

Issue 4

touchline

The journal of sport & risk with an international perspective



**Focus on Singapore:
Sports Hub of the Future**

Technology - moving the goalposts too far?

India - Sleeping Giant of Sport?

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Underwriting Agency Council congratulates award winner Sportscover

Sportscover Australia (SCA) has been congratulated by Underwriting Agency Council of Australia ("UAC") Chairman Martin McAvenna on winning the first 'Underwriting Agency of the Year' award at the 2009 Australia and New Zealand Insurance Industry awards. The category was sponsored by Lloyd's.

The judging panel decided Sportscover was the top agency operating in Australia and/or New Zealand and had demonstrated technical skills, underwriting results and outstanding client service that enhanced its market share and the reputation of the agency insurance distribution model.

Sportscover Australia is a specialist sports and leisure underwriting agency, established by former UAC board member Peter Nash in 1986. Today, Sportscover has developed into a world renowned specialist that boasts millions of clients spanning 15 countries and four continents.

It has been a particularly rewarding 3 years for the Sportscover group. During a period where many companies have struggled, Sportscover has set up a Lloyd's syndicate, its own Lloyd's managing agency (Sportscover Underwriting Ltd) and has now won the inaugural Underwriting Agency of the Year award.

SCA CEO Murray Anderson was delighted to have won the prestigious award and shared his enthusiasm for its implications.

"It's a fantastic award to win, we're all very proud of the efforts of the team in Australia. It's always rewarding to get the recognition of your peers and this award shows we have found a good niche within the market."

Murray (*pictured below collecting the award*) was quick to stress that the focus has to be on development, "We mustn't rest on our laurels. The pressure is on for us to be on the podium again next year. We need to keep up product development and remain focused on helping the client. We're proud to be able to provide the specifically tailored products that they need."

Over 800 people attended the awards ceremony in Sydney and in the buzz of the moment, Murray admits he can't remember much of his acceptance speech.

"It is only now a couple of days later that I'm getting flashbacks of what happened, it went so fast, we're obviously delighted. This represents the pinnacle for Sportscover Australia so far and I'm sure the guys in the office will enjoy this as much as I am."

However, despite the importance and gratification of winning such an award, Murray feels the establishment of Sportscover Syndicate 3334 at Lloyd's and subsequently the managing agent take pride of place for the wider Sportscover group in the past 18 months.

Group Chairman, Peter Nash agreed, "Establishing the syndicate and managing agent has just provided us with so many more options. We now have the possibility of trading in over 70 countries around the world, and we can, over time and with Lloyd's agreement, enter new lines of business and set up new syndicates. The sky is the limit."

"The Lloyd's brand is so powerful and helps us when we enter new markets. It has immediate credibility and security to match," Peter added.



**Sportscover Australia Pty Ltd
Underwriting Agency of the Year 2009**

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Is sport bad for your health?



Steve Boucher
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Very few things in life can generate such emotion and passion as sport. Whether as spectator or participant, sport seems to bring out the very best, and sometimes the worst, in people. Most of us will have experienced the sheer, unbridled joy, the exhilaration and the emotion that comes with seeing our team or country win a major trophy or event.

At a recent presentation I showed a video tape that had been recorded by someone in the crowd when John Aloisi scored the decisive penalty which took Australia through to the World Cup finals in 2006. As the ball hit the back of the net, the crowd went wild - screaming, hugging each other, some laughing, others crying with emotion. There was pandemonium. Similar scenes were witnessed recently in London when England regained the Ashes from Australia in the fifth test, and it is the same for any major event, whether it is winning the cup or league or grand final, or even, sometimes, avoiding relegation!

But of course for every winner, there are also losers. They will be experiencing the opposite emotions. The positive and negative impact of winning and losing at sport can have a dramatic effect on all aspects of life. For example, it has been calculated that the economic stimulus to a country winning the World Cup is significant.

However, such emotion can have dire consequences. A study published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* looked at the incidence of cardiac events in Germany during the 2006 World Cup and found that spectators were almost four times as likely to suffer cardiac events when their team played, and particularly, when they played very close, high-stakes matches. During the knock-out matches where Germany defeated Argentina in a penalty shoot-out and

when Germany lost to Italy in the semi-final more than 60 cardiac events per day were reported, compared to the average of about 15 per day.

Does that mean that sport is bad for your health?

The overall highly positive health effects of participating in sport, despite the higher risk of injury, are medically proven. But what about the passive impact of sport? In our feature article, Mr Oon Jin Teik, CEO of the Singapore Sports Council emphasises the positive effects that sport brings to a country. He says that the role of the SSC is primarily focused on promoting sport internally to Singaporeans because of the tremendous benefits that sport brings by improving health, developing community, generating a sense of national pride, stimulating the economy and promoting International friendship.

Most governments appear to agree by ensuring that sport is given a prominent place in the political agenda. Bidding and winning hosting rights to major events can have a remarkably positive effect on the sentiment shown towards a government.

That being the case, given that England is due to host some of the premier sporting events over the next ten years (the Olympics in 2012, the Rugby League World Cup in 2013, the Rugby World Cup in 2015 and possibly the World Cup in 2018) perhaps Prime Minister Gordon Brown's prospects of re-election are not as bleak as they first appear!

September 2009

Is Technology Moving The GOALPOSTS Too Far?

There once was a time when the decision of the referee or umpire in sport was unquestionable – at least by the players. Even if the partisan crowd thought that they could do a better job, the referee's decision was final on the pitch of play. Now in many sports the traditional view about the final authority of the referee appears to be changing.

Three sports that have recently highlighted the changing interaction between technology and sport are cricket, formula 1 and tennis.

Cricket, as the Ashes series has recently demonstrated, boasts 'hotspot' replays to sit along-side 'Hawk-eye', television replays and the 'Snick-o-meter'. Similarly, the Formula 1 authorities are constantly tweaking the technical limits and allowances to keep team mechanics in check, while Wimbledon showcased the referral system with Hawk-eye.

Just how much of a say is technology having on modern sport, its rules and how they are officiated? And to what level of influence is this scientific aid acceptable?

Well to look at some examples of sports influenced by technology, we can differentiate between two different approaches. Help for the officials and help for the sportsman.

Aiding the officials may, on the face of it, be the easiest to justify. Accuracy of decisions can surely only benefit the game and appease the supporters who suffer bouts of apoplectic disbelief at blatantly erroneous decisions by officials every week (courtesy of several slow motion replays, from four angles in the comfort of their armchair).

This has led to Hawk-eye; perhaps the most successful line-calling technology widely accepted in modern sport. Utilised in cricket to determine the path of the cricket ball in LBW appeals, if only for the viewers' piece of mind rather than the umpires, Hawk-eye has become second nature in cricket.

Even more so in Tennis where line calls are now decided by officials in conjunction with Hawk-eye, and even relied upon for referrals of human calls.

There is also talk about bringing in hawk-eye to adjudge goal line disputes in football, and the system is currently being reviewed by FIFA.

Another norm these days is the instant television replay. Most sports have introduced this technology with positive results, including cricket for run outs, catches, boundaries and stumpings, rugby for grounding of the ball and offsidess, baseball for home runs, basketball for 'buzzer beaters', ice hockey for goal line disputes, various different uses in American football and so on.

The notable exception is football. Why are the powers that be in football so afraid of implementing video replays? Is it the worry that the game will be slowed down? If the technology was used merely for goal line disputes there would be no greater delay than say, the taking of a throw-in.

Maybe they wish to stand by the truism of "what goes around comes around"? This is after all part of the fun of football, its

unpredictability and talking points. This could be acceptable if everyman and his dog didn't harp on about the injustices so vehemently. Or is it that they are concerned about undermining the authority of the referee?

Television referees in Rugby League are an example of how the system should work; the anonymous television referee working to empower the on-field referee.

Replays are also employed in racing, such as photo finishes in horse racing and athletics, and also in motor racing such as NASCAR. Television replays are also used in snooker in order to rearrange the table to its exact state prior to a shot.

All of these instances arguably improve the running of the sport, helping to avoid controversy and ambiguity. So it is unclear why some sports have embraced this new technology to improve the decision-making process whilst others still oppose it.

The other variety of technological help is that aimed directly or indirectly at the sportsmen themselves. This comes in different forms from drugs to equipment.

While performance enhancing drugs are outlawed in sport, there is widespread use of medicine, pain relief and isotonic drinks to help condition the human body to push it beyond its natural capabilities.


With regards equipment enhancements, you only have to look at how world records have tumbled over the years courtesy of improved technology. For example, the poles used in Pole vaulting were originally wooden, followed by bamboo, steel then aluminium, but it was the introduction of glass fibre-based composites in the 1960s which brought a step change in records.

The most recent debate has surrounded the use of high tech streamlined, neoprene all body swimming suits that not only reduce drag but are argued to aid the body's fight against fatigue.

The 1978 Swedish Grand Prix demonstrates technology gone too far. The race was won by the Brabham "fan car", which utilised a fan in order to create suction and downforce and a winning margin of over 30 seconds... which was ultimately deemed illegal in design. A similar debate rages around the introduction of diffusers on current F1 cars.

On another slightly more light-hearted note, it was interesting to see Manchester United goal keeper Ben Foster using a video Ipad before the penalty shoot-out against Tottenham Hotspur in last year's Carling Cup final to see where the opposition were most likely to place their shots.

