

DO GOOD, FEEL GOOD

Good Gym's helpful approach

p22

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Sports Business Council

p30

MIND, BODY AND SOUL

Kung fu master Yoke Wan Lee

p47

S&PA Professional

ISSUE 30 SUMMER 2018

CIMSPA

CHARTERED INSTITUTE FOR THE MANAGEMENT
OF SPORT AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

THE SPORT & PHYSICAL ACTIVITY INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

DARING TO DO DIFFERENTLY

Emma Atkins: UK
Coaching director on
how to equip coaches for
success and fulfilment



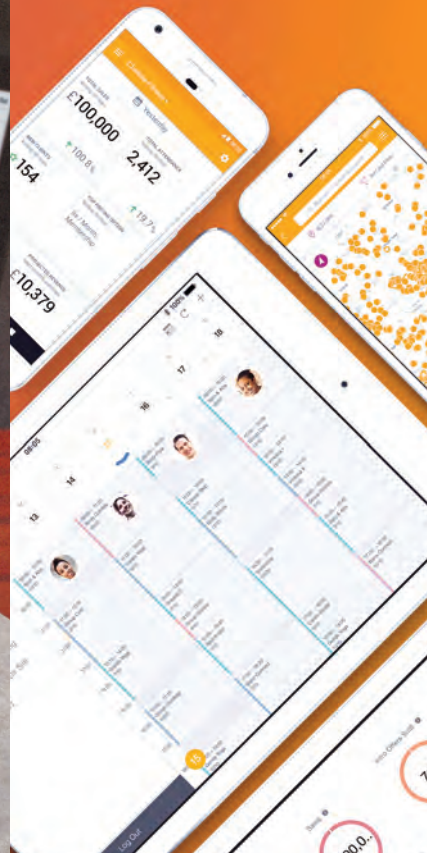
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CONTENTS

S&PA Professional

CIMSPA

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5

Upfront

5 Editor's leader

News

- 6 Building links with academics
- 8 The need to improve swimming basics
- 10 Movers and shakers
- 11 Top five swimming activities by income

12

In depth

12 CIMSPA update

Meet our new board members

22 Community action

GoodGym: exercising to help others

26 Profile

UK Coaching's Emma Atkins and the power of coaching

30 Agenda

The Sports Business Council plans for investment and impact

34 Business

Choosing the right management system

38

Tech toolkit

38 Tech focus

Rule the Pool swimming challenge

40 Product round-up

The latest high-tech equipment

43

Management

43 Expert advice

Scaling up your leisure business

45 Workplace focus

Keep an eye on supplement usage

47

Last word

47 Sport ambassador

Yoke Wan Lee, kung fu master

49 Sporting life

Nicky Perfect, personal trainer

50 Sport by numbers

This Girl Can goes global



"We need to change the narrative. There is great coaching going on daily, but we don't talk about it. We forget to celebrate the good stuff. That's what Coaching Week was all about" (p26)



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► DeeDee Doke

Exciting times



Leaders in the sector continue to work tirelessly as the bid to professionalise the workforce gathers pace

There's rarely a dull moment in the world of sport & physical activity. And the sector seems to have come even more alive in the last few months.

For a large helping of inspiration, look to the wonderful Emma Atkins of UK Coaching, who uses the 'magic wand' of imagination to encourage those she comes in contact with to think big and leave boundaries behind. In a recent conversation with her for our cover story, she told me that she uses her 'visioning wand' to "get people to think about what they really want to achieve... as a way to get people to leave

the baggage or any other constraints at the door... to think about what we need as people first and not to worry that we can't afford it at the moment of don't have the time at the moment". We could all use a wave of that visioning wand in our daily lives to transcend our limitations, couldn't we?

Another Emma also played an essential role in the inspiration factor in creating this Summer 2018 issue – this time Emma Boggis, CEO of the Sport & Recreation Alliance. Emma B spoke with me about the work of the Sports Business Council, a group of highly influential S&PA leaders that seeks to

raise awareness of the sector's economic impact on the UK – and to grow both investment and impact. As CIMSPA members, you'll want to know how skills fit into the SBC's agenda.

Inspiration, investment and impact – consider that our theme for this issue.



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S&PA News

A round-up of the latest developments in the industry

EXPLORING ALL POSSIBILITIES

How and why do people engage with sport and physical activity? The true answer can be found with a collaborative approach to research between scholars and industry professionals, say leaders in the sector

Sport and physical activity (S&PA) practitioners must develop strong links with academics to ensure that research findings can be put to practical use and drive more useful research, according to Solent University's Dr Kevin Harris.

Harris, who is a course leader on the CIMSPA-associated BA Sport Coaching and Sport Development degree at the Southampton-based university, said that the mutual interest of academics and S&PA practitioners in how and why people engage in physical activity must be used to produce more in-depth and concise research.

"We need both parties to work with and learn from each other," says Harris. "If we have a collaborative approach, then the knowledge and insight from research will be richer and more



insightful, helping to influence practice in the future."

Despite the prevalence of sports research, traditionally there has been a gulf between researchers and practitioners, meaning that much of the research that is carried out is only seen by other academics in the field.

Even where collaboration occurs, it isn't always easy for practitioners to find or make sense of research, because it is often shared in academic journals, making it difficult and expensive for those outside of academia to access.

"A lot of insight and academic

contribution is locked in scholarly journals that you have to pay for or have subscriptions to," says Harris. "There are hefty subscriptions to get to that knowledge, plus there is a lot of academic language and terminology that can be off-putting to people."

The senior fellow of the Higher Education Academy has noted that the research informs practice on occasion, but that much of the time "it gathers dust" and fails to educate practitioners effectively enough.

Andrew Bailey, referee development officer at Hampshire Football

UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS

Association, agrees there is a gulf. "There's a 'them and us' culture," he says, "an attitude of 'What can professor so-and-so tell me about my project?'"

However, Dr Chris Mackintosh, senior lecturer in sport management at Manchester Metropolitan University and chair of the UK Sport Development Network, believes that the gulf is narrowing fast, with practitioners and academics increasingly collaborating on projects.

The result is that practitioners are tapping into the research and expertise of academia, and researchers are tapping into the working knowledge of practitioners. This leads to much stronger, more meaningful research.

One of the reasons for the gulf narrowing, Mackintosh points out, is a strong drive for more evidence-based practice. As a result, there is a need for research that digs deeper, going beyond attention-grabbing, but ultimately superficial headline numbers.

"You can keep commissioning research that says the same thing, such as sport helps combat heart disease, but we need more than that," says Mackintosh.

"When you really understand things properly, then you can challenge the status quo and change the behaviour of groups of people. Practice can totally change theory, which is why academics need to learn from the day-to-day practitioners."

Mackintosh says it is easy for people to get carried away with their enthusiasm and belief in the power of sport to improve the health and wellbeing of people and the community.

However, complex social and environmental issues can be at play, preventing people from engaging in physical activity. Practitioners and researchers need to understand and engage with those issues. Mackintosh is currently involved in a project focusing on military veterans and mental health

and isolation, within the context of physical activity, for example.

Research offers its greatest impact when practitioners and academics properly explore evidence, asking searching questions with the help of a sound methodology. It is then that practice, research and policy improves. "It's the difference between policy-led evidence and evidence-led policy," adds Mackintosh.

Bailey agrees that it is "vital" practitioners and academia work more closely together. He thinks the shift away from headline statistics is very positive as the industry needs to think about outcomes, rather than the likes of attendance figures alone. "We have to focus on whether a course is beneficial or not. Evaluation helps prove that," he says.

The referee development officer also thinks practitioners have much to gain from having academics on board, helping evaluate programmes. According to Bailey, academics are less likely to suffer from conscious and unconscious bias, as they are accustomed to following tested and rigorous methodologies and are one step removed from programmes.

And a lot of funders have sought – or even require – that evaluation and evidence becomes an important part of sporting programmes. "We live in a time of funding cuts, so everyone needs to be able to demonstrate the value of interventions," says Bailey. "If you can't meet the criteria from funding partners, that funding will disappear."

As issues around exercise, health and obesity increase, so will the need and desire for research that will make a difference. This is a great time for practitioners and academics to start really collaborating, sharing knowledge and best practice.

By Roisin Woolnough

MESSAGE FROM
CIMSPA CEOTARA DILLON ON WHY THE
SECTOR MUST ADDRESS
LEADERSHIP CONCERNS

What is good leadership? Do a quick search on the internet and you'll get a host of terms like visionary, motivational and strategic. I want to know because there seem to be challenges around the concept of leadership in our sector and I want to hear opinions about it.

Some voice concern about the lack of leadership in sports and physical activity, but what do they mean by this? Are they saying there is a shortage of skills among our senior professionals, and if so which skills in particular? Where do they see critical gaps?

Our labour market survey did identify some skills gaps among senior leaders and we have partnered with an organisation to develop a course to fill these (see p16).

But I'd like to know what you think it takes to create good leaders. Are these skills that can be taught in a classroom or is it a mindset that needs to be nurtured through mentoring? And if this is the case, have we got the leaders to provide such mentoring?

I see some very effective leadership in this sector, but how do we compare with other industries? How do they define leadership? Could we have too many leaders? Would we be more effective as a sector if there was more collaboration among our leaders?

CIMSPA's role is to develop leaders in our sector, to set out behaviours, competencies and knowledge of our leaders and then stimulate a market that strives to fulfil that aspiration. But we need to challenge ourselves about what good leadership means and be clear about our expectations of our leaders.

I want to know what you think so we can determine what the sector needs in terms of leadership and how we can get there. Constructive criticism is healthy; blanket statements are unhelpful and do a great disservice to all of the valuable work being done by the sector's senior professionals.

Answers on a postcard please... I mean it. I really want to get your views.

UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS

VIEWPOINT

**PHILIPP
ROESCH-SCHLANDERER,
CEO, EGYM**



CO-OPERATING WITH HEALTHCARE CAN DELIVER SIGNIFICANT SECTOR GROWTH

Healthcare is the largest sector in the world, but in many cases, it is struggling to address the growing issue of an increasingly inactive population. Huge strain is being placed on resource, and there is a consensus that governments need to shift the focus to prevention rather than cure.

This is good news for the fitness sector, as it provides opportunity for growth. Our gyms and leisure centres cater for a tiny percentage of the population. UK market penetration is 14.9%, in Germany it is 11.6% and, in the US, it is 19.3%. Globally our services, despite the widely published benefits of regular activity, are appealing to less than one-fifth of the population.

Stronger links with the global health market will create opportunities. People suffering from long-term health conditions could benefit from a treatment plan that includes physical activity. Our sector is perfectly placed to deliver this care.

This scenario creates challenges as well as opportunities. How do we ensure our workforce have the appropriate skills? How do we ensure the gym is accessible, we deliver effective, professional services and can guarantee results for all?

Firstly, we need to design and operate gyms with offerings for everyone. New technology needs to be selected to ensure it enables operators to better motivate and engage, as well as track and measure. We need to move to an evidence-based culture so the sharing of quality data becomes seamless.

Secondly, we must get the workforce mission-ready. CIMSPA is leading the way in this area, working with partners to develop qualifications and professional standards. This action needs to be replicated worldwide. The ultimate goal would be for countries to create globally accepted qualifications, so fitness professionals can integrate with the health sector on a global scale.



STANDARDS WILL FURTHER PROFESSIONALISE THE INDUSTRY, SAYS MOORE

CIMSPA director of strategy Spencer Moore has said the new professional coaching standards released in conjunction with UK Coaching will aid job creation in the sector and further professionalise the industry.

The standards, released in June, have been designed to provide an agreed reference point of the knowledge and skills required of coaches in the United Kingdom.

"These coaching standards allow us to recognise the professionalism of coaching," Moore told *S&PA Professional*. "We are trying to help both employers and prospective employees understand the skills, knowledge and behaviours needed to help the industry thrive."

"Job creation is a huge challenge, but there is plenty of opportunity in the sector. If employers know exactly what they need, then with the help of these coaching standards we can create jobs to satisfy that desire within our sector using the help of the professional standards."

The CIMSPA director said the

organisation has been engaged in trying to rationalise the sector's job market to create a clear set of professions, including personal trainers and lifeguards. Coaching has been added to that.

Up until now, the creation of standards had been led by educationists. Moore lauded the fact that CIMSPA and UK Coaching have worked together to ensure it is now employers and employers giving their input on what is required.

"This move allows CIMSPA to nail down the best practices and allow employers to define what is needed," he said. "Our work has been to try and make it more user-friendly for the employers, so that the skills they need can be easily identified. It is an evolution of standards."

UK Coaching has welcomed the launch of the standards, calling them "the start of a new era" for development of coaches and reinforcing Moore's view that they will raise awareness of what is needed in the industry.

UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS

ENCOURAGING POOL PARTICIPATION

Swimming must be made fun and challenging again if leisure centres are to entice people back into the pool.

