

touchline

ISSUE 19 • NOVEMBER 2014

BOXING ISSUE:

IS BOXING MAKING A COMEBACK?

**BOXING AND RISK:
CAN BOXING REALLY GET BANNED?**

**AN INTERVIEW WITH MARK ABBERLEY
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF ENGLAND BOXING**



+ WHEN TEAMMATES ATTACK

+ HEALTH AND FITNESS:
WHEN YOU SHOULD
CHANGE YOUR EXERCISE REGIME

+ GLASGOW 2014:
THE BEST GAMES EVER?

+ BIG LOSSES:
BEYOND THE SCOREBOARD

THE LIFEBLOOD OF SPORT

Who do you think are the real unsung heroes of sport? Who are the people who deserve our thanks and admiration for their dedication and commitment to sport; the people who work tirelessly for their sport and without whom there would be no sport?

Is it the coaches who get the most from their players and teams and produce champions? Perhaps you think it's the midfield dynamos who run and harry and do the hard graft to enable the stars in the team to display their skills and shine? Or perhaps it is the paid umpires and referees that so often get a raw deal and are the subject of abuse by fans and those on the touchline each week?

No, all of these are deserving and make a significant contribution to sport. But the real unsung heroes of sport are the millions of volunteers that turn out week in, week out for their local club or put their hands up to assist at the event that is being held. Without these individuals there would be no sport. These are the people who organise matches, coach and manage teams and make sure the players turn up at the right venue and on time, wash the kit or direct the crowd, or do the hundreds of other tasks that mean that the local club can operate or the national or international event can be staged. They are the true lifeblood of sport.

At the Glasgow Commonwealth Games a record 50,811 people came forward to offer their services as part the volunteer force of 15,000 that was required. A similar number of volunteers will be required for the Gold Coast Games in 2018, and there will be no shortage of applications. However,



STEVE BOUCHER

even this number pales into insignificance when the total volunteer population for sport is taken into account.

The UK Community Life Survey for 2013 -2014 showed that 41% of people questioned in England reported volunteering at least once a year and 27% said they took part at least once a month. This equates to an estimated 12.7 million people volunteering in England once a month and 19.2 million once a year. The most popular sectors for volunteers are sport/exercise where 53% of those who volunteer work and hobbies/recreation/social clubs with 42%.

The estimated economic value of sports volunteering in England is just under £2 billion a year – this is what it would cost to employ full-time workers to carry out the work of sports volunteers, based on the median hourly wage.

These are staggering figures and these kind of statistics are replicated around the world. Sport would simply not exist in many places if there were no willing volunteers. Volunteers create and sustain sports clubs and associations and make national and international events work. In short, they make a vital contribution to the needs of the community.

But whilst we need to recognise the tremendous value of

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volunteers, it is perhaps also interesting that being a volunteer can be good for you too. Not only can it provide a sense of well-being and belonging to a community, it can promote a healthy lifestyle and have a positive impact on your working life. An earlier Sport England study showed that 87% of employers believe volunteering can have a positive effect on career progression, whilst 97% of volunteering organisations have experienced this happening. Employers identify communication and teamwork as the most important skills and 88% of employers believe that both of these skills can be developed through volunteering. From a sample of 3,000 employers across the UK, it was found that four out of five employers value volunteering on a CV.

This finding is totally in line with our own experience at Sportscover. Not only do we find that those candidates who have a background in volunteering generally are better team players and are more successful within the organisation, we have also found that providing opportunities for staff to volunteer for selected projects through allowing time off work promotes a much better working environment and personal commitment to the role.

It is probably well-known that the benefits to the community of volunteers in sport and other activities are immense and cannot be underestimated. However, what is probably not so readily understood is that volunteering can also be good for your own healthand wealth!

The True Value of Volunteering A message from Sportscover Australia's CEO

Often people think about volunteering as a way to "help out" or "give back" to a particular cause or group, but to think only along these lines is to under-estimate the true value of volunteering to the volunteer themselves. At Sportscover we started our commitment to volunteering along familiar lines..."who can we help out" ? In our case it was a local Australian Rules football team for intellectually disabled boys and men with ages ranging from 15 to 58. Whilst our help was immensely appreciated, the real discovery for us was in the value it brought to our staff. Everyone that put themselves forward and volunteered to help out (about 13 staff or 1 in 3) , all came back with the same story... "this is fantastic"... "I loved it"... "wow". One person was moved to say it was the best sporting experience of their life!

The power of giving has never been so evident to me, and to see the joy and sense of self-worth gained by our staff was truly one of my proudest moments as CEO. Our volunteer program continues to thrive and I have lost count of the times I have been stopped in the street or at the local shops by a parent or one of the boys to let me know what a profound difference Sportscover had made to these boys and men's lives... and that really makes it truly worthwhile!

David Lamb

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IS BOXING MAKING A **COMEBACK?**

There was a time when everyone who followed sport knew who the heavyweight champion of the world was. In fact, people whose only exposure to boxing was what they saw on the 7 o'clock news would know names like Sugar Ray Leonard, George Foreman and Joe Frazier.

Then there were the true legends, like Muhammad Ali and Mike Tyson. These men, for good and bad, transcended the sport and became icons.

Now turn to the left. Ask the closest person who the current heavy weight champ is. Unless you are sitting in Madison Square Garden watching a bout, there is a very high probability that you will receive the answer of "I don't know", or - far worse for the sport of boxing - "I don't care".

Boxing, once one of the most watched and reported sports in the world, has slipped out of the public dialogue. Many see it as redundant. Boxing, to many, is on the ropes.

But is it?

When boxing commentator Al Bernstein - a veteran who has spent decades watching the sport - comes out and claims 2013 "was the best year in 25 years", maybe we should start checking boxing for a pulse.

How can this be when everyone has almost given boxing up for a dying relic?

Timothy Mottram looks at the evidence...



Boxing is dying: The arguments

One popular litmus test for the health of boxing is the status of the heavyweight division. Today, there is no champion fighter who really draws in media attention. The lack of major talent can be seen in the ages of many of the candidates. The preeminent boxers are largely aged in their late 20s: for example, Deontay Wilder is 27. Great sportsman tend to emerge when they are much younger, and while these fighters have spent many years training and participating in bouts to hone their skills, a true genius will crash into the spotlight far earlier. Mike Tyson was world champion at 20.

More evidence for the weakness in boxing comes from a look at the books. Major sponsors have been avoiding the sport for years. Top Rank Chairman Bob Arum says that “boxing still exceeds mixed martial arts and wrestling, as far as the fan base. But if you look closer, those figures are distorted by the fact that, overwhelmingly, Hispanics favor boxing, as do African-Americans.

“The leaders of industry view it from the (perspective) that there is diminished interest in the white community for boxing. That permeates everything.”

HBO, the pay-per-view channel that has been showing matches for the past quarter century, has found new subscriptions for boxing hard to come by, and the demographic average viewer age is creeping steadily upwards. Subscribers tend to be men who are just-sorta-used to watching.

The boxing itself has been criticised by some. The most prominent heavyweight from the past few years has been Wladimir Klitschko, whose brother is also a renowned fighter. Wladimir gained something in the publicity stakes by supporting the protest movement last year in Kiev. The brothers are heavy hitters, and have won more than 100 bouts between them. Doubters claim that they are just the best of a weak field, and that a better range of boxing talent would not have allowed them to dominate as they have done in the last decade. Others claim their style is predictable and Wladimir in particular has a weak chin. Obviously, with 62 wins (52 by knock out) and only 3 losses, Wladimir is not a man that a nerdy sports writer would want to criticise too much. But when compared with the greats, there is something missing.

So, there is plenty of evidence that points to boxing being confused and listless, taking beatings when it would just be kinder to ding the bell. But what are the causes for this negativity?

Mike Tyson believes there is a lack of –ahem– fight in the sport. “I don’t think people are made out of what they used to be made out of. When I was poor, when I was a young kid, I didn’t have any television. You see people now who are broke on the welfare system, they have a television, they may even have a car and 30 years ago that was totally impossible. They are not hungry.



They are not willing to even attempt to die to accomplish their goals. We are in the era of entitlement. There is no desire to accomplish great things. When I was fighting, I was prepared to die to become champion.”

It is not hard to find examples of Tyson’s hypothesis. One of boxing’s most prominent names is welterweight champion Floyd



Mayweather Jr. According to Forbes, he made \$105 million in 2013. He was in the ring for a combined total of 72 minutes. But despite all the money, Mayweather has been criticised for approaching his career in a rather cynical manner. He picks easy fights and spends a good deal of each bout dancing. He knows where and how to land enough blows to convince the judges to award him yet another

victory. Further incurring the disdain of boxing fans, Mayweather is a known associate of Justin Bieber.

Almost as inexcusable, the avoidance of a matchup between him and Manny Pacquiao, probably the most gifted boxers of the last decade. It is the most obvious bout in boxing today, and rumour has it that Mayweather is the one ducking it.

Pacquiao's team have been almost begging for the match, and rapper 50 cent, of all people, has this to say about just how cynical Mayweather is about his sport: "I wouldn't say he's afraid of Pacquiao or any fighter. There were two reasons (for dodging the fight). He concentrates on how much someone else is getting paid as opposed to how much he's making. Then he sees himself as being so high

on top that he won't give some of the other great fighters a chance to get up to that position.

"It's more a question of who it is necessary for him to fight. So its (sic) more about finding the perfect opponent than finding the toughest fighter to fight. When you're looking to go into the history books you do it a bit differently. You fight the other great fighters.

"But for Floyd it's business. About making the right financial decisions. How do you stretch out how many wins on your record?"

The prism through which boxing is seen can be partly explained by the baffling and murky world of promotions and management in the game. Boxing, perhaps unfairly, has a reputation of corruption and back-room dealings.

