



Generalitat de Catalunya
Government of Catalonia
Catalan Tourist Board

WSTC 21

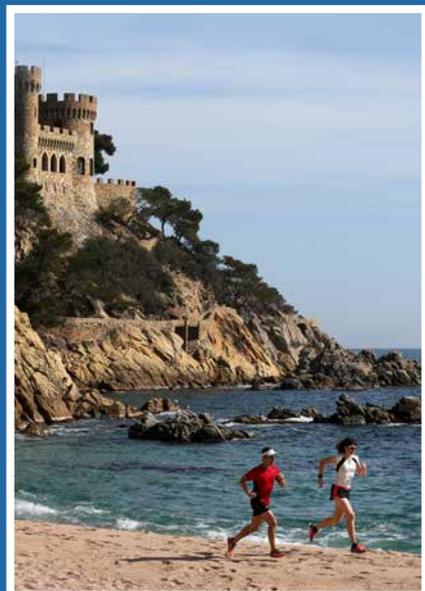
1ST WORLD SPORTS TOURISM CONGRESS

Summary of the proceedings, case studies, and the key lessons

November 25th - 26th, 2021

venue

Evenia Olympic Resort and Conference Centre
Lloret de Mar (Costa Brava), Catalonia



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It is unfair to single out any individual for special thanks as everyone played their part in making the Congress a success - and there are far too many individuals to mention by name.

Our collective appreciation is extended to all the moderators, the speakers and panellists, and the members of the Scientific Committee. We would like to thank the logistics team directed by WeAreBoth, the whole team at Evenia, and the Mayor and Municipality of Lloret de Mar. This was truly a collaborative effort.

BACKGROUND INTRODUCTION

In 1997, the Journal of Tourism and Recreation Research published a special edition dedicated to sports tourism. The forward by, the then, President of the International Olympic Committee and Catalan, Juan Antonio Samaranch, endorsed the statement stating that: "the contribution of sporting activities to tourism development seems an obvious partnership. It is surprising, therefore, how few countries propagate this interrelationship in their strategies for tourism development. Rarely has the direct link between sports motivated travel, both domestic and international tourism, been fully recognised.... Indeed, sports-related tourism may well be the growth sector of the industry into the Millennium."

Two years later (October 1999) Samaranch and Francesco Frangialli, the (then) Secretary-General of World Tourism Organization (UNWTO), met in Lausanne (Switzerland) to sign a protocol and an agreement for both institutions to collaborate to promote sport and tourism. Then in 2001 in Barcelona, Frangialli, together with Samaranch, hosted the first ever world conference on Sport and tourism.

This quote from the opening speech by Francesco Frangialli (Secretary-General, UNWTO at the time) is of great importance: "This conference is not merely a time of recognition and encounter for the two major economic, social and cultural activities of sport and tourism. It is the point of departure of an ambitious undertaking which will encourage a great many people from all walks of life to gather and work together; it is a far-reaching venture to which the UNWTO is ready to commit itself. Sport and tourism are two forces that bring people together... they bring democratization and diversification and are a major factor of cultural fulfilment, individual and collective alike."

At its conclusion, Samaranch and Frangialli were joint signatories to a communiqué recognising sports and tourism as "forces for mutual understanding." This symbolic gesture resounded around the world like a 'starter's pistol,' releasing what has become one of the fastest growing segments in the global travel and tourism industry. As a result, today, sports-related tourism can no longer be regarded as a niche aspect of tourism and travel but as a driver of tourism growth, destination competitiveness, and a major contributor to achieving the UN's Sustainable Development Goals in a distinct way because of its inherent characteristics and strengths. This fact was recognised in the 2016 UNWTO's Da Nang Declaration on Sport and Tourism

The pandemic has brought new focus on the importance of personal and societal health and wellbeing. It has heightened demand for outdoor spaces for leisure and recreation. It has put the spotlight on travel and tourism as the vehicle to help deliver these enhanced motivations to live better and longer. As a result, it has become more apparent than ever before that sports tourism holds the key to a sustainable future for us, for society, and for destinations to re-grow, reimagine and re-invigorate their tourism offer.

So, as we now consider the importance to look afresh at these 'two forces' - sport and tourism - to help shape the future it was highly appropriate that the 1st World Congress on Sports Tourism should take place in Catalunya - the birthplace of the original launch of this global phenomenon with Barcelona hosting first ever International Competition for Innovation in Sports Tourism in 2019. This is a Region that is a recognised exemplar destination that has harnessed the power of sports tourism to grow its tourism industry in a sustainable manner over the past twenty years.

DEFINING SPORTS TOURISM

Over the past 20 years researchers have defined 'sports tourism' in different ways. However, it is now universally accepted that a good starting point is that provided by Standeven and De Knop (1999) in their book 'Sports Tourism' which states that sports tourism involves: "All forms of active and passive involvement in sporting activity, participated in casually or in an organised way for non-commercial or business/commercial reasons that necessitates travel away from home and work locality".

Clearly this broad definition embraces all types of participation in sports as wide ranging as low impact rural activities (such as hands-free rock climbing or fishing) or those in an urban setting (such as Parkour) to mass participation activities in rural areas to the major city marathons of London and New York as well as the stadia team sports and the wide range of peripatetic or self-developed, signature sports events.

There are SIX clearly defined motivations for sports-related travel each of which demands appropriately planned services, facilities, and amenities to meet the demands of these consumers. So, today we see people travelling for sports-related tourism to:

- Actively participate in a sport, or sporting event, - individually or as part of a team.
- Self-development or enhanced training for sport as an individual or as a team.
- Watching sport as a spectator or supporter of a team, a sport, or a sporting event.
- Visiting sites and places associated with the history, heritage, culture of a sport.
- Expressing their everyday lifestyle and definition of self.
- Improving their health and well-being through a sporting activity.

These markets are increasingly demanding new experiences and pushing the boundaries of their own performance and expectations.

This creates challenges and opportunities for destinations.

It is no wonder, therefore, that destinations around the world are increasingly looking to develop their sports tourism appeal. The 'heady' mix of celebrity appeal, links to lifestyle, the use of natural and man-made assets, media coverage and the (relatively) high value of sports tourists ensuring that sports tourism remains an extremely attractive proposition for destinations, countries, and territories around the world.

There are other many and varied positive impacts arising from sports-related tourism. These include:

- Regeneration and the development/ investment in new facilities and associated technical innovations.
- Place promotion, re-imaging destinations, creating platforms for branding and marketing.
- Enhanced global awareness.
- Uplift in civic pride and strengthening identity.
- Increased levels of participation in sport amongst the resident communities.
- Positive attitudinal changes and new values across the community.

These benefits are equally applicable and relevant to rural, as well as urban, destinations. With competition to achieve standout and to claim global standout driving the search for hybrid, innovative, new sports (such as urban golf, street ball, bike polo in urban areas) and off-the-wall adrenalin sports and new types of spectator sports for rural destinations.

The Congress program was specifically designed to explore all these aspects of sports tourism through the lens of (a) the post-COVID environment and (b) the imperative of the UN Sustainable Development Goals all informed by research, innovation, creative interventions.

| INTRODUCTION

It is against this background that this Congress had its gestation early. It was conceived early in 2019 by ACT as a cornerstone, global, event to celebrate the planned Year of Sports Tourism 2020 and to create a platform to stimulate the further development of sports tourism around the world but especially in the Region. An organising group was established consisting of representatives from the UNWTO, ACT, specialist planning contractor, and an international sports tourism expert (who also represented the Congress' international Scientific Committee (see Appendices).

Much preparatory work was undertaken agreeing themes and topics, identifying potential moderators, keynote speakers, and panellists. The plans for the Congress to be held in May 2020 progressed well but then COVID-19 arrived and the plans for the Congress came to an abrupt halt. A new target date was set for Spring 2021 but, once again, the pandemic scuppered these ambitions.

Throughout this period of uncertainty, the organising group were determined to keep going knowing that, at some stage, the Congress would take place. During this time, the framework for the event was continually reviewed and amended, potential contributors were identified, the topics for discussion were agreed, and venue confirmed.

It was, therefore, with great relief, delight, and pleasure that circumstances eventually allowed the Congress to take place, albeit in a hybrid format (with participants and delegates meeting in person and virtually), in Loret de Mar in November 2021. This hybrid format worked well. The experience for all involved was enhanced with the novel appearance of several speakers using hologram technology delivered in collaboration with a commercial partner.

THE PROGRAM, THE PROCEEDINGS & KEY LESSONS

THURSDAY 25 NOVEMBER 2021
OPENING CEREMONY

SUMMARY

Zurab Pololikashvili (Secretary General of the World Tourism Organization) stressed that “The World Sports Tourism Congress has to be a space for the exchange of ideas and debate in relation to sports tourism, something that from the UNWTO we think that has great importance. Sporting events are essential for the recovery of tourism, especially after the pandemic. The tourism sector is ready again.” He added, “I’m aware of the sporting tradition of Catalonia and the passion of its people, that’s why the UNWTO was convinced from the very beginning to participate in this Congress”.

Roger Torrent i Ramió. Conseller d’Empresa i Treball de la Generalitat de Catalunya / Minister of Business and Labour stated that “Tourism and sport are two concepts that are very present in our country and have contributed to the development of Catalonia. This Congress is a great proposal for the future and a fundamental element for Catalonia to achieve the 4Ds: De-seasonalisation, Decentralisation, De-standardisation and Distribution”. He noted that “major sporting events of global importance, as well as sporting clubs and institutions, have made their successes an opportunity to present ourselves to the world.” The Generalitat de Catalunya has always been committed to tourism but recognises the challenge of how tourism links the sports tourism sector with the values we want for our society.

THE CHALLENGE AHEAD

Sports tourism is an extraordinarily strong, growth, sector, however there are many aspects (challenges and opportunities) to consider developing and promote this sector in a sustainable way in the future.

SESSION 1 | CHALLENGES IN SPORTS TOURISM FOR THE 'NEW NORMAL' AND ITS CONTRIBUTION TO SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT



FORMAT | Inaugural address + Expert session

TOPICS | Sustainable development goals, Agenda 2030, and sports values / The impact of sports tourism (social, environmental, economic development) / New normal post-COVID-19.

AIM OF THE SESSION | The aim of this first session is to identify challenges, opportunities, and obstacles for sports tourism. Due to COVID-19, the tourism sector has had to adapt and reinvent itself. However, this crisis is also a unique opportunity to rethink the strategies and offers around sport tourism to foster its socially, environmentally, and economically sustainable approach.

MODERATOR | Damià Serrano, *Director de MK Experiences i Recerca, ACT*

SPEAKERS | Kilian Jornet, *(by hologram)*
 Lisa Delpy Neirotti, *Professor George Washington University (virtual)*
 Sara Mair Bellshaw, *Managing Director at Slow Adventure Europe*
 Timothy O'Donoghue, *Founder & Executive Director Riverwind Foundation (virtual)*

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS | The recurring theme was that sports tourism is at the forefront of re-imagining the re-growth of tourism with the new challenges facing international travel creating fresh opportunities to create resilient, sustainable, and viable destinations.

It was clear that sustainability will be the primary concern for destinations in terms of economic, social, and environmental considerations. Extreme sports athletes are seeing the evidence

of erosion, pollution, and overcapacity numbers even in the most remote and peripheral areas of the world. This demands that the athletes must be part of the solution and take personal responsibility for sustainability and a need to re-think the competition model for at risk environments.

The constant emergence of new types of sporting activities is pushing the boundaries of where and how athletes will find the extreme and remote environments to meet their motivations. This puts greater pressure on natural resources in remote locations. The concept of Slow Adventure (human and nature powered journeys) offers a new approach to manage these challenges whilst, at the same time, creating opportunities to get sports tourists to stay longer and spend more money within the local economy on a year-round basis. The slow adventure principles ensure that sporting activities are fully integrated with local culture, language, heritage, and hospitality - slow adventure meets the slow food concept.

The Riverwind Foundation in Wyoming demonstrates the importance of a sustainability- focused intermediary to broker the relationships and achieve the balance necessary to deliver an integrated, balanced, relationship between sport and tourism in a destination. It was also made clear that many of the proprietary and franchise owners of major sports events, as well as sponsors, are now looking at their corporate social responsibility through working in partnership with destinations to deliver the sustainability credentials. There is a new sports event model that is no longer about financial incentives but, rather, creating a partnership approach between all parties to deliver a sustainable outcome.

KEY LESSONS

- ***Sustainable best practice will be expected from all stakeholders in the future.***
- ***Sports tourism can contribute making tourists more aware and encourage individual commitment to sustainability.***
- ***Participants in sports tourism will be expected to take greater responsibility for their actions, behaviour, and reducing their sustainable 'footprint'.***
- ***Destinations must work more closely with sports organisations and sporting events to act in a sustainable manner.***
- ***Slow adventure embracing local nature, culture, heritage, and community will deliver sustainable benefits especially in rural destinations.***
- ***Sports tourism can generate year-round tourism and end seasonality.***

SESSION 2 | SPORTS TOURISM FROM THE DEMAND SIDE, MARKET VOLUME AND POTENTIAL



FORMAT | Expert session.

TOPICS | Trends in sport and physical activity, from professional elite sport to recreational and amateur sport

AIM OF THE SESSION | Exploring market demand trends in sport and physical activity and how these will evolve and impact on tourism. This will begin to assess the current situation of sport tourism at the local, regional, and international level and how it has evolved in recent years to adapt to new challenges, ranging from elite professional sport to recreational and amateur sport.

