

Issue 12

# touchline

The journal of sport, leisure & risk with an international perspective



**Spotlight on sport:  
PARKOUR**

**ALTITUDE TRAINING**  
Mountains of benefit or  
mountains of hype?

**GREEK TRAGEDY**  
How the financial crisis  
has hit Greek sport

**EXERCISE ADDICTION**  
When you exercise too much

## NINA HEGLUND'S BLOG LEADING UP TO THE OLYMPICS



Nina Heglund, team GB's playmaker in the sport of handball and sponsored by Sportscover, is keeping an online blog of her journey to this year's London Olympic Games.

To follow her blog, go to [ninaheglund.blogspot.com.au](http://ninaheglund.blogspot.com.au)

## SPORTSCOVER PARTNERS WITH ACCLAIM IN SINGAPORE



From L-R: Anthony Lim, Tony Lim, Chris Nash and George Thomas.

Sportscover's Managing Director, Chris Nash, recently visited Singapore to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Acclaim Insurance Brokers to work together in the Singapore sports insurance market.

This MOU is more evidence of Sportscover's continuing expansion around the globe. The photo above shows Sportscover's Chris Nash with Acclaim's Tony Lim (Managing Director), Anthony Lim (Executive Chairman and Founder, in addition to being the Treasurer of the Singapore Sailing Federation) and George Thomas (Executive Director).

## SPORTSCOVER'S GREAT SPORTS PHOTO COMPETITION

Don't forget to let Touchline have those great sport action shots for Sportscover's 2012 Great Sports Photo Competition. We want to see all those great action shots!

Images entered must be recent (2011 - 2012) and photographed by the entrant.

The competition is open to all readers of Touchline and is a great chance for you to see your photo published worldwide.

Winners of the top three photos will also WIN a gift voucher of the following values\*:

- First Place: A\$500
- Second Place: A\$350
- Third Place: A\$150

Upload your photo to [www.sportscover.com/photo-competition.asp](http://www.sportscover.com/photo-competition.asp)

Please note, a high resolution photo is required for final judging.

\* Or local currency equivalent. For full terms and conditions see our website at [www.sportscover.com/touchline-photo-competition-terms-and-conditions.asp](http://www.sportscover.com/touchline-photo-competition-terms-and-conditions.asp)



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## SPORT OR SPECTACLE?

Later this year Dubai is holding the first forum for emerging nations looking to host major sports events. This subject is highly topical following Russia and Qatar's successful FIFA Football World Cup bids for 2018 and 2022 respectively and the bids by Doha, Istanbul and Baku, together with Tokyo, Madrid and Rome for the 2020 Olympic Games. Similarly, who had heard of Sochi before the Russian city won the right to host the 2014 Winter Olympics or Pyeongchang in South Korea for 2018?

It is good to see new cities in the running for major events. It provides them with an opportunity to step up on the world stage and show what they can do. The marketing potential to showcase what they have to offer is immense, especially for a city that would not normally feature high up on a holiday destination list.

However, whilst there can be significant benefits, staging a major event such as the Summer or Winter Olympics or Commonwealth Games can lead to significant drains on public budgets with the government spending in some cases billions of dollars to subsidise the event.

Greece is in deep financial trouble, partly attributable to the vast cost of hosting the 2004 Games, and the London Olympic budget is under severe strain with questions being raised in the UK about the value of hosting such an event. Montreal took 30 years to pay for the stadiums it built for the 1976 games. Salt Lake City, Utah—which hosted the Winter games in 2002—ended up \$155 billion in debt. Athens finished \$3.1 billion over budget for hosting the 2004 Games, although this would probably have been considerably less

if the Greeks had not left everything to the last minute.



Steve Boucher  
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A lot of the cost is related to the building of new stadia and infrastructure which can be of lasting benefit to the city and its economy provided there is a realistic and well developed legacy plan in place to make good use of the facilities afterwards. This is particularly true in an emerging nation.

However, the problem is that many of these events are now seen as spectacles rather than purely sporting events. Each host nation tries to outdo the previous in the glitz and glamour department with the extravagance of the entertainment, firework displays and choreography. The opening and closing ceremonies have become bigger than the sports events that are in between. The event should be staged to showcase the sporting prowess and achievements of the athletes, but instead has become more of a huge advertising hoarding for the city or country.

So with the costs of staging major events spiraling, wouldn't it a good time to reflect on what these events are all about and what is really important.

Perhaps the forum in Dubai will provide an opportunity to get back to basics and focus on making sure that sport rather than marketing or glitz are given the centre stage. Surely it is the efforts and achievements of the athletes that we should be celebrating, not the spectacular firework display.

# ALTITUDE TRAINING: MOUNTAINS OF BENEFIT OR MOUNTAINS OF HYPE?

By Chris Rawlinson

Altitude training is regarded by some to be an essential part of gaining an edge over the competition, whereas others regard it as pure hype. Which view is correct?

The Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living (ISEAL) at Victoria University, Melbourne, Australia is tackling this and many more questions through research in its new \$68 million state of the art research facility.

For the last 20 years, researchers around the world have been investigating the effects of training at altitude on endurance performance. While there is good evidence that such training can benefit endurance performance, there is little research and no consensus on the effects of altitude training on the performance of team sport athletes. In fact, there is no published evidence demonstrating improved team-sport performance following altitude exposure. So why have more than half of the Australian Football League teams incorporated some type of altitude training into their pre-season training?

While the use of altitude training is built on a sound scientific rationale, the simple answer is that it is mostly 'follow the leader'.

"Following its use by Collingwood Football Club in their 2010 Premiership season, the hype around altitude training has grown – this year more than half the clubs will use it", Professor Bishop (Research Leader Sport, ISEAL) said.

"What has been conveniently lost in this argument, though, is that the most successful club of the last few years, Geelong, did not use altitude training during any of their premiership years".



The altitude hotel at ISEAL, Victoria University

So, could altitude training benefit team-sport athletes, or is it just hype? There are some good reasons to think that altitude training may have a small benefit on team-sport performance. We know that if it is done correctly it may increase the oxygen carrying capacity of the blood and that this should benefit endurance performance. There is also some evidence that altitude training may increase the ability to cope with lactic acid. But, there still remains no direct evidence that altitude training can improve team-sport performance.

Researchers at ISEAL are currently addressing this lack of research. The centre has 29 brand new sport and exercise science research laboratories and adjacent exercise rehabilitation clinic, pool and gymnasium together with a \$51 million clinical sciences building with specialist exercise science facilities at nearby Sunshine Hospital and an elite sport training facility located at Whitten Oval. This creates a huge state of the art facility that has the capability to tackle cutting edge research for the sports industry and community as a whole.

The suite of world-class, high-

technology laboratories supports the five major disciplines underpinning the sport and exercise sciences. These include, exercise physiology, biomechanics, motor learning and skilled performance, sport and exercise biochemistry and molecular biology, motor control and biofeedback.

Altitude research is being conducted mainly within ISEAL's exercise physiology laboratories and altitude hotel - one of only two in Australia, the other being in the Australian Institute of Sport. This is based on ISEAL's unique capacity to recreate environmental conditions for research through the environmental exercise laboratory (EEL) which can simultaneously acclimatise up to 10 athletes in heat and at high humidity, as well as simulate altitude in a low oxygen environment. The temperature for the EEL can be manipulated between 50C to 400C, the humidity from 20 to 90% and the altitude from sea level to 3500m+.

Victoria University's altitude hotel simulates a high altitude living environment by increasing the level of nitrogen in the air, this in turn lowers the oxygen levels from the normal

20.9% typically down to 15.5%, simulating an altitude of up to 3500 metres and can be extended to higher altitudes. The hotel has space for up to 16 participants to live for an extended time with full amenities. Currently the research is investigating the impacts of chronic lung disease and also the impact of simulated altitude on the performance of endurance and team sport athletes, which is currently a very topical subject.

Researchers are using the environmental exercise labs and altitude hotel to sort fact from fiction and provide new knowledge to Australian athletes. Dr. Francois Billaut is currently completing a research project investigating the effects of 'Live Low – Train High' on intermittent sprint performance. And Dr Rob Aughey is investigating the effects of different altitude and durations of exposure on team sport athlete performance.

Given that the effects of altitude training

can vary greatly from person to person Dr Nir Eynon is also leading a project to see if simple blood tests can be used to determine beforehand those athletes who will respond best to altitude training, and those who may get little benefit from this type of training.

“That way, instead of sending the whole squad along and getting mixed results you could target it at the half dozen who will get good results”, he said. “Unfortunately that technology is still being developed so in the meantime clubs should think long and hard about a cost-benefit ratio for altitude training.”

