

### **Contents**

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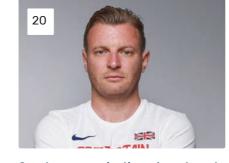
Q&A with Catherine Bond Muir We talk to the CEO at W Series. the first ever single-seater motor racing championship for female drivers only



Creating the next chapter in sporting attendance Edd Hood, discusses strategies for encouraging spectators back into stadiums



**Q&A** with Andy Harrison From St Helens Rugby League to preparing for the Tokyo Olympics, we talk through the career of the Programmes Director at the Great Britain Cycling Team



Sports communications departments are an overlooked revenue stream Jamie Fox on developing commercially-driven comms strategies to drive profitability



0&A with Rob Paddon Venue Sales Director at Fulham FC, Rob talks about his career to date and exciting commercial developments at Craven Cottage stadium

### Welcome to the latest edition of Unique People: Sports, Leisure and Hospitality (SLH)

Welcome to the third edition of Unique People aimed at providing intelligent perspectives and industry insight for fascinating leaders in the sports and leisure world.

Since our last edition in early August, the industry has encountered another challenging few weeks. The 1st October was due to see the beginning of a phased return of people to venues, this followed a number of successful test events held across the country. Due to a rise in Covid-19 infections across the country, the Government postponed this date and, as yet, there has been no indication on when crowds may return.

The pandemic continues to create an unpredictable set of circumstances for the industry with frustration being felt across the board. Venues have expended huge amounts of time & money to create 'Covid Safe' environments in order to open their doors. With a long winter ahead, they are once again looking at ways in which they can adapt and plan for the future.

As we head into the winter months and further social restrictions, we are all focused on protecting, growing and maintaining our organisations. In doing so, we must rely on the talent we engage with, and the strength of the industry supporters. What is clear is that sport & leisure plays a critical part in the lives of so many, both personally & professionally. We must therefore work together to protect and evolve it for the future.

In this edition of Unique People, we're delighted to interview Catherine Bond Muir, the CEO of W Series and Non Exec Director at Motorsport UK. Catherine talks us through the evolution of the first single seater motor racing series just for women and the invention of the W Series ESports league in the wake of the global pandemic.

We also hear from Andy Harrison -Programmes Director for the Great Britain Cycling Team. Andy has worked in the innovative and fast paced world of elite sport for over 20 years. As a Sports Scientist, he worked on the front-line, delivering and leading multi-disciplinary support that resulted in Olympic and World Championship success.

In the ever-changing environment we find ourselves in, we once again look at some of the industry insights and current trends in the sports and leisure industry. Leading sports communications expert, Jamie Fox. tell us why communication teams can be used as a source of generating additional revenue in these challenging times.

We also talk to global sponsorship and marketing expert Edd Hood. With over a decade of experience spanning multiple sports and disciplines - leading such clients as JCB, UPS and Martini - Edd walks us through the potential opportunities organisations can explore once venues open their doors to fans.

And finally, Rob Paddon, Venue Sales Director at Fulham FC, talks to us about Fulham's impressive new stadium development on the banks of the River Thames - Fulham Pier. Rob also touches on the clubs preparations for life back in the Premier League (without fans), as well as the working relationship they have with NFL side the Jacksonville Jaguars who are also owned by Chairman Shahid Khan.

If you would like more information about any of our events, or you would like to share a unique story, or that of your organisation in a future edition of Unique People: Sports Leisure and Hospitality, please feel free to get in touch with us directly.

As always, we gratefully welcome any feedback you may have to make our publications as valuable as possible.

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### **Industry insights**

# Mental health and wellbeing provision for athletes

According to a recent 'Culture Check' survey conducted by UK Sport, there have been reports of significant developments in relation to mental health and wellbeing provision for athletes operating in sports highest level.



According to the survey almost

4 in 5 athletes

reported that there are now measures in place to improve wellbeing.

Although there can always be more work to be done across all sporting levels, particularly in amateur and leisure participation, the percentage of athletes and staff who experienced unacceptable behaviour and attitudes towards mental health and wellbeing has decreased from 24% in 2018 to 10%.

Creating positive organisational cultures and both a supportive and inclusive environment will be a key long term consideration of sports' major governing bodies for the foreseeable. Ultimately the welfare of athletes, spectators and employees in the sporting industry should continue to be a top priority and with the continued development of mental health and wellbeing provision we should see the aforementioned figures continue to decrease.



### Customer service losing its human touch?

As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, the hospitality industry has had to reconsider how to deliver outstanding customer service, whilst simultaneously tackling the impact social distancing has had on the 'human touch'.

Self-service is certainly not a new development, it's been present in our hotels, retail outlets and sporting venues for quite a while. However, as organisations consciously look to increase social distancing and ensure the customer journey is 'covid secure', service users will undoubtedly start to notice a reduction in human interaction.



face guards can be considered a form of communication barrier that impacts our experience. We can certainly expect leaders of the hospitality and leisure industry to start considering how to ensure they can provide the same value from their customer service processes.

# 

#### Disappointment as fans told to stay away

In recent months, excitement had been building amongst sporting fans across the country at the prospect of being able to attend live sporting fixtures once again. Following the recent government announcements in response to rising Covid-19 cases, fans have now been told it could be as late as March 2021 before they can take a seat at their beloved sports venues once again. 

Not only has this had an overwhelming impact on the fans and spectators, it also fundamentally means many individuals working in sporting venues and stadiums face further uncertainty in terms of the future of their jobs.