MODERATOR | **Fabián Quesada**, *Managing Director Spanish Sports Association (ADESP) and Attitude Praxis*

SPEAKERS | **Jennifer Stoll**, *Director of Research and Education at Sports Events and Tourism Association (Sports ETA)*
Lavonne Wittmann, *Director of Global Membership at SKAL International*
Leslie Vella, *Malta Tourist Board (virtual)*

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS | Sports tourism is clearly identifiable as the simulant for a strong eco-system of stakeholders who already effectively collaborate. The new emerging trends will need further enhanced levels of cooperation, co-creation, and co-dependency between all involved in the eco-system. There is significant potential for sports tourism to become an engine for wider economic and social development in a destination.

The markets are extremely broad and diverse with sports tourism being relevant to all generations and providing experiences that

range from easy-to-access individual participation involving little equipment and no facilities (such as trail running or walking) to highly sophisticated, expensive requirements taking place in highly sophisticated and costly facilities (such as elite sports in a large stadium).

In the years pre-COVID-19 sports tourism was growing at 14% per annum and was valued at US\$600bn. Recent evidence suggests that over the next five - 10 years sports tourism and associated wellness tourism will grow at rates higher than that for other sectors in tourism. This will result from growth in all five motivations driving demand travel for sport (as a participant in a sport, as a spectator, for the heritage of sport, for personal health and well-being, or for rest and relaxation).

Future success in developing sustainable sports tourism demands better knowledge and understanding of the markets. This insight will support fresh, innovative, thinking about products, experiences, venues, locations, events, and the type of business model now needed to deliver a sustainable sports tourism strategy and action plan.

One of the speakers articulated the opportunity well, "The pandemic has introduced a new type of traveller, such as the solo traveller, multi-generational family travel or travellers looking for immersive experiences. This brings more opportunities and participation in sports tourism. We need to look at what these new "travellers" are looking for - authentic, diverse, real, and sustainable experiences. We have to give them the answers they want to introduce them to the new market and support them."

KEY LESSONS

- ***There is an extremely broad spectrum of opportunities for sports tourism development.***
- ***Co-operation and collaboration will become ever more important amongst all stakeholders in a destination.***
- ***Innovation will be essential in all aspects of the sports tourism planning and delivery.***
- ***Sports tourism is more likely to succeed when it is integrated into the overall values, positioning, and development of the destination.***
- ***Sporting facilities, services, and activities that are good for the residents will be great for the sports tourist and vice versa.***
- ***These paradigm shifts are opening new doors that can be used to create exceptional sports tourism experiences that will increase the competitiveness of a destination.***

SESSION 3

INNOVATION IN DEVELOPING SPORTS TOURISM: STADIUMS, OLYMPIC GAMES AND MASS PARTICIPATION AT SPORTING EVENTS



FORMAT | Expert session

TOPICS | The impact of COVID-19 for preparing their sports, viability and arrival after mass events, sustainability rights holders for their sports and events.

AIM OF THE SESSION | The impact of COVID-19 on the organisation of sporting events has been detrimental to mass attendance at sporting venues. This session analyses the viability and legacy after mass events, considering the new sustainability objectives that must be assumed and delivered by sport event venues by harnessing innovation.

MODERATOR | Professor Dr. Terry Stevens, & *Founder Stevens & Associates*

SPEAKERS | **Josep Escoda**, *Head of International Relations and Innovation Development at CAR Sant Cugat, General Secretary of ASPC, CIPC Olympic Solidarity Mentor, IOC Academic Advisor*
Juanjo Rovira, *Director MIC Sports & MICFootball*
Peter McKeena, *Stadium and Commercial Director, Croke Park, Dublin*

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS | Excellence is expected in all aspects of the design and management of these facilities. It is now taken for granted that these venues will be safe, secure, and hygienic for the competing athletes, their support staff, and spectators. They must also be designed and managed with consideration for the communities that lives around these venues and integrated with the local environment, especially public transport systems.

The modern stadia and arenas are complex environments

where the specific needs of the athletes and the spectators have to be met. This entails creating the right conditions for elite performance along with the safety, security, and comfort for all others - spectators, support staff, media, and those working in these venues. The viability of these, often expensive to build and operate facilities demands quality provision of commercial services (hospitality, retail, and entertainment) along with medical, administrative, and other amenities. There is considerable pressure to ensure these facilities can be fully used through-out the year for non-sporting events to drive revenues and viability.

It has now become essential to apply innovation thinking to how stadia and arena can be developed for multiple use in a sustainable manner. This includes novel forms of visitor attractions such as museums, visitor centres, adrenalin experiences (such as ziplines, roof walks, and roller coaster rides on the roofs of grandstands), Finding sustainable solutions to reducing costs and generating income is fundamental. Examples range from everyday practice of re-cycling waste to forms of renewable energy, stadia having their own farms for food production, the collection and re-use of rainwater for irrigating grass pitches and creating nature conservation habitats around the built facilities.

KEY LESSONS

- ***Innovation is particularly important in the search for sustainable solutions***
- ***Stimulating fresh, innovative, thinking requires a working environment where anyone can promote their 'good idea' - there is no hierarchy for good ideas.***
- ***Collaboration is essential to make good ideas work***
- ***Creating the delivering new ways of working can take time but little steps lead to successful big ideas***
- ***Innovation is the key to being competitive. The world of sports tourism is not separate from the innovation of society, the progress of society and the world is continuous, and sports tourism has to follow this rhythm, if possible anticipating it..***
- ***A stadium is not just about sport, it must reassure the community that we are responding to them in many ways.***

SESSION 4.1 | DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION IN SPORTS TOURISM (WOMEN, LGTB, ADAPTED SPORT)



FORMAT | Expert session

TOPICS | Gender, religion, cultural diversity, accessibility: current issues affecting sport and tourism

AIM OF THE SESSION | Exploring the increasingly relevant issues of gender, religion, cultural diversity, and accessibility that affect sport and tourism through different practical experiences of sport as a tool for social integration are analysed.

MODERATOR | Patrick Torrent, *Executive Director of the Catalan Tourist Board*

SPEAKERS | Maite Laporta, *Head of Diversity and Inclusion at FCB*

Harry Connolly, *CEO Visit West Belfast (Sports Tourism for Peace)*

Sylvana Mestre, *CEO/Founder of Play and Train Company*

Karl Ainscough-Gates, *Chairman of International Gay Rugby Association (IGR)*

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

Inclusion and diversity have many different dimensions and prejudice has many different causes. Diversity needs sport to look at the hidden aspects of society (sexism, misogyny, violence) as well as those issues associated with racism, LGBTPlus and disability. It is sports obligation to make a positive impact by embracing all aspects of society and providing opportunities for all. This goes beyond the physical design of facilities into looking at the way sport and sports tourism can positively change behaviour, perceptions, and attitudes.

In West Belfast (Northern Ireland) the empowerment of local

people has been the key to use sports tourism to reinforce visitors' understanding of the emergence of peace in a once torn city. At the heart of this movement are hyper-local initiatives, the role of the unique amateur community sports organisation (the Gaelic Athletic Association), and sustainability. The normalisation of life through sport and travel needs intermediary organisations, such as Play and Train and International Gay Rugby, to be the catalysts for change by taking positive actions.

In sport and tourism, everyone should have a place. Tourism unites different communities and cultures, and its relationship with sport, also a practice that unites many people with the same hobby, can be key to the acceptance and promotion of diversity. Prosperity in sports tourism is therefore not only economic, but also closely related to diversity, quantity, and the satisfaction of its participants and attendees. The goal of universal accessibility not only makes us fairer, but also more competitive.

KEY LESSONS

- ***The normalisation of sport and travel for the excluded, minority or disadvantage groups in society is a priority***
- ***Many millions of people in society are prevented from participating in sports and sports tourism because of prevailing attitudes as well as physical impediments***
- ***Collectively these markets represent large numbers of people and should not be regarded as being niche***
- ***Organisations representing the interests and rights of these diverse groups are particularly important because they can articulate need, they can promote understanding, and they can help sports bodies deliver better policies, plans, and facilities***

SESSION 4.2 | THE NEEDS OF SPORTS VISITORS: THE ATHLETES' AND COACHES' PERSPECTIVE



FORMAT | Expert session

TOPICS | Premises for the organisation of training 'stages,' tournaments and events

AIM OF THE SESSION | Without athletes, teams, and spectators there would be no sports tourism. What are the prerequisites for the successful organisation of an event, starting with the needs of the protagonists: the athletes? What are the practical needs and the ideal conditions that they require to ensure their successful contribution to the future of sports tourism?

MODERATOR | *Pere Vilà Collmalivern, Director of the Sports Federations Union of Catalonia (UFEC)*

SPEAKERS | *Ernest Aguilar, Head of Social Events, Innovation and New Markets, Club Natació Sabadell*

Trystan Bevan, High Performance Coordinator at Cardiff Rugby. (virtual)

Paraskevi Patoulidou, President Thessaloniki Tourism Agency and former athlete

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS | The design and management of training centres must inspire, motivate, and support the goals and needs of the athletes. These are often very precise requirements based on availability of excellent facilities, equipment, and world-class technology comparable to that found in their competitive environments.

There are basic human needs that athletes all require (be they in a team or are training as individuals): good food, good sleep, good facilities, time to relax, privacy, access to strong and

reliable digital services, and inspiring environment (especially nature). The environment (the destination) around the training centres is important, providing athletes with attractions, culture, and other things to do.

The decisions made about where training will take place for any sports team or athletes, are made by a small group of influencers: (i) the performance coach who looks for the quality of performance facilities; (ii) the administrator who looks after logistics and (iii) the owner of the clubs for whom other attractions will be crucial (golf courses, good restaurants, etc.). Familiarity is important so

When athletes are happy, and a venue gives good service then sports clubs tend to use the training facilities they know and trust. As clubs become closer to their competitors there is more sharing of facilities. This is increasingly allowing

Teams to by-pass travel operators and directly plan their own arrangements.

KEY LESSONS

- ***Athletes have basic human needs that must be met in training centres as well as the high-quality sports-related facilities***
- ***There are three key components: training time, relaxation time, and eating time***
- ***The destination around the training centre is important for providing a range of other attractions and access to local culture for the athletes***
- ***Athletes want their stay to be normalized***
- ***The organizers of the travel arrangements for athletes like to work with centres they have used in the past and who understand their needs***
- ***If the athletes are 'satisfied' the success of the sporting event is closer and the reputation of the destination is maintained.***

SESSION 5 | SUCCESSFUL GOVERNANCE OF A DESTINATION AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE SPORTS TOURISM STRATEGIES



FORMAT | Expert session

TOPICS | Local, regional, and national governance strategies in sports tourism in the setting of the new normal / Involvement of the private sector.

AIM OF THE SESSION | Examining local, regional, and national governance strategies and models in sport tourism in the context of the new normality and how institutions must act. to become a sustainable sports tourism destination in the medium and long term, what are the conditions for success? How to involve all sectors of society (public authorities, private and third sectors?)

MODERATOR | Professor Dr Terry Stevens, (*MD Stevens & Associates*)

SPEAKERS | Lars H Olsen, *Senior advisor at Destination Vadehavskysten (Denmark) (virtual)*
 Manuela Di Centa, *Councillor at Italian Tourism Ministry*
 Geert Bruynseels, *Event expert at Sport Event Flanders*
 Misa Novak, *ALOHAS, Sustainable Solutions in Tourism (virtual)*
 Ms Sonto Mayise, *Chief Convention Bureau Officer- Tourism Kwazulu-Natal: KZN CONVENTION BUREAU (virtual)*

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS | Every aspect of sports tourism happens in a place. This is a simple truth, but it reinforces the fact that a destination and destination management is at the heart of all forms of sports tourism. It also highlights the importance of destination management organisations (DMOs) to have the appropriate plans, policies, and governance structures to be able to activate successful, sustainable, development of sports tourism. This

must include consideration as to how best to incorporate

Sports tourism as part of a destination-wide integrated economic and cultural Sustainable development strategy.

DMOs are recognising the growth of individuals and families wanting to participate in sports tourism especially in terms of their post-covid health and wellness agendas. This means increased demand for quality walking and cycling routes, access to nature and countryside, and quality facilities that are designed to make their stay easy and relevant to their needs - such as hotels that are bike friendly, walk-out / walk in trails (such as happened with skiing in the mountains linked to hotels), and other support facilities (equipment hire, access to local guides, provision of wellness services, and good local food and drink).

Collaboration is required amongst stakeholders within a destination and sporting interests. The DMO is ideally the body to be the coordinator. Sports tourism has clear added value for the destination. Sports tourists tend to stay longer and spend more money within a destinations. They are more in-tune with nature and the interests of the local community, and respect local culture.

Hosting major sporting events can be good to raise a destination's profile and act as a catalyst for further investment but increasingly destinations must create their own events that are designed, promoted, and delivered by the destination ensuring that they reflect the destinations values and assets. Increasingly the owners of events and franchises, together with sponsors, want to ensure that their events and involvement align with the demands of local communities.

KEY LESSONS

- ***DMOs are the key body to lead, coordinate, and foster sustainable sports tourism development; to be successful they must be initiative-taking in this role***
- ***Balance with nature is indispensable for sports tourism - cultural, social, and environmental sustainability.***
- ***Local delivery cannot be divorced from high-level political support and supportive regional and national policies***
- ***Destination communities must be aware of the full range of demands by sports tourists in order to satisfy their expectations***
- ***Sports tourism delivers multiple, demonstrable, positive benefits to a community***
- ***The scope for a destination to deliver a unique, highly flourishing, and competitive program of sustainable sports tourism experiences and events is limited only by imagination***
- ***You have to choose the ideal events in the ideal places. It is essential that they fit together.***

SESSION 6 | THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION OF SPORTS TOURISM: SPORTS TECHNOLOGIES AND E-SPORTS

FRIDAY 26 NOVEMBER 2021



FORMAT | Conference and expert session

TOPICS | The impact of new technologies on sport and the tourism industry, gaming, the attitudes of sports participants and their consumption / New trends.