Legendary manager Don King took the sport and corralled it into a money-producing juggernaut, but everything got a little seedier too.

Promoter Lou DiBella claims that "everybody is suing everybody... There's mayhem... you go on social media and you read about boxing, people are spewing hate constantly".

Then there are the federations. Among the largest are the World Boxing Organisation and the International Boxing Organisation, but there are plenty in between. There are enough so that, given

the weight classes, there can be 60 different champions at any given time. This does very little to open the sport up to new viewers.

Taken all these opinions and facts, things don't look so good for boxing.

Boxing is alive: The arguments

So how does Al Bernstein get away with saying that boxing has enjoyed its best year in 25?

He is not alone in saying the boxing is making a come back.

"But for Floyd it's business. About making the right financial decisions. How do you stretch out how many wins on your record?"

"Boxing is in better position now than 10 years ago when it had its own recession," according to light-heavyweight champion Bernard Hopkins, a minority partner in Golden Boy Promotions. "Now, (boxing) has a pulse after being in intensive care for a stint," he says. "We weren't sure we would come out of the coma. People were ready to pull the plug on boxing. But we're alive."

For his reasons, you only have to look as far as the money. Mayweather might not have won his money in a manner that some respected, but he still won it. A whole lot of it. Boxing

still brings in huge money for the top performers. Manny Pacquiao's team claim that Mayweather is walking away from \$100 million every time he dodges the challenge to fight.

And while ratings might be declining in the States, boxing's global reach ensures that the worldwide audience has held, and is even gaining. The Pacquiao - Juan Manuel Marquez match up was Mexico's highest rated program in the last year, for example.

Boxing promoter Todd duBoef is another who is optimistic. "Boxing is a much healthier sport than it was 10 or 15 years ago," duBoef says. "It has evolved to be positioned with the major brands out there. It's positioned there. Before, it was a huge property that was huge for only one night, but it didn't have the overall brand appeal. Now, you can see the brand appeal very, very relevant on a global basis."

It is still filling stadia. People around the world tune in and download. Boxing is still very much part of our sporting world. Perhaps the reason boxing is seen so differently by so many is that it is changing. The days of it being an American sport where the heavyweights were kings are over. Maybe we are not yet ready to see this as evolution. As boxing morphs into a truly global sport, with champions coming from as far apart as Ukraine and the Philippines, structural and administrative changes need to occur.

Lou DiBella might be right when he says "I don't think boxing is ever going away. I think it's eternal".

AN INTERVIEW WITH...

**MARK
ABBERLEY**

**CHIEF EXECUTIVE
ENGLAND BOXING**

Mark Abberley has 25 years of sports management experience, mainly within the sports consulting sector. More recently he has been involved at board level across a number of national governing bodies. Mark joined England Boxing four years ago as chief executive officer.

Some people think that boxing is on the decline. What is your response to that?

Participation in boxing is healthier than it has been for years. England Boxing currently has around 19,000 registered members in over 900 boxing clubs.

The continued growth in our membership has been mirrored by a wider growth in the number of people taking part in the sport in order to get fit. In addition to competing boxers, there are around 150,000 people boxing for health and fitness every week, and in a Sport England survey measuring the satisfaction of participants in their chosen sport, boxing achieved an above-average result of 82.6%, exceeding the target by 18,300; one of only four sports to achieve this significant increase.

It's a great time for spectators too; London 2012 and Glasgow 2014 were enormously successful in providing a shop window for the sport, drawing huge sell-out crowds. A new post-war record for a professional boxing crowd was set at Wembley Stadium in May, when Carl Froch boxed George



Groves. I would say that boxing is very much a sport on the ascent.

How do you feel that you can increase the participation in boxing? What have you done to appeal to a wider audience?

As a national governing body of sport, England Boxing continues to work closely with its clubs to help them to increase their membership. This means supporting clubs to become sustainable, well-run organisations.

Boxing is now a part of the School Games, and a new Junior Boxing Organisers course has been established to introduce young people to volunteering within the sport. We've also launched 'satellite clubs', which provide an opportunity for clubs to increase their capacity to deliver and boost participation in suitable facilities that meet the needs of their members. We have club support officers employed in each region to help deliver and support these projects.

Boxing has traditionally been seen as a tough sport, and we appreciate that some people might feel daunted by the idea of walking into a boxing club, or simply may not have considered boxing as a route to fitness. However, we recognise that people do want to get involved in boxing for fitness and health reasons, as well as to compete, so we've evolved our own fitness product. BOX is a fitness workout incorporating Olympic boxing techniques with a fun, challenging workout. It's aimed at those who want the fitness benefits of boxing but don't necessarily want to join a boxing club. It was developed by coaches who have worked with Olympic medallists, and it can be delivered by fitness instructors and community leaders who have completed and passed a one-day course.

One of England Boxing's key tasks has been to challenge the perceptions of the sport that have been barriers to participation. One of the ways we've tackled this is by taking the sport out into the community and letting people try it out in a familiar environment using mobile boxing arenas; all-weather facilities that allow members of the public to try out boxing at festivals, community and cultural events, town centres - we've even had one in castle grounds. Coaches and staff are on hand to answer questions and help engage people, and local clubs can showcase what they do with live demonstrations. As a result, many of our clubs have seen a significant benefit in terms of membership increase.

Our flagship event, the Elite Championship Finals, has undergone an exciting change in format and we've been fortunate to secure a significant broadcast partner in Sky Sports. The event last year was held at the Liverpool Echo Arena over three days and provided a



great opportunity to showcase some of the stars and personalities in the sport to a much wider audience than ever before.

Additionally, the student market is a growing participation group for boxing and we are developing more competitions for universities and colleges.

How inclusive is the sport? Is it just for a certain demographic e.g. males ages 14 - 22?

There's an old-fashioned view of boxing as something that takes place in grimy clubs and is totally male-dominated, but that's certainly not the case anymore. The medal success enjoyed by England's women boxers in both the Olympics and the Commonwealth Games has been instrumental in encouraging more women and girls to take up boxing. Boxing enjoys a strong black and ethnic minority participant base, and projects organised in partnership with mosques and other faith centres have been popular.

I think part of boxing's initial appeal for many people is the fact it is affordable and very little equipment is

required. It is unique in the opportunities it affords to disadvantaged communities; many of our clubs are the essence of their local community, and have a proven track record of success in tackling social issues, crime and anti-social behaviour.

Although boxers compete until the age of 40, the sport offers fitness opportunities for all ages.

What are your views on the use of headgear?

Significant changes have been made by the international federation, with rule changes for senior elite men, which includes the removal of head guards. As a governing body, we are obviously primarily driven by the views of our athletes, and the feedback we have received from them so far has been positive. In terms of competition and tournaments, the sport has responded well to recent rule changes.

What impact is social media and new technologies having on the boxing fan base? Where do you feel that this will go in future

At England Boxing we've found social media to be a great way of communicating with our athletes and volunteers at grassroots level, providing a much

more immediate way of gauging feedback from our members.

Social media has become a key channel of communication over the past few years. Twitter in particular makes the sport a lot more accessible. Club boxers can get an insight into the training regimes or competition progress of the athletes that inspire them, and it's a lot easier to engage with others within the sport. It's also a good tool for creating healthy competition between clubs – particularly around championships.

TV production and presentation continues to change and engage fans in a different way, and that can only be a good thing. England Boxing has recently conducted a strategic review and one of the key themes is around our digital strategy and customer relations. We see social media as an absolutely key part of that emerging plan.

What are your general thoughts on the future for boxing?

I think to a degree we're seeing a renaissance of the sport and it is re-emerging into the public consciousness in a very positive way. London 2012 and Glasgow 2014 were hugely successful boxing events, and I believe our major tournaments will only continue to evolve. There have been significant changes in the rules and competition formats of the sport, and the landscape of boxing is constantly shifting, which is very exciting.

We are always very mindful of the fact that the most important person in all of this is the boxer, and the opportunities that are given to that individual. It's great to see the sport continue to provide these opportunities and it's a very exciting time to be a part of boxing.





Mauro Icardi is in a very public clash with Maxi Lopez. Icardi uses social media to taunt Lopez, including posting photos with Lopez's children.

WHEN TEAMMATES **ATTACK:**

WHY SOME PEOPLE JUST CAN'T GET ALONG

WRITTEN BY: TIMOTHY MOTTRAM

Australia did not enjoy a vintage Commonwealth Games, and you have to wonder how much of the one-field mediocrity is down to off-field disharmony. There was plenty of negative press after former coach Eric Hollingsworth was sent home from Edinburgh after launching an attack on runner Sally Pearson.

Pearson didn't back down after he made the claim that she had set a poor example to the younger athletes after she failed to join the team for a team camp. Since his suspension, others have spoken out about his treatment of other athletes.

Gold medalist Tamsyn Manou made an official complaint about Hollingsworth in 2012 when he dropped the C bomb on her. She went on to say that "Our sport is in the hands of dictators, not communicators. For the benefit of the athletes, there needs to be an external investigation,"

Sport is tribal. We are trained from the moment we pull on Size 5 boots that we are on the field to beat the other guys. But inner-team rivalries and spats are more common than we think. Today, with sport so tightly controlled by the merchandisers and image consultants, it is hard to see the ugly face behind the mask of rehearsed sound bites. But when the Eric Hollingsworth story went public so quickly, it took the PR people by surprise and showed us just another group of people who don't get along.

Despite culture telling us that your team is like your family, there are often deep divisions within these groups. Logically, a group of people playing a sport will do better if they are brothers or sisters, fighting side by side against a common enemy. But there are plenty of reasons why being on a team is like any other job: there will be people you like, some you dislike, and some you want to throw into a pit of wild dogs.