Those were the words of Everyone Active's regional director Duncan Jefford, following his seminar on increasing aquatics revenues at the Elevate fitness and physical activity trade show, held in London in May.

Using the CIMSPA partner organisation as an example, Jefford said that fun swimming was making waves with children while adults were more interested in specific activities in the pool such as purpose-based training.

"In the fun sessions, you have to deliver an all-round sensory experience," he told *S&PA Professional*. "Adults want to train for something specific."

Jefford said the health benefits of a low-impact, non-load bearing activity such as swimming needed to be more widely advertised and promoted across the sector.



He also urged further digital engagement from the industry to encourage growth.

"In the past five years, there has been a gradual reduction in children and adults wanting to go swimming, compared with other sports such as cycling," he said. "We need to talk about the great health benefits of swimming and use digital engagement. There are apps to help with this. People want to record and share their physical activity."

SWIMMING FUNDAMENTALS MUST IMPROVE TO AID BRITISH SUCCESS

Team GB's prospects of future success will only grow if local swimming centre coaches focus on improving the fundamental skills of emerging talent, a leading analyst at British Swimming has said.

At the recent Sports Performance Data & Fan Engagement Summit in London, Oliver Logan, British Swimming's analysis lead, biomechanics & race analysis, said focusing on "starts and turns" was important as there is traditionally a deficit in this area among budding UK athletes.

When asked by *S&PA Professional* what local centres can do to aid homegrown success on the international stage, Logan encouraged greater focus on the fundamentals in the initial stages of a promising athlete's training.

"I don't look for an idealised movement pattern, but the athletes need to have the fundamental skills in order to achieve the outcome."

Logan stressed the need for the coaching of such skills to be in place at grassroots level, which would then aid quicker development and give athletes the best chance of success when getting to elite level.

"It's linked into coaching and education," Logan said. "It's related into some of the stuff we do at elite level, but there needs to be a passing down of the core skills that athletes need."

WAVE MAKER: SAPPHIRE ICE & LEISURE

In the first of our Wave Maker regular feature looking at new leisure facilities Graham Simons found out how an East London leisure centre has used ice hockey to its advantage

A new leisure centre in Romford, east London, is capitalising on the popularity of ice hockey among locals to attract more customers.

Romford was previously home to ice hockey team the Romford Raiders, who were rechristened the London Raiders after the area's ice rink closed down in 2013 and they moved to Lee Valley. The Lee Valley site has also been the venue for ice-skating enthusiasts in the intervening years.

Now Romford has an ice rink again, seating 1,200. The centre also boasts a 25m eight-lane swimming pool and a teaching pool, a sauna and steam room, two cafes, and a meeting room, one of Sapphire Ice & Leisure's



managers, Tom Fletcher, told *S&PA Professional*. The other manager at the centre, which was launched by Everyone Active earlier this year, is Chloe Ledger. When the London Raiders returned to Romford earlier this year, tickets for five out of six games were sold out. As well as the ice hockey facilities, the centre

offers public ice sessions at weekends and accommodates figure skating – including one-to-one coaching, said Fletcher.

Looking ahead, he said the centre is working on a plan to encourage ice skating from grassroots to elite level, including 'ice legacy days', whereby children learn at the venue and are advised on continuing their ice activities.

UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS

MOVERS AND SHAKERS



Jennie Price is to leave her role as chief executive of **Sport England** at the end of October.

She led the team responsible for the award-winning This Girl Can campaign to help women and girls get active.

Price leaves to pursue projects including her longstanding work with the Cranfield School of Management and chair of the Youth United Foundation, the charity supporting uniformed youth organisations.



Former Active Tameside chief executive **Mark Tweedie** FCIMSPA has been appointed chief executive of

Active Northumberland.

Tweedie will oversee 16 leisure centres for the organisation, which manages leisure facilities on behalf of Northumberland County Council.



Neil Randall has joined fitness franchise firm **Anytime Fitness** as UK sales and marketing director.

He will play a key role in recruiting new franchisees to the Anytime Fitness network, which has more than 140 clubs in the UK. Randall will also oversee and deploy the company's marketing budget and manage national partnerships.

Most recently, Randall was chief operating officer at Go Mammoth, a UK provider of after-work sports and fitness activities.



Exercise Move Dance (EMD) UK, the national governing body for group exercise and CIMSPA skills development

partner, has made **Richard Lamb** and Lynette Eaborn non-executive directors.

Lamb previously worked in sponsorship sales and business

development at football clubs Manchester United and Inter Milan. Eaborn has held senior marketing roles at operators including health clubs, spas, hotels and leisure centres.



The Lawn Tennis Association, the governing body of British tennis, has named Labour peer **Mervyn Davies** as

its new chairman.

Davies, who also holds a World Rugby non-executive director post, will replace David Gregson in September.



Global fitness company **Dyaco** has strengthened its UK sales operations with the appointments of **Dan Hodge**, Paul

Warrillow and Adam Rogers.

Dyaco UK has also made changes in customer service, taking on Bev Phelan as customer service co-ordinator.

CONTRACTS AND DEALS

NAA BOOSTS WYG SPORTS PLANNING CAPACITY

Sports planning consultancy **Neil Allen Associates (Naa)** has joined the planning and transport arm of professional services company **WYG**. Naa, founded in 2007, specialises in strategic planning, management and development for sports and leisure facilities across the UK.

PROMOTE PR CHAMPIONS WHEELCHAIR BASKETBALL

British Wheelchair Basketball has enlisted the services of **Promote PR** as it embarks on a huge summer, including August's World Championships in Hamburg, Germany. **Promote** will aim to extend the sport's audience, attract further participants, and raise the team's profile among the public.

EXF TO SUPPLY MOBILE FITNESS EQUIPMENT

Bespoke equipment manufacturer **EXF** has signed an agreement with **Mobile Fitness Equipment** to become its European manufacturer for mobile steel container the **Mobile Fitness Unit (MFU)**. The deal will also see **EXF** become **MFU**'s exclusive distributor in the UK.

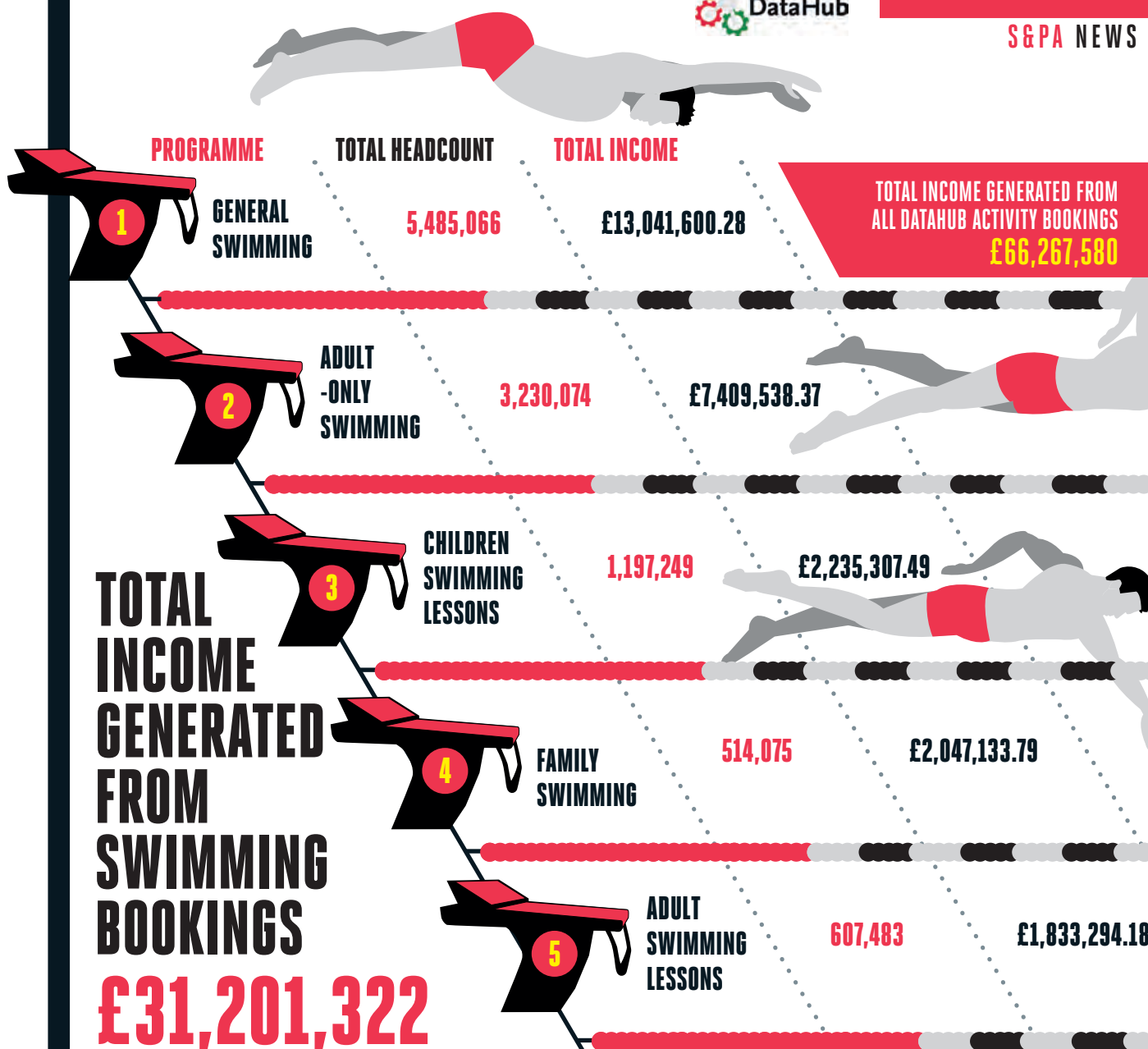
EVERYONE ACTIVE INKS 10-YEAR SOLIHULL DEAL

CIMSPA partner **Everyone Active** has been awarded a 10-year contract with **Solihull Council** to deliver its leisure services. The deal saw **Everyone Active** managing **North Solihull Sports Centre** and **Tudor Grange Leisure Centre** from 1 June. **Everyone Active** is the trading name for **Sports Leisure Management Ltd**.

Source:  Powered by
DataHub

UPFRONT

S&PA NEWS



Swimming accounted for 47% of total income of all DataHub activity bookings – customer bookings for using leisure centre facilities – across 300 sites in the UK in the past 12 months, providing £31.2m in revenue. The likes of pool parties and fun sessions feature in the top 10 revenue-generating swimming bookings, but general swimming continues to lead the way by some margin, producing almost £6m more than its nearest rival, adult-only swimming.

All of the analysis has been conducted across 300 sites, including leisure centres and gyms with swimming pool facilities, May 2017 to April 2018

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

CIMSPA's aim is to become the global leader in setting professional standards for the sport and physical activity sector. To help us achieve that aim, we need a board that comprises trustees with the right mix of skills, experience and competencies.

Any organisation wishing to achieve its full potential requires a board that challenges and guides those involved in the operational running of that organisation and ensure its strategy is robust. My aim is to further strengthen CIMSPA's ability to be a respected and trusted partner for all its stakeholders.

Last year, we identified the competency gaps on our board, and after a rigorous recruitment process we are delighted to welcome four new board members to the fold.

Their talent and experience will further enable CIMSPA to deliver on its mandate of improving standards in the sector, and therefore improving the sector's standing in all our communities.

Hailing from a variety of backgrounds, in multiple sectors, our new trustees supplement the specialist skills of our existing board members, to create the optimal mix of experiences and attributes needed to take us through our next phase of development and to achieve our business strategy. I look forward to working with them.

CIMSPA chair Marc Woods welcomes four new trustees, who bring a range of skills and experience to steer the organisation through its next phase of development

MEET OUR NEW BOARD MEMBERS

**SANDRA DODD, CHIEF EXECUTIVE,
PLACES LEISURE ▼**

With more than 20 years' experience at Places Leisure, previously DC Leisure, I'm committed to achieving our social mission of 'creating active places and healthy people', as I recognise how active communities can transform people's lives.

CIMSPA's leadership in professionalising our sector is vital to getting our nation to become more healthy and active. Our sector is transitioning from leisure and fitness to meet broader objectives and tackle wider challenges, such as mental health. We need to attract the best talent available, and ensure that we develop



careers and provide pathways for a fit-for-purpose workforce.

My own personal learning and experience in the sector has centred on ensuring financial growth through strong financial control and governance structures, which are important for any growing organisation, including CIMSPA. In more recent years, technological advances have also enabled organisations to contribute to business growth through the establishment of robust digital platforms, which have the potential to increase operational efficiencies and customer engagement.

The skills of our workforce are key to delivering offers that can inspire and change lifestyles, so it is a real privilege to join the board and be part of CIMSPA's important work.

**ROWENA SAMARASINHE, GENERAL
COUNSEL, ATHLETICS MANAGEMENT
& SERVICES AG ►**

Sport was a major part of my life growing up and I wanted to pursue a related career, so although I qualified as a solicitor into a city law firm, I focused on sports work, and ultimately worked in-house at sports marketing agencies.

