

touchline

ISSUE 21 • AUGUST 2015



GREAT ASHES SERIES

BODYLINE

IS GOLF ON THE DECLINE?

STEPHEN PITT

CEO OF GOLF AUSTRALIA COMMENTS

GOLF'S MOST BIZARRE AND
BEAUTIFUL COURSES

THIS GIRL SHOULD:

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SPORT?



TOUCHLINE PROFILE:
AN UPDATE FROM DEANNA
KYRIAZOPOULOS

A BIG COMMITMENT TO RUN
3000KM IN 367 DAYS

PHIL HUGHES' DEATH:
THE FALLOUT

CONCUSSION REARS ITS UGLY HEAD AGAIN



STEVE BOUCHER

Concussion has become a big issue – perhaps THE big issue in sport. Everyone is talking about it, the media have regular news stories focusing on players suffering with it, and lawyers are making a killing from it. It is almost as though this is a new phenomenon.... some recently discovered major health issue that has only just been announced to the public. The Sports Legacy Institute in the USA is even announcing on its website that it is 'solving the concussion crisis'!

The focus on concussion has largely been driven by the stark realisation that the cost of not doing something is much higher than the cost of trying to reduce the risk. Billion dollar lawsuits tend to have that effect. But the real cost is to those players who suffer the long-term effects of concussion, so it is important we explore ways in which to minimise the risks whilst also making sure that in doing so we do not change the rules of the sport so significantly that it becomes completely anodyne or something entirely different from what it is meant to be.

It is therefore refreshing to hear a good piece of news from the US judiciary for once when a judge dismissed a lawsuit by soccer players and parents seeking to force FIFA and other governing bodies to change the sport's rules, including limiting the number of headers allowed, in order to reduce the risk of concussions and other head injuries. In a recent decision, Chief Judge Phyllis Hamilton of the federal court in Oakland, California, said the plaintiffs could not use the courts to change FIFA's "laws of the game," noting it was their decision to play soccer.

"Plaintiffs have acknowledged that 'injuries' are a 'part of

soccer'" Hamilton wrote, citing the complaint. "Those who participate in a sporting activity that poses an inherent risk of injury generally assume the risk that they may be injured while doing so."

According to the evidence submitted, 46,200 U.S. high school soccer players suffered concussions in 2010, more than from baseball, basketball, softball and wrestling combined and at least 30% of soccer concussions come from heading or attempting to head balls. But only one of the seven plaintiffs claimed she suffered a concussion from playing soccer, and Hamilton said this appeared to be a one-time injury that ended with a full recovery.

Concussion injuries from sport have been around since sport began. Many sports are associated with a high risk of concussion – boxing, rugby, ice hockey, American football...., the list goes on. Pretty much any contact sport, as well as many non-contact sports, such as gymnastics and even cheerleading, present a higher risk of concussion.

Medical science may have provided us with better insight into the effects of concussion and the potential long-term health consequences of it, but still the debate continues on the best way to try to minimise the risk.

American football is one sport that has taken a number of steps to try to minimise the risk of concussion in a sport where it is almost regarded as part of the game. A raft of rule changes have been introduced over the past few years. Kick-offs were moved further up the field to reduce the number of high-speed impacts and helmet-first tackles have been banned. More protection has also been given to players unable to protect themselves, such as quarterbacks in the act of throwing.

The chairman of the National Football League's health and safety advisory commission, Dr John York, recently said that he believes American football could ban helmets in the future.

So isn't suggesting the removal of helmets a backward step in prevention?

Not necessarily so, as some experts think helmets give the players a false sense of security and make play more aggressive. The idea of banning helmets has been raised by some doctors and ex-players in recent years without ever really being taken seriously.

It is an idea that has already been introduced in another sport with a high incidence of concussion related injuries – boxing.


The International Boxing Association banned the use of headgear for some categories of boxing stating that all available data indicated that the removal of headguard in elite men would result in a decreased number of concussions. Research involved 15,000 boxers, half of whom had competed with headgear and half without and found that in the 7,352 rounds that took place with boxers wearing headgear, the rate of concussion was 0.38 per cent, compared with 0.17 per cent per boxer per round in the 7,545 rounds without headgear.

American football players first started wearing head protection - initially made from leather - at the turn of the 20th century when skull fractures and neck injuries were a significant and occasionally fatal problem. Helmets are much improved since the first plastic models in the 1940s.

These developments were intended to improve safety, but they also emboldened players to make bigger hits, often using their helmets like battering rams. Concussions were inevitable.

For the game to be played without helmets, the three-point stance which enables players to launch themselves at each other headfirst, providing the trademark crunch that starts each play, would probably be outlawed and instead each play would start in a more upright position. But York thinks the NFL, which is used to making changes, should continue to tweak its rules, including, perhaps, ditching its iconic headwear.

An evolutionary change of the rules that improves the safety of the sport by minimising the risk of concussion which, at the same time, maintains the principle elements and enjoyment of the sport is a natural progression.

But a knee-jerk reaction in the face of a media frenzy that changes the sport significantly is not the way to go. 

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BODYLINE

BY TIMOTHY MOTTRAM

It was January 1933. An already restive crowd erupted at the Adelaide Oval when a short ball from English paceman Harold Larwood reared and struck Australian wicketkeeper Bert Oldfield in the head.

The player hit the ground, injured with what was later revealed to be a fractured skull. Mounted police were called in to prevent what could well develop into a full blown riot. The English players nervously considered their options, some eyeing the stumps as makeshift clubs.

This moment can be considered as the lowest point in Anglo-Australian relations.

The Bodyline series, more formally known as the 1932-33 Ashes, is famed beyond what happened on the field. It represents a significant spurt in the growth of Australian nationhood. The timing of the series in a cultural-historical sense demonstrates, yet again, that sport is more than men hitting balls around fields.

With the 2015-16 Ashes already underway, Touchline looks back at a series so turbo-charged with emotion that it changed the sport forever.

The early 1930s was a period when Australia was still in the process of understanding itself as a nation independent of Britain. Many in the crowds during that series were born before Australia's federation and independence from Britain in 1901. Some would have fought in the First World War, which in turn helped forge some sense of independence. But still in the thirties, Australia had a deep sense of inferiority towards the mother country: a deep love, yet a feeling that what would later be described as cultural cringe.

Many Australians of the day had parents who had emigrated

in the past decades, which further tangled the national consciousness. So in a way, sport helped to untangle Australia's identity. Putting on a hat and deploying in a direct adversarial opposition to the English made everything much clearer.

Once the game got heated, that conceptual divide became even more salient. Australia could better understand itself as a singular entity once it was conceptually at war with England.

The situation was built for conflict along national lines. The English captain, Douglas Jardine, personified British uppitiness. A true blueblood, his cold demeanour was interpreted as a condescending disregard for the colonials. Whether this was an inferiority complex projected onto Jardine or a true reflection of his opinion it is hard to know.

What we do know about Jardine is that he had a healthy respect for the Australian team, and in particular, Donald Bradman. And so he should have. In the 1930 series, playing in an unfancied side, Bradman scored 131, 254, 334 and 232, helping Australia to a 2-1 win.

During those tests, players caught onto the fact that



Bradman squinted or flinched when a ball was pitched high into his body. So Jardine decided to tap into this apparent weakness by planning to employ “Fast Leg Theory”, which later became known as Bodyline.

Fast leg theory aimed to have the fast bowlers attacking the leg stump of the batsman. The captain would then stack the leg side of the field. The batsman was then faced with a choice. He could hit the ball to the leg side, but would rarely break the line of fielders. Or he could try to hit the ball to the unprotected offside, a risk because he would have to step away from the stumps to play across his body.

The subsequent mythology has Jardine himself inventing the tactic to gain an unfair advantage over Australia’s golden boy. In fact, fast leg theory had been around for years and many county games had seen it employed.

Jardine’s variation of the tactic was much more devastating for one reason. This was the man employed to hurl it in at Bradman’s chest. Harold Larwood was extremely fast and unerringly accurate. He hit the pitch hard and the ball would rear up viciously.

Australian pitches appear to have changed in their natures between this series and the previous, so the quicks were getting much more action. Another myth surrounding the series was that Jardine exclusively used the fast leg theory. This is not the case. Bradman did not play in the first test due to an argument with the Australian Cricket Board, and England managed a 10 wicket win without even using the tactic.

Once Bradman was back, bodyline was employed in the second test. Australia leveled the series, but it was the third test at Adelaide that really brought the heat. After Oldfield’s fractured skull, the ACB sent a telegram to the Marlborough Cricket Council, English cricket’s power brokers. They complained that bodyline was “unsportsmanlike” and should be shelved

immediately. The MCC archly dismissed the complaint, saying that they saw nothing wrong with Jardine’s tactics but would abandon the test series if Australia was dissatisfied. The ACB backed down, knowing that a cancelled test series would cost them considerable revenue.

The series ended 4-1 to England, as Jardine continued to employ fast leg theory intermittently in the final three tests. The controversy rumbled on, and even the governments of the two countries got involved in the war of words. Many of the players chose to take blows to the upper body rather than give up their wickets, which further enhanced their reputation as Australian heroes, in contrast to the unfair tactics of England. Bradman, a much wicker batsman, dodged the short pitched deliveries and exposed his stumps to get the ball away on the off side. A smaller man, he sacrificed runs to save his body. He ended the series with an average of 56.57, the worst of his career: numbers most batsmen would be proud of.

By the end of the series, the MCC came to see the damage the series had done to the reputation of English cricket. Jardine never captained the country against Australia again, and they gradually instigated rule changes that would prevent stacking the leg side and would limit the number of short-pitched deliveries a bowler could send down. Harold Larwood was the most glaring victim of bodyline’s fall out: he never played for England again. A gifted bowler merely following his captain’s orders, he was restricted to county matches and eventually moved to, of all places, Australia.

Bodyline’s legacy is part of the Australian self-concept. It happened at one of those moments in history when a nation’s identity is malleable and helped the country differentiate itself from its forebear. No other Ashes series can come close to its acrimony, just as no other series will ever be quite as broadly significant.

ODESNIK'S 15-YEAR BAN 'GOOD FOR TENNIS'

Wayne Odesnik's 15-year doping ban is "good for tennis", according to world number three Andy Murray.

Odesnik, 29, tested positive for several banned substances, including steroids, last December and January. The American, ranked 267th in the world, announced his retirement within minutes of his ban becoming public.

The latest doping violations followed a two-year ban in 2010 for possessing human growth hormone (HGH). The ban is the longest in the sport's history.

Murray told BBC Sport: "It is good for tennis that they got him off tour. It is the end of his career and with the ban he can't even come on site to events or coach. That is a good thing.

"He is a cheat, and it is good for everyone in tennis he is dealt with in the right way."

Murray's comments were echoed by Andy Roddick, the 2003 US Open champion and a former world number one.

The American, who is now retired, tweeted: "I hate that he has a US flag next to his name when he's cheating. Good riddance."

Odesnik's best result at a Grand Slam came in 2008, when he reached the third round of the French Open.

He also reached the 2009 final of the US Men's Clay Court Championship in Houston, his only ATP World Tour final.

He achieved his highest world ranking of 77 in April 2009.

In his statement announcing his retirement, Odesnik claimed he had "unknowingly ingested a contaminated over-the-counter supplement" and said he was "heartbroken".

MELBOURNE UNITED BOSS LARRY KESTELMAN INVESTS MILLIONS INTO NBL

Larry Kestelman is the new executive director of the NBL following a successful AUD\$6 million takeover.

While Kestelman remains committed to Melbourne United as an owner of the club, his priority now will be returning the NBL to the heights of popularity it once enjoyed.

"As a result of his controlling stake in the league, he will step down as Chairman (of United) and take on the role of executive director of the National Basketball League," the NBL said.

Graeme Wade will remain as independent chairman of the NBL Board and will focus, with Kestelman, on forming a

new board that will drive broadcast and general revenue.

Kestelman will concentrate on restoring the NBL to commercial success, including establishing an NBL Commission and securing a media rights partner and major sponsor ahead of next season.

The NBL is expected to be an eight team league next season with Townsville Crocs and Wollongong Hawks expected to come out of voluntary administration joining Adelaide 36ers, Perth Wildcats, New Zealand Breakers, Melbourne United, Cairns Taipans and Sydney Kings.