The announcement will lead many smaller sporting clubs and organisations into hot waters, as spectators provide a line of revenue that to some is crucial for long term survival.

# The increasing importance of athlete brand value

Top athletes have always been incredibly valuable from both an entertainment and business brand perspective. Star performers are paid millions of pounds to provide spectators with high quality and exciting performances and this will undoubtedly continue to be the case. However, the continued growth of social media has created a platform in which many can now access and share the

spotlight, which in turn makes it a competitive marketplace for brand promotion. Where sporting giants such as Michael Jordan and Tiger Woods once dominated, athletes now face a tougher battle to win the biggest endorsement contracts.



With every crisis, they say comes opportunity. Although the absence of fans from professional sporting fixtures has undoubtedly had a negative impact in terms of lost revenue and spectator disappointment, sporting franchises and organisations have been forced to rethink their digital engagement strategies and the way they communicate with fans.

No doubt many of you will have seen stadiums displaying screens which show fans watching fixtures from the comfort of their home. Now, this in no way recreates the atmosphere of a packed stadium full of screaming fans, but what it does do is demonstrate to supporters that their involvement and role is every bit as crucial as the athletes themselves.

Through the development of new ways to stay connected, organisations are ensuring that enthusiasm for professional sport remains high which will be crucial as the Covid-19 restrictions begin to ease.

# Rising technical career opportunities in the sports industry

It's a digital age we're living and working in, and it's one in which we are becoming accustomed to receiving data and information at an alarmingly fast pace.

For the sporting world, this has resulted in the rise of technical career opportunities within the sector. Roles such as Sports Analysts, Online Sports Journalists and Digital PR Specialists are becoming increasingly more in demand.

The sports industry is multi-faceted, and as the world's desire for information grows, so do the opportunities for individuals to provide it.



# Increased variety in sports broadcasting









For many sporting spectators and fans, there's simply no better way to experience a sporting fixture than watching it live.

Nowadays, there's an abundance of television channels and options for us to watch our favourite sports and there's a constant stream of content available to be consumed. What has become apparent in recent years however, is that the demand for sporting consumption doesn't just

stop at live fixtures.

Behind the scenes documentaries, around the clock sporting news channels and spor reality shows have to the increased n in sports broadcas

sporting news channels and sporting reality shows have all contributed to the increased need for variety in sports broadcasting. Sport and leisure plays such a critical role in the lives of so many individuals, so it seems only natural that we want to learn more about the business, inner workings and DNA of our favourite teams and organisations.



Catherine Bond Muir
CEO at W Series and
Non-Executive Director at Motorsport UK

A former intellectual property solicitor, Catherine Bond Muir did not always look set to one day found the first ever single-seater motor racing championship for female drivers only. However, after her move to corporate finance – where she specialised in sports and gaming deals – followed by the birth of her first and only child relatively late in life, she was ready for a new adventure. And so W Series was born. Since its inception in October 2018, W Series has set out to quite literally change the face of motorsport.

#### Q Can you talk us through your career to date?

A I started off my professional career as a solicitor, first as a non-contentious IP Lawyer and then specialised in sport quite quickly. I then spent three or four years in sports marketing before working as an analyst in the city, which was fantastic training because that's where I learnt to read a balance sheet. Thereafter, I moved into corporate finance and spent the bulk of my career working with general mergers and acquisitions, and floating businesses in sports and leisure.

I then stopped working because I had a baby late in life, and at the time nothing

was more important to me than that. Two years on I became restless and, after some thought, realised I wanted to progress down an entrepreneurial route. I felt I was somewhat unemployable and I didn't fancy a younger person telling me what to do! I had a drink with a couple of friends who mentioned the idea of a women's motor racing series. At that time women's cricket, football and rugby were starting to gain some traction but the situation for the female racing world seemed to be getting worse, so that was the kernel of the idea.

Continues overleaf



#### **RETHINK RACING**

W Series is ground-breaking racing series for women that launched in October 2018. From day one, their ambitions have been big and they'll only get bigger.

They're here to shake up the industry, push aside stereotypes and change the face of motorsport, quite literally.







#### with Catherine Bond Muir (continued)

#### Q Can you tell us a bit more around W Series and what makes it a unique motor racing championship?

A It's unique in two senses. The obvious one being that it is the first singleseater motor racing series just for women. W Series is about creating a platform for women to learn the art of motor racing and to give them a better chance to compete with men at a higher level. In our first season we changed the face of motor sport quite literally. We increased the number of women racing overnight, which was pretty extraordinary.

The second thing that makes us unique is that we are a 'free to enter' competition. Motorsport - particularly single-seater racing - is unfortunately geared towards the richest person succeeding, whether that is money from parents or from sponsorship. We wanted to find the fastest female drivers. That is key to our values; we are about promoting the best and not the richest.

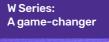


#### How has Covid-19 affected the business and what part has it played in the birth of the W Series Esports League?

A Covid affected the business fundamentally to the extent that we cancelled the season. Our second season will now be in 2021. We are an international series and wanted to race in as many countries as possible, which would not have been possible this year. We had such a strong first year that we wanted to keep that momentum and have races on iconic tracks. I think Formula 1 can withstand no crowds because they have so much history, whereas if we had raced this year, we would not have delivered the product we want to deliver to our fans.

