

future sport

TOMORROW'S TALENT, TODAY

What I learnt in sport also works in business – communication, trust, discipline and dedication.

REBECCA ADLINGTON OBE

We speak exclusively to the double Olympic champion

Also inside...

OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJÆR

on rediscovering Manchester United

SVEN-GÖRAN ERIKSSON

on his England experience

Elisha Sulola

How the Tottenham star balances education, coaching and the WSL

Rugby League World Cup

How will the 2021 tournament grow the game outside of the north of England?

Gay women in football

Will the growing popularity of the women's game stop girls from coming out?

Welcome to Miami

Inter Miami CF Stadium will play host to the first GIS campus in the US

UCFB | GIS



YOUR CAREER IN FOOTBALL AND SPORT

A world first in higher education, University Campus of Football Business (UCFB) and Global Institute of Sport (GIS) are dedicated to the delivery of university degrees in the football and sports industry that prepare students for a life within the global multi-billion pound world of sport.

State-of-the-art facilities at campuses in London and Manchester, which have the iconic Wembley and Etihad stadiums at their heart, as well as a range of sector-leading industry partnerships, connect students with work placements and contacts at hundreds of sports organisations around the world. Students also have the option to study online and utilise stadium hubs in New York, Atlanta, Miami, Toronto and Melbourne.

Find out more about the degrees on offer at UCFB and GIS and how to apply by calling **+44 (0) 333 2417 333** or visit ucfb.com.

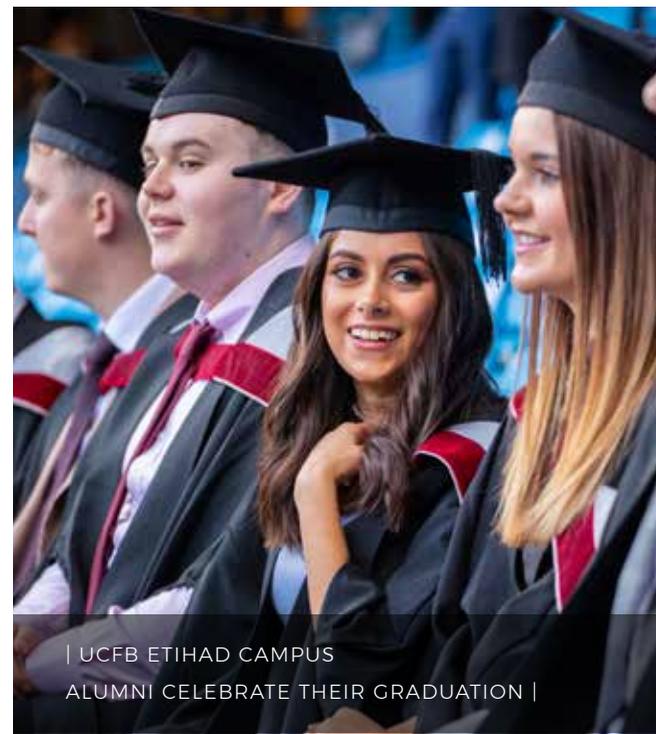
UCFB UK CAMPUSES



GIS GLOBAL STUDY HUBS



| A UCFB WEMBLEY STUDENT
AT THE HOME OF ENGLISH FOOTBALL |



| UCFB ETIHAD CAMPUS
ALUMNI CELEBRATE THEIR GRADUATION |



WELCOME ▾

THE FUTURE OF SPORT IS HERE

Hello and thank you for taking the time to read the latest issue of Future Sport, a magazine dedicated to the global sports industry, the career opportunities that exist within it and how UCFB and GIS students, alumni, staff and partners are helping to shape its future.

This is the fourth annual edition of the magazine and it is once again jam-packed with big name interviews, academic insight and thought leadership on the world's most exciting and unique industry.

There's no getting away from it, 2020 has been a hugely challenging year for everybody, no matter where they work or what they do. We've all had to adapt to a new way of working, living and socialising. It hasn't been easy but I've been able to admire first-hand the effort staff and students have made to ensure university life has continued on-campus and online to ensure tomorrow's leaders continue to get the access and insight they need as they build towards their future careers.

We were all hoping to enjoy a bumper year of sport this year, not least Euro 2020 and the Tokyo Olympics, but as we were told to wait a bit longer for those events UCFB was busy launching the Global Institute of Sport – its new home for Master's provision.

This exciting new venture has also seen VSI Executive Education join forces with us to deliver their leading executive education programmes, whose delegates include double Olympic champion Rebecca Adlington – the cover star for this edition of Future Sport. The swimming icon spoke to us about the plans for her business which is helping young children around the UK to swim, and the transition from professional sport into a 'second career'.

We've also got exclusive interviews with Manchester United boss Ole Gunnar Solskjaer, the Premier League's record goal scorer Alan Shearer, and UCFB student and Tottenham Hotspur Women's midfielder Elisha Sulola.

In my role as director at Burnley FC I've seen first-hand the effect coronavirus has had on world sport. But reading through these pages and seeing what happens on a daily basis at UCFB and GIS makes me realise that despite the setbacks this year, the future of the sports industry is in very good hands.

I hope you enjoy an educational read!

BRENDAN FLOOD
CHAIRMAN OF UCFB AND GIS
DIRECTOR AT BURNLEY FC
CO-FOUNDER OF ORLANDO CITY SC



SUBJECT KEY

- MEDIA
- COACHING
- BUSINESS
- EVENTS
- MARKETING



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FUTURE SPORT EDITORIAL

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ON THE RECORD WITH

ALAN SHEARER



PHOTO CAPTION

Alan Shearer's career needs no real introduction: he's the greatest goal scorer in Premier League history (260, in case you were wondering); has captained his country; is idolised by his hometown faithful and is now a regular fixture in the Match of The Day studio. So when Future Sport had the opportunity to speak with Shearer we wanted to know what it takes to work in football, what effective leadership looks like and if he thinks anyone will break that impressive goal scoring record...

“BOBBY ROBSON WAS A GENIUS AT MAN MANAGEMENT.”

ON MATCH OF THE DAY...

I was fortunate that I went from one dressing room when I retired in 2006 at Newcastle into another with Gary Lineker and the pundits at the time. You see a whole different side of the game – I never understood the analysis and how the pundits got to those decisions. You don't just rock up on a Saturday at 6pm, watch half an hour of football and talk about it at 10.30pm. We've got to be in to watch the first games at midday, watch the other games at 3pm, make notes for the editors and then you've got to rehearse. Being on the inside and playing football to now being on the other side, I'm one lucky lad.

ON WORKING WITH KENNY DALGLISH AND BOBBY ROBSON...

When I first signed for Blackburn I was a young player trying to make my way into the game. So to have someone like Kenny Dalglish who had been there, seen it, done it, delivered at Celtic and Liverpool and been on the biggest stages and won trophies, to work alongside him and learn from him was brilliant for me to get to a different level. On the other side, when Sir Bobby Robson came in at Newcastle I was really struggling. I had sort of lost my way in the game, I wasn't enjoying it and I was becoming one dimensional. Then Bobby came in and said something simple with his advice – I was too easy to play against; I was coming towards the ball all of the time instead of spinning in behind. At his first home game as manager we beat Sheffield Wednesday 8-0 and I scored five. I was then back enjoying football and



| SHEARER PLAYED 63 TIMES FOR ENGLAND, SCORING 30 GOALS |

scoring goals, and Bobby took us from fighting relegation to the Champions League – he was a genius at man management.

ON LEADERSHIP...

I think everyone leads in different ways; some guys are shouters, some guys do it the quiet way. But all leaders have to produce when your team needs you and then you have to be relied upon to deliver when it matters, that's what good leaders do. Whether you are quiet or aggressive in the dressing room you also have to know who you are dealing with. A manager's man-management style is more important than the coaching side of things these days because you've already got very good players and you have to mould that team. Getting the best out of your players every single day, every single year, it's not easy. It's difficult to stay at the top and that's why a

lot of clubs now have a director of football, whereas when I first came into the game in 1988 the manager did everything. Nowadays the manager can coach and get the best out of their players.

ON WHICH MANAGER HE'D LIKE TO PLAY FOR NOW...

It's obvious but it would be Jürgen Klopp and Pep Guardiola. The way these guys play on the front foot and try and get as many balls into the box. Look at some of the players at Manchester City, Kevin De Bruyne and Sergio Aguero, and at Liverpool when you've got those balls coming in from the full backs... for a forward to play in that system you'll get so many chances. So it would be those two managers and those two teams because of how they play.

> ARTICLE CONTINUES



“THE EASIEST PART IS GETTING TO THE TOP, THE HARDEST IS STAYING THERE.”

ON THE BEST DEFENDER HE'S PLAYED AGAINST...

Tony Adams. We had some great battles; he kicked me and I kicked him. He was a leader, a captain, a winner and he was playing in a very, very experienced team and back four and he delivered. In terms of other positions, Zinedine Zidane was just incredible. When I went up against him for England some of the things he could do with a football was just ridiculous. Left foot, right foot, touch, technique, control, he was just amazing.

ON HIS PREMIER LEAGUE GOAL SCORING RECORD BEING BEATEN...

I'm sure it will be beaten one day, but I do enjoy seeing my name at the top of the list! Sergio Aguero could do it, Harry Kane could do it, their records are phenomenal. I don't want it to be beaten but I'm sure it will be one day and when it does I'll be the first person to shake their hand.

| SHEARER WAS A GUEST SPEAKER AT UCFB ETIHAD CAMPUS |

ON HIS CAREER AS AN ELITE GOALSCORER...

I gave everything, worked extremely hard and was very fortunate and lucky to be paid to play football. I would have played football anyway even if I wasn't a professional, so to get to the level that I did, it was because of determination, attitude and hard work. The easiest part is getting to the top, the hardest part is staying there. Everyone knows who you are, what you're good at and what you're not so good at. They all study your game and how to stop you, so the most difficult part is staying at the top.

ON GETTING OPPORTUNITIES TO WORK IN SPORT...

It's hugely important that when you have an opportunity that you grasp it with both hands because you might not get many in your lives. Don't take any short cuts and give it your best because you don't want to look back in ten years and wish you could have done something different or worked a bit harder. Everyone's given an opportunity for a reason, so go out and grasp it.

15

BENEFITS
of playing Schools' Football
English Schools' Football Association



Improves cognitive, social, emotional & intellectual skills



Provides opportunities to develop positive relationships



Activity improves brain function



Positive impact on pupil behaviour & truancy



Helps children to feel that they are part of a team



Can enhance academic achievement



Teaches respect



Encourages teamwork



Enhances positive decision making



Improves communication skills



Improves problem solving



Reduces anxiety & stress



Helps build resilience



Reduces obesity



Provides a sense of pride to represent their school

About the ESFA

The English Schools' Football Association promotes these 15, plus many more, benefits to hundreds of thousands of school children across England each year. Working with a network of thousands of volunteers, schools and teachers, children in England are able to enjoy the competitive and engaging environment of schools' football. If you would like to volunteer for the Association, or find out more please take a look at our social channels and our website to get in touch.



MEDIA | COACHING | BUSINESS | EVENTS | MARKETING

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

UCFB and GIS graduates are working around the world in a variety of roles and across a range of sports. Almost two thirds of alumni go on to work in the sports industry, blazing a trail for the future of sport on and off the field. Their stories are an inspiration to aspiring students and sports professionals, as their comments below show...

MARKETING



JAKE RODGERS

BA (HONS) FOOTBALL BUSINESS & MARKETING

"Being in the Premier League brings with it a level of global exposure that Sheffield United have never known before, and having an existing understanding of the consumer landscape has helped me to ensure I'm always thinking about the audience we have and whether the content is suitable."
MARKETING ASSISTANT AT SHEFFIELD UNITED



MYA GRAHAM

BA (HONS) FOOTBALL BUSINESS & MEDIA

"I worked hard to network with the right people and at times step out my comfort zone. Playing it safe doesn't always get you where you need to be."
JOURNALIST AT TALKSPORT

MEDIA

BUSINESS



JOSH EASTERBROOK

BA (HONS) SPORTS BUSINESS & SPORTS LAW

"The goal for the 2019/20 season was to become financially sustainable and improve on the previous season's points tally, but fast forward a year and we've successfully dealt with a global pandemic and been promoted - you really couldn't write it!"
COMMERCIAL & LEGAL EXECUTIVE AT WYCOMBE WANDERERS



LIAM KIZILTAN

BA (HONS) FOOTBALL BUSINESS & MARKETING

"I've always wanted to start my own company and be an entrepreneur, it gets me ticking and gets me motivated! I'm extremely passionate about seeing young people develop the life skills that will help them in the future. Our aim is to equip people to lead a successful and enjoyable life."
FOUNDER OF EQUIP COACHING

COACHING

MEDIA



MIHIR PANDYA

MSC INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL BUSINESS (ONLINE)

"The ability to use UCFB's network is great for any professional as so many of the staff members and alumni are interconnected to the sporting industry all around the world."
MEDIA MONITORING & RESPONSE MANAGEMENT AT NATIONAL BASKETBALL ASSOCIATION



SHARON HOYOS-MARTINEZ

BA (HONS) INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL BUSINESS

"What I love about the sports industry is that it's so unique to any other industry. Social, political, and economical affairs all come into question. The majority of people get thrills from at least one sport and therefore have an opinion on it."
PARTNERSHIPS & EVENTS LEAD AT FOOTBALL BEYOND BORDERS

EVENTS

MEDIA



PAULA WOOD

BA (HONS) SPORTS BUSINESS & SPORTS BROADCASTING

"UCFB helped me massively with building my confidence and understanding creating stories, and being up to date with what is happening in the Premier League."
PRODUCTION COORDINATOR AT PREMIER LEAGUE PRODUCTIONS

'IT'S IMPERATIVE FOR ATHLETES TO GAIN AN EDUCATION ALONGSIDE PLAYING'

Maria Hasler has played football for Austria at two youth levels and on a scholarship at Florida Atlantic University. However, a multitude of injuries have sadly played a major role in her playing career being restricted.

Now, the 24-year-old has turned to higher education to ensure her career aspirations to work in the football industry are met off the pitch. In 2020 she enrolled on GIS' MSc Football Communications & Digital Marketing programme at UCFB Wembley to ensure she remained part of the fast paced and dynamic industry she loves. Future Sport caught up with Maria to discuss her playing career and why sport-specific education is so important to her future plans...



| MARIA PLAYED ON A SCHOLARSHIP IN THE US WITH FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY |

You spent a good few years playing football in Florida at Florida Atlantic University and represented Austria at two different youth levels. How has your playing career shaped your future career goals in the sports industry?