NEW AMERICAS SIX NATIONS TOURNAMENT ANNOUNCED

The Pan American Rugby Association (PARA) has revealed that it plans to launch a new national team competition next year based on the European Six Nations model.

The tournament, which has yet to be named, would bring together the top-six ranked rugby union nations across North and South America with the goal of strengthening

competition in the region. The initiative was unveiled followed a PARA meeting in the US city of Miami.

The competing nations – Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Uruguay and the United States – will each play five matches annually.

WHEELCHAIR TENNIS SINGLES ANNOUNCEMENT AT WIMBLEDON AS WHILEY AND KAMIJI RETAIN TITLE

The only British success at the All England Club this year came in the women's wheelchair doubles as Jordanne Whiley won her sixth Grand Slam title with Japanese partner Yui Kamiji.

Whiley and Kamiji have forged a successful partnership, winning the calendar Grand Slam last year, and were too strong for Dutch duo Jiske Griffioen and Aniek van Koot in a 6-2, 5-7, 6-3 victory.

At the same time it has been announced that from 2016 there will be a singles event in the men's and women's divisions of wheelchair tennis at Wimbledon.

The announcement, which comes on the tenth anniversary of wheelchair doubles being introduced at SW19, means there will now be singles at each of the four Grand Slams and cements wheelchair tennis on the world stage. Great Britain now hosts nine events on the ITF's UNIQLO Wheelchair Tennis Tour, as well as hosting the Tennis Foundation Development Series for those just starting out



in the sport. These events include the year-end spectacular that is the NEC Wheelchair Tennis Masters, which features the top eight men and women, as well as top four ranked quad players. This will be hosted by the Tennis Foundation in Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, London from 25-29 November 2015.

BREAK WITH TRADITION AS FA CUP GETS FIRST TITLE SPONSOR

The FA Cup will be rebranded as The Emirates FA Cup after the Football Association signed a three-year contract with the Dubai-based airline.

The deal, which starts next season and runs until 2018, means Emirates become the first title sponsor of football's oldest knockout competition.

Budweiser ended its three-year association with the FA Cup last year.

Budweiser's deal with the FA was styled as "in association with", but the new agreement with Emirates sees the 144-year-old competition get a title sponsor for the first time.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE TWENTY20 SCRAPPED DUE TO DWINDLING FAN INTEREST

The Governing Council of the Champions League Twenty20 (CLT20) on Wednesday confirmed that the ill-fated competition will be discontinued with immediate effect.

Launched in 2009 as a top-tier multi-national T20 cricket tournament, CLT20 was a joint initiative among the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), Cricket Australia (CA), Cricket South Africa (CSA). This year, CLT20 was scheduled for September and October for a seventh season.

In a media release, BCCI secretary Anurag Thakur said, "This has been a difficult decision as the Champions League T20 provided added context to a number of domestic Twenty 20 competitions around the world such as the IPL in India, Big Bash League in Australia and South Africa's Ram Slam T20. "

Dwindling fan interest has been cited as the reason for the cancellation of the competition.

NFL ENTER AGREEMENT TO PLAY AMERICAN FOOTBALL IN SPURS' NEW STADIUM

Tottenham Hotspur have announced an agreement with the National Football League that will see American football matches played in north London. The ten-year agreement will see Tottenham hosting at least two NFL American football matches in its new stadium when it opens in the summer of 2018. The announcement was made by Spurs via Twitter and on its official website and was confirmed by the NFL.

The NFL has been playing gridiron football matches in London for years, but have been looking to expand their presence there, as the market for American football has grown dramatically. The agreement with Tottenham Hotspur is to host football matches between already existing NFL franchises, but the league has been talking about eventually expanding the league to include a

London-based franchise. The agreement with Tottenham to play NFL games in North London is not exclusive; games could still be played at Wembley Stadium or other locations in England, but the agreement guarantees "at least two" NFL games per season.

It has been reported that NFL games in London are lucrative with gridiron matches at Wembley bringing in around £1,000,000 per match.

The new, state-of-the-art Tottenham Hotspur stadium itself will feature a retractable grass field with an artificial pitch surface below it that will be used for NFL matches. It is anticipated that the grass field will be used for soccer purposes only, since gridiron games produce much greater wear on grass surfaces than your average football match.

GOGGLES THAT CAN DETECT CONCUSSION BEING TESTED

The University of Miami Hecht Athletic Center has been testing concussion-detection goggles which are being developed by UM doctors and a Pittsburgh-based software company called Neuro Kinetics.

The goggles feature imbedded eye tracking and stimulus display and can detect brain injury by measuring eye movement and speed and symmetry of pupil dilation. This data helps determine at the site of injury whether an athlete is clear to return to the game or whether further medical attention is needed.

UM researchers will spend the next 18 months developing the goggles, then make a production model and hope for FDA approval. Their aim is three types of devices — a simple red light-green light version under US\$200 that could be used in youth sports, a more sophisticated model for college and pro sports and the most complex device to be used by physicians to aid with concussion treatment and clearance.

A BIG COMMITMENT TO RUN 3000KM IN 367 DAYS

We all know stories about people who give up their time or put in an amazing effort to raise money for good causes, but one man who is going further than most is Dave Mason.

He is trying to raise \$10,000 through sport for a cancer charity in New Zealand...and for very good reason.



In 2012 Dave's beloved daughter, Hayley, was struck down with cancer. After two long years of treatment, thankfully Hayley is now in remission. But Dave calculated that during Hayley's treatment from November 2012 to March 2015 they had travelled 3,000km between their home and the Starship hospital in Auckland, New Zealand.

Dave used this fact to set himself a goal that he would run 3,000 kilometres in 367 days and this would include 4 marathons. The four marathons were to represent 4 children (Jaxson, Peter, Ethan and Gabby) that Hayley knew well and that didn't make it to the end of their treatment. He started his venture on the 4th March this year.

In Dave's own words,

"My journey is inspired by the journey that my daughter Hayley started when she was 7 to beat cancer. She had a tumour the size of a tennis ball in her chest that was at risk of taking her from us. Life changes at this point. All of the worries you have fade away and your focus is on saving the life of your child. We have spent just over two years going through treatment, seeing first-hand the effects that cancer

has on our child, and we have navigated through as a family, supported by some close friends and understanding bosses at work."

This is a massive task for Dave who describes himself as an average runner at best but in just over 4 months he has covered 1,000 km and has already nearly reached his target by raising \$9,678 so far.

So Dave is on track to achieve his distance target and is not only getting fitter but is also doing his bit to help to raise funds for research into cancer.

WATCH VIDEO HERE:

<https://youtu.be/Px8Y74Fku6g>

FOLLOW DAVE'S JOURNEY

GO TO

<https://aucklandnorthlandevents.>

SPORTS CEO FORUM LAUNCHED IN UK

A National Governing Body CEO Forum has been launched in the UK to act as an independent voice to influence national and local policy making on sport in England. The forum is Chaired by Adrian Christy, chief executive of Badminton England and includes chief executives from 39 National Governing Bodies (NGBs), including Olympic, non-Olympic and Paralympic sports.

To promote the work of NGBs the Forum have released a report entitled the "State of Play", which highlights their impact in 2014.

The research was compiled by Professor Simon Shibli, Head of Sheffield Hallam University Sport Industry Research Centre, and aims to present a well-rounded view of governing bodies influence on sport, rather than focusing solely on their medal tallies.

Each NGB provided information ranging from the number of members their organisation has, to the number of volunteers and tally of medals won at major international championships.

The report points to there being 1.8 million people registered as members of sport clubs run by the NGBs.

The 39 NGBs receive roughly 78 per cent of Sport England funding across a four-year period, which is around £300 million, while they are awarded £196 million only for Olympic and Paralympic sports through the four-year Rio 2016 cycle from UK Sport.



PROFESSOR SIMON SHIBLI

As the report aims to highlight the importance of sport to the future government, over 1.9 million volunteers were calculated to have been linked to NGBs, a greater number than the entire National Health Service, while their financial contribution estimated to have been worth around £5 billion (\$7.5 billion/€7 billion) for the year.

The value of the volunteers and the increased number of

participants in sport, with 9.3 million people across the country claiming to take part in at least 30 minutes of exercise a week, are seen as examples of the NGBs having an impact on sport in communities.

Professor Shibli explained that his research had also shown the influence that the NGBs had on both grassroots level and on the international stage.

"CEO Forum NGBs also helped to deliver almost three million sports competitions last year and an increasing number within schools, as well as a growing number of British officials holding positions in international sports administration," he said.

"Our research demonstrates the impact of NGBs in supporting some significant social and economic agendas crucial to whichever administration holds office at 10 Downing Street from May."

The Forum are set to meet every six weeks.

1,812,132

Club membership
[over 1 million more
than UK political party
membership]

317

Major events held

26,729

**Competitions
in schools**

9,300,000

**People doing at least
30 minutes of sport each week**

£4.9 billion

Value of volunteers

1,908,991

NGB volunteers
[more than entire
NHS workforce]

50,262

Affiliated clubs

169

**Positions held in
international
sports influence**

2,967,534

Competitions held

BEAT THE BOSS



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VOLUNTEERS

RISK & REWARD

CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING POINTS WHEN HIRING VOLUNTEERS FOR EVENTS

RISK

VARIETY OF RISKS

THERE ARE A VARIETY OF 'RISKS' TO CONSIDER WHEN DEALING WITH VOLUNTEERS, INCLUDING RISKS TO THE VOLUNTEERS THEMSELVES, SPECTATORS, STAFF & ATHLETES. E.G. CONSIDER THE SCENARIO OF VOLUNTEER DRIVERS MOVING ATHLETES AROUND A CITY PERHAPS GETTING LOST, INVOLVED IN AN ACCIDENT, OR SPEEDING. YOU MUST CONSIDER REPUTATIONAL AS WELL AS PRACTICAL RISKS.

CODE OF CONDUCT

YOU MUST SAFEGUARD AGAINST POTENTIAL ISSUES ARISING OUT OF THE ACTS OF A VOLUNTEER. A CODE OF CONDUCT IS A MUST. CONSIDER ALSO THE DIFFERENT ISSUES ARISING FROM THE USE OF YOUTH VOLUNTEERS.

REWARDS

VALUE

WELL-TRAINED AND WELL-MANAGED VOLUNTEERS ADD REAL AND MEASURABLE VALUE TO MAJOR EVENTS.

MOMENTUM

THERE IS SIGNIFICANT MOMENTUM OVER RECENT YEARS AROUND THE DEVELOPMENT OF A MOBILE AND COMMITTED VOLUNTEER POPULATION FOR MAJOR SPORTING EVENTS.

DATABASE

SIGNIFICANT THIRD PARTY SCHEMES SUCH AS 'JOIN IN' HAVE BEEN DEVELOPED SINCE LONDON 2012, PROVIDING A POWERFUL AND ACTIVE DATABASE OF VOLUNTEERS.

LIABILITY

DISCLAIMERS

DO NOT BE TEMPTED TO USE DISCLAIMERS TO SHY AWAY FROM LIABILITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES EMANATING FROM THE USE OF VOLUNTEERS.

RECORDS

EVENT MANAGERS AND ORGANISERS HAVE A RESPONSIBILITY TO MAINTAIN ACCURATE RECORDS AND SEEK SIGNED AGREEMENTS WITH VOLUNTEERS CLEARLY OUTLINING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS OF VOLUNTEERS FROM THE OUTSET.

VOLUNTEER CHECKLIST

TRAINING

- ✓ HAVE THE VOLUNTEERS BEEN TRAINED FOR THEIR SPECIFIC ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES?
- ✓ HAVE THE VOLUNTEERS UNDERGONE AN INDUCTION WHICH OUTLINES POTENTIAL EXPOSURES TO THEM AND HOW TO MINIMISE THESE EXPOSURES?