AIM OF THE SESSION | Examining the impact of new technologies on sport and the tourism industry and identifying the most innovative new trends, initiatives, and new technological solutions available to create unique experiences for consumers and sports participants.

MODERATOR | Livia Toth, Ventures Director, Plug and Play Tech Centre

SPEAKERS | Vlad Marinescu, Vice-president at International Esports Federation and President of US Esports Federation
 Martí Niubó, director de Planificació Estratègica i Innovació at Institut Barcelona Esports (Ajuntament de Barcelona)
 Enrique Martinez Marin, President SEGITTUR (Sociedad Mercantil Estatal para la Gestión de la Innovación y las Tecnologías Turísticas) (Keynote)

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS | The future will see esports and real sports working more closely together in the future to realise their full potential both as specific experiences or as hybrid formats. The range and diversity of opportunities for this collaboration is very significant. Esports uses global platforms for on-line competitions that culminate with stadia or arena-based finals attracting thousands of real time fans and millions of on-line spectators.

Digital applications now provide sports tourists with direct access to local experts, detailed information of local facilities

such as cycle trails as well as tips on ancillary attractions, places to stay and other essential information (such as Running the City). This offers destinations to have a direct influence on tourist behaviour and better management of visitor flows.

There is also a growing cross over between esports participants becoming active in real Sports. For example, Formula One Racing teams have started talent spotting esports race winners who have the potential to become actual racing car drivers whilst professional Sports teams are hosting virtual esports equivalent teams.

KEY LESSONS

- ***The digital and real-time tourism and Sports eco-systems are now converging***
- ***DMOs must look at how to harness new technologies to enhance the appeal of their destinations for sports tourism using SMART solutions***
- ***New forms of partnerships and relationships will have to emerge to deliver these hybrid solutions. New concepts such as sports innovation hubs will be required in destinations***
- ***Technology can be applied to sport and tourism in many ways, all with the aim of improving the experience of the athlete (tourist and spectator).***
- ***The important thing in this sense is the change of mentality, digitalisation is already a necessity. We are going to experience much more than what we are living, technology has no limits and something that we now see as impossible in a few years we will see it as an everyday occurrence. Technology must help sporting culture by creating a digital eco-system that provides benefits and solutions.***

SESSION 7 | OUTSIDE SPORTS AND ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORK OF SPORTS TOURISM



FORMAT | Expert session

TOPICS | Impact of sporting events (social, environmental, economic) / How to take advantage of the capacity of natural spaces and urban environments for outdoor sports events / Climate change, COVID-19, and sports events in open spaces

AIM OF THE SESSION | The analysis of how natural spaces and urban environments can be used to organise new types of sporting events and sport tourism projects, ensuring that the effects and impact of climate change are minimised when planning them

MODERATOR | Harry John, *Founder Pure Solution*

SPEAKERS | Céline Fortin, *Regional Manager, Europe, and Oceania of the Adventure Travel Trade Association (ATTA)*
 Kattia Juarez Dubón, *Director of International Sustainability Commission at the International Motorcycling Federation*
 Nathalie Saint-Marcel, *Deputy Director of Cluster Montagne (virtual)*
 Lluís Breitfuss, *Head of Events and Activities FGC Tourism - Ferrocarrils de la Generalitat de Catalunya*

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS | Clearly every sporting activity, venue, and destination will have its own specific requirements to meet the sustainable development agenda. They must all consider their impact in terms of economic, social, and environmental issues and opportunities. For mountain and coastal environments, the emphasis is on climate change, for motor sports there are complex issues inherent in the very nature of the sport producing high levels of carbon emissions.

Highly localised sports tourism in remote rural locations involving small numbers of participants can have major negative impacts on ecology. There is no single or simple solution. Every situation must have a unique solution.

Consumers are becoming acutely aware of sustainability concerns however it is not the consumer that should dictate local community protocols to mitigate for these issues. The local host community must become more initiative-taking in developing policies and actions in their destination.

The mindset for both the destination and the consumer must be to harness sports tourism in sustainable ways that add value to both parties. Consumers need to enhance their role as environmental 'actors' collaborating with communities and DMOs to commit to sustainable tourism development. Education will be the key to the success of this approach.

KEY LESSONS

- ***Sport and tourism should focus on sustainable practices, especially in major events. These practices need not remove their essence but enhance their role as environmental actors***
- ***Any kind of sport is key to the sustainable development of our planet as it can contribute to most of the immediate sustainable goals as well as to the 2030 Agenda.***
- ***It is difficult to get the authorities to commit to environmental challenges. That is why sport and tourism have to engage all the stakeholders with the problems and solutions.***
- ***Education will allow environmental awareness to be passed on from generation to generation.***
- ***The sports tourism sector must minimise environmental impact and create economic opportunities and social improvements.***
- ***The integration of major events in the sustainable development strategies of destinations, in tourism consumption habits, in the regeneration of our territories when developing a more conscious sports tourism***

SESSION 8.1 | NEW RESEARCH INTO SPORTS TOURISM AND GENERAL OVERVIEW



FORMAT | Expert session

TOPICS | Sports tourism statistics and impact of sports tourism (social, environmental, and economic)

AIM OF THE SESSION | Interrogating recent studies, research, and results on the future of sport tourism at local, regional, and international levels and sharing knowledge on the social, environmental and economic impact and returns of sport tourism.

MODERATOR | *Dr. Kamilla Swart-Arries, Assoc. Prof, Masters of Sport and Entertainment Management, Hamad Bin Khalifa University*

SPEAKERS | *Alessia Mariotti, Director of Second Cycle in the Culture of Wellbeing: Sport, Health and Tourism (virtual)*

Simon Rofe, Director of the master's Programme in Global Diplomacy at the Centre for International Studies and Diplomacy, University of London

Marko Peric, Professor and Doctor at the University of Rijeka Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management

Top 5 Best Practices: *video presentations (virtual): 6-minute presentations.*

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS

It was noted that market and trend research is often underfunded and the last item on any financial agenda yet, in reality, it was the most important aspects for gaining intelligence and insight to guide policy and investment. It was also noted that controversial aspects of sports tourism need to be researched and debated. However, uncomfortable the issues might be it is Essential such discussions are well-informed by data and hard evidence.

The sports tourism sector has considerable information about specific projects and initiatives especially in terms of their local or regional economic impacts but much more work is needed to understand the effectiveness and impacts of sports tourism at all levels and across all dimensions (economic, social, and environmental).

Research by Professor Marco Peric highlight the narrow field of research available in a range of highly cited, international, academic journals in the disciplines of sport and tourism management and development. This highlighted that whilst research on sports tourism frequently appeared in sports-related academic journals 'sport' was only referenced in a minority of tourism-related journal articles suggesting that sports tourism was not seen as a legitimate, mainstream, areas of interest for tourism researchers. Clearly this needs to change

The frequently occurring common themes in those papers dealing with sports tourism included: major event impacts and legacy, adventure, and active sports tourism. Outdoor recreation and protected areas, climate change, community sports and COVID impacts.

There were presentations of new research ideas by the five research teams selected by The Congress' Scientific Committee. These, together with five other submissions, are presented in full in the Appendices to this report. They were global in their origins coming from Japan, Ireland, Qatar, UK, USA, Croatia, Brazil, Portugal, Spain, and French Polynesia covering climate change, stadia and experience development, governance models, and carrying capacity.

KEY LESSONS

- ***Research must be prioritised to enable better informed decisions in the future***
- ***The research agenda must be expanded, broadened, and applied at different levels across a range of issues as are reflected in this congress***
- ***The Congress has set a clear agenda for the future of research in sport, tourism, and the intersection of the two sectors: sports tourism.***
- ***Research is necessary to fuel innovation***
- ***Centres of excellence and specialist research observatories are urgently required.***

SESSION 8.2 | MARKETING SPORTS TOURISM



FORMAT | Round table

TOPICS | Trends in the distribution of sports tourism and events, e-ticketing, and marketing platforms.

AIM OF THE SESSION | Exploring the trends in the marketing and distribution channels to promote sports tourism, events, and their market with an analysis of the most effective and efficient marketing activity.

MODERATOR | **Maurici Carbó**, *Director Sports & Tourism Consulting. Scientific Committee*

SPEAKERS | **Marco Mazzi**, *Vice President, International Sports Travel Agencies Association*
Luís Valente, *Partnerships and Information Management Museu Futebol Clube do Porto*
Steven Leeke, *CEO The Vale Resort (Wales)*
Cristina Tallardà, *Director Sport No Limit*

SUMMARY OF PROCEEDINGS | The channels and platforms for marketing sports tourism are many and varied. The distribution channels must be tailored with the most appropriate messages to match the interest of specific audiences. Different types of facilities (such as sports museums and stadia) connect to communicate memories and experiences; sporting events and facilities communicate participant benefits; destinations communicate values and a holistic picture. In the field of marketing, brand activation and advertising, the use of online channels, the creation of strategic partnerships and special campaigns, creating a cultural route with the other actors (such as a museum) and participating in tourist events are essential.

Digital marketing dominates the means of connecting with audiences allowing messages to be customised and driving users to websites that allow them to explore the level of detail on the subjects that matter most to them. So, for example, the administrator organising for a sports team needs logistical information, a personal contact, and booking details. For an individual leisure athlete, the experiential information will be prioritised together with local insight.

Some sports are moving towards online activity faster than others. For example, high percentage of golf course bookings and sports event ticketing are delivered on-line. For masters, or veteran sports events /tour organisers, the focus is to use websites to explore destination activities and appealing features followed by the use of personal contacts or a third-party tour operator / destination management company. Professional athletes or sports teams have traditionally used specialist tour organisers but are increasingly shifting to self-organisation.

In summary, marketing in sports tourism is a complex and varied model due to the diversity of distribution channels, types of companies and according to their orientation towards the end customer and intermediation. It is expected that the role of technology and digitalisation will mark the change in the marketing and distribution strategies of the sports tourism sector in the coming years

KEY LESSONS

- ***Relationship building between host and guest is essential***
- ***The sports tourism business has a number of players: the destination, the event organising committee, the sponsors, the athletes, and the tour operators. Networking between these actors is essential***
- ***Different media will always be used to communicate different messages to different audiences***
- ***Digital platforms and social media are becoming increasingly important***
- ***Social media influencers are the new levers to capture market interest***
- ***Local connections and on-the-ground experts still have an important role to play for many markets***
- ***Further research is needed to develop understanding of these trends.***

CLOSING REMARKS AND CONCLUSIONS

SPEAKERS

Narcís Ferrer i Ferrer, *Catalan Tourist Board Director.*

Jaume Dulsat, *Mayor of Lloret de Mar.*

Ion Vilcu, *Director of the Affiliates Department of UNWTO*

Anna Caula, *Secretary General of the Sports Department Generalitat de Catalunya.*

COMMENTS



"The Congress has identified innovation as the most important competitiveness factor for our sports destinations and experiences. "Sustainability has been the transversal axis throughout the Congress and it is a major challenge to be taken into account in this sector".

JAUME DULSAT



"For Lloret de Mar, sports tourism is one of the keys to our success and development as a town, which is why we offer high-quality resources, services, and facilities to elite and professional sportspeople, as well as to amateur tourists and sports lovers.

ION VILCU



"The aim of this Congress was to analyse the opportunities and challenges for the future in order to strengthen sports tourism, and we at the World Tourism Organisation are convinced that this has been achieved. From the World Tourism Organization, we are blindly committed to sports tourism, and we are committed to continuing to organise this type of congresses and conferences that can be so useful. The SDGs must be a fundamental pillar in all areas of our society, and we must not lose focus on them."

ANNA CAULA



"Tourism is a great tool to open up our territory to the world, and sport must also be at the centre of creating this ecosystem. We must put the focus on sport as it moves millions of people at different levels, both nationally and internationally."

A SUMMARY OF THE COMMENTS FROM MEMBERS OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

A

CLIMATE, COMMUNITY, CULTURE; TENSIONS AND OSCILLATIONS.

*(With thanks to Neil
MacOmish, Board Director
and Design Research Lead,
Scott Brownrigg)*

The process of transformation of tourism, and by extension also of sports tourism, began before the pandemic generated by COVID19, but this has generated new elements that rethink the change. Aspects such as travel, essential for tourist activity, the profile of users, supply, or demand, will be affected. Both the events and the active practice of sports tourism should rethink their configuration, considering aspects such as sustainability, the environment, health, the impact on the territory and its residents, among others.

What is entirely clear is that all tourism (along with all aspects of our daily lives) must become immediately sustainable to avert the existential threat from climate change. This action is our collective and individual responsibility.

The papers submitted to the congress clearly demonstrate the scope and magnitude that sports tourism can contribute, both negatively and positively, to this essential topic. They identify the huge variance in material consideration - from "Hell is Other People" to "Mega Sports Events."

The built environment and its supporting infrastructure make up a significant proportion (based upon several measurements, anywhere from 18-58%) of carbon production within the sector.

It must be entirely clear then, that any project at the conception stage and through to completion and legacy, must be considered and measured against the UN's 17 Sustainable Development Goals.

Equally, it also must be recognized that there will be tensions - forces in opposition - that will make such judgements difficult. There will be clear and obvious benefits to local and national economies that may have adverse consequences on local communities. The assessment of global resources in development and in-use must be rigorous. But these are not circles that cannot be squared; what is required is a new process that includes professionals, community engagement, inclusive and diverse contribution, local and national governments, and

institutions. It requires a broader definition of legacy - one that might be best described by the late Professor Charles Jencks as "multivalent" (for example, not just a sports stadium used 10 times a year, but a community hub, a college and educational institute, as place for start-up companies, a museum or cultural facility, one that responds to a philosophy of 'long-life, loose fit'.