When I was 14 I first left my home in the Alps to move to an academy near Vienna where we trained twice a day with the national team whilst getting our high school diploma. Straight after, I moved to Florida on a full scholarship to play Division One college soccer. I've been away from my family for a long time now, but I do think it was crucial for my personal development. Being in such a professional environment from a young age - discipline, time-management, being a team player - all of these soft skills become innate.

By being exposed to this environment throughout my whole life, I've realised that is where I belong and where I thrive. Perhaps not as a player anymore, but because of my experience in Europe and the US, I understand the industry and I think that gives me a competitive advantage.

You've also trained with the likes of Nottingham Forest and the London Bees but have suffered injury problems. How resilient have you had to be to get through these situations?

Over the last four years I've had multiple surgeries, casts, injections and done lots of hard work off the pitch. All I wanted was to stand on the pitch with my teammates, so it was and still is really tough for me mentally after working so hard to come back and then just get unlucky with an injury again. But at the end of the day you need to listen to your body. So many times my heart and passion trumped my body, but now I've learnt to listen to it and still follow my passion and remain in the football industry, but this time behind the scenes.

Do these injuries make you think more about a career in the sport away from the pitch and the importance of education for athletes who want to remain in the sports industry?

Yes, absolutely. For me it has always been imperative to get an education while playing football, because as a female footballer you're still vastly underpaid despite the recent improvements. That's why I went to the US to play soccer and gain my Bachelor's, because I was in a professional football environment but still gained an excellent education at the same time.

Unfortunately, you can't predict how your body reacts to the different intensities. Despite doing all the right things in terms of nutrition, strength and conditioning, my body still wouldn't allow me to play at the level I wanted to. So I think it's imperative for athletes to get a good education alongside their aspirations of becoming a professional because injuries are unfortunately part of the beautiful game.

You've obviously been playing for many years, but what is it about the wider football and sports industry that fascinates you so much that you want it to be your career?

Football is more than a sport. It unites people from all over the world, eliminating any language and cultural barriers. This summer I was in France and able to train with a boys' team and made friends with them despite me not being a fluent French speaker. I also had a similar experience when I travelled to South and Central America.

Additionally, most individuals within the sports industry are wired the same - they're competitive. The competitive nature of sport can bring the best out of people in their respective positions. Finally, the sports industry is fast paced and dynamic, as the COVID-19 pandemic has shown, and organisations have needed to adapt quickly to a high-pressure environment. Having played football at the highest level I'm used to this environment and need this challenge to get the best version of myself.

What made you decide to study your Master's degree at GIS?

Having lectures in the most iconic football stadium in the world sounded too good to be true, especially as a footballer myself! After doing some research and talking to several fellow Austrian students already at UCFB and GIS, I found that this Master's would provide me with not only the knowledge, but also the connections that I need to be successful within the football industry.

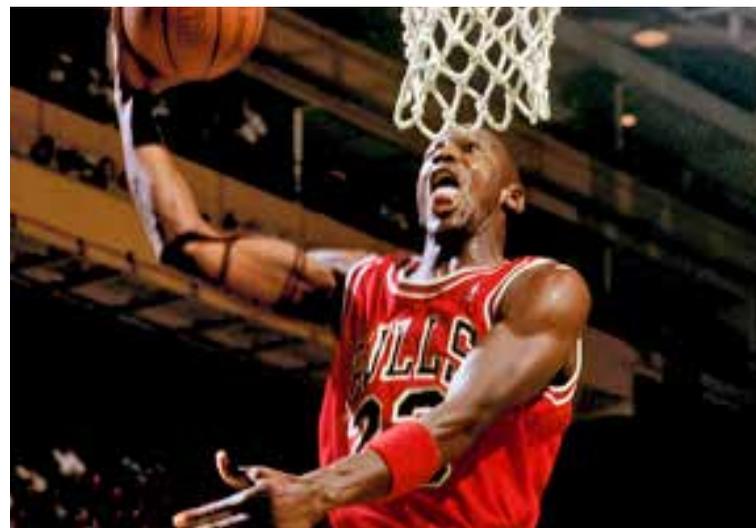
You're now living and studying in London with Wembley Stadium at the heart of your campus. How exciting is it to be studying and working at the world's most famous stadium and in a city renowned for its sporting pedigree?

I'm absolutely buzzing! I'm fascinated by the variety London offers and its enthusiasm for football. I was hoping to attend plenty of matches this season, so I'm hoping things will look a bit brighter in 2021. I don't think I will ever get used to the view from the classroom at Wembley. It's very special and I feel privileged to study and live in a location that people from all around the world know.



| MARIA IN ACTION FOR FLORIDA ATLANTIC UNIVERSITY |

THE LAST DANCE AND THE DAWN OF THE SPORTS DOCUSERIES ERA



| JAMIE VARDY HELPED LEAD LEICESTER CITY TO AN UNLIKELY PREMIER LEAGUE TITLE IN 2016 |

| THE LAST DANCE GAVE AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE BRILLIANCE OF MICHAEL JORDAN AND THE CHICAGO BULLS IN THE 1990S |

The Last Dance became a worldwide hit when it was brought forward and aired at the start of the 2020 coronavirus lockdown, bringing the exceptional 1990s Chicago Bulls, and in particular Michael Jordan, to a whole new audience.

LEICESTER CITY, PREMIER LEAGUE CHAMPIONS 2015/16

After surviving their first season back in the top flight for ten years, the Foxes were 5000/1 to be crowned champions at the start of the 15/16 season. But what followed was a perfect storm of elements, which eventually led to the single greatest achievement in English football history.

Hired at the start of the season, Italian manager Claudio Ranieri wasn't necessarily welcomed with open arms by fans and media alike. However, after an emphatic first half of the season Leicester were top at Christmas, largely fuelled by Jamie Vardy's goals and the now blindingly-obvious talents of Riyad Mahrez and N'Golo Kante. A surprising challenge from Tottenham Hotspur in the second half of the season meant that the title race lasted longer than initially anticipated, but the script had already been written.

Diving behind the scenes of the 1997/98 NBA season as the Bulls chased a sixth championship in just eight years, viewers are treated to exclusive interviews with the likes of Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman, not to mention former US President Barack Obama, as well as previously unseen archive footage of the Bulls in the 80s and 90s. Simply put, it's exceptional film-making of an incredible sports team full of extraordinary talent.

So it got Future Sport thinking, what other iconic and memorable sports teams, athletes and moments would be deserving of their own ten-part docuseries....

An emotional King Power Stadium saw a moving performance from Andrea Bocelli on the day the Foxes lifted the Premier League trophy to complete the most incredible season in English top flight history. However, just nine months later, Ranieri was sacked as Leicester struggled to defend their crown during the following campaign.

FEDERER VS NADAL, 2004-NOW

Every now and then sport throws up a rivalry which makes you genuinely glad you were around to see it. Roger Federer vs Rafael Nadal is one of them. Since Federer won his first Wimbledon in 2003, and Nadal his first French Open in 2005, the pair have collected 39 major titles between them and played out countless epic battles across the world.

Much like Ronaldo and Messi have pushed each other to become better over the years, the same can be said of Federer and Nadal. And despite their absolute will to win, the pair have never had anything but immense respect for each other. Federer's love of Wimbledon is known to all (eight titles), as is Nadal's feelings towards Roland Garros (13 titles), but each has also won the Davis Cup for their country too. The 2008 Wimbledon final between the pair was a match for the ages, with Nadal winning the fifth-set in near darkness and finally beating his nemesis in SW19 after losing the 2006 and 2007 finals to the Swiss.

What makes their rivalry all the more incredible is that it's still going strong. The pair reminded us of their greatness during the final of the 2017 Australian Open in another five-set thriller, despite both coming into the tournament out of form and racked with injuries. Federer and Nadal have given fans around the world more than a decade of absolute excellence, providing some truly unforgettable moments.

LONDON 2012

It all started with Sir Bradley Wiggins ringing a bell above a rural 'field' in the middle of the Olympic Stadium. What followed was six of the most memorable and joyous weeks the UK, and London in particular, has experienced in living memory. The London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games were a celebration of Britain, sport and friendship; from Danny Boyle's masterful Opening Ceremony (who can forget Mr Bean?) through to the hundreds of iconic sporting moments that unfolded. Team GB dominating the velodrome and Wiggins following up his Tour de France win with a stupendous gold medal in the time trial; Mo Farah, Jessica Ennis-Hill and Greg Rutherford each winning gold in less than an hour of each other to top off Super Saturday, and double-sprint champion Usain Bolt establishing himself as the ultimate track superstar.

Then, there was the Paralympics which single-handedly changed para-sport in the UK forever. Jonnie Peacock, David Weir, Hannah Cockroft, Sarah Storey and Ellie Simmonds became household names as they helped Team GB smash their target to win 120 medals. It really was the most magical summer in British sporting history for reasons way beyond sport itself.

THE MIRACLE OF MEDINAH, RYDER CUP 2012

Staying in 2012, the biannual Ryder Cup was petering out into a simple American victory by the end of the foursomes and fourballs on day two. Europe were heading into the singles on the Sunday 10-6 behind and needing a miracle, let alone eight of the 12 points available, to retain the coveted prize.

> ARTICLE CONTINUES

Sometimes inspiration comes from above and maybe this was it. To Europeans, the late, great Spaniard Seve Ballesteros is the Ryder Cup, and with his friend Jose Maria Olazabel as captain in 2012, the script was in place for the most dramatic day of golf this famous tournament has seen.

Luke Donald, Paul Lawrie, Rory McIlroy and Ian Poulter set the ball rolling by winning their matches and suddenly it was 10-10. From here, the US and Europe traded blows until they were 13-13, meaning Europe only needed a point to retain the prize. Martin Kaymer duly obliged when he holed on the 18th for a one-hole win, before Francesco Molinari halved his match against Tiger Woods to ensure Europe won the Ryder Cup in the most dramatic fashion, 14.5-13.5, to leave Olazabel in floods of tears. Now, who said golf was boring?

ENGLAND V NEW ZEALAND, 2019 MEN'S CRICKET WORLD CUP 2019 FINAL

Lord's has seen many memorable moments throughout its illustrious history, but nothing quite like the sun-drenched evening of Sunday 14th July 2019. Chasing 242 to win the World Cup for the first time, England needed an improbable 15 runs from the last over after earlier in their innings finding themselves at just 86/4. Ben Stokes hit a six and then got a huge slice of luck when a throw from the outfield hit his bat as he dived for the crease, which then deflected for four overthrows.

The drama wasn't over though. Facing the final ball of the innings, Stokes could only manage a single, meaning the World Cup would be decided by a super over. After hitting a brilliant 84 not out, Stokes went back out to the middle alongside Jos Buttler, where between them they set New Zealand a target of 16 runs to win.



| JOE ROOT, LEFT, AND BEN STOKES ON ROUTE TO HELPING ENGLAND WIN THE 2019 CRICKET WORLD CUP |

Jofra Archer, an England debutant that summer, was given the task of keeping the Kiwis at bay with the ball, but when Jimmy Neesham hit the second ball for six, England feared the worst. But Archer, and England, regrouped, and it came down to the final ball of the super over, with Martin Gupthill and New Zealand needing two runs to win. Gupthill played his shot to deep mid-wicket, Jason Roy collected the ball perfectly before throwing it towards Buttler who dutifully removed the bails. Lord's erupted and the greatest ever game of cricket finished with England as world champions.

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MEDIA | COACHING | BUSINESS | EVENTS | MARKETING

MELBOURNE CALLING

A number of students and alumni made it down to Melbourne and Sydney for the inaugural GIS Global Sports Summit in 2020 to experience the incredible diversity of the Australian sports industry. As well as hearing from some of the leaders of the industry Down Under from sports such as AFL, cricket, tennis and Formula 1, attendees also attended live events at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Melbourne Park and Marvel Stadium.

The pandemic meant that similar summits planned for New York, Atlanta and Toronto had to be delivered virtually, but below is just some of the highlights of the Australian experience...



“ONE OF THE KEY MESSAGES FROM THE SUMMIT WAS TO NOT BE SET ON ONE PARTICULAR GOAL BECAUSE MANY OF THE GUEST SPEAKERS HAVE GONE DOWN DIFFERENT ROUTES TO THE ONES THEY ORIGINALLY PLANNED. IN TERMS OF NETWORKING, I HAVE MADE SO MANY AUTHENTIC RELATIONSHIPS THAT COULD PROVE TO BE OF GREAT USE TO MYSELF IN THE FUTURE.”

Bradleigh Cregeen,
BA (Hons) International Football
Business student

Maria Fernandes,
MSc Football Coaching & Analysis student

“WHEN I LOOK BACK ON MY CAREER I THINK THIS IS GOING TO BE ONE OF THE KEY TURNING POINTS. IF I HAD COME TO AUSTRALIA JUST ON MY OWN I WOULD NEVER HAVE BEEN ABLE TO MEET SO MANY DIFFERENT SPEAKERS FROM TENNIS, AFL, SOCCER AND CRICKET TO UNDERSTAND HOW EVERYTHING WORKS HERE.”



Josh Eltringham, General Manager,
Venue & Event Services
at Melbourne Cricket Club

“THE IMPRESSIVE THING FOR ME IS THE RANGE AND VARIETY OF SPEAKERS THAT YOU GET. YOU GET PEOPLE FROM DIFFERENT SPORTS, DIFFERENT ORGANISATIONS AND DIFFERENT AREAS OF THE INDUSTRY. SO TO HEAR FROM PEOPLE WHO HAVE DONE IT ALL BEFORE IS INCREDIBLY IMPRESSIVE.”



“IT’S AN INCREDIBLE OPPORTUNITY AND EXPERIENCE, AND THESE STUDENTS WILL HAVE A LEG UP ON THEIR COLLEAGUES STUDYING LOCALLY AND DOMESTICALLY. THERE’S NOTHING QUITE LIKE EXPERIENCING A CLUB, A SPORT, A VENUE OR HEARING FROM A CEO TO HELP YOU UNDERSTAND WHAT IT’S REALLY LIKE.”