Considering football has consistently rejected video replays, the sport utilises many advanced sciences to improve the performance of players, such as Pro-zone which analyses player movement, contribution and work rate in depth over every blade of grass. There is also the use of specialist training equipment such as altitude chambers in order to improve fitness.

In American football, players now have radio transmitters 

in their helmets in order to receive on field instructions from the coach. In 2008, the 56th NHL all-star game drew indignation from fans as goaltender Rick DiPietro had a Bluetooth headset fitted into his mask so the commentators could interview him live on air during a game. 10 seconds into the game commentators started asking questions, and after 12 seconds the first puck flew past DiPietro into his net!

So where does the future lie? Where do we draw the line where technology interferes with natural human ability? Part of the appeal of sport is the ability for the general public to relate to professionals in the activities they perform, and can actively participate in the sport themselves.

However this will not be the case when a man is able perform past the limits of normal humans.

There are rumours about the American body Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency developing pain vaccines, effectively allowing an athlete to play through injuries feeling no pain. There are also stories about studying the biology of the human respiratory system to improve oxygen efficiency, aiming to allow soldiers (in this case) and potentially athletes to run marathons on only several breaths. Or how about exoskeletons that can make a 36kg load feel 80% lighter?

At what point do the little 'boosts' for athletes become more of a talking point than the sport itself? The future may well come down the present argument over Formula 1, whether the star of the sport is the human or the car.

Article by Chris Hootton

Participants in extreme sports not that extreme

A recent study found that while the image of people who partake in extreme sports is that of risk-takers and adrenaline junkies, the opposite was true.

Researchers from the Queensland University of Technology in Australia found that most extreme sportspeople were very cautious.

Eric Brymer, a lecturer from the School of Human Movement Studies in the Faculty of Health, has been researching whether the element of risk was an important factor for participants in "extreme" sports such as waterfall kayakers, mountain climbers, big wave surfers and B.A.S.E. jumpers. "I wanted to do this research because in my masters studies I was hearing about sensation seeking, risk-taking behaviour in extreme sports people, and it just didn't match what I knew from my background in kayaking and canoeing," he said. "The people I knew were very careful, disciplined, determined and focussed, not at all reckless or risk-taking; for some people to get to a certain level of a sport, it takes 15 years dedicated training, which is not something you would associate with a thrill-seeker."

Brymer conducted interviews with extreme sportspeople aged from 30 to 73, to determine their feelings when they did the activity and their motivations.

"What I found was that these people have a real love for these activities, and talk about a realisation about the power of nature, a sense of humility, and a real sense of peace," he said. "They also said they felt a sense of relaxation and freedom, not in the socio-cultural sense but in the sense that they were so focussed and aware, it was like clearing the mind in meditation."



RISK MANAGEMENT FOCUS:

Adventure sports in Switzerland safer 10 years after canyoning tragedy

A decade after 21 people died while on a canyoning trip in Switzerland, experts say tougher safety measures have made adventure sports less dangerous.

Despite the introduction of a set of safety standards implemented under the Safety in Adventures scheme following the tragedy, an element of risk still remains. In July two women were killed in a white water rafting accident near Wilderswil, in the Bernese Oberland. They were thrown from their raft, along with five other passengers and one guide, as it capsized in rapids.

Ten years earlier, 18 tourists and three guides drowned in a flash flood while canyoning in Saxetenbach, Switzerland. Managers of the company which organised the trip were later found guilty of negligent manslaughter. This tragedy led to Switzerland bringing in the Safety in Adventures measures. They require outdoor sports companies to have well-trained staff, quality equipment and undergo a series of checks each year.

"In this sense, yes, the certification is a guarantee of quality that seems sufficient to us," said Magali Dubois, spokeswoman for the Swiss Council for Accident

Prevention. "Nevertheless it does not prevent all risk, especially in activities that are intrinsically potentially dangerous."

The firm in charge of the latest fatal trip bore the Safety in Adventures label. "I think in general if you want to do adventure sports like that you have to know that there is a risk," Hans Allemann of the Swiss Outdoor Association said. "But statistically we say the risk in adventure sports, rafting and canyoning, is more or less around the same as driving a car."

"There have been big changes in recent years. For example there are Swiss-wide training courses and also exams for guides for canyoning and rafting. There are lots of checks of how companies work, how employees are trained, if insurance is correct."

The Swiss Council for Accident Prevention also attributes the relatively low number of deaths in recent years – just five canyoning fatalities between 2000 and May 2009 – to the higher standards. In comparison, there are around 30 swimming related deaths in pools and lakes each year.

Paintball verdict has implications for leisure operators

A court case resulting from an accident at a Scottish paintball centre has implications across the world according to risk management expert Steve Dymond.

Calvin Blyth damaged the sight of a colleague while cleaning paintball guns when he fired a gun he thought was empty at colleague Alan Weir's face. As a result of this "moment of madness" Blyth was found guilty of culpable and reckless conduct and given 150 hours community service at Edinburgh Sheriff Court. The incident occurred at the Ape Paintball Centre in Edinburgh, in September 2008. Blyth and Weir were working without protective masks cleaning and carrying out safety checks on guns. Blyth picked up a weapon he believed was empty and fired it towards Mr Weir, knocking him to the ground.

Steve Dymond of Worldwide Sports Insurance (WWSI) believes that this incident highlights an important point for amusement and leisure operators. "We find that a lot of the risk management is geared towards the safety of the public. However, businesses really must focus just as much on training and safety of staff internally", he said.

"Something like this could easily happen anywhere in the world and it wouldn't be far-fetched for there to be a lawsuit alleging that the business hadn't provided the right safety training which ultimately led to this event."

Dymond adds that paintball operators should "review their current risk management programmes or get their insurance broker to assist them in doing so. It doesn't take a lot of effort and can be an invaluable process."

Uncertain times make risk assessment in sport paramount

The economic downturn and its ensuing financial uncertainty have made risk management in sport an essential part of an event's organisation process according to Steve Griffiths, the Head of Technical Services at the International Rugby Board (IRB).

Budget cuts have forced corporations to rethink their support of sporting events which has had a negative effect on sport globally. Golf already has had a few tournaments cancelled. Counter to this rising uncertainty, which may force organisers to cancel, it is important for both business and sport to manage risk efficiently.

"I think risk management is essential and needs to be looked at no matter what the business whether something has a sport element to it or not," said Griffiths.

"Sporting events have huge investment nowadays and with the kind of economic instability the world is experiencing right now, risk management should be an important part of every event," said Griffiths, who presided over The World Academy of Sport's first executive workshop in Dubai.

Organisers need to assess the risks involved in staging an event to protect themselves.



First Asian Youth Games A Huge Success

The first ever Asian Youth Games (AYG) was officially launched by Singapore Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong on Monday 29 June 2009 under the slogan "Asia's Youth, Our future". Some 7,000 spectators, athletes, and officials attended the two-hour gala ceremony at the Singapore Indoor Stadium.

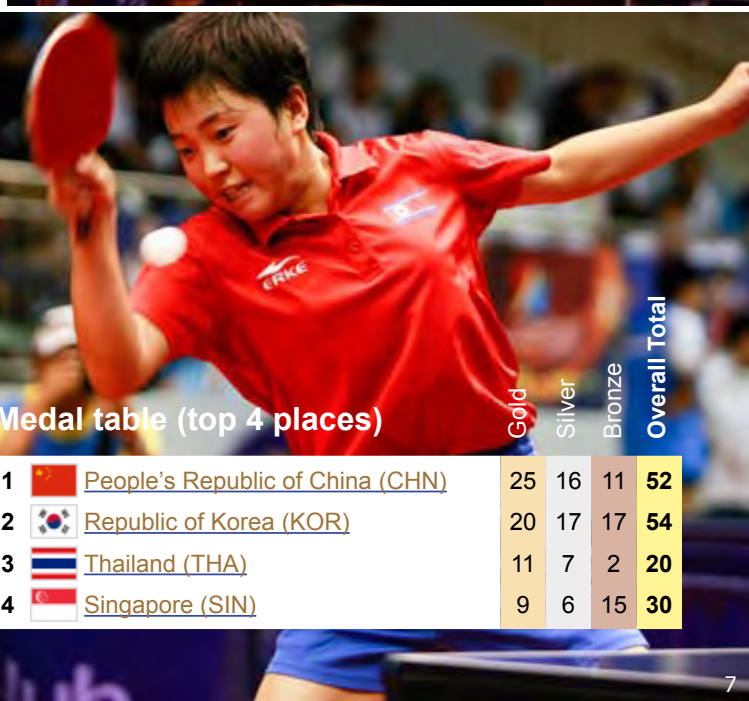
The games, which were originally proposed in Singapore's candidature document for the inaugural 2010 Youth Olympic Games, ran to 7 July and drew some 3,600 athletes aged between 14 and 17 plus 800 officials from the 205 National Olympic Committees (NOCs), along with about 800 media representatives, 20,000 local and international volunteers, plus over 500,000 spectators.

Athletes from 45 countries took part in the 90 events covering Aquatics (swimming and diving), Athletics, Bowling, Basketball, Beach Volleyball, Football, Shooting and Table-Tennis.

Some of the highlights included swimmer Chang Gyu Cheol of South Korea who won four gold medals and the Games Most Valuable Male Player Award, Singapore's female swimming champion Quah Ting Wen who also won four golds, and Footballer Suh Myeong Won who won the gold medal with South Korea with eight wins in eight games. Suh is currently at English Premier League side Portsmouth trying to replicate the success of his countryman, Manchester United's Park Ji Sung.

