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Editorial and research team

Kevin Roberts
Suzanne Swaysland
Richard Welbirg
Rory Squires

Designers

Richard Mulligan
Alex Smith

**Production and
Distribution Manager**
Craig Young

Head of Media Sales

Robin.Hume@sportbusiness.com
+ 44 (0) 2072 654182

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Published by

SportBusiness, a division of SBG Companies Ltd
New Penderel House
283-288 High Holborn
London WC1V 7HP
T: +44 (0) 20 7265 4100
F: +44 (0) 20 7265 4220

Registered address

Park House
116 Park Street
London W1K 6AF



(Cameron Spencer/
Getty Images)

Bidding for the Olympic Games: a health check

Jon Tibbs OBE is chairman and founder of Jon Tibbs Associates. He is one of the leading communications experts in the Olympic Movement, whose winning clients include Sochi 2014 and LA 2028 among others. Here he argues that early interest in hosting the 2032 Games from a number of major cities in regions around the world suggests a bright future for the Olympics...



There is an exercise that facilitators sometimes run with executives in marketing workshops. It goes like this: "If your brand was an historic character, who would it be and why?"

And if you cut through the giggle, the gushing and the grindingly obvious delegate responses, it invariably results in some revealing and helpful insights.

If the Olympic Games were represented by an historic character, one candidate could be Mark Twain, who sent a cable from London to the press in the United States after his obituary had been mistakenly published. "Reports of my death are greatly exaggerated," the cable famously ran.

Three years after the much-criticised Rio 2016 Games, western media reports on the demise of the Games seem to have been similarly exaggerated.

The iconic global cities of Tokyo, Paris and Los Angeles will host the next three summer editions of the Olympic Games from 2020 to 2028, whilst Beijing and Milan/Cortina line up for the next two Winter Games.

Hardly a brand in its death throes, as the naysayers and doomsters would have had us believe.

Quick decision

And what is happening in the early stages of the bid process for the 2032 Olympic Games is nothing short of remarkable. It appears that the race is already on to host the Games over 12 years out.

Southern Queensland (comprising Brisbane, Gold Coast et cetera.) is already fast out of the blocks, eager to

"What is happening in the early stages of the bid process for the 2032 Olympic Games is nothing short of remarkable. It appears that the race is already on to host the Games over 12 years out."

take advantage of a major change in an IOC bidding process that could see the IOC Executive Board recommending, with the full IOC Session ratifying, a 2032 host city as early as 11 years ahead of the Games.

Unlikely, but now, at least, it is a possibility.

The Australian strategy, reportedly, is to give the IOC a turn-key solution for the 2032 Games as early as 2021 – way ahead of any other bidder – in the hope of a quick decision. Furthermore, the Australian offer may be put on the table for a limited period in order to force the IOC hand. I call this a bird-in-the-IOC-hand strategy.

This strategy is a fascinating high-stakes poker play straight from the casinos of Gold Coast. And it could pay off. After all, the Sydney 2000 Games are still lauded as one of the best ever, and what's not to like about another Games down under, complete with direct flights from the North American East Coast and Europe by then?

However, the Australian bid for 2032 looks likely to be joined at the table by an Indian bid. All my meetings with sports and political leaders from that vast nation indicate that this would be no mere stalking-horse bid. There is a real intent to mount a serious bid, thereby offering the Olympic Movement stakeholders tantalising access to 1.3 billion hearts and minds.

Undaunted by the prospect of bidding against these two titans, Jakarta in Indonesia has also been steadily assembling a case for a serious tilt at 2032, having hosted a largely successful Asian Games in 2018. Indonesia is home to nearly a quarter of a billion Muslims – more than any other nation – and, if successful, would be the first Muslim country to host the Games.

Historic initiative

Then of course there is the elusive potential joint North and South Korea bid for the 2032 Games. Many megabytes have been written about IOC president Thomas Bach's desire to realise this historic initiative. And the signs were promising with the various joint North-South activities during PyeongChang 2018.

The chances of this happening will depend as much on the stop-go peace talks between President Trump and Kim Jong-un as on skilful IOC diplomacy. But what a prospect that would be! And from everything my consultancy JTA is hearing, there is a great appetite on all sides for a joint Games.

Add to all this a widely-reported potential 2032 bid from the Rhine-Ruhr region of Germany, another likely bid from a North African nation – to be the first ever Games host from Africa – as well as a possible bid from the politically-charged and competitive Gulf region, and there is every reason to believe that the Olympic Games are in rude health.

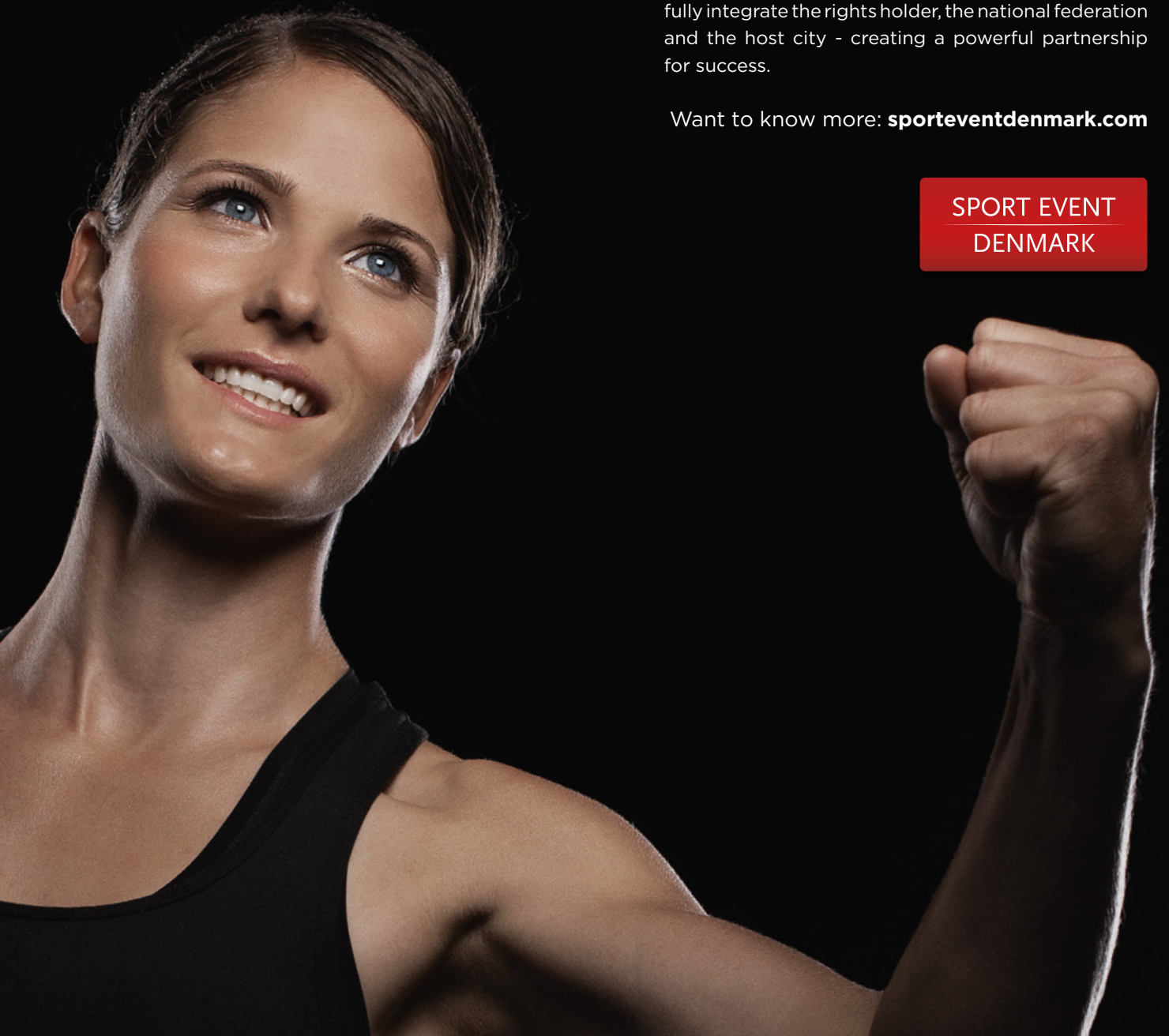
Reports of their early demise seem indeed to have been greatly exaggerated. ○

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DENMARK WON THE IHF WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS ON HOME GROUND THIS YEAR

World Championships within in athletics, cycling and curling have also been staged in Denmark in 2019.

In the pipeline, there are a wide range of major international sporting events such as the UEFA EURO 2020, BWF Thomas & Über Cup 2020, WTF World Taekwondo Poomsae Championships 2020, IOF World Urban Orienteering Championships 2020, Tour de France Grand Départ 2021, ICF Canoe Sprint World Championships 2021, FIG Artistic Gymnastics World Championships 2021, The Ocean Race 2022, IHF Women's World Handball Championship 2023, BWF World Badminton Championships 2023, The UCI Track Cycling World Championships 2024, and IIHF Ice Hockey World Championship 2025.

Denmark will play host to the events under the slogan "Hosting Winners".

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(Matthias Hangst/Getty Images)

Good LOCs make all the difference

Sunset+Vine is one of the most respected production companies in sports media. With countless experiences at sporting events large and small, the company's executive chairman **Jeff Foulser** outlines the challenges and requirements associated with being a host broadcast partner.

From your perspective, what makes for a great host city experience for a broadcaster, media or production company?

Foulser: A good local organising committee (LOC), for a start; an LOC that really understands the host broadcast role so they are prepared to work with you to achieve everyone's aims. If people don't understand that role, it makes it almost impossible.

From a host broadcast point of view, ease of access to venues and the international broadcast centre (IBC) is important, as well as good transport infrastructure and fairly

priced accommodation, as hotels always put their prices up. Local organisers sometimes have rooms block-booked so we often try to get on the back of that.

A good example was in Gold Coast for the 2018 Commonwealth Games, when everything was very accessible for us. Accommodation was available for the production teams very close to the IBC and transport to and from the venues was well organised. That sort of thing makes a huge difference to people when they are working 14- or 16-hour days. If people can finish work and have a quick walk to back to the hotel via a quick stop at a bar, it makes for a happy crew.

How has the relationship between the local organising committee and host broadcaster evolved in recent years? For example, as host cities increasingly view coverage of their events as a destination marketing tool, are they more proactive about working with host broadcasters?

JF: They're keen to support whatever we do – whether they are beauty shots at venues or the city centre. They are very keen to show off their cities.

The last two Commonwealth Games we did, in Glasgow and the Gold Coast, were both brilliant in different ways. Glasgow was very accessible and easy



to walk around. In Gold Coast it's a beautiful location and has a real Aussie outdoor sunny lifestyle.

Part of your job as a host broadcaster is to make favourable noises by capturing images of places you're in – iconic shots that make you think, 'wow', like the one of the diving board at the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona [see following page] – so we have an eye on that when we are setting up.

Which production technologies are becoming more important in your coverage?

JF: People are always looking for the next technological innovation. Things like Spidercam have been around for quite a long time and we have drone shots and underwater tracking shots in swimming. Going forward, though, I think it's going to be more about how events are covered across different platforms.



Sunset+Vine executive chairman Jeff Foulser

If you look at Eliud Kipchoge's recent marathon challenge in Vienna, when he became the first athlete to break the two-hour mark over the distance, we provided broadcast coverage, but there was also second-screen coverage with plenty of different data, including average speed, split times, weather, temperature and more.