Jennifer Watt, General Manager,
Commercial Operations & Partnerships
at Melbourne Cricket Club





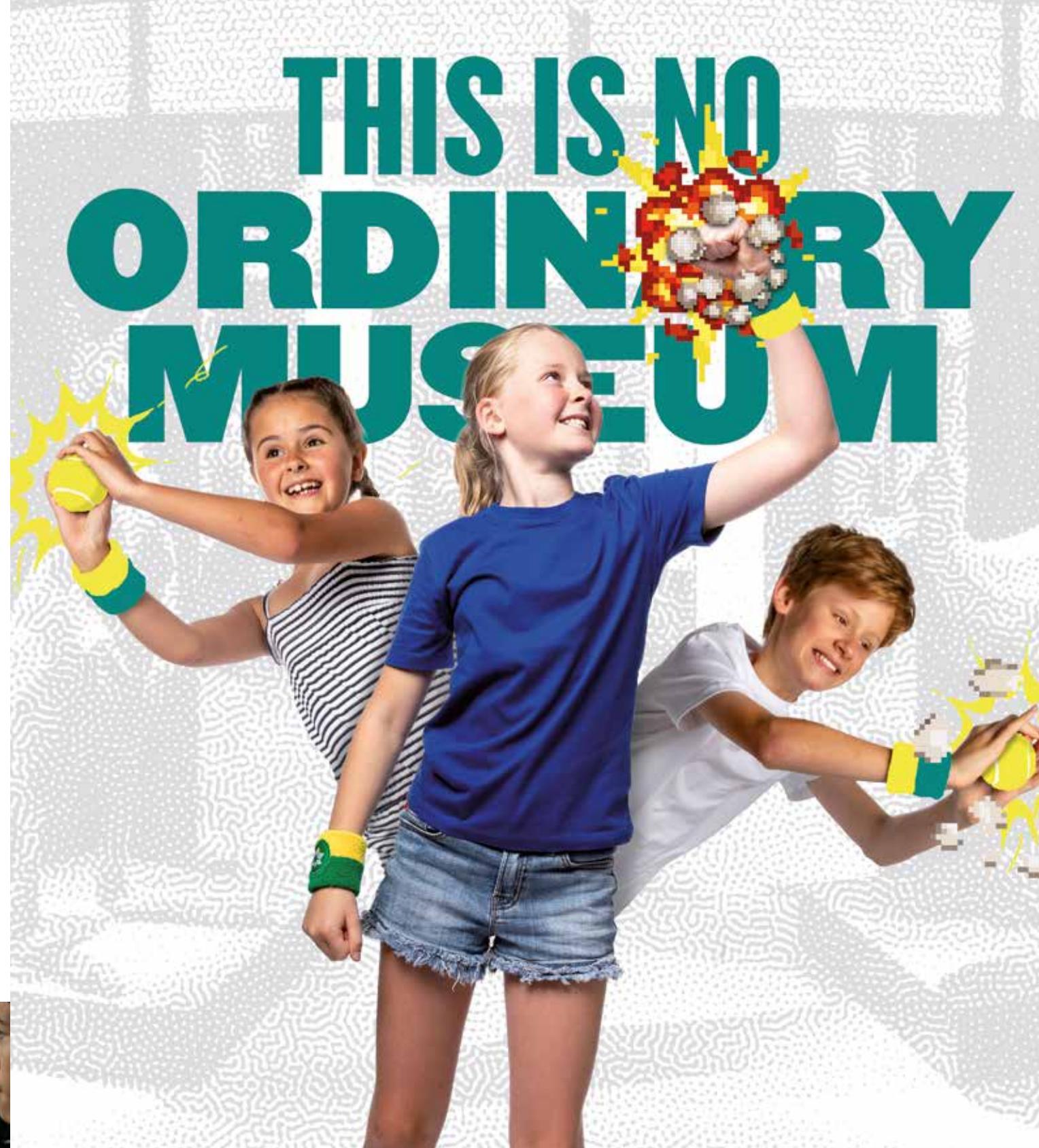
"THIS WAS MY FIRST TIME AT A MAJOR TENNIS TOURNAMENT, SO TO SEE THE WAY THEY HOST SUCH A PRESTIGIOUS EVENT WITH THE AMOUNT OF SPECTATORS ATTENDING WAS INCREDIBLE. WE ALSO RECEIVED GREAT INSIGHT IN TO HOW THE AUSTRALIAN OPEN IS MANAGED FROM PAUL CAMMACK, WHO LEADS STRATEGY AND SPECIAL PROJECTS AT TENNIS AUSTRALIA, WHICH SHOWED THE MAGNITUDE OF THIS SPECTACULAR SPORTING EVENT."

Henry Davies,
BA (Hons) Football Business
& Marketing student

"IT'S TOUGH TO PINPOINT JUST ONE MOMENT AS THE HIGHLIGHT, BUT FOR ME I THINK IT WOULD HAVE TO BE THE FIRST NETWORKING EVENING. TALKING TO PEOPLE WHO HAVE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH THE JOURNEY THAT WE ARE ABOUT TO START WAS BEYOND HELPFUL AND A REAL EYE-OPENER."

I THINK THE SUMMITS ARE AN UNBELIEVABLE OPPORTUNITY AND THE LESSONS YOU CAN LEARN ARE PRICELESS. I CAN GUARANTEE AT LEAST ONE ASPECT OF THE SUMMIT WILL HELP A YOU AT SOME POINT IN YOUR CAREER."

Jak Richardson,
BA (Hons) Multimedia
Sports Journalism student



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SPORTS
MUSEUM** 

COACHING

COACHING, STUDYING AND PLAYING FOR TOTTENHAM

She may have recently made her Women's Super League (WSL) debut and be one of Tottenham Hotspur's brightest young prospects, but it's her abilities as a coach that are what drives Elisha Sulola to be an inspiration in her local community.

The 19-year-old, who studies the BA (Hons) Football Coaching & Management programme at UCFB, is a Tottenham local and started playing football aged five for Edmonton Eagles Barsulola FC, a grassroots boys' club set up and run by her dad for youngsters in the community, where she stayed until she was 12 before being picked up by Tottenham.

During this time Elisha continued to help her dad and older brother to coach the lower age groups at the club, and gained her FA Level One coaching badge at 16.

Alongside her studies and playing career, Elisha works for Community Action Sport, a charity sports organisation in Northumberland Park who provide coaching for young boys and girls aged five to 14 in the community.

Elisha said: "This is vital for the community as it is one of the most deprived boroughs in London, so the need for access to subsidised sports facilities and coaching is vital to the young people in the community."

"AS A YOUNG BLACK FEMALE FOOTBALLER I HAVE FELT VERY SUPPORTED AND ENCOURAGED BY MY LOCAL COMMUNITY, PARTICULARLY THE PARENTS OF THE KIDS THAT I COACH."

Elisha signed her first professional contract with Spurs in September 2020, and made her Spurs debut during the 2019/20 season in the FA Women's Continental League Cup, assisting a goal in a 6-0 win over Lewes. Elisha's first goal for the club came in a 5-0 FA Cup win over Barnsley in January 2020, and she made her WSL debut in the North London derby versus Arsenal in October, coming on as a 91st minute substitute for Alanna Kennedy.



| ELISHA MADE HER WOMEN'S SUPER LEAGUE DEBUT FOR TOTTENHAM IN OCTOBER 2020 |

With her professional playing career now in full swing, as well as sharing a dressing room with US legend and World Cup winner Alex Morgan, it's her role in the local community that excites Elisha the most as she aims to provide opportunities for youngsters in North London.

She said: "As a young black female footballer I have felt very supported and encouraged by my local community, particularly the parents of the kids that I coach. The parents would often remark how pleased they were to see a female coach, particularly from the local area,

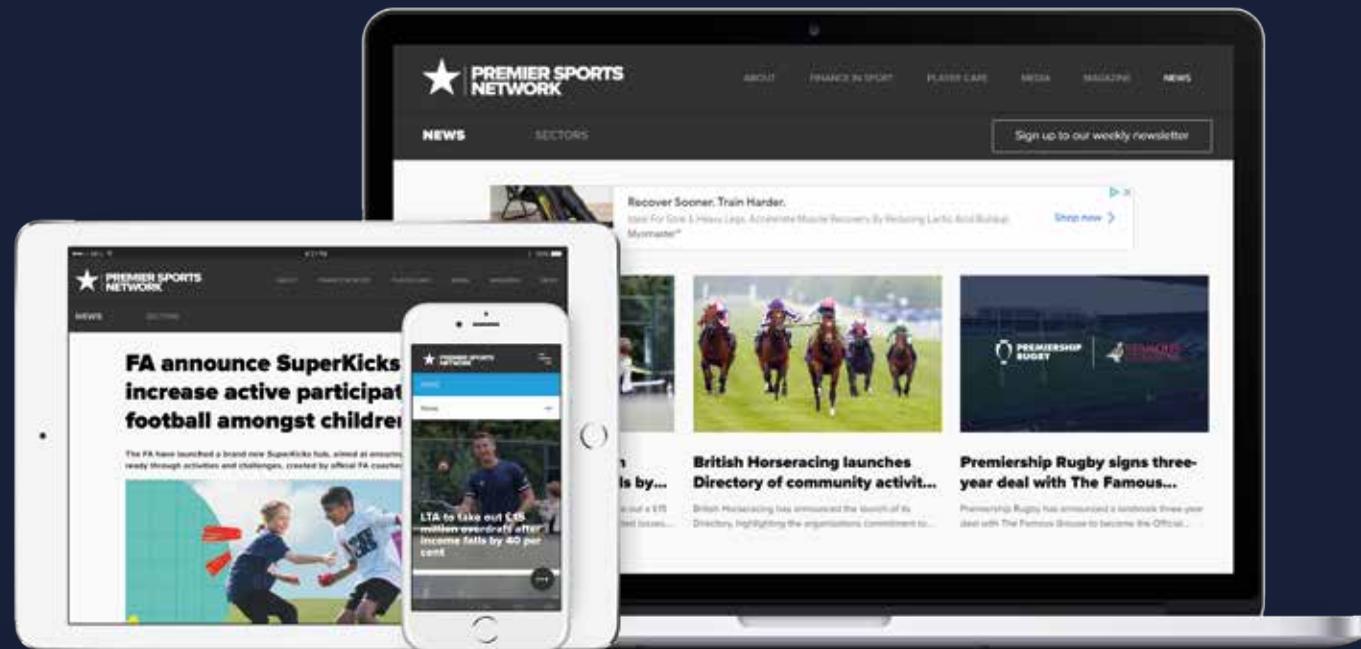
doing well in sport and inspiring their child, especially parents of young girls. This has been a big inspiration for me as I recognise the need for these young girls to have role models in sport."

There is also a neat symmetry between Elisha's student life and that as a Tottenham player - not only does she study at The Hive, where UCFB coaching programmes are taught, but Barnet's stadium is also where Tottenham Hotspur Women play their home games.



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COACHING | BUSINESS

EDUCATION FUELLING ADLINGTON'S 'SECOND CAREER'

Double Olympic gold medallist at 19, retired athlete at 23. The role of a professional athlete is famously short, but few have achieved what Rebecca Adlington did in such a short period of time. Four Olympic medals, not to mention a host of world, European and Commonwealth achievements, meant that when Adlington said goodbye to the pool she did so with ease.

Here, Adlington tells Future Sport what her aspirations are now away from professional sport and how going back into education is aiding that...

The transition from professional athlete to a “second career” is a road long travelled with huge variants of success. For some, nothing compares to the buzz and adrenaline of elite competition. For others, letting go of strict routines and beginning a “normal” life comes as something of a relief.

For Rebecca Adlington, it’s somewhere in the middle. By the age of 23 she’d won countless Olympic, world, European and Commonwealth medals, making her one of the most successful athletes in British history. So what did she do? She retired from professional swimming shortly after winning two bronze medals at the London Olympics in 2012.

For most people at 23 their career is in its infancy. For Adlington, she was about to start something she described to Future Sport as “more rewarding” than any of her Olympic medals

“To be honest I found it really easy [the transition] compared to other athletes I’ve spoken to”, she tells us. “I feel bad for saying that and feel like I probably should have found it a lot harder.

**“LONDON INSPIRED ME SO MUCH;
TALKING ABOUT LEGACY AND INSPIRING
A GENERATION.”**

“But then I’m involved in something that is massively rewarding – I get to go to all of these venues seeing these little kids overcome their fear and jump into the water. Seeing them learn a life skill is so rewarding and it has been such an amazing journey for me to be a part of that.”

Adlington is talking about Swim Stars, her programme whose mission is to see every child in the UK leave primary school being able to swim 25 meters.

“London just inspired me so much, and being at that Olympics and talking about legacy and inspiring a generation, I knew I wanted to set up my own learn to swim programme because that’s something which I am so passionate about – the grassroots side of sport rather than the elite side.”

Adlington added: “For me to be part of that [setting up Swim Stars] as a director, it’s been incredible to be involved in that process, but now I’m at the stage of my life where I’ve had amazing opportunities but I want to really get stuck into my business a lot more.”



| CELEBRATING SUCCESS AT THE OLYMPIC GAMES
IN LONDON |

Adlington burst onto the scene when she claimed two golds at the Beijing 2008 Olympics in the 400m and 800m freestyle, becoming the first British swimmer to win two Olympic golds since 1908 – not to mention breaking a 19-year-old world record along the way. She backed this up with a number of further world and Commonwealth medals before London 2012.

Since 2012, and as well as Swim Stars, Rebecca has also dived into TV work and become a patron of Women in Sport. However, eight years after setting up Swim Stars she’s ready to take it to the next level and continue that transition from Olympic athlete to business leader. That’s why in 2019 she joined GIS’ CEO of a Sports Organisation programme, ran by VSI Executive Education.

Explaining her decision to go back into the classroom, Adlington told Future Sport: “I didn’t go to university and like most people in competitive sport their career as an athlete takes over the academic side. I wanted to focus on my swimming career because I knew I only had that small window to achieve. I’ve since set up my own business but I want to better that and have some training under my belt.”

She added: “I needed to go away and know that I’ve got the education and I’ve learnt, not just taken advantage of having that status or role within a company. I want everyone to know that I’m really serious and I’m passionate about it and trying to better myself and be the best leader that I can possibly be.”

Now fully immersed in Swim Stars and the VSI programme, Rebecca has noticed first-hand the skills that are transferable

> ARTICLE CONTINUES

“BUSINESS ISN'T EASY; YOU'VE GOT TO HAVE DRIVE, PURPOSE AND A CLEAR VISION. SPORT HAS GIVEN ME ALL OF THOSE THINGS.”

between being a professional athlete and the world of business, as well as what she had to adapt to the quickest. She admits not having a coach and a mapped out daily structure was difficult at first, however, her finely tuned drive and work ethic more than made up for that.

“The things that I learnt in sport also work in business – how fundamental communication is, trusting your team, discipline and dedication” she says. “Business isn't easy; you've got to have that drive and purpose to have that clear vision. I'm very lucky that sport has given me all of those things.”

At first she inspired a generation in the pool, now she's aiming to inspire another out of it.

