

A group of female basketball players in red uniforms are celebrating on a court. They are wearing red jerseys with "ENGLAND" and "KUKURI" logos, and red shorts with the "ENGLAND" logo. The players are shouting and cheering, with their arms raised. The background shows a crowd of spectators in a stadium.

# State of Play: The Future of Sport

**Brabners**

# State of Play: The Future of Sport

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## With special thanks to:



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# The power of sport

Very few occasions capture public fervour like a major sporting event...

When Bobby Moore lifted the Jules Rimet Trophy in 1966, 32 million people tuned in to the spectacle. More than 50 years later, it remains the most viewed special broadcast in UK television history, surpassing viewing figures generated by historic moments such as the 1981 Royal Wedding and the Apollo 13 splashdown.

Sport is unparalleled in capturing our attention because it manages to weave accessible stories of adversity and triumph into our lives more so than any other area of society. In many ways it mirrors religion in its levels of worship, ritual and emotion. It's also a language which is spoken across the globe. Such is its value that it has become a vehicle for the social issues of our time.

The build up to the 2018 FIFA World Cup became a microcosm for Russia's involvement in world politics, yet the

world forgot about the potential of a new Cold War for four weeks once the tournament kicked off. The same world expressed its outrage from all corners when a member of the Australian cricket team roughed up an in-play match ball using a seemingly innocuous piece of sandpaper. Small actions on the field of play can become landmark moments in history.

For the past three decades, Brabners has been at the forefront of sports law, witnessing a transformational shift in how society values and participates in sport. In this report, we take a look at some of the pressing issues and actions of the present, including the growing business behind sport, the fight for equality and diversity, and how we might safeguard participants from grassroots through to elite level.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has provided their expertise to support its publication. From sporting CEOs and administrators to educators and performance experts, I'm sure you will find their contributions both insightful and compelling.

**Lydia Edgar**

Head of sports law, Brabners



“

It's extremely niche for a sports club to run a business model where non-sport-related revenue meets the payroll.

Daniel Gidney – chief executive, Lancashire County Cricket Club

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# Wealth and wellbeing:

## The health of the sporting economy

From the working man in the bookies to oil-rich oligarchs and royalty investing in global brands, sport has rarely been associated with economic certainty. Like the arts, the UK public's investment in sport has traditionally been a project of passion. But, as leaders of amateur and professional sports clubs alike will attest, it's an area of society which is increasingly taking commercial matters more seriously.

A recent study by Economic Modeling Specialists International valued the business of sport to be worth £23.8bn in earnings to the UK economy annually, employing nearly a million people. Yet, for all the growing international success of renowned competitions like the English Premier League and the rise of global superstars such as Anthony Joshua and Lewis Hamilton, there remain underfunded sports, below par grassroots facilities and significant class differences in terms of participation and health.

"The money involved in sport has changed dramatically in the last 25 years, but clubs and governing bodies are still developing the way in which they arrange and direct commercial skills and expertise," comments Robert Elstone, chief executive of rugby league's premier competition, Super League. A former accountant with Deloitte, Elstone spent the last decade as CEO of Everton Football Club and believes that, despite its wealth, sport remains an emerging industry in its structural and organisational practices.

"The advent of Sky Sports in the early nineties set about a monumental transformation in the value of sports, particularly English football, and we're now seeing that relative impact on sports like the two rugby codes, cricket and F1," adds Elstone. "The way we consume sports has undoubtedly changed and accelerated in volume, intensity and scrutiny, yet you could argue that the industry still has some way to go to fully capture its economic potential.

"In professional sport, commercial career pathways are far less predictable than in other industries which suggests that we've yet to discover the optimum arrangement of staff, resources and priorities that all clubs should aspire to."

Whilst at Everton, Elstone worked hard to build the club's reputation in the city of Liverpool. "We constantly reminded ourselves why Everton was formed 140 years ago and repeatedly challenged one another on our purpose," he says. "The aspirations of our Victorian forefathers still ring true today. Undoubtedly, beyond government funding, sports clubs are the major vehicle for transforming communities and improving grassroots sport, so it's important that the industry develops a sense of what best practice is – not just for the economy but for society as a whole."