After completing an MBA in international sports management at Loughborough University, I became keen to be involved in the public sector and the development of sport. I heard about this opportunity through UK Sport and Loughborough University. I considered CIMSPA an interesting organisation to work for, given my aims and the changes the sector is undergoing.

Primarily, I bring my legal skillset to the board – particularly important at a time when there's a growing focus on good governance.



Additionally, my experience in international sport brings a different perspective to the organisation, while my MBA has given me a detailed knowledge of the UK environment.

CIMSPA's work is critical to encouraging the public to get active. Professional leadership in the sector is key to gaining public trust, and CIMSPA's goals to develop and support sport and physical activity professionals are commendable. CIMSPA is a small organisation growing in importance. It can learn from other organisations, such as some of the international sports federations I've worked with, about how to manage this change internally and in the work that it does.



IN DEPTH



MANOS KAPTERIAN, SENIOR VICE-PRESIDENT/CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER, PEARSON ▲

It is a privilege to join the CIMSPA board. The institute has an important role in championing and promoting sport and physical activity. That includes transforming the sector by driving improved standards and using partnerships to provide innovative, engaging and accessible training, development and qualification programmes.

My background and experience in education, combined with a passion for sport, compelled me to pursue the role. I believe in the value and importance of vocational education, and the development of skills that help individuals make progress and succeed. I am confident I can make a positive contribution and support CIMSPA towards its goals and aspirations.

During my 17 years at Pearson, I have held senior and general management roles covering HR, operations and leading a business unit internationally. In that time, I have made significant

contributions to revenue, cost and transformation goals. To complement the important leadership and interpersonal skills that I bring, I can also draw on the knowledge and understanding of standards, assessment, qualifications and excellence in operational delivery.

On a personal level, I have recently been active in youth football locally, and have seen first-hand how sport can develop players' skills, as well as benefit them as individuals.

I'm looking forward to working with my new colleagues, to build on the many achievements and enhance the role of CIMSPA as a leader in the sector and guardian of professional standards.

TRACY REA, HEAD OF BUSINESS OPERATIONS, LLOYDS BANKING GROUP ►

I have worked at Lloyds Banking Group since the beginning of 2016 as head of business operations in group IT. The role has evolved to provide business management services to the new Group Transformation: Enterprise, which is responsible for almost 9,000 staff and £1.5bn worth of change delivery.

However, my background is in performance sport. I was a junior international shot putter, and have a master's degree in sport and exercise psychology. I am also finalising my PhD submission in talent transfer, which examines the athlete's end-to-end lifecycle of the transition. Before my role in banking, I was performance director of Scottish Gymnastics, as well as working for the sportscotland Institute of Sport.

In June 2017, I was one of six women from the UK to gain a place on an international training scheme, funded by Santander Bank, to equip global female leaders for service as board members.

I'm looking forward to this new role on the CIMSPA board; it's the

perfect opportunity to combine my skillset, which covers both sport and business management.

I'm a big advocate of learning, and I believe a growing organisation such as CIMSPA can take advantage of artificial intelligence and chatbots to support the learning method. We also need to develop a clear communications strategy, so that everyone working in sport and physical activity understands the value of CIMSPA membership. ●



EXISTING BOARD MEMBERS:



**LISA FORSYTH
- TRUSTEE
AND
TREASURER**

Lisa is a director at Max Associates and has worked in

local authority leisure for 20 years, spending the past decade as a consultant.

Her work in the sector started at an operational level, managing local authority leisure centres before heading the business development department of a leading leisure management contractor, where she won and mobilised several high-profile leisure contracts.

As a consultant, her experience has involved a wide range of leisure and cultural projects. Lisa's work has included options appraisals, new facility provision and procurement.



**NICK MASSON
- TRUSTEE**

Nick Masson started as a physical education teacher before moving into

leisure facility management for 18 years, eight of them with DC Leisure, finishing as national operational partnership manager.

In 2004, he was part of the team that won the Amateur Swimming Association's Leisure Management Contractor of the Year Award 2004 for the Swimming Academy.

Since 2007, Nick has been a senior team member at Bigwave Media, a Devon-based full-service creative

agency, working first as head of business development and currently as sales director.

He has helped grow Bigwave Media's client base from 15 to more than 68 clients across the UK, with more than 420 facilities.



**MALCOLM
MCPhAIL
- TRUSTEE**

Malcolm was appointed to the board in November 2016.

Previously a director and board member of ukactive, Malcolm is currently chief executive of Life Leisure, a not-for-profit charitable trust based in the North of England. Life Leisure operates sports facilities with more than 17,000 members and 600 staff.



**DAVID
MONKHOUSE
- TRUSTEE**

David has worked in the industry since 1985 in many roles, from

frontline to senior management, for both private and public organisations.

His most recent employed role was with a leisure contractor, taking responsibility for quality, health and safety, HR, and training and development for 60 centres and 3,000 employees.

In 2014, David merged his consulting business of six years with Leisure-net Solutions. Leisure-net delivers customer insight, research,

change management, training and development to the sport and physical activity sector.

He specialises in helping organisations to understand how they can use an excellent customer experience to generate referrals, retain customers for longer and enhance the team experience.



**ANDY REED
OBE -
TRUSTEE AND
SENIOR
INDEPENDENT
DIRECTOR**

Andy is director of SajelImpact,

the Sports Think Tank and Loughborough University's Institute for Sport Business.

Formerly the MP for Loughborough (between 1997 and 2010), he has a strong association with sport policy, having served as the parliamentary private secretary to sports ministers, and adviser to various ministers and sports bodies during his time in Westminster.

From 2010 to 2016, Andy was chair of the Sport and Recreation Alliance - the umbrella body for the 320 national governing bodies and associations of sport. He now leads on policy and the health agenda for this organisation.

Andy still chairs his local Leicestershire county sports partnership, after 10 years in the role. He also sits on the boards of Special Olympics GB, British Basketball League Foundation and Sports Chaplaincy UK, and is a member of the RFU World Cup Legacy Group for his region.

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

AIMING HIGH

CIMSPA's labour market survey identified a skills gap among senior leaders in the sport and physical activity sector. Now CIMSPA has partnered with Horizon37 to design a course to meet the needs of the sector's new and aspiring leaders



Senior sport and physical activity professionals are responsible for shaping the sector, yet, according to CIMSPA's labour market survey, many of these leaders have identified their own skills needs to achieve their full potential as effective leaders to take their businesses to the next level.

To plug this skills gap, CIMSPA has partnered with Katy Tuncer, founder of leadership coaching and consultancy Horizon37, to develop a bespoke training course to meet the needs of the most senior leaders in the sector. Tuncer is no

stranger to CIMSPA or the sector.

In 2013, she led a governance review for CIMSPA, creating the vision and building the infrastructure to transform leadership in the sector.

Since then, Tuncer has also advised Sport England on addressing its leadership strategy and assisted CIMSPA with strategic decision-making and organisational planning.

"In 2017, CIMSPA asked me to address a very specific gap in the provision of leadership development opportunities for the most senior leaders in the sector. I had been working with chief executives,

boards and executive teams in the sector for over a decade, and Tara [Dillon, CIMSPA CEO] asked me to bring together what I had seen to be most effective into a single intense course," says Tuncer.

Tuncer interviewed a number of the CEOs she had recently worked with to identify their biggest leadership breakthroughs and developed the course curriculum accordingly. Modules were designed to address questions such as, 'How do I sell a vision in the face of huge external uncertainty?', 'How do I say no more?' and 'How do I deal with dysfunctional behaviour?'.

PROFILED: KATY TUNCER

Katy Tuncer has studied at some of the world's best-known leadership institutions, including the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst and McKinsey & Company, and has been training leaders in diverse sectors for 20 years. She maintains a special interest in the sport sector – in the past three years, she has led more than 20 projects with the boards and senior teams of governing bodies and other sports organisations and trained some of the most senior and influential leaders.

The time commitment was limited to two face-to-face one-day workshops and five hours of remote engagement.

"We wanted to deliver a very practical and personal course. We built group commitment and used technology to facilitate interaction between the formal learning sessions as leaders implemented their learning. It was also very important to leverage the cohort and allow participants to learn from each other, as well as creating an ongoing support network," Tuncer says.

In February, the first CIMSPA-accredited Horizon37 Business

Enhanced credentials

Want to aim even higher? Enhance your credentials with CIMSPA's chartered memberships. CIMSPA's chartered fellowship is the hallmark of an experienced and qualified professional in the sport and physical activity sector, who is active in senior management with significant strategic responsibility. CIMSPA's chartered membership offers the same recognition for individuals active in middle management with significant operational responsibility. Individuals must meet the requirements of the initial application process and ongoing requirements of the institute's chartered CPD programme. Annual memberships are £195 for chartered membership, while fellowships are £225 per year. Both offer recognition of an individual's earned status and how that professionalism translates into employability.

More information on how to rise from member and fellow status to chartered status can be found at:

- <https://www.cimspa.co.uk/cimspa-char-member>
- <https://www.cimspa.co.uk/cimspa-char-fellow>

Leadership Course was delivered to seven senior leaders from the sector, including CIMSPA's Dillon. The cohort was diverse, with some extremely seasoned CEOs and others new in post.

"We are committed to delivering the course annually as a high-impact, structured programme that transforms the personal impact of new and aspiring CEOs. The content will be refined, but we will keep the core high-impact material and approach," says Tuncer.

Feedback from the inaugural cohort has been extremely positive, with attendees saying it gave them practical tools they could easily implement to make a real difference at work.

"This is a high-impact, inspiring and engaging course for anyone in a senior leadership position such as CEO, directors and department heads in strategic roles and managing a sizeable team. It will definitely stretch participants, but also support them along their learning journey," says Nikki Baker, cohort member and head of HR at Fusion Lifestyle.

CIMSPA will continue to work with all of its partners to ensure leadership development remains a priority. ●

Bookings are now open for the 12 places available on the 2019 course, which takes place in February. For more information, visit www.horizon37.co.uk or contact joanna@horizon37.com

BLC2018 COHORT INCLUDED:

- Tara Dillon, CEO, CIMSPA
- Matt Archibald, chief executive director, GB Taekwondo
- Adrian Christy, CEO, Badminton England
- Jon Hughes, CEO, London Youth Games
- Sara Sutcliffe, CEO, Table Tennis England
- Nikki Baker, head of HR, Fusion Lifestyle



IN DEPTH

STITCH

MAKING SURE YOU'RE COVERED

Right Directions' accident analysis tool is ensuring leisure centres don't get stitched up by dubious compensation claims

You only have to turn on the TV or radio to know that we have entered an era of compensation claims... not to mention the late night unsolicited calls about that car accident you didn't have!

And a quick search for 'leisure centre accident claim' reveals a whole host of 'no win, no fee' companies eager to help.

It's one of the reassuring aspects of Right Directions' accident analysis tool, STITCH, according to Inverclyde Leisure's operations manager, Jim Lyon. The online leisure management platform, which was launched four years ago, enables operators to monitor and benchmark the type and level of accidents and incidents occurring at leisure facilities right across the UK.

"STITCH is a really valuable tool," he says. "It not only enables us to accurately record and manage our performance, but has also put us in a really positive light with our insurance company too, because all the information is right there to hand, enabling them to see how professionally we have dealt with any

incident at the time. In the past we just wouldn't have had that depth of information."

Management company 1Life's health & safety manager, Gemma McCormick, agrees. The company, which manages 31 facilities across the country, only signed up to the system a few months ago, but already Gemma says: "Previously each site recorded their incidents on an excel spreadsheet. This was quite onerous on all parties, as our contract support centre then had to collate each facility's data in order to report company-wide. STITCH has taken us into the 21st Century. It also means we can store additional information on each incident, such as photographs and statements from those involved. Everything is uploaded and

stored in one secure place so it's quicker and easier to access too.

"With accident, incident and near miss statistics readily available, we are able to monitor the safety of our customers and staff and identify where improvements need to be made to ensure their visits are safe and enjoyable. In the long term it should help us to reduce insurance premiums, as we can defend claims more easily with all the information together in one place. Crucially, we can report on a hospital visit or whether the customer was able to return to their activity – we couldn't do that before. We have to be mindful of future claims, so it's important to know whether they returned to their activity as it indicates the seriousness of the injury."



STITCH has taken us into the 21st Century. It also means we can store additional information on each incident, such as photographs and statements from those involved



PEACE OF MIND

But, she says, it's also the security aspect of holding this information that brings peace of mind. "STITCH helps us to meet our responsibilities for General Data Protection Regulation. We will only hold names against incidents for as long as we need to for insurance purposes. After that time the accident simply becomes blind statistic."

Caroline Constantine, managing director of quality and health & safety specialist Right Directions, explains: "STITCH is powered by the DataHub, a virtual repository for sports and leisure data, which holds information from more than 157 operators at 1,600 sites. We worked closely with DataHub to ensure all personal data recorded is secure and GDPR compliant, so facilities can have full confidence that they operate in a compliant manner, carrying fewer risks and reducing their paper trail considerably."