GIS partnered with VSI Executive Education in 2020 to offer its leading CEO of a Sports Organisation and MSc Sports Directorship programmes, as well as The Executive Athlete courses. Visit www.GIS.sport for more information.



| ADLINGTON'S SWIM STARS PROGRAMME AIMS TO GET AS MANY 3-11 YEAR OLDS AS POSSIBLE LEARNING TO SWIM |



| ADLINGTON ON HER WAY TO ONE OF TWO BRONZE MEDALS AT LONDON 2012 |

REBECCA'S ROLL OF HONOUR



GOLD

- 2008:
 - Olympic Games, Beijing**
 - 400m & 800m freestyle
- World Championships (short course)**
 - 800m freestyle
- 2010:
 - Commonwealth Games, Delhi**
 - 400m & 800m freestyle
- European Championships (long course)**
 - 400m freestyle
- 2011:
 - World Championships**
 - 800m freestyle



SILVER

- 2006:
 - European Championships (long course)**
 - 800m freestyle
- 2008:
 - World Championships 2008 (short course)**
 - 4x200m freestyle relay
- 2011:
 - World Championships 2011**
 - 400m freestyle



BRONZE

- 2009:
 - World Championships (long course)**
 - 400m freestyle & 4x200m freestyle relay
- 2010:
 - Commonwealth Games, Delhi**
 - 200m freestyle & 4x200m freestyle relay
- European Championships (long course)**
 - 4x200m freestyle relay
- 2012:
 - Olympic Games, London**
 - 400m & 800m freestyle

SPORT HAS CHANGED AND EDUCATION IS VITAL TO ITS FUTURE

Brendan Flood, chairman of University Campus of Football Business (UCFB) and its Global Institute of Sport (GIS), and director at Burnley FC, explains how now, more than ever, the global sports industry must innovate to adapt to the global climate, and how specific knowledge and education is central to that...



| BRENDAN FLOOD, UCFB AND GIS CHAIRMAN, AT UCFB WEMBLEY |

Around the world there hasn't been one industry that has escaped the impact of COVID-19, and sport is no exception. From the top to the bottom, jobs have been lost, organisations folded and revenue ripped apart. Athletes have been returning to the field, but the sports they've dedicated their lives to have been changed dramatically. These truly are testing times.

It's now up to us, the leaders of today, to adapt to this new reality by bringing forward the vision, knowledge and ideas needed that will ultimately lay the foundations for the leaders of tomorrow to continue taking this powerful, transformative and global industry into the future.

No industry survives without forward thinkers and organisations that aren't afraid to think outside of the box to attract new audiences and investment. Sport has often been at the front of that curve

and it's my belief that it can continue to be so as we all continue to work our way through this unique and ever-changing landscape we currently find ourselves in.

Since the turn of the century, the sports industry has developed on and off the field in ways many of us couldn't have imagined. Nowhere is that more prevalent than in its commercial appeal to broadcasters and sponsors. As a revenue-generating industry it has sky rocketed; our audiences are no longer confined to one town or one country - Brooklyn is as key a market as Burnley.

With this in mind, I believe that it's increasingly vital that those working in sport must have the knowledge, skills and adaptability to span continents. With global industry must come lifelong learning and specific education to oversee an ever-changing and fast-paced landscape. The demand for virtual and

“NO INDUSTRY SURVIVES WITHOUT FORWARD THINKERS AND ORGANISATIONS THAT AREN'T AFRAID TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX.”

flexible education is greater than ever too - COVID-19 has highlighted this. We must ensure that individuals and organisations have access to insight from sports leaders around the world instantly online, even for those who prefer to study on location.

My goal when launching UCFB nearly a decade ago was to create the 'Harvard of Sport', and I believe with the launch of GIS we're close to realising that. We are ensuring that our network of partners and hub locations across Europe, North America, Asia, the Middle East and Australia are accessible to all of our students, graduates and

partners, meaning that learning best practices from the leading minds and organisations in the sector is easier than ever.

So whether it's teaching via the classroom or through experiences and networking, it's up to us to ensure we continue to push sport and its rich financial, cultural and social benefits on to those who'll be carrying these responsibilities into the future.

If he wasn't already feeling the pressure and expectation of a nation, then he certainly was following a conversation with then-Prime Minister Tony Blair.

Not long after arriving in England in 2001 as the first non-native to take charge of the Three Lions, Sven-Göran Eriksson was invited for coffee with Blair and Swedish counterpart Göran Persson in the not-so-glamorous surroundings of Luton Airport.

"We were sat in a private room," Eriksson tells Future Sport. "And the first thing Tony Blair said to me was: 'Welcome to England, Sven. Shall we take a bet?'"

The Swede goes on: "I said 'What do you mean?', and he replied 'Who's going to keep their job the longest, you or me? Because we have two impossible jobs and we'll be sacked one day! It made me understand that the England job is a big one."

"YES, YOU CAN GO TO GERMANY AND WIN, BUT YOU DON'T WIN 5-1!"

Not passionate enough; too quiet; not English. All slurs thrown his way during his time in charge by fans and media. Where was the machismo? The heart-on-sleeve aggression that English football culture to this day continues to be falsely led by? Perhaps following in the footsteps of the microcosm of this, Kevin Keegan, didn't help Eriksson's cause but then, as he says, he was hardly walking into a winning environment. England were struggling in their qualifying group for the 2002 World Cup.

"I recognised on the first day that there were people protesting that the national team should only be coached by an English manager," he says. "But at the same time, England weren't in the best position to qualify for the 2002 tournament, so there wasn't really a lot to lose – but there was a lot to win."

It's easy to forget, but when Sven moved to London from Lazio he was one of the hottest

properties in world football. Over four years in Rome he won the Coppa Italia twice, the UEFA Cup and did what everyone thought was nearly impossible – win the Scudetto with a team that wasn't Juventus, Milan or Inter.

However, it didn't take long for the Swede to convince his new public that he was up to the task. England won five World Cup qualifiers in a row, including that famous night in Munich – perhaps the national side's second greatest ever performance.

Eriksson told Future Sport: "Yes, you can go to Germany and win, but you don't win 5-1! That should be practically impossible."

The hardest part after that game was keeping everyone's feet on the ground. "We just had to remind the players that every game we play in the future will not be like this," he adds. "Everything went right for us and everything went wrong for the Germans."

What about the famously partisan English press? Eriksson said: "When we beat Germany we hadn't even qualified [for the tournament], but you read the papers the day after and we had already won the World Cup!"

England of course were sent packing in 2002 in the quarter-finals by Brazil, then at the same stage two years later on penalties by Portugal in the Euros. But it was the 2006 World Cup in Germany which Sven felt was there for the taking.

The so called 'Golden Generation' were in full swing – David Beckham, Michael Owen, Wayne Rooney, Steven Gerrard, Frank Lampard, Rio Ferdinand, Ashley Cole. This surely was England's time?

> ARTICLE CONTINUES



COACHING | EVENTS

ENGLAND'S GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY

It's now nearly 15 years since Sven-Göran Eriksson stepped down as England manager following three successive quarter-final tournament exits. His approach to football and visible leadership skills split the nation, but he remains one of the most fascinating figures in English football's recent history. Future Sport spoke to the Swede to relive his five years in charge of the national side, managing the 'Golden Generation' and having coffee with Tony Blair...





| WAYNE ROONEY BURST ONTO THE ENGLAND SCENE UNDER ERIKSSON |

“I thought that we could win it or at least reach the final,” Eriksson reveals. “I was quite sure of that. I think that was the thoughts of all the players and the staff as well, because we couldn’t really see any better team than us.”

He adds, regretfully: “Italy won it but they weren’t really a good, good team; Germany were ok; Spain weren’t the best at that time; so I thought that we could win it and I still think we should have done better. We should have reached the final at least, it was a golden opportunity.”

The likes of Ferdinand, Gerrard and Lampard have since said that their intense club rivalries at the time may have been one of the key reasons for the national side’s failings during this time. The trio said that they respected each other but didn’t have the togetherness that other national sides had then, or perhaps England have now.

Does Eriksson agree with that? “No”, he says. “I think it was a happy group and I’m very sad to hear that, because if there was something like that [going on] I would have been told by the players or staff.”

Straight faced, the Swede added: “If you don’t do what you’re expected to do you always find something wrong.”

Turning to England now and Gareth Southgate, Eriksson is equally as enthused about their chances at the European Championships, especially with a number of games taking place at Wembley Stadium. As ever though, he asks

the English public to not go overboard with their expectations, despite their hugely encouraging 2018 World Cup campaign.

The former Manchester City boss said: “In England sometimes I get the feeling that they forget the competition to win a major tournament is incredibly high – it’s not only England where they play good football!” He adds: “There are a lot of other teams. It’s difficult, but why not [win it]?”

Eriksson marks out England’s pace and ability on the counter-attack as a key route to success. That, and the fitness of captain and goal scorer Harry Kane. Sven, more than most, is all too aware of the impact an injury to a country’s talisman can do going into a tournament.

Beckham and Rooney’s metatarsals were front page news when, in 2002 and 2006 respectively, each suffered the same injury prior to a World Cup. Both played in each tournament but were clearly not 100% fit.

“England have to pray that Harry Kane is fit and in good shape,” he says. “You need a natural goal scorer to win a big tournament and he is a natural goal scorer for sure.”

The England job is one that Eriksson clearly looks back on fondly, but also with regret. Rooney’s red card; loose turf in Lisbon; and did Ronaldinho really mean to score from that free-kick?

“Football is lots of penalty shoot-outs. We did as we did, unfortunately,” he says. And England know that more than most.



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BUSINESS | EVENTS | MARKETING

BOLD AND BRAVE: RLWC2021 AND THE FUTURE OF BRITISH RUGBY LEAGUE

The year 2020 will go down in history for so many different reasons. For sports fans, it will be remembered as the year that leagues were nulled and voided, clubs lost their existence and international tournaments were postponed. For most, the experience of watching a sporting event inside a full-capacity stadium remains a distant memory. After a year of disruption, the attention now turns to 2021, and in particular, the Rugby League World Cup which will be held in England. Here, UCFB's Ryan Booth looks at how the tournament can help shape the future of the sport in the UK...

After fighting off competition from both the United Arab Emirates and the USA and Canada, the Rugby Football League (RFL) was awarded the rights to host the 2021 instalment of the Rugby League World Cup (RLWC). For those not associated with the sport, this might seem insignificant, but for rugby league officials, players and supporters alike it's a chance to build on the success of the 2013 tournament – of which England was a co-host – and propel the game on to the global stage.

Whilst rugby league originates from northern England, it possesses a strong desire to grow outside of its traditional heartlands, something which is reflected through the creation of its premier club competition, the Betfred Super League. This can also be seen in the formation of clubs located around the world, such as Catalans Dragons, Toulouse Olympique, Toronto Wolfpack, Ottawa Aces and a potential New York franchise.

The sport's desire to grow is undeniable; one of the semi-finals at the World Cup is set to be held at Arsenal's Emirates

Stadium in London, and will be the first non-football match to be staged at the venue. The showpiece final will take place at Manchester United's Old Trafford, the venue for the annual Super League Grand Final.

Describing the desired legacy of the upcoming tournament, an RFL/RLWC2021 spokesperson told Future Sport: "Bold and brave are the two words that RLWC have identified as epitomising their approach throughout, and certainly, taking a semi-final to the Emirates Stadium fits that template."

They added: "RLWC2021 is proud of the northern focus of the tournament, celebrating the North of England, but there is also a rich tradition of big rugby league matches being played in other parts of the country and especially London, most obviously the Challenge Cup Final. It is significant that since tickets were made available in a public ballot in November 2020, more applications came from London postcodes than from any other city. Overall, RLWC2021 provides a huge opportunity."

Josh Jones, a current Great Britain international and delegate on Global Institute of Sport's MSc Sports Directorship programme, shares this passion to help the

sport develop, and believes the tournament can play an instrumental part in increasing the sport's popularity around London, in particular.

"I think it's massive," Jones told Future Sport. "Because of COVID, a lot of people are missing sport and are longing to get back into that environment. I think it's a huge opportunity for the tournament to be one of the biggest sporting competitions in 2021."

The back-rower added: "Growing up I remember my step-dad taking me to Euro 2004, and seeing how Adidas and Nike created such a special atmosphere and culture within the city, not just within the games, but around the stadiums with all the people. I think we've got a great opportunity to do that. As a player I'd love to play in one of the big stadiums in London, and I think to be in our capital city, for a Rugby League World Cup, is a huge statement."

Despite its ambitions to progress, rugby league has long been ridiculed and stereotyped because of its northern, working-class roots. The game is widely known as an "M62 sport" due to the location of its member clubs. Aside from the London Broncos, there hasn't been a top-flight club based south of Sheffield in England.

One man who is quick to provide an explanation for this is UCFB academic, and Warrington Wolves supporter, Greg Nixon.



WEMBLEY STADIUM HOSTED A RLWC SEMI-FINAL IN 2013 |

"Rugby league is a very insular sport and, in some instances, very short-sighted in its outlook," admits Nixon. "You almost get the feeling that the sport is happy to be perceived as a minority sport that is largely ignored by the mainstream media. The finger of blame has to be pointed at the clubs, as for some of them, there is the concern that expansion might mean less money in the collective pot."

This suggestion is supported by the demise of transatlantic side Toronto who, following the outbreak of COVID-19, were forced to withdraw from Super League, due to "unexpected and

> ARTICLE CONTINUES



ENGLAND'S SAM BURGESS SCORING A TRY VERSUS NEW ZEALAND IN THE 2013 TOURNAMENT |

“RUGBY LEAGUE HAS NEVER BEEN AFRAID TO PUSH THE BOUNDARIES AND BREAK NEW GROUND.”

overwhelming financial challenges”, before seven clubs voted against readmitting Toronto into the competition for 2021.

While the decline of the Wolfpack is unfortunate, it has indeed opened the doors for clubs closer to home. Rob Butland, Co-Founder and Director of Development at Cornish Rebels RLFC, told us about his ambitions and why the Rebels are the perfect solution for Super League.

He said: “After Newcastle (Thunder), Cornwall is the next most realistic and desirable option to facilitate a Super League franchise. Yes, it’s a county and not a city but it has an audience who love rugby, the location to appeal to travelling fans, and most importantly it has the Cornish Rebels who will play in a top class facility, Sportva Kernow (Stadium for Cornwall).”

The Rebels have been plying their trade in the South West Premier League since their inception in 2013, and have big plans to grow the sport themselves in a traditional union county.