Also, we have drivers from over 15 countries, so many of them could not travel due to the restrictions in place. It was a sad decision to postpone this season, especially for our drivers, but it was certainly the right decision to make given the circumstances.

Esports had always been something we were going to do but Covid-19 certainly helped bring all our plans forward. We have been astounded by the viewing figures, and people have really got on board and taken it to heart.







We firmly believe that women and men can race one another on equal terms provided they are given the same opportunity.

At a time when most other female sports are growing exponentially, there are, in real terms, fewer women racing single-seater cars at the higher levels now than there were 10 years ago.

It is more than 40 years since a female driver last started a Formula 1 race and, unless a positive intervention is made, it could be another 40 years before a woman has the experience and qualifications to take part in a Formula 1 race again. We believe something has to change.

W Series is a catalyst for that change.

In our first year we've already given 20 women the opportunity to race relevant cars on relevant tracks, giving them the relevant experience, confidence and qualifications to put them in contention for drives in the upper tiers of motorsport.

#### Who has most inspired you throughout your career?

A The woman I have always thought was fantastic is Christine Lagarde, because she has a steely centre, and has made it in a man's world. However looking at my own career to date, I can't point to a particular woman because there weren't any senior women of whom I could say "That's where I want to be".

It has more been a case of being inspired by friends and family who are doing well. My parents were incredibly old

fashioned, but they had four children and we were brought up to believe there was no difference between a man and a woman in the home. My mother was a housewife but she still pushed us all to have professional qualifications. Having brothers who were so close to me in age, it never crossed my mind that I was different to a man in terms of being a professional.

#### What makes a great leader in an emerging business such as the W Series?

A The main thing is not giving up. Where I was brought up in Warwickshire we had something called tractor pulling, in which the further you get down the course the heavier the goods become, and it's all about how far you can make it. In a way, the more time I spent on W Series as a concept, the heavier the weight felt. There were so many times when I thought "Am I wasting my time here?" You need tens of

In motorsport you need drivers,

cars and a track to race on, but

all of those things depend on

each other. I couldn't arrange

one of those things without

having the rest prepared.

millions of pounds to get to the start of the race and raising that can be difficult. You knock on a lot of doors and while you don't get used to the word no, it does happen a lot which gradually lessens the blow. I think the reason I never gave up, besides my husband's support, was a fear of failure, and knowing that I had to make it happen.

The biggest hurdle is always money because you cannot get from a small idea to where we are now without money! In motorsport you need drivers, cars and a track to race on, but all of those things depend on each other. I couldn't arrange one of those things without having the rest prepared. Unless you have those key components in place, people aren't going to

give you the money you need to

**Q** What hurdles have you had

to overcome to establish

the W Series operation?

A Credibility is important when

you're setting up a new

sport such as W Series. We were

very lucky to get David Coulthard

involved at an early stage. David

introduced us to Dave Ryan, who

is our Racing Director, who had

been at McLaren for 33 years, and Matt Bishop who is our Communications Director. The combination of David, Dave and Matt has given us contacts

that have helped the business

because they know such a vast

number of people in motorsport.

The credibility that those three

progress much more easily

people gave us cannot be

underestimated.

move forward.



Continues overleaf







#### with Catherine Bond Muir (continued)



#### Where do you see W Series in 5 years' time?

A I see W Series being a flourishing series that also has a greater involvement at a grassroots level. If we really want to stand by our values in getting more women into motorsport, I think we have got to be attracting more females into the sport at lower levels. Whether that's having free to enter competitions with less powerful cars, or something like that, we need to keep funnelling new drivers into the sport.





#### O How are you inspiring the next generation of female racing drivers?

A The fact we exist and have demonstrated that women can race just as well as men means we are already inspiring the next generation. Just being able to see women racing makes young girls believe that they can do it themselves.

In our first year we were live on Channel 4, in fact we were the only motor racing series that was broadcast live on the first five channels last year, which was in itself extraordinary. I feel that we hit the world at the right time when broadcasters were looking for more female fronted sport.



### O How is the 2021 W Series event schedule taking shape?

A We are still in discussions with a number of different partners but can confirm that we will be racing alongside at least two Formula 1 races, in Austin, Texas and Mexico City. Suffice to say, it is going to be bigger and better than our inaugural season.

# Post pandemic what are the major challenges facing the sports industry?

A It's certainly going to be getting the crowds back. I've been watching all the F1 races but they're not the same without the crowds. During the races it's fine, but I used to love watching everything before the race to get all the gossip and feel immersed in the vibe. Sport is about lots of things, but it is so much better when there's a big crowd there.



#### VIRTUAL TRACKS. REAL RACING.

2020.

**(** 

# Brand-new in 2020, the W Series Esports League aimed to raise female participation in Esports and inspire a new generation of gamers and sim racers.

Unlike many other sim racing initiatives, the W Series Esports League was contested by women only, with W Series drivers from past and present seasons taking part.

Working closely with Logitech G, Beyond Entertainment and iRacing, W Series staged W Series Esports League races on 10 circuits, and up to three races were run at each of the circuits.

Circuit

Date

11 June 2020

18 June 2020

25 June 2020

2 July 2020

9 July 2020

16 July 2020

23 July 2020

30 July 2020

The W Series Esports League races were staged as follows:

Autodromo Nazionale di Monza

BST Brands Hatch Grand Prix Circuit

BST Autódromo José Carlos Pace

BST Circuit de Spa-Francorchamps

BST Suzuka International Racing Course | Japan

BST Watkins Glen International

BST Mount Panorama Circuit

6 August 2020 BST Nürburgring Nordschleife

13 August 2020 | BST Silverstone Grand Prix Circuit

BST Circuit of the Americas

Taking place earlier this year in June at Monza and wrapping up at Silverstone on 13th August, the W Series Esports League races were run on 10 of the greatest circuits in the world.