Nevertheless, clubs should make it a priority to understand what benefits they could expect and consider whether better training or coaching may be more effective. It is possible that there might be a small benefit from altitude training, but this needs to be weighed up against the considerable expenses involved.

**Chris Rawlinson**



Marketing Manager, Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living (ISEAL) at Victoria University, Melbourne Australia

**Professional career:**

Chris Rawlinson is the Marketing Manager for the Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living at Victoria University in Melbourne Australia. A double British athletics team Olympian who attended over 20 international Championships, winning numerous accolades including medals and a World Record over his ten years of elite level competition.



## INSTITUTE OF SPORT, EXERCISE AND ACTIVE LIVING

The Institute of Sport, Exercise and Active Living is headquartered at Victoria University's new \$70 million sport research facility in Melbourne, Australia. ISEAL has access to the most comprehensive range of sport, exercise science and active living research facilities in the southern hemisphere. Our research permeates global sporting events like the Olympics, and akin to the athletes we work with, we never set limitations on the scope or impact we can have on elite sporting performance.

We are also at the forefront of research in active living, promoting and engaging individuals along with communities in more active lifestyles, and make significant contributions to exercise science worldwide beyond the sporting landscape. Within exercise science ISEAL experts lead the field when it comes to understanding the relationships between exercise, physical activity, and chronic disease prevention.

Locally we work in the west of Melbourne, nationally with various organisations including the AFL in addition to our strategic partnership with the Australian Sports Commission and Australian Institute of Sport, and internationally with partners including ASPIRE in Qatar.

How can ISEAL help you achieve your goals? Email - [iseal@vu.edu.au](mailto:iseal@vu.edu.au)

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**ISEAL**  
INSTITUTE OF SPORT,  
EXERCISE AND ACTIVE LIVING

## SOUTH AFRICAN BOWLS CHAMPION, **TRACY-LEE BOTHA**

Tracy-Lee Botha has the potential to be number 1 in the world in her chosen sport of lawn bowls. For a sport generally considered to be for the more mature person, Tracy-Lee is aged just 23. She has recently been in Australia for the world indoor singles, finishing 8th overall.

Touchline caught up with her to find out more about her and the sport of lawn bowls.

**Touchline:** Bowls is not a typical sport for young athletes. Why did you take up the sport?

**Tracy-Lee Botha:** I started playing bowls at Turffontein Bowling Club when I was 14 years old. My father Dudley Botha started playing and my brother and I were taken to the club every weekend to watch him until we got bored of watching and decided to play. Club member Dolores van der Linda decided to step up to the plate and put us under her wing, showed us how the game should be played and the right etiquette that should be used on the green.

The club members had gone out of their way to support us and that's what kept us going. We had both won the novice singles at the club that same year so we decided to take up bowls competitively. Being at such a young age, bowls was a bit boring to start with because we were used to the fast contact sports at school - I had full colours in athletics, cross-country, netball, hockey and even cricket - but mentally it was challenging.

I really do recommend that more young people take up the sport, it is for all ages and you do need to be skilled to start to play the game. It is competitive, challenging, skilful and most of all, it's fun.

**TL:** What do you consider to be your major successes to date?

**TB:** I was selected for Central Gauteng U25 provincial side in 2004 and really enjoyed every second. I was selected for the Bowls South Africa Silver Squad where I had gained most of my experience as well as made so many good friends. Then Bowls South Africa introduced the Bowls South Africa Junior Masters in 2007. The first year of the tournament I was runner-up, second year – bronze medal, then the third year, 2009, I won.

Then the U25 provincials were held in George in June 2009 where the selections for all the BSA sides were announced. I really did not expect to hear that I was selected for the Gold Squad, to represent South Africa in the African States Tournament held in Swaziland that August as well as the Namibian Test held in Durban in November. We had won the Gold in our Triples and Fours which were the two sides I had played in and then our team went ahead to win the Gold in the Namibian test. For me I think it was a great start to my international bowls career.

The day the announcement of the Commonwealth Games team was made, I was truly grateful to be



**TOP GIRL:** Tracy Lee Botha 23, one of the world's top young bowlers with the SA Master's trophy she won in Pretoria for two consecutive years. She is in the SA team to travel to Australia in May.

selected to play the triples with two fantastic team members and managed to snatch the gold from our Aussie rivals in the final. In February 2011 I participated in the Bowls South Africa Masters Open section once again where I had brought home the gold. What a great moment that was. I was also selected in a great squad to represent South Africa alongside a great team in Cyprus last year where I got the opportunity to share the pairs silver medal with my role-model Colleen Piketh.

**TL:** You recently competed in the

## World Cup Indoor Singles in Australia. How did that go?

**TB:** I was grateful to play singles against some of the world's best and have learnt so much from the experience. I had a great run considering that it was my first tournament on an indoor surface. I was rather intimidated by the draw because the World #1 and World #2 were in my section. I started off losing my first game to Ireland who really was an incredible bowler but managed to snatch the next 2 games the following day which helped build my confidence.

I was really nervous facing the world #2 Alison Merrien (Guernsey) because I had watched her play numerous times and I knew I had to lift my game if I wanted to win. I managed to win the first set which was a great achievement on its own. I was holding game on the last end in the second set until she delivered her last bowl, forcing a tie-break which she won. I was not disappointed with the end result since I felt that I had given a brilliant bowler a great run.

I was in 4th position at the time and needed to win my next 2 games to hold a spot in the play-offs. I had to face world #1 Jo Edwards from NZ. I had lost the first set but came back really well to win the second set to force the tie-break. Unfortunately I lost the tie-break once again and my spot in the play-offs. I still had one game to go and focused on finishing 4th in the section which was the best I could do at that time. I faced Malaysia the next morning where I managed to pull off a straight set win. At the end of the tournament I finished in 8th

position of 22 participants on my first attempt on indoor turf.

## TL: Where is South Africa ranked in the world?

**TB:** South Africa is ranked in the top 5 countries and we have really redeemed ourselves over the last couple of years, especially at the Commonwealth Games in Delhi when our squad snatched 3 gold medals of a possible 6.

I really think that the talent of bowls in our country is great, especially in the ladies sections. We used to struggle to get the young ladies to play and now we are able to enter a whole section of ladies teams into the U25 provincial tournament which I think is outstanding.

## TL: Where do you draw your inspiration from?

**TB:** My family are my biggest supporters and they are the ones that inspire me to achieve. I don't think it is ever possible to make it so far without that great love and support.

## TL: What are your next goals?

**TB:** I made my first long term goal 3 years ago where I wanted to make the Gold Squad before I turned 21 years old which I did with 4 months to spare! My second goal was to be selected to play in the Commonwealth Games in New Delhi and achieved that with a gold medal. My next goal at this stage would be to represent South Africa in the World Bowls Championships held in Adelaide in November this year. After that I will focus on a long term goal of winning the World Cup Championships one day.

## SA BOWLERS WARM UP FOR WORLD BOWLS

Two fully representative lawn bowls sides have been announced by Bowls South Africa for a Six Nation International in Adelaide, Australia from May 15-20 Taking part are: Australia, Fiji, Malaysia, New Zealand, Scotland and South Africa. The event is seen as a precursor event for World Bowls to be held at the same venue later this year.

Several of the players are former or contemporary world champions, while Tracy-Lee Botha (Johannesburg) and Pierre Breitenbach (North West) are among the top four juniors (Under-25) bowlers in the world in their gender groups.

### The Sides:

#### Women:

Tracy-Lee Botha (Johannesburg Bowling Association), Helen Grundlingh (Port Natal) Sylvia Burns (WP) Colleen Piketh (JBA) Esmé Steyn (JBA) Santjie Steyn (Boland).

#### Men:

Gerry Baker (JBA), Pierre Breitenbach (NW), Bobby Donnelly (JBA), Wayne Perry ( S Free State) Clinton Roets (S Free State), Gidion Vermeulen (Port Natal) Manager: Ron Weddell (Bowls SA); Coaches: Theuns Fraser, Jessica Henderson.





Photo by Kai Hendry

TV STARS: A televised match of StarCraft in South Korea, televised by MBCGame.

## eSPORTING HEROES

CHILDREN AND TEENAGERS ARE OFTEN LAMBASTED BY THEIR PARENTS FOR SPENDING TOO MUCH TIME PLAYING VIDEO GAMES. PERHAPS PARENTS MAY HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS ABOUT THIS WHEN THEY LEARN THAT TALENTED GAMERS NOW HAVE OPPORTUNITIES PRESENTED TO THEM THAT RIVAL THOSE OF 'TRADITIONAL' SPORTING STARS.