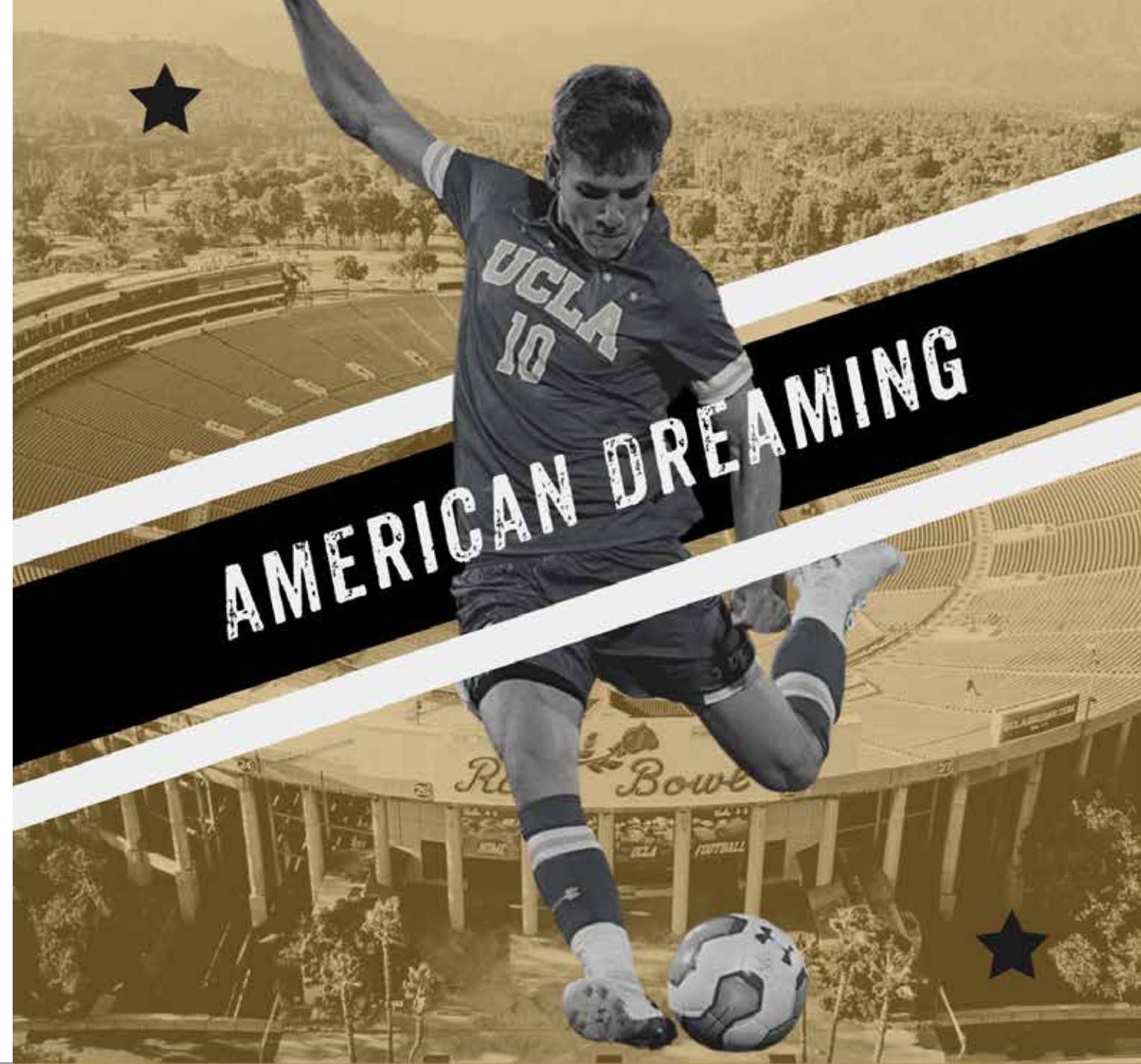
Butland added: “Our intention is to enter League One (the third tier of the RFL system) in the coming seasons and we have no

interest in stopping there. We have, we believe, a sustainable plan which will provide local audiences with the thrill of rugby league in one of the most enviable locations in the UK.”

Although the likes of the Rebels are making great strides in taking the sport to new audiences, its future heavily relies on the success of the 2021 Rugby League World Cup, as Nixon explains.

“Rugby League has never been afraid to push the boundaries forward and again it is breaking new ground by having the women’s and wheelchair tournaments alongside the men’s, which should improve the sport’s media profile. If the organisers get their marketing strategy right, then there is no reason why the tournament can’t have an influence on the growth of the sport in this country.”

He concluded: “The whole of the media has to be on board if the tournament is to have any lasting legacy, so it is vital that England not only have a good tournament, but that they win it. Once again, though, the RFL has to have the courage of its convictions and ensure any momentum gained by the tournament is not lost.”



| OLD TRAFFORD WILL PLAY HOST TO THE 2021 RLWC FINAL |



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▬ | COACHING

THE PRODIGY

Manchester United's search for the rightful heir to Sir Alex Ferguson's throne has been a complicated one. From a tried and tested Premier League manager to legends of the game, they've now landed on a relative rookie, but one who lives and breathes the club. The fact that Ole Gunnar Solskjaer doesn't shy away from his close relationship with Sir Alex, and has referenced his desire to rediscover the winning mentality that was such a feature of his time as a player in Manchester, might just work in his favour. The Norwegian spoke to Future Sport about learning from the best and how he takes that into the club with him every day...



It's been nearly eight years since Sir Alex Ferguson stepped down as Manchester United manager, yet still the great Scot's presence hangs over Old Trafford like the ever-present clouds in the North West.

David Moyes didn't get a full season in the job to demonstrate what he could do, and despite winning the FA Cup, Louis Van Gaal's tenure was ended. Jose Mourinho's Europa League title, League Cup and second place Premier League finish remains United's best return since Sir Alex retired.

Then came Ole Gunnar Solskjaer. A club legend and Sir Alex devotee, the initial temporary appointment became permanent following an improbable Champions League win in Paris.

In an exclusive interview with Future Sport, the Norwegian explained that he feels the club is close once again to being the one he experienced as a player.

| BRUNO FERNANDES HAS BEEN SOLSKJAER'S MOST IMPORTANT AND INFLUENTIAL SIGNING |



“I FELT COMING INTO THE CLUB THERE HAD BEEN A LOT OF CHANGES SINCE SIR ALEX HAD LEFT... I THINK WE HAD MAYBE LOST OUR WAY AS A CLUB.”

“I felt coming into the club there had been a lot of changes since Sir Alex left and what my memories were of that successful, winning team,” Solskjaer says. “I’m getting the feeling that we are getting back to the right values – I think maybe we had lost our way as a football club.”

Describing the winning culture and ethos of the club during his time as a player, Solskjaer explained that it was driven by the powerful first-team dressing room.

“The players drove the culture; there was Sir Alex at the top, he was the leader and we followed him, but he made players feel important and feel that we had to drive it.”

The 47-year-old has seen highs and lows during his time in the Old Trafford dugout already, including big European wins and mixed results in the league.

However, two big waves of winning form have helped to ensure the Norwegian continues to sit in the hottest seat of them all. He won his first eight games in charge to lift spirits around the club, and then there was the 19-match unbeaten run,

including 14 wins, in the second half of the 2019/20 season that saw the club clinch a third-place Premier League finish and Champions League football.

Slowly but surely, the Norwegian is moulding his team with an emphasis on young, exciting talent – something his mentor and friend Sir Alex would definitely approve of. Does he find it a difficult balancing act though doing things the “United way” in the modern game?

“The old school core values I think are so important to the DNA of this club,” Solskjaer says. “Being humble, working hard, being a Manchester United type of person, because we know at the weekend there are fans coming to watch us that have been supporting the club for a long time.”

He adds: “We want to give youth a chance, we want to take risks, but in 2020 [it’s different] compared to 1999, you’ve got to move with the times, the technology, the coaching methods and the management of millennials.”

> ARTICLE CONTINUES



| SOLSKJAER WON THE FA CUP TWICE AS A PLAYER |

Comparing his job now to that of Sir Alex, the Norwegian says: "I have to manage the young boys now differently to what Sir Alex did. We talk about millennials and that they need to be spoon-fed, but they also need to be seen and heard and feel important which is still an old school value."

Solskjær probably wasn't expecting a call from United while in charge of Molde for the second time, where he led the club to two Norwegian championships before heading to Wales for a stint in charge at Cardiff City.

Before that though he led the Manchester United Reserve team and helped Sir Alex and Carlos Queiroz as a forwards' coach at Old Trafford, learning once again from the best.

"I learnt so much from so many good football people with the right values," he



| THE NORWEGIAN TOOK UNITED TO THE FA CUP AND EUROPA LEAGUE SEMI-FINALS DURING THE 19/20 SEASON |



OLE GUNNAR SOLSKJÆR

| SOLSKJAER HAS PLACED AN EMPHASIS ON BRINGING THROUGH YOUNG PLAYERS DURING HIS TIME AT OLD TRAFFORD |

“THE OLD SCHOOL CORE VALUES I THINK ARE SO IMPORTANT TO THE DNA OF THIS CLUB.”

says. "When I went to Molde I brought a couple of friends of mine from United and we built a mini United!"

This is something he's especially proud of. Solskjær explains: "When I watch Molde now they are a mini United - it's not just long balls and crossing which is what I felt Norwegian football was back then and how Molde played [at the time]. We changed them and I think those years at United helped me and us coming in with a little bit of a different mentality."

Solskjær's task to rekindle the glories of former years remains a difficult one, but on a parallel with clubs at a similar level. Like United, Arsenal and Chelsea have turned to former players at the start of their managerial careers to take them forward. However, they're not Manchester United.

So what does success look like for the Norwegian at Old Trafford? One thing that will always remain true is that the club has the highest ambitions, and Sir Alex will be supporting Solskjær all the way.

| BUSINESS

'IT'S NOT BLACK VERSUS WHITE, IT'S EVERYONE VERSUS RACISM'



SAAD WADIA

When American George Floyd was killed in May 2020 it sparked a wave of protests around the world in support of the Black Lives Matter movement and against police brutality. These protests have been evident in the world of sport ever since, with Premier League players taking a knee before fixtures and NBA side Milwaukee Bucks boycotting their play-off game versus Orlando Magic following the police shooting of Jacob Blake in their home state.

Looking back over the last few months and the wider inequalities in society, Saad Wadia, a UCFB graduate and co-founder and managing director of sports consultancy Avalon Sports Group, penned his thoughts on the power sport has to influence change and his hopes for the future...

As a South Asian man growing up in London, I have been very fortunate to meet people from different walks of life, backgrounds and cultures.

Over the last few months we have witnessed a landmark for revolutionary acts of justice. George Floyd's death truly angered me and I still find it difficult to process the fact that bystanders addressed the situation, yet were powerless in their efforts to stop it. Seeing power so blatantly abused was shocking, but it does appear that the world has finally had enough and we are seeing this global movement, from private conversations to public protests.

For days I was caught up in back-and-forth discussions with leaders in the sports world, who have used their platforms to educate and raise awareness on the same issue for decades. Among these was Edwin Moses, a 400m hurdling legend. From 1976

to 1984, Moses won 122 consecutive races, landing two Olympic gold medals and breaking four world records.

I met Moses earlier this year at the Laureus World Sports Awards ceremony in Berlin, where he presented an award to Siya Kolisi, the South African national rugby team's first ever black captain. Rewind to 20 years ago and Nelson Mandela was stood on the exact same stage in Monaco and delivered one of the most powerful speeches in sports history. And here we are in 2020, with Moses awarding Kolisi.

Speaking to Moses about George Floyd's murder, he told me that it's time for people to speak out and put aside any fears of being vocal about calling out discrimination. He said: "My father was a military officer who served in World War II. He came back to the United States following the war and couldn't find a job.



| SPORTS STARS AROUND THE WORLD HAVE BEEN TAKING A KNEE BEFORE FIXTURES TO SHOW THEIR SUPPORT FOR BLACK LIVES MATTER |

On top of that, he was treated like ****. Erving Moses was his name. He returned home to dig ditches, even though he was a qualified teacher. You can read all about how black people were treated after the war."

Passionately, he added: "George Floyd's murder is a turning point. The days of sitting back and taking it are over." Speaking to Moses made me realise the importance of this conversation, and how late we are to opening up about it.

I reached out to another athlete who we at Avalon Sports Group have had the pleasure of working with, NFL star Husain Abdullah. He and his brother Hamza made headlines when they skipped an NFL season to make a spiritual trip to Mecca, Saudi Arabia, for the annual Muslim pilgrimage known as Hajj. Husain was also penalised by the NFL for praying after a touchdown. They were not afraid to stand for what they believed in and put their careers at risk for it.

In 2015, I was on the side-lines at a Chiefs-Lions fixture as part of the NFL International Series at Wembley Stadium, when I heard on the commentary that Husain had intercepted the ball. I knew I had heard the name before

but couldn't quite place it. Moments later, it hit me and the headlines came to mind! I caught up with him after the game and we've been in touch ever since.

Catching up with him recently, I asked him what advice he would give to an active professional athlete who is still unfamiliar to the pressures and demands of the job. He suggested an athlete should always do the right thing and put themselves above the pressures of fan noise and business. His words were empowering: "There's never a wrong time to do the right thing, it's always the right time when you do the right thing and you will always be rewarded somewhere, somehow."

When asked what he would say to the public about the current climate of affairs, he was expressive. He said: "Now is the time to fight for human rights. Now is the time to stand up against evil. Now is the time to be on the right side of history."

Sport provides a powerful platform. It is why we consider athletes as our heroes and it's shown us just how influential and impactful our heroes can be. Marcus Rashford raised

> ARTICLE CONTINUES

BLACK LIVES MATTER

over £20m for charity during the height of the coronavirus pandemic, and campaigned successfully to get the UK government to provide free school meals to children over the summer. We have also seen Raheem Sterling speak out against racism, and in boxing Anthony Joshua has been working to support his community and bring people together. In cricket, we saw the bravery of Darren Sammy to call out his teammates in India and demand they don't call him 'Kalu'.

But Nelson Mandela said it best during the awards ceremony in Monaco 20 years ago that I mentioned earlier: "Sport has the power to change the world. It has the power to inspire. It has the power to unite people in a way that little else does. It speaks to youth in a language they understand. Sport can create hope where once there was only despair. It is more powerful than government in breaking down racial barriers. It laughs in the face of all types of discrimination.

"Peace is the greatest tool mankind possesses to resolve even the most intractable difficulties. But to be effective you must seek to change yourself before seeking to change your community and the world. It is



| PREMIER LEAGUE CLUBS SHOWED THEIR SUPPORT FOR BLACK LIVES MATTER DURING THE 19/20 AND 20/21 SEASONS |

absolutely essential for leaders of every kind to create environments where men and women are encouraged to resolve problems peacefully."