For an example of what economic best practice at the top end of the game might look like, it's worth considering the commercial transformation of Lancashire County Cricket Club over the last decade. The Red Rose club endured losses of £9m in the space of four years before a £60m redevelopment of its Old Trafford stadium brought the ground back in line with test match standards in 2013.

# £23.8bn

in annual earnings to the UK economy generated by sport

# 1m

people employed in UK sport sector

“

The vision for UA92 is to bring the aspects of character development that are so intrinsic to sport – resilience, preparation, teamwork, leadership – to a higher education degree.

Yvonne Harrison – managing director, Project 92

”

Daniel Gidney, the club's chief executive, expects the club to be financially independent of international cricket by 2020 thanks to investment in state-of-the-art conferencing facilities and a new Hilton hotel which has created more than 70 jobs locally. Alongside the return of international cricket, the club enhanced its ability to host major concerts during the summer months – including a monumental effort to turnaround a benefit gig following the Manchester Arena terrorist attack in 2017.

Gidney comments: “It's extremely niche for a sports club to run a business model where non-sport-related revenue meets the payroll. While we have debt to manage, that debt is well accounted for and means that, as a club, we can

benefit the community around us through job growth and consumer spending. We believe we'll add £84m to the local economy in Greater Manchester over the next six years thanks to the presence of the ICC Cricket World Cup and international series like The Ashes. Having hosted international cricket for more than 150 years, it is something we will always want to do but, from a business perspective, the club's day-to-day existence no longer depends on it. As well as investing in on-the-field performance, this independence gives us a great opportunity to put resources into the development of local 'village' cricket and a national school strategy for the sport.”

Having led the early phases of Everton's relocation to a new purpose-built waterfront stadium at Bramley Moore Dock, Elstone agrees that property regeneration remains the biggest opportunity to unlock economic value – but one that is fraught with difficulty.

“Owner-led development is simply impractical for most professional clubs today,” he says. “The future vibrancy of professional and community clubs requires investment in stadia, but the reality is that it's extremely difficult to bring a project forward without third-party investment or a wider regeneration mix incorporating leisure, retail or housing.

“Tottenham Hotspur's new home aside, very few stadia of significant scale have been developed recently in the UK without significant 'special circumstances' contributions.”

Matthew O'Brien, Brabners' Manchester head of real estate, adds: “Keeping participation and supporters at the heart of any property proposal is crucial, particularly at elite level. The most successful developments are those that maximise their benefit to the community by creating ancillary leisure opportunities around the delivery of a core sports facility.”

Someone who has witnessed the positive long-term economic impact of facilities-led investment first hand is Yvonne Harrison, managing director of Project 92, the sports and education portfolio of Gary Neville, Ryan Giggs and the Class of '92. As the former chief executive of GreaterSport – a charity promoting physical activity across Greater





Manchester – Harrison carried the Queen’s Baton when the Commonwealth Games came to Manchester in 2002 and believes sport can be crucial to economic development.

The regeneration of the land around the City of Manchester Stadium – now part of Manchester City’s Etihad Campus – is well documented, providing much-needed facilities in a socially and economically disadvantaged part of the city. But the Games also generated the development of world-class facilities in the city for other sports, including taekwondo, swimming and cycling, for both the local community and elite athletes.

The legacy of 2002 has also led the city region to embrace physical activity as part of its economic strategy under the banner ‘Get GM Moving’ – a unique collaboration between the region’s combined authority and devolved NHS, which recently secured more than £12m to improve the health, wealth and wellbeing of local residents.

Harrison sees a huge opportunity for sporting venues and organisations to create economic value by connecting to Higher Education. University Academy 92 (UA92) is a new higher education institute co-founded by the Class of ‘92 and Lancaster University, which will blend sporting philosophy, academic excellence and employer partnerships.