By capturing, collating and aggregating accident and 'near miss' data from more than 480 individual facilities, STITCH

provides a live snapshot of key performance indicators (KPIs) that allows management to monitor accident trends locally and nationally, and club and centre managers to review site trends and avoidable incidents.

"Less than 2% of our accidents are avoidable. We manage multiple sites and STITCH enables us to identify when and where these have occurred, allowing us to minimise risks even further," continues Lyon. "We are now able to plan, review and do; by inputting and reviewing the reporting data within STITCH, we can identify actions that may reduce the risks."

Lyon believes that STITCH, combined with Inverclyde Leisure's longstanding partnership with Right Directions, has been key to making it work. He says: "We have been working with Right Directions for the last four years and the procedures they are helping us put in place have become more robust and fit for purpose. Our health & safety training with Right Directions has been a very important part of this, as we can demonstrate that

all of our staff have been appropriately trained, and STITCH is a really great add-on. It enables us to measure accident and incident KPIs identified in our 2017-2020 Strategic Plan."

Magna Vitae (Trust for Leisure and Culture) has been using STITCH for more than three years. Prior to this, the Trust simply monitored and recorded the number of accidents and incidents, using a cumbersome, labour-intensive paper-based system, without the ability to drill down and specifically analyse accident and incident details.

Utilising STITCH, the Trust recently highlighted an increasing number of minor accidents taking place in child swimming lessons. Paul Marper, duty manager, says: "We were able to identify a trend of an increasing number of 'unnecessary' minor accidents in WaterWise child swimming lessons.

"Via STITCH analysis, Magna Vitae was able to efficiently bring this trend to the attention of the swimming teacher team and swimming development manager, who are now proactively working with our pupils to reduce this number and reverse the trend."

Magna Vitae's director of operations, Aeneas Richardson, says: "The online platform reliably and accurately aids the capture of accident, incident and near miss data across all sites and service areas of our business; leisure centres, theatres, health, arts, culture, events and our HQ office.

"This means we can benchmark performance both internally and nationally, and use that data to continually improve and provide a safer and more enjoyable workplace and customer environment. STITCH is now an extremely informative and valuable element of our corporate health and safety management system." ●

For more information visit www.rightdirections-stitch.com.

IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

AT FULL STRETCH

The highest award in Sport England's quality scheme presents significant challenges to those taking part. Places Leisure's Quest lead Andy Read talks about his experience with Quest Stretch

As Places Leisure's Quest lead for 15 years and a Quest assessor himself for 12 of those, Places Leisure's head of safety, Andy Read, knows a thing or two about Sport England's quality scheme.

"One of the things I'm most proud to have been a part of was Places Leisure achieving Quest Stretch for Sports Development for the first time back in 2015," says Read (right).

"It brought the sports development team together with all the key players

across the business, from IT, HR and finance to swimming and junior programming, with one common aim – to deliver. It's what we are in this business for."

The scheme's highest-level award, Quest Stretch, provides challenges to enable facilities and organisations to better demonstrate their impact on local communities and local priority outcomes.

Caroline Constantine (above) is Quest's operations director and managing director of health & safety and quality management specialist Right Directions, which runs Quest on behalf of Sport England. She explains: "Quest Stretch is particularly hard. A centre or team needs to achieve 'Excellent' in their Quest Plus assessment before they can even consider Stretch. Then they need to achieve 'Excellent' on an unannounced Quest Stretch entry assessment before proceeding to the validation day. This is where centres and teams have fallen down in the past, as Stretch tests the frontline staff, so they need to demonstrate good working knowledge of the processes, procedures and systems, not just the management."

It wasn't easy for Read and his team, either. "We came out of the first assessment feeling we'd been put through the mill," he says. "It was a good exercise to take people out of their comfort zone. When Quest started in 1995, it was more of a tick-box exercise. But things have moved forward, and the experienced individuals validating Quest have brought a thought-provoking dimension to the process."

Read is referring to industry stalwarts Anita Cacchioli, Carl Bennett and Phil Collins, who validate the UK's top leisure centres for Quest Stretch. Validators must understand the true impact of operators' policies on their local communities, and they insist on tangible results. Not taking the operator's word for it, they



also meet customers and groups, stakeholders and partners – including health bodies – to get their take on policies and their associated impact.

Constantine says: "All our Quest validators have worked in leisure at CEO level. Anita has more than

30 years' experience across the sport, arts and leisure industry, 15 of those at director level, and has a record of delivery in large, complex organisations and challenging environments. Carl is a former CIMSPA board member and has enjoyed a long and successful career working in public health, health promotion, community development and sport, leisure and recreation management roles. He also wrote one of the Stretch modules, 'Health and Wellbeing'."

In addition to its three Quest Stretch validators, the Quest scheme has more than 50 assessors who have considerable centre management or sport development management experience.

"For us, Quest reaffirms where we are," says Read. "Having someone who is in the industry look in-depth at your business and put directors and managers under scrutiny highlights areas we thought we were doing well in, but aren't. However, it also confirms where we're actually doing good work. It can be a real motivational boost for the team as acknowledgment of their work, so we're massive supporters."

"For instance, there was recognition for our internal safeguarding board, which reviews any serious incidents. To us it's just what we've always done, but our assessor hadn't seen that before, so we weren't ready for the praise we were given. It was great to be applauded for that." ●

More than 750 leisure facilities are recognised by Quest, across 129 operators in the sector. To find out more or apply to go through the Quest process, visit www.questnbs.org, email info@questnbs.org or call 01582 840078



IN DEPTH

CIMSPA UPDATE

SPOTLIGHT ON CIMSPA'S NEW RECRUITS

A great team is vital to achieving our aims. Meet the new members of CIMSPA's team who are helping to transform sport and physical activity into a recognised and respected profession



**NATASHA EASON -
EDUCATION AND
APPRENTICESHIPS
OFFICER**

My role is to work closely with the head of

education to support CIMSPA's employer partners, awarding organisations, skills development partners, and further and higher education institutes in delivering the skills agenda for sport and physical activity. My key priorities are to develop professional and apprenticeship standards to meet employer needs and to organise and support the chair on the Professional Development Committee.

I've always worked in the sports sector. After studying leisure management and sports development, I was a coach in the US before gaining a teaching job at Derby college, where I completed my teacher training part-time while working. Teaching the post-16 age group has given me an insight into the education system and the impact of qualification design on the progression of learners, and on their ability to advance into their chosen career.



**SOPHIE DAKIN -
MEMBERSHIP SERVICES
OFFICER**

My role involves working alongside the membership team to review and

process CIMSPA membership applications, answer membership queries and upload member continuing professional development. My priorities will be to retain members by making sure CIMSPA provides value to each member and supports them to develop their career.

Before joining CIMSPA, I was a self-employed personal trainer in Leicestershire. After completing a BSc in sports science at Sheffield Hallam I became a legacy maker with Leicestershire and Rutland Sport, working with Hinckley and Bosworth Council to develop sport and physical activity opportunities in the area.

Following this graduate placement, I became a school games organiser for Hinckley and Bosworth School Sport Partnerships, organising and delivering more than 55 sports competitions to local primary and secondary schools.

After 18 months, I decided to set up a personal training business, because I loved seeing clients become transformed and start to enjoy exercising.



**CLARE DUNN -
PARTNERSHIP
ENGAGEMENT OFFICER**

As partnership engagement officer, I develop new and existing partnerships with employer partners across the sport and physical activity sector, and work collaboratively on CIMSPA's government-backed workforce development strategy.

Before joining CIMSPA earlier this year, I was customer engagement manager for a leading awarding organisation, ensuring and maintaining compliance with the regulated body.

I have worked in the leisure industry for more than 10 years, and have a range of experience in managing both wet and dry facilities in local authority and charitable trusts across England and Scotland.

More recently, my focus has been in the education sector, working for an awarding organisation as a quality assurance manager responsible for qualification compliance.



**SIMON MURPHY - HEAD OF
FINANCE**

I am responsible for providing strategic financial advice and guidance, and ensuring the provision of regular, relevant financial information to the senior team and board of trustees.

I'm a qualified chartered accountant, with experience gained in the accountancy profession and as a financial director in the commercial and charitable education environments.

I trained and qualified with Robson Rhodes, before working for Pannell Kerr Forster, providing business consultancy services to clients. I was headhunted by a client and joined that company as its financial director. More recently, I worked for an academy as director of finance for 15 years.

IN DEPTH

CASE STUDY

Personal betterment is a prime aim of fitness, but as Roisin Woolnough found out, GoodGym has shown it's possible to help others at the same time

FEELGOOD FACTOR





When Peter Freeman heard about GoodGym, he was immediately impressed by the concept. A national network of runners who run and engage in physical activity while doing a good deed in the community, it sounded perfect for his organisation, Enable Leisure & Culture.

The CIMSPA-registered sport and physical activity manager at the Wandsworth-based charity knew that it would be a great scheme for getting more people in the local community active on a regular basis, with the added bonus that they would be helping others out at the same time.

He also believed that GoodGym – which only requires that runners be able to run at a pace suited to them for a minimum of 15 minutes – would appeal to a wider section of society than the usual physical activity programmes on offer.

“It fitted our work around getting people active, but with a social angle,” says Freeman. “It has a less competitive slant so

we would be getting a different group of people. I also liked the volunteering and community aspect.”

He is not the only person to be impressed by GoodGym either. Leisure centres and local authorities across the country have been signing up at a rapid pace and so have runners. “Take-up has been immense,” says Iain Dunn, environment and community manager at York City Council. “This initiative is all about positivity. People join because they want to stay active, meet new people and contribute to local communities.”

GoodGym is the brainchild of Ivo Gormley, whose personal experience of having regularly run a kilometre to deliver a newspaper to an elderly man inspired his idea. He saw how beneficial the combination of regular running and community action was to both him and the customer.

Now GoodGym is almost 10 years old and spans 44 different locations across the UK, with four more starting soon and 73 at proposal stage.



IN DEPTH

CASE STUDY



“This initiative is all about positivity. People join because they want to stay active, meet new people and contribute to local communities”

Every week, GoodGym runners do some kind of good deed in the community. They run to wherever the task is, complete it and run back to their starting point, all in the space of 90 minutes and under the supervision of a running coach (who is also at times a good deed recipient).

At the time of going to press, the organisation has completed 96,032 deeds, with more than 33,000 good deeds achieved last year. “We did 4,600 this January alone,” says Gormley.

Alongside the recipients of good deeds, runners get a lot out of the relationship too, reporting benefits that extend beyond the physical. “A lot of our runners are looking for a sense of connection to where they live. They like the connectivity. Volunteering is good for people’s wellbeing,” says Gormley.

At the moment, half of all GoodGyms are based in London, but Gormley

wants to extend its geographical spread. The number one criteria when moving into a new area is making sure there is demand.

“We go with demand of where there are runners. What happens is that someone comes to us and says they want to get it going where they are. Then we set up an open proposal page and it’s up to runners to spread the word,” he says.

Sometimes, demand is instantly strong, such as in Brighton, where GoodGym very quickly had 600-800 runners signed up.

Once numbers hit the 100 mark, GoodGym starts forming connections in the local area and with local authorities, in particular.

“We work collaboratively with local authorities to see how runners can have the most impact. They might have a group of older people they want us to work with, for example,” says Gormley.

A recent report highlighted the positive impression GoodGym has made in the physical activity sector.

- Increased levels of physical activity among runners, increased levels of community cohesion and reduced levels of loneliness and isolation in the community
- Prior to joining GoodGym, 78% of runners had not been meeting government minimum exercise targets and 57% would not have joined a different running group
- Some 74% of registered runners are female
- Participants report a 0.29 average weekly increase of moderate physical activity, 0.21 average weekly increase of vigorous physical activity and 20-minute average increase in exercise per week in minutes

Stats taken from a 2016 evaluation of GoodGym by economic and research firm Ecorys.

Local authorities tend to react pretty quickly and positively to requests to get GoodGym going in their area. When Freeman launched GoodGym locally he was working for Wandsworth Council and got the ball rolling by contacting adult social services in Wandsworth. They were immediately receptive to the idea. "They were very interested in coach-led areas with older people," Freeman says.

So he brought adult social services together with the public health team and talked funding. Six months later, with funding in place and over 300 runners signed up, they were ready to go. The result? "It's been great. We've got people active who might otherwise not have been, while also helping the community. Plus, with 30/40 volunteers blitzing a task, work gets done very quickly. It's a good all round win-win situation," says the sport and physical activity manager.

It has been so successful that GoodGym won the council's physical activity project of the year award.

Freeman was also impressed by the fact that the project would become self-financing. The council provided an initial, one-off grant of £25,000 to get the project going and pay for a run coordinator, who finds different community groups, sources tasks and coordinates the runners. The project now funds itself, with runners paying a voluntary fee of £9.99 a month. "Knowing that this was a sustainable model was a strong selling point," he explains.

