master at Solihull School in Warwickshire.

In 1979 Keith was appointed as RLSS UK Director and Commonwealth

Secretary, and led improvements to the practice of lifeguarding across the UK and beyond.

Moving on from the RLSS UK, Keith joined the architectural practice S&P as a safety consultant, before setting up his own independent safety consultancy in the mid-1990s.

Held in high regard for his health & safety expertise, and known for his humour and quick wit, Keith provided support to leisure operators throughout the sector. Indeed, he is estimated to have delivered training to 10,000 staff at Places for People Leisure (PfPL) alone. He also worked with

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

ACTIVE-NET 2017

Supported by CIMSPA, workforce development is the theme of next spring's 'buyer meets supplier' networking event for trusts, local authorities, universities and colleges

Stephanie Maurel Strategic lead for Workforce and Clubs, Sport England

"Sport England is currently working on a professional workforce strategy for the sector and will publish this in December. This will be in conjunction with the sector and we will be speaking to partners over the autumn. Sport England is committed to supporting CIMSPA to become strong, independent and empowered by its members, so it can have a larger role to play in the strategy going forwards.

"active-net gives us the opportunity to not only share the strength of our partnership but also to give delegates the chance to fully understand the next steps and how



they can be part of the ongoing growth and professionalisation of our sector."

Geraldine Tuck Operations director, ukactive

"The sector is full of great talent. From the gym floor, to the sales floor, to the boardroom, there are some fantastic people working in our sector.

"Anyone with the right attitude, a good brain and a solid helping of common sense can make it all the way. At active-net we will be sharing how ukactive's Future Leaders programme is taking the next (and current) generation of leaders out of their day-to-day business environment and giving them a masterclass in future trends, management and problem solving."

Tara Dillon CEO, CIMSPA

"CIMSPA has grown and developed to place itself at the heart of the professionalisation of sport and physical activity sector. The strength of our partnerships and the focus placed on workforce development by Sport England is fundamental to the impact that can be made by our members on their communities.

"The opportunity to share and discuss workforce development

with decision makers across the sector is vital to the difference our sector can make."

Marcus Kingwell Managing director, AoC Sport

"A huge part of the future workforce for the sport and active leisure sector is trained at colleges - 773,000 16-18 year-olds and 2m adult learners are currently studying at colleges.

And 177,000 of these are studying a sport-related qualification. We need to make the transition from school to college to employment seamless.

"The sector faces a renewed challenge to demonstrate that it can engage effectively with inactive people and change their behaviours. This will need some new skills and an open mind.

"I would like active-net delegates to have a better understanding of the major role played by colleges in developing their future workforce. If you get the skill development right at 16-18, there is less need for training later." ●

active-net 2017 takes place in Eastwood Hall Nottingham on the 29th and 30th March 2017. Supplier and buyer (no charge to buyers) places are still available. For more information, contact kirstyreed@leisure-net.org, visit www.active-net.org and see twitter feed @_activenet for the latest news.

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IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

CORE STRENGTHS: SKILLS NEEDED

Three employer partners give their views on the skills needs of the sector, as works starts on defining the Professional Standards Matrix



Tim Spencer,
Head of Sport and
Leisure, Erewash
Borough Council
Erewash Borough
Council Sport and
Leisure Services is

an in-house operation that manages a diverse portfolio of sports, health and physical activity services. The Sport and Leisure Service employs around 100 full-time equivalent staff.

"The Professional Standards Matrix will provide employers with an easily understandable set of standards for key positions in the industry. It will allow employers to ensure that the core competencies required in today's challenging environment are fully integrated into any qualification or course.

"It's crucial that staff have the core competencies to undertake their roles effectively and continue to learn and develop throughout their careers as

part of a CPD-accredited programme. The CIMSPA 'kitemark' will help ensure staff have the right qualifications, which have been vetted and checked against quality standards. Together, this will give customers the professional experience they deserve.

"There is a general skills gap in leisure centres. Take a supervisor position, for example. There are many supervisor courses for sport and recreation but few deliver the core competencies required to be effective in the position. They lack

the knowledge required for the operational aspect of running a successful centre and completely miss the development aspects. What course today includes training on 'insight information' and knowing your target market?

Insight information is crucial for understanding catchment populations and providing the services and activities people want.

"Recruiting staff can be a lottery.

"The fact that people can become personal trainers without any personal interaction with anyone is unacceptable"

We ask for a degree or equivalent for managers, but there are so many different qualifications that it's hard to know if they cover the skills required for that position. All they do is provide assurance that the person has a level of academic ability.

"We need people with the passion and focus to understand their customers, and the skills to research and tailor programmes to meet their needs. Operational aspects should be second nature, learned and groomed throughout education and experience. We also need the balanced operator and development professional, not one or the other."



Neil Stanton,
Operations director,
Roko Health Clubs
Roko operates five 'premium affordable' health clubs with comprehensive wet and dry facilities. Through a renewed focus on its family audience, the group



has seen significant growth in its primary membership revenues and also its secondary revenues, including personal training and swimming lessons, thanks to specialised programming. Roko employs over 200 staff in addition to freelance instructors.

"It's been clear for many years that the skills we need to support our members are not being delivered sufficiently through the education sector. CIMSPA is taking the lead in changing the requirements for the industry in partnership with employers and training organisations and we want to be part of that process.

"It's essential that we establish clear requirements and that those who educate our teams understand what those requirements are. We've had a mixed experience of training and CPD hasn't always been relevant or useful. The fact that people can currently become personal trainers without any personal interaction with anyone is unacceptable.

"Skills gaps primarily lie in behaviour change for all the different types of members and their varying needs and goals. There isn't any point knowing what needs to be done for someone if you can't engage the customer.

"The issues caused by inactivity are more mainstream than ever and our teams need the skills and knowledge to offer tailored support to those affected. The 13-16-year-old group is also evolving and we'd like our staff to be able to offer more specialist interactive classes to them. Millennials are also more active, but how they consume fitness means our teams need more education to retain their position as the 'experts'.

"To succeed in the sector, staff need to engage, communicate with and motivate clients. Interaction is increasingly going online and the ability to apply those skills in a range of settings and using different methods will be vital in the future. I see a focus on prescribing specific training for individual needs forming a key part of the higher levels. Furthermore, skills at dealing with specialist conditions/needs and co-ordinating with the medical profession will be essential to get the credibility we deserve as being at the forefront of the solution to the UK's health problems."



Dean Tearle,
Centre manager,
Aspire

As the first fully accessible training centre in Europe for disabled and non-disabled people, around a third of members at Aspire Leisure Centre are disabled. The centre employs around 50 full-time equivalent staff and a variety of volunteers. Around 50% of the fitness team have come through the Sport England-funded InstructAbility Programme,

including a deaf student is currently working on the DEAFinitely Inclusive Accreditation through UK Deaf Sport. Three wheelchair users cover duty manager, fitness instructor and reception roles.

"My facilities manager Leigh Hewitt and I attended the Quest Conference where we heard [CIMSPA CEO] Tara Dillon's seminar on the Employer Partnership. We were impressed with the vision for training and took this back to the team who agreed to join. All of our lifeguards will be registered next April and we have already put CIMSPA registration as a desirable criteria for fitness and lifeguarding positions.

"I believe Aspire can help leisure providers become more inclusive. We will be giving our input at selected working groups and also welcome anyone from the industry to visit us to see what makes us the most accessible leisure centre in Europe.

"There is a gap for instructors with expertise in disability and exercise. I'd really like to see this form part of leisure providers' training plans. I'd also like more emphasis on employing disabled people, which will help deliver a more inclusive service. Other leisure operators that have provided work placements and employment to our InstructAbility graduates have reported an increase in disabled clients and staff awareness, so it really can benefit business as well as the individuals.

"It can be difficult to recruit people with particular qualifications such as GP referral, gymnastics and swimming teachers because courses can be expensive and the employer can't always pick up the cost. We try to identify current employees and give them opportunities to train in a specific area. It would be great for NGBs to be able to offer a reduced rate for employers that pay for employee's training." ●

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

NEW DIRECTION

Quest's unannounced assessments help frontline staff raise their game

The introduction of a new unannounced assessment from Quest, the UK's quality scheme for sport and leisure, is helping operators already registered with the scheme to take their service delivery to the next level.