EGO

One reason why a team is going to have divisions is down to ego. We have reached a point in sport where the players are so rich that they become their own community. Players have posesses and employees, all of which are alternately sucking at the teat or foraging for yet another soft drink deal. People who get in the path of that steaming money train are either going to get run over or there is going to be a nasty, messy collision. The Shaquille O'Neal - Kobe Bryant spat has transcended their days as stars for the LA Lakers. Bryant has been accused of being a ball hog and poor teammate before, but these two took the hatred to epic proportions. Bryant was apparently appalled by Shaq's showboating and apparently reported him to the authorities for his womanising. The two have managed to keep their hatred fresh by rapping insulting messages about each other throughout their music careers.

Probably the most famous clash of egos came in the world of figure skating when an appalled - and fascinated - world watched the tragi-comic saga unfold between Tonya Harding and Nancy Kerrigan. Movie of the week executives must have been rubbing their hands with glee as the news broke that Harding had planned and coordinated an attack on Kerrigan's knee, designed to put her out of the 1994 Olympic Games. Harding's desire to win at all costs by putting her teammate and rival into hospital received the ending it deserved when Kerrigan skated her way to silver while Harding went home placed 8th.

SLIGHTS

Sometimes it doesn't take a very big spark to light a fire. One of the most famous examples of a little act leading to an epic hatred comes to us from English football. Andy Cole and Teddy Sheringham played for Manchester United for years while secretly hating each other. The genesis of the feud came before they were clubmates.

Making his debut for England, Cole was replacing Sheringham. "I expect a brief handshake, a 'Good luck, Coley', something," he says. "I am ready to shake. He

snubs me. He actively snubs me, for no reason I was ever aware of then or since. He walks off.

"I was embarrassed. I was confused. And there you have it. From that moment on, I knew Sheringham was not for me."

Despite forming a deadly partnership, the two never swapped one word.

There are slights that just sort of happen, and then there are the type that are premeditated and designed to inflict shock and awe. Back in 1997, American football franchise the Washington Redskins were enjoying a run of form that was getting them tipped for the Superbowl. Then the team running back – Stephen Davis – decided to drop a grenade in the dressing room by declaring that the top receiver Michael Westbrook - was gay. He wasn't, and in the rather homophobic world of football, this flat out lie fostered very abrupt fall in team morale. Performances dipped. The Redskins were gone.

WOMEN

Those who believe sport is nothing but cavemanning in fancy polyester kits may have a point when we look over the long and pitiful history of teammates not respecting the boundaries of martial vows. In the NHL back in the early 2000s, there was a scandal involving the wife of Alexander Mogilny – the team's best player – and Shayne Corson, his teammate. When the affair came to light, the dressing room shattered into cliques and the Leafs tumbled to years of mediocrity.

John Terry of Chelsea managed to divide the English dressing room by sleeping with teammate Wayne Bridge's ex, but much more bizarre is the very public clash between footballers Maxi Lopez and Mauro Icardi. Former teammates, the two have fallen out

over Lopez's ex-wife Wanda Mara. Social media addicts, Icardi and Nara post daily selfies, often accompanied with Lopez's children. Lopez quite rightly is pretty steamed about his family effectively being hijacked by the Inter Milan star Icardi who has made things even weirder by having images of the children tattooed on his arm. Naturally, he tweeted about the ink, saying that "I love these little angels". On top of Mara publishing that during their marriage she and Lopez had not had sex in months, you would be forgiven for hoping that Lopez decks him

next time they play. So far his retaliation has been to refuse an offered handshake during a Serie A meeting of their two clubs.

Despite all the animosities, teams keep going out to play week in, week out. Some implode, but most of the time the players just get on with it. Shane Warne and Adam Gilchrist were part of the all-conquering Australian cricket team of the 1990s, and the pair were not on the best of terms. Rumour has it that during a Pura Cup match, Warne's sledging was so over the top that Gilchrist never quite forgave him. And yet the pair took a tonne of wickets together. Indeed, that rivalry can spur a player on to greater efforts. The Guardian's 'Secret Footballer' recalls a teammate who he disliked making him a better player. "We were always very aware of each other's ability and we used the competitiveness that knowledge provoked to great effect on the pitch, by trying to outrun, outwork and outscore each other at every opportunity."

Sport will always push people into competition, and that can spill over. It is natural, and sometimes healthy. But it always makes good press.

Social media addicts, Icardi and Nara post daily selfies, often accompanied with Lopez's children. Lopez quite rightly is pretty steamed about his family effectively being hijacked by the Inter Milan star Icardi who has made things even weirder by having images of the children tattooed on his arm.

Women's cycling team outfits "unacceptable" says UCI President

Brian Cookson, President of the International Cycling Union (UCI), has criticised the "unacceptable" outfits worn by a women's Colombian cycling team while racing at the Giro della Toscana in Tuscany, Italy.

A photograph of the six IDR-D-Bogota Humana-San Mateo-Solgar cyclists has been circulating on social media attracting criticism for the apparent nakedness around the midriff area. Among the many critics is British Olympic, Commonwealth and world road race champion Nicole Cooke, who tweeted: "This has turned the sport into a joke. Girls stand up for yourselves - say no."

The mainly red and yellow outfit appears to be largely ordinary from the midriff up, however, an apparent flesh-coloured torso area gives the impression that the wearer is partly naked.

Despite the critics, reports in Colombia have indicated that



a member of the team designed the outfits with riders having worn it for several months already.

The UCI released a statement stating: "The UCI will be sending a letter to the Colombian Federation reminding them of their responsibility regarding article 1.3.046 in the control of regional and club team kits that compete in international events."

Ecclestone settles bribery case

A German court has ruled that Formula One tycoon Bernie Ecclestone can pay a \$US100 million settlement to end his bribery trial.

Ecclestone, who is now likely to stay at the F1 helm, struck an accord with prosecutors on the huge payment which then received the Munich tribunal's blessing.

"The proceedings will be temporarily suspended with the agreement of the prosecution and the accused," pending payment of the settlement within one week, the judge said.

The \$100 million payment is reportedly the largest of its kind in German criminal justice history, with \$99 million to go to the Bavarian state coffers and \$1 million to a "child hospice foundation". Ecclestone had been asked whether he could make the payment within a week, to which he replied: "Yes".

Ecclestone went on trial in April on charges of paying \$US44 million to Bavarian bank executive Gerhard Gribkowsky in 2006-07 to help maintain his four-decade grip on Formula One.

A settlement is allowed in German criminal cases if prosecutors, aggrieved parties and the court agree, but the Ecclestone deal has stoked fierce criticism. Court spokesman Andrea Titz said the judges had determined that a conviction was "not particularly likely" based on the evidence presented so far. Proceedings had been scheduled to last at least until October.

Under the terms, Ecclestone will not have a criminal record and should be able to retain his control of the multi-billion-dollar F1 empire.

Lance Armstrong's fortune under increased threat



Lance Armstrong, 42, stands to lose nearly \$100 million in two lawsuits.

Two years after he was stripped of his seven titles in the Tour de France, Lance Armstrong now faces an increased risk of losing his personal fortune as well.

Armstrong, 42, recently scaled down his empire. He moved out of his house in Austin and sold his private jet. While Armstrong has settled or survived other litigation, federal Judge Robert Wilkins dealt Armstrong a stinging defeat — an 81-page ruling that denied his request to dismiss the government's case.

Wilkins determined that doping by Armstrong's cycling team would have been a "total breach" of their sponsorship contracts with the Postal Service, which paid \$40 million to sponsor the team from 1998 to 2004.

Ethics investigator chides FIFA over report secrecy

FIFA ethics investigator Michael Garcia has criticised the organisation's lack of transparency and urged it to publish his report into the bidding process for the 2018 and 2022 World Cups.

Garcia has written a report into corruption allegations concerning the attribution of hosting rights for the tournaments, but FIFA president Sepp Blatter says publishing it would compromise witness confidentiality.

Speaking at the ABA Criminal Justice Section International White

Collar Crime Institute conference in London, Garcia said: "The investigation and adjudication process operates in most parts unseen and unheard.

"That's a kind of system which might be appropriate for an intelligence agency, but not for an ethics compliance process in an international sports institution that serves the public and is the subject of intense public scrutiny."

The American lawyer added: "Transparency is not intended to embarrass certain individuals by airing dirty laundry or to harm the organisation by showing what went wrong. It's the opposite.

"Where the institution has taken significant steps forward and made that progress, transparency provides evidence of that to the public."

Russia won the right to host the 2018 World Cup and Qatar was awarded the 2022 tournament after a joint-bidding process that was overshadowed by accusations of corruption and horse-trading.

Several high-profile figures have called for world governing body FIFA to publish Garcia's report, including UEFA president Michel Platini and FIFA vice-president Prince Ali Bin Al Hussein.

In other news, FIFA President Sepp Blatter has told his executive committee colleagues he plans to run for re-election next year, though he is not yet an official candidate.

The Swiss official says he told them he "will accept, let's say, demands, pleas" from national federations to seek a fifth mandate.

Blatter, who turns 79 before the vote in Zurich, says his mission is unfinished.



Gyms and fitness centres failing to comply



Researchers have raised concerns at the high number of gyms and fitness centres failing to comply with industry guidelines designed to minimise the risk of injury when exercising.

Sports injury prevention researcher Caroline Finch, head of the Centre for Healthy and Safe Sport at Federation University in Victoria, Australia, said more than a third of fitness centres surveyed failed to screen members to establish their pre-existing health issues.

This is despite a national screening system designed by Fitness Australia and introduced in 2012 which, although voluntary, was designed to lift industry standards.

Known as the Australian adult pre-exercise screening system, the guidelines include assessing a gym member's risk of cardiovascular disease, metabolic or respiratory disease and getting clearance from a health professional.

The results of the survey of more than 1100 people working in the fitness industry - conducted by Professor Finch and colleagues from Bond University, the University of South Australia, Sports Medicine Australia and Fitness Australia - also found almost a quarter were insufficiently aware of the guidelines.