INSURANCE

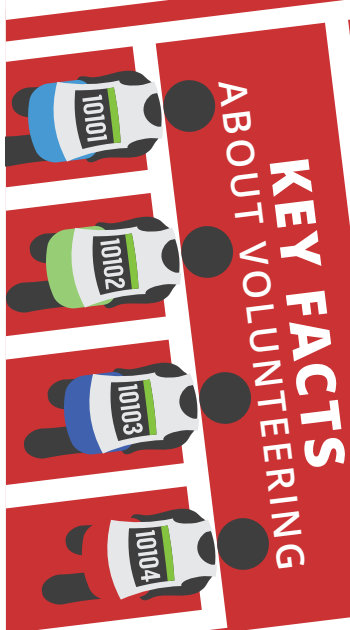
- ✓ DOES YOUR LIABILITY INSURANCE SPECIFICALLY INCLUDE VOLUNTEERS AND ENSURE THAT THERE ARE NO EXCLUSIONS FOR THEIR ACTIVITIES?

RECRUITING

- ✓ DO THE VOLUNTEERS COMPLY WITH THE REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS E.G. WORKING WITH CHILDREN IF EVENT INVOLVES CHILDREN?
- ✓ DO THE VOLUNTEERS HAVE A GOOD LEVEL OF EXPERIENCE TO BE ABLE TO HANDLE THE ACTIVITIES THEY ARE SUPERVISING?
- ✓ CAN THE VOLUNTEERS COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY WITH THE ORGANISERS AND EACH OTHER?
- ✓ WHAT ARE THE GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS IN PLACE FOR THE SELECTION OF VOLUNTEERS?



FACTS & FIGURES



2 Mn VOLUNTEERS IN THE UK VOLUNTEER AT LEAST 1 HOUR PER WEEK

50K + PEOPLE OFFERED TO BE VOLUNTEERS AT THE 2014 GLASGOW COMMONWEALTH GAMES

£2 Bn WHAT IT WOULD COST TO EMPLOY FULL TIME WORKERS TO REPLACE SPORTS VOLUNTEERS

30 + NUMBER OF UK SPORT ROAD TO RIO EVENTS IN 2015/16 THAT WILL NEED VOLUNTEERS

LONDON 2012
70,000 PEOPLE SERVED AS VOLUNTEERS - 40% OF THEM FOR THE FIRST TIME EVER

GLASGOW 2014
SAW VOLUNTEERS IN RECORD NUMBERS FOR A COMMONWEALTH GAMES

RIO 2016
OVER 240,000 VOLUNTEER APPLICATIONS RECEIVED TO FILL 70,000 POSITIONS

GOLD COAST 2018
15,000 VOLUNTEERS WILL BE REQUIRED TO DELIVER THE 2018 COMMONWEALTH GAMES

VOLUNTEER REWARDS

HOW SHOULD VOLUNTEERS BE REWARDED?
A T-SHIRT MAY NOT BE ENOUGH!

CONSIDER A FULLY ACCREDITED SCHEME THAT RECOGNISES VOLUNTEERING THROUGH SPORT, WITH VOLUNTEERS ACCRUING CREDITS, BOOSTING CVs, DEVELOPING SKILLS AND EXPERIENCE AND ADDING VALUE TO THE INDUSTRY AND MAJOR EVENTS OVER A SUSTAINED PERIOD.

MANAGE EXPECTATIONS BUT CREATE A SENSE OF BELONGING AND OWNERSHIP AMONGST VOLUNTEERS. THIS IS RELEVANT FROM A LOCAL CLUB UP TO THE OLYMPIC GAMES!

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THE SPORTS INSURANCE SPECIALISTS



WHEN TO HOLD & WHEN TO FOLD



DAVID LAMB
CEO SPORTSCOVER AUSTRALIA

Sports clubs and associations need an insurer who understands sport and the risks that they face. Naturally, it is also important that the insurer will respond quickly to any claims. But that doesn't necessarily mean paying all claims as sometimes it's in the interest of the club or association for the insurer to reject and fight claims.

Recently **David Lamb** the CEO of Sportscover Australia was quoted in an insurance journal as saying that the insurance industry sometimes needs to "grow a backbone," when it comes to the claims space. Here David explains more about when it is right to hold and when to fold.

Claims are the shop window of insurance. It's an old adage but so very true. Our performance as insurers is ultimately judged on the way in which we respond to claims, both in terms of speed and the outcome.

At Sportscover we pride ourselves on our claims service. Since I became CEO at Sportscover in 2011 I have placed a great deal of emphasis on upping our game in claims which has meant significant additional resource to improve our claims performance and the feedback that we are now receiving is extremely good. In fact our service rating has steadily risen from 3.3 out of 5 at the start of 2013 to 4.2 out of 5 mid way through 2015 based on surveys we conduct every month with all our claimants, a tangible sign that our effort and attention to quality service is being recognised and acknowledged.

However, we certainly cannot and will not rest on our laurels; we will continue to make improvements wherever necessary. It is a real boost and source of pride to me and the claims team to see the response of clients who are happy with the way that their claims have been handled.

Earlier this year we received a claim from a Hockey Association which had suffered serious storm and water damage to part of the synthetic playing surface. Although the damage wasn't reported until almost three months after the incident, as soon as we received it the next day we sent out our assessor who authorised repairs immediately. The client was very happy and commented that we had 'changed their opinion of insurers'.

This is what we are in the business to do, but some insurers are better than others at doing it.

However, the task of insurers is always made more difficult by the spurious and fraudulent claims that plague our industry. There are too many examples of frivolous claims and our industry needs to take a stand before it is too late. These can have a serious impact on the cost of insurance and in some cases the reputation of the insured. Too often insurers do not take the time or trouble to look into the smaller or some of the more contentious claims, putting them in the 'too hard' basket. But this can have a very detrimental effect on the client.

I'd be quite happy to say that sometimes they need to grow a backbone when it comes to the current stance of claims departments and insurers regarding dubious claims. There have been several recent examples of claims that have come across my desk that required a closer look and which we fought because they were clearly spurious or fraudulent.

In one claim a woman attending a children's dance night at an RSL club got up from her table and tripped or slipped on a step down onto the dance floor. She injured her arm quite seriously. There was strip lighting delineating the step and also reduced lighting in the building normal to a concert performance in progress. She sued both the dance school and the RSL club seeking a large sum in compensation which was grossly exaggerated. The circumstances of the incident were thoroughly investigated and the cause appeared to be simply a case of not watching where one was going properly. We considered there was no liability on the part of the dance school (or the RSL for that matter) and we elected to maintain a strong defence of the claim on the insured's behalf. The matter went before the NSW Supreme Court and the verdict was returned in our client's favour.

In another, the claimant was attending an outdoor exercise class in a well known park in Victoria. The class was supervised by our insured, a personal trainer. The claimant alleged that she fractured her ankle after putting her foot in a depression in the park's surface. She sued the insured alleging amongst many things that the park surface was unsafe and lack of proper supervision by the insured. The circumstances were thoroughly investigated and

we considered the claim to be totally spurious. The park is a well known one, regularly used by families and is well maintained. It is most unlikely there was any depression or hole. The claim was recently withdrawn shortly after mediation.

And in a third example a collision between two players who were competing for the ball during a soccer match resulted in the claimant seriously injuring his knee. The claimant sued the local soccer club alleging poor supervision by the referee, and also the other player. Fortunately there was film of the incident

which clearly showed a simple collision between two players during a sporting contest. There was no liability on the part of the club, referee and the other player. A strong defence was maintained throughout and the claim was recently withdrawn.

These are claims that would have been recorded against the insured and would have impacted upon their claims history and subsequent insurance premiums had we not made a stand to defend them.

However, we are fully aware that there is a balance between taking a stand and compassion and understanding in genuine cases. We are proud of being very compassionate to genuine cases, often going beyond the insurance payout to help out the families and communities where we can.

Taking a hard-line approach to certain claims is not always easy, but it is vital

in supporting small businesses and upholding the integrity of the industry. The problem is, if you pay fraudulent or exaggerated claims it can cripple a business either through increased insurance premiums or damaged reputation.

Weeding out the false claims also means we can concentrate more time and effort in making sure that genuine claims are paid promptly. I think the average person on the street who is honest and wants fair insurance cover would encourage insurers to identify those excessive and fraudulent claims and take a strong stand on those.

Sports clubs and associations need the strength of insurance behind them. They also need an insurer with the strength and courage to know when to pay promptly and when to defend the claim on their behalf.

“Sometimes they need to grow a backbone when it comes to the current stance of claims departments and insurers regarding dubious claims.

There have been several recent examples of claims that have come across my desk that required a closer look and which we fought because they were clearly spurious or fraudulent.”

DEANNA KYRIAZOPOULOS

In the last issue of Touchline we introduced Deanna Kyriazopoulos as an up and coming potential future Taekwondo world champion, one of the aspiring young athletes sponsored by Sportscover. Since we last spoke to Deanna she has been competing in the World Championships in Russia and is just back from the Pacific Games in which Australia competed for the first time. Here with an update on her achievements is Deanna's blog.

I was in Belgium for a week of training with the Belgium National Team in May and then moved on to Russia for the tournament, which lasted for 2 weeks. This experience was truly fantastic and gave me the opportunity to train and compete with world-class athletes. I gained a lot of valuable skills and experience. It was wonderful making new friends from different countries as well.

I fought Japan in my first fight and unfortunately lost. The experience I gained from this competition will definitely help prepare me for further competitions. I am very proud that I had the opportunity to represent Australia at the senior World Taekwondo Championships as a junior.

I participated in the Australian Open in June, which was an international event held in Melbourne. Unfortunately I lost to New Zealand, a very experienced fighter.

I am also very grateful to have been selected for the Pacific Games held in Papua New Guinea. I am the youngest member of the Australian Senior Taekwondo Team. I just returned from these Games and am very proud to have won a silver medal in a very tough final against New Zealand which ended in sudden death. At the end of the three rounds, the score was 4-4 and unfortunately the golden point round didn't go my way. I am incredibly proud knowing that gold is well within my reach. My opponent was a much older and experienced athlete. This is the first time Australia and New Zealand were invited to participate at the Pacific Games and my medal was the first ever Australian taekwondo medal at a Pacific Games. I am very proud of that.

It has been an incredibly rewarding and exciting year and I am now currently focusing on my schoolwork and training to prepare for future competitions.



Diving injury decision delivers lessons on risk assessment for schools and sports clubs

BY **JAMES MCINTYRE**, SPECIAL COUNSEL WITH HBM LAWYERS

In *Miller v Lithgow City Council* [2014] NSWSC 1579 the New South Wales Supreme Court found that a school was liable in negligence after a student sustained catastrophic injuries while undertaking swimming training in a Council pool.

The student's claim against the Council was unsuccessful. Although the decision turned on its unique (and tragic) facts, the Court's discussion of those facts provides valuable guidance on risk management for schools, sports clubs and facility operators in relation to the selection and use of training facilities, training of staff and the relevance of guidelines issued by sports governing bodies:

FACTS

The Plaintiff sustained spinal injuries on 7 January 2008 after diving into water approximately 1.1m deep at the shallow end of a public swimming pool operated by the Lithgow City Council.

The Plaintiff was a highly ranked junior swimmer and had been awarded a sporting bursary to the Kinross Wolaroi School (operated by the Second Defendant) and was a member of the school's swimming club, the Kinross Wolaroi Swimming Club (KWSC).

At the time of the accident, the Plaintiff was training for the New South Wales State Swimming Championships. As the school's pool was closed for the school holidays, the Plaintiff was training at the Council's pool. She was supervised by a Mr Brodie, whose two children were also members of the KWSC and were training at the same time. Mr Brodie was following a programme set by Mr Critoph, who was employed by the school as a swimming coach.

Mr Critoph was usually present when the Plaintiff was training. However, if he was not available during

school holidays, he prepared programmes for the Plaintiff and would contact her during school holidays to enquire about her training.

The Plaintiff had been attempting to execute a "track start" dive which she had been taught by Mr Critoph in 2006. She had initially practised these dives at the deep end of the school pool using starting blocks and then began to perform them at the shallow end. The Plaintiff gave evidence that she had never previously experienced problems with the track start dive or her foot slipping prior to the accident.

The Court accepted the plaintiff's evidence that she was never warned of any risks associated with:

- carrying out such a dive at the shallow end of a swimming pool;
- incorrectly performing the dive;
- her feet slipping whilst attempting the dive.