The world of eSports is growing at an astonishing rate, along with the financial benefits and celebrity status afforded to its stars. eSports, simply, is the competitive playing of video games from a variety of genres including strategy, shooting, fighting and racing. eSports has given rise to competitive playing at amateur levels, all the way through to professional levels. Top players can earn very healthy livings, along with celebrity status, while even amateur players can earn significant sums of money if they perform well in competition.

The industry is growing at such a rate thanks to a number of factors. The size of the video games market is huge, and still growing. It is now the largest purchased entertainment market and notably more valuable than the film industry.

As such, it is attracting some of the biggest names from other areas of the entertainment industry. The number of games released which lend themselves to being played competitively, and the sheer number of players playing them, is ever increasing. And it is these players that are attracting investment and advertising money for eSports.

Video games players can no longer be pigeon-holed as children and young men as they once were. In fact, a survey by the Entertainment Software Association in the US indicated that the average gamer is 37 years old and has been playing for 12 years and eighty-two percent of gamers are 18 years of age or older. However, eSports is largely represented by the traditional market of young males, a market that is traditionally hard to reach by marketers. This



is leading to significant investment in eSports through marketing and sponsorship, including television coverage. This is unsurprising when you learn that online streaming of major tournaments and matches is capturing a viewership of 18-24 year olds larger than that of major cable networks airing programs at the same.

This financial investment is leading to huge financial rewards for players. Tournaments have prize pools upwards of \$1 million; players can earn up to \$10,000 per month by broadcasting videos of their matches online and players can attract major sponsorship deals and be placed on salaries to play for their professional gaming teams.

It isn't just financial rewards that players are attracting. It is also the adoration of the public. No country illustrates this point more than South Korea. Tournaments for Starcraft, a strategy game, can attract 30,000 fans or more and the tournaments are sometimes held in stadiums once used for the 1988 Olympic Games.

These players are often seen as sex symbols, with fans creating fan clubs and devoting websites to their idols. There are about 300 professional gamers in South Korea, who play for 11 teams which are run by big business conglomerates which pay members of their team a salary, costing the conglomerates \$20m a year.

So it seems that no longer are video games just a hobby or a distraction from homework. Instead, becoming a professional eSports player is now a serious career option.



LAN PARTY: Gamers gather in their thousands to play games over networks

## METEORIC RISE TO BE RANKED 5TH IN THE WORLD

**Colin Webster - Mind Sports South Africa**

The International eSports Federation (IeSF) has just released its latest rankings for eSports.

Due to the incredible efforts of Robert "PandaTank" Botha, previously unranked Robert has managed to become the first South African ever ranked in the top ten according to the world governing body for eSports (the IeSF).



Robert Botha - The first South African to be ranked in the top ten by the International eSports Federation

However, Robert is not only ranked in the top ten, Robert is ranked in fifth (5th) position overall for the incredibly popular game of StarCraft II.

Only the following are ranked above Robert:

1. **Jeffrey Brusi** - Sweden - 2100
2. **Manuel Schenkhuisen** - Netherlands - 1890
3. **Jen-Yu Chan** - Taipei - 1701
4. **Andrei Nordea** - Romania - 1701

Robert, a resident of Fairlands, in Johannesburg, is a 21 year old male, who after completing a bachelor of sciences degree in Information Technology at the University of Johannesburg is currently taking time off from his studies to pursue his dream of becoming a full time professional gamer.

While many such gamers in Europe find it easy to become professional gamers, such an ambition is quite elusive for many top South African gamers due to the lack of sustainable sponsorship programmes.

Even the South African Department of Sports and Recreation (SRSA) are streets ahead of many of their counterparts. The SRSA recognises eSports as a sport in its own right and has recognised many of the benefits that eSports have to offer.

# WHEN YOU EXERCISE TOO MUCH: EXERCISE ADDICTION

By Timothy Mottram



Photo by Greg Westfall

“Pain is just weakness leaving your body.”

These are words that you can imagine a Spartan uttering as he sparred with his soldier-colleagues in Ancient Greece, honing themselves into killing machines. But more and more regular, white-collar men and woman adopt the same destructive, obsessive attitude to exercise.

Schedules become more and more demanding as addicts push themselves harder, fearing the dreaded plateau. Families and commitments get pushed to the side for longer and more intense work outs. Blogs get flooded with hysterical questions about calories and bulking-up tips. Inevitably, injuries occur, putting the addict out of commission, resulting in depression.

Exercise addiction is under-studied and misunderstood, but, like any addiction, it results in misery.

The message which has been transmitted by doctors for years - that everyone should exercise for healthy bodies and minds - obscures the dangers that too much of a good thing can be bad. When researching this article, a Google search resulted in more hits for gyms named “Exercise Addiction” than it found articles on this modern malaise. This addiction is being tacitly endorsed by many in the industry.

The causes of exercise addiction are typical of any addiction. The work outs themselves provide a chemical high that can be addictive. The planning, research and calorie-counting fill the addicts’ time and help them avoid thinking about unpleasant realities in their lives. As their body shape

changes, they enjoy a bump in self-esteem that comes from being better than others.

In an article on the subject for the Sydney Morning Herald, psychiatrist Dr Tanveer Ahmed says people “who engage in compulsive exercise also do so to feel more in control of their lives. They often define their self-worth through their athletic performance and try to deal with emotions such as anger or depression by pushing their bodies to the limit.”

Cross addiction is another reason for exercise addiction. Typically, people addicted to drugs or alcohol move to another, less dangerous addiction to help them deal with the loss of a compulsive activity in the past. One of the most famous former alcoholic / exercise freak is former American president, George W. Bush.

His battle with alcohol and his subsequent sobriety has much to do with the fact that he became a committed sportsman. James Harding, a prominent Bush-watcher, claims that “he looks pumped”, and focuses on going “into the Dallas sunshine to go mountain biking”.

Jake Gyllenhaal is another celebrity whose investment in exercise has caused him to re-think his attitude and practice. “I’ve had to teach myself to slow down a bit. Because I get so into it, it becomes a real addiction,” Jake says.

Exercise addiction takes many forms, but typically addicts participate in more solitary sports that do not require social obligations. Some of the other key signs are:

- Avoiding rest days, which are in fact vital for giving the body time to recover
- Turning down social opportunities in favour of a work out
- Constantly striving for more: for example, more kilometres for runners, or more weight for body builders

- Thinking of food in terms of calories and type rather than as food

- They continue their regular training schedules even on holidays

Exercise addicts are like most addicts: they are unlikely to concede that they have a problem. Family and friends, often ignored and neglected by the addict, are usually the source of change.

At its most extreme, exercise addiction is often followed by body dysmorphia. This condition occurs when an individual’s body image is so distorted that they fail to see in the mirror what others see. In many women, this manifests itself in anorexia. Males who bulk up may not see just how large they are getting. They constantly crave more size, which often leads to the use of dangerous substance abuse. At its most extreme, dysmorphia results in freakish body shapes and even death.

A healthy approach to exercise is paramount. If you think you might be in danger of being an exercise addict, here are a few tips to help you find a balance:

- Exercise should never be your first commitment. Take stock of what you value in your life
- Decide on an exercise goal that is achievable. Once you get there, change your practice to keep you at that level. When you are in shape, you will need less exercise than you needed to get you there
- Always have one or two rest days. They help you avoid injury and ensure you have time to do other things with your life
- Work with a professional. They will give you guidance and balance in your exercise schedule



## APPLICATIONS FOR *SPORTSCOVER'S* 2012 SPONSORSHIP FUND ARE OPENING SOON

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[sportscover.com](http://sportscover.com)

# PARKOUR: LEAPING FROM THE ROOFTOPS

By Timothy Mottram



Parkour is not a new sport, and nor does it have designs on increasing its market share or profile. It can best be characterised as the solitary pursuit of excellence.

Parkour practitioners, or traceurs, run through the urban environment in as free-flowing a manner as possible. They jump and climb over any stationary objects in their path: stairs, walls, even roofs. The goal is speed and grace. The point is to get from point A to point B as quickly as possible.

The sport does not have rules, so much as disciplines. For example, traceurs need to be able to return to their starting point, but not necessarily by the same path. The action should involve acrobatics and jumping but not flips and showy moves. The object is movement and speed, not fancy thrills.

Indeed, true traceurs have an almost aesthetic approach to the sport. They see the running and jumping as a method to improve the mind, some how using the speed to achieve a better

understanding of themselves and their environment.

The Parkourpedia website characterises the essence of the sport in this way: “Move in such a way, with any movement, that will help you gain the most ground on someone / something as if escaping from someone / something or chasing toward someone / something.”