“The vision for UA92 is to bring the aspects of character development that are so intrinsic to sport – resilience, preparation, teamwork, leadership – to a higher education degree,” says Harrison.

“Traditionally, universities focus on academic knowledge, with elements of character development added around it.

“Our approach is to bring character development to the centre and wrap high quality academic knowledge around that. We believe this approach will appeal and create opportunities for people from all backgrounds but particularly those who haven’t considered university education before.”

“Social outcomes are now a key part of Sport England’s funding,” adds Stewart Kellett, chief executive of Basketball England, who believes there is a significant opportunity to grow the sport thanks to its appeal in inner cities. The governing body’s six-year strategic plan, which was launched in 2018, recognised its ability to engage communities in underprivileged areas, with more than 50 per cent of those playing the game from BAME backgrounds.

“For many young people, their local club is the place where they develop the skills needed to thrive throughout their life. So, while we focus on new opportunities and commercial strategies to grow the wider game, it’s important we don’t overlook the importance of the grassroots game to wellbeing and the wider economy. There’s no substitute for healthy, happy and engaged people and sport is a major facilitator.”

When it comes to economic value, it seems there’s room for a future where health and wealth are inextricably linked. ■



“The money involved in sport has changed dramatically in the last 25 years but clubs and governing bodies are still developing the way in which they arrange and direct commercial skills and expertise.”

**Robert Elstone,**  
Chief executive of Super League

# A sum of its parts:

## Diversity in sport

According to a global study by Nielsen, 87 per cent of general sports fans – more than half of whom are men – take an interest in women’s sport. But is this translating into participation on and off the pitch?

The high-profile nature of the sports industry has made it a focal point for the issue of gender equality faced by almost all organisations, regardless of sector. In recent years, sport has made great progress – the English Premier League recently named its first ever female chief executive while major competitions, such as the Women’s Six Nations Championship (rugby union) and cricket’s KIA Super League, now feature far more prevalently on television.

### The root of the issue

But for Sara Tomkins, chief executive at Manchester-based charity GreaterSport, there is still a grassroots issue that hasn’t been fully addressed. She works with clubs, schools, leisure centres and healthcare organisations in Greater Manchester promoting the role of sport in order to boost participation.

“Part of what we’re trying to do is break down the stereotypes and get more women into sports,” she explains. “Girls as young as seven are seeing themselves as ‘not sporty’ so don’t get involved.”

Tomkins believes that a negative experience in school means a lot of women rule sport out of their lives altogether, leading to a less active, less healthy lifestyle. “Trying to convince women they’re able to do sport is much harder when they are older,” she argues.

Leading by example, according to Tomkins, is key to changing the way women think about sport. She says: “It has to be a case of practise what you preach, which is why we have a 50/50 split on our board in terms of gender.”

Change at the top is also part of the solution for individual sports, according to the director of legal and governance at the British Horseracing Authority (BHA), Catherine Beloff.

“Horseracing has an incredibly rich history – which is a great strength – but it has been male dominated in the past. While women are becoming increasingly prominent – and horseracing is one of the few sports where men and women compete on equal terms – they are still underrepresented as trainers, jockeys and in administration. As a governing body, we have a duty to set the standard for the rest of the sport. We’re doing a lot of work, both internally and with partner organisations, to improve representation.”

### Talk the talk

But this is only the starting point. Ultimately, completely reviewing the way we talk about sport could be the answer in some cases. Beloff explains how tackling the issue of unconscious bias in recruitment is another key battleground for her. “It can be as simple as using gender-neutral pronouns in job advertisements,” she says. “More deeply, it’s where we advertise as much as how.”

Beloff and the BHA team now avoid sticking to traditional avenues – like trade publication *Racing Post* – when advertising new positions. This is all part of the BHA’s strategy to attract more people from outside the sport into the organisation.







The Ebony Horse Club in Brixton is working to transform lives in one of London's most disadvantaged communities.