What sort of timeline do you work with to prepare for major events versus smaller, one-off events?

JF: For big events, we would have people on site about two years before the start. We would be working with the LOC from the moment the contract is awarded.

We would expect to have a small team working alongside the LOC on the planning, and we would be working with all of the different divisions of the LOC, whether it is in relation to transport, power, venues or something else. It's a big joint operation and lots of different people are involved.

When it's an event that lasts for a long time, the set-up tends to be with a flypack kit, with the LOC providing a portacabin for you, rather than taking an OB van.

If we are working in a new stadium where we haven't been before, we would carry out enough visits beforehand to understand how it all works. It's vital to understand how a stadium works as you have to manage the expectations of broadcasters. There were about 300 of them from around the world on site for the IAAF World Championships in London in 2017, for example, and we had to think really carefully about how to accommodate all of them.

What about the security provisions?

JF: The areas in which we work tend to be locked down once everything is checked on the way in and then they do a big sweep a day or two before the start with dogs sniffing around in bins. Then everything is completely locked down and you can only get into the venue through various checks. It's just a part of life now.

Are there any areas of support for host broadcasters that can sometimes be overlooked?

JF: The most important thing is simply meeting the basic needs you require to get the job done. You want things to be easily accessible to enable you to carry out your work. But, aside from logistical aspects and obvious areas, there are things that can be overlooked.

There are sometimes issues with catering at venues. In Glasgow, for example, some crew members had hot meals, but others had to have sandwiches – and that didn't go down well. These kinds of things might sound unimportant, but having a happy team is very important.

It is also really important to have clear lines of communication, and having an LOC that really understands your requirements as a host broadcaster is vital. Experience on both sides is important. There is a whole industry of people who basically just work on major events, whether they are involved in booking broadcast equipment or are responsible for technical delivery. The same faces tend to pop up from one major event to another.

How important is that experience, as well as an existing relationship with the organisers of the event?

JF: It's important when it is a big logistical challenge, as was the case for the recent Cricket World Cup in England and Wales. We had five facilities units and four production teams charging up and down the land, but because we've done so much cricket, we already knew a lot of the people, including the International Cricket Council, the England & Wales Cricket Board and even people who work at the grounds. That certainly made our lives easier.



Other really positive experiences we've had with local organisers include the 2017 IAAF World Championships in London and the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, which was fantastic and ran really smoothly."

Do any examples of events that ran less smoothly spring to mind?

JF: There are countries and places that don't have the money or infrastructure that could make things easier. We had a challenging World Equestrian Games last year in North Carolina, USA.

The people organising the event – not the international federation – did not really understand what we were trying to do, which made life quite difficult.

The accommodation was an hour's drive from the host venue, so we had to get cars and drive them back and forth around long work days. Then there was no proper food at the hotel. So, it was a challenging one, but we made it work.

Ultimately, of course, everyone wants it to be a success and no-one is trying to obstruct you deliberately.

"Part of your job as a host broadcaster is to make favourable noises by capturing images of places you're in – iconic shots that make you think, 'wow'."

What sort of contingency plans do you put in place?

JF: There are a lot of moving parts, and you have to be ready for that. In 2016, for example, covering the ICC World T20 cricket tournament in India was very challenging. There were seven different cities and we had to move commentators and production units over large distances between venues.

The venue of an India v Pakistan group match was switched from Dharamsala to Kolkata with 10 days' notice due to security concerns. Thankfully, we had a unit there already, but if the match had been relocated to another city where there was not a production team in place, it would have

been tremendously difficult. However, that's the job of the host broadcaster.

"Also, the organisers spoke to us before the relocation was announced, as should always be the case. I'm sure, for example, that the host broadcaster for the 2019 Rugby World Cup was in discussions with the organisers about the typhoon disruption before announcements were made.

Looking to the future, how do you feel the role of a broadcaster at a major sporting event will change and develop in the next five years?

JF: I don't see it changing drastically in the foreseeable future. International federations are certainly getting more involved and are often taking more control and I can see that happening more and more. However, it obviously depends on whether the international federation has the budget to take control effectively of production, or whether they would prefer someone else to have that financial burden as it is not a cheap thing to do. The economics have to work." ○

WWC facilities among the best ever

Canadian-born **Tiffany Cameron** was a member of Jamaica's squad at the 2019 Fifa Women's World Cup in France, appearing in two of the matches. The 28-year-old forward's current team is Stabæk in Norway, having also represented clubs in Canada, the US, Germany, Cyprus, Israel and Sweden in her career so far.

How do you reflect on the organisational experience of the 2019 Fifa Women's World Cup, from the perspective of a player? What were the good organisational aspects, and were there any less satisfactory experiences that future event hosts can learn lessons from?

Cameron: I think from an organizational standpoint everything was very professional at the 2019 Fifa Women's World Cup. The transportation resources in camp were quality and our training fields were very nice. The food could have been better and I think it should be mandatory for the chefs at each venue to learn how to make at least one or two traditional breakfast, lunch and dinner dishes from each country. That was the only thing that was missing. Our federation had to fly in a Jamaican chef from England so that everyone felt more at home.

How did France compare as an event host in comparison with previous tournaments you've attended?

TC: I think the facilities in France were one of the best I've personally attended. I was impressed mostly with the quality of the grass fields. There have been tournaments in the past that I've participated in and the quality of the grass fields were poor. I liked how each country had a representative and that the media requests weren't too pressing. We had a decent amount of time to rest and be with our families.

As a player, what for you makes a good event host, and what are the priorities from your perspective?

TC: I think what makes a good event host are quality facilities, quality service and a nice warm welcome to newcomers. What makes me the most comfortable is knowing that after a hard session I can come back to a clean hotel with a heater, some air conditioning,



Tiffany Cameron at the 2019 Fifa Women's World Cup
(Elsa/Getty Images)

“What makes me the most comfortable is knowing that after a hard session I can come back to a clean hotel with a heater, some air conditioning, good food and WiFi.”

good food and WiFi. If a hotel can offer me those things, I am happy. It's also important that any events that are hosting professional clubs or national teams are able to provide professional fields and facilities.

What are the most common problem areas for athletes when it comes to visiting an event host?

TC: I think some problem areas for

athletes visiting an event are the food and the field quality. Usually, for any athlete when they travel to a different country, it takes a while for their stomach to get used to the food. I remember when I went to China for a national team event, I was eating certain food that looked and tasted different than what I was used to, but an athlete has to eat or their performance will be affected. Of course, when a soccer field is poor quality it also affects the quality of training sessions. I've been in situations where I've had to play on horrible grass conditions. I think in the women's game we need a higher percentage of quality practice and game fields worldwide.

Aside from the 2019 Fifa Women's World Cup, are there examples of

Jamaica's players after
their game against
Australia (Maja Hitij/
Getty Images)



a good event host experience you have encountered and if so, what made it so good?

TC: One of the best facilities I've ever had the privilege of using was Olympique Lyonnais' facilities in France. Our national team trained there for a few days preparing for the World Cup and everything was top notch. The soccer fields, gym, food, pool and recovery areas were all amazing. If I were a professional athlete at that club, I literally would play there for the rest of my career. They say that there is no such thing as a perfect situation playing professional football, but my experience there for a few days really felt like one.

On the flip side, can you think of any recent examples of a bad experience for you as a player when competing at an event?

"If I am going to be participating in a major tournament, I want to go somewhere I know will be very organised and professional."

TC: I remember traveling to a country in South America and the food being absolutely horrible. We had our staff members remind us every day not to drink the water or brush our teeth with tap water. We couldn't walk anywhere without our team and staff. It was just a bad experience overall, because it felt like we had to stay on our toes the whole time. I think every athlete wants to be able to travel to countries and actually do some exploring, instead of feeling like they have to watch their

every move. To top things off, the field quality there wasn't the best either.

From a player's perspective, are you happier to travel to experienced event hosts like France for a major tournament, rather than emerging markets that have less hosting experience?

TC: At this point in my career I am happier to travel to experienced event hosts for a major tournament. I think when I was younger, I didn't have as many needs and expectations like I do now. If I am going to be participating in a major tournament, I want to go somewhere I know will be very organised and professional. When players are comfortable in their environments they tend to perform better. However, it is important that the developed countries help out the



developing countries so that one day they can be suitable hosts when the time is right.

What can the likes of Fifa, local organisers and host cities do to make the event experience better for players?

TC: I think it would be cool to have performers from each country get a few minutes to share their culture with the fans who came out to watch. So, for example during the half-time of a Jamaica v Brazil game, it would be really cool to have some Jamaican dancers perform and then possibly have Brazilians perform afterwards. Life outside the sport is important and it would be awesome to see something like this happen in the near future. Embracing the many different cultures of each country would go a long way.

To what extent do athletes need to have a greater voice in how the events they compete in are assigned and organised?

TC: I think it's essential that athletes continue to fill out surveys about how their experience was at an event. Feedback is crucial in order for an organisation to improve. The quality of the questions in surveys could be better though. I find as an athlete filling out a survey, I often get annoyed, because the questions are very repetitive and they drag on. Even if things were a bit simpler and we were asked to list positives and negatives of our experience at a host event, that would give us a greater voice. Sometimes open-ended questions are the best way to go if you don't ask too many of them. The more opinions athletes give, the more professional events will be in the near future.

In reflecting on your experience at the 2019 Fifa Women's World Cup, what are your broader thoughts about the tournament and the development of women's football?

TC: I think women's football is developing as a whole, but there are still certain aspects in the game that can improve tremendously, from how we are paid as athletes, to the professional facilities provided worldwide. I think coverage of the Fifa Women's World Cup was great and a lot of fans came out to watch and support all of the countries. I was really impressed by how many Jamaican fans came out to cheer us on and it was a huge motivator for us to want to return in another four years' time. Being World Cup debutants was an amazing experience and it was an honour to wear the Jamaican flag on my chest and make history! ○

Introducing the new Montréal

The Montréal Olympic Games of 1976 produced some of the greatest moments in sports history.

American Ed Moses powered to his first 400m hurdles gold and launched a legend in front of a passionate crowd in the ground-breaking Olympic Stadium, while nearby on the Olympic Park, teenage Romanian gymnast Nadia Comăneci's flawless performances and sparkling personality won her seven Perfect 10s, three gold medals and hearts everywhere.

Montréal never forgets its Olympic heritage, or the stars who made 1976 so memorable, and in 2017, Comaneci returned to the city and the rejuvenated Olympic Park when a new plaza was named in her honour.

Passion for sports

The gesture was typical of a city in love with sport. Canada's second largest city is not simply home to one of the most iconic teams in any sport – the NHL's Montréal Canadiens – but is a world class host for a range of national and international sports events every year.

While Montréal's passion for sports hasn't changed since 1976, the city and its infrastructure certainly have.

Many of the facilities created for the '76 Games have been updated and upgraded, while new venues have been added to a wide-ranging portfolio that now includes the Bell Center (home to the Canadiens), the Olympic Park aquatics centre (upgraded to meet the highest Fina standards) and the IGA Stadium, which hosts numerous sporting and special events including the Rogers Cup, a WTA Tour and ATP Tour Masters 1000 event. Then, of course, there's also the Circuit Gilles Villeneuve in the Parc Jean-Drapeau, the host venue of the Formula 1 Canadian Grand Prix. Long viewed as a gem by Montrealers, the Parc Jean-Drapeau offers a multitude of facilities



© David Ospina / Vans Park Series

Recent events in Montréal

2016 FIS (cross-country skiing)
World Cup – Canada Ski Tour

2017 FIG Artistic Gymnastics World
Championships

2018 ISU World Short Track Speed
Skating Championships

2019 IJF Judo Grand Prix

2020 ISU World Figure Skating
Championships

and recreational opportunities just minutes away from downtown Montréal.