To those unfamiliar with the sport, they should get a copy of the 21st James Bond film, *Casino Royale*. In the

opening scene, Bond chases a suspect in typical parkour style: over walls, jumping from roofs: at one point running up a vertiginous crane. In fact, Bond's adversary in the chase was none other than Sebastian Foucan, a parkour expert and later developer of free-running. Free-running shares many characteristics with parkour but is considered more flamboyant.

Traceurs insist that the sport is not limited to the urban environment, but is equally exacting in forests or deserts.

However, it is in the cities that the sport has found its adherents.

Urban youths in the cities of France found a lack of organised sport no hindrance when they could use the environment around them as a setting for their endeavours. The blooming of the sport might have come after *Casino Royale*, but parkour and sports like it have been around for years. Its roots can be found in Hebertism, an approach to fitness and training invented by Georges Hebert in the first years of the 20th century. He based it on the training undertaken by the African men he saw when stationed there. His methodology later became one of the main training styles for the French military in the First and Second World Wars.

Almost one hundred years later David Belle formalised parkour into its current manifestation. He took Hebertism and added a touch of Eastern philosophy to make it a spiritual as well as a physical challenge.

This emphasis on sport for its intrinsic results means that if you are burning to see the best traceurs in competition you are going to be disappointed. No parkour competitions are held because traceurs believe that competing against each other serves only to create elites,



undermines a collective community and pushes competitors to sacrifice their health. Rather, a key tenant of the sport is the traceurs support of each other.

One traceur who has recently been in the headlines is Marcus Wilson of Suffolk, UK. At just seventeen, the clip he posted of his jumps and runs has scored him a job teaching potential parkour enthusiasts how to do the do sport in America.

'We started filming for fun, but as we went on it we took it more and more seriously,' Marcus said.

'It feels amazing to jump over buildings.

'I would love to make a living out of parkour - it would be a fun job.

'It is a really fun sport, keeps you fit and you meet lots of people through it.'

In fact, it is on the internet that most people first see the sport. Many are hooked as soon as they see the death-defying leaps.

For people just getting started, there is good news and bad. Because parkour shuns commercial deals, there is no specific equipment required. Most

traceurs recommend good quality trainers. On the down side, a high level of fitness is required from the get go.

Experts suggest that as a baseline, you should be able to do 25 crunches, 5 pull ups and have good cardio fitness. Beginners should focus on landing successfully and should only move on to landing on concrete after lots of practice on softer surfaces.

There have been surprisingly few serious injuries due to parkour in recent years. This is partly because of the philosophy of the sport, where the traceurs build up to a certain move and never practice the sport when feeling under the weather. Most injuries tend to be repetitive strain injuries. Some traceurs complain of a 'jumper's knee'. Aerobic training and stretch seems to alleviate most of these issues.

Parkour is a serious sport, in many ways more serious than most. So next time you see a kid scamping along the top of a wall or leaping off a 3 metre high building, don't shake your head in dismay at his foolishness. He might just be trying to achieve personal excellence.

Visit [www.parkourpedia.com](http://www.parkourpedia.com) for more information.



Photo By Bruce | SuperFantastic

## GETTING RIPPED WITH P90X2

TOUCHLINE CONTRIBUTOR AND P90X GRADUATE **TIMOTHY MOTTRAM** GETS BACK IN TRAINING WITH BEACHBODY'S NEW RELEASE, P90X2.

Imagine being only halfway through the Chest and Back workout for P90X2, and you are already shaking from fatigue. Your eyes burn from salty sweat and your legs feel like overcooked spaghetti.

Then Tony Horton, the Guru of home fitness, announces that the next exercise is called Impossible/Possible. With his unique brand of goofy, tongue-in-cheek bravado, he explains that the name is more a promise than a threat.

You won't be able to do it for weeks, but then you will do two and feel pretty good about yourself.

The exercise requires you to place both feet on a 75cm round pilates ball and grasp a medicine ball with your hands. You then simply lock up the core and pump out twenty push-ups. Nothing to it.

So far, I have managed a grand total of exactly zero push-ups. So very much in the Impossible stage of my exercise journey.

Now, you might wonder why anyone would continue with this madness. Everything is harder in P90X2. Standard Burpees are hard enough: Horton has you do them with dumb bells, or with a mule kick, or on one leg. Do enough push ups and you get strong. But is that good enough for Horton? No.

His push-ups have you balancing on four medicine balls, or springing between three medicine balls, or doing decline push-ups on the Pilates ball.

Remember when you set yourself up with a solid base before ripping out bicep curls? Well, forget about that. Try P90X2 and all curls require you to balance on one leg.

The reason for all this pain and discomfort has been dubbed Muscle Confusion. The idea is not new and was a core principle of the wildly popular predecessor, P90X. Known in the scientific community as daily undulating periodization, the idea is that if you keep the body guessing in exercise, it cannot adapt to the movements. Keep the body guessing, and it grows.

Of course, as road tests go, this one is in its infancy. Enthusiasts will be just finishing up as Touchline goes to print, as the new edition was shipped just before Christmas. The author is currently battling through the Strength Stage.

By now, most of us have conquered the Foundation Stage—a series of exercises designed to get the core as strong as possible, so when we are balancing on 4 medicine balls, there is a better chance that we won't flop onto the floor in a sweaty mess. The foundation stage introduces you to the new mentality of the sequel: it is not enough to be strong

anymore, you have to be balanced and you have to use your brain.

One particularly gruelling exercise requires you to get into the plank position and raise the alternate arm and leg. Sounds easy? It is so painful by the fourth rep that it becomes almost impossible to remember which arm and which leg you just raised.

After three weeks of this, you enter the Strength Phase. This is much more like P90X, but the cardio has been culled to make way for more muscle work. Stable leg exercises have been replaced by Plyometrics - or jump training - which is alternated with pull-ups. The one purely cardio day of the week has been given the slightly sinister name Plyocide, which redefines the term "bone-jarringly exhausting".

Off in the distance gleams a rest week, which combines yoga (a constant and much derided element of the program) and stretching to prepare you for, as Horton would call it, the mother-in-law of exercise routines: PAP, or Post Activation Potential. According to Beachbody, the science is this: "P.A.P is based on a unique combination of traditional resistance training and total-body plyometrics. When performed in a specific cadence, P.A.P. trains muscles to fire more efficiently, significantly increasing explosive strength." Translation: jumping until near death.

But that is the beauty of these work-outs: you leave the thinking, the timing, and the form up to the experts. It is very much a case of when Tony Horton says "jump", you say "how high?"

**It is so painful that by the fourth rep that it becomes almost impossible to remember which arm and which leg you just raised.**

Another area where you allow P90X2 to make your decisions for you in is the stretching and recovery. These workouts are intense. Beachbody needs to protect you from injury, because they need to protect themselves from lawsuits. In each hour block of exercise, at least 25 minutes is given over to stretching, warming up and cooling down. One of the newest developments is the foam roller.

Now, I was dubious. Not even Horton and his uber-fit acolytes can make foam-rolling look graceful or effective. They seem to be just lolling about on the floor, doing not very much. I finally stumped up the money for the roller, and immediately saw the point. You effectively knead out the pain and knots, a very important part of the process

when engaging in extreme exercise.

One criticism I have heard leveled at the P90X series is in the name: exercise is a life-long commitment, so you shouldn't be using targets such as 90 days. I think this is countered by the fact that once you follow this system and you start seeing results, it becomes very difficult to go back to being slightly overweight and breathing heavily at the third landing while walking up stairs. To that end, it is a gateway option. P90X2 has everything that P90X had and more: there is no reason why this product won't sell in the millions.

Who knows: one day I might even make the Impossible Possible.

### Verdict:

Exhausting, gut-churning and terrifying for the lady who lives in the apartment below me. I love it.

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- Sailing
- Triathlon
- Volleyball
- Water Polo
- Badminton
- Soccer (Individual)
- Hillwalking
- Hockey
- Lacrosse
- Netball
- Orienteering
- Racquetball
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**CRISIS IN ATHENS:** Greek residents take to the streets to protest austerity measures.

# GREEK TRAGEDY:

## HOW THE FINANCIAL CRISIS HAS HIT GREEK SPORT

By Timothy Mottram

As the fallout of the Greek financial meltdown continues to rock the country, it seems that sport has become the latest casualty of years of mismanagement.

Athens will be sending only 75 athletes to London this summer, less than half of the squad that went to Beijing in 2008. Of those, many are struggling to find financial support and are forced to live and train on as little as \$1,400 a month.

“We have gone from heaven to hell. This is our reality. The country in which the idea of moderation was born has now

gone beyond every limit”, says head of the country’s Olympic Federation, Vassilis Sevastis.

Some \$40 million was earmarked for preparing the Greek Olympic team for London: but that was before the financial crisis. The teams have so far only gathered \$10 million, all preceding the budget cuts that have been part of the national austerity measures. More money coming in is unlikely.