One of the requirements of Quest registration is for centres to undergo a one-day Directional Review (DR) a year after their initial assessment. While the results do not affect the site's registered status, unless they fail the statutory Health and Safety Declaration, the report helps managers identify areas to improve ahead of their next registration assessment the following year.

But since the launch of a newly redesigned DR in July, this mini assessment has just got a lot more challenging. Firstly, the date of the visit is now unannounced. Secondly, the new process is aimed squarely not at general managers, but at duty management and frontline staff.

With a much greater focus on the operational aspects of the business, the new assessment covers three areas: General Observations, on everything from building presentation to customer service; a Review of Duty Management, ranging from communication methods to staff training on procedures; and a Review of Operational Staff, ranging from development processes to awareness of business objectives.

In addition to checking competence in all these areas, the assessor conducts interviews with both duty managers and frontline staff to see how they might react in a variety of situations. For example, what should you do if a fitness instructor doesn't turn up for their class, or if one customer accuses another of indecent behaviour?

Gill Twell, Quest operations manager, says: "The unannounced DR will help senior managers understand and raise the standard of

what is happening at their facilities on a day-to-day basis, by ensuring that frontline managers and staff are knowledgeable, trained and have the necessary resources in place."

Since July, 28 sites have gone through the new review, and a survey of results to date shows some interesting findings. For example, while most facilities score highly for staff training and qualifications across a range of areas, ongoing staff training plans are in need of improvement, with 43% of sites only scoring satisfactory in this area.

Other strengths include user-friendly and well-presented websites, varied and accessible activity programmes and the statutory Health and Safety Declaration, which received an average excellent score of 88% (this was weaker for the general Health and Safety review, at 73%).

On the other hand, the report identifies a lack of awareness of business objectives among operational staff, with 86% of sites scoring no more than satisfactory in this area, and none scoring very good or excellent.

"Because this assessment focuses more on day-to-day operational procedures and less on strategy, some of the results are quite different to what we would expect to see in a standard Quest assessment," says Twell. "For example, we were surprised to see centres scoring so well in general maintenance, yet not so well in cleanliness and housekeeping."

"But the key lessons for senior managers are, firstly, that frontline staff are paramount to the successful running of sport and

leisure centres; and secondly, that everyone in your team needs to understand every aspect of the operational side of the business." ●





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IN DEPTH

CASE STUDY

DATA IN ACTION

Performance Data Management System was developed to allow coaches and athletes to gain a competitive edge in training. Sue Weekes looks at the programme

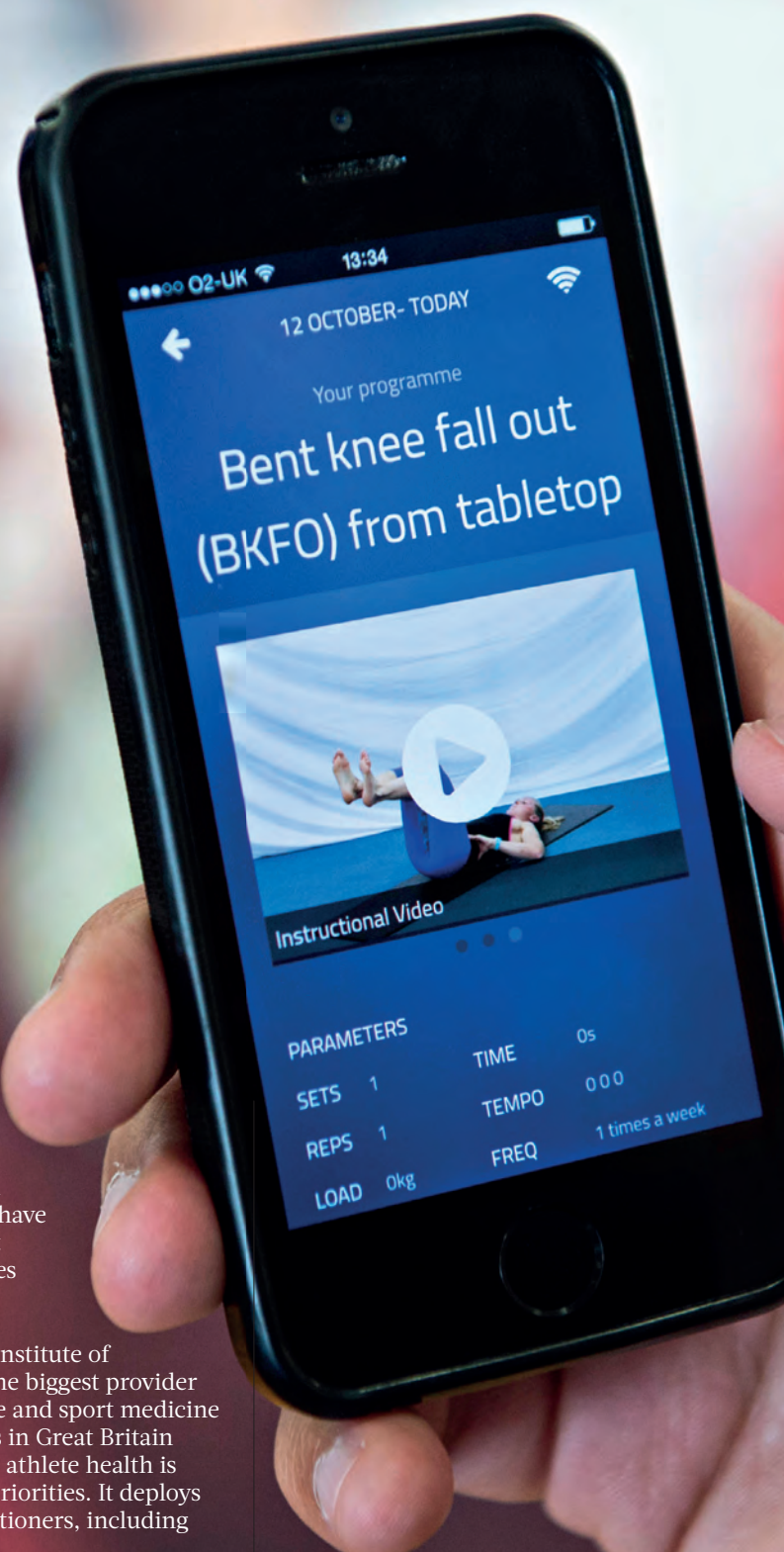


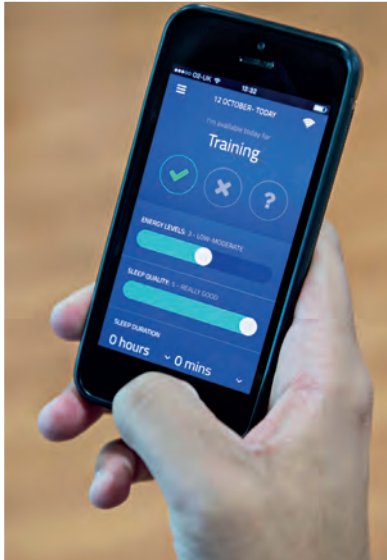
With the build-up to Tokyo 2020 already underway after record-breaking performances by the GB Olympic and Paralympic teams, sporting bodies and institutes will be seeking to build on many of the initiatives put in place for the Rio cycle (the period from the London 2012 Games to the games in Rio).

Injury and illness is one of the single biggest factors that prevents athletes from being successful. As well as losing training days and missing competitions, injured or unwell athletes are unable to exert

maximum effort when they do train. And any gap in training could have a major impact on their chances of success in competition.

The English Institute of Sport (EIS) is the biggest provider of sport science and sport medicine to elite athletes in Great Britain and preserving athlete health is one of its key priorities. It deploys teams of practitioners, including





The Performance Data Management System in action

THE PDMS IS MADE UP OF FOUR PARTS:

1 AER Athlete monitoring
This element allows athletes to input quantitative and qualitative data about their training regime on a daily basis. It enables them to record their 'availability' to train, the 'effort' they were able to exert and how they feel afterwards during 'recovery'.

Over time, this can be used to provide an overview of an athlete's training history and by attaching metrics to it can establish the extent to which they are performing efficiently or at their optimal level. It also enables athletes to set personal thresholds which flag when the training load is a concern. When an athlete is recovering from injury it can be used to track their progress, how their body feels after each session and the markers they are achieving in their rehabilitation.