And what do people say about GoodGym, those older people who get a regular visit from a runner, for example? All of them (100%) reported that they felt happier after six months of visits, with a 28% average improvement in life satisfaction after six months of visits.

And some 98% also thought of their

runner as a friend after the same period. Exercise combined with community action is a fruitful pursuit across the board, says Gormley.

Lots of other people think so too, in the UK and in other countries. A new

activity-based, community-based trend has taken Sweden by storm recently. It's called plogging, referring to people going for a jog and picking up litter as they go. Pick-up litter and jog = plog. It's the way to go. ●



Green Gym: a related approach

Green Gym is another activity-based, community-based charity. An arm of the community volunteering charity TCV (The Conservation Volunteers), it also gets volunteers to blitz a task, although it doesn't involve running.

"It's once a week for three-four hours and when people turn up, there's a 'meet and greet', a safety talk and warm-up (sort of thing you might see in a gym), an hour of activity, a cup of tea and chat, another hour of activity and then a cool-down and off you go," explains Craig Lister, managing director at Green Gym.

The activity is always outdoors and involves anything from planting trees to distributing bark chippings on the ground. Lister, an exercise psychologist by trade, says Green Gym works because three key elements are in place.

"It is group-based and we are pack animals. It involves physical activity and the benefits of this are unequivocal. It is done with a purpose – one of the things we say is 'Why go to the gym to lift something that doesn't need to be lifted?'"

For more information, visit www.tcv.org.uk/greengym

IN DEPTH

PROFILE

POWER OF THE COACH

S&PA editor DeeDee Doke met up with Emma Atkins, director of coaching at CIMSPA partner organisation UK Coaching, to hear about the value of the coach

What makes a great coach? It's not necessarily about having the most effective technique in a particular sport. And superlative athletic skills are by no means a pre-requisite. Instead, being a great coach comes more from within – inner capabilities such as empathy and being able to draw capabilities and strength from their participants' reserves that they may not know they have.

Emma Atkins, director of coaching at UK Coaching, explains it this way: "They need to understand the person standing in front of them."

Atkins gets it – she's received great coaching from childhood through young adulthood as a tennis,

basketball and hockey player, and she has been a coach herself in settings that ranged from rural middle class to disadvantaged communities. And now she's helping UK Coaching lead the country's current bank of 3m active coaches through a whirlwind of change for the better: the availability of newly-launched professional standards related to coaching in the UK and a drive to increase recognition of the value coaches bring to the lives of millions and to society.

SETTING THE STANDARDS

Developed and launched in partnership with CIMSPA, the professional standards





“I have this
fundamental
belief that people
are brilliant”

IN DEPTH

PROFILE

– the coaching sector’s first – provide an agreed reference point for the knowledge, skills and behaviours required of coaching assistants and coaches. The new standards will also support the effective deployment of coaches (*see also news story on p9*).

What excites Atkins about the new standards is not the focus on academic or theoretical study but on “doing what’s needed for the customer or participant to have a great experience, and therefore what your coach needs to be able to do to allow that to happen”, she says. “It’s not what you know; it’s the skills that you’ve got. It’s skills and behaviours-based. You can’t just pass an exam and tell me a lot of knowledge – it’s actually how you interpret and take it forward.”

Flexibility is key to how the new standards are delivered and trained, allowing “the people devising the training to be creative and to do things in different ways”, she says. “You need to understand the needs of your participants... are they active or inactive? And if they’re inactive, they may have some confidence problems you want to overcome first.”

She continues: “You need to be thinking about the community in which they’re operating. We try to get coaches to continuously think about who it is they’re actually coaching. And then, from that, you can help everybody to be creative.”

Atkins has been with UK Coaching for a year. Before joining, she spent 10 years in, as she calls it, “Charityland”, helping to build, develop and lead one of the UK’s most dynamic and high-profile, sports-linked charities, the Dame Kelly Holmes Trust.

She’s also worked with government to initiate and create 45 coach development officers in 45 counties across England. And as a new graduate with a sport science degree from the Bedford College of Physical Education (now De Montfort

University), she began her own career as a sports development officer – one of the UK’s first – in Blaby District Council, Leicestershire.

EARLY FOUNDATIONS

Atkins grew up in the Midlands, the youngest of five children, in a sporty family. She credits her mother for both providing her with a sense of caring for people and, as a tennis enthusiast herself, encouraging her daughter in athletic pursuits.

“I grew up a real tomboy,” Atkins recalls. “I was always doing something active. I played a lot of tennis, basketball, hockey – I played at quite a high standard in hockey as a junior. Then I ended up breaking my kneecap actually, and,” she says matter-of-factly, “then got involved in coaching as a result. Instead of being able to aspire to carrying on in my hockey career, I got more involved in the coaching side of it.”

Heartbreaking? Initially, she acknowledges. However, the foundation for a move into coaching had already been laid whilst she was a player. “I had a great coach at school who was my PE teacher but also my hockey coach, and she’d always had a coaching philosophy that would involve the players in decision making. So getting involved in coaching wasn’t a massive transition for me because I was often involved in the decision making as part of the team.

“So yes, [the injury] was pretty devastating but I had somewhere to go, so I carried on.”

“We don’t tend to dare to do stuff differently at times”

“Because, for many years, I worked with a double Olympic champion, what I learned from her was, ‘If you can dream it, you can do it’”

She paid her way through university by doing full-time tennis coaching, with one of her placements in a disadvantaged area of Leicester – “an absolute revelation for me because I’d never come across kids that basically told you to ‘eff off’ and that kind of behaviour”, Atkins recalls.

CREATIVE COACHING

However, she was able to develop her coaching skills by getting creative and integrating other facets of learning and subject areas into her sports-focused sessions. “It was a time when there was a big push on numeracy and literacy in schools, and sport was a bit devalued at that point,” she says.

Working alongside teachers who weren’t comfortable operating in a PE environment, Atkins “would kind of take from them numeracy and literacy ideas, and integrate them into the coaching sessions. They [the teachers] would be happier about using a bit of activity, especially with young people who found many formal academic stuff boring. We did a lot of that”, she says.

Warming to the subject of creativity in coaching, Atkins leans in and says: “It’s a bit like when kids first go to school: their creativity just drops through the floor because they’re suddenly bombarded with all of this information. We must always make sure that people can be creative so they can look at what’s needed for the people they’re working with. I think

sometimes we lose that because there tends to be a book somewhere or a list of drills. Let’s look at what we’re trying to achieve and trust ourselves to be more creative.”

Ensuring that coaches receive their fair due of recognition as professionals has also been an essential element in establishing the standards. “When I was a tennis coach, I went to get a mortgage, and they [the bank] said, ‘Ok, you’re a coach but what do you do in your real job?’,” she says. “That’s why we needed CIMSPA to come in to drive forward the professionalisation of our industry.”

Currently, 58% of the UK’s coaching population are not qualified, she says. “That does not mean they’re not good. Many people are put off getting qualified because it means they have to have some academic knowledge, or it’s going to cost a fortune. We need to have different ways to reach out to people so that they can get involved,” she says, “and get some kind of recognition of their professional abilities.

“If you just look at stats, 3m people coach on a regular basis, reaching 9m adults; you’ve got to keep on top of that. It’s just not given the place in society that it needs to have.”

CELEBRATE THE COACHES

The first-ever Coaching Week, held in June, was a social media campaign aimed at “celebrating the good stuff”, Atkins says, and calling attention to great coaches. As S&PA Professional

went to press, a potential audience of more than 23m people had been reached, with a wider broadcast, print and online media audience more than doubling this number to over 50m, which, Atkins points out, “is pretty cool for a first campaign. I was just buzzing that we managed to get that amount of backing for it”.

“When I started here about a year ago, I stood up in front of a lot of governing bodies and said, ‘Guys, we need to change the narrative here. There’s great coaching going on day in, day out in this country but we don’t talk about it... We forget to celebrate the good stuff. That’s what Coaching Week was all about,’” she says.

In addition to celebrating great coaching, Atkins is committed to looking after and building a community of coaches – connectedcoaches.org – to share joys and woes, help each other solve problems and simply speak with each other. “We want to make sure that coaches feel a sense of community so you as a coach shouldn’t feel isolated,” she says. “When I was a coach myself, and working in a little village for years, I was the only coach and didn’t really have anyone else to speak to.”

Ultimately, Atkins wants the British public to understand and embrace the power and value of the committed individuals who coach, whether at the elite sport level or for a neighbourhood sport club. “Eventually, I would want to be able to just speak to somebody on the street, and ask them about coaching, and they would know what great coaching is,” she says.

And it’s all about people – or, as a UK Coaching consultation outlined, PEOPLE: **p**erson-centred, **e**mpowered, **o**rganised, **p**ositive, **l**earning-focused and **e**ngaging. “I find it quite simple,” Atkins says. “You’ve got to just focus on people a lot more, and ultimately the system will build around them.”

IN DEPTH

AGENDA

GROWING THE SPORTS ECONOMY

Sport and physical activity is a huge part of British life, and the Sports Business Council aims to see the sector's economic potential maximised, as DeeDee Doke found out

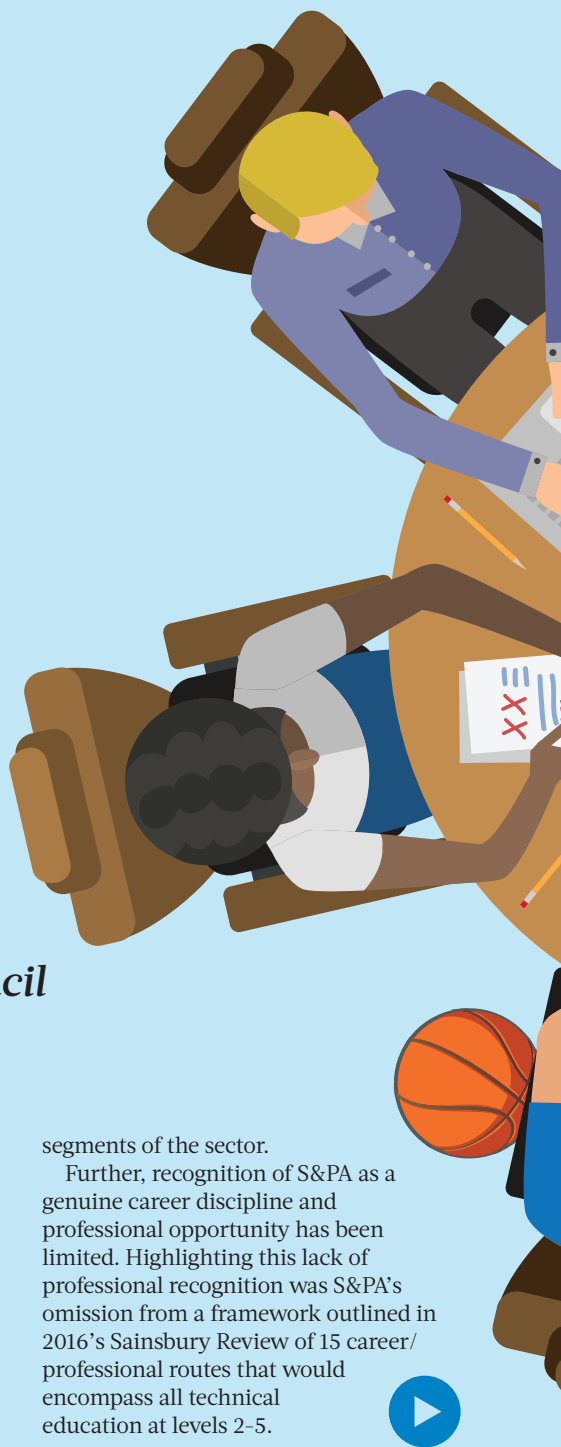
The UK is undoubtedly a country of sports lovers. From World Cup football matches and the Wimbledon tennis championships to the Oxford and Cambridge boat race, sporting events grab Britain's attention like few, if any other, activities besides perhaps royal weddings and births. And it's the rare British child who grows up without having kicked a ball around his

or her local neighbourhood or having played netball at school.

At the same time, the UK's sport and physical activity (S&PA) industry lacks a certain professional respect from the country's other industries and even the government, most practitioners would agree. Quantifying the contributions that S&PA makes to the UK economy is difficult, if not impossible, because of the siloed nature of the disparate

segments of the sector.

Further, recognition of S&PA as a genuine career discipline and professional opportunity has been limited. Highlighting this lack of professional recognition was S&PA's omission from a framework outlined in 2016's Sainsbury Review of 15 career/professional routes that would encompass all technical education at levels 2-5.



 ISTOCK/SHUTTERSTOCK/SARAH AULD

IN DEPTH

AGENDA

But the tide may be about to turn in favour of the S&PA industry. A year after its establishment (see box), the 18-strong member Sports Business Council (SBC) is starting work on proposals to create a partnership with the government that could see significant investment in the sector to maximise its economic and professional potential, a so-called Sector Deal (see Case Study). Sector Deals have been structured in the automotive, creative, artificial intelligence, construction and life sciences industries.