These and a range of other facilities have made Montréal a popular host city among governing bodies of sports ranging from skating and aquatics to athletics and combat sports.

Thriving hub

And a city that never stands still moves with the sporting times and is a

thriving hub for urban sports thanks to facilities including the Vans Skatepark on the Esplanade at Olympic Park. This year alone the city has hosted the Fiba 3x3 basketball World Tour, climbing's Psicobloc Open Series and skateboarding's Vans Park Series Pro Tour and action sports festival Jackalope.

But facilities alone are never enough to create a world class sports city; the human element plays a vital role. In this respect, Montréal's vast hosting experience has created a reservoir of planning and management talent to help sports federations maximise the value and impact of their key events.

They can be confident in the knowledge they and their athletes will receive the warmest of welcomes and maximum support in a city with sport in its DNA. ○

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Andréanne Paquet
EMAIL: apaquet@mtl.org
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Technology and the spectator

Michael Cole, chief technology officer of golf's European Tour, on how technology can bring the spectator closer to the action while they remain blissfully unaware of the surrounding hardware.

I've only really been involved in sport and technology for the past 12 years, but already within the short period, the inclusion of the latter within the former has changed unequivocally. I recall London 2012 being referred to as the first truly social media Olympics, and even at that time, technology accounted for around 30% of the entire operating budget. And in 2016, when Danny Willett won the Masters and his first major championship, he attributed his success to the insight into his performance enabled through technology. Technology in golf is changing and changing the landscape rapidly.

Of course, the typical golfer, on-course spectator, TV viewer or digital consumer of our major golf championships would probably have little appreciation of the complexity of the underlying technology that is required to make it possible for the world to consume some of our greatest events, including the established Rolex Series, our order of merit Race to Dubai and our wonderful finale DP World Championships, as well as the Ryder Cup itself.

As golf is a technically complicated sport, it is not surprising that technology for golf is therefore complicated too. Typically for any tournament, European Tour is delivering in a region of five separate infrastructures across operations, spectators, media and broadcasters.

For wired connectivity, we could be deploying over 200km of fibre for just four days of operations, repeated up to 26 times a year for our main sole-sanctioned events alone. For wireless, the management of radio spectrum is becoming increasingly challenging with increasing traffic in the regulated and unlicensed spectrum, whilst always striking a balance with those spectrums essential for the players in the field of play, and operations in the venue more generally.



“As golf is a technically complicated sport, it is not surprising that technology for golf is complicated too.”

To keep fans engaged and excited at the course, the European Tour has to meet their expectations of world-class sporting events. These expectations include connectivity, and one of the biggest challenges the European Tour and Ryder Cup have is to ensure our fans and all key stakeholders are always connected wherever they are on the course, and feel a sense of immersive connectiveness, not to technology but to content and sport itself.

Smart cities

At the European Tour, we've been creating small towns for our tournaments for many years, from operational centres to hospitality pavilions, spectator villages and players lounges, but the vision is to evolve from small towns to smart cities, leveraging emerging technologies such as AI and IOT to create what we call the “intelligent course”, when everything is connected, so anything is possible.

Our challenges are unique. The majority of our tournaments are at new venues requiring temporary provision of overlay and always with world-class delivery in mind – for players, spectators and our global audience. So, whatever is deployed for the Ryder

Cup, or for any golf tournament for that matter, we have to ensure that it's fully operational, flawless delivery for the three or four days of operation and then we have to decommission and move on to the next event. European Tour needs capability that is robust and that can be packaged and easily transported all our events, run in 31 countries and across five continents.

And the size of the course presents a unique challenge too. Unlike a football stadium that has a large, but manageable footprint, the size of a golf course is the equivalent of 85 football pitches, or over 200 acres, so providing this technological stage can be quite a challenge.

However, the European Tour is already changing the conversation in golf. We are an entertainment company and golf provides the platform. In looking for new ways to widen the interest and broaden the audience we are using innovative technology to engage different types of fans across multiple platforms, such as Hero Challenges, Golf Sixes, Shot Clock Masters and Knockout formats. And of course, as the European Tour, we aim to provide the perfect green for a truly connected course and a compelling showcase opportunity across all our events for fans, players, media and a global audience.

New audiences

Ultimately, we want to change golf from being just a sport for loyal fan experiences to becoming a true spectator experience for new audiences. Based on our proof of concepts we ran in 2019, we intend to incorporate the learnings from our connected and intelligent course, and create capabilities into our regular schedule where fans in time will continue to benefit from services such as:

- Interactive Maps – These will help fans find their way around the event



(Stuart Franklin/
Getty Images)

with maps based on geo-location, directing users to where they want to be via the fastest route.

- Live Streaming – Providing spectators and fans with access to unique and behind-the-scenes live streams, replays and highlights whilst at the event.
- Targeted Merchandising – Using geo-fencing to providing location-based offers, directing spectators to relevant content based on profile or event analytics.

Technology landscape

As part of our two-year 2020 vision, we are transforming the technology landscape at the European Tour, having:

- Migrated our office systems to the cloud, to create agility for our staff to work from everywhere in the world
- Launched a new European Tour website and two spectator apps for Apple and Android.
- Delivered a world-first proof of concepts for DCM-based Virtual Advertising
- Implemented the first Shot-Clock tournament in golf, improving player performance and pace of play.
- Trialled real-time shot-by-shot data collection and scoring
- Incorporate a new modular tournament TV display and IPTV management system into our operations
- Assessed new resource management systems for our 200+ volunteers at every event
- Deploy an innovation IOT solution for address pace of play and help provide an more immersive environment for fans.
- Tracked and analysed crowd behaviours at tournaments, creating unequivocal insight and intelligence at the course
- Conducted further tests on new technologies such as private LTE and 5G, with an ambition over time to reduce deployment time and fibre on the course

We have been collecting data in golf since 1972, and it remains intrinsic to the sport more than most. Scoring alone for a 156 full-strength field can generate around 23,000 data points over a full-day tournament. We recently extended our data collection capability with an interim “Waggle” project, collecting

around seven times the amount of data, and very shortly we will go live with our new shot-by-shot data collection service, using a team of nearly 80 full-time professionals to collect up to 700,000 data points in real-time for every tournament.

In addition, we are developing a crowd analytics capability, using our learnings from the Ryder Cup in September 2018 and the BMW PGA Championships in 2019 to better understand the behaviours of the on-course spectators to drive engagement and commercialise for greater share-of-wallet, but also for our own operational people, tracking people and assets to improve the operational effectiveness of our tournaments.

Technology is everywhere on the course, but it's the tournament's goal to keep it hidden, which is important because golf courses are beautiful venues and it's important to keep them pristine. European Tour must ensure that the vast kilometres of fibre we're deploying is largely hidden from public view, and not vulnerable to breakages. Some of the fibre is buried in the ground, but not enough. We want to

utilise technologies such as localised 5G to provide a high-speed low latency wireless infrastructure, supporting operations, broadcast media and public services. Our goal is to ensure the technology is not only a key enabler but is generally hidden from the visible view as far as possible.

Ultimately, we need to bridge the gap from on-course spectator to the armchair fan, and technology has a key role to play in that. The European Tour's digital strategy is to continually make more powerful use of on-site data, but also create social media content that will trend across the major platforms and spark new people to take up the sport.

Our vision is three-fold. It's to roll-out a converged and extended infrastructure, to ensure a truly connected course, with a layer of insight and delivered at the edge, to create the intelligent course, and then finally to industrialise the solution to ensure it can be deployable across our full schedule of tournaments, which can only be achieved by delivered more cloud-based services, what I call TAAS: tournament as a service. ○





Esports events are proving valuable for cities across Europe (Bart Oerbekke, ESL)

Esports and the city: How smaller European cities are transforming their image via video games

Callum McCarthy finds that European cities are falling over themselves to bring top-tier esports to town.

The growing popularity of esports means that wherever big events are held, thousands of young, well-educated fans will descend on that city over the course of a weekend. Over half of the attendees will have a bachelor's degree, and they'll spend plenty of money in hotels, restaurants, shops and in the arena.

It's a dream demographic, and the growth of League of Legends esports over the past three years has allowed Riot Games – the game's developer and competition organiser – to start treating its biggest events like the finals of traditional sports properties. Instead

of entering private negotiations with venues, Riot – alongside its hosting partner, the PR and communications firm Burson Cohn & Wolfe – has started to hold host-city bidding processes.

“My background is from sports, so when we discussed about trying to adapt some of the tactics or strength from the sports business, I think that's one example of something that I brought to the table,” says Alban Dechelotte, head of sponsorship and business development, EU esports, at Riot Games. “Riot was more used to the entertainment and music touring approach to venues. I suggested that we

start with the city and then look for a venue second.”

This was Riot Games' first attempt at a hosting process, and Dechelotte says about 150 cities submitted their interest in hosting the event, with 40 brought forward to a so-called shortlist.

“It was mind-blowing,” he says. “The idea was to go wide, discover cities that we didn't expect could be interested. It's amazing that 150 cities said they were interested.”

The winning city for LEC's Spring Split finals, Rotterdam, was also the first to apply. The Rotterdam Ahoy arena hosted the event three years prior

“Hosting esports events is still less costly for cities in comparison to hosting traditional sport events with a comparable economic impact and exposure.”

Ronnie Hansen | partner and director of sports practice, Burson Cohn & Wolfe

and continues to host multiple esports events each year, as the city sees esports as a fantastic way of attracting young, tech-savvy people.

A total of 20,000 people – only 12 per cent of them locals – attended the event over the course of April 13 and 14, contributing €2.36m (\$2.64m) to the local economy.

While this pales in significance compared to the estimated €60m brought in by tourists visiting Madrid for the Champions League final earlier this year – or the estimated €20m spent by those travelling to the Copa Libertadores final in the same city last December – esports events offer cities a cost-effective alternative that attracts a coveted demographic.

“Hosting esports events is still less costly for cities in comparison to hosting traditional sport events with a comparable economic impact and exposure,” says Ronnie Hansen, partner and director of sports practice at Burson Cohn & Wolfe. “The impact in Rotterdam is extraordinarily good for an event of that size and cost. A stand-alone concert and even most festivals would not generate this amount of economic impact and neither would more than 90 per cent of other arena sport events.”

From venue to city

Across the board, esports’ relationship with cities is changing. The host city process is a new phenomenon in an industry where tournament organisers generally prefer direct relationships with venues that are built over a period of years. ESL, which organises some of Europe’s biggest Counter-Strike: Global Offensive tournaments, uses the same venues in Cologne, Katowice and Odense each year for its biggest events,



ensuring profitability with each visit.

Travelling to new cities each time a tournament is held has historically created more risk for the organiser, but with consumer demand for esports events on a consistent upward curve, Riot feels that now is the time to begin branching out and engaging with League of Legends players in cities that wouldn’t usually be associated with esports.