"We've just appointed our first head of diversity and inclusion and we're becoming much more literate about the issue as an organisation. There is more understanding of the business case for inclusion – better decision making at the top, for example."

#### Neutral ground

Improving representation isn't 'job done', however, and the barriers facing women who are already involved in sport are just as prevalent.

Genevieve Gordon is the chief executive of specialist sports consultancy firm Tactic Connect. She works with athletes at all levels – from amateur to professional – on a range of issues. She argues that some sports need to stop seeing equality as a problem they must solve alone.



"Athletes are given most of their guidance by their club, which isn't always impartial."

**Genevieve Gordon,**  
Chief executive of Tactic Connect

"Athletes are given most of their guidance by their club, which isn't always impartial. Sometimes a truly independent organisation – one that doesn't have affiliations with the sport – is needed to ensure everyone's interests are represented. There is an abundance of independent organisations that offer guidance and sports organisations could do more to work with these companies."

Gordon questions whether athletes are always given the right information about where they can go for support. The options, she says, are increasing all the time so the information available to players needs to be updated frequently.

#### Tip of the iceberg

Gender equality is one piece of a much larger puzzle – diversity. Catherine Beloff explains how attracting people from a wider variety of social and ethnic backgrounds to horseracing is the sport's real challenge. "Representation goes a lot further than just gender," she says. "The issues with accessibility and affordability are where there is the most work to do."

Beloff points to the work done by organisations like the Ebony Horse Club, an inner-city horse riding club in Brixton, South London, to make riding more accessible to a wider demographic. The charity comes into contact with more than 1,000 children a year in an area with a history of academic underachievement, high rates of teenage pregnancy, violence and drug-related crime.

Further north, the objective for GreaterSport is also to ensure that diversity and inclusion goes beyond just gender. Sara Tomkins adds: "When we look at our recruitment pool, the gender split is pretty good. What we're possibly lacking is a breadth that reflects the Greater Manchester community. We want to reflect the people we're here to help, so addressing other types of diversity – ethnicity, people with disabilities – is essential."

Lydia Edgar, head of Brabners' sports sector, concludes: "Sport has made some solid strides forward in recent years to address inequality but we are still only at the start of the journey."

"Many of the sporting organisations we work with are working hard to level the playing field – whether that's amending their constitution, removing practical barriers for female board members, or actively recruiting people from diverse backgrounds such as LGBT and BAME. Their mission now is to continue identifying and removing the barriers to inclusion and governance whilst acknowledging that achieving true diversity in sport will be a marathon and not a sprint." ■

# What's in a name?

## Branding and IP protection

Intellectual property and the concept of brand identity are constantly evolving and, in a digital world, theft of IP assets is becoming far more difficult to police. We spoke to four experts about the opportunities and challenges that face sporting organisations when defending and utilising their brands.

### What does brand protection mean to you?

#### Robert Zuk (Barnsley FC):

"Our main concern is the longstanding challenge of counterfeiting. That's the number one issue that we're most vulnerable to.

"We're a victim of the general success of UK football and its appeal all over the world. We've also recently welcomed foreign investors into the club, which has increased our international profile. The attention that generates benefits both the club and Barnsley greatly, but it's something we need to be mindful of when policing use of our brand.

"Fake goods ultimately create reputational issues. The quality is often low and the lack of customer service from the supplier can reflect poorly on us if our branding is prominent. Genuine supporters believe they are going to receive official merchandise and, in some cases, it never actually arrives."

#### Stewart Kellett (Basketball England):

"Basketball is very much at the starting point of its commercial journey in the UK, so having a strong brand identity, and protecting it, is vital for us. That said, we still want to make sure that our clubs and stakeholders can access our brand and utilise its power and meaning as a link to the governing body.

"As an organisation, we're pushing out new programmes across the country and those programmes wouldn't have the same impact and association without a unified look and feel. Participants need a solid

brand that they can recognise and come back to time and time again because they understand and respect its values.