A UNIFIED APPROACH

The SBC is “trying to engender a greater sense of commerciality, and business and economic participation, recognising that the sports sector is a



“It’s one of the only forums where you get major global brands sat there with the industry... everyone agrees the importance of growing the sports economy”

Steven Ward, chief executive of ukactive



“There are lots of different figures so actually trying to create a bit of a common narrative is important”

Emma Boggis, CEO of the Sport and Recreation Alliance

very important part of the economy – to make sure that it’s recognised, and the government’s capitalised on that”, says Christian Brodie, a council member and chair of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP), whose jurisdiction includes East Sussex, Essex and Kent.

Steven Ward, chief executive of ukactive and a member of the SBC, explains further: “It’s one of the only forums where you get major global brands like Nike sat there with the Premier League, and sat there with different parts of the industry having conversations between them, trying to find the areas of common ground. There are slight differences in the agendas, but there’s also huge commonality in that everyone agrees the value and importance of growing the sports economy.”

In fact, an SBC sub-group devoted to sports economy nuts-and-bolts issues is

CASE STUDY: THE CREATIVE INDUSTRIES SECTOR DEAL



The so-called ‘Sector Deal’ is a key policy in the government’s Industrial Strategy, referring to partnerships between government and industry that aim to increase sector productivity.

Published in March, the Sector Deal agreed between the government and the creative industries calls for £150m investment across the life cycle of creative businesses, including:

- **places of the future** – by funding leading creative clusters to compete globally
- **technologies and content of the future** – via research into augmented reality and virtual reality
- **creative skills of the future** – via a careers programme that will open up creative jobs to people of every background.

This deal, as outlined in a 72-page document, builds on recommendations of Sir Peter Bazalgette’s independent review of creative industries. The Bazalgette review forecast that a successful Sector Deal agreement could support UK creative businesses to:

- deliver a 5% increase in reported creative industries exports by 2023
- sustain growth and achieve gross value added (GVA) of £150bn by 2023
- boost jobs, potentially 600,000 new creative jobs by 2023
- narrow the gap in creative business activity between the South East of England and the rest of the UK
- best reflect UK society by opening careers to a wider range of people.

Source: www.gov.uk/government/publications/industrial-strategy-sector-deals

developing a basis for quantifying elements of the sector, such as “how many people actually work in sport, what’s the contribution to the economy, what figures can you actually draw on, and try to bring all of this together. There’s a lot of research out there”, points out SBC member Emma Boggis, CEO of the Sport and Recreation Alliance, “but there are lots of different figures so actually trying to create a bit of a common narrative is important”.

The Sports Economy sub-group, which Boggis and Brodie co-chair, is also exploring issues as wide-ranging as taxation (how to ensure the taxation system supports sport), the potential contributions of the gaming industry and how LEPs, such as Brodie’s, “link into local growth agendas”, Boggis says.

PURSuing A SECTOR DEAL

A factor that could play a big role in achieving a Sports Sector Deal was actually an underlying theme of both the government’s 2015 Sporting Future: A New Strategy for an Active Nation document and 2017’s Industrial Strategy, Boggis suggests. “Interestingly, if you look at a lot of the other Sector Deals that are being developed, a large

part of them talk about the productivity of their own workforce,” she says.

“They want to drive up the productivity of their own workforce. One of the things we think about from an S&PA perspective is, it has a benefit that underpins every other Sector Deal as well. Because if they all want healthy, productive workforces to develop, sport and physical activity underpins the workforce of the nation as a whole and therefore underpins the productivity of the nation as a whole.”

Boggis says that the Council has “started to identify timeframes” to prepare proposals for a Sector Deal. “We’re not quite there yet, but there is certainly aspiration to have some key timelines identified”.

When asked about timeframes, Brodie says, “I think that we’re looking forward to making a proposal that will be signed off by the [SBC] within the next three to four months.”

But he warns that achieving the SBC’s aims of raising the sports sector’s profile and maximising its potential will largely depend on the proposal’s reception by the Government, “I think a Sector Deal is quite important,” he says. “If we don’t get a Sector Deal, then I

will struggle to see what can be done further.”

Ukactive’s Steven Ward expresses some ambivalence about the SBC’s ultimate success, even if a Sector Deal can be won.

“I think it’s early days of seeing whether the government can truly deliver on its expressed ambitions through this vehicle,” Ward says. “We’ve identified some initial priority areas of support that are required; they’ve been articulated to the Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport, so we need to see how we can mobilise on these things – can we mobilise on these things. Will this make any difference at all?”

He adds, “I’m as interested as anyone else to see what happens in the next year or so on this.” ●



CIMSPA AND THE SBC

Skills are a key area of concern for the SBC, and CIMSPA CEO Tara Dillon participates in the council’s Skills working group. (The number of seats on the council itself are limited, and in the wider work of the council, CIMSPA’s interests are represented by ukactive.) “We’ve got a great dialogue going on,” says ukactive’s Steven Ward of the Skills working group. “This is a fantastic forum to articulate the wider work that CIMSPA and ukactive have been working on, highlight the pace of pace in approving apprenticeship standards [in S&PA], which basically is making the Apprenticeship Levy an apprenticeship task for many employers. So we need to see much more pace in approving the standards that are being produced.”

Ward went on to say, “We also need to see higher levels of priority attached to S&PA qualifications, not least in recognitions of where it sits in the [Sainsbury Review’s] 15 routes. We also need to see greater levels of support and consistency around price mechanisms – how much should each qualification earn in terms of the cost of delivery.

“I think a Sector Deal is quite important. If we don’t get a Sector Deal, then I will struggle to see what can be done further”

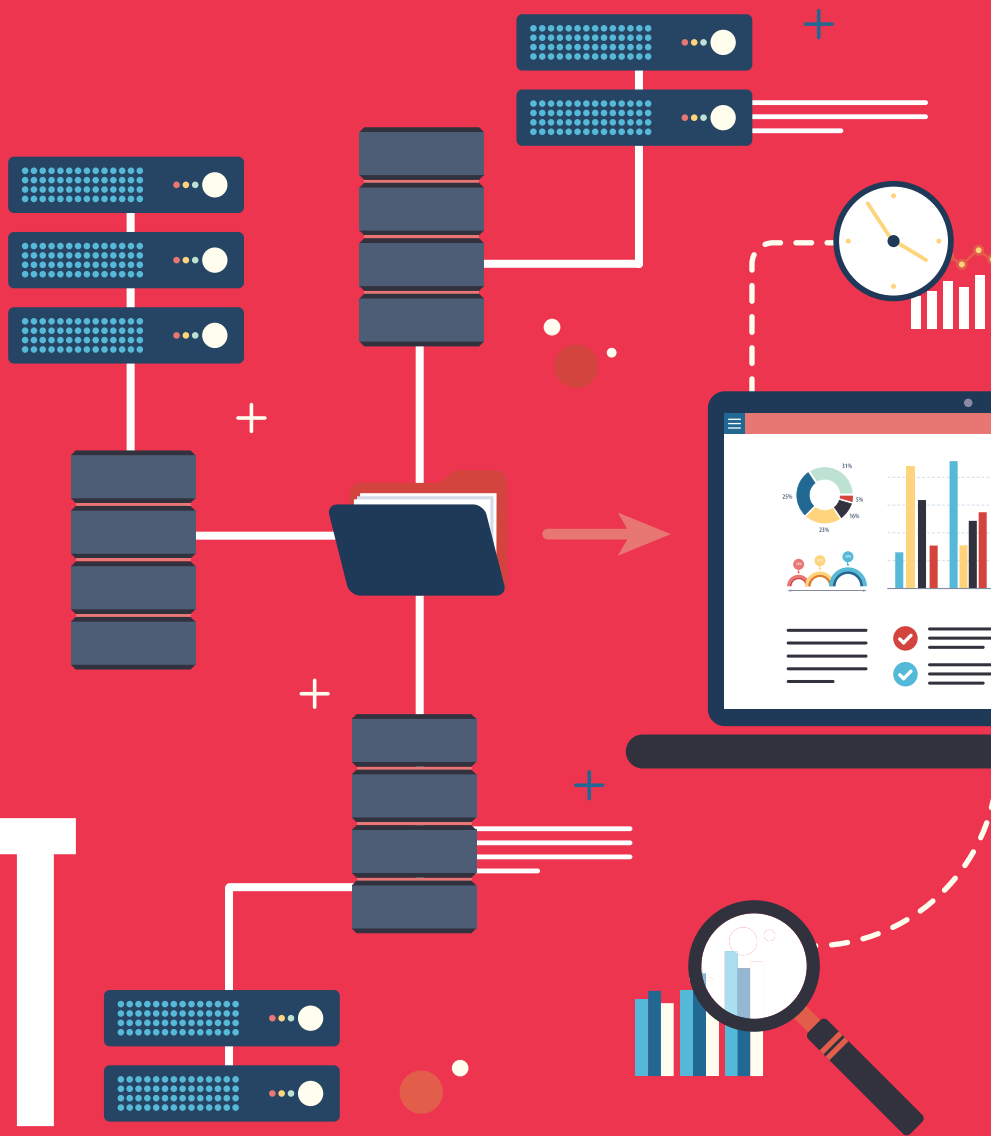
Christian Brodie, SBC member and chair of the South East Local Enterprise Partnership

IN DEPTH

BUSINESS

Leisure operators are becoming more aware of how choosing the right management system can help their business, writes Sue Weekes

THE IT FACTOR





Winning new members and retaining existing ones will clearly come from a combination of the right technology and the right people

One of the days when management systems were the silent and invisible black boxes that busily worked behind the scenes to keep an organisation running. They are coming out of the backroom to play a far more upfront and central role in winning and retaining customers.

The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), which came into force in May, provided the incentive for many operators to review their IT systems and processes. Having got their house in order in this respect, the next challenge for operators in the sport and leisure sector is to ensure their systems are fit for the future. This means adapting to trends such as self-service and mobile as well as integrating with wearable, biometric and other access control systems and the latest payments technology.

One of these trends, self-service, should be a priority for leisure operators, in common with those in other sectors. Those who do self-service well are those embracing rather than fearing it, and using it to help their employees add value to their role in other ways. For the health and fitness sector, that means more time to engage with members – which, in a fiercely competitive market, is increasingly the differentiator.

One of the challenges for the sector is identifying administrative efficiencies that free up staff and help them to use their interpersonal strengths, says Sarah Pearce, service enhancement manager at membership management company Harlands, which processes 2m membership payments a month in the market. “Health and fitness staff are confident, outgoing, friendly social engagers and should be allowed to use those [skills] to full effect,” she says.

Winning new members and retaining existing ones will clearly come from a combination of the right



IN DEPTH

BUSINESS

technology and the right people. "It used to be that you gave the best service by having smiling, happy, jolly staff at reception greeting every member, every time they came into the club," says James Barter, senior software consultant at gym management software provider Clubware UK. "However, customer demand is moving the sector to more of a self-serve model. Self-serve is the new full-serve."

The smartphone has already become the preferred method of booking and communicating with members. Clubware UK says that email is now less popular for communication, with SMS on the rise. "SMS now demonstrates a 97% open rate," says Barter.

Fitness and leisure management software provider Gladstone similarly reports that its MobilePro app has become the foremost form of two-way communication with operators and their customers. It adds that almost 40% of its own communications to operators are being read and actioned via a smartphone.

Pearce urges operators to ensure customers feel "connected at every stage of their journey" and adds that traditional methods of communication and engagement are not enough. "There is more technology out there that can be employed to ensure that the member/customer experience is slick," she says. "The fitness industry has an increasing number of similarities with retail, but is behind in methods of engagement. Where we have the biggest opportunity is with wearable technology and the value that can add to the member/customer experience."

Technology providers are already adapting their offerings to enable operators to keep up with trends in retail. Gladstone's mobile app, for example, has cashless and loyalty points spending at the beta development stage, and is working on



radio-frequency identification (RFID) beacon technology. Gladstone's Stephanie Hutchings, whose responsibilities include leading the organisation's digital transformation strategy, says many operators are still falling behind on some of the basics, such as not aligning their own mobile strategy with members' aspirations.

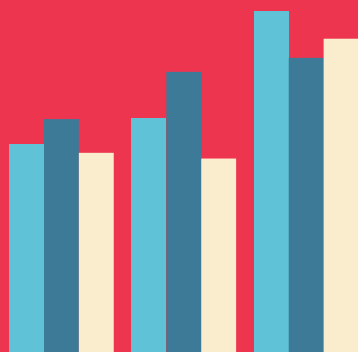
"Where websites are not mobile-responsive, operators will find that customer engagement drops off, as it is difficult to engage with traditional websites on mobile screens with back and forth scrolling of scaled-down text from websites," she says. "This results in increased calls into centres for straightforward bookings that could be delivered online, [which would] reduce overheads on reception teams and telephone management."