China made a clean sweep of the table-tennis gold medals with 14 year old Yin Hang winning 3 in the singles and team events. China also finished top of the medals table with 25 gold medals and 52 medals overall. South Korea finished second followed by Thailand, but Singapore punched well above its weight by finishing fourth with 9 gold medals but third in terms of total medals won with 30. Given the size of the country and the population, this was a remarkable achievement and perhaps demonstrates the success of the policies being pursued through the Singapore Sports Council (see Feature article on pages 12-13).

Next year, Singapore plays host to the first Youth Olympic Games which run from 14th to 26th August 2010.



Medal table (top 4 places)

		Gold	Silver	Bronze	Overall Total
1	People's Republic of China (CHN)	25	16	11	52
2	Republic of Korea (KOR)	20	17	17	54
3	Thailand (THA)	11	7	2	20
4	Singapore (SIN)	9	6	15	30

IOC announces new sports for 2016 Olympics



Golf and rugby sevens have been recommended for inclusion in the 2016 Olympics after the International Olympic Committee's Executive Board voted for their addition to the Olympic programme during a meeting held in Berlin on 13 and 14 August.

The federations of the seven sports competing for two spots in the 2016 Olympics made their presentations to the IOC. Representatives from the governing bodies for baseball, softball, roller sports, karate and squash along with golf and rugby sevens made a pitch to the IOC. Each federation was given 45 minutes to present their case to the IOC Commission followed by a question and answer session.

The recommendation must be rubber-stamped by a full meeting of the IOC congress in Copenhagen in October.

Golf was played at the Paris Games in 1900 and four years later in St Louis, but has never returned to the Olympic agenda.

The proposed format would be a 72-hole strokeplay competition for men and women, with 60 players in each field. The world's top 15 players would qualify automatically, and all major professional tours would alter tournament schedules to avoid a clash with the Olympics.

IOC president Jacques Rogge said winning an Olympic gold medal would remain one of the main ambitions for top golfers, despite the traditional lure of the four major championships - the Masters, the Open, the US Open and the USPGA.

Rogge said: 'This is the young generation that will be at its peak in 2016. The same question was raised time and time again when tennis and ice-hockey were introduced.

'Ask Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer, ask

the NHL players, ask the NBA basketball players. They all want to go to the games - they are absolutely not concerned about that.'

Fears that a number of the sport's top players would not compete in the Games have proved unfounded with world number one Tiger Woods leading the way in stating his intention to take part. Tiger Woods was among a raft of players who had written to the IOC giving their support to golf's inclusion as an Olympic sport. Padraig Harrington and Colin Montgomerie were among 18 players who had all sent letters of support to IOC members from their countries.

Rugby union, which was played in four different Olympics between 1900 and 1924 in the full 15-a-side format, proposed the seven-a-side version for both men and women.

The International Rugby Board would scrap its Sevens World Cup to ensure the Olympics is the sport's top event. Sevens rugby is already part of the Commonwealth Games.

The 15-member board selected the proposed sports for 2016 by secret ballot over several rounds, with the sport receiving the fewest votes eliminated each time. Rugby was the clear winner overall, getting seven votes in the first round and a majority of nine in the second. In a separate ensuing vote, golf needed four rounds to get through.

Karate actually led the first round with five votes, with golf getting three. Golf then got six votes in the second, seven in the third and nine in the fourth.

The four cities bidding to host the 2016 Games, Chicago, Madrid, Rio de Janeiro and Tokyo, have also made their presentations to IOC members.



Nancy Au, Pearson Dunn Insurance Inc.

Nancy Au is the Corporate Sales Manager, Sports and Recreation at Pearson Dunn Insurance Inc. in Hamilton.

In addition to her significant business accomplishments and volunteer work, Nancy has two young children, participates in a curling league with her husband and recently completed a half marathon, proving herself a genuine super woman.

Nancy paused for a moment to share her thoughts with Touchline.

Can you describe your pathway into the insurance broking business?

Like many people I know I ended up in the insurance industry by accident. I had a friend who was working with insurance company Dominion of Canada. She convinced me to meet with the branch manager. The rest is history. I've worked in the insurance industry since 1989. I started with various roles at insurance companies including being a branch personal lines manager with Economical Insurance Group and then in their head office working on strategic projects. In 2003 I was looking for a new challenge that would incorporate my personal interests into my professional life. My personal passions are sports and volunteering in the community. I joined Pearson Dunn as an account manager in what was then called our Special Lines Unit.

What are your particular areas of interest or specialty in the insurance business?

I work in two areas: sports and the not-for-profit social sector. I am the manager of our Sports and Recreation Unit. We have a specialised team which provides insurance to groups ranging from small local teams up to provincial and national sports organisations. We provide liability, accident, property and other coverage. Much of the work we do with our sports clients is around safety within the sports environment. The more we can do to keep people safe when they are playing sports the better.

I also work with clients in our Corporate Unit. Some of my clients are hospitals, school boards, long-term-care facilities, and social service providers. Besides providing insurance to these clients, Pearson Dunn also encourages all staff to volunteer in the community. Each staff member has one volunteer day a year where they can volunteer in the community for any charity. Of course, many of us spend many hours/days volunteering during the year, especially for our clients.

What are the professional accomplishments you are most proud of in the last few years?

At the 2008 Olympics in Beijing, Canada won 18 medals. We insured 11 of the 18 medalists!

What are the best aspects of your current job?

The people. I work with a wonderful group of people and we have the best clients in the world. We know that we are able to make a difference in the sectors in which we focus.

What do you feel are important challenges for the industry at the moment?

Finding markets for our higher risk sports clients.

What are your tips for success in the insurance industry?

Education is the key to success. So many things change in this industry that you need to continually educate yourself on what is happening.

What have you enjoyed most about working with Sutton Sportscover?

Sportscover is a great sports insurance market. We have been able to successfully place business with them since they started dealing in Canada. I enjoy being able to stay on top of the international sports perspective by talking with their underwriters in other parts of the world.

Working in the sports insurance industry, do you find time to participate in sport yourself?

On a regular basis I curl with my husband in a league. I golf, swim every day in the summer, run, skate, and play baseball. I LOVE to dragonboat. For five years Pearson Dunn had its own team. What a great team sport! Sports have been a big part of my life since I was a kid. I expect I will always play sports. I also follow my kids' sports. They each play soccer in a league in the summer. In winter Lucas (7) plays hockey and Megan (8) figure skates. I also follow the sport organisations that we insure. Recently I attended the Canadian Championships for gymnastics. What incredible athletes!

What are some of your personal accomplishments that you are most proud of in the last few years?

I completed a half-marathon in May 2008. Running is great. Life is hectic with a career, husband, two kids and volunteering. Running gives me the stress release and time to myself that I need.

What do you regard as your personal strengths?

I am always willing to try something new! Relationships with my team at work and with clients.



PROFILE

SPORTSCOVER BROKER

on track

QUICK NEWS TO KEEP YOU IN THE FAST LANE

English Premier League revenues up as debt for big clubs increases

The revenue accrued by the 20 Premier League clubs jumped by 26% to close to £2bn in the 2007/08 season according to the latest Annual Review of Football Finance by accountants Deloitte.

Revenues for the season were £1.93bn, up from £1.5bn a year earlier. 11 of the 20 top league clubs made an operating profit in 2007/08, up from 8 a year before.

However Premier League salary costs topped £1bn for the first time, and the clubs' total net debt was £3.1bn. Two-thirds of the debt was carried by the big four of Manchester United, Liverpool, Chelsea and Arsenal.

The strong revenue growth outstripped the continuing rise in salary costs, which increased by 23% to £1.2bn, the biggest annual increase in absolute terms recorded by the Premier League.

Premier League Clubs Debt – Top Five

Chelsea - £711m
Manchester Utd - £649m
Arsenal - £318m
Liverpool - £300m
Newcastle Utd - £245m
(Figures are net debt at end of 2007/08 season)

Premier League Wage Bills – Top Five

Chelsea - £172.1m (£132.9m)
Manchester Utd - £121.1m (£92.3m)
Arsenal - £101.3m (£89.7m)
Liverpool - £90.4m (£77.6m)
Newcastle Utd - £74.6m (£56.7m)
(2006/07 wages in brackets)

Source: Deloitte

Triathlons gaining in popularity, but fraught with danger?

Triathlon is growing in popularity, but recent reports question the sport's safety.

The Daily Telegraph in Australia recently claimed that 'Triathlons are twice as dangerous as marathons'.

American studies have suggested it is the first segment of the triathlon that is most fraught with danger. Research into 14 deaths in triathlons in America showed that 13 of those occurred during the first portion of the swim phase.

Doctors claim the stress of jumping into cold water under competitive conditions could cause vulnerable people to hyperventilate or suffer a heart attack. But there are those that argue that this makes triathlons the trigger, rather than the cause. Cold water temperatures and choppy conditions pose problems for the swim segment. At the World Triathlon Championships in Vancouver, Canada the event was switched to a duathlon (run, bike, run) due to the water conditions. This was not well received by many participants who were disappointed with the decision.

Swimming in waters below 12 degrees is prohibited, while triathletes are not allowed to wear wetsuits if the water temperature is above 22 degrees. Between 14 and 22 degrees it is up to the competitor whether or not they wear a wetsuit.

Four bids in frame to host Euro 2016



France, Italy, and Turkey have informed UEFA they wish to submit a single bid to host the UEFA European Football Championship in 2016, while a joint bid will be presented by Norway and Sweden.