The Plaintiff also gave evidence that if a coach had told her to do something, she did it. After 2006, she always used a track start dive as her method of commencing races or training swims.

The Court heard further evidence that diving at the shallow end of the pool outside of swimming competitions was common and not challenged by pool employees.

The principal of the school gave evidence that the school did not undertake risk assessments of public facilities such as Council pools or sporting fields used by the school at the time of the incident but now undertakes such assessments. He estimated that attempting such a task would be impossible as 40% of the school's 900 students were boarders who came from around the state.

The Court noted that, in judging the reasonableness of the Defendants' actions, there was a wealth of evidence showing that swimming carnivals were a common feature in New South Wales towns and swimming carnivals commonly included relay races where children dived into the shallow ends of pools.

EXPERT EVIDENCE

The Court heard expert evidence from Bill Sweetenham, an elite swimming coach, that "all swimming should be under the guidance of a qualified coach". The Court rejected this approach and commented that it was "so far away from how society operates" and given the

necessity of paying for coaches, even assuming that enough coaches existed or could be trained, such views were unreasonable.

THE COURT'S FINDINGS

Given the extent of diving into shallow ends of pools generally, the Court was not persuaded there was anything unreasonable in Mr Critoph incorporating diving at the shallow end into the Plaintiff's training programme. Further, there was nothing unreasonable in the Council permitting such diving in the course of training.

The Court concluded that the presence of a qualified coach would not have prevented the accident. A coach may have been away from the shallow end of the pool as the Plaintiff dived, and unable to intervene when the Plaintiff was in mid-air.

NEGLIGENCE OF THE SCHOOL

The Court found it was unreasonable for the school, through Mr Critoph, to encourage the Plaintiff to dive into the shallow end of a pool with the lack of gripping facilities of the Lithgow Pool. The Court found that the absence of gripping facilities and the shallow depth both contributed to the accident.



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The evidence indicated that a track start dive carried more risk than a “grab start” or one where the swimmer’s feet were placed at or partly over the edge of a pool and a professional swimming coach was obliged to take account of the additional risks and not simply follow the FINA standard (which permitted diving into water at least 1 metre deep), particularly in view of the magnitude of the potential consequences.

Mr Critoph should have been aware of the risks of the track start dive and the disadvantages caused by an absence of coping tiles at the pool edge.

Accordingly, the Court found the school was negligent, resulting in the Plaintiff’s injury.

The school’s liability arose from Mr Critoph’s failure to warn the Plaintiff of the risks associated with the track start dive. The Court held that a reasonable person in Mr Critoph’s position would have given a warning of the risks to the Plaintiff. Mr Critoph should also have instructed the Plaintiff in how to minimise the dangers associated with the track start dive such as training in aborting a dive that had gone wrong and “belly flopping” into a pool.

NEGLIGENCE OF THE COUNCIL

The Court found no basis for concluding that the Council should have precluded all dives into the shallow end of the Lithgow Pool or was negligent in failing to adopt this measure.

The Court found the Council’s position could be distinguished from that of the school and Mr Critoph and found no basis for the Council being aware of the dangers associated with track start dives prior to the Plaintiff’s accident.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE DECISION

The decision is relevant to sports coaches and their employers (such as clubs and educational institutions, who would be vicariously liable for their negligence) and the operators of facilities at which athletes train.

LESSONS FOR COACHES, CLUBS AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

In the case of coaches whose charges, particularly of junior athletes, are undertaking training away from the coach’s direct supervision, the decision illustrates the

importance of the coach taking reasonable steps (such as an inspection) to satisfy themselves that the facilities (eg swimming pools, gymnasiums, sports fields) are appropriate for the training programme they have devised and do not unreasonably expose the athlete to a risk of injury. Potential hazards may include gymnasiums with poorly maintained equipment, sports fields with irregularities in their surface or facilities with inadequate protective equipment such as padded mats at gymnastics training facilities.

In situations where athletes, particularly those of school age, are training at facilities outside the control of their school or club, where reasonably practicable, the school or club should have procedures to inspect the proposed facilities and document the inspection process. In the event of a liability claim arising from an injury at the facility, the

record of inspection may be a critical piece of evidence addressing the issue of whether the school or club took reasonable measures to satisfy itself that the facility was appropriate for the athlete’s training programme.

SUPERVISION OF ATHLETES’ TRAINING

The need to have a qualified coach present will ultimately depend upon the nature of the sport and the training activity. A training session involving laps of a pool or athletics track is likely to carry a relatively low risk of injury and consequently, a limited need for a qualified coach to be present. This can be contrasted with a training session in which a gymnast is attempting an unfamiliar and demanding routine. Given the potential for catastrophic injury in gymnastics, unlike the conclusion in Miller, the exercise of reasonable care would likely require a qualified coach to be present to identify and correct technical flaws that, if left uncorrected, might lead to significant injury.

Sports clubs and schools do not have limitless resources and are frequently dependent upon volunteers. Care needs to be exercised in the selection and management of volunteer coaches. Resources permitting, volunteer coaches should be provided with specific guidance as to potential risks of the sport (rather than assuming the coaches’ own experience will provide them with sufficient insight into risk management) and the provision of such guidance should be documented and retained.

THE SCHOOL’S LIABILITY AROSE FROM MR CRITOPH’S FAILURE TO WARN THE PLAINTIFF OF THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THE TRACK START DIVE.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE GUIDELINES ISSUED BY A SPORT'S GOVERNING BODY

The decision in Miller illustrates that mere compliance with a sport's guidelines will not provide immunity against a finding of negligence. Although track start dives were permissible under the FINA guidelines of that time, the Court noted that professional coaches are obliged to take into account additional risks and 'not simply follow (limited) standards'. Guidelines are, as the name indicates, merely guides. It is up to coaches to carefully consider the components of the programme they have devised and the environment in which the programme is to be completed and assess whether those elements combine to create an unreasonable risk of injury.

IMPLICATIONS FOR FACILITY OPERATORS

Although the Council escaped a finding of liability against it in Miller, the decision turned upon the facts of the case. A critical factor in the Council avoiding liability was the Court's finding that a Royal Lifesaving Society Practice Note specifically addressing the risks of competitive dive starts in shallow water issued four weeks before the claimant's accident, had come to the Council's attention. Given that this document has now been in circulation for seven years and there is now greater awareness of the hazards associated with a failed track start dive, it is now less certain that a pool operator would escape liability if a similar incident occurred in the present.

For facility operators, the decision illustrates that effective risk management goes beyond physical inspection of the facilities to identify potential hazards. Operators should monitor guidelines from peak bodies of sports conducted at their facilities and assess whether they impact on activities being conducted at their facilities.

RISK MANAGEMENT LESSONS FOR SCHOOLS, CLUBS AND FACILITY OPERATORS

Although Miller turned on its individual facts, the Court's discussion of the evidence and its conclusions contain the following practical lessons for schools, clubs and facility operators:

1. A school or club's potential exposure to liability may extend beyond its own training facilities. Where athletes are training offsite, where practicable, schools and clubs should conduct inspections to satisfy themselves that the facilities to be used are appropriate for the athlete's training programme.
2. The need for a formally qualified coach to be present during training will depend upon the potential risks of the sport and the type of training being undertaken by the athlete.
3. Many clubs and schools are dependent on volunteer coaches who may not hold formal qualifications. Resources permitting, volunteer coaches should be trained in risk identification and management. Younger coaches (who may not be much older than their charges) need to be able to demonstrate the ability to influence their charges to avert potentially hazardous behaviour.
4. Compliance with a sport's guidelines will be relevant to the assessment of whether a school, club or facility operator has discharged their duty of care. Schools, clubs and facility operators need to consider the nature of activities being conducted at their facilities and whether any features of the facility give rise to a risk of injury despite apparent compliance with the sport's guidelines.
5. In addition to physical inspection of their premises, facility operators should monitor relevant industry publications and guidance from relevant peak sporting bodies and assess whether remedial action or modification to activities is required.



ABOUT JAMES MCINTYRE

James McIntyre has extensive experience advising commercial insurers, self insurers and the Australian Government in relation to liability claims. James has defended a wide range of liability claims arising from sports including horse and greyhound racing, mountain biking, motor sport and soccer as well as school physical education lessons.

James has also spoken on sporting liability issues at an international sports law conference. In addition to his liability experience, James has worked as an in-house lawyer at Lloyd's of London.

A SAGA CONTINUES



In the March 2015 edition of Touchline, Andrew Ray, solicitor with DLA Piper in Melbourne, discussed the various legal proceedings relating to the investigation of the Essendon Football Club by ASADA (Australian Sports Anti-Doping Authority) and the AFL. Since then, WADA (World Anti-Doping Agency) has appealed the ruling of the Tribunal (AFL Anti-Doping Tribunal) that it was 'not comfortably satisfied' that 34 former and current Essendon players contravened Rule 11.2 of the AFL Anti-Doping Code by using a prohibited substance, Thymosin Beta 4. Whilst the Tribunal condemned various aspects of Essendon's 'supplements program', it was unable to determine what substance(s) had been injected into the players.

Unsatisfied by the outcome, ASADA referred the matter to WADA, which appealed the Tribunal's decision to the CAS (Court of Arbitration for Sport) and requested that an 'appropriate sanction' be imposed on the players (the maximum ban is 2 years). Whilst the CAS hearing will be based on the same Code and standard of proof as the Tribunal hearing, it will be heard 'de novo' and the parties are entitled to rely on new evidence and witnesses. That said, WADA is unable to compel key witnesses to give evidence (notably Stephen Dank, who devised the supplements program, Shane Charter, who allegedly imported the banned substance, and Nima Alavi, who allegedly compounded the substance). A similar restriction on ASADA weighed heavily in the Tribunal proceeding.

The CAS Panel members are James Spigelman QC (Essendon's selection), Romano Subiotto (WADA's selection) and Michael

J Beloff QC. Neil Clelland QC represents the 34 players and US attorney Richard Young represents WADA. The CAS may issue a new decision or refer the case back to the Tribunal for rehearing. The parties have a right of recourse to the Swiss Federal Tribunal on limited grounds including lack of jurisdiction, violation of procedural rules and public policy considerations.

Whilst the CAS hearing is scheduled to take place in Sydney later this year, WADA has requested that the hearing be stayed pending resolution of the appeal proceeding between Stephen Dank (who has received a lifetime ban) and ASADA in the AFL Appeals Board. With this matter unlikely to be resolved prior to commencement of pre-season training, the cloud surrounding each players' future is darkening. Whilst Essendon deserved to be reprimanded as a result of significant governance failures, it was fined \$2,000,000, stripped of draft picks and its head coach for 12 months, and was expelled from the 2013 finals series. Essendon's on-field performance is deteriorating and it may have difficulty retaining quality out-of-contract players and luring free agents to join the player ranks. Essendon's 'faithful' also appear to be dwindling, recently recording its smallest ever home-crowd at Etihad Stadium. The possibility remains of numerous players being banned and Essendon is also faced with the prospects of a prosecution by the Victorian WorkCover Authority and civil action by various personnel and players. With the wake of this saga likely to surge on for some time, how much 'blood' must be shed by Essendon and its players prior to paying their full penance?

LEGAL FOCUS UPDATE

Australian Capital Territory Court of Appeal dismisses “obvious risk” appeal in *Stewart –v– Ackland*.

Mr Ackland suffered catastrophic injuries at the Defendants’ amusement park whilst attempting a backward somersault on a “jumping pillow” (similar to a trampoline) that was 20 metres x 10 metres in size.

The ACT Supreme Court, at first instance, found the Defendants liable to pay compensation to the Plaintiff in respect of his injuries.

The Defendants appealed to the ACT Court of Appeal , contending that the Plaintiff’s injuries had arisen from an obvious risk of a dangerous recreational activity.

The Court of Appeal upheld the Trial Judge’s finding that the activity in which the Plaintiff was engaged when injured was a “dangerous recreational activity” for the purposes of the Civil Liability Act 2002 (NSW). The Court of Appeal upheld the Trial Judge’s findings that the risk which materialised was not obvious to a reasonable person in the Plaintiff’s position in view of the following matters :

- The jumping pillow was full of air and its surface was yielding.
- The pillow performed very much like a trampoline.
- He would have observed young children were performing somersaults on the pillow without any apparent attempt by the Defendant’s staff to stop them.
- He had previously landed awkwardly on the jumping pillow after attempting a backwards somersault and suffered no injury or discomfort.