Operators should also be using their management software as a proactive business tool when it comes to finding and retaining members. Barter contends that "all software" should enable an operator to determine who is at risk of leaving. "Usage trends and payment patterns give the operator a steer on where their risk is," he says.

Clubware UK offers the ability to pull down non-attendee reports, "to close

Key questions to ask a vendor

- How well does the vendor know the health and fitness sector?
- What is the self-service and mobile offering?
- How can the system help with customer engagement?
- What functionality does the software have to help retain customers, such as spotting when they are at risk of leaving?
- What support is offered after purchase?
- What options are there for integration with third-party products in areas such as access control and new payments technology?
- Does the software vendor's roadmap align with the organisation's plans and aspirations for the future?



“Customer demand is moving the sector to more of a self-serve model. Self-serve is the new full-serve”

the gate before the horse bolts”, he adds. Operators can then use this data for trend analysis, allowing them to identify at-risk members.

Gladstone reports that many of its customers are taking advantage of its Insight Net Promotor Score tool (Insight NPS), which sends out automated NPS messages to customers after visits to their centres. This module enables operators to quickly understand which members are ‘promoters’, ‘detractors’ or ‘passives’. “The tool enables the member to comment freely on their experience in the centre to provide feedback on the changing rooms, pool environment, or anything at all,” explains Hutchings.

The company also recently released a new prospecting module, designed to help acquire new customers. The module has been adopted by some of its larger enterprise customers, but Hutchings believes it offers an opportunity for small-to-medium operators to formalise and process member acquisition programmes.

Some providers report that operators still aren’t as diligent as they could be when buying a new system, and that price remains a number one consideration.

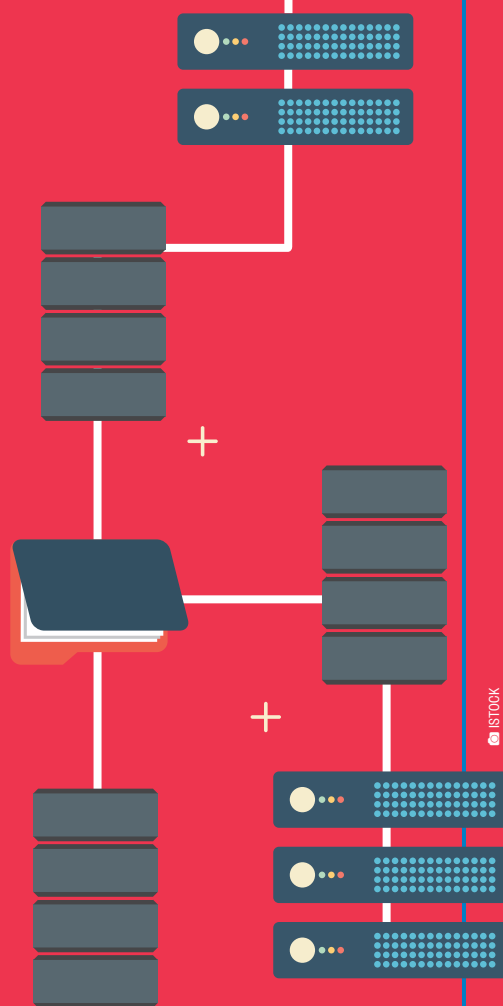
While this issue is clearly important, operators should also investigate the pedigree of the vendor and the level of support offered after purchase. Pearce

says operators normally go through a detailed tender process to ensure they have a solution fit for today, but often forget to consider the future.

Specifically, she says, they don’t consider how the system might link to new technologies, or whether it is exposable to application programming interfaces (APIs), which enables the operator to integrate with third-party products. “Every operator should select a solution that has the ability to adapt to changes in customer buying habits and market evolution,” she says.

Barter agrees, saying a key question to ask is whether the vendor has a roadmap that aligns with the operator’s needs, now and in the future. Integration options will be key to this future alignment, with so many tools and technologies likely to emerge in areas such as facial recognition and biometrics for member identification and cashless payments. Operators should also enquire about options for integration with gym kit, which can feed back valuable data about a person’s training programme.

Clubware UK took a strategic decision to build open-access APIs, so that operators can control who they integrate with. “As industry experts, we should be recommending solutions based on an operator’s business needs, and their problems and challenges,” says Barter. ●



TECH FOCUS

SWIMMING

GOING TO GREAT LENGTHS



Designed to tackle swimming's recent decline, developers of the SWIMTAG platform launched a weekly challenge-based drive to help get more people back into the pool with the help of social media, as **Sue Weekes** reports

Everyone working in the sport and leisure industry shares a vision of getting more people exercising more often. 222 Sports, developer of the SWIMTAG platform and wristband, and leisure management company Places Leisure, hope to have come up with an irresistible weekly challenge for swimmers that could boost participation in the activity across the country.

Rule the Pool claims to be the world's first pool-based weekly challenge, which invites participants to swim

400m (16 lengths of a 25m pool) as fast as they can. 222 Sports and Places Leisure originally secured funding from Sport England and have been refining the idea over a two-year period.

It already attracts 1,000 participants a week at Places Leisure pools and, from July, will be available to swimmers at all SWIMTAG pools across the UK. There are even plans for a global roll-out.

"Two years ago, we recognised the need to offer an accessible pool challenge, which would engage a wide spectrum of ages and abilities to attract more people into the water," says Mark

Haslam, head of swimming and sport at Places Leisure.

"SWIMTAG was already installed in all our pools, so when we mentioned our ambition to Kieran [Sloyan, managing director of 222] and the team at 222 Sports they set about developing a cloud-based competition open to all, titled Rule the Pool."

To take part, swimmers register via the SWIMTAG website, put on a wristband available at the pool and then swim. The wristband logs their effort and ranks them in a central Rule the Pool league table. Unlike the weekly



Parkrun challenge for runners, which takes place at the same time on a Saturday morning, swimmers have from Monday to Sunday to do their swim and receive a personalised email from SWIMTAG providing details of their time, ranking and number of participants for that week.

They can complete the swim as many times as they like during the week and Rule the Pool logs their best time. At the end of the week, the leaderboard is cleared and a new challenge starts.

“Our previous work with virtual SWIMTAG challenges certainly gets people to stay in the pool longer and complete more lengths,” says Colin Scott, business development manager, 222 Sports.

“When you add a more competitive edge like we have tried to do with Rule the Pool, that gets people swimming faster and really gets their heart rate up.”

As well as helping individuals benefit from being fitter and healthier, the developers also hope to reverse the decline in swimming across the UK.

“If we can motivate more swimmers to get in the water more often, then hopefully more pools will be able to attract new customers and remain viable,” adds Scott.

“There are millions of people who know how to swim but don’t make it part of their weekly routine and it’s those people we all want to entice back into the leisure centres and clubs across the country. But this won’t happen unless pools innovate, try new

ideas and bring modern concepts to their customer experience.”

The decision to go for 400m was taken because it is a doable distance for most recreational swimmers so it ensures the challenge doesn’t exclude or discourage people from taking part.

Indeed, a major factor in the success of Parkrun is the achievable 5k distance and the event attracts more than 1.5m participants in the UK every week (at the last count).

All of the management and communication around Rule the Pool is handled by SWIMTAG so, in theory, it shouldn’t place a burden on the swimming pool operator.

“If Rule the Pool has even a fraction of the effect that Parkrun has had on sports participation then we will be absolutely delighted,” says Scott.

So will the 222 Sports team be diving in and taking part every week? “Absolutely,” he says. “We face the same challenge as so many other people these days. Much of our work is done in front of a computer screen, which means it’s even more important to stay active, so we’ll certainly all be aiming to log a time at least once a week.

“The great thing about Rule the Pool is that you can have as many attempts as you like in the week, so if someone is beating you and you want to leapfrog them on the leaderboard, you can have another go. I’m sure the competition in the office will be just as fierce as in pools up and down the country.” ●

“There are millions of people who know how to swim but don’t make it part of their weekly routine. It’s those people we want to entice back in, but this won’t happen unless pools innovate and try new ideas”



TECH TOOLKIT

PRODUCT ROUND-UP

BRAVE
AND BOLD

Elevate 2018 previewed a whole host of exciting technology to keep your gym ahead of the curve



SETTING A NEW BENCHMARK

The EVO Bench from the Physical Company is aimed at small group training, bringing the boutique fitness model into the mainstream by housing all the kit required for a multi-functional work-out. The bench itself has an adjustable seat and seven backrest positions to target all major upper body muscle groups. It includes a welded anchor point for battle rope training, which also acts as a handle to tip the bench on to its wheels, and it houses up to six dumbbell pairs,

two kettlebells, slam ball, battle rope and two levels of resistance tubing. Trainers can access a digital library of exercises developed by Physical Company's experts by holding a near-field communication-enabled (NFC) Android or iPhone smartphone over the NFC tag on one of the bench legs. Physical Company describes it as perfect for circuit training and bootcamp classes.

Price: £749 + VAT for bench on its own; £1220 + VAT with accessories
www.physicalcompany.co.uk

GOING TO THE MAX

The Max Trainer from Octane Fitness aims to tap into the soaring demand for high intensity interval training (HIIT). The cordless machine, which claims to take up less floor space than treadmills, ellipticals and steppers, features the 14-minute Max Interval workout. According to research, this can help burn up to 43% more calories than using a rower and up to 26% more than those using a standing elliptical (both at self-pace). It offers 10 levels of progressive resistance and instant resistance changes via a high-velocity fan and magnetic brake. Additional features include a calorie meter, which provides instant feedback throughout workouts, while the console delivers feedback on time, floors climbed, pace and total calories. Additional programmes include Manual, Interval and Cross Circuit workout in which users combine cardio intervals on the machine with strength-training exercises. Gyms and clubs can opt for the Cross Circuit Pro Kit, which includes two PowerBlock dumbbells and an integrated PowerBlock stand. The trainer will be available in the fourth quarter of 2018.

Price: On application

www.octanefitness.com



STRIVING FOR NEW GOALS

eGym Training Goals software has been upgraded and enhanced to create a set of 12-week, phased and progressive programmes that are designed to support club members in achieving their bespoke goals, whether that be muscle building, weight loss, body toning, rehabilitation or athletic or general fitness. The upgrade also includes the three new training methods of Adaptive, Isokinetic and Explonic to deliver fast results. Along with the upgrade, eGym has also

introduced a SmartStart cardio software solution, which enables eGym ONE partners to utilise eGym's software on their cardio machines. SmartStart prompts the user to perform regular cardio tests to produce a 'cardio age'. The test measures endurance capability and then calculates a personalised smart training prescription to complement plans provided by the trainer.

Price: On application
www.eGym.co.uk



STAGE THE ULTIMATE COMBAT ZONE

Dyaco will launch a commercial line of Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) equipment in autumn this year. It will provide operators with the opportunity to create bespoke 'UFC Zones' on the gym floor. The kit includes: UFC-branded gloves, mitts and punchbags suitable for beginners up to professional mixed martial artists; a range of premium commercial UFC strength equipment including plate-loaded machines as well as benches; and a diverse range of functional training equipment from rigs to accessories, including ab wheels and battle ropes. A range of UFC training programmes will also be available in written and video format. Among those programmes in development is Championship Rounds, comprising five five-minute rounds (with one-minute rests) of training, which claims to replicate the intensity of championship competition in the UFC.

Price: TBA
www.dyaco.co.uk

Pulsating anti-gravity exercise

Pogo Pulse officially launched its high intensity interval training (HIIT) class with the French-made TK8 Pro Fitness and Fun Fitness pogo sticks at the recent Elevate show at London's Excel Arena. Classes make use of the Pogo Pulse method of instruction, which aims to promote pogo stick riding as a "lifetime fun activity" for health and fitness. The developers (a former national water ski champion and a military PTI) have spent "countless hours" working with different pogo sticks and anti-gravity apparatus such as stilts and trampolines to develop Pogo Pulse. According to Pogo Pulse, the 45-minute session claims to provide an all body workout and participants need a minimum safe jumping space of 2.25 square metres.

www.pogopulse.co.uk





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EXPERT ADVICE

SCALING UP YOUR LEISURE BUSINESS

Leisure investor and sports manager Mo Chaudry shares his top five tips for small businesses in the leisure industry looking to grow

1 Getting your business proposition right

An entrepreneur in the leisure industry needs to have a strong handle on the type of business they want to be in. With the wellness industry growing exponentially year-on-year, you need to know where you stand against the competition and what your unique selling point will be in the industry. A simple business plan is essential, as well as a passion and determination to make it work.

2 Determine if your business is scalable in the first place

Not every business is scalable, nor should every business be scaled. Market research and feasibility

assessments are important for most businesses that want to scale. This analysis will assess your target market and locations. If you are an operator in the leisure industry, you need to know the type of member you want to attract and where to find them. There's no sense in opening a new location if the demographic isn't right. On the other hand, if you have the resources, skillsets and ambitions, you can create your own trends by following your instincts.