"We don't have the same issues with piracy that you might find in a higher-profile sport. For us, it's more about protecting the integrity of our name as our presence grows, but remaining accessible for people in the game to utilise our brand correctly. We need the people who join our programmes to see our brand and associate it with safety and quality - that's our number one priority. For that to happen, we always look to make sure our brand is only used by approved stakeholders and providers."

#### Neil Doncaster (Scottish Professional Football League):

"The league has a different relationship with intellectual property to the one our clubs have. There's very little effort from pirates to replicate our brand identity.

"But, when you strip it back, almost all of our revenue streams are dependent on IP law in some form or another. The main example is, of course, broadcasting rights. Our broadcast partners pay for access to televised matches so obviously protecting that property from pirates is a focus."

### Is enforcement of intellectual property only ever a defensive tactic? Can it be used strategically to strengthen brand identity?

#### Colin Bell (Brabners):

"As sport becomes more economically valuable, professional clubs are

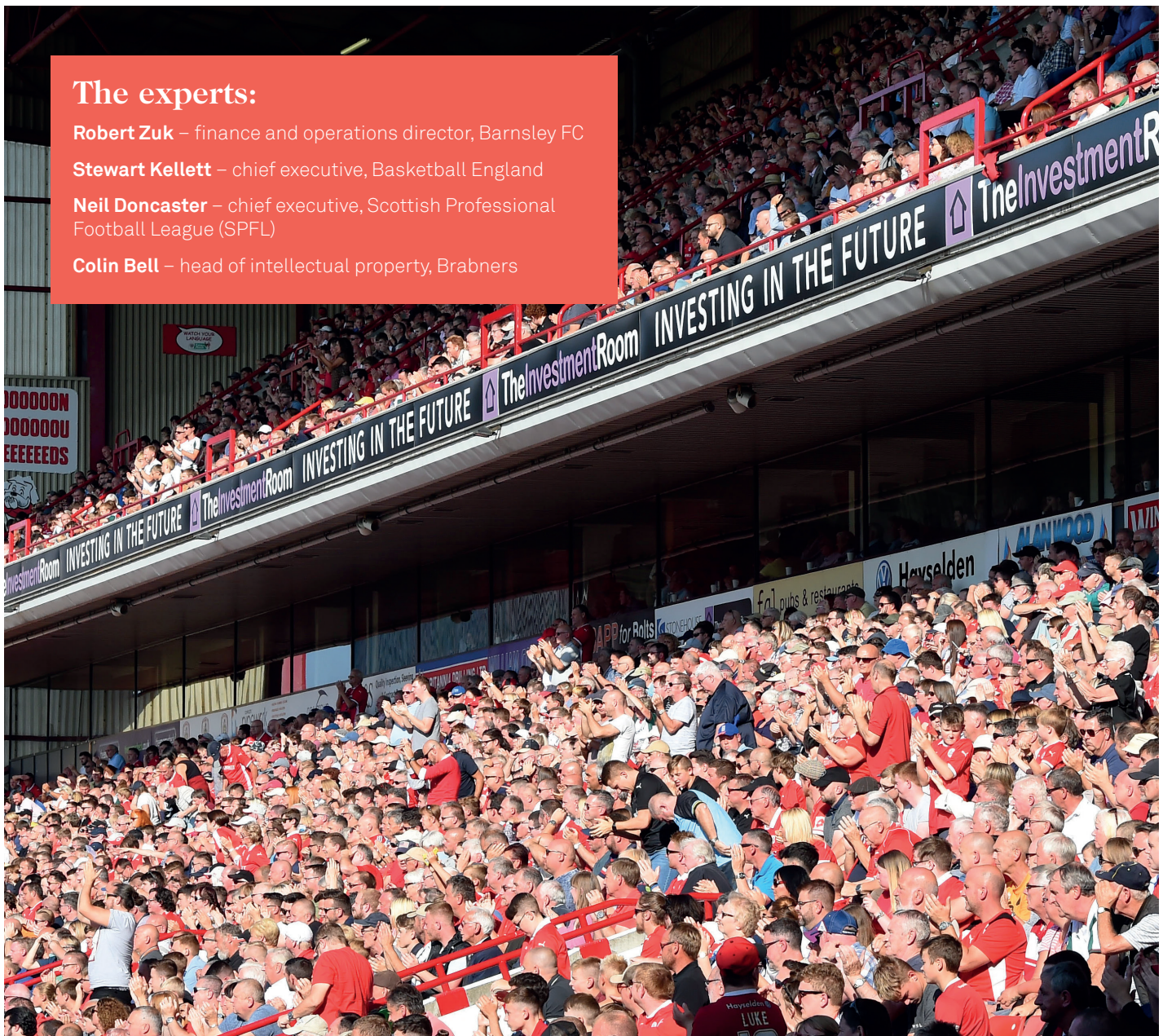
increasingly looking to revamp their brand image in order to gain more control over it. While IP protection can be used to strengthen brand identity, it's paramount that any rebranding exercise doesn't come at the cost of the fanbase. Brand imagery - Liverpool's liver bird for example - can also be engrained in local culture, so it's important to understand those complexities and establish what fair usage might look like outside of a club's trade marks and copyrights."