The candidates will have to present their campaigns to UEFA by 15th February 2010. The final decision will be taken by the UEFA Executive Committee on or about 27th May 2010.

The European Championship in 2012 is being jointly hosted by Poland and Ukraine.

Snooker launch new Super6s format

Snooker has launched a new short form of the game, entitled Super6s, in a bid to open the sport up to new audiences in a similar fashion to the introduction of Twenty20 cricket. The new format was launched at the World Championship earlier this year. Each frame has the same number of colours but only six red balls.

Tony Knowles won the inaugural snooker 'Super 6s' tournament against 13-year-old Ross Muir with the aid of a lucky shot on the brown.

The sport has come under attack in recent years with players saying snooker was "dying" and demanding the governing body do more to attract new audiences and improve tournaments. Two weeks ago, World Snooker chairman Sir Rodney Walker hailed the appeal of Twenty20 saying: "It has brought in a whole new audience so what we have in mind we think would be appealing to a younger audience. As an observer of snooker you cannot churn out the same diet year after year."



on track

CONTINUED...

Women's boxing wins 2012 approval

The International Olympic Committee voted to include women's boxing in the London 2012 programme. Three women's weight classes will be added to the Olympic programme for 2012 Games in London, with one of the 11 men's classes dropped to make room. Women will fight at flyweight (48-51kg), lightweight (56-60kg) and middleweight (69-75kg).



'Women's boxing has come on a tremendous amount in the last five years and it was time to include them,' said IOC president Jacques Rogge.

Fears were that the sport was not competitive in enough countries, which could lead to potentially dangerous mismatches. However participation has since boomed with 120 international federations having female boxers. There are now nearly 600 registered female boxers in England, up from 50 in 2005.

FINA to ban new swimsuits from January

World swimming governing body FINA has announced that the controversial performance enhancing, non-textile swimsuits will be banned from 1st January 2010.

Twenty-nine world records were set in the first five days of the FINA World Championships in Rome this year. Only two of the current world records, both men's and women's, were set before the introduction of polyurethane suits in 2008. The return to common textile suits would mean world records would be almost impossible to better in the short term.

Since the introduction of the Speedo LZR swim suit 135 long and short course world records have been broken.



Aussie Rules footy major cause of head injuries in school-age children

Recent research from the Murdoch Children's Research Institute in Victoria, Australia found that football was a major cause of head injuries in school-age children.

While falls, sports and motor vehicle accidents were the main causes of head injuries, 30% occurred playing Australian Rules Football. Though most of the head injuries were mild, 26 of the children were admitted to intensive care and two died.

The researchers surveyed 1,115 children up to age 16 who had been admitted to the Royal Children's Hospital with head injuries over a 12-month period and it was found that 90% were classified as mild, 8% as moderate and 3% as severe and males and children under 3 years had the higher attendance rates. Over 50% of the injuries happened in the home and most injuries to infants were due to falls from beds, sofas, prams, change tables, stairs and high chairs and the injury level fell as the children got older.

School, sports venues and playgrounds were also found to be dangerous areas and while boys and girls under two were found to be equally at risk, in the older groups males dominated and for school-age children, sports were a major cause of head injuries, with almost a third due to football.

The researchers have called for better public education and say many causes of head injuries appear preventable, in particular, falls from heights in infants and injuries in sport.



Singapore: Sports Hub of the Future

Singapore has been a highly successful commercial and financial centre for many years, but now it also has big ideas to be a major sports hub for Asia and beyond. Touchline met up with Singapore Sports Council Chief Executive and former Olympian, Mr Oon Jin Teik at the SportAccord convention in Denver in March this year to ask him more about Singapore's plans to become a major sports hub of the future.

How does a nation of less than 5 million people and ranked 192nd out of 234 countries in size manage to win the right to stage the inaugural Youth Olympic Games, the first Formula 1 Grand Prix night race and numerous other prestigious events? Mr Oon, Chief Executive Officer of the Singapore Sports Council (SSC) suggests it is a combination of macro and micro attributes that makes Singapore an ideal location for sporting events.

From a macro perspective he cites Singapore's good geographical position in a continent where sport is booming (according to one global study the total value of the Asia Pacific sports market should reach US \$17 billion by 2011), the financial stability, excellent infrastructure and communications of the country and the willingness of the government to support this drive. Add to these the excellent training facilities which were used by 32 countries in the run up to the Beijing Olympics, the wealth of doctors, physiotherapists and the ordered and structured approach to planning and you can see why the country is becoming a major venue for the top sporting events.

Other major events that Singapore has already lined up or is targeting are the 1st Asian Youth Games and Men's Junior Hockey World Cup both this year, Rugby World 7's and the World Netball Championships in 2011.

So what are Singapore's motives in bidding for these events? Mr Oon points out that, "If showcasing to the world is the only objective then it becomes a cost, whereas if you are able to create mini ecosystems through these events and construct and upgrade facilities for the future, you build a legacy."

Sports Hub development

There is no doubt that Singapore is building for the future. Singapore Sports Hub, a Sing\$1.87 billion (net present value) public-private partnership

development project that will be developed over 25 years, is described by Mr Oon as a "mega eco system" on its own. It will be Singapore's premier land and sea sports, entertainment and lifestyle hub. The SSC website describes it as "a unique cluster development of world-class sports facilities within the city, it will play a critical role in accelerating the development of sports industry, excellence and participation and take sports to the next level in Singapore."

Sports Hub has three main objectives. It will draw international events to its world-class facilities and offer events management enterprises some of the largest potential crowds ever to assemble in Singapore. Secondly, it will encourage large numbers of people to adopt and pursue sports and make sport part of their life. Thirdly, it will offer exceptional opportunities for sports-related organisations to bring their message to a large audience.

The Sports Hub will include the following facilities:

- A new 55,000-capacity National Stadium with a retractable roof;
- A 6,000-capacity indoor Aquatic Centre that meets world tournament standards;
- A 3,000-capacity multi-purpose arena which will be scalable and flexible in layout;
- 41,000 sq m of commercial space
- A Water Sports Centre
- The existing 12,000-capacity Singapore Indoor Stadium; and
- Supporting leisure and commercial developments

Increasing participation is the goal

But the role of the SSC is not only about attracting major events to Singapore, but also, and primarily, is focused on promoting sport internally to Singaporeans. Formed in 1973, the SSC's vision is to create a



Singapore where sport is a way of life and it has made great strides in the past five years in transforming the way Singaporeans view and participate in sports. The stated core principles for sport in Singapore are:

- Developing resilient & healthy Singaporeans
- Bringing a multi-racial society together
- Enhancing national pride
- Contributing to a vibrant society and economy
- Strengthening friendships with other nations

SSC's strategy has been carefully built on three equally important thrusts. Mr Oon summarises these as "increasing participation, promoting excellence and encouraging industry development."

Clearly an area of great personal satisfaction, he speaks of how weekly participation in sport in Singapore has increased from 38% in 2002 to over 50% today and illustrates this further by describing how the numbers running the Singapore marathon has grown from 6,300 in 2002 to 50,000 today.

Mr Oon stressed that concentration on youth is very important – "...in 2005 SSC took a decision to focus on youth to help to build a sports culture for the future. The culture in Singapore has always been very academic based. The SSC have been targeting schools to get young people to play sport. We need to get people involved at early age and they will generally stay with it. Their parents also become involved; this is even more evident with women."





Above: An artist's impression of the Sports Hub

Previous Page: Mr Oon Jin Teik, CEO of Singapore Sports Council.

Mr Oon cited the most popular sports in Singapore for individuals as running and swimming and for teams as soccer for men and netball for women.

Funding for sport

The SSC is also responsible for delivering strategic national sports objectives through its key channel partners - the 64 National Sports Associations (NSAs) which represent the various sports in Singapore. Each NSA has an executive committee and several full time staff.

SSC disburses funds to the NSAs to build their internal capabilities and grow their sport in Singapore.

Mr Oon highlights the importance of the role of the NSAs in delivering the desired results "Our strategy has always focused on building the NSAs' capabilities so that they can perform at the optimum level to meet Singapore's sporting objectives and priorities."

The source of funding for sport mainly comes from the Ministry of Community Development, Youth & Sports (parent ministry overseeing SSC) and the Tote Board (Singapore Totalisator Board), although there is a small amount of private funding. Mr Oon states that the way that funds are allocated has "been changing over last few years to make funding more effective. Funds are distributed according to performance, future plans and management competency."

This year the SSC is channelling Sing \$58.8 million in grants to the NSAs. Funding to NSAs has gone up despite the

economic downturn so the SSC needs to be even more prudent and ensure that the NSA grant proposals are cost-effective. Key outcomes expected from the NSAs for 2009 include achieving continued success at major international games and competitions such as the 2009 Asian Youth Games in Singapore and 2009 SEA Games in Laos; improving the quality of sports participation programmes; continued emphasis on youth participation for the majority of NSAs' programmes and events; as well as a greater level of organisational excellence.

Achievements

Apart from securing the staging of major

"Our strategy has always focused on building the NSAs' capabilities so that they can perform at the optimum level to meet Singapore's sporting objectives and priorities."

events and generating significantly increased participation by the population, there have been other major successes. In 2006, Singapore qualified more athletes in more events and won more medals than ever before in regional and international arenas. These achievements are a direct result of the integrated work done by the SSC, the NSAs, the coaches and the athletes through integrated systems and programmes, and targeted financial support.