Accordingly, the Court of Appeal dismissed the appeal.

RISK MANAGEMENT SIGNPOST

As set out in Touchline’s previous summary of the Supreme Court decision in this matter, the Court of Appeal’s decision demonstrates the critical importance of written warnings in a leisure activity provider’s ability to mount a defence based upon the materialisation of an “obvious risk”.

Leisure operators need to consider the nature and mechanism of injuries that might eventuate. Once those risks have been identified, they need to be conveyed to patrons, ideally in writing, and clearly convey the nature of the risk and how it may materialise. The warning should also be delivered close in time to the commencement of the activity.

Where the leisure activity involves international patrons, operators should consider the various languages spoken by their potential patrons and assess whether multilingual warning signs are appropriate. Pictograms may assist in overcoming language barriers but care must be taken to ensure the pictograms adequately convey the risk and manner in which it may materialise.

1 *Ackland –v– Stewart* [2014] ACTSC 18; Summarised in Edition 18 of Touchline

2 *Stewart –v– Ackland* [2015] ACTCA 1

3 At paragraphs 145 and 146



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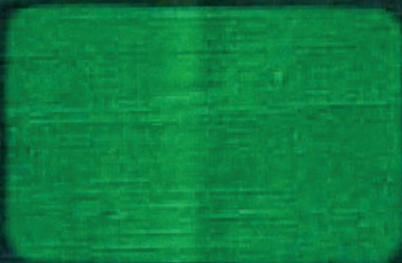
GOLF'S MOST BIZARRE & BEAUTIFUL COURSES

BY TIMOTHY MOTTRAM

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THE LONELIEST GREEN

Coeur d'Alene Resort, U.S.A.

There is nothing new about having a lake next to a golf course, but what makes Coeur d'Alene a bit different is what is floating in the lake. One hundred metres from the shore is a floating green. Should you get your ball onto it, you then have to take a boat shuttle across to the island to sink it. If you make the putt, there is a certificate of achievement waiting back across the water.

To the average golfer most golf courses have some challenges. But four hundred metre drops, floating greens, hippos, sharks and even live minefields can transform your regular Sunday afternoon round into a carnival.

Touchline profiles some of the most extreme courses in the world.

THE LONGEST COURSE:

Nullarbor Links, Australia

Not many countries have the space to devote 1000km to a golf course, or the quirkiness to do it. Australia has both. Nullarbor Links stretches along the Eyre Highway between Western Australia and South Australia, with each of the 18 holes located at a different town. Better leave the Golf Skate Caddy in the garage: on this course you will need a four wheel drive and an extra tank of gas. Still, there is plenty of time between holes to think about your short game: the closest distance between holes is 60km.

HIGHEST PAR 3

Legend Golf and Safari Resort, South Africa

Legend Resort is a famous and celebrated course, where each of the holes has been designed by famous golfers. What gets it plenty of press is the 19th hole. The Extreme 19 is 400 metres above sea level and requires players to shoot for the green way below which is spaced like a map of Africa. You need to get a helicopter to the top. No one has yet managed a hole in one.

THE MOST DANGEROUS

Joint Security Area Panmunjom, South Korea

While this is not much of a course –it is only comprised of a single hole- the risks make up for the lack of time a round might take. Located in the demilitarised zone between North and South Korea, this course is very close to the border. Given the antagonism between the countries, the rough is actually alive with unexploded mines. A sign stating “Do not retrieve balls from the rough live mine fields” is required reading before teeing off.

THE WILDEST COURSE

Skukuza Course, South Africa

Located inside world famous Kruger National park, this course relies on its four-legged residents to bring some interest to the sport. Baboons and warthogs are just a few of the creatures that wander the course. There are some hippos too, which adds an element of danger to the round. After all, they account for more deaths than any other African animal.....though the thought of hitting a wallowing hippo probably would improve your long game!

THE TACKIEST COURSE

Mission Hills, China

The Chinese have taken to golf like duck to Hoisin sauce, and are not afraid to try something a bit different. It is probably a Great Wall of China-sized understatement when the designer says “traditionalists will probably hate it”, but Mission Hill is beyond beauty or ugliness. On the 4th, golfers don't have to worry about bunkers: instead they are faced with a huge replica of the Great Wall. There is a hole dedicated to pandas and another where the green is ringed by a giant pot of artificial noodles. This is mini-golf kitsch, just on a massive scale.

THE HEARTBREAKER

Carnoustie Golf Links, Scotland

Carnoustie Golf Links, Scotland This course is so brutal that it has given its name to a particular type of psychological break down that golfers can experience. The “Carnoustie Effect” has claimed plenty of big names, including Spaniard Sergio Garcia, who broke down in tears after losing here. Located in the Scottish city of Dundee, screaming winds coming from the frozen North Sea make a bad round hideous. There is little cover to be had and plenty of bunkers and snarls in the turf in which to lose your ball.....and maybe your mind.



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.

SCHOOL FINED FOR PUPIL INJURED IN PE CLASS

A School in Kent, England was fined £10,000 after a pupil suffered a life threatening injury during a PE lesson.

A 14-year-old boy was hit on the head with a shot put during an athletic session at The Jude School. He required emergency brain surgery and spent a month in hospital before returning to school with a permanent indentation on his skull.

The student was standing on the edge of the shot put landing area when he was hit on the back of the Head. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) told the court that the school had not followed its own risk assessment or guidance on multi-event PE lessons.

The school admitted to breaching health and safety legislation and stated that they deeply regret the incident.

A school statement said: "We have re-examined all our safety procedures in PE and are doing the same across the whole school. We have also shared the lessons from this incident with other secondary schools and we are as confident as we can be that a similar accident will not happen again in future."

US\$1BN PAYOUT PLAN FOR CONCUSSED NFL PLAYERS

A deal worth US\$1bn to compensate US football players for head injuries suffered while playing, is set to be approved.

More than 4,500 former football players filed a lawsuit against the National Football League (NFL), saying that the league hid the dangers of concussion-related trauma.

The compensation deal has been granted preliminary approval by district court judge Anita Brody, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania where the settlement agreement was originally filed, though the judge asked the deal to be revised for wider compensation coverage.

The settlement will cover players who develop dementia or neurological issues related to concussions suffered during their professional playing careers.

Despite the agreement in place, lawyers have queried why the deal does not cover future payouts for a disorder known as chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) – a condition seen to be synonymous with football concussions which can cause depression, rage and other mood disorders, and is only diagnosable after death.

The average individual payout would be \$190,000, with younger men receiving awards between \$1m and \$5m. Players' lawyers say the money will be used to compensate families and for medical testing.

The NFL expects 6,000 of its approximately 20,000 retired players to develop Alzheimer's disease or dementia in their lives.

The deal could cost the league more than US\$1bn over 65 years.

ARGENTINE FOOTBALL PLAYER DIES AFTER COLLAPSING ON PITCH

Argentine defender Cristian Gomez, who played for Atletico Parana, died in May shortly after collapsing on the field during a game. The 27-year-old fell unconscious in the match against Boca Unidos in Argentina's second-tier Primera B.

Gomez collapsed during the 33rd minute of the game and a trainer performed CPR before an ambulance came on the field to take him to a hospital. Gomez had gone into cardiac arrest and was pronounced dead at the hospital, according to Argentine television network TyC Sports.

When Gomez collapsed, team-mates and opponents immediately took off their shirts to fan him and cried for help.

"The doctors told us they couldn't resuscitate him. This is totally unexpected, unbelievable. He'd never had anything wrong with him," said match supervisor Ramon Gomez.

Gomez is the second Argentine soccer player to die after an on-field incident in a month. Emmanuel Ortega, a player in the country's fifth division, suffered a head injury during a match on May 3 and died 11 days later. San Martin de Burzaco defender Ortega, 21, died in hospital after failing to come out of a coma following injuries when he hit his head on a concrete wall surrounding the pitch.

The AFA suspended all league play after Ortega's death and matches had only just resumed prior to the incident with Gomez.

CRICKETER DIES IN FIELDING COLLISION

Indian cricketer Ankit Keshri died after colliding with a team-mate as they both attempted to take a catch in a club match in Kolkata (formerly Calcutta), India in April.

The 20-year-old, a former captain of Bengal's under-19 state team, was only on the field as a substitute fielder.

He reportedly regained consciousness after the collision, but later suffered a cardiac arrest in hospital and died soon afterwards.

FISHERMAN SWEEPED OFF ROCKS

Father-of-three Peter Oberg, 45, was lost at sea when waves washed him and his two companions off a rocky platform into the water at Seal Rocks near Forster in NSW. One of the men, Damon Thorpe, 39, made it back to shore, while an exhausted and battered John Keith, 34, was lifted out of the water by a jet ski rescuer.

Mr Oberg's father Leon said that his grief is keener with frustration that Peter was not wearing a flotation vest.

"None of them were wearing flotation vests. They go up there every year, it was their annual holiday," Mr Oberg said.

"The forecast up there was for big swells, but they were around the corner near a lighthouse. It was fairly calm. They were in a place they regularly fish. No excuse for not wearing flotation gear, though," he said.

RUGBY LEAGUE PLAYER JAMES ACKERMAN DIES FOLLOWING INJURY SUSTAINED IN SUPER CUP MATCH

SUNSHINE Coast prop James Ackerman, 25, died two days after being felled in a tackle in Brisbane.

Ackerman was playing for the Falcons against the Norths Devils at Bishop Park when he was hurt in a tackle in just the fourth minute.

The Intrust Super Cup game was called off as Ackerman suffered a major brain injury.

He was placed in intensive care as the rugby league community rallied around the family.

"We send our deepest condolences to James' family and friends, and the Sunshine Coast club," QRL managing director Robert Moore said.

WHY THE GAME OF GOLF IS DEVOURING ITSELF

BY TIMOTHY MOTTRAM



Golf today is very different from the game of the eighties. For most of us of a certain age, back then, the major players were household names. Jack Nicklaus, Arnold Palmer and Greg Norman were instantly recognisable. Golf made news. But while we all knew about it, on a sunny afternoon while channel surfing, many would hit upon a televised game and would see it as a sure sign that we were wasting our day. The tired banter of the commentators, the camera panning up to follow a minuscule ball followed by polite clapping from the obedient crowd, all served as a sign that there was certainly something better to do.

Golf is in a tail spin and there are many in the game who seem blind to the fact that it may not survive the next couple of decades as a global sport.

The numbers suggest it is contracting badly. In the U.S., by far the largest golf market, it is in peril. The 2014 Masters tournament received a viewership rating of 1.5 in America, compared with the 7.3 garnered by a World Cup game played between USA and Portugal in the same year. In 2013, 157.5 courses closed, while only 14 opened. In the same year, it was estimated that 25 million Americans played the game, down 18 percent from 2006. It is believed that American golf loses one million players per year.

While the Asian market provides the only note of optimism in the sport, all of

the traditional golfing nations –Australia, Canada, and even Scotland- are seeing similar slides. The reasons for this are obvious, but it is that very nature of golf that makes changing the sport so difficult.

Golf's very nature is causing its collapse.

Golf is a cultural sport. First played in Scotland, it was a favoured sport of Mary, Queen of Scots. It broke big in the 18th and 19th centuries, when the length of the game was seen as a bonus by people with the time

and money to participate. In

our era of constant engagement

and immediate entertainment, it

is hard to understand just how

much time the rich of the past

had on their hands. Golf be-

came a sport that underscored

one's social prominence. As it

gained prominence in America,

it came to be much more than

a sport. The long hours spent in

a private retreat became a ven-

ture for businessmen to get to

know one another, to do deals

and understand their competi-

tors. As P.G. Wodehouse once

said, "To find a man's true char-

acter, play golf with him".

And just as golf suited the elitist,

male-dominated world of the

past, it now is failing to fit into

contemporary society. The Royal

and Ancient Golf Club of St

Andrews in Scotland voted to

allow women membership as

late as 2014. Another Scottish club only recently took down a

sign that read "no dogs, no women".