State incentives have also gone. Hellenic Olympic Committee (HOC) President Spyros Kapralos told Reuters that “The debt crisis now has

affected both sport and the National Olympic Committee. In the previous quadrennium (2005-2008) the Greek state paid around \$30 million in total towards the country’s Olympic preparation.

“We had agreed the same amount from the state (for 2009-2012). In 2010 and 2011 the amount we got from the Greek state was zero,” he said. “So our preparation has suffered.”

Olympic hopeful and pole-vaulter Kostas Filippidis is one of many Greek athletes forced to train on a very slim budget, but he is bullish. “Of course it’s



a thought, but I cannot be worried about this every day," he said, adding that he lived rent-free in an apartment owned by his father. "Taking part in the Olympics for my country makes me very proud."

To say that sport has been an unwitting victim of the Greek financial disaster is to understate the role the 2004 Olympics played in the current mess. It is partly the weight of the debt accrued eight to ten years ago that pulled Greece under the financial waves.

After three years dithering, the Greek government was given a stern warning by the Olympics' senior commissioners: get your act together or we take it elsewhere. Athens, terrified of what losing the games would do to their global reputation, acted.

Buildings were erected by workers doing double, triple shifts. No expense was spared. The final deadline was met, and Greece glowed in the beam of world attention. The final bill came to over \$12 billion, but so what? The games, founded here over two millennia ago, were home.

The trouble was that Athens had no plan for paying the money back, and no hope of doing so. What was always going to be difficult became impossible with the GFC of 2008.

The malaise in Greek sport can be seen in the very real evidence scattered through Athens. The sporting facilities, erected at such immense cost and responsible for so much of the country's current climate, stand decayed and disused.

"I watched Athens go completely broke when we built the venues," said Taki Theodoropoulos, a Greek expert on the city. "Now they're derelict. These buildings are horrible and the government is to blame. It's disappointing and it's all subsidised crap. All because of the bureaucracy."

Now, most of the 2004 venues are derelict, homes for stray dogs and the homeless. Thieves have gutted what remained, even seats from the Olympic stadium being hauled away. Leasing ventures, ear-marked to help subsidise the massive outlay for the Games, almost completely failed.

"The dream of the Olympics that improved our image in the world during those 16 days has been lost, and it makes me sad," Kapralos said.

"We had a foundation of good people in 2004, a dynamic which now is lost just like the venues that have become soulless buildings."

While Athens bares the visual scars of the disaster, Greek athletes continue to prepare, despite the constraints. Private sponsorship is now the only sure way the players will be supported as they train. But this money comes at a trickle.

Betting company OPAP gives the Olympic hopefuls \$6.5 million, and the national airline, ironically called Olympic Air, gives away free flights. It is all too little, and Greece has all but conceded that there will be no medals this year.

Greece will lead the world out into the arena during this year's Olympics. They do this to remind the world of where this grand tradition began. This year, they should also remind us what the consequences of financial mismanagement in sport can be.

## AND ON TO LONDON

The London Olympics will suffer a budget blowout according to a parliamentary committee charged with keeping an eye on the bottom line.

While the shortfall will be nothing like the tragedy that unfolded in Greece eight years ago, the figures once again confirm the perils of hosting a major international competition.

The number quoted by the committee is roughly £11 billion, which is almost two billion more than the £9.3 billion budget assigned to the competition initially.

Chair of the committee, Margaret Hodge, claims the biggest unanticipated cost will be security, and questions the government's handling of the tender and subsequent negotiations.

"LOCOG (The London organising committee) now needs more than twice the number of security guards it originally estimated and the costs have roughly doubled. It is staggering that the original estimates were so wrong," she said.

Head of LOCOG, Paul Deighton, shot back by saying that the Olympics are on track to come in on budget, but it will be close.

"We have £93m contingency and our expectation of risks is £88m, so we are very, very finely balanced," he said, explaining the built in funds that protect the budget against unforeseen costs.

The government denies the findings of the committee. A spokesman for the Department of Culture, Media and Sport said that future earnings will offset current shortfalls.

"The cost of purchasing the Olympic Park land will ultimately come back to the public purse through the resale of the land after the Games and was therefore not included," he said.

The London 2012 Olympics will open on July 27th.

# World Sports News Roundup



## Australia

### MELBOURNE TO HOST HOCKEY CHAMPIONS TROPHY 2012

The Federation of International Hockey (FIH) has announced that the Hockey Champions Trophy will be held from 1st – 9th December in Melbourne, Australia. The World Number One Men's hockey team, the Kookaburras will compete for an unprecedented fifth consecutive Champion's Trophy title and a historic 13th gold medal overall.

The top five nations from last year's Champions Trophy, the winner of the Champions Challenge and two nations invited to participate by the FIH are expected to compete at the event.

Hockey Australia Chief Executive Mark Anderson said "Melbourne hosted a tremendously successful Champions Trophy event in 2009. The crowds were large, loud, supportive and all of the international teams had a fabulous experience both on and off-field."

"We look forward to bringing the teams back to Melbourne for what we believe will be an even bigger event and more entertaining tournament."

Sports Minister Hugh Delahunty said the event would be hosted at Melbourne's international standard hockey facility, the State Netball Hockey Centre, which gave spectators the opportunity to watch and support the Olympic medallists.

"Securing the FIH Champions Trophy for Melbourne will deliver economic benefits of up to \$5.6 million to Victoria and reinforces Melbourne's reputation as the world's ultimate sports city, as well as significant benefits to the hockey community."

Hockey Victoria Chief Executive Ben Hartung commented, "This is a brilliant opportunity to showcase our sport on the world stage and engage the wider community in an event that promises to shine and grow even bigger and better."

Last year the Kookaburras defeated Spain 1-0 in the final in Auckland.



## Dubai

### DUBAI TO HOLD FIRST HOST NATIONS EVENT

Sports leaders from around the world will gather to discuss the topical issue of emerging nations hosting the world's biggest sporting events in Dubai on 4 and 5 December 2012.

The summit will aid potential host cities by offering them an opportunity to develop their understanding of what it take to be a host nation, and work as a base for sporting administrators, brands and broadcasters to seek out new hosts and partners.

Representatives from golf's European Tour, the US Tennis Association, the International Cricket Council and Emirates Airline - whose sport sponsorship portfolio includes the FIFA World Cup, DP World Tour Championship Dubai, IRB Rugby World Cup, the Dubai World Cup and numerous professional football clubs - will be among those supporting the event.



**DUBAI: Will hold the first host nations event.**

Dr. Ahmed Saad Al Sharif, Secretary General of the Dubai Sports Council, said: "Dubai is always looking at various ways and means to position itself as a global destination for a variety of sporting events."

"This event will further strengthen the pulling power of Dubai, the UAE and the Gulf region. Dubai has fast become a destination of choice for some of the biggest and most important sporting and tourism events in the world and this summit will further consolidate its position as a sporting capital of the Middle East."

The UAE's development can be seen in sport through the hosting of events such as the Dubai World Cup, Formula 1 at Yas Marina Circuit, FIFA Club World Cup football, Pakistan international cricket and the European Tour's Race to Dubai.



## Canada

### CANADA TO HOST WOMEN'S WORLD CUP 2015

FIFA have announced that Ottawa will be joined by Edmonton, Montreal, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Moncton as host cities for the 24-team Women's Football World Cup in 2015. The decision came

following a year-long series of site inspections in seven cities.

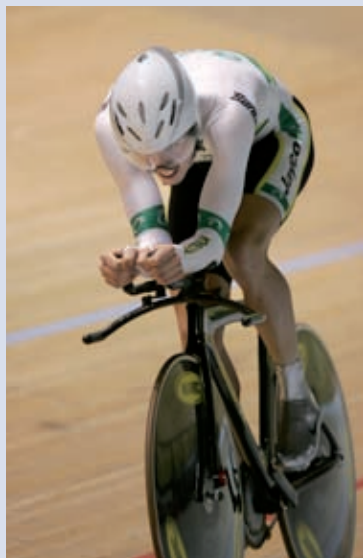
In 2007, Canada staged the most successful men's under-20 World Cup ever, packing 1,195,299 fans into stadiums from east to west.

# World Sports News Roundup



**Australia**

## WORLD RECORDS FALL AT UCI TRACK WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS



Australia's Anna Meares broke her second world record in the women's 500m time trial at the 2012 UCI Track Cycling World Championships to blitz the field on the final night of competition.

It was the eighth world record of the championships which were held on 4 – 8 April in Melbourne, Australia.

The result was enough to ensure the home team

stayed at the summit of the medal standings, finishing with six gold, six silver and three bronze for the championships. Great Britain finished in second position, also finishing with six gold, but with four silver and three bronze medals.