Whilst Mr Oon is at pains to point out that "not everything is focussed on medals," he does mention that Singapore won a silver medal in Beijing after a 48 year

drought.

Whilst he would not be drawn on making specific predictions for London 2012, he said that there was a "good chance for us to get medals", and added, with a smile, "We are a small nation but we have some talent."

When questioned about his background and his experience, Mr Oon volunteers that he is a chemical engineer by trade. However, more probing questions lead Mr Oon to modestly reveal that he participated for Singapore as one of five athletes attending the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics. He and his younger brother competed in the swimming 4 x 100 m freestyle and the 4 x 100m medley relays. He recalls one of the highlights as swimming against the American Steve Lundquist, who went on to win two Olympic gold medals that year. The other significant memory was of "an unbelievable Olympic village experience. The Opening Ceremony was like a Hollywood production... an amazing experience."

Mr Oon and his team are working hard to make sure that other Singaporeans can share in the Olympic experience in the future. It would appear that the future of sport in Singapore is very bright with someone with the drive, dedication and determination of Mr Oon at its helm and the vision of Singapore as a major sports hub is much closer to becoming reality.

*Interview by Steve Boucher,
editor of Touchline.*

Sports Shorts

VANOC sues local firm over ticket sales

The organising committee of the 2010 Winter Olympics in Vancouver have sued a local travel operator over the illegal sale of tickets to the Games.

The organisers VANOC have issued a lawsuit against Canadian firm Roadtrips accusing the operator of engaging in 'materially false, deceptive and misleading advertising, acts and practices' after it offered Olympic tickets at prices far higher than their printed value.

VANOC executive vice-president Dave Cobb said, "Roadtrips doesn't have the authority to sell Olympic tickets and that's what they're doing. Companies are making assumptions they're going to get tickets, in our opinion inappropriately and not through the right channels."

Roadtrips president David Guenther responded in a statement saying: "It is perfectly legal and common practice to sell sports travel packages. This activity is different than the simple re-sale of event tickets, which is also legal in most parts of Canada and the United States."

VANOC took similar court action against Vancouver ticket broker Shane Bourdage's company Coast2Coast Tickets two months ago.

Student athletes left in the lurch

The New York Times recently reported that some student athletes at universities in the United States are being left with huge medical bills because they are uninsured or underinsured. While some schools provide adequate coverage, many do not pay for their student-athletes' medical bills. This forces students to draw from their regular student health insurance which generally does not offer the same amount of coverage and may specifically exclude varsity sport injuries.

The *New York Times* cited the example of a Colgate University rower who accumulated \$US80,000 in bills for pain in her back and legs that the school refused to pay because it said she was treated for an illness, not a sports-related injury.

While the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) does require athletes to have insurance before competing, the National College Players Association, an advocacy group, says it does not do enough to protect collegiate athletes.

"The only way to increase coverage would be to make it mandatory," Joe D'Antonio, chairman of the NCAA's legislative council and associate commissioner of the Big East Conference, told the NYT. "It could be too demanding financially on some of our institutions."



Pressure for boundary ropes following cricket accident

There will be pressure on officials to introduce boundary ropes at all cricket grounds after a young Sydney representative player smashed into a fence and ruptured a kidney in February.

The former Australian under-19s star Ahillen Beadle was playing in a first-grade match for Northern Districts against Parramatta at Kings Oval and was trying to stop a boundary when he slid into a fence pole. He shattered his kidney.

Raj Beadle, Ahillen's father, said the chain-metal fence was extremely dangerous as the poles were facing the cricket ground. "Ahillen slid into the fence and hit his kidney straight into the pole, imagine if he had hit his head?"

Parramatta District Cricket Club has a grant to put up a new fence but because the ground is heritage listed, it had been negotiating with the Parramatta Grounds Trust over whether it should be metal or wood.

All Australian grounds staging international and state matches have boundary ropes to protect sliding fielders, but local club and grade parks do not. The chairman of Cricket NSW, Dr Harry Harinath, said an investigation would be held and a decision on boundary ropes would be made after the findings.

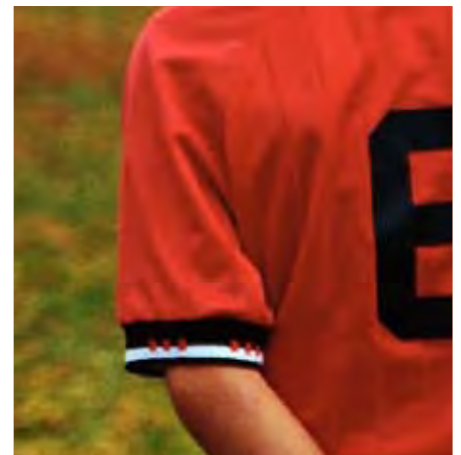


Risk of concussion higher for younger athletes

A recent report from *The Journal of Athletic Training* in the United States indicates that high school football players have a higher risk of sustaining concussions than college or pro football players. The study speculates that high school players have higher incidences of concussions because their neck muscles are not as fully developed.

The report estimates between 43,000 and 67,000 of the 1.2 million high school football players in the US suffer concussions.

Biomechanical analysis of these high school age athletes points to their size as the key factor in why they sustain more concussions than college or pro athletes. The study points out that in college or the pros a player has strong fully grown muscles, more able to withstand the jarring hits.



Go-kart centre fined A\$1.4m for woman's death

A Melbourne go-kart centre found responsible for the death of a patron has been fined A\$1.4 million.

A woman died after crashing her go-kart into a barrier at the Port Melbourne go-kart centre in October 2006. She was wearing a seatbelt that did not fit properly and safety barriers on the track had been incorrectly installed, the Victorian County Court heard. Judge Duncan Allen said "There is no doubt in my mind that (Auscarts) not only was fully aware of the risk, but was fully aware of the ways to reduce them," he continued, "the company showed a gross disregard concerning the safety of employees and the public."

AAA Auscarts Imports Pty Ltd was found guilty of failing to provide a safe workplace and failing to ensure persons other than employees were not exposed to health and safety risks. The fine is the largest ever imposed for a single death in Victoria.

Sports Shorts

Olympic Village to be publicly funded

The Olympic Village for the London 2012 Games is to be publicly-owned after the government said an extra £324m of public funds will be used in the project.

The £1bn Village, which includes 2,800 flats, was initially a privately-funded project but was switched to a public-private financed initiative after the impact of the recession.

The government said the money would be paid back after the flats were sold.



Men are from Mars and Women from Venus even when it comes to football

Researchers at the Leon Root Motion Analysis Laboratory in the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York City say that the underlying causes of gender-based kicking patterns could help lead to better treatment, or even prevention for present and future football stars.

Using video motion analysis researchers examined the dynamics of the kicking motion. They found that female football players face a greater risk of ACL injury and patellofemoral problems, while male players are more at risk for sports hernia.



Gymnast dies in 'freak accident'

A 19-year-old woman died in a gymnastics training accident in Townsville, Queensland in June. Michelle Maitland hit her head after a falling from the tumble track.

Gymnastics Queensland has announced its own investigation and its president Wayne Hill said it appears to have been a freak accident in a top-class facility.

"It's got good governance and good safety practices which it adheres to and if this was going to happen in any club, it would probably be the last club we would have expected," he said.

Mr Hill says he has never heard of an accident like it before. "I think she hit her head on a floor well away from the tumble track. They've got matting around the tumble track and within all the requirements that we put down as the governing body - it was just something that was totally freakish."



Beckham stays on top of Sunday Times Rich List

English football superstar David Beckham has again topped The Sunday Times Rich List for sports stars with a personal fortune estimated at £125m, unchanged from last year.

The list is dominated by footballers and motor racing stars, although Lennox Lewis, despite now being retired from boxing, is second on the list. Former Ferrari driver Eddie Irvine third.

Individuals' wealth also takes in to account that of their entire family and earnings outside of sport, with Michael Owen and Robbie Fowler, now playing his football in the Australian A-League, benefiting from property investments.

Jenson Button, the Brawn GP F1 driver is the highest placed new entry as well as topping the young sportsmen rich list with wealth of £40m up 14% from last year, though reigning world champion Lewis Hamilton was not included.



Platini criticises 'excessive' £80m Ronaldo transfer fee

UEFA president Michel Platini criticised the recent £80m world record transfer of Ronaldo from Manchester United to Real Madrid labelling the deal as 'excessive' and 'puzzling'.

He said: 'These excessive transfers are happening almost every day. It is very puzzling at a time when football faces some of its worst ever financial challenges. These transfers are a serious challenge to the idea of fairplay and the concept of financial balance in our competitions.'

The deal is £24m more than the highest ever transfer – a deal signed earlier the same week when Madrid unveiled Brazilian Kaka for a reported £56m, surpassing the previous world record fee of £45.6m, which Real also paid for Zinedine Zidane in 2001.

Infertility risk for elite cyclists



A Spanish study of top triathletes found sperm quality drops dramatically with rigorous training.

Researchers found those who cover more than 186 miles (300km) a week on their bikes have less than 4% normal looking sperm. At such levels, men would have "significant fertility problems", according to the study. However, a UK expert said the average man cycling to work would be unlikely to suffer fertility problems because of their time in the saddle.