By drawing on a range of factors, it provides an overview of how an athlete is progressing in either their training programme or recovery from injury that can be used to inform future training plans. By looking at how tired or sore an athlete is after training, it can also help to identify when they may be susceptible to injury and enable coaches to make appropriate interventions to the training load.

2 Electronic Medical Records and Athlete Health Insights

The medical records section of PDMS is accessible to all medical practitioners that work in the HPS and provides a place for them to log every interaction they have with an athlete. It enables them to rate the injury or illness status, detail the treatments and interventions they delivered and monitor the 'journey' of an athlete's injury.

PDMS provides a means to maximise this information through the creation reports, known as ULTRA, which are based on the athlete's medical records. Developed by EIS practitioners, these reports can examine injury or illness patterns in a particular sport to identify the most common ones or look at patterns around particular types of injury and the impact of these in terms of training days or not being able to give maximum effort. They can also influence the medical and injury prevention strategies developed by performance directors and sport National Governing Bodies (NGBs).

3 ICE – Anticipate and mitigate against performance threats

As well as enabling athletes

IN DEPTH

CASE STUDY

and coaches to look back at previous information, there is also a forward-looking element to PDMS that aims to help sports use this data to look at potential future injury issues, their causes and the probability of occurrence. This is done through a process known as ICE, which brings together coaches, athletes and medical staff in a facilitated discussion to examine the medical records data of individual athletes and identify key areas of potential injury risk in future. From this, interventions can be planned based on the athlete's previous history, their track record and their behaviours to help minimise and prevent future injuries.

4 Best practice recovery advice

As well as providing a mechanism for collecting and interpreting data, the PDMS app is also a means to communicate directly with athletes and is used to deliver advice and tips on a wide range of recovery techniques.

Advice is sport-specific and tailored to reflect the individual circumstances of a sport or athlete. It covers a range of subjects, including everything from meal planning and nutritional advice, to tips for minimising the impact of jet lag, or even the best way to create a home ice bath. By being easily accessible via the mobile app and including feature rich content such as images and videos, PDMS puts tailored, bespoke advice into

the hands of athletes, which reflects their circumstances and the particular performance challenges they face at any given time.

British Cycling was one of the first sports to use the PDMS app to support its athletes in their recovery strategies (see pp36-39, 'Measuring the sporting edge'). Meanwhile, GB Hockey made use of the PDMS as part of its athlete monitoring and said its ease-of-use and ability to serve up understandable information quickly to coaches and support staff are two of the major benefits of the platform.

"PDMS has a user-friendly interface so it makes it easier to capture information and then present it back quickly in graphical reports that provide a snapshot of athlete availability for training and, longer term, enable us to track and analyse the volume and intensity of their work," says Andy Hudson, EIS strength and conditioning coach and who is the head of physical preparation for GB and England Hockey.

"Having all of the information available and up-to-date in a single place makes it much easier for the sport science team to support the athletes as they are all working from the same data. It means the strength and conditioning coaches can use it to inform their work, as can the physiotherapists, physiologists, doctors and other practitioners that are also part of the multi-disciplinary team."



doctors, physiotherapists, strength and conditioning coaches, soft tissue therapists, performance nutritionists, performance psychologists, performance analysts, biomechanists, performance lifestyle advisers and physiologists, who work on a day-to-day basis delivering services to improve athlete health.

To further bolster their efforts in this department, the EIS explored ways to supplement this day-to-day delivery of medical care during the Rio cycle. It led to the development of an information-led approach to enable athletes and coaches to better manage and understand health and fitness and, crucially, reduce the incidence and impact of illness.



Athlete discusses his health with an EIS expert



Undertaking strength and conditioning exercises

The bespoke Performance Data Management System (PDMS) was developed by the EIS in consultation with sports and is available to all athletes, coaches and EIS sport scientists throughout the UK's high performance system (HPS).

It collects data from a variety of sources and provides coaches and performance directors with intelligence that enables them to monitor and adapt training programmes and manage

recovery in a way that optimises their athletes' availability to train and compete with maximum effort, and thereby give them the best

possible chance of achieving their performance targets.

PDMS has been developed based on a 'continuous improvement' approach," says EIS sport intelligence manager David Gallimore. "And this will continue throughout the

sports use PDMS for medical records – covering 1,600 athletes – and athletes from over 20 sports record their daily availability, effort and recovery data using PDMS.

Gallimore explains that with most sports already using PDMS for their medical records data, growth of the system is likely to be in the "breadth of capability" offered to each sport.

He adds: "An intelligence-driven approach to athlete health is a major focus area for the EIS over the Tokyo cycle, and PDMS is a key enabler supporting the athlete health strategy. Athlete health insight will inform decision-making during athlete health planning and execution, ultimately leading to greater availability for athletes to train and compete." ●


"Athlete health insight will inform decision-making during athlete health planning and execution"

Tokyo cycle."

Over 40 Olympic and Paralympic

IN DEPTH

AGENDA

STOPPING THE CHURN

Staff turnover across the health club industry has reached challenging levels, especially for its micro and small businesses. But operators can take steps to make staff more likely to stay. Colin Cottell reports

While a certain level of staff turnover is not necessarily bad, employers in the sport and physical activity (S&PA) industry say it has gone too far. With 92% of S&PA employers falling into the categories of micro (80%) or small (12%) businesses, budgets to offer their staffs the best pay and career progression opportunities are limited – so creativity and a firm commitment to developing staff for the benefit of employees and customer service alike are essential to building the business and healthy staff retention.

“It’s a massive challenge for the industry,” says David Peacock, director

at niche recruiter Leisure People. Although hard figures about the level of staff turnover are difficult to come by, anecdotal evidence gathered for this article suggests it could be around 30–40%. “Our organisation has 75–80% annual staff retention, which is pretty high for the industry. I am pretty happy with that,” says Dave Courteen, managing director of Mosaic Health and Spa Club.

The fact that he is happy with around a quarter of his staff leaving each year, perhaps tells its own story. Indeed, according to Toby Bowen, manager of the Alive Fitness and Natural Health gym in Brighton, there





IN DEPTH

AGENDA



are worrying signs that it has become an accepted feature of the industry. "It is getting to the point where staff churn is accepted, and if someone leaves after three to four months, there is always someone else who can come in and easily fill the gap."

However, at the same time many in the sector believe that this can't go on. "High staff turnover makes it harder to build that rapport with customers. If you have an unstable workforce the business won't do as well," says Ashish Pattani, owner of two branches of Snap Fitness, a gym and fitness franchise.

"No level of turnover is acceptable. All turnover costs you money, literally cash, and then there is the time involved [in rehiring new staff]," says Catherine Holt, HR manager of Freedom Leisure, a not-for-profit leisure trust that operates centres across South-East England.

Bowen says the lure of being a personal trainer makes it difficult for employers to hold on to staff. "If you are paying the living wage and they see their former colleagues doing personal training with private clients and earning £30 to £60 an hour, it

is difficult to hold out," he says. The result, says Bowen, is that after getting the requisite experience working in a gym, "it is common for people ... to leave after six to 12 months".

Unrealistic expectations of the job also factors in to staff leaving, says Emma Teasdale, owner of gym and fitness club Active4Less in Havant, Portsmouth. "The colleges tell them they will be doing fitness training and earning a fortune, but the reality is the industry is not well paid and people have to work unsocial hours. The job isn't all about fitness; a lot of it is cleaning [the equipment]. Between 6am and 10pm you don't always have a customer that needs help."

Courteen agrees. "There is an element that the job isn't what they thought it would be. Yes, it is about fitness, but the main part of the job is about customer service and looking after customers."

Lack of opportunity for professional development is also a big issue, particularly for smaller operators. "Staff would like it, but like many owners I cannot do it. With only five or six staff, I am too small, so I don't have a job for them to move into," says Teasdale.

And the picture is more complicated than it first appears, says Holt, "There are pinch points within this, particularly caused by people going off to university," she says.

Retaining lifeguards is a particular problem, says Ruth Preece, manager at The 52 Club, which provides gym and fitness services to NHS hospital staff in central London: "Watching a piece of water can be soul-destroying. When we had a pool, we had higher staff turnover."

However, while operators in the sector face an uphill battle in retaining staff, this doesn't mean they are accepting it lying down. Indeed, they can and are doing many things to retain staff.