Does it make sense that one global sports event promotes its response to sustainability by stating that all venues are within 40 miles of one another, but requires vast open-air facilities to be mechanically cooled and ventilated, whilst another states that by re-using existing facilities it is green, but promotes hundreds of airplane journeys to those venues which are thousands of miles apart? Neither seem to be appropriate.

Global sports events can be regenerative, fundamentally change countries, regions, and communities but only if long term and sustainable criteria is applied. The COVID-19 pandemic has demonstrated that we still need international connectivity, and travel not only broadens the mind, but facilitates economic benefits that can create positive change - but can also promote greater understanding of cultural diversity, inclusiveness, and tolerance.

Technological advancement will help us in our targets for a sustainable environment, but a re-aligned attitude must be the principal driver. If the global pandemic has taught us anything, it is that when we are faced with an immediate threat, we can, through collaboration and collective effort, respond quickly and effectively (whilst recognizing that there have been aspects of the response that have fallen short).

Necessity it is said, is the mother of invention. We need to be inventive on a community, cultural and global scale now to deal with the unquestionable threat that lies before us.

B

**PUTTING THE TOURISM
BACK INTO SPORT
EVENTS**

*(With thanks to Heather J.
Gibson,
University of Florida)*

Recently I finished a project that involved reviewing the scholarly literature on sport events. I looked back through the early accounts of the modern Olympic Games and tracked the literature through the over politicization of the Games in the 20th century into the contemporary era where the scholarship has formulated into a recognizable field of study with distinct streams of research in topics such as event legacy, event leveraging, sustainability, and e-sport events, among others. This review took me back to the early days of sport tourism scholarship and industry practice. What struck me as I took stock of the past decade of scholarship specifically, is that while outside of academia we have seen many communities invest in hosting the burgeoning number of sport events from marathons to triathlons, to ultra-running, pickleball, and Parkrun, and the term Mass Participation Sport Events (MPSEs) has become part of our vocabulary, and destination marketing organizations and sports commissions recognize the tourism potential of these events, there is a growing absence of tourism in sport event studies.

From the early days of sport tourism in the 1990s, there was always an uneasy relationship between sport and tourism agencies, but as scholarship in sport tourism grew scholars engaged with, and investigated the connections between sport and tourism, not only in the event realm, but also in non-event contexts such as golf, skiing, stadium tours and sports museums. The lack of attention to tourism by sport event studies' scholars is troubling on several levels.

First, in terms of our educational mission, as many of our undergraduates have flocked to degrees in event management (not just sport events) away from tourism degrees, many event students do not understand the relationship between events and tourism and how events not only have a long history in the tourism industry and are integrally related to tourism but are a primary catalyst for tourism visitation to many destinations. As scholar-educators by ignoring the tourism associated with many

sport events, we are contributing to this artificial divide and doing our students a disservice as future event professionals.

Second, as we look ahead to a post-pandemic era and continue to debate how we might emerge as an industry that is more sustainable, more equitable, and more responsible the question becomes what role can sport tourism play? For many, sport and physical activity provided a sense of freedom during the pandemic. Some of this participation is now transitioning into sport event travel, as individuals are eager to take their participation to the next level in the many events being hosted as communities re-open.

In the US we also saw another phenomenon emerge in the early re-opening period, a trend we first documented during the 2008 global recession, that of the resilience of youth sport tourism, with events contributing to early tourism recovery for some host communities. Finally, we should not ignore the experience of travel itself which is an integral part of sport tourism participation giving rise to many benefits including social connections, and an overall sense of wellbeing. So, while it is heartening to see the growth and development of sport event studies, please do not forget that tourism is an important part of these events both for communities and participants.

TEN CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS

- *Wonderful, inspiring, opportunities exist for consumers and residents when sport and tourism meet and work together*
- *Leadership within the sport and the destination*
- *Widespread recognition of the power of sport with tourism to make a better world*
- *Sustainability (economic, social, and environmental) drives the new agenda)*
- *Collaboration between all actors is essential*
- *Co-dependency and co-operation based on common trust*
- *Innovation and creative thinking about the five dimensions of experiencing sports tourism (the sport, the event, the venue, the destination, and the governance model) - hybrid solutions will be found by engaging hybrid thinkers*
- *Short-term actions must mirror long-term plans*
- *Education is the fundamental pre-requisite to secure shared understanding of the job to be done*
- *Research is needed to inform decision-making*

CORE PRINCIPLES: THE LEGACY AND FUTURE AGENDA

THE DECALOGUE

- 1 ● Importance of sports tourism in the reactivation of world tourism after the pandemic Sports tourism has demonstrate a great capacity to adapt to this new normality. In addition, the importance of outdoor spaces and the need for people to take care of their physical and emotional health was demonstrated during the Congress.
- 2 ● The importance of generating greater synergy between tourism and sport Engagement between institutions and good management has been identified as indispensable for successful governance. This includes governments, entities (both public and private) and institutions of different ranks.
- 3 ● Relevance of inclusion and diversity values in these two sectors Diversity and inclusion as the axis of development. The values that sport represents are also projected in the practice of tourism for everyone. The goal of universal accessibility not only makes us fairer but also more competitive.
- 4 ● The role of local communities One of the keys to the success of sport tourism in the future is the need to bring the tourist closer to the local community. Destinations are made up of citizens, so everything that is done for sports tourism ends up being a return for the future of the country and its inhabitants.
- 5 ● A more conscious sport tourism During the Congress it was reflected that sports tourism can contribute to the fact that tourists can become more aware through individual commitment. Motivating change in the travel culture and achieving a conscious and regenerative tourism is a great challenge.
- 6 ● Sports tourism demand trends in some sessions of the Congress, the importance of the amateur sports tourist was emphasised. The new demands call for tourism proposals adapted to their experience as sports tourists. New targets have been identified, such as: the solo traveller, family trips, multigenerational travellers and travellers looking for immersive experiences.

- 7 ● Innovation the Congress identified innovation as the most important competitive factor for our sports destinations and experiences. It was possible to present proposals in the field of technology that amplify the experience of the athlete and their companions, contributions on artificial intelligence and new entities that accelerate change, such as innovation hubs.
- 8 ● Sustainability as a challenge. This has been the cross-cutting theme throughout the Congress. The integration of major events in the sustainable development strategies of destinations, in tourism consumption habits, in the regeneration of our territories when developing a more conscious sports tourism and the opportunities that sport generates in the mitigation of climate change have been reflected upon.
- 9 ● Trends in sports tourism marketing; marketing in sports tourism is a complex and varied model due to the diversity of distribution channels, types of companies and according to the orientation of the end customer or intermediation. The role of technology and digitalisation will mark the change in marketing and distribution strategies in the coming years
- 10 ● Research in the field of sports tourism has shown that it is extraordinarily rich. Ten research projects were presented at the Congress from universities in countries as diverse as Japan, USA, Ireland, Portugal, Spain, Croatia, Brazil, and Polynesia. The main areas of interest were the sustainability of sport events, technology, and new systems of governance. However, it is clear that research in sports tourism is under-funded and deserves a stronger level of commitment at all levels to help inform policies, plans, and actions in the future. The priority themes have been identified in this Congress.

SELECTING THE CASE STUDIES

Twenty case studies of examples of sports tourism in action have been selected. Fourteen of the case studies have been drawn from thirteen different countries, the six others are examples that take place on a global, or international, stage and are not confined to any particular destination. Some of the cases were presented at the Congress, others have been specifically selected to add to the range and diversity for the reader. The case studies chosen involve sports for elite and amateur teams as well as activities for individuals. There are examples of extreme, popularist, and e-sports together with recreational and adrenalin sports. There are case studies associated with sport on water, in the air and on the land.

CASE STUDY 1 | PATHWAYS IN PARADISE

Jackson Hole Wyoming

Jackson Hole has 115 miles of mountain bike trails and 56 miles of paved pathways that link the Town of Jackson to Teton Village and Grand Teton National Park. Altogether, these trails and pathways are used by a variety of recreational and more ambitious visitors and residents in a breath taking, scenic setting. A whole host of government agencies, businesses and organizations including the partnership of Teton County Pathways & Trails and Friends of the Pathways have supported the demand for and education about flat paved pathways, steep single tracks, and everything in between. Bike shops, outdoor gear retailers, and bike clubs as well as après bike dining and entertainment experiences have been created.



An exhilarating experience is exploring Grand Teton National Park through its pathways. Cyclists, rollerbladers, and walkers use GTNP's multi-use pathways in the warmer months, then Nordic skiers and walkers in the snowier months.

Leveraging American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009 funds, the Jackson Hole Mountain Resort (JHMR) created a significant addition to the local cycling culture. Known for its "steep and deep" skiing and the largest vertical drop in the United States, JHMR undertook an initiative to be more economically sustainable as a year-round business and destination. The result of this initiative is the Jackson Hole Bike Park - a network of mountain bike trails for all ages and experience levels.

A recent survey showed that 9 out of 10 residents use the pathways in summer and winter as well as an increasing number of visitors. The significant use of pathways helps Jackson Hole address important visitor experience, quality of life, and environmental stewardship challenges such as traffic congestion and carbon emissions. Jackson Hole's pathways are part of the heart of visitor experience, community culture, and sustainability solutions.



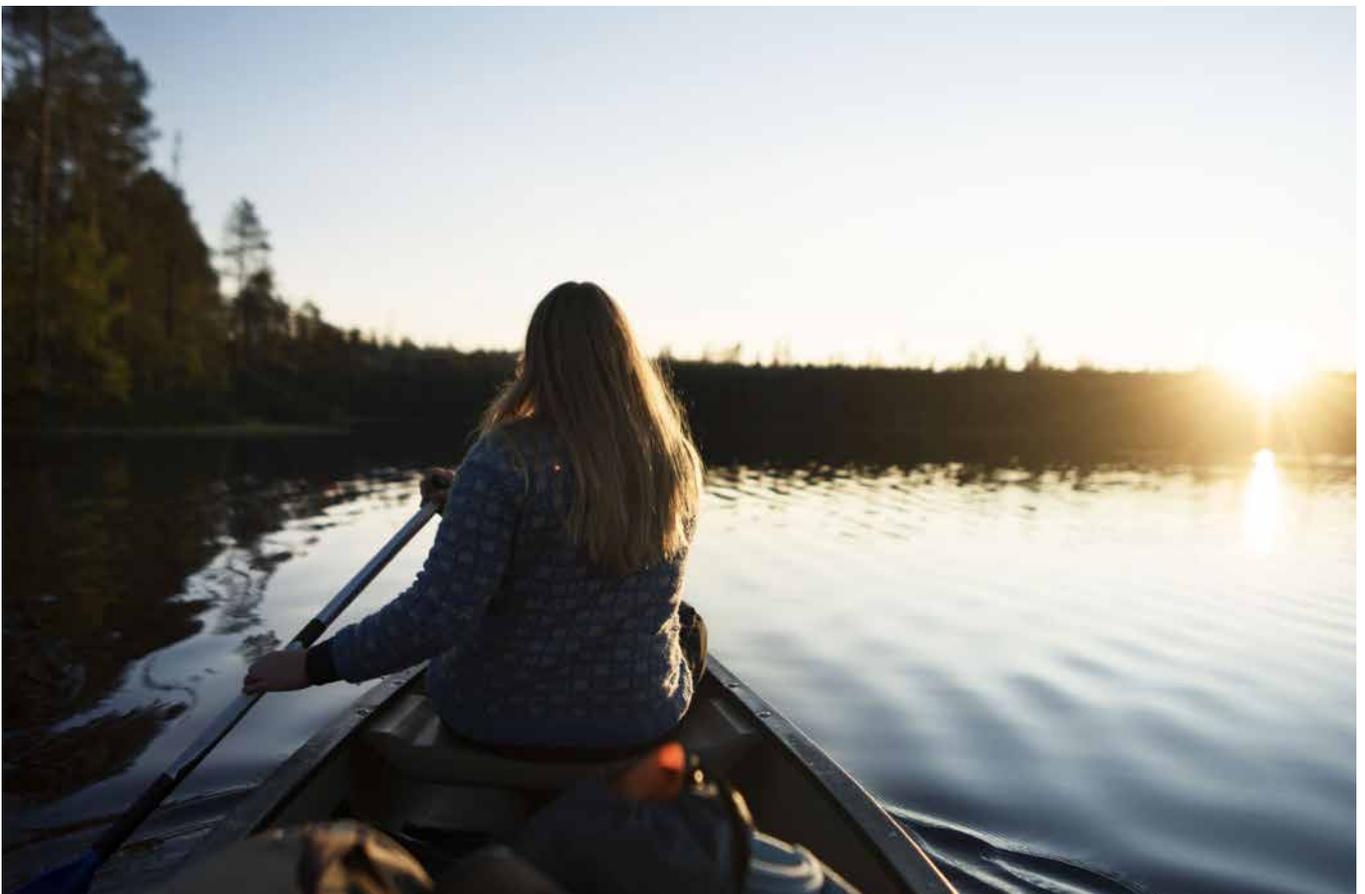
Jackson Hole Mountain Resort
Courtesy Riverwind Foundation



Riverwind Foundation

CASE STUDY 2 | SLOW ADVENTURE TOURISM

In 2022, Slow Adventure Ltd is launching in 5 countries. Our human powered journeys take place in remote, off the beaten track regions. They enable a better way of adventuring by creating a circle of respect in adventure tourism that protects and regenerates fragile ecosystems. We are building a global gathering that contributes to the restoration of the natural balance between local communities, visitors and nature to enrich the lives of all involved. Led by the original pioneers of the slow adventure movement, Slow Adventure Ltd enables visitors to give back to local conservation projects through our Ethical Fund which benefit local communities and the natural environment where our adventures take place.