“From a pure business point of view, the ESL way is more profitable,” Dechelotte says. “They have a long-term relationship with their cities, they can build year-on-year in terms of trade shows and relationships with local business operations. From a business

point of view, I could be jealous of the ESL way. But for us there’s a longer term and the more important point, which is to please the players, and not all of them are based in Katowice and Cologne. Our players are all over Europe.”

Those players’ willingness to travel to watch their heroes – and the work done by BCW to inform cities of that fact – means there aren’t many European cities that would turn down the opportunity to host an event.

But while €2.36m in a weekend is not to be sniffed at, city employees rarely speak about the short-term financial benefits of hosting esports events. Most are far more interested in how esports



“Attracting these kinds of events is good for the image of the city. Rotterdam stands for innovation and progress.”

Kees de Jong | marketing and community manager, Rotterdam Ahoy

events can change the perception of their city and the demographics of the people living in it.

“Attracting these kinds of events is good for the image of the city,” says Kees de Jong, marketing and community manager for Rotterdam Ahoy.

“Rotterdam wants to position itself as a young, vibrant, dynamic city. Rotterdam stands for innovation and progress.”

De Jong is proud to point out that Rotterdam held the Netherlands’ first ever large-scale esports event in 2016, and will hold the inaugural Rotterdam Games Week in October this year. For him, esports events are all about making Rotterdam seem attractive to a tech-focused person under the age of 30.

In his previous job, Hansen performed a similar role to de Jong for the Danish city of Odense. Hansen was looking for opportunities to host events that could change Odense’s reputation as a sleepy, historic city of churches and museums.

With a population of around 30,000 students and the biggest concentration of robotics companies anywhere in the world, Hansen’s job was to attract events that would keep some of those students in Odense after they had graduated, and provide a reason for people with STEM degrees to visit the city.

“I know of no other means of communication for a city, let alone sport or entertainment proposition, that will reach these demographics in these numbers,” Hansen says. “That is also the reason why most esports host cities use esports events to raise awareness of job and education opportunities with their local companies.

In both his old job and his current one, Hansen strongly believes esports events are the perfect platform for cities and employers to attract young workers in the fields of science and technology. The case study conducted by BCW around Riot’s event in Rotterdam indicates this is likely to be true.

Small city benefits

According to research conducted by BCW, over a quarter of non-local attendees said they would be willing to relocate to Rotterdam should an interesting job opportunity arise. For smaller European cities that often struggle to attract or keep young people in the city, this makes esports events a much more compelling proposition than other one-off arena events.

“We have a very large community of younger people, and traditionally, the city really didn’t offer much to them,”

says Tue Kempf, who works as project manager for esports events held in Odense. “It has been part of the city strategy for five years now to offer a more vibrant scene for them. It’s too early still to see if it will keep young people here, but we are seeing the effects of these initiatives. When we measure things like city pride – which is a good indicator of how likely someone is to stay – this is rising significantly among young people.”

Hansen agrees: “We have seen third cities like Odense and Katowice yield extraordinary benefits from hosting esports tournaments – benefits that would have never been possible when hosting traditional sports.”

Katowice, in Poland, has transformed its image. Once viewed as a dying industrial city, Katowice is now known across Europe as a hub for the European esports community, hosting several major tournaments over the past five years.

How much that image counts for depends on who you are. If you work in a city’s marketing department, positive press coverage and large-scale events can provide proof that esports is worth every penny. But as for their effectiveness in attracting students and workers?

“On the tourism economy alone, it’s a good business case for us,” says Kempf. “As for the attraction of qualified labour, this is a bit tricky to measure because there are so many variables when you consider moving to a different country or different city. So it’s really hard to measure what actually made it happen.”

From the perspective of Riot Games – and of other tournament organisers that specifically seek them out – smaller cities are willing to provide a level of support and integration for esports events that capital cities aren’t yet ready to. Regardless of the reason, it provides a fantastic alternative to the tried and tested.

“A lot of capitals in Europe are interested, but sometimes like the willingness from a city to promote the event, elevate the sport and provide us additional exposure like Rotterdam did – by changing the colours of the Erasmus Bridge, or by giving us access to city landmarks – these small touches demonstrated for us that passion and interest from the city,” says Dechelotte. ○



Queensland's big step forward

With SportAccord having followed the Commonwealth Games, Queensland is looking to make the most of its natural attributes as it explores future event-bidding opportunities.

Queensland's sporting ambitions have taken a considerable step forward in 2019, with the Australian state having strengthened vital connections away from the competition arena whilst pursuing opportunities to host future major events.

The SportAccord World Sport & Business Summit in May shone the global spotlight on the hosting capabilities of the state and the event's host city, Gold Coast.

More than 1,700 of the world's most influential sporting executives gathered for the week-long event, with world leaders like International Olympic

Committee President Thomas Bach and former United Nations Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon in attendance alongside representatives from 500 different international businesses, sports federations and rights holders.

The gathering provided a unique opportunity to welcome the leading decision-makers from the sporting world, just 12 months after the same state and city had hosted the Commonwealth Games to great acclaim.

With the success of the Games, as well as SportAccord, still fresh in the memory, sports industry stakeholders have been given a thorough introduction to a state that is a sporting hotbed and

is able to welcome a variety of sporting spectacles.

Spotlight

"Last year's Commonwealth Games certainly shone the spotlight on the whole of the state and the well-proven capabilities of Queenslanders to stage outstanding sporting and cultural events," Commonwealth Games Federation president Dame Louise Martin said.

"The Gold Coast, Brisbane, Townsville and Cairns all shared the Games hosting duties and delivered remarkable results."

Held in April 2018 across the four



Queensland cities, the Games provided a thorough test of the state's facilities, infrastructure and management capabilities, featuring more than 6,000 athletes and officials from 71 countries.

In the lead-up to the Games, Queensland benefited from A\$200m of investment in new and redeveloped sport infrastructure that will equip the city to stage national and international events for many years to come.

Meanwhile SportAccord was secured for the Gold Coast through a partnership between Tourism and Events Queensland, Tourism Australia, Gold Coast City Council and Destination Gold Coast.

Reflecting on this year's gathering, SportAccord managing director Nis Hatt described the event as "the best SportAccord ever", with delegates from across the world having been left "extremely impressed not only by the facilities on offer in Queensland, but

"Last year's Commonwealth Games certainly shone the spotlight on the whole of the state and the well-proven capabilities of Queenslanders to stage outstanding sporting and cultural events."

Dame Louise Martin | President,
Commonwealth Games Federation

the relaxed lifestyle and the beautiful scenery of the Gold Coast".

He added: "Many delegates have left the Gold Coast with the strong impression that Queensland is capable of hosting their future events and I'm sure we'll start seeing the outcomes of the conversations had here in the weeks, months and years to come."

Launchpad

According to Tourism and Events Queensland's chief executive, Leanne Coddington, SportAccord has provided an ideal launchpad for the state's future sporting ambitions in the wake of the Commonwealth Games triumph a year earlier.

"Queensland's event calendar had another big year in 2019, following the success of the Gold Coast 2018 Commonwealth Games," she said.

"In an Australian first, we secured SportAccord for the Gold Coast, an unprecedented opportunity to showcase our world-class event hosting capabilities and were thrilled when the event was widely hailed the 'best ever' in its history.

"It was certainly a unique chance to host the world's top sporting representatives and show them why Queensland is the perfect next event destination. The hard work has begun

to convert that interest in Queensland into future events around the state, with a goal of securing A\$100m in economic return over coming years.”

For the Gold Coast alone, the impact of Games on the local community has been dramatic, aside from establishing a pool of volunteers who have an appetite to support any future events on the calendar.

Since the Games, which attracted direct investment of more than A\$2bn, significant free-to-air publicity and a wider package of more than A\$10bn committed to projects before and after the multi-sport showcase, several more event leads have been pursued.

It certainly helps that Queensland’s sporting future is built on solid event foundations that extend well beyond SportAccord and the Commonwealth Games.

The ITU World Triathlon Grand Final, international Twenty20 cricket and the FAI World Parachuting Championships were among the events to land in the city following the multi-sport event, with the 2020 World Bowls Championships and the 2024 ILS Lifesaving World Championships also in the pipeline.

Across the state the sporting menu is varied, ranging from top-tier international cricket, tennis and track cycling in Brisbane to professional golf, surfing, motorsport and marathon events on the Gold Coast.

The Ironman and Great Barrier Reef Masters Games in tropical North Queensland, and yachting’s Hamilton Island Race Week, which attracts entries from all over the world to the Whitsunday Islands, add to the portfolio of sporting attractions that allow the state to show off its natural assets, alongside a host of mass-participation events for runners, triathletes and cyclists.

Natural fit

Endurance events provide a natural fit for Queensland, with the state’s outdoor lifestyle, climate and natural



“We have a bold and committed approach to growing the value of our It’s Live! in Queensland events calendar over the next five years.”

Leanne Coddington | Chief executive,
Tourism and Events Queensland

environment enabling win-win scenarios with rights-holders across triathlons, marathons and other road races, cycling events, mountain biking and water-based sports such as surfing, sailing, swimming, life-saving.

An example of the success of this approach can be seen with the Cairns Ironman Asia Pacific Championship, which was rated at No.1 for overall satisfaction in the 2018 Ironman Athletes Choice Awards.

Situated at the gateway to the Great

Barrier Reef and within easy reach of the Daintree Rainforest and tropical islands, the event, which boasts a stunning backdrop, has become known as the Ironman in Paradise after well over a decade on the global circuit.

With arguably the most spectacular cycling course in the world, competitors race up the Captain Cook Highway hugging the coastline from Cairns to Port Douglas. From reef to World Heritage-listed rainforest, and a run along the stunning Cairns boardwalk, the race finishes in the heart of the city.

With the next edition taking place in June 2020, the Cairns Ironman Asia Pacific Championship will provide another platform for a sport-obsessed state to promote its appeal to a global audience in an exciting schedule next year.

Ambitions

However, the state is seeking to secure

more high-value major events that will drive significant levels of interstate and international visitation and therefore contribute to the Queensland economy.

A perfect example came in May, when the first-ever National Rugby League (NRL) Magic Round took place in Brisbane, attracting a significant number of out-of-state visitors.

The event featured all 16 NRL Premiership teams played in a series of double-headers at Brisbane's Suncorp Stadium. It is expected to generate 300,000 tourist bed nights and A\$60m for the local economy over the three-year deal.

Approximately one-quarter of all ticket-holders came from a different state in Australia, while spectators from 10 countries outside of Australia and New Zealand were in attendance. About 10,000 children were also engaged through 23 school and junior club visits by NRL players surrounding the event.

In total, almost 135,000 people watched the action over four days, with another 3.8 million watching the games on television, underlining the huge interest in the landmark event, with hopes high ahead of the return of the NRL Magic Round to Brisbane next year.

"While SportAccord was certainly a key highlight this year, we were also proud of a number of new events that were staged in Queensland for the first time," Coddington added.

"In an Australian-first, the NRL 'Magic Round' was hosted in Brisbane, where all eight games of a round were played in the same place over one weekend.

"We also launched the inaugural innovation and cultural festival 'Curiosity Brisbane', the first-ever Outback Queensland Masters Golf tournament, and supported a high-end culinary festival on the Sunshine Coast.

"We also made a number of announcements this year of events that we've secured for 2020 and beyond – including Wagner's epic 16-hour Ring Cycle opera and the 2024 World Lifesaving Championships."

The trajectory with regard to events in Queensland is more positive than ever. While only five years ago, Queensland's Events Calendar generated about A\$300m per year for the state, this year it is expected to have delivered around A\$800m.