TOP TIPS TO REDUCE STAFF TURNOVER

- Be honest with candidates about what the role does and doesn't entail
- Redesign your organisation to provide opportunities for development
- Make the job as varied and interesting as possible
- Provide training and give people

the option of taking further qualifications

- Consider taking on apprentices
- Get your recruitment and induction right
- Give staff an opportunity to feel they can make a difference
- Pay and perks are important, but they are not the be-all and end-all

Teasdale advises making the job as interesting as possible for staff by developing their service to customers. This could be by allowing them to lead classes, or conduct one-to-one or group sessions.

Preece says: "One of the key reasons they leave is because they are doing the same old same old."

Restructuring the organisation can also help retain employees' interest. "Two years ago we created duty managers. Before that we had quite a flat structure, and we thought it would be nice if we could give people who had been here for quite a long time more responsibility," Preece adds.

For Courteen, the most critical thing in retaining staff is to give them "a clear and definable career path showing how they can move forward with qualifications and be promoted". Courteen says Mosaic's policy of promoting from within has paid off, with 25 of its 35 managers progressing via this route. "We see that as one reason why our staff retention is so high," he says.

Pattani says that for many operators in the sector, "training and career development is really difficult to do". But despite the difficulties, "it is about

making time to do it", he adds. And it need not be training that directly or immediately benefits the business: "It could be something the staff themselves are interested in."

That said, he admits that being part of a franchise helps, "allowing us to do what the big gyms do" by providing quarterly structured training. In addition, he says equipment providers are happy for his staff to be trained on their equipment, "so it is not costing us directly". "We do personal development, adds Teasdale. "I have just put someone through management training, but I don't have a position for her."

Bowen says operators should avoid falling into the trap of not putting the effort in to train staff because they don't see the point when they [staff] are likely to leave within three to four months anyway. This can become a Catch-22 situation, he warns, with staff leaving in response to managers not putting the effort in.

Recruiting the right staff in the first place is also important, says Preece. And it is not only a matter of people having the right qualifications, but also the right personality. "With a small team you really need that person to gel," she advises.

Holt highlights the need for "good solid recruitment processes", with staff trained in recruitment and understand its importance, as well as good induction. Freedom Leisure's induction programme is carried out by staff with direct experience in the role. "Make sure the induction is

thorough, provide staff with a mentor, and have constant performance and development reviews," adds Peacock.

Employers also need to do more at the selection stage to attract the best candidates, he suggests. "You have got to sell the opportunity and explain why they should come to you, and that it is not just any job, but why it is going to be great for their career."

Courteen says the importance

of relatively low levels of pay in the industry shouldn't be over-estimated or used as an excuse for why people leave it. "People don't go into health clubs because the pay is fantastic. Those that want this [fantastic pay] go into something else," he says. Preece adds: "In the last three years, we have only lost three members of staff because of pay."

What matters more is "to make them feel appreciated for what they do", says Courteen. As well as recognising their performance, this also means "giving them an opportunity to say what they think and contribute to initiatives, so they can make a difference to what we do".

Although employers can take a number of steps to keep their staff in post, perhaps Peacock sums it up best. "If you don't invest in people, they will move on. It's a job where you can leave a job today, and start another one tomorrow," he says. ●

● How do S&PA's large employers deal with staff retention? What's a success story from your business? And what must the sector do to create rewarding career opportunities for ambitious future professionals? Join S&PA Professional for our Winter 2016-17 issue.


"You have got to sell the opportunity and explain why they should come to you and why it is going to be great for their career"



IN DEPTH

WELL-BEING

CHANGING THE IMAGE

Steroid and drug misuse is prevalent in the UK. Caroline Roberts reports on what gyms can do to educate customers

D

oping in elite sport gets most of the publicity, but the use of image and performance enhancing drugs, from anabolic steroids and growth hormone to insulin and appetite suppressants, is increasing among the wider population too. And as more and more people resort to these substances in their quest for the perfect physique, it's becoming a significant public health concern.

Accurate statistics for the use of the drugs, often referred to as IPEDs, are hard to come by but the 2015 Crime Survey for England and Wales estimated that around 60,000 people had taken steroids in the previous year. However, many working in the field believe that the real figure more likely to be in the hundreds of thousands. Figures collected by local drug support services show that, in some areas, IPED users account for as much as 70% of their service users.

"It's in every gym," says Joe Kean, team manager at the Bridge Project, which provides substance misuse support in Bradford. "When people register with us we ask them where

they train. When we call that gym to offer information and support on IPEDs, they often say they don't have a problem. It worries me how little concern there seems to be about it."

Given that gyms and exercise facilities are in the business of promoting health and wellbeing, he feels they should be taking a more active role in harm reduction. There's a wide range of health risks associated with these drugs, especially with uncontrolled or prolonged use (see *panel, right*). And because many are injected, there are wider public health issues too. Although surveys

Useful resources

Information booklets on steroids from www.hit.org.uk. 'A guide to steroids (and other drugs)' is published by www.exchangesupplies.org. For facilities in the North East, the Regional Steroid and IPED Reference Group holds quarterly meetings open to anyone with an interest in the issue. Tel: Naim Vali on 01924 438383 for details.

suggest needle sharing is relatively rare among IPED users, a 2013 study of almost 400 users, published in *The BMJ* (British Medical Journal), found similar levels of HIV infection (1.5%) to that found in heroin users.

So what do we know about the user demographic? For a start, the vast majority are male. The 2015 National IPED Info Survey, a Public Health Wales initiative surveying users across England, Wales and Scotland, found that men accounted for 96% of respondents. Young men are under increasing pressure to conform to the ideal body shape. More mature men feel they need a little extra help to get the same results from their training they were able to achieve in their 20s.

The use of steroid-type drugs among females seems to be largely confined to the bodybuilding community. However, IPEDs such



as fat-burning drugs and appetite suppressants are more likely to appeal to the female population.

In legal terms, IPEDs are categorised as Class C drugs, which means that in the UK they can only be issued by a pharmacist under prescription. It's illegal to order the drugs online or by post, or to supply them to others. However, it's not against the law to possess IPEDs intended for personal use and to obtain limited amounts abroad.

Unsurprisingly, there's a thriving black market, says Naim Vali, steroid lead at substance misuse service, Lifeline Kirklees. Also, contamination with other substances is a problem. "Dealers always say it's 'pharmaceutical grade' but we know

that a lot of these drugs come from underground labs, which in reality could mean someone's kitchen or cellar so it's very hard to be sure what's in it."

So what action should gyms and leisure centres take? Kean advises that they build relationships with local drug misuse services or needle exchanges so they can access information and training for staff, and signpost IPED users to those services when necessary. Some gyms are also installing sharps bin in changing rooms, ostensibly for the disposal of razor blades. Monitoring the contents can be an eye-opener, he adds.

Staff education is key. Vali points out that many IPED users have researched the subject thoroughly

and are extremely well informed about what they're taking. "There's no point in just telling them to stop. You need a base of knowledge so you can be credible when you are having these conversations."

Kean adds that, at some point in their career, every trainer on the gym floor is going to be approached by someone thinking of taking IPEDs. "They need to be saying to them: 'Why do you feel you need to do that? Let's have a look at your programme and nutrition, and your goals, and see if those things match. In six weeks' time you're still determined to go ahead, we'll put you in touch with a specialist worker so you can do it as safely as possible.'" ●

COMMONLY-USED IPEDS AND THEIR EFFECTS

► **Anabolic-androgenic steroids**, such as testosterone and nandrolone, increase muscle mass and decrease fat. Regular use can lead to a range of health problems, including high blood pressure, and kidney and liver disease.

► Prolonged **steroid** use turns off natural testosterone production so can cause testicular atrophy and sexual dysfunction, along with breast growth. Female users can develop masculine features, such as excess body hair and deeper voice. Changes are often irreversible.

► The drugs can be psychologically addictive, as well as causing mood swings and aggression. There is also growing evidence that prolonged use of steroids can lead to cognitive decline.

► **Human growth hormone** builds muscle gradually, but can also cause growth of the hands, feet,

forehead and jaw. There is also a risk of tumour growth.

► **Insulin** helps prevent new muscle being broken down, but incorrect dosage can lead to dangerously low blood sugar levels, coma and death.

► **Anti-oestrogenic drugs**, such as the breast cancer drug tamoxifen, are taken to counteract breast growth often experienced by steroid users. Little is known about the long-term effects of this drug in males.