Sara Bellshaw, Slow Adventure Ltd.

The core values of Slow Adventures are to invite visitors to journey by human-power, to slow down, spend more time, and connect meaningfully with nature and the people who live there. We are creating a grassroots movement where local people build adventures for visitors and shape how visitors engage with the local area. We create a fair and transparent way for visitors to donate to local conservation projects each time they book an adventure with us to support fragile ecosystems. How? By going beyond simply adventuring slowly and creating the conditions for people to give back to local conservation and regeneration.

The aim is to build a global movement of people who understand that it's no longer possible to adventure without giving back. Tourism and adventure travel needs to be created and shaped by local people who cherish and protect where they live. Slow Adventure is a grassroots movement which empowers local people, supports fair and transparent conservation funding, and helps people choose how to give back each time they adventure. This is the Slow Adventure way.

This means that if we choose to adventure, we must do so responsibly. If we choose to go, then we ought to go for longer. If we choose to spend, then we ought to spend well with a responsible local. If we adventure in nature, we ought to do so mindfully and under our own steam. If we tread on landscape and experience culture, we ought to donate to regenerate the places we visit.

The adventure tourism, outdoor activities, and sports tourism sectors need to do far more to help close the global biodiversity financing gap. Slow Adventure is creating the conditions to do this on a local level worldwide so that the places where we live, and love can regenerate and continue to thrive.

CASE STUDY 3 | FC PORTO MUSEUM

FC Porto Portugal

FC Porto Museum opened in September 2013 under the vision of 'Porto, Club and City'. Located at the Dragão Stadium, home of FC Porto, impresses with high-tech and architectural solutions. Like the club, it has the Porto and Northern Portugal's soul and turned a worthy tourist and cultural attraction by showing the history of a world successful football club established in 1893, the beauty of an international acclaimed stadium and sharing local values and traditions.



FC Porto Museum

The Tour FC Porto (Museum + Stadium) is a most wanted experience that grew up to 1 million visits until the summer of 2020. Alongside the success of the club in sports, it calls attentions to the way how FC Porto affects people's life in many ways. Literature, poetry, photography, film, painting, sculpture or architecture are some of the aspects present in the tour.

Musical events, theatre, temporary exhibitions, cultural tours (indoor/outdoor), workshops (families and schools) take place every month. Frequently, exhibitions and workshops are organized in local or regional institutions or commercial facilities. The Espaço João Espregueira Mendes (EJEM), a cultural room at the Museum, and the Exit Games Dragão (escape room game) are also part of the success.

An affiliate member of the UNWTO - United Nations World Tourism Organization, ATPN - Porto and North Conventions & Visitors Bureau, ICOM - Conseil Internationale des Musées and APOM - Portuguese Museums Association, FC Porto Museum was awarded the 2015 APOM's Innovative and Creative Prize, 2019 APOM's Touristic Information Prize and the 2019 APOM's Partnership Prize. In 2016, it was nominee for European Museum of the Year.

On TripAdvisor's ranks for Porto and Northern Portugal, the Museum has been listed in the top-10 attractions and is the leader of the museums' rank. A TripAdvisor Travellers' Choice Award placed it among the best tourism businesses and museums in Portugal.



FC Porto Museum Ditto

CASE STUDY 4 | THE ROLE OF AN ELITE PERFORMANCE COACH IN SPORTS TOURISM

Trystan Bevan ***Cardiff Rugby***

My role at Cardiff Rugby involves aligning the strategic training direction of the organisation with the delivery to the senior team players. This involves everything from being involved in the macro-planning of all aspects of the calendar to the minutiae of overlooking individual player performance programmes.

Since the team plays in an intercontinental league (The United Rugby Championship) a part of my role inevitably involves linking with other teams around Europe and South Africa when it comes to resource planning for games and training camps, learning from one another about the changes in biases and standards within the sport and sharing best practice. This also includes sourcing and engaging with commercial partners that play a part in facilitating performance resources. Mine is a joyful role that allows me to engage with players, coaches, administrators, sponsors, and national level staff members in the quest for improved performance.



Vale Resort, Wales

CASE STUDY | 5 | SUSTAINABLE STADIUM STRATEGIES AND ACTION

Croke Park Dublin, Ireland

As home and headquarters of the GAA (Gaelic Athletics Association), an Irish icon and a venue for up to 1.5 million visitors a year, Croke Park has championed the importance of sustainability globally for over ten years now.

Proud of its long-established sustainability credentials, Croke Park was the first stadium in Ireland and Britain to secure both ISO14001 and ISO 20121 standards. In another first, Croke Park was the very first stadium in the world to obtain certification to the latest international Environmental Standard ISO 14001:2015.

"If we can do it in Croke Park, then it can be a model for the rest of the country" is how GAA Commercial Director & Croke Park Stadium Director, Peter McKenna, puts it. "Culturally, it has become a core value of Croke Park to pursue best practice in sustainability and to encourage others to do so by following our example."

Kilkenny GAA star Richie Hogan was joined by young GAA supporters Lily Kelly and Zach Fox at the launch of Croke Park's most recent stadium sustainability day, which celebrated the stadium's bird & wildlife habitats. On the day, supporters were able to take part in Croke Park's first ever re-usable cup scheme as well as sample dishes made from Croke Park honey.

Energy efficiency is an area of major focus for Croke Park. A state-of-the-art environmental improvement programme is in place covering the stadium's electricity and a range of energy efficiency measures have been implemented that has led to a reduction of almost 75% in carbon emissions

In 2014, Croke Park achieved the landmark of full waste diversion away from landfill and 100% of the waste produced is now recycled, reused, or recovered as solid fuel. Not only is 0% of the venue's waste sent to landfill, but there has also been a 12% reduction in the total amount of waste produced in the past 5 years with the introduction of many new compostable items throughout the stadium.



Croke Park, GAA

Croke Park is a member of the Water Stewardship Programme, which is accredited to European Water Stewardship Standards (EWS), designed to help reduce water consumption and introduce more efficient water management and monitoring across the facility and operations.

One of the more engaging projects is Croke Park's biodiversity programme which started in 2015 with a bug hotel and by 2018 had expanded to include the GAA's new turf farm and the placement of special bird nesting boxes throughout the stadium. The farm is used to grow herbs and vegetables for use in the stadium as well as beehives producing Croke Park honey.



Croke Park, GAA

Croke Park was the founding partner for the Dublin North Central Garda Youth Awards. Still going strong in 2021, this year's young winners were delighted to meet Olympic Champion Kellie Harrington at the award ceremony. Kellie is a former winner of a garda youth award too. She received one in 2018 for all the work she has done - particularly for young people - in Dublin's north inner city.

Croke Park's relationship with its nearest neighbours is also an important focus for the stadium, with local community projects in place to lessen their impact of events on the community and help the area thrive. These include a community fund project that has allocated over €1 million in support to over 200 different local community groups, an event day community team made up entirely of residents and a calendar of special projects and activities for neighbours to get involved in.

Find out more at www.crokepark.ie/sustainability

CASE STUDY 6 | COMMERCIALISING THE SPORTS TOURISM OPPORTUNITIES

The Vale Resort Hensol, Wales

Vale Resort is arguably the first choice for rugby and football training camps in the UK and attracts both national and international teams and now has more demand for our facilities than we can realistically cope with.

In 1999, when Kiwi Graham Henry agreed to become the national rugby coach of Wales and, as the team were based with us, Henry asked Gerald Leeke, (company chairman) whether he would consider investing in sporting training facilities. The rest is history.



Vale Resort

The resort's professional sporting facilities now consist of a world class indoor Centre of Excellence with a 60m x 50m 3G pitch, two state of the art gyms, a high-altitude chamber, 2 x cryo-genic chambers, a full size 3g floodlit pitch, two Desso football pitches and two rugby pitches as well as specialist warm up areas. The resort is now the official base for both the Welsh Rugby Union (WRU) and the Football Association of Wales (FAW) as well as Cardiff City Football Club. It was also chosen as the pre-tour training venue for 3 British & Irish Lions under Warren Gatland and Sir Clive Woodward.

Working closely with both the Welsh Government and Visit Wales together with the national associations with their bids to host showstopper events resulted in the Vale Resort being selected as an official hotel for the Champions League football, hosting Juventus and Real Madrid for the Super Cup. For the 2015 Rugby World Cup the venue hosted Wales, Argentina and France. This close working relationship with government also resulted in the resort being chosen to host a 2012 London Olympics national team - Trinidad and Tobago.



Vale Resort

As for the future, as the venue is now well established with a number of UK and European sporting agents means enquiries for camps are stronger than ever. Already, the Welsh Athletics team will be using the facilities prior to the 2022 Commonwealth Games in Birmingham and at least 4-5 training camps will be held at the resort by Championship and Premiership football teams... and it all started with a chat between a Kiwi rugby coach and an entrepreneurial Welsh businessman back in 1999.

CASE STUDY 7 | THE DESTINATION APPROACH: FLANDERS - THE HOMELAND OF CYCLING

Flanders | 100TH ANNIVERSARY UCI ROAD WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

2021 was without a doubt a sporty highlight for Flanders. Exactly 100 years after the very first World Cycling Championships, the UCI Road World Championships came 'home' in September 2021 in Flanders, the cradle of cycling. It was an excellent example of public-private cooperation between the local organizing committee (Flanders Classics and Golazo), the Flemish government (coordinated by EVENTFLANDERS) and 4 host cities, the time trials between Knokke-Heist and Bruges and the road races between Antwerp and Leuven.

The (international) interest in the event was huge and offered a special opportunity to put Flanders, and more specifically a lesser-known region '*the Druivenstreek*', in the spotlight as a bucket-list cycling region and perfect cycling holiday destination. Within the new strategy of VISITFLANDERS 'Travel to Tomorrow', this 'flourishing event' was not only used for economic benefits, but to create a positive social impact and stimulate wider connections with different stakeholders and participation.

This unique event has the potential to be a catalyst for legacy, as well in tourism (cooperation, investments, innovation) but also in wider social objectives like sustainability, functional and recreational cycling (mobility) and innovation. The sustainability report, developed in cooperation with Deloitte, calculates the carbon footprint of the event and can be an inspirational 'standard' for future World Championships and organizers.

THE FLANDRIEN CHALLENGE

The Flandrien Challenge is a cycling challenge where digital and physical worlds collide. It visualizes the digital STRAVA segments on the road surface of numerous storied climbs and cobbled roads in Flanders. This is a unique physical manifestation of cycling's most popular digital experience. To conquer the Flandrien Challenge, each participant must ride in Flanders and unlock the 59 segments in less than 72 hours. Segments include

legendary slopes like the Oude Kwaremont, the Koppenberg and the Paterberg.

Each cyclist who succeeds will become part of the legend. They engrave their name in a stone, like a cobble, that will be exhibited on the Wall of Fame at the Centrum Ronde Van Vlaanderen in Oudenaarde: a unique place for those who love cycling, the ultimate experience for the fans of the Tour of Flanders. The Flandrien challenge is a 'free route' challenge, but there are 3 suggested routes to allow you to unlock all the segments whilst discovering the impressive countryside of the heartland of cycling. It doesn't expire, as it is a challenge that each cyclist will be want to accept at least once in their life: today, tomorrow, in 6 months, in the next years or at the height of the spring classics season. Those who are interested have all the time they want to train and get ready to challenge themselves in Flanders, while pushing their limits in their hometown and being ready to conquer the Flandrien Challenge whenever we can travel safely again. www.flandrienchallenge.cc



Visit Flanders

ABOUT CYCLING IN FLANDERS.

The brand by VISITFLANDERS for any passionate cycling fan: Flanders is the birthplace of the race, the Heartland of Cycling. The cobblestone slope distinguishes us from other destinations. Only in Flanders you can find bergs & cobbles and the Ronde Van Vlaanderen. Flanders is the home of cycling and a unique place for every cycling fan: it should be on the bucket list of every cycling passionate to ride on bergs & cobbles at least once in your life. The Flandrien Challenge is, therefore, the ultimate experience for any passionate cycling fan. (www.cyclinginlanders.cc is the essential guide for cycling in Flanders: impressive routes, the best races and sportives, challenging bucket lists and tips to plan your stay.)

ABOUT VISITFLANDERS.

This Flemish government agency is an official tourist organisation for Flanders. The organisation strives for the sustainable development and promotion of tourism to and in Flanders with a view to boosting the economic return, employment and well-being (for the inhabitants of Flanders). www.toerismevlaanderen.be

ABOUT EVENTFLANDERS.

EVENTFLANDERS is an entity of VISITFLANDERS dedicated to attract and develop major international events to the region of Flanders. It's a broader cooperation between the policy areas of sport, tourism, culture, and foreign affairs.

CASE STUDY 8 | THE ŠKODA TOUR DE CONAMARA

Conamara Ireland

The ŠKODA Tour de Conamara is a leisure cycling sportive that attracts 3,000 cyclists from 15 different countries to Connemara and the Wild Atlantic Way. The event started in Clifden, Co Galway in 2012 attracting 150 cyclists. It has developed into one of Ireland's most popular mass participation events, selling out each year since 2014 in under 24 hours.

The event takes place every May over 140km and 80km routes. It generates an estimated €1 million euro in direct expenditure for the local tourism economy. The success of the ŠKODA Tour de Conamara is due to a number of factors, namely the setting, local community embracing the event and the investment by ŠKODA into developing the sportive as an international premium sportive.