The leader of the study, Professor Diana Vaarmonde, from University of Cordoba Medical School in Spain said other studies had indicated very high levels of exercise affected fertility in both men and women. In this most recent study, 15 triathletes with an average age of 33, were asked to abstain from sex for three days before giving sperm samples. When the results were compared with their training schedules, only cycling – not swimming or running – was linked with sperm quality.

All of the men, who had been training for an average of nine times a week for eight years, had less than 10% of normal looking sperm, compared with the 15-20% seen in the most fertile men.

In those who managed more than 186 miles a week on their bikes, the proportion of sperm that was the correct size and shape had fallen to 4%, the point at which men may struggle to conceive without fertility treatment.

Suggested causes were heat from wearing tight clothing, friction against the saddle and stresses on the body from the amount of energy needed to do such rigorous exercise.

The team is doing further research into how cycling may impact metabolic processes in the body which lead to the development of abnormal sperm. Vaarmonde noted that it was unclear whether sperm quality would improve if men retired from the sport.

Protection to all clubs, leagues and players.

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- Snooker
- Swimming
- Table Football
- Table Tennis
- Archery
- Athletics
- Aqua Gymnastics
- Ballet/Dance (including Irish Dancing)
- Baseball/Softball
- Canoeing
- Cricket
- Gymnastics
- Handball
- Keep Fit
- Rowing
- Sailing
- Triathlon
- Volleyball
- Water Polo
- Badminton
- Basketball (individual)
- Cycling
- Fencing
- Hillwalking
- Hockey
- Lacrosse
- Netball
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- Squash
- Tennis
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- Soccer (Individual)



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World Sports News Roundup

England to host Rugby World Cup in 2015

England has won the right to host the Rugby World Cup in 2015, beating off rival bids from South Africa and Italy.

The International Rugby Board (IRB) announced England as the host of the 2015 event with Japan to host the tournament in 2019 following a vote of the IRB Council in Dublin. England received 16 votes from the 24-strong IRB Council to emerge victorious. England was a co-host of the tournament in 1991 and 1999.

UAE to host 2010 America's Cup

The United Arab Emirates has been named as the host venue for the 33rd America's Cup which starts on 8th February, 2010. Two-time defending champion Alinghi of Switzerland picked Ras al-Khaimah as the port for a one-off duel against US challengers Oracle.

Canadian GP likely to return in 2010

Montreal's Circuit Gilles Villeneuve is likely to return to the F1 calendar in 2010 after Bernie Ecclestone hinted that a deal had been reached to reinstate the Canadian Grand Prix. The Montreal leg of the F1 season was dropped in 2009 after a row over fees between F1 rights holder Ecclestone and track promoters. In June, Quebec Finance Minister Raymond Bachand and the City of Montreal stated that the federal and provincial governments were ready to meet the shortfall required to see the street circuit back on the F1 scene.

English Cricket Board reports increase in participation

The England and Wales Cricket Board has announced that there was an increase in participation across recreational cricket in 2008, particularly amongst women and disabled players. Overall, there was a 24% jump in participation, with a near 50% increase in the number of women and girls taking part in the sport. There was also a 137% increase in disability cricket participation and a 30% increase in black and ethnic minority participation.

Bidding process for 2018 Winter Games launched

The International Olympic Committee has launched the bid process to find the host of the 2018 Winter Olympics. French Alpine town Annecy, Munich, and Pyeongchang in South Korea have confirmed their intention to bid, while a bid is also expected from Harbin in North East China.

National Olympic Committees must name candidate cities by 15th October. The winner will be announced by the IOC at a meeting in Durban in July 2011.

British Masters dropped from Tour

The British Masters, one of the longest standing golf tournaments in the UK, was dropped from this year's European Tour schedule after failing to find a new title sponsor. The event, which has been played at The Belfry for the last three years, had been staged every year since 1946.

China tournament steps up to WGC status

The HSBC Champions golf tournament in Shanghai, China has been boosted up to World Golf Championships status, becoming the fourth worldwide tournament to be just one step down from the majors.

Indian athletes uninsured as they prepare for the Commonwealth Games

It has been recently reported in the Indian press that insurance is not in place for athletes in training for the 2010 Commonwealth Games to be held in New Dehli. Despite being a requirement of the government guidelines for preparing teams, a year after training began all over India, insurance cover for athletes is still being discussed by the Sports Authority of India.

This deficit has been brought into focus following the serious eye injury recently sustained by hockey goal-keeper, Baljit Singh.

England to become GB for 2012 football

A deal to allow an England football team to represent Great Britain at the London 2012 Olympics has been agreed. Under it, the Scottish, Northern Irish and Welsh football associations will have no involvement in the 2012 Games but they will not seek to prevent England from representing Great Britain in London on a one-off basis. World football governing body FIFA has ratified the proposal.

Platini confirms that Ukraine will co-host Euro 2012

UEFA president Michel Platini has given Ukraine assurances that it will not lose the right to co-host the 2012 European Championships despite falling behind on construction deadlines. Platini previously threatened to revoke the hosting rights from the country if Kiev's Olympic stadium is not built on time, leaving Poland as the sole host of the tournament.

Pakistan lose £27m due security concerns

Pakistan's removal as a co-host of the 2011 Cricket World Cup due to security concerns will cost the country's national cricket board. The country was set to hold 14 ties, including one semi-final, after being awarded the tournament in conjunction with India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Pakistan have already suffered substantial revenue losses due to the cancellation of tours by Australia and India last year. The Pakistan Cricket Board is believed to estimate the combined loss of revenues since last year is around £27m.

UK lands Rugby League World Cup

The UK has landed the Rugby League World Cup tournament in 2013, adding to the increasing number of global events being staged in the country in the next decade.

The decision was made at a meeting of the Rugby League International Federation in Singapore to discuss the future of the international calendar.

Australia had also submitted a bid to stage the event again after the success of the 2008 tournament which attracted combined crowds of 290,000 and a global television audience of 19.2m, making it the most widely broadcast event in the game's history.

The 2013 Rugby League World Cup is set to be contested by 12 teams, an increase on last year's 10-team event in Australia.

The 2009 and 2011 Four Nations will be staged in England with both Australia and New Zealand hosting it in 2010 and Australia the next hosts after the World Cup in 2014.

IS SPORT ABOVE THE LAW?

What are the implications for contact sports following the manslaughter conviction in May of this year of a youth playing school league rugby in a district of Toronto, Canada? The victim, Manny Castillo, 15 suffered a severe head injury after he was picked up and slammed to the ground in the final moments of a game. He died days later in hospital. The Judge later sentenced the youth to a year's probation and community service.

This month our legal experts examine the fine line between normal injury incurred in the course of the game and assault.



Canadian Perspective

Is The Playing Field a Criminal Law Free Zone?

Not in Canada!

The three topics discussed in the prior issues of *Touchline* – assumption of risk, duty of care, and tort reform, all feature in a recent decision by the Ontario Court of Justice which resulted in the conviction of a high school rugby player for manslaughter as a result of a spear tackle on an opponent late in a match.¹ Towards the end of an under-17 game between two Toronto area schools, a ruck had occurred from which the ball came out and was being run towards the centre of the field. The defendant came from an off-side position with a head of speed and contacted the victim, lifting him off the ground and driving him backwards before slamming him into the ground resulting catastrophic injuries and death soon thereafter. In rendering its decision (the accused was a young offender and the case was decided by a judge sitting without a jury), the court found two primary issues of importance:

did the act cause death and was that act unlawful?

Although physical force in contact sports is not usually considered to be criminal because participants impliedly consent to it by virtue of their participation, such consent is only implied for contact or force that comes within the rules of the game. This general principle has been broadened to include force that is outside the rules of the game but within the scope of the accepted standards by which the game is played.² With respect to criminal conduct in the realm of sports, there is a balance of weighing what a participant has actually consented to against the purpose of criminal law – to protect individuals from uncontested invasions of the physical integrity.

In *R. v. C.C.* the court held that a participant's knowledge or expectation that violence well outside the rules of the game might

occur is not the same thing as consenting to such violence. By way of explanation, Duncan J. stated that "[i]f it were otherwise, in sports the line into criminality would be pushed ever forward with the latest violent outrage serving to set the standard for that to which all future participants are deemed to consent."³ In determining what a reasonable expectation of a participant in an organized sporting event would be, Duncan J. reasoned that the "more reasonable inference is that the participant entered the game for its pleasures and benefits and had confidence that his opponents would act in a civilized manner, that the rules would be enforced by presiding officials and that gross violence would be deterred by sanctions, including civil and criminal law."⁴ One must keep in mind that this decision is written in the context of high school rugby and not an IRB sanctioned match; however, as has been discussed in prior issues of *Touchline*, professional athletes are by no means immune from civil and, indeed, criminal liability for their actions on the pitch, field or ice.

With respect to the tackle itself, the court found that the force applied was not within the rules of the game. There was no evidence of any unwritten code or common unlawful practices except, as has been the case in other Canadian and international jurisprudence on the doctrine of implied consent, to the extent that punches, kicks and the like are sometimes inflicted in the close and sheltered quarters of a scrum or ruck. Accordingly, Duncan J. found that nothing suggested that the sort of conduct found to have taken place would be within the accepted standards of play – there was no implied consent. Accordingly, the court reasoned that, not only was there a lack of implied consent, but the conduct amounted to a reckless disregard for the safety of the deceased. In what will likely be the most oft-quoted portion of this decision in future sports-liability actions, Duncan J. stated that: "[t]he playing field is not a criminal law-free zone...[t]he laws of the land apply in the same way as they do elsewhere...".