Varied experiences

While the extent to which a major event will attract domestic and international visitors is paramount, Queensland is also on the look-out for events that showcase the state's many and varied experiences to a global audience and engage effectively with the local community to leave behind genuine legacy.

In September, Queensland's government announced support for Australia's bid to host the 2023 Fifa Women's World Cup, and pledged A\$11m in funding if it succeeds. The funding offer is conditional on Queensland hosting nine games and the final being played at Suncorp Stadium.

Football Federation Australia chief executive David Gallop said: "This will secure an outstanding legacy for female sport in Queensland and Australia, powering Football Federation Australia's drive toward gender equality in football."

Queensland has made no secret of the fact that events that provide a "synergy" between the sport and the state will be of particular interest.

"The events held across Queensland are as diverse as our world-famous landscapes and that is definitely a competitive advantage that sets us apart," Coddington added.

"We have a bold and committed approach to growing the value of our It's Live! in Queensland events calendar over the next five years, and see events as a vital component of our tourism strategy to drive visitation to Queensland. In Brisbane, Gold Coast, Townsville, Cairns, Sunshine Coast and others we have a variety of towns, cities, each of which has something different to offer." ○

2020: Queensland's year of sport

- Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP) Cup (debuts in 2020 alongside the already successful Brisbane International, now a women's-only tournament) – January 2020
- Australian Youth Water Polo Championships (including major Olympic-lead up test matches between Australia and the USA) – January 2020
- Whitsunday Clipper Race Carnival (welcoming the eleven yachts and their crews competing in the Clipper Round the World Yacht Race) – January 2020
- World Surf League Gold Coast Pro – March 2020
- ICC Women's T20 World Cup – February/March 2020
- Brisbane Cycling Festival (debuted 2019) – April 2020
- 2020 Bowls World Championships – May 2020
- NRL Magic Round, Brisbane – May 2020
- Cairns IRONMAN Asia Pacific Championship – June 2020
- Supercars Townsville 400 – June 2020
- Outback Queensland Masters Golf (debuted 2019) – June/July 2019
- Gold Coast Marathon – July 2020
- Airlie Beach Race Week Festival of Sailing – August 2020
- World Masters Ultimate Championships – September 2020
- Supercars Gold Coast 600 – October 2020
- ICC Men's T20 World Cup – October/November 2020
- Australian PGA Championship – December 2020



Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium hosted the 2019 Super Bowl (Scott Cunningham/Getty Images)

Bidding for Super Bowls is not for the faint of heart

Rick Snider lifts the lid on the highly competitive process facing prospective hosts of the NFL's annual championship clash, which is said to be worth hundreds of millions of dollars to the host.

Prospective Super Bowl hosts are greeted with a dense document from the National Football League, 150 pages jammed tight with requirements of seemingly every conceivable size and type.

Seventy-thousand fixed stadium seats. Three thousand parking spaces for staff. Four hundred TVs, and even a re-sodded field are just the beginning of the NFL's extensive demands. In some cases, local roads and hotel rooms must be added. Naturally, the NFL makes all of the money from the game, too.

Hostile takeovers seem friendlier.

The bottom line, found deep in the NFL's 2013 hosting bid package, reads, "The NFL shall own exclusively, on a worldwide basis, all rights in relation to the commercial exploitation of any kind to the Super Bowl and all official events..." with "revenue enhancements" and "cost avoidance enhancements" littered throughout the agreement.

"Basically, the circus is coming to town," says Victor Matheson, an economics professor at the College of the Holy Cross in Massachusetts. "The

circus doesn't stay. They pack up and leave town with all the money they can gather."

Community prize

Bidding on a Super Bowl isn't for the weak. Still, the prize for a local community is so valued that costs are almost irrelevant. Americans embrace the Super Bowl as their biggest unofficial annual holiday, with only Thanksgiving seeing more food consumed while more than 100 million people watch.



(Al Bello/Getty Images)

In return for those 200 million eyeballs, the league pits cities against each other to host the event. Aside from dangling the game as a potential economic carrot to entice public funding of its stadiums, the NFL projects hundreds of millions of dollars in economic impact from perhaps a million hungry and thirsty tourists ascending into town.

Economists say it's a great con job, and insist most financial forecasts are far overblown. Yet, hosting cities say it's the best chance to raise their profile to international status much like Olympic games. And unlike the international counterpart, one US city will get the Super Bowl annually.

"If given the choice, I think every city in the country, if not globe, would want to host," says Roy Higgins, executive director of the Tampa Bay Sports Commission that is hosting Super Bowl LV in 2021. "The economic development opportunity is tremendous. The tourism

"The ability to make a first impression with so many CEOs and companies visiting has significant value itself."

Roy Higgins | executive director, Tampa Bay Sports Commission

spending is phenomenal. But the ability to entertain and make a first impression with so many different CEOs and companies visiting has significant value itself. We've had somebody visit our community for the first time with a major event fall in love with our community and come back for vacation or relocate a company."

Proven experience

Mostly, the Super Bowl has long been the province of America's southern and western regions, with warm tropical

breezes and proven experience in large-scale hospitality. Miami will host a league-record 11th Super Bowl on February 2, while New Orleans gains its 11th to tie the mark in 2024. Los Angeles sees its eighth Super Bowl – though first since 1993 – in 2022, the long break caused by the Rams moving to St. Louis in 1995 before returning 20 years later. Tampa, Florida, gains its fifth in 2021, while Phoenix, Arizona gains its fourth in 2023.

The NFL does throw an occasional game to a new city, often to help encourage public-sector support for a new stadium development. The league even breached its own rule mandating outdoor Super Bowl hosts have an average February temperature of at least 50 degrees by staging Super Bowl XLVIII in 2014 at MetLife Stadium outside New York, in part as an economic boost to the region following the 9/11 terrorist attack in 2001. That it snowed heavily



Miami's Hard Rock Stadium will host the 2020 Super Bowl
(Mark Brown/Getty Images)

the day after the Super Bowl will likely deter owners from tempting Mother Nature again anytime soon.

Overall, only 15 cities have hosted the 53 Super Bowls played to date with a Miami-New Orleans-Los Angeles circuit dominating and a wild-card host randomly added. That's why non-traditional cities lobby so intensely for the rare chance to host.

"You have a scarce resource that gathers a tremendous amount of publicity so no chamber of commerce is going to pass," says Richard Sheehan, a finance professor at Notre Dame and author of *Keeping Score: The Economics of Big-Time Sports*. "You have one shot at it in 15 to 20 years."

"Hosting gave the world a chance to see what Atlanta has become. They didn't realise how much it had changed."

Brett Daniels | chief operating officer, Atlanta Super Bowl LIII host Committee

Brett Daniels, chief operating officer for Atlanta's Super Bowl LIII host committee in 2019, says there was a definite competitive feel to the bidding against other cities. Indeed, the NFL has groups practice their speeches one day earlier in the same room as the presentation. Only two speakers

are allowed when appearing before the 32 owners with no outsiders in the room. But rather than worry over what competitors offer, Daniels said the key is for bidding cities to focus on their own strengths.

"It's not about chess moves other cities did, [but] the chess moves we needed to make to get [the Super Bowl] to come back," he says. "In 2000, the [icy] weather was a factor so we had to show preparedness that weather wasn't an issue. That was a big selling point for us."

Learning from the past

Tampa lost its bid for 2021 only to suddenly gain the game when Los

Angeles needed an extra year to complete the construction of SoFi Stadium. Higgins said simply relying on past hosting isn't enough anymore. It's what cities learn from past Super Bowls, regardless of where they are played, that help gain another one.

"Every time you get a chance to host an event a second time you're trying to raise the bar," he says. "We took the foundation from previous opportunities. We coupled that with studying other opportunities that people hosted. We put on our own touches. It's always an evolving process. One dovetails into the next one."

There's even victory in defeat for losing cities, says John Boyd, founder of The John Boyd Co., a New Jersey-based consultancy specializing in corporate site selections.

"Even if you submit a losing bid," Boyd says. "It strengthens relationships between private and public sectors."

Daniels warned staying current is absolutely necessary for prior-hosting cities because of the league's still-growing needs for additional floor space, security, and technology.

"Those [upcoming] cities have a history of hosting in the past, but it wasn't a recent past," he says. "The Super Bowl continues to grow. Whether you hosted [Super Bowl] 46 or 43 and in L.A.'s case 28, the enormity of the game has changed in that time."

Higgins also says that "a lot of emotion" goes into the bidding process. But that's just the start. Atlanta welcomed not just 500,000 visitors into the city, but 1,593 private jets and 150 corporate parties. Throw in 250,000 volunteer hours performed by 10,000 people, and the week itself is seemingly one big, unending event. Indeed, Atlanta's MARTA subway system operated 94 straight hours over Super Bowl week rather than taking its usual nightly breaks.

"Hosting gave the world a chance to see what Atlanta has become," Daniels says. "They didn't realize how much Atlanta had changed. In hosting, it's all about getting people here for an extended period of time. The chamber of commerce bought a lot of people in trying to connect to those people to use as a platform to talk about Atlanta."



Super Bowl host cities

2020 Miami, Florida
2021 Tampa, Florida
2022 Los Angeles, California
2023 Phoenix, Arizona
2024 New Orleans, Louisiana

Worth the effort?

But are Super Bowls really worth the effort to cities? Do they truly bring claims of up to \$700m in local economic impact that the Glendale, Arizona, committee cited from the 2015 game or the \$500m projected by New Orleans for 2024?

Economists says double counting and money generated by corporate hotels and restaurants merely redirect money away from that would have already been spent elsewhere the local economy. With cities now spending more than \$40m to host the game, some experts say it's closer to a break-even deal.

"There is some real impact the actual week, but we've never been able to identify a long-term impact," Matheson says. "If you're talking a Super Bowl causing a tourism boom, that's completely wrong. The biggest thing that drives tourism on vacations is word of mouth."

"If people go on vacation to Miami they say, 'It's great, we did this and this', then all of their friends say, 'Great, we'll go to Miami'."

"If they go to the Super Bowl, they say, 'The game was great. We saw the halftime show and Tom Brady in a bar and John Madden eating in a

restaurant.' Their friends say, 'That's awesome, we're going to go to a Super Bowl.' That tourism benefit doesn't really work as a benefit for a city."

Says Notre Dame's Sheehan: "A typical Super Bowl, counting all the positives and negatives, it would be close to zero."

"It's not going to be that big because many of the benefits come from double counting or ignoring some of the costs. When you have tens of thousands of people, it will bring in revenues, but you impose costs, too."

Yet, Atlanta gained 10.6 million social media comments as publicity for future corporate relocations and tourism. Surely, that has value.

"[The Super Bowl] has the potential to last much longer than the immediate economic boom," Boyd says. "All economic development is cumulative. They take time to bear fruit."

It took months to wrap up the Atlanta committee business after the game. Yet, Daniel says the panel may regroup in a year to work on its next Super Bowl bid. The NFL has an uncharacteristic grace period with Super Bowls scheduled through 2024. The next wave will surely include Las Vegas as a host following the Raiders move from Oakland to Allegiant Stadium in 2020.

"The Las Vegas hospitality industry foot soldiers are already beginning to assemble their Super Bowl pitch to the NFL," Boyd says.

"It should be a slam dunk not unlike the successful inroads Vegas has been making with the NBA as a warm up to getting the next franchise. No city knows branding – or that sports and gaming are now connected at the hip – like Vegas."