► Stimulants, such as **clenbuterol** and **ephedrine**, help burn fat. Side effects include raised blood pressure, shakiness and agitation.

► **Melanotan** is an unlicensed synthetic hormone that increases the level of melanin in the skin, resulting in tanning. As it has not been through a stringent testing process, little is known about side effects. There are also risks associated with injections by untrained users.

IN DEPTH

BUSINESS

Whether you're looking to go solo as a personal trainer or set up your own gym, there are crucial steps you should undertake. Graham Simons investigates

ON YOUR MARKS...

Choosing whether to discard a steady pay cheque in favour of striking out on your own is one of the hardest decisions a gym instructor can face in their career.

It is clearly not enough to have a filled-to-the-brim contacts book – though this certainly helps. To go it alone, instructors need business smarts as well as the goodwill from clients built up over many years working for a gym.

So what exactly do gym instructors need to know when starting out on their own? Where should you seek out advice upon launching your business? Where should you go for finance? How do you eke out your place in a crowded market? How do you select a location? How do you promote your business upon launch? And do where should you strike the balance between being gym instructor and the next Duncan Bannatyne?

"I would go and seek out other people in the industry who are willing to talk to you," says Ashton Turner,



director, at Evolve 353, who opened a fitness and lifestyle studio in Parsons Green in Fulham with partner Dave Arnot in May. Turner told SP&A he had benefitted from the shared knowledge gained from being part of a group of gym owners: "The reason we are where we are today is because one of the gyms sat down with us and gave us their business plan. They said 'this is our business model, this is how we run it'. I went to a couple of seminars where this guy, who set up a load of businesses like ours, came over from the US."

According to Alan Levi, who started out as a personal trainer a decade ago, the internet has grown in importance as a rich, if flawed, source of information for would-be start-up gym owners.

"The internet has made getting

good quality information so much more accessible and easy compared to when I was starting out.

"However, a caveat is that for every exceptional website, there are also some that are utter nonsense – internet warriors making ridiculous statements or entering into arguments just for the sake of it. Use your critical faculties and check that these people have the track record to back up what they say.

"Some good starting points are anything by Charles Poliquin, Paul Chek and Joe DeFranco. I highly recommend Tim Ferriss's book *The*

Four Hour Body as it covers so many areas of interest to personal trainers."

No matter how good you are as a trainer, you will need financial backing, so where should you go for backing for your business plan? According to Turner, while a number of routes are available, there is no right way to secure funding. "As business partners we had money to put in so we had help from investors, but it's different for everyone. If someone goes to the bank and gets



IN DEPTH

BUSINESS



Alan Levi, a personal trainer for over a decade, says the internet can make starting out easier

a bank loan, that's great. There are so many different options, it just depends on what suits the person."

But equally, in the first few months you are likely to be on a low income in the initial period following the launch of your business.

"If you can, have some savings set aside for this period, or simplify your lifestyle," Levi advises. "Trainers beat themselves up too much if they aren't doing 40 hour weeks within a few months. Let me be blunt: if you are still in business after a year, you are a success. It is a marathon, not a sprint."

Like any business, your ability to bring the day forward when you are finally turning a profit depends on whether you have an effective unique selling point (USP). So how do you do that when new gyms seem to be popping up all over the country?

For Levi, you need a definable skill set that is uniquely yours and

distinguishes you from everyone else. "Mine is that I am an holistic trainer that incorporates every aspect of the client in formulating my programme design – nutrition, sleep, stress, limiting and negative beliefs. I really try and factor in every aspect of my client's life and the challenges that life provides into what I do."

For Turner, Evolve's focus is on basic semi-private personal training for up to four people training with one coach.

"It's a lot more time-efficient for us a business. They are not having to train just one person. You can get a minimum of four clients through at peak time. And also it's a lot more cost-effective for our clients. They can generally afford to come to the gym more often. Rather than having just two one-on-one, they are training in small groups so it becomes more encouraging and more motivational."

Another consideration in terms

of establishing that USP is ensuring you have limited competition for the services you provide. The mantra of 'location, location, location' is equally important to gym owners as it is to home owners.

Turner told SP&A initially his big considerations were the prospective location of his new gym, the space in terms of finding a venue that was usable as a gym and for personal training, looking at the competition around, as well as whether he and his partner had enough money to move into their desired location.

"Have you got the money to do it? Can you get the investors to help you? That's always the big thing and also the confidence if you do it to be successful," Turner explains. "We were originally based in Clapham, which is where all of our original client base would have been but there was a lot of competition. There wasn't any usable space, so we started to just look about. We have actually got another business partner, a silent partner, who found the space."

"The reason we took it was because there are lot of gyms in the area but a lot of them are yoga and pilates. None of them do what we're doing. It's an affluent area. There's a lot of disposable income here."

Mervyn Espie, founder director at N4 Workout, who set up his gym with partners in the Hornsey area of North London four years ago, advises would-be start-ups to research their prospective local area thoroughly, as well as their target audience.

"From there look at the demographics and target your advertising specifically. Choose your partners carefully and ensure everyone is accountable for their position in the company. Ensure your staff are fully qualified and committed, or let them go."

Once you are up and running, you



L-R: Ashton Turner and Dave Arnot set up Evolve 353 together in Fulham, West London

will need to promote your business but what's the best way of doing this with a plethora of social media channels to choose from? According to Turner, his secret of success in using social media is authenticity.

"Don't try and be somebody you're not. Be authentic. Be believable. On our social media, we use Instagram and Facebook and we are constantly posting good content. It's very rarely about myself and Dave. It's always about our clients. I don't really care if people know who Dave and I are, but I want them to see how we treat our clients and the kinds of things our clients are achieving. That's what is going to bring numbers in.

"We'll put up the workouts they're doing, the things they're achieving. We have big social events here. We had one at the weekend where 42 people came and did a workout, then we all went out for drinks straight afterwards. We have a big members' goal board of Polaroid photos all around it. Dave and I will post workouts as well. We'll post tips, nutrition – it's about giving people information that they want. But also it's what we do as a gym, what's happening in our gym, what kind of things they can expect if they come and see us."

Levi says start-ups should aim to build a high-traffic website and an exceptional professional Facebook page with excellent content.

"You can really drill down to getting the exact audience you want on Facebook (ie men and women between 28-35 interested in kettlebell training) and for a small investment you can boost the audience to reach thousands of people."

"Let me be blunt: if you are still in business after a year, you are a success"

For Espie, it's about embracing the entire marketing mix from leaflets to social media to client referrals to newsletters, as well as working closely with next door businesses. "Because we're close and community based, word of mouth is our best tool. We targeted the primary and nursery

school mums, and now 80% of our clients are from these schools. Mums bring partners who talk to neighbours," he adds.

Ultimately, being your own boss is far stiffer challenge than being directly employed by a gym, so where should you strike the balance between being a gym instructor and the next Duncan Bannatyne?

For Turner, no matter how small your operation you need to think in

the same way any business owner would and most importantly not underestimate the challenge ahead if you do choose to discard a steady pay cheque in favour of striking out on your own.

"I think a lot of people just think 'I'm working in someone else's gym – I've got loads of clients; all I need to do is find the space and I'll be a millionaire. But you are running a business. It's exactly like any other business. You have to be looking at performance.

"You have to be looking at your financials. You have to be looking at the admin side of things. You have to deal with towel deliveries, restock shower gels. You are the person in charge of sales, the marketing, the PR.

"Until you can afford to get someone to do that, that's your job. I think a lot of PTs [personal trainers] think 'it's fine I've got 50 clients – I'll open a gym and it will be easy' but there's a lot more behind it. You won't succeed if you're not business minded." ●



N4 Workout in North London was set up by Mervyn Espie

TECH FOCUS

PERFORMANCE DATA

MEASURING THE

Technologies that are helping top athletes gain the advantage are already finding their use at grass-roots level. Sue Weekes reports

G

aining an extra 24 minutes' sleep a night might not seem much but, when you are a Team GB boxer training for the Rio 2016 Olympics, it could make all the difference between a silver or gold medal.

Sleeping was just one area where data and analytics technology has helped to make performance improvements that contributed to Great Britain's best ever Olympic medal haul in the modern games era in Rio 2016. While technology is just one aspect of the success story, there is no denying the vital part it has played and will continue to in the

run-up to Tokyo 2020.