1 *R. v. C.C.* [2009] O.J. 2216.

2 *R. v. Cey*(1989) 48 C.C.C. 3d 480 (Sask. C.A.); *R. v. Leclerc* [1991] O.J. No. 1533 (C.A.).

3 *Ibid*, note 1 at para. 10.

4 *Ibid*, note 1 at para. 11.



After reviewing the findings of fact in the criminal proceeding, it does not appear that the actions of the coaches, teams or referee would warrant a finding of civil liability. It is unlikely, based on the events leading up to the eventual spear-tackle, that the defendant's actions were reasonably foreseeable by the potential parties in a civil action: the school board, team, coaching staff and referee. With respect to the liability of the coaching staff of the defendant, there does not appear to be any evidence of pre-meditation nor any intention to instruct their players to injure the deceased.⁵ Accordingly, a finding of vicarious liability on behalf of the school board is highly unlikely. Though the court found that the defendant stood out from the other players as a result of his skill and aggressive behaviour both in play and words (including protesting various calls by the referee), his eventual conduct was likely not reasonably foreseeable based on his prior actions. It would, therefore, be unlikely that the referee will face any civil penalty for allowing the play to escalate to the degree that it

5 In both the Canadian case of *Moore v. Bertuzzi* [2008] O.J. No. 347 and the English case of *Gravil v. Carroll* [2008] EWCA Civ 689, courts have recognised that the acts of a player, during a game, may attach liability to both teams and coaches if a player commits a tort in a manner that is so closely connected with their employment that it can be said to be authorised or encouraged by the team and/or coach.

did.⁶ The actions of the defendant seem to have escalated to a degree that no one could have predicted. However, individuals, teams, schools, referees, players and organizations must always take the necessary precautions to protect against such risk as the sports field has found its way in to the civil liability arena on many occasions.

Graeme Mew (gmew@npm.ca) and Morgan Martin (mmartin@npm.ca) are lawyers with Nicholl Paskell-Mede LLP in Toronto.

6 In *Smolden v Whitworth and Nolan* [1997] PIQR P133, a referee of a rugby match was found liable for allowing the scrum to collapse approximately 25 times before a player suffered a catastrophic injury. The court, in assessing the duty of a referee, divided the rules into those which are there for the proper running of the game and those that contained an element of safety for participant – only a failure to apply the latter could result in liability.



UK Perspective

The UK draws the line between competition and assault

In contact sport, where to draw the line between fearless competitiveness and needless aggression tantamount to assault is an issue of international interest. Keeping with the theme of rugby, we recently saw Chalk Burger cleared at a disciplinary hearing of allegedly gouging Luke Fitzgerald's eye during the Lions tour of South Africa. Had he been found guilty, would that have given Fitzgerald grounds to press charges?

In *Andrew Gravil v (1) Richard Carroll (2) Redruth Rugby Football Club* [2008] EWCA Civ 689, a rugby club was found to be vicariously liable for a **tortious assault** by one of its rugby players, where the victim had been punched in the face during a mêlée on the pitch. In that case, there was a specific clause in the contract between the Defendant and the rugby club which expressly stated that the Defendant should not physically assault an opponent, and that the club might be vicariously liable for the player's acts during his employment. The Defendant was held liable for assault, and the club had to pay the victim an award in damages.

Similarly, in *R v Mark David Moss (1999)*, the Defendant was sentenced to eight months' imprisonment for grievous bodily harm after punching the victim in the face following a "ruck" in a rugby match. The judge acknowledged that rugby is a contact sport, but stated that that cannot be construed as a licence for "thuggery". The Defendant was found to have committed an "off-the-ball" offence so serious that only a custodial sentence could be justified.

It seems that the Courts, both in the UK and internationally, are prepared to reprimand excessive and unnecessary force in competitive sport. It stands to reason that the umbrella of "sport" should not exist a shield to criminally aggressive behaviour, and Justice Duncan must be right that "the laws of the land apply [to sport] in the same way as they do elsewhere". However, the danger is that genuine competitiveness (which always carries an inherent risk of injury in contact sports) might be confused with a criminal act of violence. Could we find ourselves in a situation

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where every foul called in a rugby or soccer match is capable of being labelled as an assault? Few would have difficulty in condemning "off-the-ball" incidents, as they have no place in the game being played. A leg being broken as a result of an over-zealous, two-footed challenge in a soccer match is not so easily pigeon-holed as "criminal". The difficulty is in identifying the *mens rea*, the intent to injure, which must be established before any criminal liability follows.

The Manny Castillo case serves as a warning to those who see contact sport as an opportunity to inflict injury on others. The case is made all the more interesting by the comments posted at the bottom of the website page on which the story was reported. Those comments, all (or at least mostly) put eloquently and with force, emphasise the distinct divergence of opinion on the ramifications of such a decision. Having said that, the decision, in the context of the number of injuries suffered in contact sport every day, has to be seen as the exception rather than the rule. One would like to think that the fallout from this case will, therefore, be small in scale.

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Australian Perspective

The sports field blurs the line between sport and criminal assaults in Australia

An emerging trend in Canadian case law indicates that the courts are taking an increasingly hard line approach on violence on the sporting field. Recently, an 18 year old was convicted of the manslaughter of Manny Castillo, a fellow player, during a rugby match.

In Australia, a nation that prides itself on its sporting prowess, the situation is a little different. It appears that where violence occurs on the sporting field, it is being excused as being within the 'hurly burly of the match.'⁷ To date, Australian courts appear reluctant to impose criminal convictions for those found guilty of assault which takes place during competitive, high contact sport, instead opting to leave disciplinary measures to internal review processes within sporting clubs such as tribunals and other disciplinary bodies.

The Canadian case, however, highlights the fact that players who involve themselves in contact sport can be held liable under the criminal law for actions that go beyond what is permitted by the particular rules of the game. The case demonstrates that even though internal review processes may exist, the criminal law will nevertheless apply.

The cases show that when a player participates in a contact sport, that player impliedly consents to the use of some degree of force. Indeed, there is a presumption that those taking to the field often *expect* and *agree* to some form of violence. The questions of implied consent to assault by fellow players is the major issue in any consideration of assault in sport.

When looking at assaults in sport and the number of subsequent criminal prosecutions in Australia, it must be noted that the number of cases that reach the courts after an on field altercation are very small given the number of professional and amateur matches that are played across Australia every year.

In 1985 Leigh Matthews, an AFL player, pleaded guilty in the Magistrates' Court for assault occasioning bodily harm after breaking the jaw of an opposing player. Mathews was convicted

⁷ *McAvaney v Quigley* (1992) 58 Crim R 457 at 462

and fined \$1,000 but the conviction was overturned on appeal.⁸

In 1987⁹ during a rugby match, the defendant broke the nose of an opponent with an illegal head high contact. The court found that a player cannot expect that every opposition player will play strictly according to the rules. Justice Johnston overturned the Magistrates' Court decision which imposed a \$250 fine and a conviction. Johnston J believed that the tackle had taken place during a match where the players were 'revved up and excited' and held that no conviction should be recorded.

In 1991, a Brisbane rugby league player died after he had been tackled high while running with the ball. The man responsible for the tackle, Heke, was charged with manslaughter. The jury acquitted Heke after 10 hours of deliberation.¹⁰

It was stated in *McAvaney v Quigley*¹¹ that criminal assault is a crime wherever it is committed. Nevertheless, the Court was prepared to place sports assault in a somewhat different category when it came to affixing penalty upon a finding of guilt. The court imposed a fine of \$400 but choose not to record a conviction after the defendant broke the jaw of an opponent during a football match.

There appears to be a consensus among Judges both in Australia and Canada that the sports field does not evoke immunity from criminal prosecutions. However the Australian approach to date demonstrates that in high contact sports, the sports field blurs the line between sport and criminal assaults. Conversely, the Canadian approach is consistently adhering to the policy that crimes committed on the sporting field will not be tolerated.

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⁸ *R v Matthews* (unreported Magistrates Court 1985)

⁹ *Watherston v Woolven* (unreported, Supreme Court of South Australia 21 October 1987)

¹⁰ *R v Heke* (unreported QSC, 6 February 1992)

¹¹ *McAvaney v Quigley* (1992) 58 A Crim R 457

India – sleeping giant of sport?

Despite the Global Financial Crisis, figures show the Indian economy is still growing at 5%, protected from the worst of the global recession by being mainly a domestic economy. The growing economy is providing new opportunities for sports like golf and tennis which are closely linked to the strength of the business community. But with a population of over 1.1 billion, India could well become a sports powerhouse in the future.

Anyone with even a passing knowledge of Indian sport knows that much of the money in sport is based on a huge national passion for cricket. The Indian Premier League was a massive boost to the amount of revenue spent around sport as well as an instant global phenomenon drawing the very best players to India each year. Field hockey is the national sport with a huge following and sports such as squash are also extremely popular.

However, there have been a number of recent developments that suggest that other sports are growing significantly in their popularity and support.

Formula 1 has seen a huge surge of interest following Vijay Mallya's creation

of the Force India team. Golf and tennis, both aspirational sports for the huge number of people forming the Indian middle class, are enjoying record levels of success. Perhaps most interesting of all, football is starting to achieve real traction with TV audiences turning on in ever greater numbers for international leagues and competitions.

There are also some major events in the calendar which look set to have a transforming effect on sport in India. Delhi will play host to the Commonwealth Games in 2010 and India will stage part of the ICC Cricket World Cup in 2011. The race is also on to bring F1 to the country which will almost certainly see the creation of a new circuit which together with historic investment in stadia by cricket and football will drive opportunities here too.