The W Series Esports League were also shown on BBC iPlayer, the BBC Sport website, Twitch, YouTube and Facebook.

Texas, United States

New York, United States

United Kingdom

Interlagos, Brazil

Bathurst, Australia

Belgium

Germany

Location

Italy



Coming in first place with a total of 439 points across the 10 races was Dutch driver,

race formats for their chance to win the all-new W Series Esports League in





For the latest news regarding future plans for the W Series Esports League and the return of W Series' on-track racing programme in 2021, visit **www.wseries.com** 

United Kingdom





Edd Hood is a global sponsorship and marketing expert with over a decade of experience spanning multiple sports and disciplines, leading such clients as JCB, UPS and Martini. Here he walks us through the potential opportunities when venues once again open the gates to their beloved fans.

Whether you're a fan or work in the industry, sport tugs at the heart strings like nothing else; the reason it's worth over €30 billion for European rights holders alone according to the European Sponsorship Association. One of the principle objectives for clubs and venues is undoubtably to get people physically reengaged with the action and to deliver an experience which equates, if not surpasses, the previous norm.

Currently this presents a series of commercial and operational hurdles but there could be a promising future if we take a fresh look at who we're speaking to and with what message.

Speaking to experts at Nielsen and Harlequins, there's a contrasting picture on how the return of live sport will look; there's natural hesitancy for some, for others the heart rules the head.

According to Nielsen Sports' UK Covid Fan Survey, only 51% of fans are comfortable returning to live events within six months.

However if we focus on 16 - 29 year olds, the figure rises to 65%, potentially paving the way for partnerships targeting a younger demographic. In parallel, there have long been question marks around millennial and Gen Z's spending power, something no doubt compounded by the ongoing restrictions and probable over-indexing of dismissals amongst a iunior workforce. That said, if we look at the esports and gaming sector - one predicated by this demographic - and understand its value has risen by 15% in 2020 to over \$1bn, we can surely unearth commercial opportunities for even the most conservative sponsorship expert.

Recent events around Black Lives Matter and Coronavirus have also given rise to the importance of who sponsors are, with nearly two thirds of fans believing brand purpose is key. For big brands there's an opportunity to develop plans at a macro and micro level whereas for locally relevant companies it creates a platform to re-establish themselves in the 'community' at a time when the very word has never rung truer. This is backed up

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nielsen

by the Nielsen data suggesting that over 50% of fans want sponsors to help their beloved and beleaguered clubs rise again from the post Covid-19 quagmire.

### Getting fans through the door is more than half the battle

In contrast to the hesitation around physical attendance, once fans reengage on match day, they're eager to repeat the process with 92% of attendees at Quin's first (and now only) spectated game either 'Likely' or 'Extremely Likely' to return. Credit must go to the effort of the Quins team in making 97% of fans feel 'Safe' or 'Very Safe' through signage, stewardship or cleanliness. Before attendance trials were shelved in late September, there were only a few 'test and learn' events, often hindered by conflicting local council factions, so to get a better sense of opportunities, more events must surely be enacted to gather a clearer picture of the route forward.

Looking at the 2019 EFL Championship Supporters Survey, around a third of ticket holders are aged 55 or above, mirroring the same demographic hesitant of event attendance. If we're to explore new revenue streams whilst



Once fans re-engage on match day, they're eager to repeat the process with

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at Quin's first (and now only) spectated game either 'Likely' or 'Extremely Likely' to return.

also shoring the foundations of future fandom, now could be the perfect time to create programmes to resonate with new and impassioned consumers for everyone's benefit. This may not prove to be a strategical long term play but could tactically target a new sector whilst encouraging tomorrow's fans in to stadia, building trust and harnessing passion; the very crux of what sport stands for.

Covid-19 has been a wrecking ball for the sports industry, however if sport teaches us one thing, it's resilience. Coupled with the fact that fans will come back with

renewed and enhanced vigour, there's more opportunity to watch live sport than ever before through both digital and linear platforms. Opening up the box of marketing tricks with greater sense of commercial flexibility could be a way to inspire the next generation. It's true, rights holders need to be mindful of strategic planning, but if we're to come through this chapter in history with an exciting commercial story, we must evaluate our audiences and messaging. The future of sport could depend on it.

This article is an abbreviated version. The full article is available on LinkedIn on the link below:

https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/could-return-fans-signal-commercial-rethink-rights-holders-edd-hood/?trackingld=dSshdqlTTtC62bbslKAoog%3D%3D



Programmes Director, Great Britain Cycling Team (GBCT)



For over twenty years, Andy has worked in the innovative and fast paced world of elite sport. As a Sports Scientist, he worked on the front-line, delivering and leading multi-disciplinary support that resulted in Olympic and World Championship success. For the last twelve years he has held senior roles, providing strategic vision and leadership that have enabled success 'on and off the field' by the organisations and sports teams he has led. Andy is currently responsible for leading the UK's most successful Olympic sports team ever, Great Britain Cycling.