"One of the exciting things is that we now have eight years of data in sport, including two Olympics, and by the time we get to Tokyo we will have 12 years' worth," says Steve Haake, professor of sports engineering at Sheffield Hallam University. "That is the really valuable part."

The university's Centre for Sports Engineering Research (CSER) is among those organisations that has been working with the English Institute of Sport, Sport Scotland, Sport Wales, Sports Institute of Northern Ireland and other dedicated sporting bodies to

help Team GB use technology to bring about performance improvements.

"The technology we've worked on over the years prior to 2008 was more to do with physical things such as boots, bikes and boats," says Haake. "Then, after Beijing, sport started to lean towards these mobile platforms, really driven by the iPhone and other smartphones, looking at performance technologies. So how do you measure – in situ, in the field, on the slalom or the bobsleigh track – how well your training regime is working? That is the question the systems answer."

Each sport has its own demands in



SPORTING EDGE

terms of the desired data and how it is packaged but all data and analysis systems serve the same purpose of giving the athletes and their coaches the information they need to succeed, when they need it and in one place. In boxing, for example, iBoxer software provides the boxers and coaches a single portal for all their performance statistics, while a five-ring camera system at the GB Boxing gym in Sheffield records, monitors and collects data from each ring.

In diving, a camera system trained on the boards at Ponds Forge International Sports Centre in

Sheffield is timed to deliver video of the dive at a variety of speeds by the time the athlete gets back to the side of the pool. Video and analysis is also sent straight to an athlete's phone. "Immediacy of feedback is one of the key things we've worked hard on," says Haake. "The aim though is never to overload the athlete with too much information and this is carefully managed by the coach or performance analyst."

In total, the CSER was involved in 10 medal-winning teams at Rio 2016, including GB Boxing, British Canoeing and British Gymnastics and GB's

Paralympic teams currently in action also make use of the same technology.

Meanwhile, GB Rowing utilised technology provided by business analytics company SAS when preparing for Rio 2016. Steve Ludlow, SAS UK principal technology specialist, said it was difficult to calculate the precise impact of the technology as it worked on numerous projects, some of which will see improvements post-Rio, but adds: "What we do know is, it will have helped make the boats go faster, as the coaches can now access all the information they need about



Professor Steve Haake is professor of sports engineering at Sheffield Hallam University

a particular rower or crew much quicker than they could before and then analyse that information to derive insights that aid decision-making.

"Not only that, but the rowers themselves said they feel better prepared and therefore more confident on the start line knowing that there is a more rigorous approach to data."

Ludlow says SAS is exploring how to improve understanding around the biomechanics of rowing. "For example, different stroke patterns and the various different forces operating on the boat to further improve boat speed," he explains.

"In addition we're looking at how to improve talent identification by studying and analysing data relating

to junior rowers."

The sporting bodies also had a number of specific projects ongoing in the run-up to Rio 2016 that made use of data and analytics. These included the English Institute of Sport's (EIS) investigation into GB Boxing's sleeping habits. Data was collected using the Pittsburgh Sleep Quality Index, a formal metric used to assess sleep and exercise.

"For Jessica Ennis-Hill, it's about winning gold but for my mum it's about getting out of the chair"

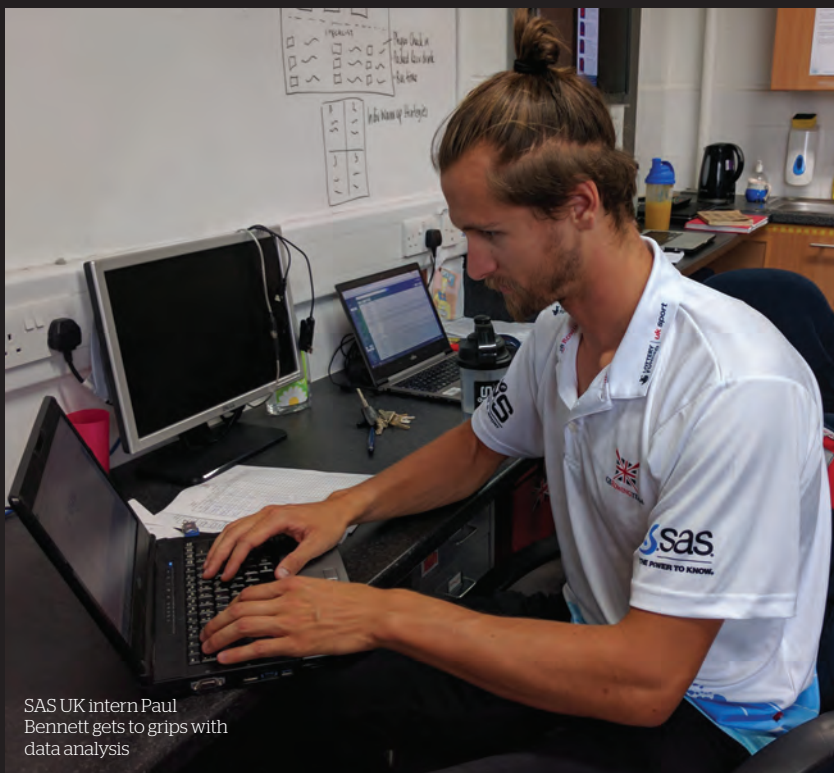
This revealed that 80% of the GB Boxing Podium squad were recognised as poor sleepers. Various improvements were made to upgrade the sleeping environment such as increasing bed sizes and improving sheets and duvets to limit the build-up of allergens in bedrooms. Further sleeping habit tests were carried out and the collective

data used to develop individualised sleeping strategies, reflecting physiological sleeping patterns and preferences.

Olympic bronze medallist Richie Woodhall, who works as a consultant coaching the GB squad, points out that the average increase of 24 extra minutes a night could add up to as much as 29 or 30 days' sleep in the Rio cycle. "That can be the difference between winning a medal or going out in the first round," he comments.

The EIS has also developed the Performance Data Management System (PDMS) in consultation with various sports (see Case study, p22). PDMS enables performance experts to monitor and adapt training programmes and manage injury recovery in a way that optimises athletes' ability to train and compete with maximum effort. British Cycling was one of the first sports to use the PDMS app to support its athletes in their recovery strategies.

According to Jonathan Leeder, the EIS performance lead who works with British Cycling, one of the most common challenges athletes face is to find the right balance between optimal



SAS UK intern Paul Bennett gets to grips with data analysis



training load and recovery, especially as recovery will be completed away from the training centre. The PDMS helps to address this challenge as it can be used to deliver a prescriptive bespoke recovery programme to each athlete, he says.

It isn't just elite athletes that can benefit from such data and analytics technology to improve performance. Ludlow says that "hundreds of thousands" of copies of its free statistical software SAS University edition have already been downloaded and can be utilised for an individual's own learning. "This would also provide non-elite rowers with the ability to monitor and predict their own performance," he says.

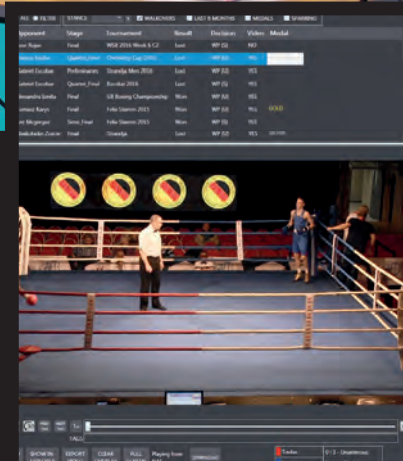
Meanwhile, Sheffield Hallam is setting up the Advanced Wellbeing Research Institute with a tagline of 'Innovation that helps people move'. Haake explains that the aim is to take

the learning and technology from the elite sporting world and apply it to everyday sport and activity. "For Adam Peaty or Jessica Ennis-Hill, it's about winning gold but for my mum it's about getting out of the chair and walking around the block.

We want to cover everything across this continuum," he says.

Haake gives the example of a gait analyser used in elite tennis and athletics that counts stride frequency and the distance between each footprint. There is now a version of this

"It's a bit like the Formula 1 effect where you have F1 technologies appearing in everyday cars"



located in a local Sheffield stadium for running clubs and others to use, while another one has been made available in a local clinic.