However in the Olympic events it was Great Britain who prevailed, winning five of the ten gold medals on offer. Australia was next best with three, with Germany and France finishing with one a piece.

Meares' victory earned the 28-year-old her second rainbow jersey of the championships and tenth world title to sit equal with French track legend Felicia Ballanger as the winner of the most world track titles in women's events.

Her first world championship victory was won in the same event at the same venue in 2004.

Other highlights included a move of pure genius on the final turn by Sir Chris Hoy who shocked the field with what was an unbelievable display of bike handling and pure speed to take out the men's keirin final. Hoy looked certain to be caught four wide in an attempt to come over the top of New Zealand's Simon Van Veltooven, Germany's Maximilian Levy and compatriot Jason Kenny before the 36-year-old slipped to the inside to find what appeared to most to be a non-existent gap to race to his eleventh world title, and his fourth in the keirin.

In the women's individual pursuit, Alison Shanks picked up New Zealand's first gold medal of the championships.



**Germany**

## SLINGSBY WINS FIFTH CHAMPIONSHIP

"Defending champion Tom Slingsby of Australia has won his fifth world laser championship in Boltenhagen, northern Germany.

The 27-year-old New South Welshman wrapped up the title with a race to spare. The reigning world No.1 started the day already 20 points ahead of his nearest rival, Croatia's Tonci Stipanovic.

And his second place in the day's first race was enough to gain an unassailable lead.

Slingsby sat out the final race and received treatment for an ankle injury he sustained during the seven-day regatta.

Victory will be a major boost ahead of the London Olympics, which Slingsby will now enter as overwhelming favourite for the laser class gold medal.

Only one man, Brazil's Robert Scheidt has won more Laser world titles. Scheidt, who will compete in the Star at the 2012 Games, has eight to Slingsby's five.

But the Australian yesterday signalled that he will move away from the Laser after the Olympics.



**USA**

## NBA ALL-STAR GAME GOING TO NEW ORLEANS

New Orleans is slated to host the 63rd NBA All-Star Game on Sunday, 16 February, 2014, it was announced by NBA Commissioner David Stern.

The 2014 All-Star Game will be played at New Orleans Arena, home of the Hornets, pending the completion of arena and hotel agreements. This will mark the second time that the NBA All-Star Game will be hosted in New Orleans, having previously been held in the "Crescent City" in 2008.

"There is no better place to celebrate and showcase the NBA than in New Orleans, a city with a rich tradition of hosting major events that is second-to-none," said Stern. "Our 2008 NBA All-Star festivities proved a terrific experience for everyone involved, and we anticipate 2014 will be even better."

# CONSTITUTIONAL DISORDERS

SPORTING CLUBS MUST BE AWARE OF THE POTENTIAL LEGAL HAZARDS THAT CAN ARISE DUE TO DISPUTES BETWEEN COMMITTEE AND CLUB MEMBERS, WRITES **JAMES MCINTYRE**, SPECIAL COUNSEL WITH DLA PIPER AUSTRALIA.

Many sporting clubs exist as associations (either incorporated or unincorporated) under a constitution and operate in the belief that the only potential legal hazards might arise from the state of their playing fields (*see Touchline Issue 7 – Focus on Risk Management*). However, office bearers in sporting clubs should be equally aware of the potential pitfalls within the clubhouse arising from decisions by the club's management committee. Disputes between committee members and club members dissatisfied with the committee's decisions or actions have the potential to be more fiercely (and more expensively) contested than any of the club's sporting encounters. Although it is impossible to completely immunise a club from becoming entangled in a legal maul, there are some steps that clubs can take to manage the risks associated with such disputes.

## Identifying the risks

In Australia, many club constitutions may be based upon 'model rules' provided by state government agencies responsible for regulating incorporated associations. However, constitutions are like suits - one size does not necessarily fit all and clubs that are contemplating incorporation or drafting constitutions should review the model rules and consider whether any refinements are necessary to take into account the nature and scope of the club's activities and its potential membership.

For sporting clubs that already operate with an existing constitution, the members of its management committee should familiarise themselves with its constitution rather than tolerating a situation in which the only copy of the club's constitution might be sitting in the kitchen drawer of the person who was president five years previously.

Although not exhaustive, the following issues have the potential to trip up any management committee just as readily as an unidentified divot on the club's playing field:

- **Membership** – is the club adhering to its procedures for the admission, rejection and, if necessary, the termination of membership?
- **Elections** – is the club complying with its procedures for notice of elections, nominations and voting procedures for the management committee?
- **Functions of the management committee** – is the committee acting within the powers granted to it under the constitution (for example raising or borrowing money)?
- **Validity of the committee meeting** – were there sufficient members of the committee present to constitute a quorum and allow decisions to be taken?
- **Finances** – is the club keeping proper financial records, adopting appropriate procedures for drawing cheques and preparing financial statements?

The above list is not intended to be exhaustive but to indicate some of the areas of club operations which may trigger disputes and potentially, litigation.

## Managing the risks

Like any other risk management exercise, the first step to risk management is identifying the potential risks. The list set out above should assist a club in identifying the areas in which its operations could give rise to disputes or litigation. The club should also review its insurance arrangements to assess whether its insurance policies will respond to the risk by providing cover for the club's directors and officers in the event of such disputes arising. The policy wording, particularly the definitions of the risks being insured against, should also be reviewed to ensure that they meet with the club's needs.

## RELAXING DANGEROUSLY REVISITED

'Relaxing Dangerously' (Touchline – Issue 11), noted that in *Laoulach v El Khoury* (2010) NSWSC 1009, the NSW Supreme Court found that the risk of serious spinal injury from striking the bottom of a bay should have been obvious to the injured plaintiff, particularly after the defendants had relocated their boat due to concerns about the water being too shallow for diving and the plaintiff had been aware of these concerns.

On 16 December 2011, the NSW Court of Appeal dismissed the plaintiff's appeal. Importantly, the Court held that the plaintiff was not engaged in a 'dangerous recreational activity' within the meaning of the NSW Civil Liability Act 2002 when he dived into the bay. The Court held that for a 'significant degree of risk of physical harm' to exist and allow the activity to be characterised as 'dangerous', there must be a finding not only that the risk was more than trivial or very slight but also that there was a real chance of the risk materialising.

The Court of Appeal was not satisfied that there was a real chance of physical injury occurring and concluded that the plaintiff was not engaged in a 'dangerous recreational activity'. However, the Court of Appeal upheld the trial judge's findings that the defendants had not breached their common law duty of care to the plaintiff. Consequently, the plaintiff's appeal against the Supreme Court's decision failed.

## NHL INSURERS HEADACHE OVER CONCUSSIONS

By Timothy Mottram

In a move that has set the National Hockey League quaking, there are rumours that insurers will stop covering players who retire because of concussions.

Hockey could be just the first sport where insurance companies start to be more careful about how they handle pay-outs for head injuries. With advances in brain-monitoring science, health professionals are sidelining more and more players on account of concussions. More injuries are being diagnosed and longer rest periods demanded.

The result is that this season up to 10 percent of all players from the NHL have been sidelined with a concussion-related complaint.

Of even more concern to the insurers is the condition of NHL poster boy Sidney Crosby. The high profile player has started only a fraction of the Pittsburgh Penguins' games this season on account of his concussions. The club remains protected from the financial cost of his lay off, because as part of his contract, if he missed over 30 consecutive games, the insurer foots the bill. In Crosby's case, this will mean they will pay out around 8 million dollars.

Howard Bloom from Sports Business News said that "in the case of Sidney Crosby about 90 percent of his contract is covered against his concussions if he can't play games."

"What [the insurance companies] are suggesting is that after a player suffers one concussion they're not going to cover that player."

Should he be forced to retire, Crosby will receive a pay off of around 20 million dollars from his insurance provider. It is believed that he paid 1 million dollars for the policy, which is calculated to protect him from a loss in

salary and the millions he makes from his commercial sponsorship deals.

The changes could be devastating for smaller clubs as they struggle to pay out a player's contract without the assistance of the insurance companies.

"It's implications are really very, very terrifying for the National Hockey League and the sport of hockey," Bloom concluded.

One of the mooted changes is for players who have suffered one concussion become virtually uninsurable for subsequent brain injuries. Should the injury be career ending, the clubs will have to stump up what the insurers would have paid.

These changes are already reflected in certain insurance companies' vetting processes, such as Toronto-based Sutton Special Risk.

"We used to have one question asking players their history with cardiac issues and other problems like concussions," said Greg Sutton, the company's president.