#### Robert Zuk:

"Football clubs are in a fortunate position in that brand loyalties often run far deeper than they do for other types of business. Supporters have a very deep connection with the club. But that's not to say we can't build on this and expand year by year. We're increasing the number of organisations our brand is associated with all the time. For example, having a women's team has enabled us to promote the Barnsley FC brand in the world of female football. Likewise, the women's team benefits from the validation it deserves by being associated with an established club."

#### Stewart Kellett:

"A big part of our mission is to get young people interested in basketball, so naturally we want to develop a brand that they can identify with. A great example is our recently launched Slam Jam programme, which we enlisted the help of young fans to help design the logo for. That way, what we're creating has a link to the people utilising and engaging with it, and we have actively engaged with our communities. That's how we look to strengthen identity."



## The experts:

**Robert Zuk** – finance and operations director, Barnsley FC

**Stewart Kellett** – chief executive, Basketball England

**Neil Doncaster** – chief executive, Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL)

**Colin Bell** – head of intellectual property, Brabners

## How is the importance of brand protection evolving for you?

### Robert Zuk:

“There is no doubt that the growth of ecommerce has proliferated counterfeit merchandise. Policing the vendors themselves is very time consuming and reactive, so we’ve decided to go on the front foot and focus more resource on communicating to supporters about how to spot fake merchandise and where they can go to get the real thing.”

### Stewart Kellett:

“The further along our journey we get, the more important brand identity and protecting that identity will become. As we develop relationships with retailers and stakeholders in the game, we have to make sure from the outset that our brand is used correctly and consistently.

“We’re not currently at a level where we have an issue with piracy or misuse of our brand but we are focussing our efforts on making sure that, when our brand is used, it is done in the correct way. By developing those relationships from the outset, brand integrity can be consistently protected and maintained.”

### Neil Doncaster:

“The digitalisation of televised sport has presented new challenges. It’s now quite common for overseas broadcasts of matches to be hijacked and streamed back to the UK. It is difficult to identify and even harder to police.

“The quality and availability issues with these streams mean that the broadcasters who have paid for rights still have an edge over the pirates. Most people who have invested in a new 4K television aren’t willing to downgrade to a laptop screen to regularly watch football just to avoid paying their Sky or BT subscription. The real threat will come when the

technology advances to a point where fans can stream onto their televisions in comparable quality to satellite or cable.”

### Colin Bell:

“When it comes to illegal streaming, recent rulings have restored the balance in favour of professional clubs and leagues. The Premier League and UEFA have both obtained a ‘live blocking’ injunction which is effectively a running judgement that enables them to provide a list of offending streams to internet service providers who will then shut down the broadcasting sites immediately. This is achieved using new technology for the purpose of detecting and blocking infringing streams on a near-live basis.