There are whispers that London could one day host the game, when the NFL is ready to expand into Europe beyond its current handful of annual regular-season games. But that would require a permanent NFL franchise moving to the city first.

"It would be great for the game and league," says Daniels of a London game. "It would be a challenge if there's not a team there because so many owners are invested in their cities."

Then again, the NFL is always looking for a good deal – on its terms. ○



Super League Triathlon's strategy for scaling up events schedule

Super League Triathlon has made significant strides since its formation just two years ago. However, with expansion on the agenda, identifying the right hosts remains the priority.

Super League Triathlon (SLT) launched in 2017 with the goal of creating an entertainment property to elevate the growing sport into the mainstream consciousness.

Two years on there is little doubt that SLT has already done that, establishing the series as the pinnacle of triathlon on the world stage.

SLT has delivered game-changing race formats – mixing up long and short-course athletes – in a series of fast-paced events with unpredictable outcomes that culminate in the crowning of the best and most versatile male and female triathletes in the world.

“When Super League first started it was a case of testing whether this new and unique concept in triathlon would work, both practically and in terms of the appetite for it,” SLT’s chief executive and co-founder, Michael D’hulst, says.

“That meant searching for venues who were willing to allow us to test our concept and showcase it to the world. We believed in it and happily the demand for Super League racing was huge.

“That has meant our hosting strategy has quickly evolved to finding places whose DNA aligns perfectly with ours and where both Super League and the venue can flourish. We have been growing quickly ever since 2017 and are now scaling up for what will be our biggest season yet.”

Expanded schedule

SLT recently confirmed plans for a new and expanded Championship Series for 2019-20. The campaign kicked off with events in Jersey and Malta in September

“When Super League first started it was a case of testing whether this new and unique concept in triathlon would work.”

Michael D’hulst | Founder & chief executive, Super League Triathlon

and October, respectively, before pausing to allow athletes to concentrate on the Tokyo 2020 Olympic Games, with a further five races set to take place in 2020. In addition, there will also be a raft of new qualifier races in the first half of next year.

“The Olympics takes place next year which is obviously very important for our athletes and will also grow further interest in triathlon so we have decided to take this opportunity to rapidly expand,” D’hulst adds. “Between now and the resumption of the Championship Series we also have a host of qualifiers around the world and we are aiming to expand further in 2021 and beyond.”

SLT’s strategy of attempting to arrange its calendar 12 months in advance is helping to establish long-term targets whilst enabling quick expansion of the schedule.

A variety of factors are currently under consideration in relation to the 2021 calendar, with the formal selection decisions set to be made in the summer of 2020.

“Obviously, we must be mindful that we look after the athletes and their movements around the world,” says D’hulst, before elaborating on the selection process. “It typically all

starts with an expression of interest from a host city and then we have a conversation as to how we make that work and to ensure we have exclusivity around venues so each has a major impact.

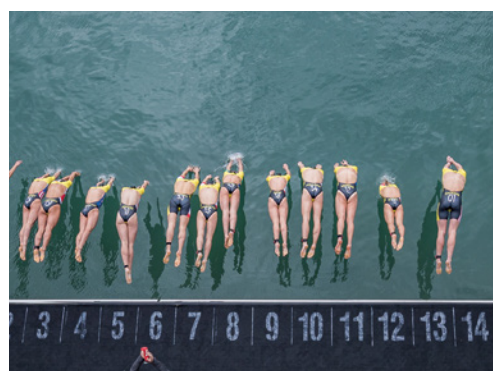
“We do have numbers in mind [for the 2021 calendar] but for us it is more important that we grow in the correct way, and that means getting the right host cities. At this stage getting the right hosts are more important than the number.”

Hosting value

The value of SLT events to host cities has already been clearly illustrated. The series brings with it the best professional athletes in the world, youth participants and juniors, as well as fans and amateur athletes who compete in age group races, providing a clear tourism boost. Additionally, a Fanzone pops up at each event site to bring together families, community vendors and local vendors, to heighten fan engagement.

In Jersey, surveys carried out after this year’s event indicated that the awareness generated by SLT had the potential to generate 2.7 million new tourists from their key target markets in France and the UK, while four in five local residents felt that the event had a positive impact on their community – much higher than other sporting events.

Local triathlon club membership numbers are also soaring in Jersey. Age-group participation has grown by 141 per cent and more than one per cent of the entire population signed up for the RBC Race for the Kids fun run to raise money for charity. Further afield, SLT has a



worldwide global broadcast reach of 1.6 billion and the Jersey event enjoyed a social media reach of 22 million over the race week. However, the impact is also long-lasting, with SLT working closely with multiple departments and agencies in each host destination with a focus on delivering a return on investment against set KPIs.

“Super League offers a whole package that is just unbeatable with our TV and social media reach and engagement, demographics and our outreach and community programmes,” D’hulst says. “We are not a brand who just turn up for one weekend a year and then leave and forget about it. We work to benefit everybody.

“We spend a long time planning and organising all manner of community engagement activities, from encouraging local vendors to share in the success to giving dance troops the chance to perform in front of a big crowd.

“But probably the headline impact is from the legacy the professionals leave behind them.

We bring the best professional athletes in the world, and they are truly inspiring. We go to schools, businesses, community clubs, sports clubs –

anywhere we are wanted and can have a positive impact.”

‘Wow factor’

In seeking host city partners, SLT looks for destinations that share the spirit of innovation and the vision of the series’ organisers for encouraging healthy living amongst the public, as well as sustainability.

“That cultural fit is very important. We also want unique destinations that have a ‘wow factor’ on TV,” D’hulst says.

“The great thing about Super League is that we cause very little disruption to a host city. Our races consist of short and sharp formats where the crowd sees lots of action at very close quarters.

“This all means we only need an 800-metre loop in order to host an event and so we won’t be disruptive or cause lots of road closures and this sets us apart, along with our cultural integration and outreach programmes which are an intrinsic part of our value proposition.”

Most importantly, at the heart of SLT’s relationship with host destinations is engagement and alignment with the city’s interests, as well as a commitment to “flip on

its head” the traditional format of a triathlon event.

“Our community engagement programme is key, as is our global TV and social media reach, which is the biggest in endurance sport, and another important factor is that we don’t shut down a huge area for a weekend as our races require such a tiny footprint,” D’hulst adds.

“The number of spectators is always a multiple of the racers and we build stadium like courses so everybody is close to the action. We are a very dynamic and unique offering and the fact we can package our races into much shorter and more watchable formats means we are growing rapidly with a younger audience who traditionally have not been engaged in the sport.

“We will utilise local organisers, experts, agencies and businesses to assist us along the way to make sure we are getting the right advice and also putting money back into the local economy and we very much view the whole thing as a partnership on every level, whether that be operations or marketing or anything else. For us, co-operation is the key to successful events.” ○

The US players lift the Fifa Women's World Cup trophy
(Maja Hitij/Getty Images)



Managing the growth of the Fifa Women's World Cup

The latest edition of the Fifa Women's World Cup in France smashed records for worldwide engagement, but how can football's global governing body maximise the opportunities of this growth with future editions?

Fifa outlined the evolution and growth of the Women's World Cup as a vital tool in its inaugural global strategy for women's football, released in October 2018.

Just over 12 months on, reflecting on the 2019 edition of the tournament in France, football's global governing body is bullish about the prospects for future expansion – and it is easy to see why.

Eight bids are currently on the table for the 2023 tournament, which

will expand from 24 to 32 teams, with Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, Japan, New Zealand and South Africa all in the running, as well as an intriguing joint offer from North and South Korea. Fifa is expected to award the hosting rights in May 2020.

Bonus payments to players will be significantly increased at the 2023 Women's World Cup, with the prize fund for this year's tournament having been raised from an initial \$15m to \$50m, while \$1bn is set to be ploughed

into women's football from the body's cash reserves over the next four years, after the 2019 event captured the attention of viewers worldwide like never before.

Worldwide impact

France 2019 was the most watched Women's World Cup ever, reaching 993.5 million unique individuals for at least one minute on in-home linear television – a 30-per-cent increase on the reach of the previous edition in

Canada. Additionally, based on research carried out by Nielsen, it is estimated that 481.5 million people accessed coverage of the tournament on digital platforms.

The average live match had an audience of 17.27 million viewers, more than double the average of 8.39 million recorded four years earlier, while the final between the US and the Netherlands was the most-watched match in the history of the tournament, with an average live audience of 82.18 million, up 56 per cent on the 2015 final.

In terms of fan engagement in the host country itself, there was an increase in the number of activations by commercial partners in comparison with Canada 2015. Visa, for example, carried out three global marketing campaigns and seven special match-day programmes across the host cities. Coca-Cola and Qatar Airways carried out activations in multiple host cities, while the likes of Wanda, Kia and Hyundai also benefited from visible presences.

The partners' appetite for engagement was helped by having more opportunities to connect with supporters than ever before at a Women's World Cup.

Fifa launched Fan Experiences – public events to showcase women's football and the tournament – in all host cities, with 419,400 people attending. To ramp up the matchday experience, an 'infotainment' programme was also rolled out across the stadia, including a live DJ and a 'Dance Cam' among other features.

"There were some new initiatives at this tournament to improve the fan's experience, such as in-seat delivery of food and beverage," says Rhiannon Martin, the head of Fifa women's football tournament operations.

"The motivated and friendly volunteers also played a key role in ensuring an enjoyable fan experience in the stadium. The in-stadium experience will no doubt be further enhanced over the course of the next four years to make it even more attractive to come to the stadia."

The initiatives certainly appear to have had a positive impact, with the tournament's social media accounts

"It will be important to begin raising awareness at an early stage about the next host and tournament."

Sarai Bareman | chief women's football officer, Fifa

growing by 25 per cent to reach 2.2 million followers, while official Fifa channels also attracted 1.1 million new followers.

Fifa's chief women's football officer, Sarai Bareman says: "The exponential growth in digital engagement demonstrated that this element of the fan experience also needs to be nurtured and further developed."

Attendances

In terms of crowd figures, results were mixed.

The number of VIP guests rocketed by 420 per cent in comparison with Canada 2015, with a total of 20,328 packages sold. However, a total of just over 1.13 million people clicked through the turnstiles across the 52 matches, producing an average attendance of 21,756 – lower than the average crowds at the three previous Women's World Cups, including the most recent edition in Europe, held in Germany in 2011.

Although 74.71 per cent of the seats were full, with Fifa praising affordable prices for families and the utilisation of local networks within France for ticketing distribution, as well as collaboration with the local organising committee (LOC), empty seats were conspicuous at several games, especially in the group stages. For example, a clash between rivals England and Scotland at the 35,100-capacity Stade de Nice pulled in just 13,188 spectators.

"Despite selling out numerous matches throughout the tournament, including all matches played by the French national team and the final, Fifa is committed to delivering matches in full stadia for future editions of the Women's World Cup," Bareman says.

"With this in mind, it will be important to begin raising awareness at an early stage about the next host and tournament, as well as running

increased and sustained promotional campaigns in the host country and in international markets to maximise exposure and awareness of the competition throughout the world."

There was certainly plenty of interest outside France, though, driven by a tournament record 3,748 accredited members of the media – 2,755 of whom represented broadcasters, with a bespoke International Broadcast Centre in Paris serving as a focal hub. Global interest in the tournament was underlined by the fact that 77 per cent of the members of the written press in attendance were not from the host country.