In the past, men would disappear to the course for hours as a

regular slice of their weekend, leaving the wife to manage the

kids. Today, men are more likely to help out with running the

children to their own sporting commitments. Moreover, the

increasing divorce rate means that men are often spending

time with their children during their prime golfing periods.

Demographically, then, golf is in something of a squeeze.

Clubs continue to be elitist. Most of the courses closed in

America over the past seven to eight years are middle class

courses in smaller towns. This process has accelerated since

the 2008 downturn, as the middle class have less money. The

one voice that is advocating the health of the sport should

serve as some sign of the attitude within the sport.

Donald Trump claims that the sport is "booming". He based his

assessment on the fact that his own courses are enjoying their

best ever seasons. But the fact that these clubs are stagger-

ingly expensive –the initiation fee at his West Palm Beach club is \$250,000- only goes to show that the sport's broad appeal is diminishing. Golf is retreating back into its role as a status symbol sport.

But there are some who see the sport needs to adapt or

die. And while tradition is one of the factors that makes it so

attractive, it alienates many. Cricket –a sport that has limited

appeal to the uninitiated given its long playing time and

arcane rules- has kept its audience

through innovations based on

making it faster and shorter.

In the U.S., some entrepreneurs

are fighting back against declining

numbers and old men in dusty

rooms. While clubs keep getting

better at helping golfers drive the

ball further and straighter, the re-

cently invented Gold Skate Caddy

promises to speed the game up

by an estimated 25 percent. An

electric scooter, its four wheels

cause less damage to the greens

and can zip around with much

more dexterity than the traditional

club cart. They provide a sense of

fun that was perhaps missing for

those golfers who were required

to walk between shots.

In an effort to gain more mass

appeal, Irish entrepreneur John

McGuire has come up with Game

Golf. "Tags" are screwed into the

clubs and a small device that is

carried on the belt provides data

points that chart the course of each shot. This creates a data

bank of shots which are then uploaded, so players can track

their own play, which can then be shared with other players

around the world. Game Golf plugs into the golf community,

making the game much less solitary.

In an effort to involve and engage children in the sport, Tay-

lorMade-adidas is promoting a project called Hack Golf. It is a

crowdsourcing idea that uses ideas from the golfing communi-

ty to radically change the sport. One idea taken from Hack golf

is the Two-Hour Round, which is based on faster play. Another

is the concept of a much larger hole, to make putting much

easier.

The notion of a larger hole has many traditionalists fuming,

but golf is perhaps at a stage where any idea that improves

its participation levels should be treated seriously. If it fails to

bring in the young, women and people of ethnic backgrounds,

it risks becoming a sporting curiosity, played by the rich and

watched by no one.

MEMBERS DECLINE **SLOWS TO TRICKLE**

Touchline asked Golf Australia CEO Stephen Pitt to comment on the state of play of golf in Australia and what plans Golf Australia had to increase participation in future. Here is Stephen's response.

GOLF: THE AUSTRALIAN STORY

BY **STEPHEN PITT**
CEO, GOLF AUSTRALIA



The medium-term trend of membership decline in Australian golf clubs appears to have slowed to negligible levels.

This is the main positive to arise from Golf Australia's 2014 National Golf Participation Report released recently, along with a big increase in rounds of golf played.

The main points are:

- National club membership for the year ending 2014 is at 396,880, a reduction of 0.8 percent on the previous year. In actual numbers, this represents a decline of about 3200 members.
- Rounds of golf increased by 7.2 percent in 2014 to 14.3 million rounds.
- There has been a cumulative loss of 7.3 percent of club members since 2010. While the 2014 report continues the downward trend, it is a lower reduction than in 2011, 2012 and 2013.
- Western Australia was the strongest performing state in 2014 with an increase of 2.2 percent, while Victoria and South Australia recorded small increases. New South Wales dropped 2.4 percent while Queensland, Northern Territory and Tasmania also experienced declines.
- The attrition rate of club members is around 12 percent.

Participation is an ongoing focus area for us, and the numbers indicate the struggle to hold our ground.

The challenge is to turn that graph around to the positive,

which is what initiatives like GOLF MONTH and the MyGolf Sporting Schools program are about.

Australia is about to witness its first GOLF MONTH, an exciting new participation event that is an extension of the old Playgolf WEEK.

GOLF MONTH kicks off this October, right around the country. Golf Australia and the other key stakeholders, such as the PGA, ALPG and state and territory golf associations, are fully behind expanding the program from a week to a month, in line with feedback received about previous campaigns.

Playgolf WEEK began in 2013 in South Australia as a pilot program, and was picked up nationally in 2014. More than 7000 people participated in programs run throughout the country in November last year, but the clubs and golf facilities who took part have indicated they need more time.

Hence GOLF MONTH, part of the overall strategy for growing the game in this country.

In addition, Golf Australia and the PGA of Australia are offering a MyGolf Sporting Schools program which is expected to engage children across Australia in what will be the country's largest school-based participation program, working under the banner of the Australian Sports Commission.

Within the MyGolf Sporting Schools program we aim to introduce children to the game of Golf through fun, engaging and challenging games and activities that are easily suited and adapted for a range of age groups and skill levels within the school environment. The Program runs for four weeks in a school program with an optional fifth week at a local golf club or facility to further enhance the children's experience.

We are seeking registrations and this can be done at www.sportingschools.gov.au

As for GOLF MONTH, it is aimed at driving club membership and to re-engage lapsed golfers under the banner 'Rediscover Your Drive'. Part of the strategy is to encourage golf people to introduce friends and family to the game.

We have research to tell us that up to 92 percent of casual golfers, and 80 percent of club members, started playing the game because they were introduced by someone close to



Golf Australia's biggest participation program for kids is MyGolf (the equivalent of Auskick for Aussie Rules)

mygolf.org.au

For women, there is a new program called SwingFit

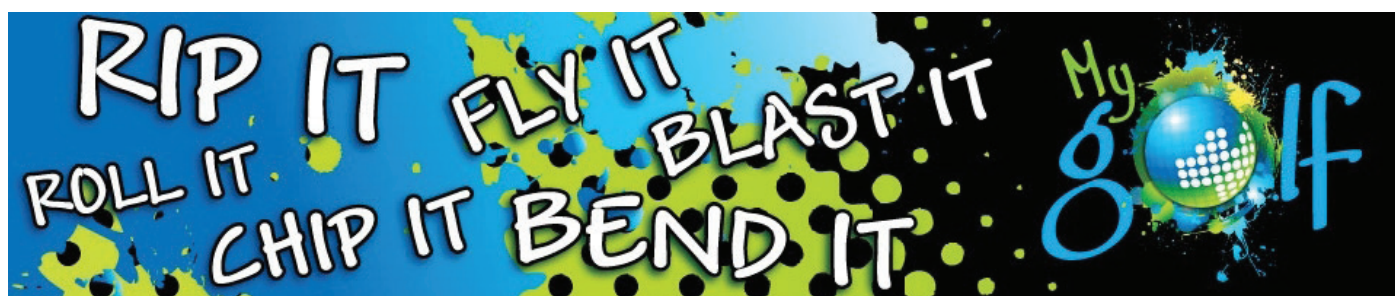
golf.org.au/swingfit

them. It is something we need to encourage and to capitalise upon.

In GOLF MONTH we will offer up a coveted place in the Emirates Australian Open pro-am this November in Sydney to a golfer who introduces a new member for a golf club. Any golfer who manages to recruit a new member can enter a draw for the prize.

There will be hundreds of golf clubs and facilities running activities during the month of October, with details at the new website www.playgolf.com.au.

I urge golf people to get on board.





I'm slow but I'm lapping everyone on the couch.



THIS GIRL SHOULD:

FEMALE PARTICIPATION IN SPORT

Sport England has recently introduced a new campaign to get women more involved in sport. It is called 'This Girl Can', and bases its approach on new data that shows why women don't exercise as much as men.

In this issue, Touchline looks at the reasons why programs like This Girl Can are necessary to increase female participation in sport, as well as the continuing barriers between women and a healthy lifestyle.

By Timothy Mottram

While programs are vital to increasing participation, there remain a range of cultural and psychological reasons as to why women can't find their way to the gym. According to Sport England, 75% of the women interviewed wanted to work out more. Moreover, there remains a significant gender gap, with two million fewer women than men regularly participating in sport.

Across Europe, the ratio of men to women who stay fit are roughly similar, though in the U.S. there is a massive discrepancy. In a 2013 study, Preventative Medicine found that men were getting as much as twice as much daily exercise as women.

Returning to England, the data behind the new program highlighted one overall reason why women are not running, dancing or pumping iron. This reason is fear. Sport England chief executive Jennie Price says that "one of the strongest themes was a fear of judgement. Worries about being

judged for being the wrong size, not fit enough and not skilled enough came up time and again." The massive sports equipment/fashion sector markets its product with typically fit and svelte beauties: while Nike and Adidas now feature women sweating, they rarely have them giggling.

This Girl Can focuses on women of all sizes and skill levels achieving. "The aim was to create a celebration of ordinary women smashing through the many and different barriers each face," London agency FCB copywriter Simon Cenamor says. "We had a desire to feature as wide an array of women and sports as we could."

The campaign features slogans such as "I jiggle, therefore I am" and "sweating like a pig, feeling like a fox" accompanied by images of a wide range of women working out. It was an instant hit on social media, trending at number two on twitter on the day of release and generating over eight million hits since its launch.

The key to its success beyond the message -which clearly resonates- is that the program is based on a community of support. The website encourages women to share their successes, even their failures, as part of the experience. The program is designed to empower women to have a go.

Of course, Sport England has received some criticism for the program. Social media has reacted strongly to the term “girl” in the title. It has been long established outside of feminist criticism that “girl” infantilises women and is not an acceptable term. In the Guardian, Jessica Francombe-Webb and Simone Fullager go further, saying that the short video sexualizes females, despite their depiction of authentic female bodies. They say it “seems these bodies, jiggly or otherwise, are just another form of objectification in a popular culture already saturated with sexualised images.” Despite it all, they claim that these bodies are exhibited for the male gaze.

Which brings us to the central question: why does female participation in sport have to be such a complicated issue? Female physicality as taboo is effectively a myth: it is well documented that much of the work done in the world is done by females.

Sport England’s identification of the fear factor is a major contributor, but it is unclear of whose judgement they are afraid. In an American study, some women claimed they didn’t exercise because they were worried that people would judge them as poor mothers, putting their own well-being over that of their children. Responses like this show that women fear the judgement of both men and women.

Another reason that complicates the issue of women in sport is the lack of representation of women in sports administration and coaching. It was not until 2013 that Lydia Nsekera became the first woman to be placed on the executive committee of FIFA. In the European Union, only 30% of coaches are women, dropping as low as 12% of highly qualified coaches. In the U.S., the number of female coaches has actually halved since the 1970s. When we look for strong female leadership figures making policy for sport,



we see very few role models.

Then there is the sex factor. Given the lack of women on sporting boards, sporting role models must be found on the courts and fields around the world. They are necessarily in top condition, which is then fed into by the promotion wing of each sport. The line between sporting excellence and sex appeal merges as a viewership factor. In one of Sepp Blatter’s more famous faux pas, he made the suggestion that viewership of women’s soccer would go north along with hemlines. “Let the women play in more feminine clothes like they do in volleyball,” he said.

“They could, for example, have tighter shorts. Female players are pretty, if you excuse me for saying so... (that) decision was taken to create a more female aesthetic, so why not do it in fashion?”

It is this attitude that prevails in organised sport, and it leaches down into the perception of many women at the grass roots. Despite the criticisms levelled at it, This Girl Can is tackling the reality of female participation in sport, and cuts through many of the barriers.

Despite the criticisms levelled at it, This Girl Can is tackling the reality of female participation in sport, and cut through many of the barriers.



Looking for a new perspective on sport?

Watch **TouchlineTV** for videos, interviews and analysis from some of the less-mainstream sports around the world.