"So if you've got a gait abnormality, it can be used by clinicians to find out how effective clinical intervention and rehabilitation has been," he says. "So we have gone from elite sport to people's everyday lives. It's a bit like the Formula 1 effect where you have F1 technologies starting to appear in everyday cars." ●



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Safety wristbands from the National Open Water Coaching Association (NOWCA) are now available. NOWCA swimmer's with a wristband benefit from only ever having to provide their lake with emergency contact and medical details once, unless these details change, while their swims are timed and distance recorded which is available to view in an personal login area. They can also purchase multiple swims at their lake, removing the need to take money with them each time and scan in and out of the water, quickly and without any paperwork. Available to collect at designated NOWCA lakes, NOWCA swimmers are advised that once collected, their wristband will be theirs for each subsequent year and so must be kept safe as NOWCA lakes can charge for replacements.

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www.nowca.org



FOOD & DRINK

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MANAGEMENT

FOCUS

*A Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) is an option worth looking at for clubs eager to attract members and save funds, says **John Hammill***

IS CASC STATUS RIGHT FOR YOU?

N

early 7,000 sports clubs in the UK have benefitted from registering as Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs), a status that enables them to save vital funds to reinvest in community-level sporting activities.

CASCs were introduced by government to promote public participation in sports. By registering as CASCs, sports clubs receive charity-type tax reliefs, benefitting from mandatory 80% business rate relief, Gift Aid on donations, and tax reliefs on profits and the sale of land.

To qualify as CASCs, sports clubs need to ensure that they comply with the HM Revenue & Customs (HMRC) conditions that were brought into force on 1 April this year. If the club's activities are carried out on a not-for-profit basis, qualify for CASC registration (most sports do) and are open to the whole community, it should be possible for the club to be registered as a CASC.

South Northumberland Cricket Club is one such sporting club that has applied the new rules: club chairman Roger Griffiths said that altering its legal status meant the club underwent "small internal changes". He went on to say that the organisation will achieve savings on "a recurring basis [which]

"Savings will be reinvested directly into the running of the club"

will be reinvested directly into the running of the club for the benefit of the community.

"We already have ambitious plans for the money, which will be used to enhance our cricket camps for all ages as well as a greatly improved winter coaching programme."

If a club's activities are undertaken on a not-for-profit basis, then it should be possible for them to register as a CASC but they would require legal and accountancy advice to ensure that the appropriate legal structure and documents are produced.

Could your club benefit? Consider the following points:

1. Be organised on an amateur basis – the club must be run as a not-for-profit organisation with all income being used to further the aims and objectives of the club.

2. Have as a main purpose the provision of facilities for, and promotion of participation in, eligible sports – details of eligible sports are on the HMRC website.

3. Have affordable membership, which is open to all without discrimination – the application process for membership must be open and transparent and membership must be available for £520 per year or less. That said, other categories of membership can cost more – eg. golf clubs might have members who pay less than others but are only entitled to play on certain days of the week.

4. Don't pay players more than £10k per year – the club can pay as many players as it wishes but to be organised on an 'amateur' basic, it must not pay players more than £10k in aggregate per year.

5. Have a suitable governing document. If a club is incorporated, it will need to ensure that its articles of association comply with CASC legislation, otherwise HMRC will refuse its CASC status application. ●

John Hammill is a partner at commercial law firm Square One Law in Newcastle-upon-Tyne.



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MANAGEMENT

LEGISLATION

*If you employ anyone from the EU, then the ramifications for them – and your business – could prove challenging in the months ahead, says **Steven Bostock***

HOW WILL BREXIT AFFECT YOU?

The recent referendum decision for the UK to leave the European Union has caused a significant amount of uncertainty. One of the more challenging aspects that politicians must now deal with is the UK/EU immigration relationship.

At the heart of this challenge is a conflict between the UK's desire to maintain access to the European single market, while at the same time controlling the ability of Europeans to come to the UK. The free movement of people is an EU cornerstone and the EU has never allowed a country to have free access to the single market without the free movement of people.

Unfortunately, we will not start to see clarity in respect of the immigration relationship until the UK and EU both establish their respective negotiating positions; immigration being one of the strongest cards each side holds.

There are currently around 3m European Economic Area (EEA) nationals living in the UK and around 1.2m Brits living in the EEA, mainly in France, Spain and Germany. Any decision the British government makes in respect of EEA nationals currently in the UK would clearly have an impact on any British citizens living in the EEA.

ADVICE FOR EEA NATIONALS CURRENTLY LIVING IN THE UK

Senior government ministers in the UK have said that they expect to protect

“The free movement of people is an EU cornerstone”

the long-term status of European migrants already in the UK if free movement comes to an end. This is not a clear commitment to safeguarding their immigration positions but is the closest we are likely to get to this for some time.

We are advising EEA nationals currently in the UK to apply for a registration certificate from the Home Office to formally confirm their status here. If they have lived here for five years already and exercised European Treaty rights throughout this period, we recommend they apply for permanent residence (the first step to becoming a British citizen).

We are currently experiencing a surge in these applications and the Home Office could potentially be forced to process 140 years' worth of visa applications in one year if all EEA nationals currently in the UK apply for these documents. Our advice to EEA nationals is to get these applications submitted to the Home Office as swiftly as possible but to expect significant processing delays from them.

THE FUTURE

It is far too early to say with any degree of certainty how the future UK/EU immigration relationship will look. This ultimately depend on the extent to which the UK will have a hard or soft Brexit from the EU.

The EU has so far been clear that any derivation from the free movement of people would likely cause the rest of the Union to crack. Were the UK to decide that immigration control is more important than access to the free market, it seems likely that EEA nationals would continue to have the option of moving to the UK, but would need to apply through the domestic points-based system.

The Prime Minister, however, has recently ruled out a points-based system approach to EU nationals, favouring instead a work permit arrangement. The PM should be aware that Tier 2 of the points-based system was introduced in 2008 to replace the work permit scheme. The most likely category for skilled workers would be Tier 2, which allows employers in the UK to sponsor skilled migrants from outside of the EEA to work for that business in the UK. This category could become the main route for EEA nationals to come to the UK to work when the UK and EU formally divorce.

Steven Bostock is partner, Immigration, at law firm Mishcon de Reya LLP

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LAST WORD

SPORT AMBASSADOR



*In the West Midlands, Wendy's Wednesdays offers disabled people a chance to get fit, but most inspirational of all is the instructor herself, **Wendy Hall***

BREAKING DOWN DISABILITY BARRIERS

I broke my neck in October 2008, which left me paralysed from the neck down. It's been a long road to recovery – and one I'm still on – but I'm moving to the faster lanes.

I used to work in the control room for the ambulance service in the West Midlands, but I wanted to get out on the road. So I went out as an observer. On one visit to a patient, I wasn't feeling well. I was at the top of the stairs, and passed out and fell, face first. I remember coming to at the bottom of the staircase. The paramedic I was with said: "You have to stay still." I replied: "You have to get me up because I can't feel anything at all." If they hadn't been there I wouldn't be here today. Simple as. Had I been at home, nobody would have found me. I couldn't have been with anyone better that day.



Before then I worked as a dental technician, an aerobics teacher and as cabin crew on long-haul flights. I'm not good at sticking at one role!

The irony is, I couldn't do any of these jobs now because of my accident. I'm still in some level of recuperation. I was in hospital four months but all that time I was so focused on getting home.

The following years were just a whirl of treatment, pain and physiotherapy. It took up all my energy, but I was determined to get back to work. Your friends and your family keep you going. My sister used to spend Sundays with me just to do my hair. It's still emotional... but I'm good where I am now.

Keeping fit after my accident also changed. When I first went to the gym though, the biggest barrier for me was facing people who I knew before the accident. People who I trained with wouldn't look at me; they didn't know what to say. It was weird. So I

changed gym, and the anonymity of fresh surroundings helped me make a fresh start.

I started a voluntary placement at Sandwell Leisure Trust's Portway Lifestyle Centre about a year ago. Before that I got on to the Instructability course YMCA qualification. Now I run Wendy's Wednesday at Portway and do odd days here and there when

needed. It's always interesting when I start a new class as an instructor. I set up equipment and check if anyone taking part needs any special equipment. I always ask "Does anyone have any disability that I need to know about? But first I'll tell you about mine." They see me walk in with a stick and say, "Wow that's really cool". It gives them a boost to see someone like themselves taking the class. We want participants to feel relaxed and to enjoy themselves before anything else. And they do. A lot would never have even picked up a bag, never mind a weight.