"One of the most difficult tasks was to identify the right media facility capacities for the tournament across all the different venues," Bareman says. "Fifa Media, including the media operations and relations teams on-site, as well as Fifa Media officers at each venue, had an excellent collaboration with all stakeholders in order to find the right balance between media and other area needs, as well as booking the right facility sizes."

Experience

Behind the scenes, France's extensive track record as a major event host enabled a smooth working relationship between the LOC and Fifa.

"Once a host country is appointed, it's Fifa's duty to ensure that the level of knowledge of Fifa's requirements and procedures is explained in detail," Martin says. "With a less experienced host, we generally bring the key parties together for workshops when we present and clarify the procedures for different areas. We also mentor the LOC more closely."

"A lot of the people working in the LOC in France had recent experience of hosting a major event with the Euros in 2016, and already had operational concepts and plans which were a good starting point to be adapted for the Women's World Cup. There are many similarities of organising a continental tournament and a Fifa Women's World Cup, but there are also different challenges too, which sometimes needs a change in mindset."

Martin, who assumed responsibility

“There was a marked increase in team requirements compared to Canada 2015.”

Rhiannon Martin | head of women's football tournament operations, Fifa

for being the project lead for operations at the tournament in January last year, adds that the Fifa Women's World Cup project team was involved in several stadium inspections throughout 2018 and 2019. Fifa also held monthly conference calls with the full Fifa and LOC project group, had regular working meetings and daily contact with the LOC either by email or phone ahead of the tournament.

“Each of the Fifa departments also had regular topic-specific meetings and conference calls,” Martin adds. “We worked very closely on the operational concepts, legal documents and budget.

“During the tournament itself, Fifa set up offices together with the LOC in Paris and then in Lyon for the semi-finals and final, which allowed us to have constant interaction together and work together as one team.

“In my opinion, it was also a good decision from Fifa to appoint the U-20 Women's World Cup 2018 to France. Despite not using the same stadia as those in 2019, organising the tournament gave the LOC the opportunity to better understand the Fifa procedures and match organisation and to test and fine-tune processes for the Women's World Cup in 2019.”

Fifa and the LOC used a project issue log in the build-up to the competition to track any issues that arose, and the two parties also worked together on a risk management document and contingency plans ahead of the event.

“There were of course challenges along the way which we tried to identify early and then work together to find the best solutions,” Martin says. “One such challenge was training site pitches, which were flagged as being an issue during inspections running up to the tournament. Pitch quality had been an issue at some previous tournaments hosted in France, so it was important for us to get it right for this tournament.

“Consequently, we worked closely



74.71%

of seats were filled at the 2019 Fifa Women's World Cup in France

with the LOC and the training site owners, and we organised practical and theoretical workshops with the groundskeepers and our pitch experts drew up tailor-made programmes and monitored the pitches on a regular basis. All of this planning ensured that the teams were very satisfied with the

quality of pitches when they arrived in France and started training on them.”

Requirements

Fifa relies on the knowledge of the LOC to identify facilities by drawing up a shortlist of training sites and hotels in and around the host cities and, with an increasingly professional approach being adopted within the women's game across the world, the list of requirements is getting longer.

“There was a marked increase in team requirements compared to Canada 2015, which we strived hard to deliver as far as possible in France given certain



US and Dutch players in the Fifa Women's World Cup final in Lyon
(Maja Hitij/Getty Images)

constraints,” Martin adds.

“The teams were on the whole very satisfied with the facilities selected for them in France and we will strive to make further upgrades and improvements for the Fifa Women’s World Cup in 2023. It is important for Fifa to deliver the best solutions for the teams and thanks to extensive feedback from the majority of the teams in the post-tournament debrief questionnaire, we have clear input in this regard. With the creation of the Team Services department in Fifa in 2018, we are confident that the team needs will continue to be prioritised.”

This increasing professionalism has been reflected by the action on the pitch, with the talent pool within the sport – and across various countries – having improved considerably in recent years.

According to Fifa’s post-event technical report, only nine per cent of passes in the matches were played long – lower than the previous two tournaments – while the number of short passes by goalkeepers increased from 16 per cent in Canada to 26 per cent in France, illustrating how teams are trying to build attacks patiently from the back.

However, there is still a need to drive an improvement in standards on a global basis, as evidenced by the US team’s 13-0 walkover of Thailand in the group stage. With that in mind, Fifa is considering creating a Women’s World League, as well as a Club World Cup for women, to build on the growth of the Women’s World Cup.

The Women’s World League would include a World Division, comprising the top-ranking women’s football teams, and up to four regional divisions, with each divided into a number of zonal leagues. The initiative, which has been the brainchild of Fifa president Gianni Infantino, would deliver up to nine additional matches over the course of three international windows in a two-year period.

Bareman, referring to Fifa’s global strategy for women’s football, adds: “Specifically in relation to the Fifa Women’s World Cup and the strategic objective to ‘showcase the game’, it is clear that competitions are the biggest driver of women’s football development.

“With this expansion also comes an acknowledgement that significant work will need to be undertaken at confederation level and with member associations to ensure competitive balance among the 32 teams. The fact that seven of the eight teams in the quarter-finals were from Europe clearly demonstrates that substantial investment and consideration of existing qualification pathways and participation levels among national teams in the other five confederations is required.”

Whilst there are still hurdles to overcome before the Women’s World League proposal secures the required support of all of the relevant Fifa stakeholders, it is clear the governing body is exploring a variety of avenues as it seeks to hit the key target outlined in its Women’s Football Strategy document – to double the number of female players to 60 million by 2026.

At the heart of that anticipated growth will be the development of the Women’s World Cup, and wherever the 2023 edition takes place, France 2019 showed that standards in women’s football are continuing to rise – on and off the pitch. ○



Melbourne – the ultimate sports city

Melbourne has forged an enviable reputation as an outstanding host of sporting events, with a string of award-winning venues and an unrivalled appetite for sport.

Melbourne has long been recognised as a global event city and one of the world's best for sport.

It was crowned 'Sport City of the Decade' at the SportBusiness 2016 Ultimate Sport City Awards and was then recognised at the 2018 Ultimate Sport Cities Awards as the 'Best Large Sports City' whilst also topping the rankings in the 'Best Major Events Strategy' and 'Best Sport Venues' categories.

"Sport is Melbourne's passion," says Peter Bingeman, chief executive of Visit Victoria, which was established in 2016 by the combination of Tourism Victoria and the Victorian Major Events Company.

"For rights holders, a partnership here means accessing the world's best venues, an experienced and integrated events network, a proven track record of delivering successful events and genuine enthusiasm for sport unlike anywhere else."

Sport lives here

Melbourne is a global events city, widely recognised as Australia's sporting capital and acknowledged as one of the world's premier major event destinations, annually playing host to world-class offerings including the Australian Open Tennis Championships, the Melbourne Cup Carnival and the Formula One Australian Grand Prix.

12m

visitors to Melbourne
annually (domestic and international)

It is easy to see why many see sport is the heartbeat of the city, with a suite of award-winning multi-purpose facilities and unrivalled infrastructure, including six international standard sporting venues within walking distance of the city centre. Melbourne welcomes more

than 11 million event attendees annually, delivering record-breaking events, with an impressive and varied portfolio.

Melbourne is the only city to annually host both a Formula One Grand Prix and tennis Grand Slam, and is the only city in the world to have staged an Olympic Games, Commonwealth Games, a UCI Road Cycling World Championship and a FINA World Championships. In fact, the city is home to seven of Australia's 10 most significant sporting events annually.

Melbourne is home to more professional sporting teams per capita than any other city in the world and has been voted as the No.1 Australian city with a reputation as a great sports city for 18 consecutive years.

Passionate fans

Decades of experience delivering the world's largest events has made Melbourne a trusted partner for event owners around the globe. Major events in Melbourne are renowned for being



A sporting and cultural capital

Melbourne's calendar is unrivalled – and not just confined to sport. Live performance and the creative industries are also celebrated, with Melbourne's calendar for the year ahead highlighting a best-of-the-best outcome for Australia's sporting and cultural capital.



NOVEMBER

Melbourne Cup Carnival (horse racing)
Melbourne Music Week
Aus-X Open (super-cross, freestyle moto-cross)

MARCH

Formula One Australian Grand Prix
Virgin Australia Melbourne Fashion Festival
Melbourne Food & Wine Festival
Melbourne International Comedy Festival

DECEMBER

Keith Haring x Jean Michel Basquiat: Crossing Lines (art exhibition)
Presidents Cup (golf)
Boxing Day Test (cricket)



JANUARY

Australian Open Tennis Championships
Cadel Evans Great Ocean Road Race
Festival of Sails

APRIL

Rip Curl Pro (surfing)

FEBRUARY

Jayco Herald Sun Tour (cycling)
FIM World Superbikes Championship
World Cup Gymnastics
Billy Elliott (theatre)
Shrek the Musical (theatre)

JUNE

Melbourne Winter Masterpieces: Pierre Bonard (art exhibition)

AUGUST

Bledisloe Cup (rugby union)
Melbourne International Film Festival
Melbourne Writer's Festival

SEPTEMBER

AFL Finals Series (Australian rules football)
AFL Grand Final (Australian rules football)
Melbourne Fringe Festival
Melbourne Fashion Week

OCTOBER

Melbourne International Arts Festival
Australian Motorcycle Grand Prix
Caulfield Cup Carnival (horse racing)
Cox Plate Carnival (horse racing)



well organised, well resourced, well marketed and well attended every time a rights holder selects the city as a host.

"To see a whole city come alive, as Melbourne does for a major event, makes you appreciate why this is one of the great sporting destinations," Bingeman adds.

Melbourne is Australia's strongest commercial market for sport, offering events the opportunity to maximise revenue streams such as ticket sales, broadcast rights, sponsorship, merchandise and corporate hospitality. With a year-long, world-class sports calendar, few places in the world can equal Melbourne's appetite for sport.

Independent research has shown Melburnians are more likely to attend a major sporting event in the next 12 months compared to any other Australian city with an extraordinary depth and breadth of events on offer.

International events in Melbourne have resulted in spectacular attendance records, drawing crowds from around Australia and overseas as well as enthusiastic locals. The support derived from the sport-obsessed culture is the primary reason why Melbourne sustains more professional sporting franchises per capita than any other city in the world. ○

A sports precinct in the heart of the city

Melbourne's unique sports precinct, located just one kilometre to the east of the heart of the city, includes the iconic Melbourne Cricket Ground (MCG), Rod Laver Arena, Melbourne Arena, AAMI Park and a suite of elite sport training facilities.

The MCG is a 100,024-capacity facility that has forged its place in global sporting legend as the host of the Olympic Games, the Commonwealth Games, international cricket, football and rugby, as well as the pinnacle of Australian rules football, the AFL Grand Final, on an annual basis.

Only metres away is Melbourne & Olympic Park, home to the Australian Open Tennis Championships. This grand slam captures the imagination of Melbourne every January, with more than one million people engaging with ticketed and free events attached to

this two-week celebration of tennis, Melbourne and the best in sport.

The Melbourne Sports Precinct is accessible by two train stations, three tram routes and two bus routes. Federation Square is just a 10-minute walk away, providing ease of access to an array of restaurants, retail outlets and bars for visitors to enjoy.