#### Q Can you talk us through your career to date?

A I was fortunate to play sport to a reasonably high level, with time at St Helens (Saints) and Widnes Vikings Rugby League Clubs from the ages of 17 to 22, two very successful clubs and Challenge Cup Finalist at Wembley Stadium as well as Premiership Champions. My involvement was primarily at reserve grade, and I was acutely aware (probably before they were) that I wasn't going to be good enough to make it my career, so in parallel I completed under and post graduate degrees in Physiology and Sports Science.

My playing contract ended, and I then landed a role with the Welsh Institute of Sport as a 'Sports Scientist'. This involved providing physiological support to elite athletes and teams, and then latterly managing the Institutes support staff and multidisciplinary support teams. During the five years I was there, I led multidisciplinary support teams at national and international training camps and competitions (Olympic, World, European and Commonwealth) with over 10 different sports. It was a great team

and we worked hard to revolutionise the department from a 'testing service' to a fully integrated 'performance development team', resulting in an invitation to present a keynote lecture at the BASES Conference (2001)

This change in approach was what I thought led to me being offered my next role which was with the English Institute of Sport as 'Athlete Services Manager'. This was in 2002, and I was employee number six for the organisation! It was a really exciting time with a real 'start up' attitude and the necessity to act entrepreneurially. As such I played an integral part in developing the network structure and stakeholder/ partner relationships. The role involved leading the athlete development support services across multiple sports (Olympic and Professional), initiating (and managing) the 'Northern England' Human Science Team and facility, plus providing physiological support to elite athletes and teams. As such, I managed the EIS elements of British Cycling's 'Project Beijing' as part of the sports marginal gain's initiative (2005-08).

A 3-year, science Olympic preparation strategy culminating in 14 medals (8 gold medal) at the Beijing Games.

In 2008, I changed roles within the EIS and became the 'Performance Manager'. This involved leading the 'North England' region (Sport city, Manchester). I was responsible for elite sport engagement and support service delivery, management of all senior staff (science. medicine, analytics, biomechanics, etc.) and worked with elite sports to optimise their strategy and development pathways. Again, this was a really exciting time as we headed into a home Games (London 2012). We worked with some fantastic sports and athletes and I feel we played a real part in Team GB's success in 2012. If the GB athlete's we supported had competed at London 2012 Olympics as a standalone nation, we would have placed 8th on the medal table!

In 2013 I left the EIS when I was offered my current role as Programmes Director with the GBCT.

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#### Andy Harrison | Programmes Director, GBCT

#### You have been with GBCT for 7 years now, how has your role evolved in that time?

A It has been, and continues to be, a hugely enjoyable role. A large part of that enjoyment comes from having clarity of purpose but at the same time trying to achieve that purpose in the innovative, fast paced world of elite sport. The core responsibilities of my role have remained consistent:

- a. Provide strategic vision and leadership to enable GBCT to be successful 'on and off' the field
- b. 'On the field', that's podium success at Worlds and Olympic Games
- c. 'Off the field', that's connecting the wider sports business functions with the world class programme

What's changed is where we have spent energy to achieve these goals during this 7-year period. Initially, this

was about generating greater medal competitiveness for the Rio Games whilst at the same time completing a major overhaul of the rider pathway/academy. Immediately post the Rio Games, we spent time developing our 'why' and creating an environment that enables people (staff and riders) to be the best version of themselves (collapsing vision/ mission into a purpose that resonated with everyone, identifying winning/ losing behaviours, empowering people to develop and positively challenge).

More latterly, we have advanced our philosophy towards being 'programme framed' whilst retaining the critical 'rider centred, coach delivered' elements (embedding discipline blueprints that are a blend of analytics and coach know-how).



#### Working with elite athletes on a day-to-day basis, what are the specific challenges you face as a leader?

A In my role I am slightly removed from working with the riders on a dayto-day basis. To give some perspective, my role is similar to that of a 'Sporting Director' or 'General Manager' in the sports sector.

Ultimately, we are trying to help the riders achieve their performance ambitions. To do that requires high challenge but that is only possible (and effective) if it based upon a foundation of high support. We work hard to develop this through building relationships and trust through

consistent and clear communication around things such as expectations and outcomes. Riders are 'people' not just 'athletes', and we have a duty of care to support and enable their development as people, not just as athletes.

As a leader in the sporting environment (and I'm sure it's the same in most sectors), the constant challenge is to get the right balance between short and long-term success. We look to do that by balancing transformational strategy with operational excellence. It's then with the leadership group to pivot intelligently and prioritize ruthlessly.

#### Fact file



British Cycling is one of the world's leading national governing bodies thanks to our ability to harness mass participation from international success.

The organisation oversees all forms of cycling in Britain. Whether you are a competitor in one of the six sporting disciplines, (BMX, mountain bike, cyclo-cross, road, track and cycle speedway) a personal challenge rider, a commuter or a leisurely weekend rider, we are committed to helping you enjoy cycling.

We administer the sporting calendars in all domestic cycle sport and oversee cycling's development across all disciplines, helping to ensure those who want to race can do so in a competitive and compelling environment.

Away from competition, we continue to encourage millions of people to ride their bikes through our recreational programmes, all suited to meet an individual's preferred form of cycling. We are also working hard to inspire the next generation of cyclists through our work with schools and community clubs to ensure that more young people are taking up the sport than ever before.



British Cycling has set the standard by which elite sporting success in this country is measured with unparalleled Olympic, Paralympic and major championships success, cementing our status as one of the strongest nations in competitive cycling.