"Now, concussions have their own section. We're asking about frequency, how bad they were and how many games they missed. We know you're not recovered from brain injuries because the symptoms go away. This is not an organ like the liver that can regenerate itself."

"You're going to see a lot more contracts with concussion exclusions. It's a big risk. Teams are going to have more exposure related to concussions that they're going to have to eat."

Just how this issue will develop in hockey is anyone's guess, but the implications for high impact sports such as boxing, certain football codes and basketball are obvious.

# HOW THE MIGHTY HAVE FALLEN: RANGER'S TIMELINE TO DESTRUCTION

By Timothy Mottram

Glasgow's rival football teams, Rangers and Celtic, sell more papers than any other subject in Scotland. With Rangers' descent into administration speculation has reached a fever-pitch as journalists and fans alike ask the burning question: how could this happen to biggest club north of the border? Touchline looks at the key dates in Rangers' spectacular fall.

**29th August, 2009:** Rangers Chairman announces Sir David Murray announces his decision to step down and Alastair Johnston is declared his successor.

**24th October, 2009:** A representative of Lloyd's Bank, Donald Muir, is appointed to the board.

**27th April, 2010:** It comes to light that Ranger are under investigation by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs regarding player payments.

**November 2010:** With the club looking for an owner, billionaire and eventual buyer Craig Whyte begins circling the club.

**19th April, 2011:** The Rangers Board block Whyte's bid.

**April to May, 2011:** Board member Paul Murray makes a counter offer in a failed attempt to scupper Whyte's bid.

**6th May, 2011:** Craig Whyte buys the club for £1. The reason for such a small fee was because of Rangers' outstanding debt of around £22 million owed to the clubs' bankers Lloyd's as well as several debt cases which could total over £55 million.

**10th May, 2011:** Whyte assures fans that the tax case against the club is a dead issue.



**25th May, 2011:** Whyte oversees a boardroom coup which sees rival bidder Paul Murray and Alastair Johnson sacked. Chief executive Martin Bain and finance director Donald McIntyre are suspended.

**June, 2011:** Bain decides to sue Rangers for his suspension.

**2nd September, 2011:** Rangers receive a final warning over a £2.8million bill from HMRC.

**14th September, 2011:** Courts freeze nearly £500,000 of Rangers' cash.

**18th October, 2011:** The BBC reveals that Whyte had been banned from being a director for seven years.

**December, 2011:** Rangers see their profit fall from £4million to just £76,000 in the year to the end of June.

**31st January, 2012:** New sources in Scotland claim that Whyte had sold 4 years worth of season tickets to finance the ailing club and had not paid any income tax since taking over the club.

**February 13th, 2012:** Rangers go into administration. Automatic 10-point

deduction sees them effectively out of contention for the league.

**March 7th, 2012:** Rangers admit they cannot play in Europe next season because of financial rules.

**March 10th, 2012:** After weeks of negotiations, top players finally agree to a 75% wage cut until the end of the season.

**March 16th, 2012:** A pension fund part owned by Whyte begins legal proceeding to recover almost 3 million pounds in loans funneled into the club.

**March 16th, 2012:** "Blue Knights" consortium amongst the front-runners to buy the club.

**March 25th, 2012:** Rangers beat arch rivals Celtic 3-2.

**April 6th, 2012:** The administrators estimated that total debts, as of 6 April 2012, could be as much as £134m.

**May 10th, 2012:** Rangers administrators Duff and Phelps say Craig Whyte has agreed to transfer his majority shareholding to two parties involved in takeover talks.

# THE BOUNTYGATE SCANDAL

By Timothy Mottram

American football's Bountygate scandal has served as a body-blow for the image of fair play in the sport. The New Orleans Saints have been found guilty of offering their players financial incentives to injure key players from other teams.

The scandal could open up other franchises to similar accusations, as the tactic is thought to be wide spread in the National Football League.

The case against the Saints claims that between 22 and 27 defensive players were offered the bounties between the years 2009 to 2011.

According to reports, in one case Saints linebacker Jonathon Vilma offered teammates 10,000 dollars to injure rival player Brett Favre, then of the Vikings.

The man at the centre of the scandal is former defensive coach for the saints, Gregg Williams. His future in the game is bleak, but it remains to be seen if his is the only head that will roll.

Williams released a statement in the aftermath of the ruling: "I want to express my sincere regret and apology to the NFL... and the New Orleans Saints fans for my participation in the 'pay for performance' program while I

was with the Saints.

"It was a terrible mistake, and we knew it was wrong while we were doing it. Instead of getting caught up in it, I should have stopped it. I take full responsibility for my role. I am truly sorry. I have learned a hard lesson and I guarantee that I will never participate in or allow this kind of activity to happen again."

While the scandal may be a long way from over, it has spurred many to look at how they perceive and understand the inherently violent nature of the game. Some have asked the question of where the line between being hard and being aggressive lies.

In an interview for the Washington Post, football expert Thomas Boswell makes the case that there is a very clear line.

"When you hit-to-injure, especially around the head and spine, you could kill or permanently injury an opponent. Wouldn't that be even worse than throwing a game? So, as far as I can tell, it's the ultimate crime against the integrity of the sport you play."

In his blog, veteran football commentator Bob Smizik claims that it is "an ugly, sordid mess and it's hard

to believe Williams was the only coach involved with this practice."

Others think that being hit hard is just an aspect of the sport that you should accept. After the Championship match where he was targeted, Favre said: "I'm not pissed. It's football. I don't think anything less of those guys."

The problem for football is that even at the grass roots the line between hitting an opposition player to merely play hard and to injure are blurred. The hits are not simply to take players out of a play, or to knock the ball out of their grip: hits by nature are designed to intimidate. One telling custom from high school football in some states is that the player who made the biggest hit in a game gets a sticker.

The sticker goes on the player's helmet. Sound reasoning from opposition players leads them to assume that you should watch out for anyone with a helmet painted in stickers.

These kinds of traditions go a long way to explaining just how the sport's code can find its natural conclusion in targeted violence. Coaches have become cagey about naming where and how badly injured a player might be before a game, lest the opposition use the information to target that player in that area.

It remains to be seen how this scandal will impact the code. Should the bounty system be widespread – it is hard to believe the Williams only paid for injuries at one of his former clubs - the NFL will have to begin cleaning house.

But more importantly, people in football will have to confront the question of just what is fair in an all-in, full-contact sport.



**HIT THEM HARD:** Players are encouraged to try to hurt the opposition

## WATER SAFETY GUIDANCE LAUNCHED



On 26 April, Surf Life Saving GB (SLSGB) in partnership with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) and with the support of SLSGB insurer Sportscover, launched a new national guidance document on the management of event water safety.

The guidance document, a product of extensive research thanks to the support of Sportscover and Derby University was launched at the RoSPA National Water Safety Conference to an audience of more than 100 experts for further consultation. This consultation is now taking place with a view to publishing the final document in the June 2012.

Esther Pearson, SLSGB's Chief Executive has been the driver behind the project. In the forward to the guide, she writes,

"The publication of this guidance document is testament to the commitment from those involved with water-based sporting events to deliver the highest possible standards for their participants. As the charity of 6000 volunteer lifesavers, there are many calls on the services of SLSGB lifeguards to support the increasing appetite for water-based

events, as well as supporting our own growing life saving sport programme. There have been a number of occasions that we and our members have been concerned about varying standards of event water safety management, often driven by the need to reduce costs and therefore cover. This document aims to ease that conflict and create an overarching strategic framework that sits across a variety of sporting disciplines. Without the commitment to safety and watersports by a number of leading organisations we would not have been able to create this guide. In particular, the research, authoring and publication of this document would not have been possible without the support of RoSPA and Sportscover, to whom we offer our grateful thanks."

Touchline will be re-printing sections from the guide over the coming months as we see this document as a major development and step forward in helping to make our beaches, oceans and waterways safer places to enjoy. Although written with the UK in mind, the water safety principles contained in the document are applicable across the world.

On the following page is the introduction from the guide:



## INTRODUCTION FROM THE MANAGING EVENT WATER SAFETY GUIDE



Over the last decade there has been huge growth in the volume, scale and types of events on offer throughout the UK and abroad. Music and large scale sporting events have come to define the british summer. Challenge and sporting events are the focus

for tens of thousands of people – both those new to event participation and those looking for an inspiring challenge.

Water based events provide benefits for the participants, organisers and wider community. They have become one of the main vehicles for charitable fundraising and raising awareness of good causes, whilst providing brand exposure for both the sport and corporate partners.

Importantly, they can provide a much needed goal to challenge sedentary behaviours and lifestyles, whilst offering a route into a new sport for beginners. They are also central to how our future Olympic and elite athletes are developed and tested, through events that often cannot be found in a single club or community.