“The impact of Brexit may also mean a more difficult playground for pirates as the end of Free Movement of Services and portability of online content services will make it harder to access digital streams in the UK from the EU and vice versa.”



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Clearly, players are increasingly becoming celebrities in their own right. They are free to develop a platform through which to generate income outside of their sport.

Neil Doncaster – chief executive, Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL)

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**The concept of IP is constantly changing to incorporate more than just traditional brand assets. Do you ever envisage a time when celebrations like the ‘Mobot’ or tricks like the ‘Cruyff turn’ will be enshrined IP assets?**

**Robert Zuk:**

“Turning iconic celebrations and moves into branding isn’t necessarily a new thing. A recent example is Paris Saint-Germain, who currently use Michael Jordan’s ‘Jumpman’ on their kits rather than the Nike logo. This shows how branding can play a part in immortalising an athlete and how it can even transcend different sports.

“But this is definitely still quite far removed from a player claiming rights over something ‘in game’. I can’t see it happening in football and it would probably stunt the development of the sport if there were restrictions on what actions players could use on the pitch.”

**Neil Doncaster:**

“There would be significant impediments making it difficult for an individual sportsman in any team game to promote his or her own brand in a way that they could monetise. This is partly because the value of a player celebration or move is in the footage of it – footage that the club, or more likely the league, owns.

“Clearly, players are increasingly becoming celebrities in their own right. They are free to develop a platform

through which to generate income outside of their sport. David Beckham or Roger Federer’s clothing lines are good examples. However, Roger Federer is an individual athlete and David Beckham had to step away from the teams with which he was most associated in order to develop his own brand identity.

“But regarding what they do on the pitch, players are required, in effect, to hand over any intellectual property rights they might have. If there was a way of monetising this, it would likely be the club that would be able to extract revenue from it.”

**FIFA took a hard line on protecting brand assets associated with the 2018 World Cup in Russia. Is this a model for how sports should protect the official marks of their flagship competitions? Or is it an overzealous use of IP law?**

**Robert Zuk:**

“FIFA’s stance was an aggressive one, but you have to acknowledge that the competition’s partners will have paid vast sums of money for the rights to use the official marks. Heading off any exploitation by those who haven’t paid their way is, quite rightly, the priority.

“The World Cup is a global phenomenon and there’s no way FIFA’s approach to IP would have caused anyone to miss it. But a smaller competition does need to do more

to create buzz, and limiting the ability of people and businesses to talk about it too much could impact how much excitement an event generates organically.”

**Neil Doncaster:**

“A major competition like a World Cup or the Commonwealth Games will stipulate as part of the bidding process that the host country or city passes a temporary law that upholds and protects the competition owner’s IP rights.

“For a smaller competition, say the Betfred Cup here in Scotland, there isn’t the need to defend the IP assets so vigorously. From our perspective, if local TV or local businesses were featuring match footage or upcoming games in marketing materials, we would probably think twice before stepping in. The added promotion and awareness this creates may be more valuable to us.

“If, however, someone decided to put real money behind illegal streaming and move it on from the cottage industry it is now, that would be a real concern for us.” ■

# At all costs?

## Safeguarding the future of sport

### **'For the glory of sport and the honour of our teams...'**

So finishes the athletes' oath that has been delivered at the opening ceremony of every Olympic Games since 1920. Both on and off the field, sport has changed dramatically in the past century. However, the one constant in that time has been the sense of integrity sport provides as a representation of human achievement. Heroics, passion and commitment are all terms that come to mind.

But, as the sporting arena continues to offer increased wealth and fame on a global scale, the fear is that sport is no longer the pillar of society it once was. Undoubtedly, the stakes have been raised – and it's having an impact across the board.

For all the entertainment it provides, elite level sport is regularly the subject of stories relating to match fixing, doping and the ill-discipline of its ambassadors. While we may associate community-based sports with greener pastures, such is the trickle-down effect that grassroots sport is more susceptible to misconduct and poor behaviour than ever before.