#### Who has most inspired you throughout your career?

A To achieve great things requires a team effort. Consequently, building, enabling and sustaining that team is as important (if not more so) than any singular strategy or intervention. The longer I hold leadership positions and the more exposure I get to great teams in various sectors, the more this is reinforced and heightened.

The leaders that do this well, in addition to other skills, have heightened levels of self awareness, empathy and social skills.

I have been lucky to work for, and with, some fantastic individuals and organisations. Equally, through consultancy and advisory roles, I have observed some less than optimal attitudes and approaches. The leaders that do this well, in addition to other skills, have heightened levels of self awareness, empathy and social skills. Through these, they can play best against their areas of strength/weakness, understand other peoples emotional make up and build rapport to move people in the right direction. These are valid whether in the board room or the changing room. It's the people who I see do this well that have most inspired me.

Continues overleaf





#### Andy Harrison | Programmes Director, GBCT



### O How have you and the team dealt with the postponement of the Tokyo Olympics this year?

There was obviously a huge level of disappointment within the team, both staff and riders. It became increasingly obvious that the UK was going to go into lockdown in late March, and in preparation we had constructed a robust plan of how we would secure and deploy equipment to riders/staff prior to the NCC closing.

During the initial stages of lock down (and throughout) our primary focus was staff and rider welfare, both physical and mental wellbeing. We purposely gave staff and riders space and time to adapt and to take care of themselves and their families during this unprecedented, often confusing and constantly changing time.

Attention then focused to enabling activity within government guidelines, once the games was postponed. This changed the dynamic. Riders and coaches throughout the programme,

not just at the podium level, have shown a huge level of resilience and ingenuity. The SLT did a great job of steering the programme during the period anchored by a daily 8am teams call.

We returned to the NCC as soon as we could do that safely and we've been back for 3-4 months now. The Road Worlds are at the end of September and we're focused on 2021

Post Games would typically be when we would reflect and transition into new strategies. To some extent, we have lost that natural window. Currently we are concluding an exercise of planning what, where and how we will alter activity and emphasis so that we maximise success at Tokyo without compromising success in subsequent major events in what will be a very busy three years (x2 Games, x1 CWG, world championship in every disciplines, Europeans, etc).

### What have been the stand out moments in your career to date?

A The obvious answer is being Team Leader at the 2016 Olympic Games, responsible for delivering Team GB's cycling medal target resulting in being the most successful cycling nation at the Games with 12 medals (6 gold).

However, there are things that did not generate headlines that I have given me equal levels of joy for instance, the redesigning of the athlete development structure and support model within British Cycling (2014+). The pathway is now more effective and efficient than at any previous point in it's history. I was the Programme Advisor and Olympic Team Manager for the female GB Water Polo Team (2010–12) taking them from a world ranking of outside the top twenty to within the top ten and Olympic quarter finalists.

More generally – working with staff members 1-2-1 and seeing them grow and go on to be successful. And finally, transitioning between sports (F1, football) and sectors (academia, private business) has also provided some fantastic opportunities.

### How are you inspiring the next generation of British cyclists?

A By being a desirable and effective destination that works with and enables riders in their athletic career. Being cognizant of the need to support and develop riders both on and off the bike to ensure they maximize their athletic potential and are prepared for the next phase of their journey.

As a NGB, BC has excelled at capitalising upon the inspiration that podium success brings to the nation, we have a fantastic record of developing and delivering opportunities that drive social participation and diversity objectives while developing cycling opportunities as a key life skill.

We will continue to strive to make the link between inspiration into participation as clear and easy as possible both for a societal good aspect and as a virtuous circle of talent development.

# What do the next five years hold for you and your career?

Working with good people who share my passion for solving problems and creating new things is what I love, this will continue to be what inspires me to work hard. At the moment, in addition to my role with BC, I'm looking at how I can do this in other capacities such as non-executive roles.

I find writing, publishing and presenting helpful. It forces me to work with a certain level of rigour and enables me to have an outcome to reflective practice. I have been fortunate to deliver at various national/international events and to franchises, businesses and academia, and this is something I'm looking to continue.

# Post pandemic what are the major challenges facing the sports industry?

A key challenge will be revenue - particularly with the impact of spectator attendance but the Tour De France has shown that, even now, it's possible to hold a compelling sporting event. I believe that sport can, and does, generate and sustain a sense of community and attracting and retaining volunteers at all level of sport is critical. They are the life blood upon which all sports depend. Will people be spending less time commuting? If so. can we motivate them to find space in their lives to volunteer or participate? As an armchair quarter back. I'm really interested to see the continued integration of technology to enhance the experience of the fan and to inspire and motivate those taking part.

# Sports communications departments are an overlooked revenue stream

### **Written by Jamie Fox**

Jamie Fox is one of the United Kingdom's leading sports communications professionals. He has worked in senior positions for various national teams, Olympic organising committees, national governing bodies and international federations - including the International Cricket Council, British Athletics and Team GB, Harlequins rugby club and the Australian Athletics team.

There is no doubt that times are tough in the sports industry. Over the last few weeks 'the big three' have been forced to undertake a series of difficult steps that will see hundreds of roles become further casualties of the Covid-19 pandemic.

a profitable revenue stream and develop commercially-driven comms strategies that will help sports organisations not only get back on their feet today, but prosper tomorrow.

Jamie's wide-ranging knowledge of has been accrued with time at a number of global sporting bodies including; International Cricket Council, British Athletics, Team GB, Harlequin Rugby and Athletics Australia.