Mark o'Connell



Mark o'Connell

The uniqueness of the Connemara coastal, mountain and valley landscape provides a stunning route for the event participants. The setting has earned the event the title of 'Ireland's most scenic sportive'. The locals have embraced the event and in partnership with the event organisers developed Culture de Conamara, providing cyclists with a range entertainment options in the evening time after they have earned their well-deserved medal of completion.

ŠKODA became the title sponsor in 2014 working with sport tourism specialists Repucon Consulting to accelerate the popularity of the event. The motor brand is synonymous with cycling events for decades having originally started out as a bike manufacturing company. ŠKODA is one of the main sponsors across all of the grand tour cycling events such as the Tour de France and the Giro d'Italia.

The sponsorship focus for ŠKODA has been the creation of a unique cyclist experience at the ŠKODA Tour de Conamara. This includes pre event pasta partie, event activation activity providing every cyclist with a photo memento of the day, post event massages and a BBQ waiting for cyclists at the finish line. The success of the ŠKODA Tour de Conamara has resulted in the development of new ŠKODA events such as the ŠKODA Ring of Clare Cycle in Ennis and the creation of the ŠKODA Celtic Cycle Series to grow the reach of the events into the international market. For more information on the ŠKODA Tour de Conamara visit www.tourdeconamara.ie

CASE STUDY 9 | FANØ ISLAND

Fanø Island Denmark

This is one of Denmark's main holiday islands with authentic experiences fuelled by the sea, the wind, and nature. It has a resident population of 3,500. It is a remarkable Island, which is well managed and has a very efficient local tourist board. The Island has many extraordinary, endearing features: its long, clean and wind-swept sandy beaches; its wildlife and seafaring culture as well as a high quality of life; the special community spirit and personality; and hundreds of summer vacation homes.



Fanø is located in the Wadden Sea National Park, which stretches from Blåvandshuk in the north of its border to the salt meadows of Tønder in the south. It is a unique natural area that includes the Wadden Sea, the islands of Fanø, Mandø, and Rømø. In 2015, the area was designated as a World Heritage Site by UNESCO. In 2020 a new destination management organisation - Visit Vadehavskysten(www.vadehavskysten.dk) - was established combining the municipalities of Fanø and Esbjerg.

The island's 'capital' and ferry port is Nordby, at the northern end of the Postvejgen main road that runs down the spine of the island connecting with the historic village of Sønderho. This is the island's most southerly community and is recognised as Denmark's most beautiful village with many, well-preserved buildings from the 18th and 19th centuries. This all makes for a very fine destination for families with children of all ages, nature lovers and those active outdoor sports enthusiasts.

The island is long and thin and compact - just sixteen kilometres long and three kilometres wide - made up of heathland, small pine forests interspersed with pastureland and great dune systems backing on to expansive sandy beaches of Bad Beach and the strands of the Rinby, Fanø and Sønderho. The island earned fame between 1919 and 1923 because of the long, straight and quite firm sandy beach used to host yearly motorcycle and car racing events, until a tragic accident killed a local boy and put a stop to further events.

The island's communities have always had to be innovative, creative, and inventive to survive. This imaginative approach is evident in many of the sports tourism experiences. For example, tourists are urged to try mountain climbing on Fanø. Whilst that may seem like a joke the tourist association has established a geocaching trail called The Big Five. The five big mountains are in fact sand dunes. Once conquered, families have the possibility of getting a certificate at the Tourist Office, which states that they are officially Fanø mountain climbers.

In Mid-June on the large beach on the west side of the Island, there will be thousands of kites filling the sky with designs of giant animals and cartoon characters. Fanø is a kite flyers' paradise due to the wide beach and stable wind conditions. Club Fanø arranges kite-building workshops for children all year round. Kite flying is also a sport. Most of the summer season from April to October, kite flyers come to Fanø to set up their kites. These come in all shapes and sizes, from small traditional handheld kites to huge kites that are fixed to the ground and those that pull surfboards across the waves or karts across the sands. An international centre for the development of kite flying and kite flying equipment is now being planned. Some of the Island's other events are similarly different and unusual.

The Fanø Sommercup is a wonderfully glorious and unique weekend football competition, open to all skills, levels, and genders. It is akin to a arts and music festival meets the amateur soccer meets music, food, art and, of course, plenty of local beers.

CASE STUDY 10 | TOUGH MUDDER MASS PARTICIPATION EVENTS

Tough Mudder's mission is to create unconventional experiences that empower people of all abilities to transform their lives. With more than 100 annual races in 20 countries around the world, TM has involved over 6 million people beyond their comfort zones, teaching them valuable lessons while empowering them to overcome physical and mental obstacles, all while helping them to forge unbreakable teams on and off the course.

Tough Mudder events cater to all types of participants. From athletes who love the outdoors searching for an extreme fitness experience that tests the body, mind, and spirit, to people just getting off their couch in search of a supportive, healthy, and motivational community. There are numerous event formats within the portfolio, each escalating in distance, obstacle count and challenge level: Mini Mudder (1 mile, ages 5-12), Tough Mudder 5k (3.1 miles, 13 obstacles, ages 13+), Tough Mudder Classic (10 miles, 25 obstacles, ages 14+), Toughest Mudder (12 hours, overnight) and World's Toughest Mudder (24 hours).



The ultimate goal is to create annual anchor events where communities come together to share in a physically challenging and socially rewarding experience. Local volunteers take ownership in our events, children get muddy and become active, adults can accomplish something that they may have never thought they would be able to do, co-workers will forge new bonds outside the office, charities will benefit from bespoke fundraising platform, and destinations benefit from economic uplift and awareness. The Tough Mudder community travels from event to event to experience not only the event but the destination. On average, 78% of attendees are traveling from outside the market, 52% from outside the area will stay overnight, and 67% indicate they plan on visiting the market again in the future.



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In February 2017, 7,500 Tough Mudders were joined by more than 2,500 spectators who gathered for one of Eastmark Valley's (Mesa, Arizona) the Valley's most exciting events. According to event registrations, participants travelled from a number of cities around Arizona, as well as San Diego, Reno and Las Cruces. These registrations create a direct economic impact through entry fees, merchandise, and food/beverage purchases. In addition, visitors stayed in local hotels, dined in local restaurants, bought gas, food, sunscreen and more. Tough Mudders' event management team spends tens of thousands of dollars in the local economy. They rent tents, tables, equipment, and they hire contractors to build their obstacle courses. The operation engages hundreds of people and a range of companies to deliver this spectacle. The vast economic impact of events like Tough Mudder ripples throughout our local economy through indirect multipliers. These additional state and local tax dollars support our parks, libraries, and roads. In addition to the sales tax revenue, Tough Mudder invests some of their proceeds back into our local community through their partnership with the Wounded Warrior Project. (www.eastmark.com.)

CASE STUDY 11 | WALKING FOOTBALL

Catalonia | Although Walking Football shares similarities with regular association football, the two have many differences. The biggest difference is that running is o-limits - this includes jogging! But you can 'walk' as fast as you want, as long as "one foot is in contact with the ground at all times". Walking Football is a bespoke, non-contact sport created in 2011 in England for the older generation of men and women, with age-appropriate and very simple rules designed with health and safety as the paramount consideration. This is why tackling is only allowed with no contact, all free kicks are indirect, and the ball must never go over head height. It is played on small pitches with small goals and typically six-a-side teams. Walking Football can be played indoors, or outdoors, on 3G/4G artificial grass pitches or natural grass. It is a fast-growing sport with regional, national, and international club and representative competitions.

Terry Stevens and Ymaohud
Walking Football



FC Sport Experiences is planning a Walking Football tournament in Catalunya for May 2022. As an event featuring teams from across Europe, the tournament will serve as a platform which highlights the beautiful and culturally rich Costa Brava.

Lloret de Mar will be at the heart of the event as the location for the majority of the competition and accommodation. This destination lends itself to a relaxed atmosphere and will enable participants to experience the rich natural beauty, cultural diversity, history, architecture, and gastronomy for which it is known.

To this end, a key component of the event's programming will include cultural and historic walking tours, museum visits, wine tasting, gastronomic experiences and optional activities such as golf, tennis, hiking and skydiving. These group activities, along with organized dinners are designed to foster camaraderie and lasting friendships.

The project is a textbook example of leveraging sport for the purpose of tourism and creates an experience that immerses participants in the destination. As the first in a series of Walking Football tournaments planned for Catalunya, the objective is to establish these events as sustainable and enable participants to experience memorable and culturally enriching experiences at a selection of Catalan destinations.



Lloret de Mar

CASE STUDY 12 | THE WIDER IMPACTS OF SPORT-TOURISM EVENTS: A RESEARCH AGENDA

Sport-tourism events create a broad spectrum of impacts on and for host communities. However, sustainable sport-tourism events, which emphasize positive impacts, and minimize negative impacts, do not arise by chance—they need careful planning and implementation. There is a wide spectrum of social impacts that outdoor sport-tourism events create from the perspective of key stakeholders and addresses strategic planning elements necessary for achieving event sustainability.

These researchers (Ana Kersulić, Marko Perić of the University of Rijeka, Faculty of Tourism and Hospitality Management, Primorska Croatia with Nicholas Wise of the Liverpool Business School, Liverpool John Moores University) examined the Web of Science Core Collection (WoSCC) database, searching for relevant scientific papers focusing primarily on the impacts and legacy of sport events, strategic planning elements, and attributes necessary for achieving sustainability through a systematic quantitative review and content analysis.

The results indicate that the relevant literature mostly focuses on economic impacts, followed by social and environmental impacts. Most studies focus on Europe and Asia, with the Olympic Games and FIFA World Cups being the most popular type of event studied. To systemize event and destination strategic elements and attributes for achieving sustainability, their study considers eight categories: social, cultural, organizational, logistic, communication, economic, tourism, and environmental. There are research gaps. There is a need for a holistic sport-tourism events research agenda so that organizers can avoid planning, organizing, financing mistakes and better leverage future sporting events.



Visit Soca Valley

CASE STUDY 13 | THE 2017-2018 VOLVO OCEAN RACE

The latest edition of the Volvo Ocean Race, which started in Alicante, Spain in October 2017 and finished in The Hague in the Netherlands in June 2018, will be remembered as the closest in race history, as well as a record-breaking event on many levels. After racing 45,000 nautical miles around the world, three teams embarked on the final sprint leg to The Hague with an opportunity to claim the title. And it wasn't until the final moments that skipper Charles Caudrelier's Dongfeng Race Team emerged as the leader ahead of Team MAPFRE and Team Brunel to grab the top step on the podium. There had never been a race like it over the 45-year life of the race. At the conclusion of 126 days of racing, the winning margin was just 16 minutes.

But apart from the action the water, the 2017-18 edition of the race was setting records elsewhere as well. More than 2.5 million fans attended the race stopovers, putting the Volvo Ocean Race in the top tier of international sporting events, while new marks were set across all aspects of fan engagement and media coverage.



The Volvo Ocean Race 2017-2018 in numbers (comparison 2013 -2014 figures):

- 23 female sailors in the race - the most ever - including three who sailed with the Dongfeng Race Team and became the first women to win the race
- 2.5 million people visited the 12 Race Villages (+4% over previous race)
- 94,200 corporate guests (+26%) attended functions during the race period including over 6,500 participants in the Guest On Board programme
- Over 3,300 hours of television broadcasting generated €429-million in publicity value (+46%)
- There was a cumulative TV news audience of 2.2 billion (+45%)
- 194 hours of live coverage was produced
- 1.9 billion social media impressions, including 200 million video views• 13.7 million social media Likes
- Over 400,000 comments on Instagram posts
- Over 1 million comments on race content on Twitter and 9 million retweets
- The average viewing time per video on YouTube was over 9 minutes
- The average Facebook post reached 398,000 users
- The most popular social media video was viewed over 23-million times
- Social media publicity value was €71-million
- 71,000 online articles (+10%) and 7,500 (+4%) print stories generated €95-million in publicity value
- www.volvooceanrace.com hosted 174 million page views (+72%) with visitors spending an average of over 4:20 (+149%) on the site
- The official app was downloaded over 537,000 times (+38%)
- The official race tracker hosted 111 million unique sessions (+186%)
- The digital TV (OTT) audience was 342 million, generating €67.8-million in publicity value
- Over 4,300 media accredited to cover the race (+4%)
- From its base in Lisbon, Portugal, The Boatyard provided a 15-week, 6,000+ man-hour refit to each of the seven one-design VO65 race boats ahead of the start, preparing the fleet for the closest race in history
- Hosting the race start in Alicante contributed €96-million to the Spanish economy and generated 1,696 full-time equivalent jobs

** Media number analysis by SMG



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The Volvo Ocean Race 2017-18 also set a new standard for how a major international sporting event could integrate sustainability efforts as a core value. By discouraging single-use plastics in our Race Villages, we avoided the use of over 388,000 plastic bottles. Other Sustainability Programme highlights include:

- 7 Ocean Summits hosted at international stopover locations with over 2,050 speakers and attendees
- Over 114,000 children from 40 countries participated in the Education Programme
- 404,000 visitors to the sustainability exhibition in The Globe
- 30 scientific drifter buoys deployed by the race boats in remote parts of the ocean
- 93% of water samples collected by teams while racing in some of the most remote oceans in the world were shown to contain microplastic particles

The 2017-18 edition of the race marked the end of Volvo's tenure as owners of the event. A new ownership group, led by Richard Brisius and Johan Salén will drive the event forward, with Volvo. The 2021-22 edition of the race will start from Alicante, Spain in the autumn of 2021 and finish in Europe in the early summer of 2022, with up to nine stopover ports. The full race route will be confirmed in the summer of next year.