"If you go to a gym where the people don't know about the guidelines, then you're not going to get assessed before you start to exercise, and they're not going to tell you what's safe for you," Professor Finch said. "Failing to follow these guidelines puts people at risk."

Editor's note:

Risk management company VRA Risk has stated that when they are visiting and surveying a gym, the following questions are asked and information gathered accordingly:

Do staff have the relevant fitness qualifications?

Is there a medical or a fitness assessment completed for new members?

Are new members shown how to use all of the gym's equipment?

Do members "sign off" on the equipment they have been shown how to use?

Does the client have an effective "Accident Book" or "Accident Reporting System"?

In regards to points 2 and 3 in particular, if a venue is lacking in these areas, a risk recommendation as follows is made:

"As part of the introductory induction process a health questionnaire needs to be developed where a prospective new member's prior history of playing sport, engaging in exercise and sporting injuries sustained is recorded. The questionnaire should identify any health issues such as high blood pressure, and if there are any doubts about the person's ability to commence a membership a doctor's medical clearance is required before the membership can be granted."

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RISKY BUSINESS

Legal liabilities associated with injuries caused by poorly maintained sporting equipment or playing arenas are well known. However, recent cases have emphasised the breadth of potential issues that face sporting bodies. **Andrew Ray**, Solicitor with DLA Piper, highlights a range of cases that bring into focus the importance of sound risk management and the need to implement and abide by appropriate risk management plans.

DOCTOR'S LIABILITY

Matthew Egan, former Geelong footballer and current Essendon assistant coach, recently issued proceedings in the Supreme Court of Victoria alleging that Geelong's Sports Medicine Physician (and his surgeon) failed to advise him of the long term risks associated with foot surgery. Egan commenced an aggressive rehabilitation program less than 2 weeks following surgery, but suffered severe pain and was unable to recover in time to play in Geelong's 2007 Grand Final demolition of Port Adelaide. Egan has required numerous subsequent surgeries and alleges permanent incapacity. Sport-related Bodies should be aware of potential liabilities associated with the negligent advice and conduct of health and fitness advisors and should ensure that such professionals are suitably qualified.

DEFAMATION

(Dank v Cronulla-Sutherland District Rugby League Football Club [2014] NSWCA 288)

The much publicised Stephen Dank issued legal proceedings in the Supreme Court of New South Wales

against the Cronulla-Sutherland District Rugby League Football Club (and others) alleging that the Club was vicariously liable for defamatory statements made by the Club's Chairman to the effect that Mr Dank injected players with 'horse drugs'. The Court struck out Mr Danks' claim for procedural reasons (he was not aware of the precise words spoken and could not adequately plead his claim) and he was refused leave to appeal this decision. Defamation proceedings are inherently linked with mis-communications and relationship breakdowns. A Sports-related Body can be held liable for any defamatory statements made or published on its behalf and, especially in high-tension sporting environments, should be aware of these risks and maintain a degree of 'level-headedness' in all communications.

DISCRIMINATION

(Brown v Bourke Bowling Club [2012] NSWADT 248)

Ms Patricia Brown issued proceedings in the New South Wales Administrative Decisions Tribunal alleging that the Bourke Bowling Club discriminated against her on the basis of race. The Club's board decided to suspend Ms Brown for 2 years after she was heard by a staff member swearing on her mobile phone at the Club. The evidence indicated that swearing was 'commonplace' at the Club, that there was no prescribed penalty for swearing and that a non-Aboriginal member of the Club received a lesser suspension for threatening to kill staff members. The Tribunal found that Ms Brown was treated less favourably than a non-Aboriginal person would have been treated in the circumstances and ordered that the Club pay \$8,000 in compensation together with a written apology.



Stephen Dank: At the centre of allegations involving the use of performance enhancing drugs at a number of Australian sporting clubs.

This decision emphasises the need for decision making processes to be transparent and based on implemented rules and policies wherever possible.

DUTY OF CARE

(Parker v City of Bankstown RSL Community Club Ltd [2014] NSWSC 772)

Ms Kathleene Parker issued proceedings in the Supreme Court of New South Wales against the Bankstown RSL Community Club (and others) when she fell from a step in an auditorium whilst attending a daytime dance school concert in which her children were performing. Ms Parker alleged that the step was insufficiently illuminated or indicated. The Club was held to owe a duty to those on Club premises to take reasonable care to protect them from harm and to warn of risks of harm that were not obvious.

Whilst the Court found that the risk of someone falling on the step during a performance when the lights are dimmed was foreseeable, the Court dismissed the claim

and found that the Club had taken adequate precautions against the risk of people falling on the step by installing metal strips along the edge and strip lighting below the step. Ms Parker was found to be solely responsible for her fall as she was not watching where she was going. Had she been successful, Ms Parker would have been awarded \$577,608 in damages. Sports-related Bodies should perform thorough inspections of all premises under their control (including club houses and function rooms, and not just areas used for sport) in an attempt to identify and take precautions against risks and 'hidden traps' which pose a risk to occupants.

The above cases show that the legal risks facing sports-related bodies may not be immediately apparent. A proactive and well documented risk management practice will assist them to avoid legal proceedings. A thorough assessment of all activities, staff conduct and premises (both sports and leisure related), and transparency and openness in policy and decision making processes, may enable risks that otherwise 'lurk' in the shadows to be identified and managed.

THE CHANGE UP

WHEN YOU SHOULD CHANGE YOUR EXERCISE REGIME



REASONS TO CHANGE YOUR PROGRAM

1. YOU ARE UTTERLY SICK OF IT

The first piece of advice here is suck it up. If it got you results before, it will keep on working if you keep evolving it. But if that boredom means you aren't lacing up your trainers anymore, then radical measures might be required

2. YOU HAVE AN INJURY

If the repetitive nature of your routine or an external incident makes it painful to do the exercises in your program, quit it. Get advice from a doctor and a professional trainer to find out how to get around the pain

3. IT'S DOING NOTHING FOR YOU

It might be that you have plateaued because of ill-discipline, but you might just have found a program that your body doesn't respond to. It is time to have a frank conversation with yourself on what your goals are, and how realistic are they. It might be that you need to change.

We have all been there. You start your new exercise kick with a shiny new tracksuit and a spritely willingness to get to the gym by six a.m. Over the next few weeks, your self-congratulatory grin is amped by all the people who are patting you on the back, or the biceps, depending on how well things are going. You are shedding weight and wondering if you should get your back shaved for summer.

Fast forward a few months, though, and things look different. Gone are the days of big gains and rapid changes. Where once you were continually racking up the weights, now you have been sitting on the same numbers for weeks. You feel you might vomit if you have to do another forward lunge.

So you grab a copy of a fitness magazine and there is the answer. Your muscles have worked out what you are up to and have decided they no longer want to allow you easy gains. They got used to your program. They are now just going through the motions, hoping you won't notice that they are phoning it in, waiting for you to shower and get the hell out of the gym so they can kick back. What you need to do is change your program.

Like most topics in the world of exercise, not everyone is buying this argument.

“Muscle confusion” is a term knocked about in both the gym and the offices of muscle magazines, but just how a muscle gets confused is difficult to say. You can hardly give it a rubik's cube or ask it to solve an equation. Muscles have the mental acumen of a rubber band: they are hardly crafty adversaries. With that in mind, there is a large segment of the exercise community that believes you should just stick with your regime and put that lack of gain down to lack of will.

The non-change party makes the simple argument that if you persist

with the same regime you will inevitably make incremental gains. While they acknowledge the body can adapt, throwing out a perfectly good system is counter productive. In fact, it can set you back, as in the first few weeks you will be testing the new system and will not be functioning as smoothly or to your maximum capacity. They claim that the concept of change-ups was invented by the powerful Exercise Magazine Lobby in an effort to sell more press. After all, they have plenty of pages to fill between ads for muscle supplements.

However, it is hard to argue with all the exercise professionals throwing their voices behind the idea that change makes exercise work. These people tend towards the ripped: their biceps, if not their science, should be heeded. They make the argument that the body adapts to any physical challenge, and changes are required to keep you gaining size or fitness.

The answer to the question of whether you need to change your program is somewhere in the middle.

Changing every other week is obviously nuts. You just get used to a system and then you have to start again. You lose time in the gym as you stand there, slack jawed, looking at the latest program and wondering what a sideways lateral raise actually is. Your body cannot get the most out of a series of exercises that you are not familiar with.

But keeping the same thing going for months and months is equally dangerous. Newness at the very least makes you think about the exercise. Your form is generally good and you have got the impetus to improve. The same exercise over a long period can lead to complacency and corners being cut. Moreover, when you start getting too familiar with a program you might start fiddling with the exercises you don't like, throwing them out because

you just don't like them. And often the exercises you like least are the ones you should be doing.

The trick to keeping things fresh is two-fold. First, you should constantly be cranking up the output in your exercises. Your body responds to increasing increments of effort. This ensures greater fitness or mass, depending on your target. We tend to 'plateau' roughly two months into a program, and this is often because we tend to push up to the next level too early. Making smaller increases in the level of intensity means you have someplace to go later down the road. Hit your maximum level too early and you will sacrifice improvement.

Second, you should make relevant changes to your program while keeping the same overall structure. An example is in weight training. You might start out doing 3 sets of 8 for each exercise. After a few weeks, try doing 4 sets of 6. You are still doing 24 reps total, but the change will freshen things up and make it more interesting. Lower reps per set means you can do a larger weight, which will help too.

With cardio, try swapping through different machines: bike one week, treadmill the next. Or instead of a half hour run, jog for 15 minutes and then engage in some high-intensity interval training.