The England and Wales Cricket Board announced 62 job losses recently, the Rugby Football Union is planning to cut 139 jobs and 124 posts have been removed at The Football Association. It is a sobering toll.

But even if spectators were allowed to return to stadiums tomorrow, teams and organisations should not expect to rebuild sport's economy on the same pile of sand. With the value of TV rights widely expected to diminish, sponsors dealing with their own economic issues and questioning the value of all partnerships. it will take a new direction and a real change in commercial strategies and revenue streams of the past to rebuild sport's economy in the UK.

And that's why it is time for sports communications departments to become









Far too many who work in sports communications, particularly those in the Government funded Olympic and Paralympic sector, believe comms departments are 'unable to generate income or profit' or what they deliver is 'unquantifiable'. That is an old way of thinking and doing things. It is time for

Outdated thinking like this has led some CEOs to believe comms departments do not offer a good return on investment, other than in times of crisis. And unarquably over the last few months. many communications teams have proven their worth when dealing with the PR problems brought about by Covid-19 and closed stadiums. Alongside a long overdue effort to deliver messages, internally and externally, that will assist organisations to increase diversity, both on and off the field of play.

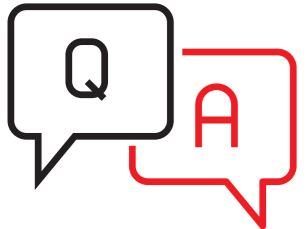
But now is not the time for comms teams to pause or to wait around for commercial teams to fix the revenue problems. Now is the time to fundamentally change communications departments from just a PR and crisis management safety net to a quantifiable and profitable revenue stream.

Communications Directors who are progressive thinking, can identify commercially appealing messaging opportunities unique to the sports industry. They can help partners shape the messaging needed to engage with their organisation's fans and deliver messages that actually stick, get noticed, shared and repeated.

With so much data available, despite past thinking, communications strategies can now deliver clear measurables and show a return on investment. And in a constantly changing world, where the global news agenda can be ignited by a single Tweet and cultural shifts can happen overnight, the communications department is the most able to react and change focus at a

For sports organisations to emerge from this crisis stronger than before, they need to make sure they have the right workers in place to generate and fulfil these plans. Companies that invest in the recruitment of progressive Communications Directors will be rewarded with employees who can realise the commercial potential of communications strategies, both traditional and digital, and deliver an untapped revenue stream.





# Rob Paddon Venue Sales Director FULHAM FC

We caught up with Rob Paddon, Venue Sales Director of Fulham Football Club, to discuss his career to date, as well as the exciting Fulham Pier development at Craven Cottage. Fulham Pier is due to open in the summer of 2021, which will transform Craven Cottage into an iconic, premium, riverside location overlooking the Thames.

#### O Can you talk us through your career to date?

Post my degree I started helping at my local football club Exeter City to try and gain some relevant experience whilst trying to find my way into the sports industry. Thankfully, they liked how I was adding value, so I was offered a full-time role, supporting departments across the club from commercial sales, meetings and events, marketing and also the matchday operation. It was a great first grounding in sport and we had a fantastic Chief Executive at the time called Norrie Stewart, who really believed in nurturing young people in the business world.

I then moved onto Southampton FC as I knew I wanted to specialise in sales and had a fantastic two years at St Mary's, with good success in selling sponsorship and hospitality. During this time I had my first experience of being promoted to the Premier League, which is always very special.

After two years at Southampton FC, I had gained a lot of sales experience, but I now really wanted to move to the capital and work for one of the biggest football stadiums. I joined the premium team at Arsenal and had three fantastic years at the Emirates Stadium. It was again, a great place to nurture my sales skills and experience, and, at the time, work on some of the biggest matches in world football. We broke numerous revenue records during my time and delivered some incredible deals to a host of global brands.

I now knew, I wanted to look for both project and managerial experience for my next move. The RFU at the time were looking to expand their hospitality proposition, and deliver a significant uplift in matchday revenue, by transforming their East Stand, with state-of-the-art hospitality facilities. I joined to run the debenture programme, which by the end of my time at Twickenham would result in my department generating over £60m in matchday revenue. We also had to deliver a particularly complex migration of debenture holders, to accommodate the East Stand premium areas, which whilst challenging, was an incredible achievement.

Fulham FC had always been on my radar as a venue, that oozed with potential, with just an incredible riverside location, right in the heart of London. As my time on the debenture project was coming to an end, the opportunity presented itself at Craven Cottage. The opportunity to work with such incredible people in the industry such as our CEO Alistair Mackintosh, Casper Stylsvig (now at AC Milan) and Chad Johnson (Jacksonville Jaguars) was just something I could not turn down. I wanted to move to somewhere where my development would continue, and where I could make a real impact. In my three years now at Craven Cottage, we have broken every matchday revenue record, and won some great awards along the way which has been pleasing. We also have a very exciting future ahead with the new stand development which we will go into later.













Rob's wide-ranging knowledge has been accrued with time at Exeter City FC, Southamption FC, Arsenal FC, England Rugby and now at Fulham FC

Continues overleaf





#### Rob Paddon | Venue Sales Director at Fulham FC (continued)

O Since confirming your return to the Premier League, it's been a quick turnaround to the start of the 20/21 season. How have the team reacted?

We got promoted two years ago by the exact same method of the play offs so we do have quite a lot of experience in turning the seasons around sharply, but with the added complication of Covid-19 and also a new stand build, it's been a particularly challenging timeframe.