3 Don't overborrow

Tread carefully when seeking funding. It can be tempting to look at new streams of investment like crowdfunding, but it also means giving up valuable equity to do so, which might come back to haunt you if the business becomes very successful. An alternative would be to partner with a business associate or an angel investor. Look for someone in the industry whose values align with yours. Usually you can start with a limited budget, particularly if you are looking to provide a service such as personal training or setting up a small gym. Any funding that is publicly available will always be more expensive. If you have a USP [unique selling proposition], private equity (PE) could be a possibility. PE will usually want a quick return, but they will also add expertise and mentoring support, which you would not get via traditional funding. Overall, resist borrowing, create your own positive cashflow and build up reserves.

4 Be willing to change the plan

This is when you actually learn. Even the best executed plans can sometimes go wrong. Your success will be measured by how you react to these circumstances and ultimately, it will determine your success in the end. You must not be afraid to take chances and challenge situations to learn and grow. The business proposition is a continuously changing beast; one can never stand still. In one of my businesses, we are about to start on a new leisure development and we have gone through numerous changes and amendments to get the right formula. The result is totally different to when we started to look at the concept three years ago.

5 Know when to walk away

Too many people overthink things and rely too much on financials. They over-analyse. Virtually anything is workable if you have the determination and the will to make it happen and execute difficult decisions. Trust your instincts. You will know when things are right.

Mo Chaudry is an entrepreneur, investor and sports manager. He is chairman of M Club Spa and Fitness chain and owner of Water World Leisure Group in Stoke-on-Trent. Recently, he joined the Pulse Group as a majority shareholder following a significant investment in the business and currently sits on the board of directors as chairman



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WORKPLACE

FOCUS

Gym instructors and personal trainers have a responsibility to guide clients who use synthetic products, advises Ellen Gregson

KEEP AN EYE ON THE QUICK FIX

For decades, the use of supplements by athletes to enhance their performance has been a widely accepted practice. More recently, the market has expanded to respond to demand from the general population for quick fixes and easy alternatives to a well-balanced diet.

With misleading advertising claims, alongside the ever-increasing image pressures of today's social media-driven society, the supplements industry can be potentially confusing for athletes, never mind the general gym-user.

Indeed, research released during UK Anti-Doping's (UKAD) Clean Sport Week in May found that 87% of adults taking such supplements received no medical advice prior to use. In some cases, certain supplements can have severe health implications, such as insomnia and cardiac arrhythmia. More advice is needed.

With an increasingly wide range of supplements and sports foods easily accessible to the general public, it is important that personal trainers have a thorough working knowledge of the various sports foods and supplements, so they can provide the appropriate advice related to possible benefits, potential side effects and risks associated with use.

Supplements can be broadly defined as products containing a concentrated source of nutrients or of other substances that have a nutritional or physiological effect. They come in many

“Ultimately, it is your client's responsibility to make the final decision about whether to use a supplement or not”

forms, including functional foods, sports foods, dietary supplements and herbal or all-natural products.

All foods serve a function – to sustain life – but so-called functional foods are those “that contain wholefoods and fortified, enriched or enhanced foods which have potentially beneficial effects on health when consumed as part of a varied diet on a regular basis”.

This definition includes foods enriched with additional nutrients or components outside their typical nutrient composition, such as vitamin C-enriched orange juice.

Sports foods are products – such as sports drinks, gels or bars – that aim to provide energy and nutrients in a more convenient form than normal foods, with the goal of enhancing sports performance.

Although dietary supplements may seem to serve the same purposes, they are different in that they don't look like functional foods and are usually more artificial or ‘drug-like’.

When it comes to ‘all-natural’ or ‘herbal’ products, dietary supplement

manufacturers often advertise products as being ‘natural’, with many consumers perceiving these products as ‘healthier’ and safer compared with synthetic versions.

The rise in the use of social media has led to many new dieters or gym-goers believing they can buy their bodies from a bottle, and that this will lead them to quick fixes and fast results. This belief has resulted in many people using a product as a substitute rather than as a supplement.

Ultimately, it is your client's responsibility to make the final decision about whether to use a supplement or not. Nonetheless, this decision needs to be an informed one, and your role is to help guide your clients to adopt safe, evidence-based use of supplements on a needs basis.

You should check your client's need for a supplement (food first), recognise the risk of that supplement, and assess accordingly. In a professional gym or leisure-based role, it's imperative that you reduce the risk to clients and provide safety.

If you believe your client has questions that you do not feel comfortable advising them on, don't be afraid to refer them to a qualified dietician for more specialist advice.

***Ellen Gregson** is a UK Anti-Doping science officer and an expert in nutrition and supplements. She has previously worked in the industry as a personal trainer*



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LAST WORD

SPORT AMBASSADOR



Master Yoke Wan Lee is a Kung Fu master at the UK Chin Woo Athletic Association and helped teach martial arts to Star Wars actor Ray Park

HEALTHY BODY, HEALTHY MIND

I was born in Ipoh, Malaysia. According to my mother, my grandfather, who was a member of the Shaolin Temple, had a training centre at the back of the house for people. My mum said that when they finished their training, people would come out with some bruises, which left me fascinated – I was three or four at the time.

Martial arts helps a lot with mental focus. I am a firm believer that when you have a healthy body, you have a healthy mind and it builds both mind and spirit to become one. I moved to the UK around 40 years ago and have spent my whole time here as a professional martial artist, teaching others. We have clubs in West Hendon, Harrow and Heathrow currently, and membership is about two or three-hundred across those.

In West Hendon we are trying to get the martial arts club to become a community centre where older people can meet weekly to learn tai chi and do exercise classes and things like that.

In today's society, we don't seem to have time to relax. We are constantly combating all this modern technology and it makes us more inclined to run about to make ends meet, but to me



Lee's former student
Ray Park (right) as
Darth Maul

that is not important. What is important is we all have one life – so we have to look after it and in order to look after your life you have to take care of it and maintain it. Martial arts can help you find your balance.

Building your body and mind to become one – as you do through martial arts – helps you become wholesome in life itself and you are more aware of not stressing yourself out. I think that is very important, given society today.

One of my greatest students was Ray Park, who is most famous for his role as Darth Maul in *Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace*. He would follow my classes from Monday to Saturday. With six years of training, and total dedication he has turned out to be a very good martial artist. He won a

gold medal at the Chin Woo Championship in China during his time as one of our students, and that expertise helped him work in stuntman roles, which eventually led to *Star Wars*.

Alongside helping older people, my philosophy also is to help the younger generation. Some children as young as three are coming to the club, which is the perfect age for them to learn.

Nowadays, many children are lacking in discipline and they

fail to show elders respect. At our clubs, we try to teach them respect. We want them to understand that in life, you have to respect others in order for them to respect you. Martial arts helps with this, and is a great way of building up your self-esteem.

We also explain that bullies are there to fight and hurt you, so being able to defend yourself will help you avoid getting hurt. Fighting just means 'you hit me, I hit you'. Using martial arts as self-defence, you are not fighting – it is exactly the reverse. You can use it to totally prevent yourself from getting hurt, and this is an important point we teach not just to our younger members, but all members.

Master Yoke Wan Lee was speaking to Graham Simons

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LAST WORD

SPORTING LIFE



We talk to **Nicky Perfect**, a policewoman turned personal trainer, who has gone into partnership with gym operator Realfit in Riseley, Bedfordshire

ARRESTING DEVELOPMENT

WHEN DID YOU KNOW YOU WANTED TO WORK IN THIS SECTOR?

During my time in the police (I retired from the police in January), in early 2000 I applied to become a firearms officer. My application was successful. I knew I would have to be really strong to do this, and so it started my interest in female weight training and getting fitter in a different way rather than just running and cycling.

Two-and-a-half years ago, I decided to see how far I could push myself. I entered two bodybuilding competitions, and that piqued my interest in nutrition and how you could manage your body.

That's when I started to think about becoming a personal trainer and coach, helping people to overcome bad habits.

WHAT WAS YOUR FIRST JOB IN THE SECTOR AND HOW DID YOU COME INTO IT?

My first job was behaviour change coach. In the police, I used to be a hostage and crisis negotiator. The skills I used in that were the same as those I used when I was coaching people – the biggest barriers to change were mindset and bad habits.

I was helping my friends in coaching, and realised what I could

“I used to be a hostage negotiator – the skills that I used there were similar to those I use in coaching people”



do was help people get over those bad habits, and take the steps they want to take towards becoming successful.

WHAT DO YOU LOVE MOST ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ROLE?

Seeing the change in people.

WHAT DO YOU CONSIDER THE MOST BRILLIANT MOMENT OF YOUR CAREER?

I have a client who is an amputee, and who had a stroke two years ago. The most brilliant moment of my career was seeing him walk with his friend further than he had ever done before, and the look of achievement on his face.

WHAT'S YOUR ULTIMATE CAREER GOAL IN SPORTS AND LEISURE?

I want to have a series of Realfit gyms and be a household name.

WHAT IS YOUR SIGNATURE DISH?

I make a great curry.

LAUGH OR CRY, WHAT DID YOUR MOST MEMORABLE CLIENT MAKE YOU WANT TO DO AND WHY?

He made me want to help other people achieve the change that they desire.

WHAT'S THE BIGGEST CHALLENGE YOU FACE IN YOUR JOB TODAY?

Education about eating habits, and about healthy habits in general.

IF YOU HAD A THEME TUNE, WHAT WOULD IT BE?

‘This is Me’ from the musical *The Greatest Showman*.

LAST WORD

SPORT BY NUMBERS



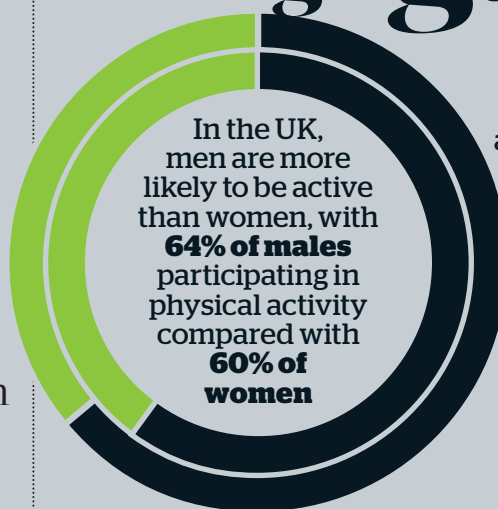
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This issue... These girls can go global

Sport England's inspirational campaign '*This Girl Can*' is now making waves across the world. The initiative, which has seen 3.9m British women of all shapes and sizes become more active, has just touched down in Australia with the launch of Victoria Girls Can.

Similar to recent local campaigns in the UK, including Bristol Girls Can, the motive is to help women find out how to get involved with physical activities across the state of Victoria, with the aim of encouraging greater participation, regardless of skill level.

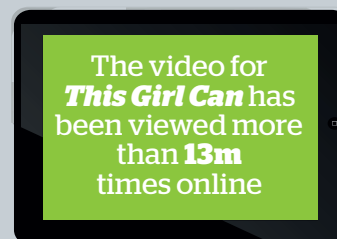
This global step is an encouraging one for the British campaign, which has had a positive impact on domestic sport and physical activity participation figures.



13.7m women are active in the UK, according to Sport England's Active Lives survey



This Girl Can has almost **700,000 followers** across its main social media channels, helping to drive participation among women across the UK



The video for **This Girl Can** has been viewed more than **13m** times online

The most popular physical activity among UK women is **walking**, for both leisure and travel

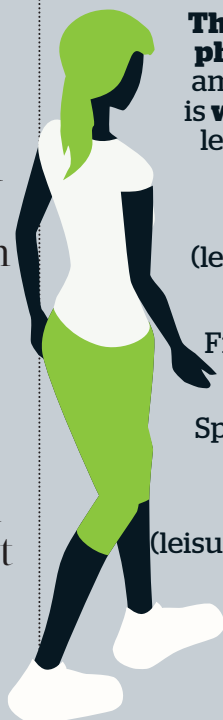
46%
Walking
(leisure and travel)

19%
Fitness activities

17%
Sporting activities

7%
Cycling
(leisure, sport and travel)

2%
Dance



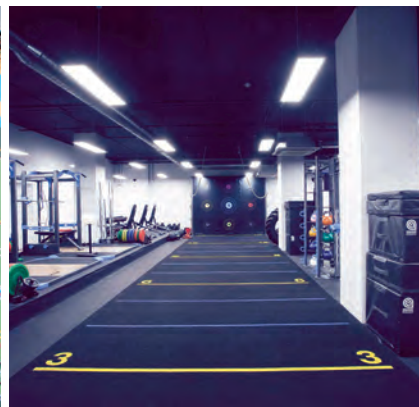
Figures taken from Sport England Active Lives Survey 2018



- Increased Energy
- Boost Immune System
- Better Digestion
- Better Sleep
- Increase Antioxidants
- Reduce Fatigue
- Improves skin condition



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