CASE STUDY 14 | ACES EUROPE ISLAND OF SPORT 2020

Mali Losinj Croatia

ACES Europe is a non-profit association based in Brussels which assigns every year the recognitions of World Capital, European Capital, Region, City, Island, Community and Town of Sport. The allocation of these recognitions is done by ACES Europe, according to the principles of responsibility and ethics, being aware that sport is a factor of aggregation of the society, improvement in the quality of life, psycho-physical well-being, and complete integration within social classes in the community. ACES Europe awards the European Capital of Sport title, an initiative that has received the recognition of the European Commission in the White Paper (Art. 50). In addition, ACES Europe is an official partner of the European Commission in the European Week of Sport. ACES Europe is official partnership of UNESCO, United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Its awards include:

WORLD CAPITAL OF SPORT, 1 award per year to a capital of a country or city with more than 500,000 inhabitants.

EUROPEAN REGION OF SPORT, 1 award per year to a region.

EUROPEAN CAPITAL OF SPORT, 1 award per year to a capital of a country or city with more than 500,000 inhabitants.

EUROPEAN CITY OF SPORT, multi awards throughout Europe per year to a city between 25,000 and 500,000 inhabitants.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY OF SPORT, a group of small cities, multi awards throughout Europe

EUROPEAN TOWN OF SPORT, multi awards throughout EUROPE per year to a city of less than 25,000 inhabitants.

AMERICAN-ASIAN-AFRICAN AND AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL, COMMUNITY/ISLAND, CITY, TOWN AND REGION OF SPORT.

THE EUROPEAN CITY/TOWN OF SPORT OF THE YEAR, the cities and towns compete during the year for becoming in the best city preparing a summary file of activities which will be evaluated by independent body.

And EUROPEAN ISLAND OF SPORT, multi awards throughout Europe per year to a city between 25,000 and 500,000 inhabitants.

In 2020 the Croatian Island of Mali Losinj was awarded the title of European Island of Sport. 'Losinj - the Island of Vitality', is located in the Kvarner Gulf south of Rijeka. It is the 11th largest of the Adriatic islands and forms part of the Cres-Lošinj archipelago of 36 islands and islets. This community has always been outward looking, a seafaring community with many renowned sea captains. As a result, it is no surprise that today's community is confident and ambitious. It understands global wellness trends, sport and tourism. It is positioning itself as a leading, competitive, sustainable Mediterranean destination. For Losinj, 'vitality' goes beyond wellness and well-being. It is about the capacity to live, to grow, to develop with energy and vigour. It is about living life to the full in a vibrant, dynamic, and authentic way.

After the Evaluation Committee of ACES Europe stayed on the island of Lošinj from May 28 to 30, 2019, the entire sporting offer of the island and all sports clubs and associations was presented, and resulted Mali Lošinj has officially been given the title of the European Island of Sport for 2020.

"A great thanks to all sports clubs, institutions, and individuals who were involved in marking World Sports Day and thus helped us in the candidacy for the title 2020 European Island of Sport. Winning this title is a great opportunity for positioning and branding the entire island of Lošinj as a sports



destination, with easier access to significant European funds for further investment in sports and sports infrastructure, i.e. the construction of a new sports hall, football field, swimming pools, and bicycle paths. Our island has a long history of sports, numerous teams, and champions in various sports, and each success has contributed to winning this title," said Mayor Ana Kucic.

The Lošinj sporting events in 2020 included:

XTERRA Croatia: On 18-19 April, more than 800 participants will line up in Lošinj to take part in XTERRA Croatia, an off-road racing extravaganza comprising the first ever XTERRA off-road triathlon held in Croatia, and a 40km off-road mountain bike race. The XTERRA Croatia triathlon will be one of the most challenging in central and eastern Europe. Starting with a 1.5km swim in the natural harbour of Đikat Bay, participants will then cycle 30km across the island's rugged landscape, before a final 10km off-road run through dense forest trails.

Mountain bike events: Mitas Adria Four-Island race; Mercedes-Benz UCI Mountain Bike Downhill World Cup; first ever XCO Lošinj Cross Country Mountain race.

Mediterranean Cricket League: the fifth annual Mediterranean Cricket League tournament, featuring Australian double-World Cup winner Brad Hogg and defending champions Warriors Cricket Club Qatar.

Lošinj half marathon: the 10th annual Lošinj half marathon, a scenic race through the island's streets on 26 September. Open to amateurs of all levels, the event also includes the 5km Apoksiomen Cup and a 10km city race.

Cres-Lošinj Trail Weekend: a unique two-day trail race that showcases the most beautiful landscapes, highest peaks and hidden corners of two connected islands, Lošinj and Cres. Participants can choose from Duga (short: 6-9km), Srednja (middle: 15-18km) and Kratka (long: 20-25km) courses for each race day.

CASE STUDY 15 | PARC ANTUR

Snowdonia **Wales, UK**

The establishment, by a private sector investor, developer, and operator, has created one of the world's largest inland surfing lagoon and associated facilities and additional leisure products located in a scenic river valley on the edge of the Snowdonia National Park in a traditional tourism area heavily dominated by coastal resorts. The project forms part of a cluster of outdoor adventure active products in a 30m radius that is now driving the branding and positioning of the destination as a whole. In recent years, tourism in North Wales, and especially in Conwy and Snowdonia has become increasingly focused on adventure activities and the use of the area's natural environment (coast and countryside) and former industrial landscapes of former slate quarries.

The initial investment in the project totalled £18m of which £3m (17%) came from public grants with £1.5m of this amount from the national tourism authority and £1.5m for decontamination of the industrial site. A phase two £13m development program was completed in 2020 that will see the diversification of the tourism offer and a shift away from the core product and original core markets in order to drive revenues.

Surf Snowdonia / Adventure Parc Snowdonia is anchored by the world's first inland surf lagoon in the village of Dolgarrog (pop.600) in the heart of the outstanding beauty of the Conwy Valley (North Wales) and abutting the boundary of the Snowdonia National Park. The development occupies a 55-acre site that was a former aluminium works. Upon the closure of the industrial works the site became surplus to requirements and administrators appointed to sell the assets. The Welsh Government added the site to its register of 'strategic land' allowing it to financially support an appropriate after use. In 2008 the site was acquired by Ainscough Strategic Land) and the company alighted on the concept of a surf-centred water adventure parc (note 'parc' is the Welsh language spelling for 'park'). Surf Snowdonia (the trading name of Conwy Adventure Leisure Ltd) opened in 2015.



Adventure Parc Snowdonia

The genesis of the facility was predicated on its revolutionary design and engineering which means that the operator can deliver guaranteed consistent waves (surfable waves every 90 seconds) and can deliver different wave profiles in specific zones of the lagoon (total capacity 400 per day) thus customising the experiences for surfers with different levels of competence and experience. This also makes it 'family friendly' and suitable for all ages as well as abilities. In addition to the surfing there is a range of family activities to do on site: the 'wipe-out style Crash and Splash' obstacle course, kids soft play, a top-notch restaurant and bar and great value glamping accommodation. There are currently 36 accommodation pods together with a £13m investment adding a 106 bed 4* hotel with spa and a large indoor adventure soft play facility.

In 2016 'Lonely Planet' announced that North Wales as one of the world's best regions for adventure tourism. This coincided with Visit Wales designation of 2016 as 'Year of Adventure' and the publication of research that adventure tourism in the region was worth £740m per annum, attracted 9m dedicated visitors and supported 11,400 jobs. This had grown from £140 in north Wales in 2004 and from £481 for the whole of Wales in just four years. Local authorities and the Snowdonia National Park Authority aligned their economic development and tourism plans to support this growth. For example, the current Conwy 'Destination Management Plan 2015 - 2018' is titled "Heart of Adventure".

Of the 170,000 visitors using the site in 2017 (average 450 a day) just one third were surfers who were primarily motivated by the ability to get access to the surf and waves; the original business

plan of 2013 estimated 67,000 visitors. There is high demand from family groups seeking more general leisure activities (the crash and splash pool and the soft play area plus access to a nice family friendly restaurant who regard the surfing as a spectacle - a show- to watch when doing other things. Local residents looking for a good day out are a strong market alongside the purposeful 'surfer' and there is a small but important audience of 5,000 local surfers, kayakers and canoeists who are allowed to use the facility prior to its 10am opening. Events and activities (such as Surfest, 'Waves, Mud, Mountains' bespoke triathlon) and music events (dance and family) and drive in cinema with themed evenings linked to the movie are important drivers of demand.

The actual outcomes (research undertaken in 2018 by REGENERIS) identifies the following impacts as a result of the existing provision: 63.2 FTE posts created on-site; 83% of all employed (130 people) come from the local area; a strong local supply chains; £660,000 direct expenditure with these local suppliers in 2017 supporting 13 FTE jobs; direct and indirect visitor spend in the local community out-with the site of £5.1m; wider catalytic effects of media coverage, civic pride, stimulating other local businesses to invest (new coffee shop, beauty salon, surf shop, Airbnb, new guest house and camping barn all opened); and with Phase 2 developments an additional 178 FTE on-site jobs and an additional 35 FTE off-site jobs.

CASE STUDY 16 | THE ALPS 2 OCEAN CYCLE TRAIL

New Zealand

The Nga Haerenga, the New Zealand Cycle Trail (NZCT) project, arose out of the New Zealand Government's 2009 Employment Summit and originated as a partnership project between the Government and the Green Party of Aotearoa New Zealand. This project established a fund that would be used to cover the costs of the construction of a series of "Great Rides" across the country. It was aimed to create jobs in the short-term while also creating conditions for businesses to prosper in the long-term. Vote Tourism then appropriated NZ\$50 million over three years to fund the construction of a suite of cycle trails to occur through the granting of funds to third parties. A project team was established within the then Ministry of Economic Development (now MBIE) to oversee the dispersal of these funds.

The Alps to Ocean Cycle Trail (A2O) is currently New Zealand's longest Cycle Trail and stretches over 300 kilometres through the Mackenzie Basin and down the Waitaki Valley to Oamaru and the mighty Pacific Ocean. Beginning at the base of Aoraki/Mount Cook, New Zealand's highest peak (12,345 Feet), it passes a number of glacial lakes while descending 780 metres to the sea and is one of the most epic Great Rides on the Nga Haerenga (NZ Cycle Trail Network). The trail can be enjoyed in sections or in its entirety (requiring typically 5-6 days to complete the full length). The A2O is free for cyclists or walkers to use. The Trail transects the Mackenzie and Waitaki districts, running from the South Island's majestic Southern Alps to the east coast of New Zealand. It is possible to join the A2O Trail at almost any point, however the official starting point is at the White Horse Hill Campground at the foot of Aoraki/Mt Cook with an alternative start at the town of Tekapo - the two trails meet on the banks of Lake Pukaki. The trail generally follows the Waitaki River from the Mackenzie Basin to the coastal town of Oamaru on the Pacific Ocean.

The Alps 2 Ocean Joint Committee was set up under the Local Government Act as a Joint Committee of the Mackenzie and

Waitaki District Councils and the Nga Haerenga, The New Zealand Cycle Trail project and the Department of Conservation, with an overarching governance role and specific responsibilities to oversee the construction of the Alps 2 Ocean Cycle Trail. It is also responsible for establishing Alps 2 Ocean Limited and set its business operating mandate. The Joint Committee reports directly to its stakeholders the MDC and WDC and through the tourism agency for Waitaki - Tourism Waitaki. The MDC and WDC have agreed to underwrite the JC's activities. The Department of Conservation (DOC) is also a stakeholder in the activities of the JC. Trading as Tourism Waitaki, is responsible for promoting the trail on behalf of the Waitaki and Mackenzie District Councils. Tourism Waitaki is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Waitaki District Council. Tourism Waitaki provide media liaison, marketing, website, social media and manage the Trail's Official



Alps2Ocean

Partnership Programme to the whole trail. MBIE initially gave a grant of NZ\$2.8million which was matched with contributions from Waitaki District Council, Lion Foundation, Lotteries, Otago Community Trust, DoC, and Trust Aoraki contributions. A further grant from MBIE of NZ\$935,000 has been approved but further funding is necessary to get the entire trail off road.

The mission is to provide riders with an Alps to Ocean cycle experience that is second to none' and the objectives are to develop and maintain an outstanding cycle trail to achieve the mission statement; to attract both domestic and international riders to use the cycle trail and community operator services;

establish strong tourism product that improves regional economic development; provide job opportunities for the local community; and, ensure on going sustainability of the trail through the development of revenue streams.

Slow growth at first but has seen increasing interest from domestic market (Auckland is strong) and the Australian markets. Growing visitor numbers with centralised demand on the key iconic sites within the region (Aoraki/Mt Cook, Tekapo, Oamaru). Since the advent of the A20, increasing numbers of riders are completing the full or part sections of the trail. The intention is to target Germany and the UK, Australia, USA and the domestic NZ market. The challenge for Tourism Waitaki is to make sure the A20 remains at the top of the list in terms of customer experience - if you only do one NZ Cycle Trail do the A20 - "we have a great variety of scenery and landscapes to give a great flavour of certainly the South Island Cycle Trails of NZ". The A20 has directly increased the local economies of towns along the Trail - Tekapo, Twizel, Omarama, Otematata, Kurow, Duntroon, Enfield and Oamaru. Tekapo, Twizel and Omarama are all support bases for tour and transport companies directly supporting customers on the A20

Current use shows female riders 55% / Male 45%; walkers 57% /cyclists 43% with average annual spending in MacKenzie District of Domestic: NZ\$120m, International: NZ\$240m. The country of origin of trail users being:

New Zealand	58%
Australia	19%
United States	8%
United Kingdom	3%
Canada	1%
France	1%
Germany	1%
All others	9%

Ultra-Running is the sport of long distance running, also known as ultramarathoning. How far is "a long distance"? The standard definition is anything past the marathon, or 26.2 miles. However, the shortest standard distance that is considered an ultra is the 50-kilometre distance, or 31.07 miles. Other standard distances are the 50-mile, 100-mile, 100 km, and a series of events that last for specified time periods such as 6-hour, 12-hour, 24-hour, 48 hour, and 6 days.