Off the pitch, we have had to be strategic given the changing legislation and guidance, and plan for every single permutation and outcome. At least with the promotion, that took 50% of the permutations (EFL) off the table.

We have been as agile as we can, given the circumstances and I think it is testament to our operations team, who have adapted and have been delivering match days successfully in the new COVID world.

We have been working tirelessly, so we know that the minute we can welcome fans back into the stadium, we can ensure anyone attending will enjoy it and do so in a safe manner. After being away for so long we want to get that experience right.



A Last summer we started redeveloping the Riverside stand, which for those who have not visited Craven Cottage, is the stand that stretches right along the River Thames. The new six floor facility is going to increase our overall capacity to circa 28,000, but more importantly, transform Craven Cottage into an iconic, premium, non-matchday riverside location, overlooking the river. Most importantly, we have purchased part of the river, so we will be opening up the Thames path, with an iconic 'boardwalk'.

The venue itself is going to have diverse range of offerings, with something for everyone, from morning through to night. From private accommodation, a health club and spa, shared working spaces, a basement music and events facility, several high-end restaurants and bars, and finally, a truly incredible roof terrace with stunning views of the river.

The opportunities here are endless, with facilities to not just serve the local community, but for it to become an iconic London destination for tourists and Londoners alike. It just so also happens to be a football stadium too.



### fulham\_pier

Positioned along the Thames and nestled by parkland, Fulham Pier will bring to life this pocket of South West London by creating a unique destination that'll be open morning, noon and night.

So whether you start your day with sunrise yoga; pop in for a flat white in between meetings; make space for mindfulness in your lunch break or try a pizza class with the kids; take the whole family to the rooftop pool or make a date with a glass of bubbles, there's something for everyone.









#### Rob Paddon | Venue Sales Director at Fulham FC (continued)





#### How will the new development impact the future of the business?

This development of the stand as mentioned previously, is going to allow Fulham FC to deliver a broad range of year-round experiences, which will naturally transform our non-football revenues. The opportunities in the stand are endless. We are so fortunate that with Shahid Khan as our Chairman, we can

even consider a project of this magnitude, which is truly going to change the game, when it comes to stadia developments. Certainly, from the research we have undertaken, there are very few sport stadiums to benchmark this against, let alone entertainment venues in London.

#### Are there any future plans to further develop other parts of the stadium?

We have already undertaken some development of areas ahead of the Riverside Stand. Most notably, we have transformed the cottage itself back to its former glory. This project transformed two floors of this iconic piece of football

history and now makes it an incredible space for both matchday and events.

Naturally, our focus right now is solely on the new stand development, which will be due to open in summer 2021.

#### In what ways has the global pandemic affected the club on a day-to-day basis?

A Not having fans in the stands has naturally been challenging from a revenue perspective, but it has been positive to see how departments have adapted and, as an example from a digital perspective, our interaction has gone through the roof.

We have to all had to adapt to working from home and thankfully we have some great partners, that has resulted in all departments working remotely wherever they can. From my teams perspective we have all been home for six months now, and are still delivering some great output, despite Covid-19.



Fulham Football Club is an English professional association football club based in Fulham, London. They currently compete in the Premier League, the highest level of the English football league system. Founded in 1879, they are London's oldest football club playing professionally.

Head Coach:	Scott Parker
Arena/Stadium:	Craven Cottage
Owner:	Shahid Khan
Location:	Fulham, London
Nicknames:	The Cottagers The Lilywhites The Whites

### O Shahid Khan owns both Fulham FC and the NFL team, the Jacksonville Jaguars. Do the clubs work together in anyway?

A It's a truly unique relationship, and both teams benefit from the mutual sharing of knowledge, experiences and resource, whilst also having respect, that we do also have our differences.

We do have a great relationship with our commercial counterparts and, for example, share similar ticketing and data systems, which allow us to share insights and learnings. Another example of working together is our medical team and players often go over to Florida and vice versa to assist with recovery of injuries. Personally, its also great experience for

me too, as I expand my knowledge into the US sports market.

Every year we have the Jags weekend where we will play a home game on the Saturday and the Jags will play at Wembley on the Sunday. The commercial opportunities that gives us is amazing. We will have an influx of US tourists on the Saturday who are here for the Jags game and vice versa on the Sunday, they will have an influx of Fulham supporters wanting to cheer on the Jags, so it's a great celebration of our ongoing relationship.



#### What would a successful season look like for you?

Off the pitch, we want to continue to be commercially driven, and drive as much commercial value as we can whilst also delivering great fan experiences, when they can return to Craven Cottage. In the meantime we also want to make sure the fans still feel part of it, even if they are only consuming us currently through digital channels.

In relation to the new stand, success is going to be opening a world class destination that can provide the most exceptional experiences for everyone and anyone. That for us is going to be our biggest achievement, and will no doubt create an iconic landmark, on the banks of the river Thames at Craven Cottage.

#### Fact file

# JACKSONVILLE



The Jacksonville Jaguars are a professional football franchise based in Jacksonville, Florida. The Jaguars compete in the National Football League as a member club of the American Football Conference South division. The team plays its home games at TIAA Bank Field. They are owned by Shahid Khan.

Owner:	Shahid Khan
Arena/Stadium:	TIAA Bank Field
Head coach:	Doug Marrone
Division:	AFC South
Mascot:	Jaxson de Ville





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