"Sport's position in society has changed to the point where it has become a means to a hugely attractive economic end," says Michele Verroken, director of sports business consultancy, Sporting Integrity, and former director of ethics and anti-doping at UK Sport.

"As the rewards for success become ever-more lucrative, athletes have become commodities to be exploited by coaches, commercial partners and nation states.

"As a result, people are more willing than ever to take shortcuts that help them obtain a better life – whether that's a coach or athlete gaining sponsorship or a government hosting a major sporting event.

"While we in the western world are quick to point the finger regarding doping and corruption, you need only look at gyms and sports clubs around the UK to see that these issues are manifesting themselves as commercial industries elsewhere despite our clean performance on paper."

For Verroken, the next decade is crucial to re-establishing the voice of the athlete and a model of governance where participant wellbeing is the absolute priority at all levels. She believes that scenario is beginning to play out in anti-doping as the collective bargaining of athlete groups begins to influence typically bureaucratic sport governance. The increased focus on mental health across society is also enabling a major shift in how sport views itself and the role it plays.

Ash Cox is director of legal for British Swimming and has seen mental resilience become an integral part of the sport in recent years. "Sport treads a very fine line in that people are willing to push each other incredibly hard," he says.

"It's our responsibility to ensure that not only are our athletes able to deal with the stress of performing but that our coaches have the right support and that we, as an organisation, understand the boundaries between guiding someone to new heights and causing them damage – mentally or physically.

"The funding situation in many sports is such that athletes are often competing simply to maintain their financial awards and sponsorships – often on an annual basis – which can be challenging when creating a positive environment for mental health.

"As such, it's becoming increasingly important for governing bodies to have frameworks and personal development programmes in place to care for their athletes, not only when they are competing, but also to prepare them for life after sport. With this in mind, British Swimming is taking steps to introduce ex-athletes into its education programme so that the current generation receives first-hand experience of transitioning into a career outside of aquatics."

Lydia Edgar, head of sports law at Brabners, concludes: "Through the window of 24-hour news, social media and the implementation of initiatives like the Code for Sports Governance, sport is arguably putting more effort into transparency than ever.

"Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson's 2017 Duty of Care Review rightly brought the issue of welfare vs winning to the forefront of debate as society continues to evaluate the price it is willing to pay for entertainment and success. The standards amateurs and professionals alike aspire to are constantly improving. The hope is that sport continues to recognise the value of participation and integrity in pursuit of those goals." ■



# A winning opportunity

We have read in this report of the immense opportunity sport provides as a stimulus for our economy, social cohesion, health and wellbeing. But it is also clear that, as with so much in modern life, we are increasingly living in a world of haves and have nots.

The tectonic plates have shifted considerably in elite sport in recent decades, creating a hierarchy of wealth between sports, as well as huge chasms in the financial landscape that sits between the realms of amateur and professional.

As the business of sport transforms the fortunes of various leagues and clubs for the better, we must strive to ensure that those successes are for the benefit of all. When a sporting organisation gets it right, we must document why. From those victories – be they sporting or commercial

– we must invest in the future of that sport and those around it.

Grassroots facilities, diversity and access for disadvantaged communities are all issues that sport will continue to address in the years to come. In the UK, our sporting wealth means we are uniquely positioned as custodians to ensure physical activity and fair competition play a positive role in society both now and in the future.

In the English Premier League we are home to the world's most lucrative sports league outside of North America. We are also set to host major international tournaments including the INF Netball World Cup, ICC Cricket World Cup, UEFA Euro 2020 and the Commonwealth Games in the space of just four short years.

These momentous occasions will all provide platforms to champion the impact of sport and create positive legacies that far outreach the events themselves. As commercial entities supporting the growth of sport, it is our responsibility not to let the opportunity slip from our grasp. ■

**Maurice Watkins CBE**  
Senior partner, Brabners



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Outstanding



November 2018