CASE STUDY 17 | HIGHLAND KINGS: WHEN ULTRA- RUNNING MEETS LUXURY TOURISM

Highland Kings *UK*

The World's first premium ultra-event over four days, covering 120 miles of the most rugged yet scenic terrain takes place on Scotland's west coast. It has been designed by ex-UK Special Forces personnel with a world-class support crew behind to bring a luxury wilderness experiences alongside an ultra-marathon. It is the first of its kind. It is not just a race experience but an unparalleled journey from October through to April, covering all key aspects of your preparation; physical, mental, nutritional, and more. According to the world-famous explorer, Sir Ranulph Fiennes this is "A pioneering Ultra. Bringing together the best of Scotland to deliver a unique luxury, endurance and immersive wilderness experience."

Open to only 40 athletes, the event will take place in April 2022 and will cover 120 miles of trail running over four days, starting from the stunning Glencoe mountains, and finishing at Dougarie Estate on the west coast of the Isle of Arran and you become a Highland King. Because whilst the event may take place in April, leading up to it there has been seven months of coaching, training and support from experts and legends of sport and adventure including Ultra Running World Champion Jon Albon, Anna-Marie Watson, and Sir Ranulph Fiennes.

Each runner will receive a specialist, bespoke training programme, designed to their psychological condition and developmental needs which includes one to one and group interactions, performance coaching, monthly training plan reviews, sports psychology video consultations, luxury performance clothing and a pre-programmed Garmin MARQ Athlete watch to allow performance checks throughout the journey. Once the challenge is underway, everything is taken care of from bag transfers and logistics to transport which includes exclusive fast rib boats. Athletes will have access to a physiotherapist, sports psychology coach and a safety team of qualified local mountain guides, medics and route safety staff who will track each athlete to follow and monitor progress. Nutrition during

the event is looked after by a Michelin Star Chef providing, breakfast, an evening meal at your luxury campsite and there will be aid stations enroute so you can replenish your energy throughout the race. The race will culminate with a gala dinner, hosted by event's guest speaker and ambassador, the 'world's greatest living explorer' the record-breaking adventurer Sir Ranulph Fiennes. Competitors will get a copy of the professional documentary recorded throughout the whole event.

Highland Kings will evaluate participants physical and mental resilience. Ticket price is £15,499, to sign up to Highland Kings (www.highland-kings.com). The event is organised Primal Adventures offers immersive, luxury experiences across the most remote and beautiful areas of Scotland. Surrounded by stunning coastlines, breath-taking mountains, and pristine lochs, inspiring people to reconnect with nature and create



Visit Inverness Loch Ness.

lifelong memories. The Primal Adventures team collectively bring together an impressive knowledge of unexplored areas of Scotland and take great delight in highlighting our rugged and majestic land.

CASE STUDY 18 | APHETOR: THE CREATOR GAMES

Traditional sport is losing the born digital generation. Not because this generation isn't interested in sport (they are!), but because traditional sport is stuck in a 60-year-old media model that simply doesn't deliver against the expectations and media consumption patterns of Gen Z fans. While the media companies spend billions of dollars for the exclusive right to create and distribute all the content for a particular sports property in a particular territory, the problem is that they are delivering the wrong content on the wrong channels and failing to deliver the immersive experience this audience craves. As long as this is the case, this audience will spend an increasing amount of time engaging with the media formats that hit the mark, like gaming, streaming and creator content.

Aphetor is a new model that re-imagines the very nature of sports content, including the way it is created, distributed, and



Aphetor Games

shared. It flips the model with respect to the role the audience plays, turning them from passive spectator to active “players” that compete, collaborate, and create with their heroes and each other.

Aphetor is the “Creator Games”. We bring the world’s best content creators to epic locations around the world, where they compete in insane challenges. But the magic is in the fact that the creators themselves are the ones telling the story - through their eyes, for their audience on their channels. No-one creates better content than these creators for this audience - that’s why on average, our participating creators had 2m followers - so it’s Aphetor’s job to simply let them do what they do best, giving them the platform to create their best-ever content.

Aphetor is a proven concept - the model works. Even during the pandemic, we managed to stage two successful events. At our most recent event in Rhodes, we generated over 2,000 pieces of content in all formats, on all platforms and in multiple languages, delivering over 115m views - more online views than for the BBC’s Tokyo Olympic coverage. Critically, we were also able to showcase the unique benefits Aphetor delivers to our destination partners. The reality is that the born digital generation has disrupted travel just as much as they have disrupted sports and media. Where they want to go, what they want to experience when they get there and how they decide where to go have all changed beyond recognition compared to previous generations.



Aphetor Games

That means that the destination marketing playbook must change with it. The new playbook is built on content rather than advertising, compelling stories rather than predictable tropes and authenticity above all else. Aphetor’s destination partners provide the stage for epic internet-stopping moments, with some of the world’s most influential creators genuinely having the time of their lives and sharing it with their followers. With our destination partners appearing in over 400 posts with 50m aggregate views, the results speak for themselves. Excitingly, Aphetor is just getting started. With “always-on” content fuelled by at least 6 events every year, we hope to fulfil our vision of being the world’s most-watched games.

CASE STUDY 19 | SLOVENIA - A WHOLE COUNTRY APPROACH

Slovenia | The Slovenian Tourist Board (STB) is a traditional supporter of sports events in Slovenia. They recognize sport as a great way to promote the country. Sporting events have become especially important during the new coronavirus pandemic when the world came to a standstill. STB makes no secret of the fact that sport has even gained in importance during this period. Event support therefore remains unchanged which also applies to smaller events, as the multiplier effects of the sport in tourism are large. (www.slovenia.info)

What is the secret of the success of Slovenian athletes? Although small in area, Slovenia is large when it comes to sporting success per capita. Check out some of the reasons why the green country in the heart of Europe has so many top athletes. What do sporting events mean for the promotion of Slovenia or Slovenian tourism - first and foremost, the biggest events, such as the IBU World Championships Biathlon, or the IBU World Cup Biathlon in Pokljuka?

Internationally recognizable and high-profile sports events are of great importance for the promotion of Slovenia and its tourism, as they are followed by millions of sports fans and numerous media. The Slovenian Tourist Board has been participating in major sporting events for many years with the intention to highlight Slovenia and the "I feel Slovenia" brand.

Major international sports events hosted by Slovenia, attract millions of viewers around the world in front of television screens. It is also very important that we know how to upgrade each event separately in terms of communication and content. Slovenian athletes, who are excellent promoters of Slovenia, promote the country. Many international sports events hosted by Slovenia take place in front of the unique natural backdrop of our country, which inspires people to visit Slovenia for active holidays. It is a fact that the implementation of demanding sporting events in Slovenia is at a high level which contributes

to the recognition of the country as a host of top organized international events.

Immediately upon the onset of the COVID crisis, the Slovenian Tourist Board adjusted its marketing activities to the situation and redefined its target markets with an emphasis on the nearby and domestic markets. In these markets, we have intensified digital promotion with both the business and the general public and the media. Considering that during the recovery active holidays will gain additional importance as a tourist product, we have increased promotion within high-profile sports events and cooperation with top athletes who help us present the advantages of Slovenia.



Visit Soca Valley

The Slovenian Tourist Board has been cooperating with top Slovenian athletes, who have always been one of Slovenia's most successful ambassadors. We are proud to work with the most recognizable Slovenian sports names. These are extraordinary individuals who impress millions around the world with their success, diligence, and heart. Especially globally influential media pay a lot of attention to them, highlighting Slovenia as a country of top athletes, loyal fans, and a great destination for an active vacation. Their posts on social media platforms are especially resonant, so our cooperation takes place primarily with the exposure of Slovenia and the "I feel Slovenia" brand on their social media profiles, especially by highlighting the Green & Safe brand.

Slovenia is seen as a country of champions - Tadej Pogačar, Primož Roglič, Luka Dončić and many other Slovenian names in the world of sports fill the headlines of the world media. Many wonder how a nation of 2 million people can be so successful and versatile in sports. Former sports journalist, Igor E. Bergant, listed some of the most noteworthy reasons for Slovenia's success in his article, written just before the Olympic Games

in Beijing. He highlighted (a) Geographical diversity, It would be hard to find a country that combines such different types of landscapes in such a small area. In Slovenia, the Alpine, Mediterranean, Karst and Pannonian worlds meet; (b) the distances between areas are relatively short - from the centre of Slovenia you can be in different parts of the country in less than two hours, while in one day you can be in the Alps and at sea; (c) nature is also close to you in the cities - just a few steps from urban centres. Concluding that all these natural resources provide excellent training grounds for various activities

He stressed (i) Accessibility and organised sports infrastructure noting that Slovenia mostly has a well-organised sports infrastructure; (ii) the rich sports tradition For Slovenians, sport is, written in our genes and part of the Slovenian identity; (iii) Slovenia has a sporting heart - We like to live actively, with more than two thirds of the population regularly participating in recreational sports. The most popular activities in Slovenia are hiking, cycling, running, and skiing in the winter. We have about 7,000 categorised athletes. Since last year, Slovenia has also had its own national holiday dedicated to sport; and finally (iv) The sports mentality of Slovenians - Slovenians are known as a diligent nation and are eager to prove themselves.

CASE STUDY 20 | SPORTS TOURISM FOR PEACE IN WEST BELFAST

West Belfast Northern Ireland

The resident population of WB is 94,000 representing 27 per cent of the total population of Belfast. The area is bordered by the Belfast Hills to the North West and the M1 motorway to the South East and spans a total of 3,358 hectares. People living in the area are mostly from a catholic, nationalist and republican community background, representing 96 percent of the population. The conflict had a far reaching impact on the residents of West Belfast. Five hundred political deaths between 1969 and 1999 were located in the West of the city, representing 31 per cent of the total deaths across Belfast.

Despite the recent conflict visitors to www.visitwestbelfast.com are welcomed by this outward looking progressive and warm wording: *“West Belfast is known throughout the world as a hotbed of political invention and a platform for social progress. The legacy of the recent conflict is a confident community that attracts interest from actors, writers, politicians and an ever-increasing number of tourists from every continent.”* (www.visitwestbelfast.com).



Feile Belfast

'Tourism brings peace - peace brings Tourism' In 1998 - Peace Arrived and Belfast witnessed a huge Influx of tourists. Local authorities began to develop Visitor and Convention Bureau and the work of The Tourist Board was enhanced. At a local level in West Belfast Political and community representatives came together and began to explore how this new social and economic potential could be harnessed and developed in order to become a core part of the overall programme for regeneration. Fáilte Feirste Thiar (welcome to west Belfast) emerged from this process.

What began as an element of a sub-group is now a confident, award winning and vibrant organisation working across and attempting to marry the public, private and community sectors to ensure tourism is maximized for local people.

Sport: Ireland has hosted many major international sporting events including the Giro d'Italia in 2014 and recently the 148th Open Golf Championship in July 2019. It boasts many World Class sports stars and house-hold names. However, my contribution to the congress explored two case studies that show cased the role of sport tourism as a catalyst for peace and reconciliation.



Féile Belfast

Case Study 1: Féile an Phobail presents Michael Conlon. The platform is Féile an Phobail - born in the darkest days and as a direct response to conflict in Belfast in 1988. It has grown to become Ireland's biggest community arts festival. Attracts 100,000 visitors per annum. Sport has underpinned the programme from the outset. "Féile an Phobail is at the heart of modern Belfast, where our communities are increasingly multi lingual and multi-cultural. During the last 30 years Féile has enabled our resilient and creative spirit to flourish and unlocked new opportunities for proud residents. It allowed us to see what

determined, innovative, entrepreneurial people can do when given the opportunity”

The Venue: Falls Park. A Place where Michael fought as a kid, outside of the ring, an open space transformed from an anti-social hotspot to Belfast Green Lung, a civic open green space that is connecting communities to the hills of the city where urban meets rural. The Party happened, 10,000 people from across Ireland, Britain, Europe, and USA in attendance. There was a global reach of 8 million global reach on ESPN and BT Sport. The return was impressive. Repeat business is easier got than new business. Michael returned for a world title eliminator in Irelands first major sporting event post Covid. In any post conflict scenario whether in Belfast or across the world, we have come to the conclusion that those that suffered the most during times of conflict must benefit at times of renewal and post conflict otherwise we are all condemned to repeat the mistakes of the past.

Case Study 2: The GAA. ‘The Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is Irelands largest sporting organisation. It is celebrated as one of the great amateur sporting associations in the world. It is part of the Irish consciousness and plays an influential role in Irish society that extends far beyond the basic aim of promoting Gaelic games. (www.gaa.ie). It is part of the very fabric of community life in west Belfast and has been a life-line fostering civic pride and identity during times of conflict and has played a transformative role in peace building. ‘GAA members, supporters as well as people across the local community are looking forward to an exciting new beginning for Antrim and a Provincial Stadium for Ulster. We want to create a positive sporting legacy and iconic stadium that will be a beacon to inspire young GAA players throughout, West Belfast, Antrim and across Ulster.’ (Michael Hasson, Former Ulster GAA President)

Sport can drive change in a new Belfast with three new modern stadia catering for Rugby, Soccer and GAA. This can forge a new identity for Belfast as a ‘Sports Tourism’ destination and attract fans and visitors from across the world. A blend of international established sporting codes and indigenous sport such as the GAA can mark Belfast out as a truly unique sporting destination.