The reason sports science is so contentious is that everyone has a different response to exercise. What works for you will not work for the person puffing away on the elliptical trainer next to you. Therefore you need to invest in finding a system that you enjoy and helps you make gains. Like finding a life partner, it is not easy. And like a husband or wife, you would be crazy to get rid of them just because your heart has stopped going all aflutter when you see them. Make some little, constant changes, and you



BOXING AND RISK:

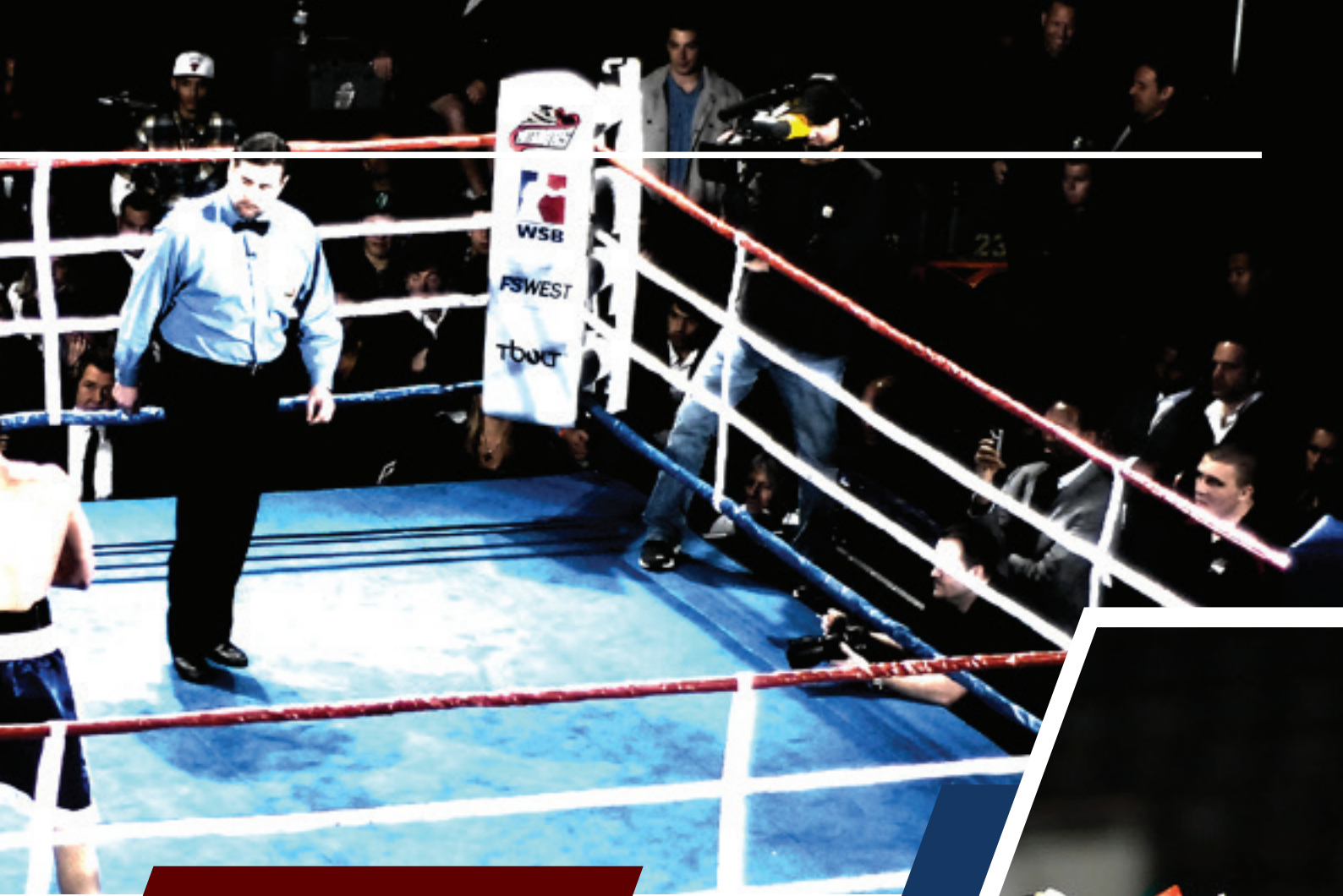
CAN BOXING REALLY GET BANNED?

Back in 1999, the British Medical Association published a pamphlet called *Boxing Packs a Punch*. In it, the BMA laid out reasons why children and young adults should stay away from boxing. It was by no means the first attack on boxing as dangerous, but it was one of the most targeted.

Naturally, the boxing world was less than impressed. And while the attacks have continued, boxing has managed to survive- in spite of mounting medical evidence that the sport leads directly to brain damage and even death. The debate will inevitably continue.

Recent studies prove conclusively that boxing is incredibly stressful for the brain. Frequent blows to the head can lead to Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy, a condition that we might consider being 'punch drunk'. While the immediate repercussions are obvious, hidden underneath the swaying and glazed eyes is the damage that can lead to depression, memory loss and even aggression.

John Hardy, chair of Molecular Biology of Neurological Disease at University College London's Institute of Neurology, explains that "You get tiny lesions along the blood vessels



where they have torn the nerve cells around them. This damages those nerve cells, and those cells start to develop the tangles that you see in Alzheimer's disease.

"And what we now understand is that this process spreads."

Muhammad Ali's tragic slide into dementia is the most salient image when we think of the long-term damage boxing can do. He developed a stutter and a tremor even before the end to his career, and now has Parkinson's Disease. Considering his former grace and eloquence, this change holds great poignancy for all sports fans.

In fact, there is evidence that suggests the damage from CTE causes protein tangles in the

brain. Trials on mice have suggested that these tangles spread damage from neuron to neuron.

The article in New Scientist

by Hardy goes on to say that this condition is not confined to boxers in their later career. Head trauma in the young may be significant enough to change their behavior before even going professional. Violence, aggression and depression "are consistent with underlying damage to the frontal cortex, which controls executive functions such as impulse control."

But sometimes the boxer has the pithiest take on the subject. As boxer Barry McGuigan said, "Boxing damages your brain: don't let anybody tell you different".

While the medical community might

want the sport abolished, most agree that this is both impossible and undesirable.

To many, boxing is a magnificent sport, the sport to which all others aspire. It is obvious that humans have been boxing in some capacity for a very long time. It fulfilled important social functions as aggression was formalised. Boxing is in our DNA. We are as likely to ban alcohol as we are boxing.

Boxing is an undeniably noble sport with a long history. There is, however, a darker side. People enjoy seeing violence. It is hard to argue against this notion given the popularity of

boxing and lately of Mixed Martial Arts. Most societies have some form of ritualised and

legalised systems for two men – and increasingly women – to hit each other.

Ban boxing and there will be an inevitable underground movement. Underground fighting is already a highly dangerous, criminal activity, but it would exponentially grow should boxing be banned. The conditions would be infinitely worse, featuring less or no medical care, and human exploitation would be rife.

Indeed, boxing is safer now than ever before. Between the 1930s and 1950s, boxing was a long-term career. Medical science was not where it is today, and a professional would be

in the ring for an average of 10 to 20 years. The gloves were heavier, which delivers more force. Boxers were not evenly matched for size or skill and yet ring officials rarely called off a fight, even when one of the boxers had been knocked into tomorrow. Even when their career ended, they would participate in sparring which could leave them fighting well into old age.

Compared with those days, boxing is a much safer sport. Harry Mullan, boxing correspondent for The Independent newspaper, states that there is a far higher death toll in grand prix racing. "Racing drivers die in pursuit of enhanced profits and sales figures for the manufacturers of the cars they drive," he says, "but boxers battle in a purer and more noble cause."

Extreme sports such as base-jumping are very risky ventures, but are yet to suffer the same community outrage as boxing.

The social effects of youth boxing in disadvantaged neighbourhoods are well-documented. Many inner-city youths are saved from a life of crime and possibly death because they join a gym. Boxing gives them a sense of community, discipline and self-respect. It provides them with a genuine path to financial security, even of extreme wealth.

While sections of the medical profession are warning against the sport, it would seem that no amount of medical warnings will stop people from boxing. The chief argument is that in no other sport is the objective to render someone unconscious. But in a way, this at least makes the sport

"Boxing damages your brain: don't let anybody tell you different"

more transparent. No one should be surprised when they get injured boxing. Boxing broadcaster Jim Lampley says that boxers “understand what they do. Fighters are more in the clear than any other athlete on the risks they take. Is it a blood-curdling risk? Yes it is...but they know. They know from the beginning. And I don’t think that’s true of hockey players or football players.”

Very few boxers resent the brain injuries that may have come from boxing. They know the risks and they accept them. Even those badly injured in the ring continue working in the sport in some capacity. Presumably they accept the risk and acknowledge all the positives that the sport has brought into their lives.

So if boxing is here to stay, how can it be made safer? Mullan suggests a physician be present at all matches, and should have the authority to stop a bout if he or she is convinced that a boxer is suffering heavy concussion or other injury that has long term effects. Speed is essential with brain injuries; so all bouts should have access to ambulance services and adjacent hospitals. And in line with modern advances into the dangers of concussions, boxers should be kept over night for testing, and provided with longer periods between fights.

Boxing has a huge global audience and it is not going away. Medical professional bodies need to do their best to ensure that fighters continue to be screened effectively before and after matches.





AT RISK

'At Risk' is a regular feature which highlights recent news stories about some of the accidents and injuries that occur in the sport and leisure world. Risk is present in our everyday lives even when we are playing sport and having fun. Here we report some of the more tragic and bizarre events that lead to loss, injury and sometimes even death in our industry.

Ultramarathon burn victim wins \$10m payout

An ultramarathon runner who suffered life-threatening burns when a bushfire tore through an event in Western Australia is believed to have reached a \$10 million settlement with the race organisers.

Turia Pitt, 26, suffered burns covering more than 60 per cent of her body while running in the 100km race in WA's Kimberley region in September 2011.



Turia Pitt suffered life-threatening injuries when she was caught in a bushfire during an Ultramarathon in Western Australia.