6.36m

people call the state of Victoria home

To the west of the city, the state-of-the-art Marvel Stadium, featuring a retractable roof, delivers a multi-purpose venue for sports of all kinds. The stadium is most commonly used for Australian rules football as the tenant

venue for five competing teams, but also regularly hosts international cricket, as well as one-off stadium events for mixed-martial arts, basketball, moto-cross and other sporting endeavours.

The 'Melbourne Experience'

Melbourne is renowned as a progressive, stylish and sport-fuelled city. It is also a place for the eternally curious.

The city is an intriguing and eclectic mix of cultures, architecture and desires that is not a place for the casual observer; it is a place for participants.

Melbourne's credentials as a leading sports city have been predicated on delivering a unique and outstanding visitor experience. For supporters and event attendees, the experience in Melbourne does not simply start and end at the venue, but will be a truly unique and immersive experience, taking in the very best the city has to offer.

The 'Melbourne Experience' is why millions of visitors descend on the city each year, making Melbourne Australia's favourite short-break destination.

Visiting fans will benefit from decades of Government investment in venues,



The home of world-class venues

Melbourne Cricket Ground.....	100,024
Marvel Stadium	55,000
Melbourne and Olympic Park (multi-purpose):	
AAMI Park (rectangular stadium).....	30,050
Rod Laver Arena	15,000
Melbourne Arena	10,500
Margaret Court Arena.....	7,500
Flemington Racecourse.....	120,000
Lakeside Stadium (IAAF standard athletics facility) ..	11,000
State Netball & Hockey Centre	3,000-8,000
Melbourne Convention Centre, Plenary Hall	5,000
Melbourne Sports & Aquatic Centre	3,000
State Basketball Centre	3,200
National Ice Sports Centre	1,500

transport infrastructure and visitor amenities. From the airport arrival, journey to the city centre, quality accommodation, dining and leisure options, centrally located venues and excellent transport links.

Melbourne is also obsessed with food and wine, with the city boasting more cafes and restaurants per capita than anywhere else in the world. Melburnians and visitors alike have access to 3,500 dining venues serving cuisines from more than 70 countries.

Melbourne's major sporting venues, all on the edge of the Melbourne city centre, are also a short walk from exceptional hotels, the best of Melbourne's culinary, arts and fashion scenes as well as free inner-city public transport, ensuring the a truly world-class 'Melbourne Experience' for event attendees.

A trusted partner

Visit Victoria is charged with growing Victoria's visitor economy through tourism marketing and major event acquisition.

The organisation is uniquely positioned to bring together the best people, venues and partners, with a proven foundation for event planning and execution.

Visit Victoria is committed to working with event owners to comprehensively market events to Melbourne, the people that call the city home, as well as those that visit from interstate and overseas.

As a trusted partner for event owners, Visit Victoria prides itself on delivering excellence and building strong long-term relationships with its partners. ○



Visit Victoria offers...

- 1** Access to dedicated and experienced marketing and events professionals with extensive stakeholder networks.
- 2** A powerful marketing partner, with a well-resourced and knowledgeable marketing team, to explore the very best collaborative opportunities to drive higher reach and event attendance.
- 3** Dedicated public relations support, committed to amplifying communications in Melbourne and around the world.
- 4** Unrivalled access to digital assets and marketing channels, continuing a world-class reputation in the tourism category for innovative digital marketing strategies and content.



For more information:

Damien de Bohun – General Manager,
Major Events, Visit Victoria

TEL: +61 (0)39002 2288

EMAIL: majorevents@visitvictoria.com.au

WEB: corporate.visitvictoria.com.au



(Nathan Stirk/Getty Images)

Volunteer programme underpins Cricket World Cup success

The 2019 Cricket World Cup was supported by 4,000 volunteers following a mammoth selection and training process. What is the secret to a successful programme, and how can knowledge be shared?

The importance of volunteers, ready to provide vital assistance to spectators, VIPs, officials and media members during major events, has been increasingly recognised by rights-holders, international federations and local organising committees in recent years.

It has become customary for the International Olympic Committee's president, for example, to praise the contribution of the unsung and unseen army as the flame is extinguished on

another Games. Jacques Rogge did just that when he hailed the "smiles, kindness and spirit of the wonderful volunteers – the much-needed heroes" of the London 2012 Olympics.

Mary Cahill, as a selection event coordinator ahead of London 2012, was responsible for managing teams across two centres that were established to recruit the 70,000 'Games Makers' before serving as a volunteer and administration manager for track cycling and BMX during the event itself. Three years later, her role as

volunteer resourcing team manager and workforce operations manager supported the Rugby World Cup in England, before she stepped up to become the head of the volunteering programme for the International Cricket Council Cricket World Cup 2019 in England and Wales.

However, her journey down the major event volunteer route began some 16 years ago with the 2003 Special Olympics World Summer Games in Dublin; an experience that left a lasting impression.

"I saw the impact volunteers can have and that inspired me to continue," says Cahill, whose perspective is shared by an ever-increasing proportion of sporting event attendees the world over.

Huge task

While the level of appreciation has grown for the efforts of volunteers, it is easy to overlook the gargantuan task facing those responsible for pulling together and motivating such a vast workforce for a short-term project that essentially underpins the visitor experience.

At the Cricket World Cup, 4,000 volunteers were recruited as part of a programme that launched in May 2018, just over a year before the start of the tournament. Some 20,000 registrations were submitted during a six-week application window, with 10,000 going on to complete an application form.

'The First Innings' volunteer selection events were then held between July and October last year, with the recruitment team travelling to all 11 competition venues to conduct interviews and group exercises. Further interviews were carried out via Skype with those who could not attend in person.

After roles were offered from December 2018, training took place between February and April 2019. The volunteers then sprung into action, with some supporting the pre-tournament Trophy Tour from 100 days before the opening match on May 30.

Cahill, who headed up a team of five people on the project, admits: "The workload was certainly full on. When delivering a volunteer programme for a large-scale event you are operational very early on in comparison to a lot of your colleagues."

With regard to the budget for a volunteer programme, there are costs associated with setting up a database or management system, carrying out interviews and training, catering and delivery requirements, as well as uniforms and rewards, from items to experiences. For some events, travel expenses are covered.

"Volunteer programmes bring a huge level of admin, from email communications and responding to queries to building training materials

and event time shifts," Cahill says. "We had over 12,000 unique shifts that needed to be uploaded into a system so volunteers could select their slots."

About 10 per cent of the volunteers came from overseas, with 15 different nationalities represented. There was a 70:30 male-to-female split – a more balanced ratio than the standard for cricket – and among the age range of 18- to 82-year-olds there were students, police officers, CEOs, teachers, mothers, fathers and grandparents.

"When delivering a volunteer programme for a large-scale event you are operational very early on."

Mary Cahill | head of volunteering programme, ICC Cricket World Cup 2019

Communication

For Cahill, it was vital to set the right parameters from the outset of the selection process.

"First and foremost, a strong communication plan needs to be in place," she says. "This covers multiple facets, from ensuring people know what to expect by signing up to the programme, to keeping people up to date about their application and ensuring information is clear and understandable so everyone knows their role, where they need to be and when."

"I wanted to ensure we delivered great experiences for our volunteers, whether they came for an interview, training day or went on to volunteer at the tournament. Every experience should be a positive one and it is so important that each volunteer feels welcomed and valued."

"Respect is of the utmost importance for a volunteer programme. People are offering their time and they come from a range of backgrounds. Their commitment needs to be respected and recognised."

A monthly newsletter provided volunteers with important information, as well as insights into fellow recruits and the organising committee's back-of-house operations, while Cahill's

programme went to great lengths to put keep volunteers happy and engaged.

Music, tea and coffee, as well as an optional game of bingo greeted the applicants when they arrived for their interviews, encouraging a relaxed environment. During the tournament, a workforce team was stationed at every venue to offer all volunteers a warm welcome at the start of every shift and ensure their needs were catered for and, importantly, they had somewhere to turn if they had any issues.

"You have to try to be flexible and understand people's motivations," Cahill says.

"As with any event there were many learnings. One to mention from this tournament was the uniform and ensuring you allow adequate time for swapping items. Let this process happen as soon as people get their kit. Make sure you have a robust system for swapping items and ideally let it happen on the day you are carrying out the distribution. Always have contingency items with you."

Contingencies

In terms of broader contingency planning, preparing for drop-outs is important. Cahill says that, on average, a 30-per-cent reduction in the headcount can be expected at every major stage of the recruitment process. Therefore, it is best to aim high on the numbers from the outset.

"You never want to keep anyone hanging on and unsure about the outcome of their application, but you will always have people dropping out of the programme at every stage and it is important to ensure you have a pool of people available to step in and fulfil positions as they come available," she says. "The key is being clear and ensuring everyone understands where they are at in the process and where they stand."

"Then there is the contingency on the ground when volunteers don't show up or have to cancel on the day. Make sure you have prepared all teams to have their post prioritisations in order and quickly know where you can pull resources from to assist any team that may be struggling due to lack of numbers on the day."



(Mike Hewitt/Getty Images)

Cahill is clear that motivated recruits help to mitigate attrition amongst the volunteer base.

For the Cricket World Cup, the roles were assigned relatively early in the process. However, role rotation was used so that volunteers were not just standing in the same spot for hours.

Opportunities were also shared between different operational teams – giving, for example, all of the groups an opportunity to carry the on-field flags for the national anthems.

The rewards and recognition programme, which consisted of gifts for the volunteers like pin badges and mugs, also offered experiences, such as meeting ex-cricket stars and having a photo taken with the Cricket World Cup trophy.

“We endeavoured to give volunteers the opportunity to watch the game during their break,” Cahill says. “It was important to try and give our volunteers a chance to sit in the stands and soak up the atmosphere.”

“Also, adequate break times, and a comfortable space for people to sit down with a cup of tea and take a break from the hustle and bustle should be standard for every volunteer programme.”

Responsibilities

Roles available spanned multiple areas, from welcoming spectators to boosting efficiency by facilitating queue management and preparing people for upcoming security checks. Some volunteers also supported transport logistics and others were able to shadow venue managers, giving budding event managers valuable on-the-job experience.

“Assisting with movement around the grounds is very important,” Cahill adds. “We had many grounds that had sold-out matches and tight spaces, with everyone wanting to use the bathroom at breaks in the innings, for example.”

“If you are in the spectator services team, we are looking for people who are outgoing, bubbly and happy to talk and engage with spectators, whether on the walking routes, in a fan zone or within the ground.”

“The accreditation team look for people with technology skills who are able to resolve issues and report them when necessary, while the hospitality team look for people with experience in the sector who are comfortable engaging with VIP guests.”

“The skillsets vary from team to team and it’s vital to match people

to a suitable role. In general, though, volunteers need to be willing to go the extra mile, help out where needed, roll up their sleeves and get involved. A smile and positive attitude go a long way at any event.”

However, Cahill is well aware that effective knowledge exchange between volunteer programmes at different events remains a challenge.

“I don’t believe it’s fully mastered yet, but there are initiatives in place,” she says. “Event reports are usually shared within the same sport. And events delivered by the likes of UK Sport and Sport England offer wonderful opportunities to share knowledge, with programmes set up to allow event day observation of operational teams and presentation programmes enabling discussions about the planning process.”

Having experienced volunteer programmes across a number of events and years, Cahill is in little doubt that “a volunteer programme is the heartbeat of any event and vital to its success”.

She adds: “It is about making sure you are providing great experiences for your volunteers. Respect the commitment people give and ensure they have a memorable and enjoyable time. Don’t take any volunteer for granted.” 

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