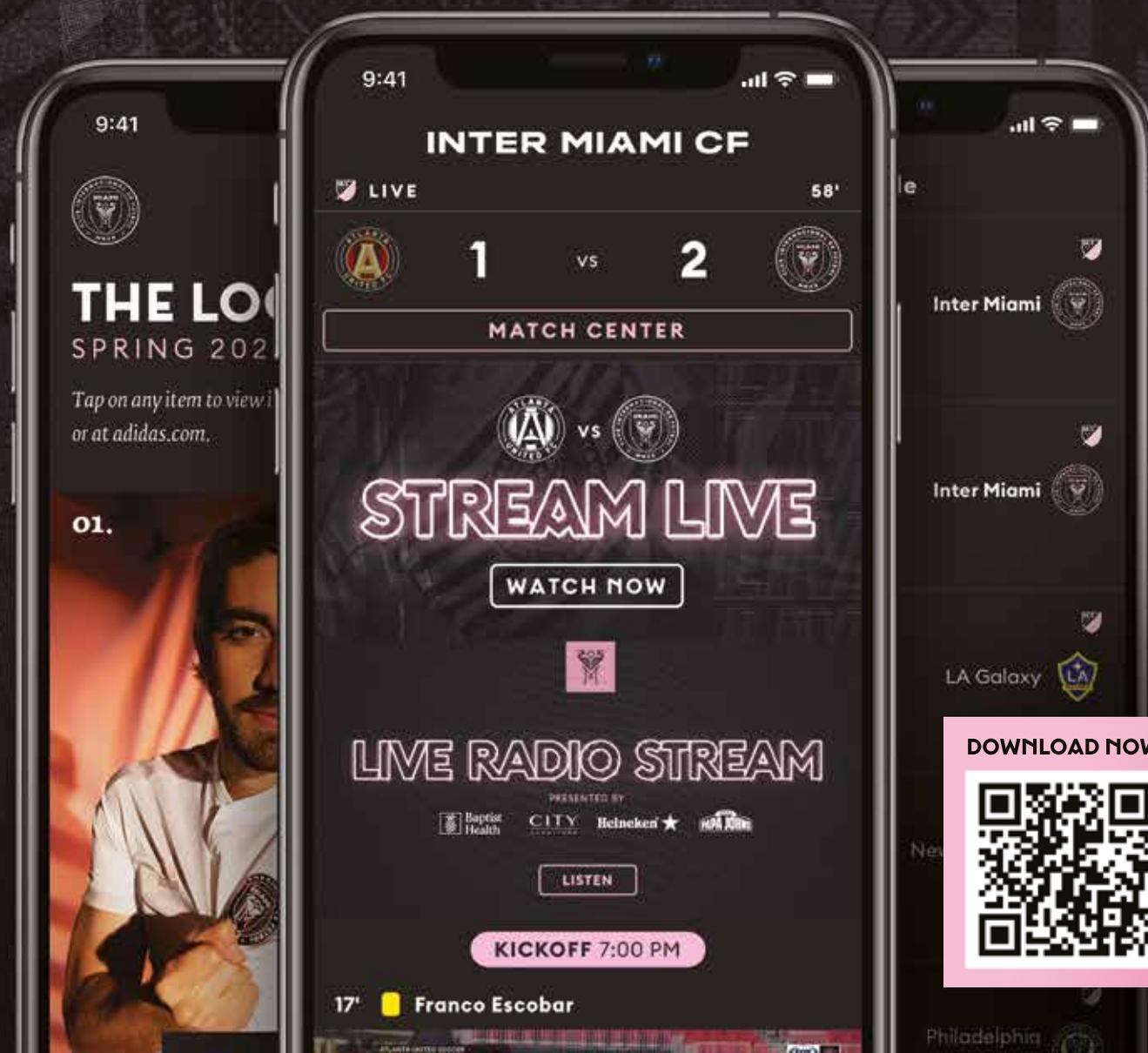
During the protests in London, we saw a Black Lives Matter supporter carrying a counter-protester to safety to try and keep the peace. If only the three police officers who arrested George Floyd had done the same. 2020 has shaken the world, but looking toward the future there is hope. Leaders in the community have spoken out and united everyone to fight the same issue. There is hope, because for the first time it's not black versus white - it's everyone versus racism.

| GEORGE FLOYD'S KILLING IN MAY 2020 SPARKED A WAVE OF PROTEST AROUND THE WORLD |




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| ATLANTA UNITED
HAVE BEEN A
REVELATION SINCE
JOINING MLS |



| DAVID BECKHAM
REVITALISED MLS
WHEN HE ARRIVED
IN 2007 |

 BUSINESS | EVENTS | MARKETING

IN FOCUS:

MAJOR LEAGUE SOCCER – FROM RETIREMENT LEAGUE TO THE REAL DEAL

Since David Beckham arrived in LA in 2007, the number of teams in the Major League Soccer (MLS) has doubled, players' salaries have gone through the roof and only Europe's five major leagues have a bigger stadium audience. Everything is in place for MLS to become a powerhouse of world football, and yet it's still seen by large swathes of the world as a football backwater.

Here, Future Sport takes an in-depth look at the growth of the league since Beckham's arrival and speaks to those who've played a major part in its rise...

It remains one of the greatest mysteries in modern sport and only recently appears to have seen a shift: why isn't football, the world's most popular sport, loved and adored by the world's biggest sports-mad nation?

On the face of it things just don't stack up. The US Women's National Team is the current and multi-time FIFA world champion, crammed full of talent that is recognised around the world, from Megan Rapinoe to Alex Morgan. And in 2026, the US will host the men's World

Cup alongside Mexico and Canada, marking the second time it has held the event in 32 years.

In general, sport in the US is a license to print money – the television adverts during half-time at the Super Bowl are talked about almost as much as the game itself – so why isn't MLS as big and as popular as the Premier League and LaLiga?

Well, it's not for a want of trying. And it's getting there, slowly.

Born out of the 1994 World Cup, MLS took nearly two decades to explode onto the world scene. With small stadiums and even smaller crowds, the league really kick started in 2007 when David Beckham arrived at LA Galaxy from Real Madrid. Despite being at the back-end of his career, Beckham was undoubtedly the most recognisable player in the world at the time. The fact he was moving to MLS from the world's biggest club also made his move even more spectacular.

Brand Beckham had arrived in Hollywood, and with it came a reported \$50m contract and the option to own a MLS franchise further down the line – an option realised in 2020 when Beckham launched the league's latest club, Inter Miami CF. In fact, Beckham's move is seen as one that potentially saved MLS. According to Bruce Arena, his former coach at the Galaxy, the former England captain's move to LA “probably kept the MLS around forever”.

Since then the names that have passed through the MLS reads like a who's who of European football elite. David Villa, Zlatan Ibrahimović, Robbie Keane and Thierry Henry have all had a huge impact on the league and their respective clubs, not to mention Brazilian superstar Kaka.

But for every Beckham or Villa, there have also been big names who've come and gone and who the American public won't remember in the years to come. Englishmen Frank Lampard, Steven Gerrard and Jermain Defoe all arrived to much fanfare but delivered with varied levels of success, suggesting MLS isn't quite the “retirement” league it's often made out to be.

“Beckham arriving is when the league took off”, says Chris Shewfelt, Toronto FC's Vice President of Business Operations. “Franchise

value started to grow and there started to be a lot more attention towards MLS.”

Shewfelt added: “A lot of people in the UK called MLS a retirement league at that point. At that point it was a case of going out and finding players that would drive marketing, interest in the franchise and sell tickets. Maybe the product didn't improve that much because you were only improving the top end, not the middle or the bottom, but the evolution of MLS in recent years has seen tremendous movement in the composition of rosters, an increase in the salary cap, and tools that can be used by general managers to add better players to the middle and lower end of their roster.”

One Englishman whose success cannot be denied but often gets overlooked is that of LAFC's Bradley Wright-Phillips. Wright-Phillips, who signed for LAFC this season following six incredible years at New York Red Bulls, is currently sixth on the all-time record goal scorers list in the MLS with 166 goals.

Logan Smith, Senior Director of Strategy and Analytics at the New York Red Bulls, explained the journey the league is on as it continues to battle the market dominance of predominantly North American sports and competitions, such as the National Football League (NFL), National Basketball Association (NBA), National Hockey League (NHL) and Major League Baseball (MLB). It's a battle for fans, battle for TV revenue and a battle to remain relevant in a sports-mad nation. New York alone has two NBA, NFL, NHL, MLB and MLS sides. That's a lot of sport.

Smith explained: “Being young, we're trying to fight an uphill battle against other sports organisations that have a historical relationship with fans. People are born into being a Yankees fan, whereas our league is only 25 years old and only just now the younger generations are coming through households that have had MLS

> ARTICLE CONTINUES

as part of their sporting experience.”

He adds: “Sometimes I say I’m looking forward to 25 years from now when we have the generational impact of sports fandom, but being younger gives us the opportunity to be a little bit more innovative and try new things because fans aren’t so traditional about the experience that they expect.”

When it comes to innovation, perhaps no one in MLS history has quite taken that baton and ran with it as well or as successfully as Atlanta United. Since being founded in 2014 they’ve won the MLS Cup and now hold the top five attendance records in the league. More importantly, they’ve introduced football to a city famed for sport and have now set the bar for every club in the competition. From the boardroom to the match day experience, Atlanta have re-energised the MLS by marrying the American fans-first match going experience with the traditional football-only European approach.

At the centre of it all is the truly incredible US\$1.6 billion Mercedes-Benz Stadium. Utilising the arena’s state-of-the-art technology – from the 360 degrees ‘halo’ screen to its unique roof that opens up to the elements – the stadium offers award-winning food and drink, including free drink refills, to keep the fans coming back. And it works – United have an average home attendance of 53,000, by far and away the biggest in the MLS.

For context, only Europe’s ‘five major leagues’ have a bigger average attendance across world football than MLS.

“A lot of it [the fan base] has come naturally,” says Carlos Bocanegra, Atlanta’s Vice President and Technical Director. “As we’re building our club, we’re building our fan base and we’re building the roster. Everything we’re doing we try to do it very organically.”

Four more franchises are set to join MLS by

2023 which will take the league to 30 teams – there were just 16 franchises in 2010. Austin FC will join in 2021, Charlotte FC in 2022, and St. Louis and Sacramento Republic will complete the picture in 2023.

Helping to lead the charge for Charlotte is Sporting Director Zoran Krneta, who was appointed at the beginning of 2020, just before the coronavirus crisis kicked off. “It’s super exciting,” he says when asked about launching a new team in a new city. “It’s not like walking into an organisation where there are hundreds of employees and you’re coming in to change some ideas, change some habits and maybe change some people. This is building from scratch.”

Krneta, a GIS and VSI delegate, adds: “It’s a novelty for me and everyone else. How many times in life can you say you’ve started a football club from zero and try to make it competitive and winning?”

The first hurdle Krneta had to deal with was the franchise having to delay its entry to the league by a year, which was originally intended for 2021, due to the virus. The second has been signing staff and players for a club which had no visible identity until it was named as Charlotte FC in July 2020.

“It was very difficult to deal with people like agents, clubs and players and not being able to tell them the name of the club or the colours or the badge,” he says. “That was always the first question!”

One player who knew exactly who he was signing for was Robbie Keane. Ireland’s record goal scorer and appearance maker spent five years at LA Galaxy. The man who persuaded him to swap the Premier League for California? David Beckham of course. Three MLS Cups, one MVP award and 104 Galaxy goals later, Keane is rightly considered one of the great MLS imports. He also saw



| ATLANTA'S MERCEDES-BENZ STADIUM |



| BMO FIELD, HOME OF TORONTO FC |

“PEOPLE ARE BORN INTO BEING YANKEES FANS, WHEREAS OUR LEAGUE IS ONLY 25 YEARS OLD.”

first-hand the growth the league made during his time in the US.

“When I first went to MLS the Galaxy stadium was always full”, Keane tells Future Sport. “But most of the others were probably around half full. By the time I left, all the stadiums were full. Football just took off massively and has kept on growing.”

The former Tottenham and Celtic striker added: “A lot of players who call me now say they want to go and play in MLS. I’m not talking about average players; I’m talking about players at the top of their game who would love the opportunity to have a go. I think that says it all really about how much the league has grown. MLS is the place to be right now.”

Now though, as well as growing the league brand around the world, the focus of clubs is to unearth talent and become sellers. For this, teams are incentivised to sign younger players, including designated players, to get a relief on their salary cap. Signing younger players means the

opportunity then arises to sell talent on – Miguel Almiron’s record £20m move from Atlanta to Newcastle United in 2019 eclipsed the fee Bayern Munich paid for Alphonso Davies the year before.

“The league needs to transition to one where we are a league of sellers, not just buyers, and that’s the phase that we are in now,” explained Toronto’s Shewfelt. “Look at Alphonso. He’s a product of Vancouver Whitecaps; they found him as a refugee and he came into their academy from Edmonton, a smaller Canadian city. Their programme found him, developed him from a young age and then sold him to Munich.”

Now Davies is a Champions League winner and the most talked about youngster in world football. No longer a retirement league, MLS can be the birthplace of champions.

KEANE READY FOR NEXT CHAPTER

Robbie Keane is arguably the greatest player to ever pull on the green jersey for the Republic of Ireland. He's also a Premier League great, has won the MLS and is related to Barack Obama, kind of. As the Irishman now lays the foundations for life as a coach and manager, Future Sport caught up with Keane to discuss how his glittering playing career has set him up for the next phase of his career...

| KEANE PLAYED 146 TIMES FOR THE REPUBLIC OF IRELAND - A COUNTRY RECORD |

From the muddy fields of Dublin to the bright lights of the World Cup, Robbie Keane's playing career took him to places he could only dream about as a boy.

Like most youngsters in the Republic of Ireland, he dreamt of pulling on the famous green jersey and scoring goals at Lansdowne Road, but did he ever dream of setting foot on the pristine lawns of the White House and then-President Barack Obama claiming to be his cousin?

"As a lad from Dublin, having the opportunity to go to the White House was incredible," he told Future Sport. "It was very surreal, a great opportunity and a great memory to meet the President."

and could quite easily be considered the Republic of Ireland's greatest ever player. Earning a record 146 caps, he captained his country for over ten years and scored a record 61 goals as well as playing at the 2002 World Cup and two European Championships.

"I'm a proud Irishman," he says. "Even when I was in LA and flying back for friendly games, it was never ever an issue for me. It was an honour and a privilege. The green jersey was certainly the one that fit best."

It wasn't just for his country that Keane scored goals for fun. He currently sits 15th in the all-time Premier League goal scorers list on 126, a record he is rightly proud of. Keane told Future Sport he knew he had the ability

"PLAYING FOR IRELAND WAS AN HONOUR AND PRIVILEGE. THE GREEN JERSEY WAS CERTAINLY THE ONE THAT FIT BEST."

Keane, of course, was referencing one of his three trips to 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue with LA Galaxy in a long-time tradition of America's sporting champions being congratulated in person by the sitting US President. In what was a long and goal-filled career, Keane's five years and three MLS Cups in California could easily be the highlight. The lad from Dublin has only one though.

"All I ever wanted to do was put that green jersey on and as soon as I did it was definitely the proudest moment of my career", he says.

Not only did Keane wear that green jersey with pride, he broke every record going

to score goals, but he still needed to work hard day in, day out to become the lethal finisher he was.