A WA parliamentary committee later found Hong Kong-based organisers Racing the Planet did not take reasonable steps to ensure the safety of the runners, several of whom were burnt in the blaze.

Ms Pitt and another severely burnt runner, Kate Sanderson, were each given \$450,000 in act-of-grace payments from the WA government.

But Racing the Planet had continued to deny fault and legal proceedings were begun against the race organiser.

Her lawyer, Greg Walsh, said the Supreme Court action launched in February last year had ended in an out-of-court settlement.

Ms Sanderson, 38, settled with Racing the Planet last year in a separate agreement.

Bride-to-be dies on court after collapsing during a netball game

A 27-year-old champion netball player, who was due to marry this year, has died after suffering a fatal heart attack during a match.

Beth Leske, who excelled in the sport from a young age, died while playing a club match when she suddenly collapsed on the courts at Fred Finch Park at Berkeley, near Wollongong, in New South Wales, Australia. Ms Leske also left behind a young son, Tarne, when she died from a heart attack on the netball court. Two off-duty paramedics rushed to her side to perform CPR, before she was rushed to a Wollongong hospital where she later died.

Beth Leske and her husband-to-be Chris Hendry were due to marry this year. She was a former Illawarra Sports High School student and an Illawarra representative junior basketball player during her teen years. In 2000 she competed in the national championships with the Illawarra under 14 girls basketball team representing NSW Country.



US 'soccer moms' sue FIFA over concussions



A group of young American footballers and their parents have sued FIFA and US football groups over the risks from concussions.

The California class-action lawsuit accuses the sport's governing bodies of acting "carelessly and negligently" and failing to protect young players.

The filing also calls for new safety rules, including limiting the number of headers for young players.

The US collegiate sports authority settled a similar suit earlier this year. The National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) agreed to toughen rules over how long players have to rest after a head injury, and to create a multi-million dollar fund to test athletes for brain trauma.

The FIFA suit, filed by two former youth football players and parents of current young players, does not seek monetary damages, but calls for a medical monitoring programme for those who played football as children and young adults and may have suffered concussions. The filing argues "there is an epidemic of concussion injuries in soccer at all levels around the world" and that "FIFA presides over this epidemic and is one of its primary causes" through its ability to set the rules of the game.

The US Soccer Federation, US Youth Soccer Associations and several other football groups are also named as defendants.

The lawsuit particularly focuses on heading, citing research that the practice is more damaging for young people because their neck muscles are weaker and cannot slow the impact of the ball on the head.

Among the changes sought are limiting the number of times a player under 17 can head the ball and allowing temporary substitutions in professional leagues if a player has received a head injury.

Spanish footballer imprisoned for push

The Criminal Court of Vigo sentenced a local football player to four months imprisonment for a personal injury offence which occurred in a football game in Vigo, a city situated in north-west Spain.

The offence was committed by the convicted football player who pushed his competitor against the advertising hoardings. As a consequence, the competitor hit his head on the steel pole of the billboard and subsequently suffered from serious skull injury and an open wound on the front.

The Judge decided that this conduct was committed with the "intention of undermining the physical integrity of the competitor" and it constitutes a criminal offence punishable under Spanish Criminal Code.

In addition, the Judge ordered the football player to pay to the victim €1,210 to compensate for damage suffered as a result of the offence.

This is a pioneer court ruling in Spain, which opens the door to criminal liability for sports injuries.



Scotland, and Glasgow, you really have delivered in every aspect the best Games ever. Glasgow you were pure, dead brilliant.

Commonwealth Federation
President Prince Tunku Imran

GLASGOW 2014: THE BEST GAMES EVER?

It wasn't long after the lights over Hampton Park were shut down for the final time on the 2014 Commonwealth Games that the eulogies started. It seemed that the Glasgow Games had the whole of the United Kingdom united in self-congratulation.

They certainly got far more things right than they got wrong, and The Gold Coast – host of the 2018 tournament – can take much away from Glasgow. So let's take a look back at the Games...

The opening and closing ceremonies

7/10

Opening and Closing Ceremonies are one of life's tougher parties to stage. Everyone is watching and you can bet more than half want you to fail. You have to straddle the line. It cannot be too pompous and serious, nor too camp and glitzy. Scotland had the added pressure of an independence referendum coming up. Despite the two sides agreeing not to politicise the event, the games couldn't help but put the nation's heritage on display.

The organisers decided to throw every Scottish cliché they could find into the mix, perhaps deciding that which some would take as patriotism, others could enjoy as a wee bit of winking self-mockery. Both ceremonies were particularly kitsch, with The Loch Ness Monster, Susan Boyle and Rod Stewart all making an appearance.

The British Prime Minister was left swooning with the performance by Stewart, tweeting: "Stunning opening ceremony for the Commonwealth Games – and Rod Stewart! Perfect start to Glasgow 2014."

Others were less thrilled. Alex Massie, a Scottish political commentator said it was "Kitsch. Bizarre. Mental. Mortifying. Redeemed by cute-but-vicious ankle-biting dugs. Everything an opening ceremony should be".

One pro-independence observer gave this withering summary: "I'm now much, much less certain that we should be an independent country."

Take-aways for the Gold Coast: No one will ever be happy with opening and closing ceremonies. So don't try to please everyone. Get out there and have fun.

The sport

8/10

The quality of the sport on offer was what you would expect. Given the absence of the traditional giants of athletics, there was still much to get excited about. One statistic that confirms the high quality of the event is that 140 Commonwealth records were broken in Glasgow. There were many highlights, but as usual, human drama makes extraordinary sporting feats even more fascinating. Lynsey Sharp's silver in the 800 metres is said to have created the biggest roar of the tournament. The Scottish runner has faced a nightmare year in the lead up to the Games and was even in hospital the night before the race.

"Even right up to this morning I was in hospital in the village until 5:30. I haven't slept at all. I was throwing up all night. I had a drip in my arm," she said, not long after the race.

One of the biggest upsets was New Zealand's 17-12 loss to South Africa in the final of the Rugby Sevens Competition. It was the first time in 16 years that the All Blacks had not won the Commonwealth Gold. In all but two of their matches did the Springboks fail to score more than 35 points, using an aggressive style of Rugby that left their opponents bewildered.

For real high-wattage star power, you just needed to watch the 4x100 metres relay. Champion sprinter Usain Bolt had finally made it to a Commonwealth Games, and showed the Hampton Park crowd just what fast is.

Despite reportedly questioning the relevance of the competition (more on that below), he seemed genuinely delighted with his gold.

"It means a lot," said Bolt. "It was the

only thing missing from my collection. I missed a couple of Games because of injuries and different problems, so I am happy to be here. Even though I was cold, the reception has been warm."

The Women's Hockey Final saw more than its fair share of chewed nails, after an equalising goal in the final 10 seconds sent the game to penalties, which the Hockeyroos won. More Australian drama could be found in the hurdles, where Sally Pearson rose above the Eric Hollingsworth scandal by taking gold.

Finally, 4.6 million watched the televised Men's 200 metres Breaststroke as unfancied Ross Murdoch beat his rival Michael Jamieson for the first time in his career. For the Scots watching across the world, it was a glorious sight to have two world-class sportsmen representing their country.

Take-aways for the Gold Coast: if you provide the venues, the athletes will provide the drama. You are the vase, they are the flowers.

Making it Relevant

9/10

The standard criticism of the Commonwealth Games is they are pointless at best, an echo of the shameful colonialist past at worst. They go on to argue that without the presence of the world heavyweights Russia, China and the USA, the gold medals being handed out are slightly de-based. Elite sport is about being the best, and how can you take a competition seriously when the best are not even watching your global event?

It is hard to counter-argue this fact. Yes, the Games are limited in ways that the Olympics aren't. England can win double the medals in first place



Clyde Auditorium hosted the Weightlifting.

SOURCE: Finlay McWalter

that Canada got in third. Australia can go into a minor strop for only coming second. Ghana sent 70 athletes and won just two bronzes. The list of absurdity goes on and on. Clearly, The Commonwealth Games are not really very logical.

But one of the advantages of branding the competition “The Friendly Games” is that in a philosophical sense you undermine the argument that the best has to meet the best. What Glasgow did so well was to make this event about the fun and joy of sport. There was never a chance of two badminton teams playing to lose as happened at the London Olympic Games. There are no countries growling at each other across borders spiked with artillery. This is an event where netball gets coverage. And the predominantly Scottish crowd actually cheered on the English teams.

Take-aways for the Gold Coast: Don’t engage with the Captain Buzzkill. The Commonwealth Games is full of elite athletes doing amazing things. Just because not many of them are called Sergei doesn’t make them less worthy of our attention.

The Organisation

10/10

Overall, the success of the Games is down to the people of Glasgow. The organisers saw ways to get their most precious resource working towards a common end. So they should be commended. But the excellence of the Glaswegians is the raw product.

The enormous pride, humour and good-will of the spectators made the whole thing float. Using the people of Glasgow as an army of volunteers paid off, ensuring that the buzz of the game spread throughout the entire city. As champion squash player James Willstrop says “Transport was perfection and running the logistics of all operations were armies of helpful and pleasant volunteers, who did a fabulous job.”

The community was plugged into the planning from the outset. An example of the inclusive way the Games were approached was the designing of the Games’ Mascot, Clyde.

A large green thistle, the character was created by schoolgirl Beth Gilmour when she was just 12 years old. He proved a huge hit, outselling all other official merchandise.

Beth said “It’s really good to see, I feel like it’s my own part of the Games and it’s really good to be involved in a such a good thing.”

And that is the point. By making the people of Glasgow feel involved, they bought into the whole event. They could have engaged focus groups and commercial peddlers to make the mascot, but instead they left it to a high schooler.

Take-aways for the Gold Coast: use the community as much as possible. The Commonwealth Games brand has been redefined by Glasgow. This should be driven and supported by the community.