One of the less welcomed aspects of this growth is the sometimes variable safety provision that has occurred; there have been a few notable near miss events in the UK, and fatalities involving participants. Although rare, it is something that is growing in likelihood with the rise in participation and absence of national guidance for water safety at events.

Another concern is the perception, or reality, of a risk adverse culture developing. Our scoping research indicated that a number of events were reportedly cancelled due to non-specific 'elf-n-safety', insurance or civil litigation fears. Therefore, our first priority with this project was to do no further harm; second, address the misunderstanding and concerns when running water based event; third, bring together and showcase the good practice that does happen within a common framework.

### SCOPE

The guidelines within this document are relevant to any organised or public open-water sports (recreational) activity. The principal activities to which this document relates are the activities of open water swimming, triathlon, surfing, rowing, canoeing, paddle boarding, surf life saving sport and kite surfing - taking place on both inland and coastal waters.

The information contained within this document is intended to be a useful aid to managing safety at a water based event. There is no compulsion to follow this information, nor is there one single approach that should be considered as 'best practice'.

The use of the terms; should, consider, good or best practice are the opinions of the authors only, and as such do not carry any legal compulsion. Where existing UK law, regulation or code exists we highlight these. Voluntary organisations such as sports clubs and those running smaller events will be able to draw useful guidance from this document; however much of the complexity that surrounds public events might not always be applicable. If in doubt you should contact your sport's national governing body and/or the local authority event safety advisory group who can give you further information on the local arrangement and specific permissions required.

The information which follows has been developed through a combined approach using desktop research, interviews and reviews of leading events in both the UK and abroad. Workshops with expert groups were held throughout the research and drafting to ensure a balanced approach.

**Watch out for extracts from the sections of the Guide in future editions of Touchline.**



**Managing Water Safety:** Esther Pearson and Sportscover's Steve Boucher at the RoSPA National Water Safety Conference in Birmingham, UK

## SCHOOLBOY DIES DURING RUGBY MATCH

A schoolboy died after collapsing during a rugby match in Kidderminster, UK in March.

Luke Chapman, 15, from Haybridge High School in Hagley, was taken by air ambulance to Birmingham Children's Hospital. He was taking part in a game against Kidderminster's Baxter College.

A West Midlands Ambulance Service spokesman said: "Ambulance crews took over resuscitation attempts and advanced life support was carried out at the scene.

"The boy was transferred to Birmingham Children's Hospital by air ambulance for further emergency treatment.

"Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of ambulance crews and hospital staff, nothing could be done to save the boy and he passed away shortly after arriving at hospital."

Caroline Hoddinott, head teacher at Haybridge High School, said: "Luke was a much-loved son, grandson, friend and student and we will miss him very much.

"Our focus now is to help family, friends and our whole community through this difficult time."

Tributes have also been paid to the 15-year-old on social network sites Facebook and Twitter.

One former coach described him as "a cracking lad", who "never failed to make me laugh".

## HEADSCARVES FOR WOMEN'S GAMES NEAR APPROVAL

Football's international rules board have unanimously supported a proposal to reverse a 2007 decision that barred women from playing with headscarves.

The 2007 decision was based on safety concerns. At a meeting of the International Football Association Board in Bagshot, England, Prince Ali of Jordan, a member of the executive committee of FIFA, presented a hijab with Velcro fasteners made by the Dutch company Capsters.

In a statement released by FIFA, soccer's world governing body, the board said it "agreed to the proposal in principle that headscarves be allowed, pending an accelerated review of health and safety issues." A final endorsement is to be made at the board's special meeting on July 2.

Upon hearing the news, Reema Ramounieh, 28, a goalkeeper for Jordan's national team who was barred from participating in the team's first Olympic qualifying match last year, said: "We're really happy, you know. We were thinking that we wouldn't be playing anymore. What I'm feeling I can't even express now."

The rules board also assessed the test results from eight goal-line technology systems. Two, Hawk-Eye and GoalRef, received "very positive" scores. A final round of testing will be done before a vote in July. One could be in place for the 2014 World Cup.

## HOCKEY PLAYER DIES AFTER BEING HIT BY BALL

An elite 24-year-old hockey player in Perth has died after a ball deflected off a stick and hit her on the head midway through the first half of the game.

Elizabeth Watkins was playing alongside her sister at Perth Hockey Stadium on 6th May in a State League game between the North Coast Raiders and the Victoria Park Panthers when she collapsed unconscious. She was then revived but died on her way to hospital.

Hockey Australia's Mark Anderson has described her death as a terrible accident.

"Yesterday was just a very sad and tragic day for our sport," he said.

"It appears like it was just a terrible accident that occurred and tragic consequences and very much our thoughts are with the family at this stage as they work through an extremely difficult and sad situation."

The Australian hockey team, the Kookaburras, wore black arm bands during an international match in London in honour of Ms Watkins.

## SCHOOLGIRL SUED OVER TENNIS INCIDENT

A 13-YEAR-OLD schoolgirl is being sued by a classmate over a tennis court mishap at one of Queensland's top private schools.

The legal claim, over a bruised eye, has raised concerns that "litigation-crazy" parents could threaten the future of

school sport by forcing up insurance costs.

It may also force parents to take out third-party accident insurance for their children.

Several Queensland schools have

already banned activities including tiggly, red rover and cartwheels because of injury fears.

Cardiologist Guy Wright-Smith said he was "gobsmacked" to receive the damages claim, addressed to his 13-year-old daughter Julia.

# Shorts

## TWENTY20 CRICKET BANNED FROM MELBOURNE PARKS

There has been an outcry following the decision by Boroondara Council in Victoria, Australia to ban the playing of Twenty20 cricket in parks.

It is believed a car window shattered by a soaring ball prompted the ban.

Disappointed cricketers say the decision is one of the most bizarre enforced on sports clubs in Victoria.

"It's just a stupid situation," Burwood Cricket Club president Tony Canterbury said.

"You either ban the whole lot or you live with the risk.

"The main frustration is that we can play a one-day game on a ground but we can't play a Twenty20. Players can still hit a six."

But Boroondara said a crackdown was necessary because many of its grounds were too small or too close to public areas.

"There are about 40 grounds at which we currently don't allow Twenty20 cricket," community development director Jacqui Briggs said.

"We have restricted Twenty20 cricket on some grounds due to the potential risks ... such as the ground being too small, too close to roads or playgrounds, houses or paths."

Reviews had begun on risk control measures, including additional fencing or moving pathways, so bans could be lifted.

## ANOTHER SURF LIFE SAVING DEATH RAISES QUESTIONS

SURF Live Saving Australia has been asked to explain why it did not heed a coroner's warning to make competitors wear inflatable safety vests after the death of 14-year-old Matthew Barclay.

Matthew came off his board during an under-15s competition at Kurrawa beach on the Gold Coast in March and is the third teenager to die at the national championships since 1996.

Ironman Saxon Bird drowned in wild seas at the 2010 event and in 1996 teenage boat rower Robert Gatenby drowned at the same beach in rough surf.

The lawyer for Bird's family, Christopher Branson, QC called for a royal commission into the running of the Australian Surf Life Saving Championships on the Gold Coast.

His call came after Surf Life Saving Australia (SLSA) was criticised for not heeding the coroner's recommendation to make inflatable surf vests - still being trialled - mandatory at surf competitions.

Mr Branson said officials had "learned nothing" from the previous deaths.

However SLSA chief executive Brett Williamson said a coroner's recommendation that helmets and flotation vests be given to competitors is expected to come into place next season.

"I'd anticipate something would be in place by next year," Mr Williamson said.

"It's been optional and ... there's more and more people using various designs of flotation vests and more people choosing to use helmets."

He said a range of cultural issues would have to be addressed before vests and helmets were made compulsory and a range of inflation vests had been submitted to SLSA for evaluation.

## RACE ATTENDANCES HIT ALL-TIME HIGH IN UK

UK Racecourse attendances grew for the third year running, reaching an all-time high of 6.15 million adult visitors in 2011, according to trade body - the Racecourse Association.

The latest figures were reportedly helped by good weather and more aggressive promotion of the sport by racecourses, along with other initiatives designed to take racing to a broader audience.

In April 2011, 26 racecourses participated in a 'try racing

for free' offer organised by Racing for Change, an industry promotional body. The activity resulted in an additional 63,000 adults through the turnstiles, many of whom were new customers or lapsed race goers.

The sport's growing popularity on the track was also been mirrored in TV viewing figures with both Channel 4 and the BBC reporting increases in their audience numbers. 9 million viewers saw the 2011 Grand National, an increase of one million on the previous year.

# BREAKAWAY

FROM THE CROWDS, NOT THE PELOTON

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