This all translates into a nation that is currently a sleeping giant in terms of world sport but that could well be transformed over the next decade. Perhaps it will not be too long before we see India challenging the rest of the world for major trophies in football, rugby, tennis as well as cricket.



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Swingers are winners in golf

New studies identify most effective warm-up exercises for improving golf



Most golf books and magazines will tell you that stretching before hitting the links will improve your score. Not so according to the latest research which showed golfers who undertook a traditional stretching routine before taking their first swing performed worse than those who did not.

A 2009 study from Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas reported that club head speed, distance, accuracy and consistent contact with the ball decreased in the 15 competitive young male golfers who performed 20 minutes of static stretching before heading out to the driving range. Similar findings were recorded by golfers using a five-iron in an Irish study, "Dynamic Stretching and Golf Swing Performance", published in the February edition of the International Journal of Sports Medicine.

However, before you ditch stretching altogether, know that flexibility is still crucial to perfecting your swing. A good shoulder turn and a flexible set of core muscles are essential to performing the kind of wide-arching swing that is the mark of a good golfer. Why then is stretching before your game so counterproductive? The common ground in both studies is the type of stretching that is done. Static stretching, defined as holding a position for 10 to 30 seconds, is the focus of the debate. Evidence suggests that this traditional form of stretching may not produce the kind of results once believed.

Similar findings of reduced strength and power output have been found in other studies that evaluated the effects of static stretching before exercise. The

benefits of traditional pre-exercise stretching have been questioned for almost a decade, with sports specific research reporting similar decreases in performance markers after a period of stretching.

Researchers are not yet sure of the physiological reasons why static stretching before exercise hampers performance, though the main theory is that increased laxity in the soft tissue temporarily reduces maximum force output. What is known, however, is that stretching is best left for after your workout, practice or game when flexibility gains, not performance, are the prime focus.

So, how should golfers warm up before a game? Both studies recommend golfers engage in dynamic stretching, which proved to be more effective than static stretching in improving performance on the links.

Dynamic stretching consists of sport-specific movements that are done in increasingly larger ranges of motion until they resemble the actual pattern and speed of movement performed in competition or practice. In the case of the Stephen F. Austin State University study, the dynamic warm up involved controlled golf swings with a variety of clubs, starting with high irons and working up to a driver. A dynamic stretching routine is the best choice immediately before heading out on the course. For the days between games, or immediately after a game, a static stretching routine can be performed to ensure that the body has enough range of motion to facilitate proper swing mechanics.

Crime is of concern for World Cup 2010

South Africa's infamous record for robbery, murder and rape may be the biggest challenge facing the organisers of next year's football World Cup.

South Africa needs not only to protect fans when they arrive, but convince them it is safe to make the trip in the first place. Not an easy task with one of the world's highest violent crime rates. Approximately 50 people are murdered a day. This is a higher rate than in the US which has six times the population of South Africa's 50 million. In 2007-2008, there were officially 36,190 rapes and 14,201 carjackings, but many crimes go unreported.

Organisers are attempting to allay fears, pointing to South Africa's good record in protecting increasing numbers of foreign tourists and its staging of many successful international events. The police strategy will be based on techniques developed during the 2002 World Earth Summit, which involve saturating areas including

hotels, stadiums and transit routes with at least 41,000 specially deployed officers.

"We are preparing ourselves for a worst-case scenario or any eventuality... although we have the framework in place, we must deal with issues as they present themselves," said Police Senior Superintendent Vish Naidoo who leads the 2010 team.

The government is spending 1.3 billion rand (\$US162 million) on the effort, which includes new helicopters, surveillance equipment - including unmanned drones - vehicles and body armour. Around 700 officers will patrol every stadium in addition to an army of private security guards, Naidoo said.

But crime statistics, albeit improving slowly, leave questions about what may happen outside the venues, if visitors stray away from protected areas. Organisers warn that visitors must be vigilant despite

the police effort.

Many South Africans remain sceptical, complaining that police are often too slow to respond to the existing crime wave. In the big cities where crime is rife, the presence of private security companies is far more evident than that of the police. Homes are surrounded by a daunting array of razor and electric wire and protected by heavily armed private response units.

Clearly a special effort will be required during 2010 if South Africa's reputation is not to be irrevocably tarnished. The presence of comparatively well-heeled foreign fans could be seen as a golden opportunity for criminal gangs.

World Cup organisers have launched marketing campaigns overseas to lure visitors and counter crime fears. Signs so far are that the fans are not deterred.



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touchline letters

Flexible Health

Your story about the risk of injury to young gymnasts was of concern to me.

As a mother of three young girls who are all keen gymnasts, it made me realise that trainers need to recognise the potential impact of the training regime on young, developing bodies.

Following the article, I spoke with some of the officials at the club where my daughters' practice. It was clear from the conversation that a few people regarded the results as more important than the impact on the children. However, by providing details of your article to them I do feel as though my concerns have now been accepted. A new programme is being introduced which allows a more varied exercise regime which hopefully will be less intensive. We want our children to be successful in sport but not to the detriment of their health.

Bethany, Sutton, Surrey, England

Well Done Touchline

I have posted the journal on our website on the News page and in the Publication section. Awesome. Thanks again.

Denise, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

News from around the world!

I really enjoy reading Touchline and think it contains a good balance of news and articles. I find the articles on new research into various sports injuries particularly useful in my professional capacity.

However, I would like to see a section that summarises the major sports news from around the world. I am not referring here to results of games or competitions but more to some of the major decisions of the Olympic Committees, International Federations, National sports bodies and governments as they relate to sport.

I hope you can take on board my suggestion.

Bill, Bedford, England

Editor: Bill, many thanks for your comment. We have taken this on board - please see page 17

International A League

Re your small article in Sports Shorts about FIFA limiting foreign players, I am not sure how this can work especially concerning the EU laws. This would surely amount to discrimination and be totally at odds with the EU's free market principles.

One other aspect to consider is how will the process work for players who are eligible to play (and passport holders) for several countries? As an Australian born man of Irish and Croatian parents, I could play potentially for three different countries. In fact, the rules seem to be changing and allowing players to claim eligibility to play for an ever increasing array of countries. Being a fan of the A league, I want to see more and more international players playing in the A league, but when John Hutchinson recently earned his first cap playing for Malta because his grandmother was Maltese, I wonder where it will end!

Marko, Gold Coast, QLD, Australia

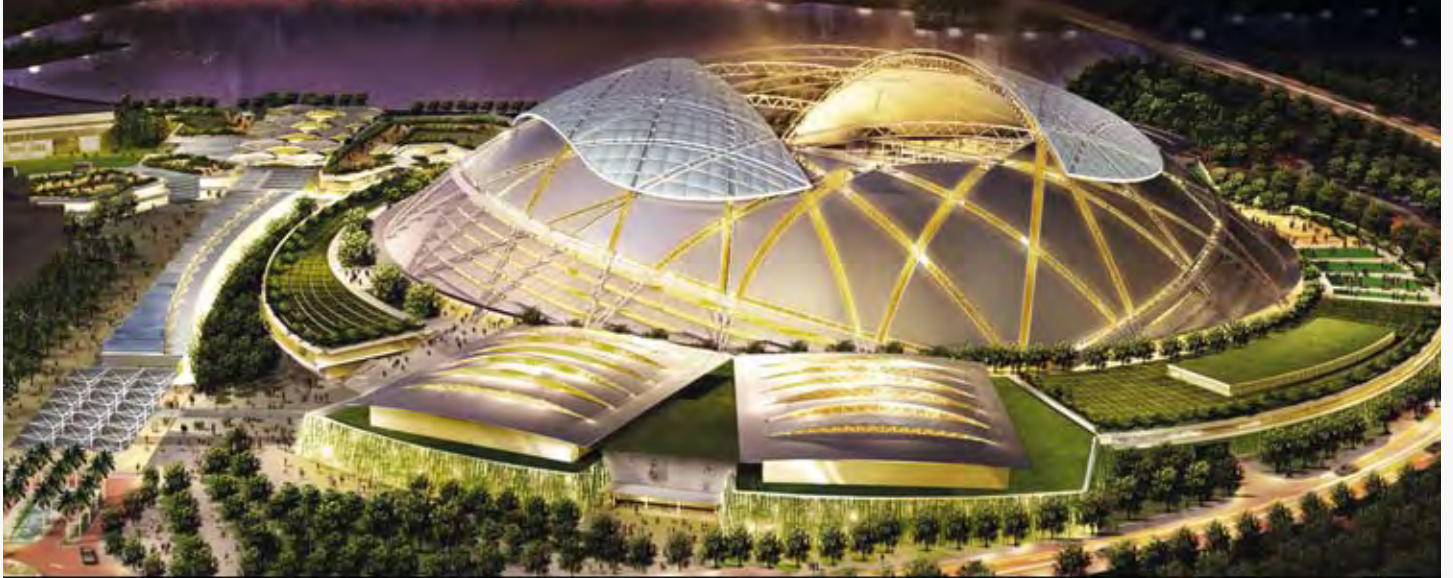
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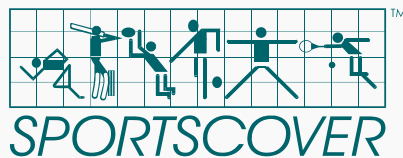
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