BIG LOSSES

BEYOND THE SCOREBOARD:

Providing adequate insurance cover for sportspeople is an increasingly vexed issue for many codes, writes **Jason Clout**.

Athletes from the elite level down to grassroots could be presented with the option of choosing their own level of injury cover as a safeguard, should the worst occur. Continual testing of their mental faculties could also become commonplace for athletes as a way of determining if competing has reduced their mental acuity.

The proposals come as sports across the spectrum wrestle with the implications of insuring athletes for what can be a very short playing career if problems arise.

The NRL's Alex McKinnon received a serious spinal injury while playing for the Newcastle Knights earlier this year. In the United States, the National Football League is facing huge claims from a class action brought by former players who believe their mental capabilities have been impaired by playing American football.

All sports bodies stress that extreme injuries are the exception and that sports can be played with minimal risk of major disability. But the chief executive of Sportscover

Australia, David Lamb, says the key question for athletes and sporting administrators is deciding how much insurance cover is enough.

Currently, most decisions are made by those running a sport.

“The NRL and [chief executive] Dave Smith did a magnificent job in organising support for Alex. Since then, they have also implemented a system where there is an insurance scheme where \$1 million is available to support an injured NRL player,” says Lamb.

The AFL, Australian Rugby Union and other sports have similar schemes in place. But Lamb says players at all levels should have a say in how much cover they have.

“You could have the base level cover provided by the sport, but on top of that you could elect to take additional cover. Any extra cover could be organised through the players’ associations or in collective bargaining agreements.

“It would allow a player to secure bigger cover than the base amount, weekend warriors included. That could be even more important for people who play sport simply for the exercise or enjoyment.”

Lamb says many people join a local sporting team and think they are adequately covered when, in fact, they may be exposed financially if injured. They might pay \$150 for registration and insurance but less than a tenth of that may actually go on injury cover, says Lamb. The rest may be spent by the sporting body or club on administrative costs like ground hire, or repair and fees for referees.

“It’s not that those expenses aren’t important. Of course they are. It’s just that it can mean there is not as much being spent on insurance as someone might think,” says Lamb.

That’s a major problem when even a \$250,000 insurance payout can be quickly consumed by medical costs from a catastrophic injury. The worst cases can run into millions.

Another issue perplexing sporting administrators is the ramifications of head injury cases in the NFL. American football is different from the local football codes in that padding, including a hard helmet, is a required part of the playing outfit. Debate in the US has raged over the dimensions of the concussion cases. Many argue

the multimillion-dollar fund proposed by the NFL is insufficient for the number of former players who face a life impaired by significant memory loss, anger outbursts and other severe types of mental distress.

It is uncertain how and if Australian sports will need to adapt. As with the NFL, the conundrum can be that symptoms may not manifest themselves until many years after retirement.

CLOSER SCREENING

The NRL has moved to closer screening of concussed players, so they have to complete a sideline test to establish cognitive

competence. Concussion is likely to be better monitored across all sports, including enforced layoffs. But Lamb would like to see it taken even further, with the implementation of a system where professional athletes would undertake a test at the start of the season.

Those results would be rechecked to see if there was a drop in their capabilities over the year.

“The challenge, of course, is that could mean a club being without a star player for a big game,” says Lamb.

Matt Harvey, senior lecturer in the College of Law and Justice at Victoria University, says the US cases should ring alarm bells for local sports executives. What has been noticeable is the number of cases in the US, rather than just a few isolated examples, he says.



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AND MY OBVIOUS RISKS

By James McIntyre, Special Counsel with HBM Lawyers

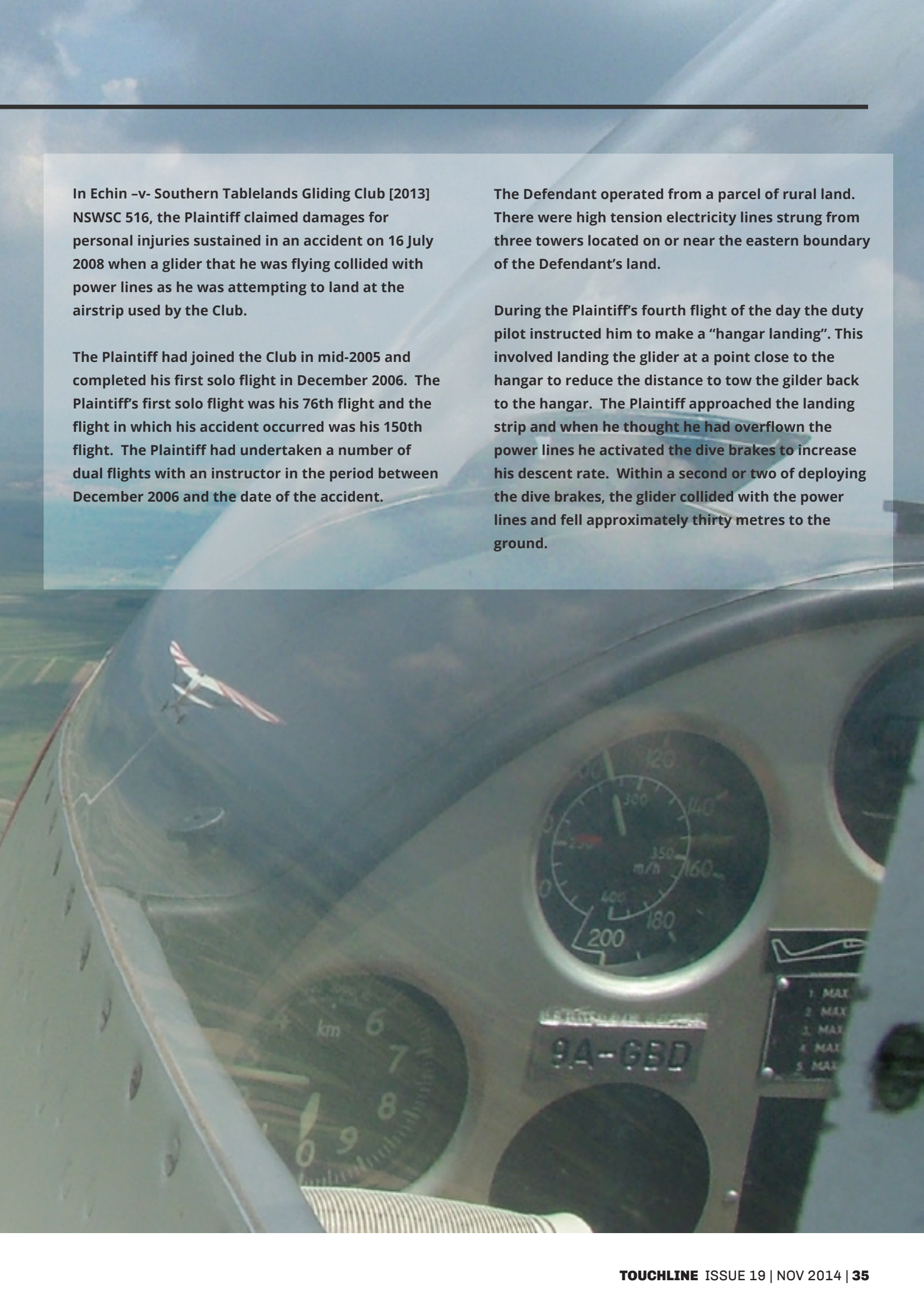
Many liability claims from sporting and recreational activities relate to the condition of the playing surface. As a change from considering claims arising from earthbound activities, the New South Wales Supreme Court and Court of Appeal have recently considered claims arising from gliding and the use of light aircraft and this article will discuss the Court's conclusions and identify any lessons applicable to terrestrial recreational activities.

In *Echin -v- Southern Tablelands Gliding Club* [2013] NSWSC 516, the Plaintiff claimed damages for personal injuries sustained in an accident on 16 July 2008 when a glider that he was flying collided with power lines as he was attempting to land at the airstrip used by the Club.

The Plaintiff had joined the Club in mid-2005 and completed his first solo flight in December 2006. The Plaintiff's first solo flight was his 76th flight and the flight in which his accident occurred was his 150th flight. The Plaintiff had undertaken a number of dual flights with an instructor in the period between December 2006 and the date of the accident.

The Defendant operated from a parcel of rural land. There were high tension electricity lines strung from three towers located on or near the eastern boundary of the Defendant's land.

During the Plaintiff's fourth flight of the day the duty pilot instructed him to make a "hangar landing". This involved landing the glider at a point close to the hangar to reduce the distance to tow the glider back to the hangar. The Plaintiff approached the landing strip and when he thought he had overflown the power lines he activated the dive brakes to increase his descent rate. Within a second or two of deploying the dive brakes, the glider collided with the power lines and fell approximately thirty metres to the ground.



The Plaintiff alleged that the Defendant had been negligent on the following grounds:

1. Providing a runway in a location such that high tension electricity lines were likely to intersect the flight path of gliders approaching the runway;
2. Failing to instruct or warn the Plaintiff as to the danger associated with using that runway for landing;
3. Failing to warn the Plaintiff as to the risk of collision with high tension electricity lines;
4. Failing to ensure the Plaintiff was sufficiently trained before permitting him to fly solo.

The Plaintiff conceded in his evidence that he was aware of the power lines and further conceded he became aware of them during his training at the Club. Justice Davies agreed with the joint experts' conclusion that the Plaintiff had been appropriately trained in how to deal with the power lines.

Justice Davies also found that the Plaintiff was sufficiently experienced to fly solo and noted that the mere fact the Plaintiff may have made errors from time to time did not of itself show that he was not competent to fly solo and there was no expert evidence suggesting, on the basis of log book entries or otherwise, that the Plaintiff was not sufficiently competent.