I tell people to work with what they've got. Don't worry about what your body can't do; focus on what it can do. You may even surprise yourself. ●

As told to Mike Nesbit. Wendy Hall is a gym & fitness instructor, Portway Lifestyle Centre, Portway, Olbury, Borough of Sandwell, West Midlands



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LAST WORD

24 HOURS WITH...



Robbie Simpson, Exeter City footballer and founder of LAPS, Life After Professional Sport, on how he balances professional sport with entrepreneurship

16:15

I have an afternoon nap before my Tuesday night match, so my alarm wakes me up in plenty of time to get ready. I always have beans on toast, and finish eating three hours before kick-off so it's all fully digested.

18:00

I'm always a bit early getting to the stadium to get my massage and strappings done – plus a little caffeine boost as well!

19:45

Kick-off! Hopefully a goal and three points!

21:45

Game's over (and hopefully we're all on a high from our resounding victory...), team talk's done, so now it's vital to refuel and jump in the dreaded ice bath (actually I quite like it, but don't tell anyone). After that, time to talk to the press, meet our brilliant sponsors and finally head home.

00:00

Adrenaline is still in full flow. I always find it hard to sleep after night games, so I check my emails and social media in bed and find out what the LAPS team has been up to while I've been playing, as Wednesday is my LAPS day. It's all go at the moment, and we've had the team out recording filmed interviews with other sports pros who have moved into new careers, so I love seeing the footage. They've usually also



been busy researching stuff and developing new features for the platform. I have to switch off from it all during matches and training but it's great to see how well it's all coming along.

08:00

Alarm wakes me up as usual and I'm up for breakfast – most often Marmite on toast (I'm a lover not a hater!).

09:00

In full LAPS mode and into my working day. First I respond to the emails and messages I've received, checking in with our researcher Tom to find out what new contacts he's got lined up for me. I look at the progress of the platform itself, which is really exciting at the moment.

10:00

At LAPS I'm responsible for building relationships with sports governing bodies,

player associations and so on to spread the word about what we do, so I get in touch with the player association/professional body of athletes we've interviewed recently and send over information about LAPS.

11:00

Meet up with LAPS CEO Rob Steed and head off to a meeting with either a sporting body, player association, recruitment company, athlete representative or media outlet for interviews etc. We'll always meet up a bit early to go through our strategy, though meetings are usually fairly informal, often over lunch, unless we're doing a formal presentation.

14:00

Meeting's over, and it's time for Rob and me to review it, give each other feedback and work out what to take forward to our next meetings. We'll pass on anything that needs following up back to the team, and spend some time thrashing out new ideas for the platform.

15:00

I'll go through emails again, responding to the replies I may have had that morning and setting up more meetings for the coming week. Now we're so close to launch we're getting more and more interest so it takes a lot of organisation to schedule it all in. It's an exciting time for LAPS and I can't wait to see it launch soon! ●

LAST WORD

SPORT BY NUMBERS

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This issue... Rio 2016 Paralympics

This year's event was the 15th Paralympic Games and showcased once again the Paralympic spirit and determination among the athletes

1960

The first ever Paralympic Games was held in Rome, with 8 different sports:

Archery, IPC Athletics, Dartchery, Snooker, IPC Swimming, Table tennis, Wheelchair fencing, Wheelchair basketball

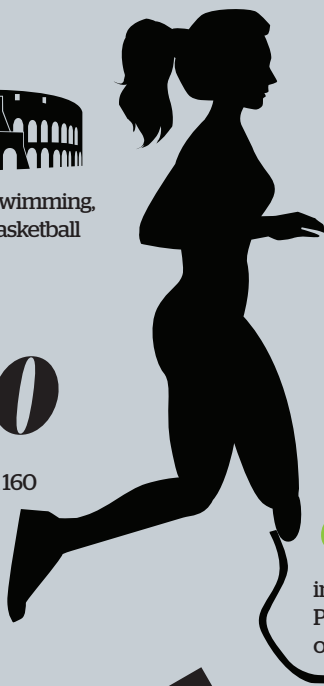


4,350

athletes from more than 160 countries competed

528

medal events took place in 22 different sports



25,000

people in 104 countries play wheelchair basketball

9.9%

increase on London 2012 Paralympics with the number of women taking part



6

medals events each were staged by first-time sports canoeing and triathlon

Sporting quote



"To go quicker than London after having my daughter Louisa is the icing on the cake"

— DAME SARAH STOREY, PARACYCLIST GOLD MEDALLIST —



154

countries broadcast the Rio Paralympic Games, a record number and up from 115 countries in London 2012



4 billion

is the expected global audience

Sources: <https://www.paralympic.org>



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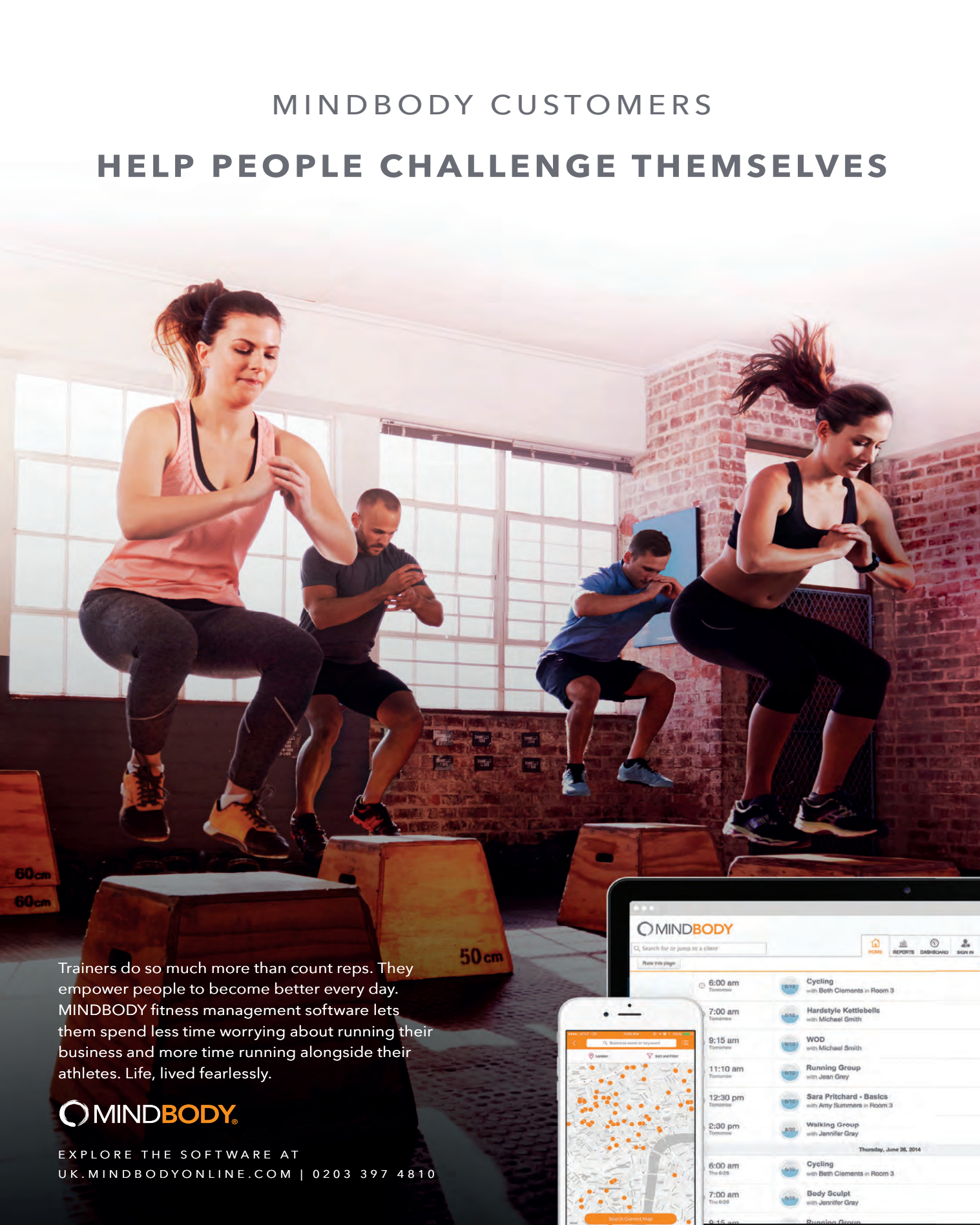
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