Touchline TV interviews Sonny Webster, 2015 British Champion (94kg)

August 9, 2015 | Steve Boucher | 0 | 0 | 0 | 10



Touchline TV: Steve Boucher talks about Sportscover's partnership with British Weightlifting

August 9, 2015 | Steve Boucher | 0 | 0 | 0 | 6



Touchline TV: Ikechi Anya - Scored against World Champions

August 9, 2015 | Steve Boucher | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0



Touchline TV: Business of Sport Summit 2015: Innovation in sport (Chris Nash's Edited Segments)

August 9, 2015 | Steve Boucher | 0 | 0 | 0 | 4



Touchline TV interviews UK Sport's CEO Liz Nicholl and Performance Director Simon Timson

August 9, 2015 | Steve Boucher | 0 | 0 | 0 | 0



Touchline TV: Amber Reed - England World Cup Winner

August 9, 2015 | Steve Boucher | 0 | 0 | 0 | 1



HOCKEY AUSTRALIA TAKES ON THE RETAIL GAME

In a competitive global sporting landscape, Hockey Australia's commercial team are taking on the retail game as a strategic approach to diversifying revenue and engaging with hockey fans around the world.

For a National Sporting Organisation who has historically relied heavily on funding from the Australian Sports Commission, it has been a rare shift in mindset to delve into the retail space to capture

revenue opportunities outside of major funding partners and sponsorship dollars.

Hockey Australia's Marketing Manager, Josh Givoni believes Hockey Australia's online shop has become an important channel to engage with the Kookaburras and Hockeyroos' global fan base.

With product lines covering team based replica apparel, lifestyle products, national

junior participation program accessories and officiating apparel, the online shop now offers significant expansion opportunities for the future, especially with an Olympic Games around the corner.

To check out Hockey Australia's online shop, aptly named "The Hockey Dugout", head to hockey.org.au/shop.



FITNESS FOCUS:
MUSCLES
GOLFERS NEED

Golf might be the game that ruins perfectly lovely walks, but it should be seen as more than just a stroll. In fact, if you can recruit specific muscle groups, your swing will not only be more powerful, it will be safer.

Here are four exercises that will improve your handicap.

CORE

The core is the most crucial muscle group for a golfer. Having a strong middle protects the lower back whilst giving power and balance to your swing.

PALLOFF PRESS

Some moves that work the obliques need a twist, which is potentially dangerous. The Palloff Press requires you to resist twisting, which makes it much better for you. Move the cable on the cable machine to chest height and stand perpendicular to it. Hold the handle in both hands over your heart and then push out. You will feel the weight pulling your straight arms to the side, so use your core to resist. Pull it back to your chest. Hold for 5 seconds, repeat on each side five times.

PLANK

Another static exercise, which also burns through the shoulders. Get in a classic push up position and place your elbows on the floor. Hold your body flat for at least 30 seconds. Rest for 30 and repeat.

HIP FLEXIBILITY

Golfers need to move in one fluid motion while adjusting their bodies into a variety of shapes. Therefore, your hips need to be loose in motion.

LATERAL LUNGES:

Stand tall, with or without weight. In one motion, step your right leg wide and move your body weight over the right foot. Push down, bending the right knee while keeping the left straight. Pop back up and repeat with the left leg. Do this for 8-12 repetitions and break for 30 seconds. Three sets.

WRIST STRENGTH

Your wrists are vital for controlling the swing and for added power.

BAND WRIST CURLS:

Get hold of a Pilates band or some other type of firm, thick elastic. Place one end in each hand and hold the middle of the band on the floor with your foot. Adjust your grip so that the band is taut, and then curl your fists up, keeping your arms straight. Repeat 20 times, or until you feel some fierce burning in your forearms.



BODY HACK: THE STRUGGLE AGAINST DRUGS IN ATHLETICS

BY TIMOTHY MOTTRAM

Yet again, athletics has made the news, not through the feats of its athletes, but through the taint of doping. American coach Alberto Salazar is the latest coach to be implicated in a plan to help his athletes take a variety of performance enhancing drugs.

The BBC program Panorama alleges that Salazar both encouraged and helped Olympic medalist Galen Rupp to use a range of drugs, including testosterone and prednisone. He also assisted Rupp in avoiding detection by providing him with intravenous drips, which mask the effects of the other drugs; and are accordingly banned by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) and the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency (USADA).

Cuban-born Salazar responded by producing a point-by-point refutation of the allegations, citing Rupp's diagnosed asthmatic condition and thyroid complaint as reasons for the application of the prednisone, as well as his own ethical rectitude as evidence of his innocence. Salazar claims the allegations are based on nothing but "slander and hearsay".

The story has a way to run, as Salazar is also the coach of Mo Farah, British runner and winner of the London 2012 Olympic golds for the 5,000m and 10,000m. While Farah is not under investigation, he has been advised to cut Salazar loose. However, some are questioning why Farah missed two drug tests in the same year. A third miss would see him potentially banned for two years. Farah claims that on one of those days he did not hear the doorbell.

Whilst the allegations against Salazar are unproven and there is no suggestion that Farah has ever taken any banned substances, the public's trust in the words of athletes and their coaches in a variety of sports is probably pretty close to zero. They have heard the same protestations too many times. Athletes who can look into a camera and lie about their use of banned substances are as common as the

stories that break sometime later. Then comes the tearful admission, the blaming of the culture of the sport, and another hero is pulled down.

There are many questions that emerge from this latest revelation. But they are the same as the ones raised every time this happens. How common is doping really? How can they get away with it? How much do the organisers know and do they conceal it from the public? Why does this keep happening?

The first question is perhaps the easiest to explain. The culture of sport as competition has triangulated with advanced science and our dreams of becoming something more than human. Sport has always been about getting that extra one percent to win. The rules have always been bent to breaking. The ancient Greeks, seen as a paragon of sporting fairness - right down to the lack of clothes - regularly took herbal potions and experimented with mushrooms to beat back pain and promote endurance. If they had access to anabolic steroids, you can bet your amphorae that they would have used them.

Why they do it is closely tied to how they can keep getting away with it. Science in all fields is progressing exponentially, but that progress is dramatically accelerated when large sums of money are involved. And sport is big business. Drugs employed by scientific wideboys are staying ahead of detection agencies. The parallel between this illegal drug trade and the war against mainstream drugs is clear. The official agencies play a rather reactionary foil to the drug cheats, as they can only test for something that they know about.

Elite athletes and their coaches have sensitive antennae for details: knowing how to structure their diets, how to time their training and what minute changes in their posture will improve their performance. So knowing the right time to administer a drug and in what amount also can fall into that very skill-set. Steroid users who suspect a test will be administered use micro-injections and avoid them around the time of testing. Blood infusions allow an athlete to appear clean during a test, and afterwards they would defrost previously doped blood and inject it back into their bodies.

Lance Armstrong is well-attested as being the greatest sports cheat of all time: though there may well be greater out there- he did get caught, after all. His story of bullying, coercion, cutting edge science, and simple chutzpah will one day make for a great movie with a sad ending. But his decade of lies really demonstrates the science and skill in the life of a drug cheat.

Simply put: athletes are prime competitors, and not just at running or jumping high or riding a bike. They are masters of winning. And sometimes for some that requires something extra.

As to the role of the organisers of sport; a cynic could argue that they have more to gain by keeping quiet about drug cheats. Every bust pulls their respective sport lower in the eyes of the audience. Sports themselves are in competition for viewers, and by extension, sponsors. Cycling has almost been pulled under by its culture of drug use, and every other sport must be terrified of sponsors closing their giant novelty cheque book. It would be far simpler to turn a blind eye to most of the sordid cheating than to confront it: even better, allow one or two athletes to get caught every so often to show you are paying attention.

Equally, there is the argument that organisers are just as frustrated as the viewers, constantly trying to sniff out the cheats and stay ahead of the science. The empowerment of the WADA and the USADA seems to suggest that sport power brokers do take these issues seriously and want to see doping gone. WADA, growing tired of the drugs arms race, has developed the Athlete Biological Passport. This is designed to chart specifically tested biological properties of the athlete against performance. They hope to cross reference the two variables to see evidence of changes in the body that do not reflect a natural advancement on the field. This innovation removes the random discoveries of doping, but enables them to detect that something is going on, that they can then use targeted testing for.

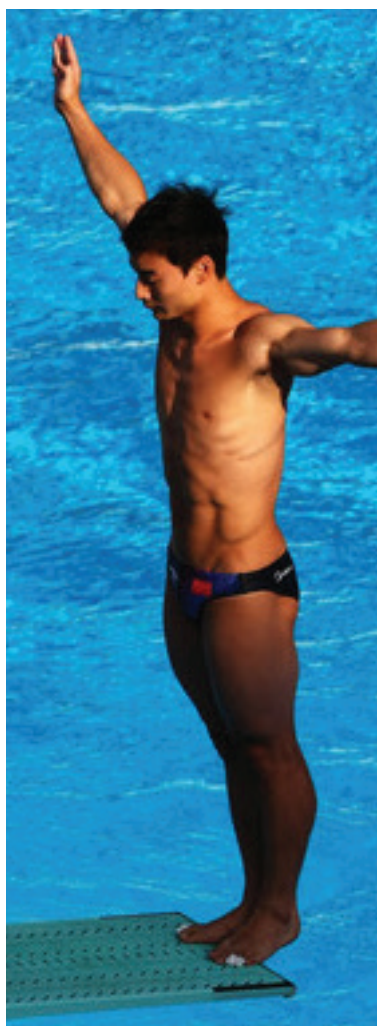
The role of WADA in the elimination of doping is essential. But doping will always be part of sport unless athletes and coaches themselves decide to speak up and stamp it out.



Hungary

Budapest to host 2017 FINA World Championships

The International Aquatics Association (Fina) announced that Budapest will be the new host of its 17th World Championships and World Masters Championships in July 2017. FINA's most prestigious event showcases the Federation's six disciplines: swimming, diving, high diving, water polo, synchronised swimming and open water swimming in 2017.



New Zealand

Kiwis take legal action over Olympic football disqualification

New Zealand are to take legal action after their men's team were thrown out of Olympic qualifying for fielding an ineligible player.

The Kiwis were due to play Fiji in the final of the Oceania qualifiers after beating Vanuatu 2-0 in the semi-finals. However the Oceania Football Confederation (OCF) upheld Vanuatu's protest that South-African born Deklan Wynne was ineligible to play in the match. Vanuatu were then awarded a 3-0 win, but lost to Fiji in the final.

Fiji will represent the Oceania region at next year's Rio Olympics after beating Vanuatu 4-3 on penalties.

Left-back Wynne, 20, represented New Zealand at the Fifa Under-20 World Cup last month and has played at senior level after becoming a naturalised New Zealander.

The OCF's disciplinary committee ruled that Wynne did not meet any of the criteria that would allow him to represent New Zealand as set out in article seven of the Fifa statutes. Wynne, who was not born in New Zealand and doesn't have a New Zealand parent or grandparent, would have to have lived in New Zealand for five years from the age of 18 to be eligible.

New Zealand Football said it was not aware of the disciplinary hearing and was told the matter was being referred to Fifa.

They are now working with their lawyers to contest the committee's decision.



UAE

2019 Asian Cup goes to UAE

The AFC (Asian Football Confederation) has awarded the hosting rights for the 2019 edition of the Asian Cup to the United Arab Emirates. The UAE is set to use stadiums in three cities – Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Al Ain.

The UAE saw off competition from the IR Iran Football Federation (FFIRI) to land the hosting rights to the quadrennial tournament. The UAE and Iran were the only two nations left in the bidding process after early interest from the likes of China, Lebanon, Oman, Thailand, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia failed to materialise into official bids.

Iran's chances of staging the competition were considered slim due to the country's unwillingness to allow women to attend matches.

The awarding of the hosting rights comes after the conclusion of this year's Asian Cup, which took place in Australia from January 9-31. The host nation beat South Korea 2-1 after extra time in the final to secure its first-ever title.

The 2015 competition was the last edition of the Asian Cup to feature just 16 teams, with the 2019 event to be expanded to include 24 sides. The AFC is said to be keen for more of its members to compete in the tournament and has merged the qualifying process for the competition with the one used for the FIFA World Cup.



China

Chinese club giant Guangzhou Evergrande files for IPO

Guangzhou Evergrande, China's most successful club of recent years, has filed with the National Equities Exchange and Quotations (NEEQ) to list on a trading platform for shares in small and medium-sized companies.