"If you don't put in the hard work you won't go far," he says. "I wanted to be better - if my left foot wasn't as good as my right foot I would practice and practice. I scored a lot of goals with both feet and that didn't just come because I had a good left foot, it came from hard work and I think that's important to become a striker and score all those goals."

Keane's most prolific spell came at White Hart Lane, where over two spells and ten

> ARTICLE CONTINUES

“I’M ALWAYS LEARNING; YOU NEVER STOP LEARNING.”

seasons he became a firm favourite of the Tottenham faithful. After exploding on the scene at 17 with Wolves, Keane moved to Coventry City, then Inter Milan and Leeds United, all by the time he was 22, before finally settling in North London.

It was at Tottenham where he won his only major honour in English football, the League Cup in 2008, alongside a famous Bulgarian. For two seasons at Spurs, Keane and Dimitar Berbatov paired up to form one of the league’s most deadly strike partnerships, amassing 91 goals between them in all competitions. From the moment they took to the pitch at White Hart Lane their bond was sealed.

“I got him straight away and our understanding on the pitch was incredible,” Keane says. “I always knew where he was and vice-versa; we had this understanding where if I went long he went short and it was very difficult for defences to play against us. We had a real connection from the very start.”

The pair were sold by Spurs later that summer, to Liverpool and Manchester United respectively. Whereas Berbatov went on to win two Premier League titles, Keane’s move north to his boyhood club wasn’t as successful – he returned to London just six months later.

Keane explained: “I signed there for a reason – to win things. Unfortunately, it didn’t work out the way I wanted it to and I had a manager who had different ideas to what I was told. Do I have any regrets? No, because you do things in life for a reason.”

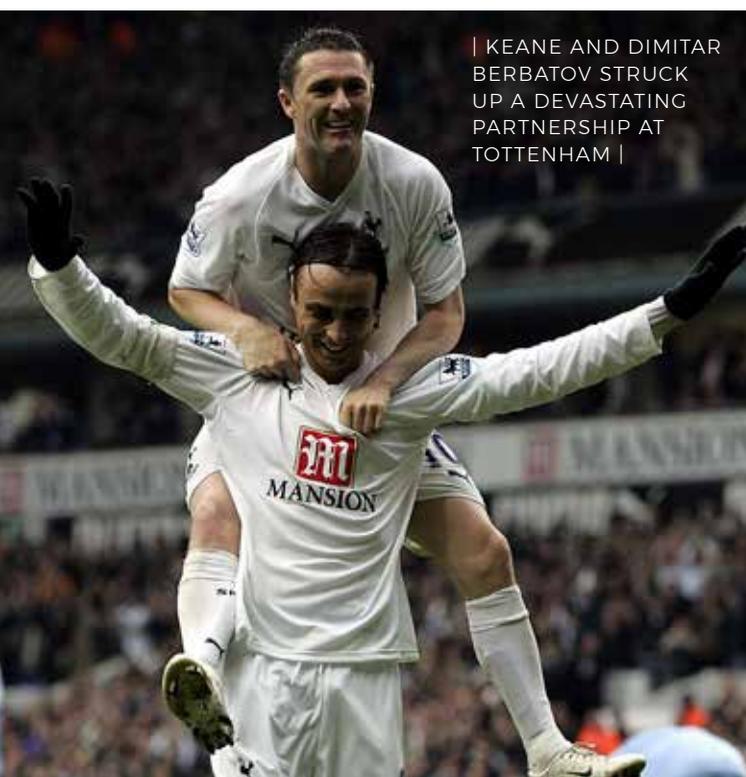
It’s clear talking to Keane that he still loves football as much as he did before he retired from playing in 2018. And now heading into the beginning of his career as a coach, and as Ireland and Middlesbrough players have found out in recent years during Keane’s time as assistant, he has a lot to offer.

With his badges already under his belt, Keane is waiting for the right offer.

“I’ve made no secret that I want to be a manager one day but it has to be the right opportunity,” Keane says. “Some have come up but they haven’t been right for me; I’m not going to jump into something that doesn’t feel right. I’m looking forward to the future, to keep on learning, keep continuing to read, keep on asking questions and speaking to managers.”

He adds: “I’m always learning; you never stop learning.”

Read more about Robbie Keane’s time at LA Galaxy and in Major League Soccer on page 50.



| KEANE AND DIMITAR BERBATOV STRUCK UP A DEVASTATING PARTNERSHIP AT TOTTENHAM |



BUSINESS | EVENTS

WELCOME TO MIAMI

David Beckham realised a dream in 2020 when his Major League Soccer (MLS) franchise Inter Miami CF took to the field for the very first time. With its bold pink, black and white colour scheme, the club is already promising to be as cool and as stylish as its English co-owner. But how did the franchise come to be, and why will its new stadium become Global Institute of Sport's first non-UK campus. Future Sport finds out more...

The badge might say MMXX but Inter Miami CF can really trace back their roots to 2007 and the equally as glamorous city of Los Angeles.

When David Beckham pitched up from Real Madrid and was revealed as LA Galaxy's most high profile designated player, alongside the lucrative contract and pressure to grow the game in the US was the option to buy a MLS franchise at a reduced rate at some point in the future.

"WHEN PEOPLE THINK ABOUT SOCCER IN THE US I WANT THEM TO THINK ABOUT INTER MIAMI."

Fast forward seven years and the former England captain announced his intention to follow up that option. Then in 2018 Beckham's Inter Miami was chosen as the location for the 25th MLS franchise.

Club Internacional de Fútbol Miami, to give the club its full name, had to get to work for a 2020 kick-off. With no players, no staff and no stadium, Beckham and the ownership team – Softbank CEO Marcelo Claure, Jorge Mas and Jose Mas, the chairman and CEO of Mastec respectively, and Softbank founder Masayoshi Son – got to work.

First through the door as employee number one was Paul McDonough as chief operating officer and sporting director. With experience of getting fellow MLS sides Orlando City and Atlanta United off the ground, McDonough was seen as the perfect candidate to help make the Miami dream a reality.

Thereafter came head coach Diego Alonso, a two-time CONCACAF Champions League winner, and a playing roster of young talent and experienced heads. As well as Mexican star Rodolfo Pizarro and Argentinian hope Matias Pellegrini, Inter Miami also brought in French World Cup winner Blaise Matuidi and former Juventus striker Gonzalo Higuain.



| INTER MIAMI CF STADIUM WAS BUILT IN JUST EIGHT MONTHS |

Previously speaking during the club's build, Jorge said: "We're working hard, we're all in and fully committed. I want the first team that comes to mind when people think about soccer in the United States to be Inter Miami."

Next was the stadium, and perhaps the most impressive operation of all. In a race against time ahead of the 2020 season, the franchise acquired the aging Lockhart Stadium in Fort Lauderdale in July 2019, the home of South Florida's only ever other MLS side – the now defunct Miami Fusion. Over the next eight months, developers flattened the original structure and built an 18,000 capacity arena and training facility now known as the Inter Miami CF Stadium.

The pandemic delayed the side's first home game by five months, but when it came in August 2020 via a 3-2 win over Florida rivals Orlando City, a dream had been realised.

Fast forward to December 2020 and the club announced that their new stadium would become the first North American campus for Global Institute of Sport (GIS) to deliver its leading Master's degree programme, the MSc Sports Directorship.

GIS Inter Miami CF Stadium Campus will officially open in 2021, with students utilising the state-of-the-art facilities on offer at the new arena, and will be the first non-UK campus for GIS, away from its traditional home in and around London's Wembley Stadium and Manchester's Etihad Stadium. The Miami campus will join GIS' study hubs already based at New York's Red Bull Arena, Atlanta's Mercedes-Benz Stadium, Toronto's BMO Field and the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

> ARTICLE CONTINUES

“This is truly a landmark moment for GIS, Inter Miami and education in North America,” said GIS President Sharona Friedman. “Students already enjoy great access to the North American sports market, but never have they had a permanent place to call ‘home’ and study away from the UK.”

Friedman added: “You only have to look at the name of the franchise, its brand identity, the city it represents and the people that run the organisation to know that this is a partnership that will excite football fans and those who aspire to work at its senior levels around the world.”

Inter Miami made the MLS play-offs in their first season, no mean feat, and genuinely believe they have what it takes to make it to the top of the sport in North America.

McDonough, who helped Atlanta secure the MLS Cup in only their second year, has been quoted as saying: “With a goal of winning in MLS you have to also have your eye on the next level, and the next level would be the CONCACAF and continental championships.”

However, looking to the future of football in the US, Jorge has even bigger ambitions for the sport.

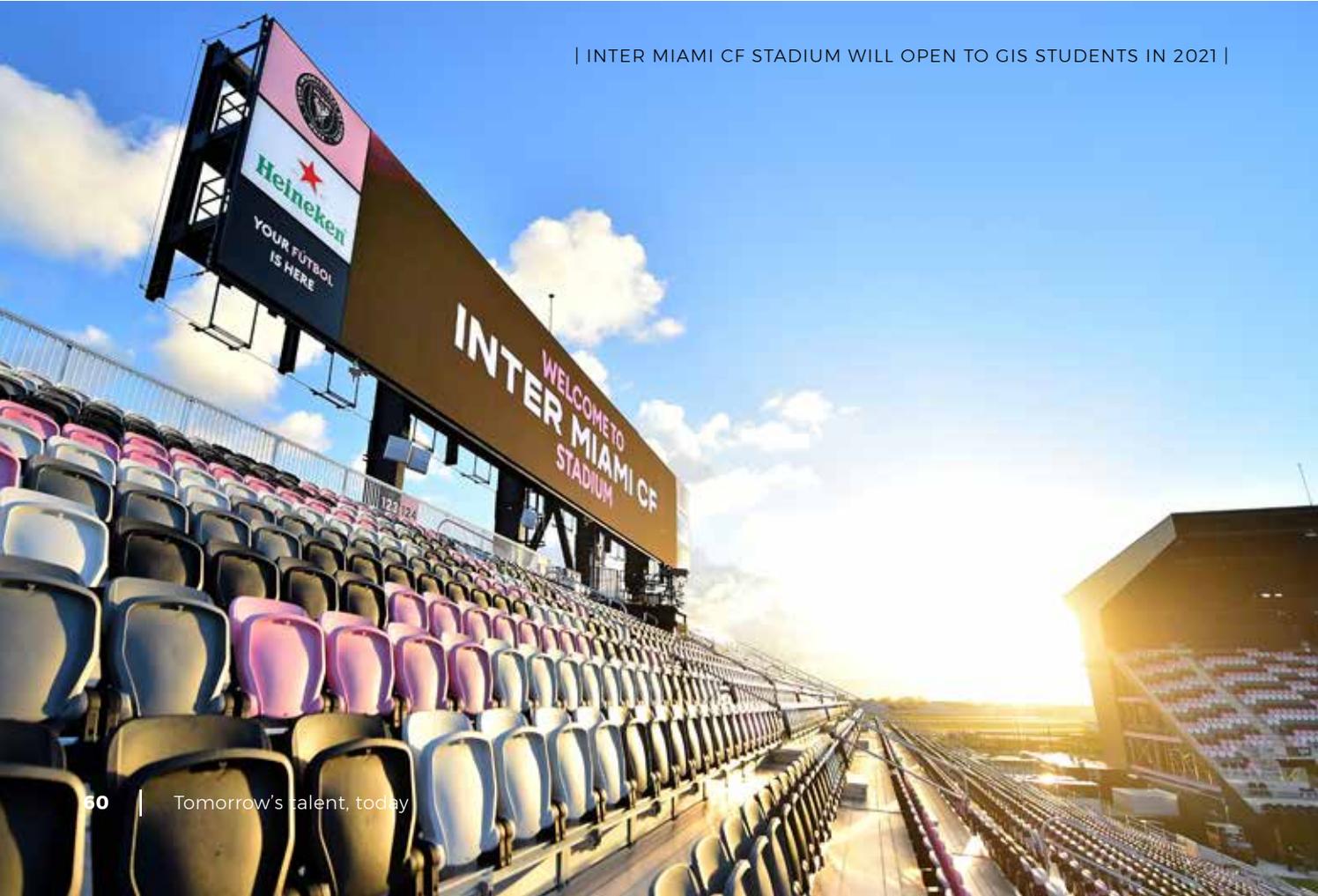
“I think there’s no doubt as we look out five years from now, with an upcoming World Cup in the US [2026], that the MLS and US will be one of the major, if not the major, markets for football worldwide. I think it’s the sport of the future in the US.”



| COVID-19 MEANT THAT INTER MIAMI'S FIRST SEASON IN THE MLS WAS PLAYED BEHIND CLOSED DOORS |



| INTER MIAMI CF STADIUM WILL OPEN TO GIS STUDENTS IN 2021 |



“I THINK THAT SOCCER IS THE SPORT OF THE FUTURE IN THE US.”

| THE CLUB'S OWNERS HAVE BIG PLANS FOR THE FUTURE OF SOCCER IN MIAMI |



CROSS-CONTINENTAL APPROACH TO EDUCATION WILL SHAPE SPORT'S FUTURE

In 2020 UCFB introduced its new destination for Master's degrees and executive education around the world - the Global Institute of Sport (GIS). Utilising hubs and partnerships in Europe, North America, Asia and Australia, the cross-continental and multi-sport approach was designed to give students a complete world view of sport and the way the business of sport is approached across different countries and cultures. Here, GIS President Sharona Friedman tells us how the educational approach of GIS is more important than ever in a world that has been gripped by the coronavirus...

It was never our intention to launch the Global Institute of Sport in the middle of a global pandemic, but then 2020 hasn't really gone the way many of us planned.

But in a way, it was also the perfect time. Sport, and the multi-billion dollar industry that surrounds it, is a juggernaut that has gained incredible momentum throughout the 21st century. Suddenly, coronavirus was the first truly existential threat the industry had faced since the turn of the century. "What next?" we all asked.

UCFB, and now GIS, has always been about delivering an education specific to the sports industry as it stands today and in the future. The long-term future is as exciting as it's ever been, but its short-term future remains a slight mystery. Sports leagues and its workforces around the world are currently operating in one of the most challenging environments in

living memory, with new rules, restrictions and regulations being introduced on an almost weekly basis.

These ever-changing goalposts are, however, an incredible example of how GIS' cross-continental and multi-disciplinary approach to education and thinking ensures the student experience is as up-to-date and relevant as it possibly could be.

Central to the launch of GIS was its Industry Advisory Board, a collection of brilliant individuals from some of the world's biggest sports, governing bodies and clubs. Their years of experience and expertise help shape and provide the vision necessary to ensure the education offered by GIS addresses the current issues within the industry, as well as what will add incredible value to organisations in the years to come.



| GIS PRESIDENT SHARONA FRIEDMAN |

2020 was an incredibly challenging year for sport everywhere, so being able to understand these challenges first-hand from those who have lived them is invaluable. These professional, live-in voices from around Europe, North America, Asia and Australia offer GIS staff and students a truly international overview of the current landscape and how we can all play a part to shape what it looks like not just post-COVID-19, but also in the decades to come. This way of integrated thinking is now more important than ever as we face up to the challenges ahead.