Consequently, Justice Davies found that the Club had not been negligent

Although it was not necessary for the Court to consider the defences raised by the Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW) (CLA), the Court went on to consider the protection provided to volunteers and the defences and dangerous recreational activity and obvious risk.

Community work and volunteers

There was no dispute that relevant persons from the Club such as the duty pilot and the Claimant's instructors were volunteers for the purposes of Section 61 of the CLA. Section 61 provides protection to volunteers from any personal civil liability in respect of any act or omission done in good faith while performing community work (which includes work for sporting organisations which is not for personal gain).

The Court noted that if the allegations of negligence against the Club's volunteers had been made out in respect of activities for which the Club might be vicariously liable, the Club would have had the benefit of Section 3C of the CLA. This section provided the Club with the same immunity as that provided to the volunteer. However, the Court noted that these provisions would not shield the Club from allegations of negligence for which the Club was directly liable.

'Dangerous recreational activity' and 'obvious risk'

Justice Davies noted that there was no real dispute that the Plaintiff was engaged in a dangerous recreational activity. The critical issue was whether a collision with power lines was an obvious risk of that activity. The Court noted that gliding involves a significant risk of physical harm because although the risk of an accident is low, the potential harm would be catastrophic. Further, the Court noted the Plaintiff's concession that landings were the most dangerous aspects of gliding and that power lines presented a danger which could potentially result in injury or death.

Accordingly, the Court concluded that the risk of striking power lines was an obvious risk of gliding over power lines and most relevantly, performing a landing over power lines. This was due to the need to descend over them or very shortly after passing over them, and it was that risk which materialised in the present case. Consequently, the Plaintiff's claim was dismissed.

In *Campbell v Hay* [2014] NSWCA 129 the Plaintiff sued the Defendant for injuries sustained when the single engine recreational aircraft in which he was receiving flying lessons from the Defendant had to make a forced landing in a paddock because of engine failure.

The Defendant was a highly experienced pilot and flying instructor who had flown a total of 8,000 flying hours (including 1,500 hours on the model of aircraft in which the lesson was being conducted).

The accident occurred during a training flight in which the Plaintiff was flying between Katoomba and Oberon under the Defendant's instruction. Approximately 45 minutes after the flight commenced, the Defendant felt "subtle" engine vibrations for a minute or so and he instructed the Plaintiff to increase the engine revolutions, after which the

vibrations ceased. After the vibrations ceased, the aircraft continued on its course before turning back for the return leg to Katoomba and the Defendant instructed the Plaintiff to reduce the aircraft speed and the aircraft flew normally for the next five minutes.

The second set of vibrations occurred about five minutes after the first set of vibrations when the plane was again flying at 70 knots per hour. The second set of vibrations lasted for about 30 seconds and the Defendant took control of the aircraft and the vibrations worsened before the engine stopped completely.

The Court noted that the period from the commencement of the first set of vibrations to complete engine failure was about 7 ½ to 8 minutes. The Defendant then started looking for suitable terrain for a forced landing and conducted a forced landing in a paddock.

The Plaintiff alleged the Defendant had been negligent in not ensuring that the aircraft was flown towards an appropriate landing strip immediately after the second set of vibrations started and, "Continuing to fly towards Katoomba relying on some 'misplaced' sense of innate luck".

The Court of Appeal found that the allegation that the Defendant had been negligent by failing to immediately seek a suitable landing strip was not supported by the expert evidence. The Court noted that any delay in diverting the aircraft in the last 20 or 30 seconds before the engine failure could not be criticised as the Defendant was occupied with making adjustments in an attempt to rectify the second set of vibrations as had successfully been done with the first set of vibrations.

The Court also rejected the contention that the Defendant had simply "trusted solely to luck". The Court noted the only criticism that might be directed to the Defendant was that he had waited a short time to see if the vibrations corrected themselves, and this was not unreasonable having regard to his experience and the expert evidence.

'Dangerous recreational activity' and 'obvious risk'

The Court also rejected the Plaintiff's contention that there was no basis for the Trial Judge to conclude that flying a light aircraft under the supervision of an experienced instructor was an activity that carried a significant risk of physical harm.

The Court noted that a complete engine failure in a single engine light aircraft brings a risk that a forced landing will result and the risk that such a landing will result in serious injury or death. The Court further noted that this risk exists whether or not the pilot is an experienced pilot, since it cannot be assumed that all engine failures can be resolved without forced landing.

The Court found that this risk must have been obvious to a person in the position of the Plaintiff (an adult having his third lesson in a single engine light aircraft) and accordingly, the dangerous recreational activity defence provided by the CLA would apply to the claim.

Accordingly, the Plaintiff's appeal was dismissed.

Post-flight checklist

The following points emerge from these decisions:

- A sporting club or organisation may be able to take advantage of the vicarious liability immunities provided by Civil Liability legislation. However, the nature of the allegations of negligence and the extent of control which the organisation exerts over the volunteers will be an important consideration in assessing whether any vicarious liability arises.
- The fact a person is undertaking an activity under the supervision of an experienced participant does not remove the element of danger from that recreational activity.
- Where the risk of an accident in a recreational activity is low but the potential harm is catastrophic, that activity can be characterised as 'dangerous' for the purposes of Civil Liability legislation. This is especially relevant in sports in which the safety of participants may depend upon a single piece of equipment, such as the engine in a single engine aircraft or an oxygen tank when scuba diving.
- The assessment of whether a risk associated with a 'dangerous recreational activity' is 'obvious' requires an assessment of whether it would be apparent to a reasonable person in the position of the plaintiff. In claims arising from sports in which the claimant maintains a logbook of their activities, the logbook can provide critical evidence to assist in that assessment.



Scotland

Glasgow to host the 2018 European Swimming Championships

Glasgow emerged as the winner of the bidding procedure for the 2018 European Swimming Championships. The continental showcase will visit Scotland for the very first time in its history.

Cabinet Secretary for Commonwealth Games and Sport Shona Robison said: "I am delighted that Glasgow has been chosen as the host of the 2018 European Swimming Championships. This is a hugely important event, won through a strategic partnership including EventScotland, Glasgow City Council and British Swimming, which will give us the opportunity for us to further the profile of swimming in Scotland.



No venues have been announced, but Tollcross International Swimming Centre will almost certainly stage the main indoor swimming events.



Australia

Australian Grand Prix posts record A\$60 million loss



The 2014 Australian Grand Prix posted a record A\$59.97 million loss amid soaring costs and declining revenue, government officials have announced.

The loss, subsidised by taxpayers in Victoria, the host state of the Melbourne Formula One race, outstrips last year's deficit of A\$50.7 million by over 18 percent.

Sales revenue was down A\$2 million while expenditure was up A\$7.5 million, Victoria's Major Events minister Louise Asher told reporters.

The race, which has traditionally opened the F1 season, has recorded A\$50 million-plus losses for a number of years, sparking a backlash from local critics who see it as a waste of public money.

The controversy was brushed aside last month, however, when the state's Liberal-led government inked a new

five-year deal with Formula One management to keep the race in Melbourne until 2020.

Local politicians from both major parties have long justified the costs on the claimed economic impact and branding effect the race has for the state.

"The Formula 1 Australian Grand Prix alone generates between 351 and 411 full-time equivalent jobs and up to A\$39 million in economic benefits as well as up to A\$35 million in media or advertising-equivalent," a statement released by Asher's office said.

Critics have strongly questioned the accuracy of those figures.

The government also announced the 2013 Australian MotoGP held at Phillip Island circuit near Melbourne had posted a loss of A\$11.27 million, nearly double the previous year's A\$5.9 million.



Europe

Four countries co-host EuroBasket 2015

France, Croatia, Germany and Latvia have been awarded the right to co-host EuroBasket 2015, while France will host the final knockout stage of the biennial tournament.

“This is an important moment in the history of European basketball, as we have voted not only for the hosts of next year’s event but also on pioneering a new concept, with four hosts,” FIBA Europe President Turgay Demirel said.

It will be the first time in history that the event, which will run from September 5-20, will be hosted in multiple countries.

The four first-round host cities will be Berlin, Montpellier, Riga and Zagreb while the finals will be played at the Lille Arena, which seats 27,000 spectators.

Eight countries - Croatia, Finland, France, Germany, Israel, Latvia, Poland and Turkey - submitted official bids to host or co-host the event.



Canada

The Canadian Soccer Association have confirmed their intention to enter the race for the 2026 FIFA World Cup tournament in January.

Canada have never previously hosted the World Cup finals, which were last staged in North America 20 years ago when the United States held the event.

The US are reported to be among the leading contenders to stage the 2026 tournament, while Canada have already been confirmed as hosts for next year’s Women’s World Cup.



England

Twickenham will host the inaugural European Rugby Champions Cup final on Saturday May 2nd 2015.

European Professional Club Rugby (EPCR), the new company set up to organise the competitions, undertook what they described as a “competitive tender process” open to countries which provide the clubs for the English Premiership, the French Top 14 and the Pro12 competitions.

Next year’s final will be the fifth time the 82,000-capacity Twickenham will host the European decider, setting an attendance record in 2012 when 81,744 fans attended Leinster’s victory over Ulster.



The France national team after winning silver medals in FIBA EuroBasket 2011, hosted by Lithuania.

SOURCE: Christopher Johnson



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Events in 2015:

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- UCI BMX Supercross World Cup Series, Manchester; 18-19 April
- ISAF Sailing World Cup, Weymouth; 10-14 June
- IPC World Swimming Championships, Glasgow; 13-19 July
- Modern Pentathlon European Championships, Bath; 16-22 August
- EHF European Hockey Championships, London; 21-30 August
- European Wheelchair Basketball Championships, Worcester; 28 August - 7 September
- European Eventing Championships, Perth; 10-13 September
- World Canoe Slalom Championships, London; 15-20 September
- World Artistic Gymnastics Championships, Glasgow; 23 October - 1 November

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