The club is currently owned 60% by property firm Evergrande Real Estate Group Ltd and 40% by e-commerce giant Alibaba Group Holding Ltd and has been valued by Chinese media at 10 billion yuan (US\$1.61 billion), although on what basis is unclear as Alibaba last year reportedly paid US\$192 million for 50% of the club.

The team made a loss of 265 million yuan during January-May but the owners hope that the listing will "enhance the liquidity of its equity interest, thus facilitating the introduction of strategic investors, promotion of corporate image and realization of sustainable development."

Whilst Evergrande is being hailed by various media as "the first Asian football club to list on the stock market" this is not true in a geographical sense - with Trabonspor and Fenerbahce both listed and physically in Asia.



USA

US Open becomes richest tennis grand slam

The U.S. Open leapfrogged Wimbledon as the richest grand slam event in tennis as the United States Tennis Association announced a 10.5 percent prize money increase for the championship starting on 31 August 2015.

The purse for the U.S. Open will hit US\$42.3 million, with the men's and women's singles winners each pocketing US\$3.3 million.

The All England Club upped the Wimbledon prize money this year by seven percent to 26.75 million pounds (US\$41.82m).



Italy

Rome city council strongly backs bid for 2024 Olympics

Rome's city council has voted 38-6 in favour of a bid to host the 2024 Summer Olympics.

The vote comes two days after Paris joined Boston and Hamburg in the race to host the Games, with Budapest also expected to be a candidate.

The city's Mayor Ignazio Marino said: "Like it was for Barcelona and London, the Rome 2024 Olympics will leave a renewed, modern and sustainable identity for our city.

"This is a vote that looks to the future and an opportunity to think about the city for the next generation."

Rome, which last hosted the Games in 1960, abandoned plans to bid for the 2020 Games due to financial concerns.

The bid is expected to include many of the venues used for the 1960 Games, including the city's Stadio Olimpico, which hosted the 1990 World Cup final as well as four European Cup finals. Rome is believed to be considering a budget of €6 billion, which is roughly half of what London spent on the 2012 Games.



Japan

Rugby World Cup plans in doubt

Japan's plan to host the 2019 Rugby World Cup were thrown into doubt as the design for the new stadium was scrapped. The Japanese government dealt organisers a huge blow when Prime Minister Shinzo Abe announced that the design for the new 80,000 national stadium was being scrapped due to spiralling costs, meaning the venue - scheduled to host the semi-finals and final in 2019 - would not be ready when revised plans are drawn up.

World Rugby issued a statement expressing their "extreme disappointment" with the announcement given the proposed stadium had formed a "compelling pillar" of Japan's bid to host the tournament. The prospect of the tournament being taken off Japan remains a distant one, despite speculation that those interested in hosting the 2023 tournament might offer their services.

That would bring Ireland into the equation, but it would appear more likely that one of their rivals such as South Africa may seek to step into the breach given the existing stadium infrastructure that exists since the 2010 football World Cup finals.



PHIL HUGHES' DEATH: THE FALLOUT

BY TIMOTHY MOTTRAM

It is now over seven months since Phillip Hughes died as a result of a head injury sustained during a Sheffield Shield match. The death of the 25-year-old batsman, the first of its kind in over a century, sent the cricket world into unprecedented mourning. After the tributes, there naturally came a time of reflection as players, administrators and fans tried to adjust their vision of a game that had just become deadly.

As the Ashes unfold in England, Hughes' death is still a major part of the narrative. English bowler James Anderson believes that the way the two teams will conduct themselves will be influenced by what happened to Hughes. "People talk about it," he said. "I think when we get out in the field we'll make sure the game's played in the right spirit".

Hughes' death may not be enough to keep things dignified on the pitch, and it is not at all clear how it will actually change cricket. This was not caused by spiteful, targeted short balls. Phillip Hughes was unlucky to a terminal degree, and underlined the fact that cricket is a dangerous sport.

One aspect of the sport that is being re-evaluated is how it protects its players. Obviously, helmets have become central to how cricket can avoid a repeat.

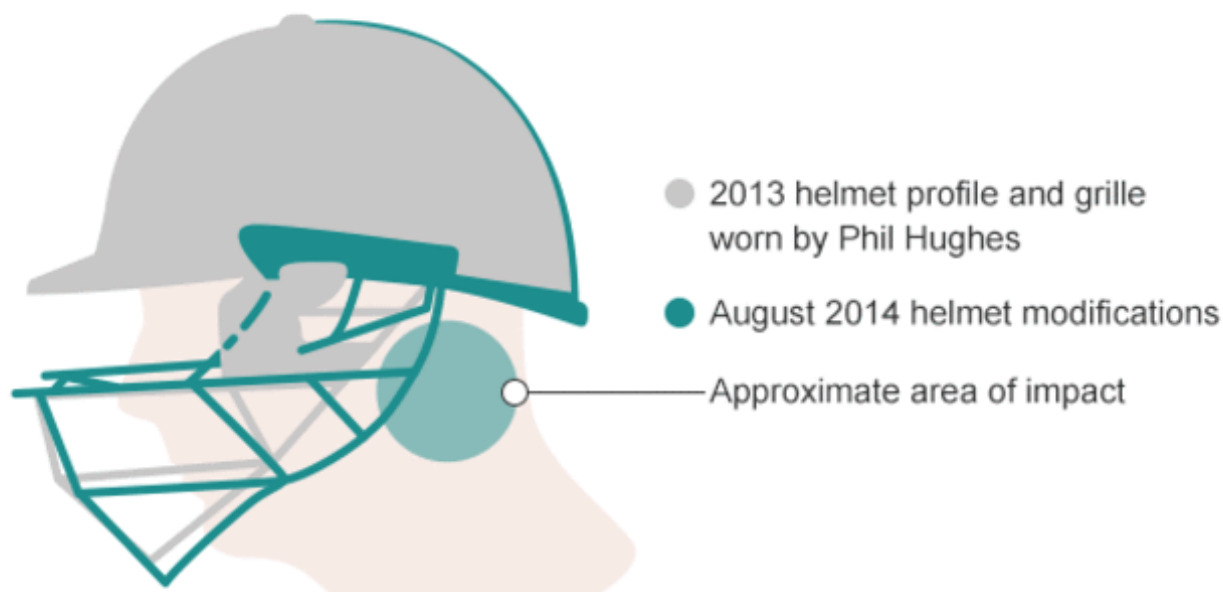
Cricket collectively sees this horrible death as a stroke of poor fortune. Soon after the injury, Cricket Australia's doctor Peter Brukner reported the "injury, called a subarachnoid haemorrhage, occurs when an artery is compressed and splits, forcing blood into the brain area. Only one case had previously been reported as a result of a cricket ball. It was an injury to the neck that caused haemorrhage in the brain," explained Brukner.

"The condition is incredibly rare."

The injury occurred when Hughes was attempting a pull shot against a short ball. His neck was unprotected: in fact, most producers have no helmets designed to protect the side and back of the neck.

Indeed, the producer of the helmet, Masuri, was quick to explain why Hughes was not effectively protected. "The model Hughes was wearing does not offer as much protection to the

Masuri helmet modifications between 2013 and 2014



Source: Masuri Group Ltd

back of the head and neck as newer models issued by Masuri," they said a statement to The Independent.

It is pretty clear that this was an unfortunate accident that could not really have been avoided. But it seems to have had an effect on how players protect themselves.

Helmets were not introduced to the game until the 1970s, and they are still not mandatory. Cricket Australia has commissioned an independent inquiry into Hughes' death but from the outset seem to be against radical changes to the rules given the freakish nature of the injury. That said, rarely do players face the faster bowlers without a helmet, and most even wear them when facing spin.

The Telegraph reported in December, less than a month after Hughes's injury, that helmet sales had spiked around Australia. Amateur and weekend crickets were rightly spooked and sales went up by a reported 70%.

But despite the prevalence of helmet use in cricket, the old ways die hard. Innovation in helmets comes slow. Many grade cricketers feel slightly shy about wearing a helmet. Even in international matches, newer and perhaps safer styles have been rejected because of entrenched ideas of how they should look. Bryce McGain, a former Australia player, tried out a helmet designed by Albion Sports Pty Ltd in 2009. The helmet offered improved safety but looked radically different from the dome of the time.

But a strange sort of peer-pressure killed the helmet. "The commentators had a go, saying 'He looks like Darth Vader', 'He looks like Robocop,'" McGain says. "It didn't bother me too much, but only a couple of other players wore it and if you don't have the players at the top, the ones on TV, wearing them, they don't sell."

This latent prejudice can be further seen in comments from for-

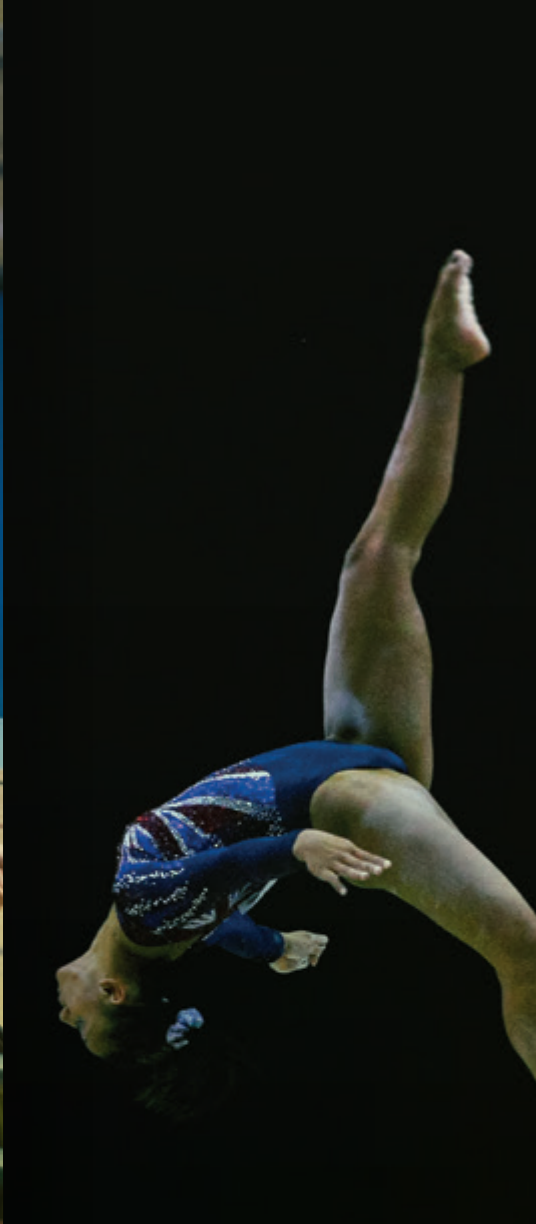
mer English player Geoff Boycott. Always a source of tasty quotes, he claims that helmets have made players too brave. They feel more confident taking risky shots, which actually endanger them.

It is unlikely that any helmet would have saved Hughes, and his aggression in the shot was typical of the modern player. But that doesn't mean helmets can't be developed that will protect the neck and the back of the head. While tradition means innovation in cricket is swimming upstream, there is also issue of functionality.

In an interview with The Conversation, a senior lecturer in sports technology said that safety equipment is in a constant trade off. Andy Harland of Loughborough University explains that safety, performance and comfort are in competition when designing helmets. Technically, players could be vastly better protected, but this would mean heavier helmets with less visibility. In a game where fractions of seconds are key, Dr. Harland says most players will let the design slide on the protective side of the triangle. Helmets, it seems, will never be as good as they could be.

However, even before November 2015, helmets were under scrutiny. The previous year saw English batsman Stuart Broad cop a broken nose as a ball delivered at pace broke through between his face grill and the helmet. This promoted a review and gradually titanium has been replacing the traditional steel grills.

Cricket can be conservative and reactive by nature. But the death of Phillip Hughes has had a deeply psychological effect on his team mates. There have been reports of Mitchell Johnson losing some pace in his bowling and Shane Watson being rattled after being struck by a bouncer in the nets. Players are facing the reality that they could be killed playing this sport, and regardless of how small the risk, they are reacting. It would be surprising if this tragedy does not result in the loosening of prejudice against innovations in protection.



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