Choosing New York, Atlanta, Toronto and Melbourne as our global hub locations wasn't a happy accident. Not only do these cities have geographical importance in the northern and southern hemisphere, but they're leaders in their respective countries. They host a number of leading clubs that span the sporting spectrum, not to mention playing host to numerous governing bodies.

I'm delighted that we'll soon be opening a fourth North American hub in Miami at Inter Miami CF Stadium. By having access to this already worldwide brand, students will not only be able to attend our annual Global Sports Summit here, but they'll soon have access to study a range of courses at GIS Inter Miami CF Stadium Campus.

I'm as convinced as I ever have been that the future sports industry will be led by those who have the education and experience to manage its nuances and global challenges. Our job at GIS, and that of those in leadership roles in sport and education around the world, is to ensure these individuals are given the necessary tools to move forward, achieve and become leaders themselves.

Find out more about GIS' plans in Miami on page 58.

MICHAEL JORDAN – ATHLETE OR BRAND?

Very few athletes in history have risen above their sport to become bigger than it, but Michael Jordan certainly comes into that category. Since making his NBA debut in 1984, Jordan's success on and off the court has been unprecedented and has seen him blur the line between most valuable player and most valuable asset. Here, Future Sport takes a look at the numbers behind Brand Jordan...

Which athlete was the highest paid in the world in 2020? Roger Federer? Lionel Messi? Cristiano Ronaldo?

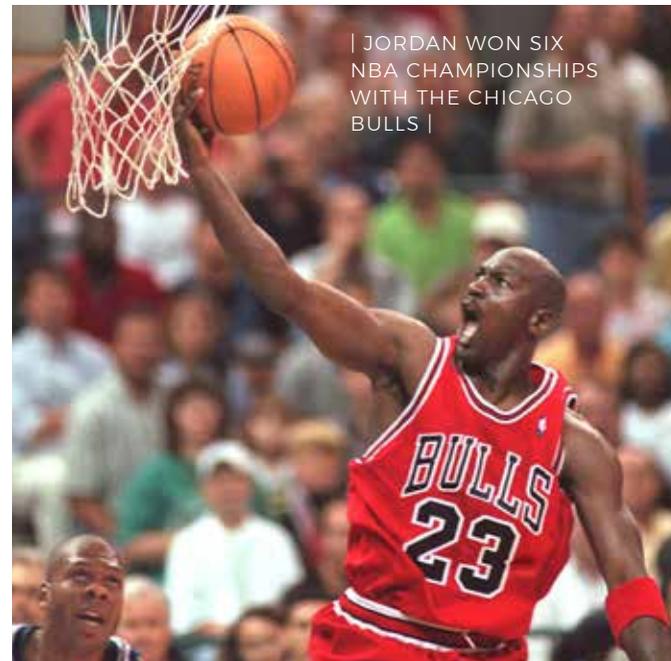
Wrong, wrong and wrong. According to Forbes these were the top three earning current athletes, however, the man truly at the top of the list stopped playing his sport nearly 18 years ago.

Widely considered the greatest basketball player of all time, Michael Jordan continues to transcend his sport almost two decades after hanging up his famous sneakers.

**“IF YOU COULDN'T
BE LIKE JORDAN ON
THE COURT THEN
YOU WANTED TO
LOOK LIKE HIM.”**

A six-time NBA championship winner, five-time MVP and double Olympic gold medallist, he's seen it all and won it all.

However, it's perhaps off the court and in the bank account of his sponsors where he's had the most impact and continues to have it.



In 2019 he pulled in \$130m from long-time sponsor Nike. To put that in context, Forbes say that 2020's top earner, tennis player Federer, earned \$106m over the year from endorsements and tournament winnings.

As we learnt watching *The Last Dance* on Netflix, that Nike deal almost didn't happen. Jordan was determined to sign with Adidas in 1984 but his agent David Falk had other ideas. With Jordan refusing to get on the plane to sign the deal, Falk rang his mum.

Nike, at the time an athletics brand with no foothold in basketball, offered rookie Jordan \$250,000 and his own shoe line – Air Jordan. Hoping to sell \$3m of Air Jordans that year, Nike sold over \$120m. The rest, as they say, is history.

First Chicago, then America and finally the world went Jordan crazy. There had been sporting icons in the years before Jordan – Muhammed Ali, Pele and Billie Jean King to name a few – but none had done what Jordan was about to do: become a global brand. Make no mistake – the 'brand' of Serena Williams, David Beckham and Tiger Woods wouldn't exist without Jordan.

Growing up in New York at the time was Fabulous Flournoy, now a coach at 2019 NBA champions Toronto Raptors. Speaking to Future Sport, he said: "Jordan drove culture at that point in time. You wanted to be like him even before the 'Be Like Mike' commercial came out.

"If you couldn't be like him on the court you wanted to look like him and walk like him. That's what changed the whole culture of basketball and created an international market for the game."

In the early 1990s, just as the Chicago Bulls were about to win the first of six championships, Jordan was earning \$2.5m a season. However, it was his commercial value at the time that helped make him worth a net \$1.6bn today. It's estimated Jordan earned approximately \$30m a year in endorsements from the likes of Nike, Gatorade and Hanes – around \$50m in 2020 – which was more than ten times his Bulls' salary.

The Toronto Raptors' debut in the NBA came in the 1995/96 season – the same year Jordan's Bulls won their fourth championship. Watching at the time was Torontonian Sharona Friedman, GIS' President. Like most Canadians at the time, basketball was barely on the radar – until Jordan came along.

"Marketing is probably the most powerful tool in creating cultures and societies," Friedman says. "As a Canadian growing up basketball wasn't in Toronto – we had hockey. I can honestly say that my love of sport started because of Jordan and his marketing presence coupled with his talent."

"Everything about him – the shoes, drinking Gatorade – it became a culture that was so different to hockey and gave us an alternative sport to get into. I think it's testament not just of Jordan's abilities, but his marketing that made basketball a cultural phenomenon. That's the power of sport."

To new basketball fans or those who weren't around at the height of Jordan's career, the iconic 'jump man' logo has become synonymous with the Nike and Air Jordan brand. So much so, the brand has started to operate away from basketball and can be seen worn by the likes of Neymar and Kylian Mbappe on the match day shirts of Paris Saint Germain.

Recognising Jordan and his team's business acumen, Flournoy pointed out that Jordan knew how to monetise the culture he was responsible for creating. He said: "Whether it was Michael Jordan or the Jordan brand, you knew what it represented. Sport has a way of transcending all boundaries and I think Jordan figured that out and figured it out as a businessman.

"There were iconic athletes before him but none of them branched out into other forms of business. Jordan and his team helped to create that to a point where not only did they want to be dominant on the court, but also off of it."



| MANCHESTER UNITED WOMEN'S MANAGER CASEY STONEY IS ENGLISH FOOTBALL'S MOST RECOGNISABLE OPENLY GAY STAR |

 BUSINESS | MARKETING

IN FOCUS:

THE PREVALENCE OF GAY WOMEN IN FOOTBALL

Women's place in football is now firmly established and increasingly respected. Unlike the men's game, many female footballers are often characterised as gay, and unlike many stereotypes, this one happens to hold some truth. The over-representation of gay women in the sport, when compared to the general population, is widely accepted but rarely questioned. Why is this the case, and as women's football grows in popularity, is there a chance this unique culture will disappear? UCFB's Lydia Scobie summarises her Master's dissertation on the subject...

Studies have reported an over-representation of lesbian and bisexual football players at every ability level in the UK. From grassroots to Women's Super League clubs, chances are a much higher percentage of the players will identify as something other than heterosexual in comparison to the general population.

This is hard to miss. In recent years, high-profile footballers have been vocal and unforgiving about their sexuality, often commenting on the prevalence of gay women on their team.

Over 1.3 million people watched a BBC documentary on West Ham United FC Women. One episode focussed on the relationship between teammates Alisha Lehmann and Ramona Bachmann, where Lehmann noted: "In women's football, it's perfectly normal for people to come out. It doesn't change anything." After leading the USA to victory in the 2019 FIFA World Cup, Megan Rapinoe stated: "You can't win a championship without gays on your team. That's science right there!"

Football should not be viewed purely as a vehicle for women to express their sexuality and defy gender expectations. Women participate in sport for a myriad of reasons and moreover many straight athletes are wrongly labelled as gay simply because they play. When discussing the history and culture of women's football however, it cannot be dismissed. As the women's game grows vastly in popularity and comments like Rapinoe's are broadcast to an increasingly large audience, researchers are questioning how this culture has come about.

The over-representation of gay women in the game is most commonly explained by ingrained gender expectations. Sport is seen as an ideal arena for the display of sex and gender relations, and the use of the body so obviously reflects masculinity or femininity. Theorists have argued that female demonstrations of athleticism do not comply

with orthodox rules regarding femininity, aggravate visions of masculinity and therefore homosexuality.

Moreover, it is no secret that football occupies an exalted place in British culture; a space historically inhabited by men and often characterised by violence, class tensions, racism and homophobia. Women's participation in football has therefore distorted what the sport signifies to society, its players and its fans. Female footballing environments therefore represent a space which goes against these rules and which offer some a sanctity in sport, enabling players to reject overriding notions of heterosexuality.

It is over simplistic, however, to maintain this is the sole explanation of gay women's prevalence in the sport. It is impossible to claim any one theory as fact; identities are multi-layered, culture is complex and sexualities are not binary. Moreover, the feeling towards women in football has developed and changed dramatically in recent years. It is no longer enough to explain such a unique culture in this old-fashioned and presumptive way.

Studies tend to dismiss socialisation. The way that female clubs and players socialise and interact with each other is hugely influential and arguably more so than expectations that exist elsewhere outside the club. There is a lack of research about socialisation of women within sporting spaces and sexual minorities within this context are rarely explored. The following findings are not to be taken as fact, however, and are the first steps towards exploring the intricacies of football culture in the UK.

Alongside high degrees of personal comfort, a spirit of tolerance and an exclusive social atmosphere, player

> ARTICLE CONTINUES

| WEST HAM UNITED'S ALISHA LEHMANN |



populations often rely on off-pitch activities to protect and expect homosexuality. Research conducted on amateur teams reveals the use of obscure slang, songs revolving around their own group identity as homosexual and drinking games based purely on sexuality.

Impressing elder or more established members within the club was deemed incredibly important to younger or newer members of the group. A hierarchical dynamic is often cultivated and inter-club relationships are very common.

Players have reported that duration and frequency of playing, alongside positions of responsibility, could affect how you view homosexuality. The more you uphold club values, and the more time you spend within an atmosphere of tolerance, the more likely you are to see homosexuality as normal and therefore feel accepted regardless of identity.

The exponential growth of participation and popularity in women's football in the UK within the last decade is well-documented. Top-tier clubs are finally seeing their female counterparts as genuine commercial assets rather than sideline community projects. Sponsorship deals reach £10 million, viewing figures rival men's sport and England stars are now household names.

“SOME PLAYERS FEAR THAT AS THE GAME MIRRORS THE MEN'S IT WILL BECOME INCREASINGLY DANGEROUS TO COME OUT AS GAY.”

But some fans and players fear that as the structure of football mirrors the men's game, operating within the sport can become increasingly dangerous. Stepping into the mainstream comes with more media pressures, more chance of abuse and less confidence when coming out. This trickles down to grassroots players, and there is a danger that eventually the spirit of tolerance and openness will be diluted, therefore denying women a safe space to express and experiment with their sexuality.

As pressure builds for the 2023 World Cup, and Hollywood stars announce their investment in new National Women's Soccer League teams like Angel City, we must keep a careful eye on how brands, sponsors and the media portray female footballers.

TOGETHER LET'S #TAKE A STAND.

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| CLUBS ACROSS ENGLAND HAVE BEEN PLAYING BEHIND CLOSED DOORS |

BUSINESS | EVENTS

IN FOCUS:

WHAT A DIFFERENCE A YEAR MAKES: HOW 2020 SHONE A LIGHT ON THE FINANCES OF THE ENGLISH GAME

Lockdown. Suspension of play. Facemasks. Geisterspiele. Furlough. Five subs. Hand sanitiser. Pay per view. Zoom. Rebates. Bailouts. Big Picture. The arrival of COVID-19 in the UK has brought unprecedented changes, especially in the football industry. Football clubs in their own right, from the Premier League to the EFL and beyond, are relatively small businesses with players under contract, club staff on the payroll, and many operating costs that do not disappear despite the ongoing absence of match day revenue.

With so much having happened in 2020 on and off the pitch, GIS' Christopher Winn, programme leader on the MSc Football Business degree and former co-author of the Deloitte Annual Review of Football Finance, talks us through what has come to pass, and where things may be headed...



CHRISTOPHER WINN

THE FINANCIAL IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON THE PREMIER LEAGUE

Ultimately, the initial suspension of play followed by games being played without fans has shone a light on just how critical cash flow management is across all levels of the game. In the Premier League, match day revenue accounted for just 13% of revenues in the 2018/19 season. However, despite historically contributing the least to the revenue mix of Premier League clubs, match day revenue will still be the most consistent cash inflow received by clubs in the course of paying the high and frequent levels of staff wages and other operating costs.

In the eventual conclusion of the 2019/20 season, clubs are likely to have foregone a cumulative £150m in match day revenue across Premier League, FA Cup, and UEFA club competitions alone, with the 'Big Six' potentially footing around 70% of this given their relatively larger crowds and remaining responsibilities in cup competitions upon resumption of play. With the full return of fans to stadiums currently nowhere in sight, clubs will likely have foregone at least a further £200m in match day revenue alone in 2020, with potentially £80m also missing across domestic and European cup fixtures. As a result, 2020 may have cost clubs upwards of £430m cumulatively in match day revenue.

The receipt of significantly larger broadcast revenues (exceeding £3bn in 2018/19), whilst likely to be more infrequent from a cash flow forecasting perspective, should also not be discounted from the situation. Clubs are reported to have been informed that a 2019/20 broadcast rebate of at least £330m will be due to domestic and international broadcasters given the change in timing and nature of the broadcast product over the summer, though at least half of this will be deferred until 2021/22.

With clubs recording a cumulative loss after-tax position of c.£175m in 2018/19, the worst result since 2012/13, it is likely that such levels of losses could now be further compounded, potentially reaching historic levels.

HOW THE FOOTBALL LEAGUE COMPARES TO THE PREMIER LEAGUE

The further down the footballing pyramid you go, the more reliant clubs become on match day cash inflows and revenue. On the face of it, match day revenue contributed c.20% of Championship revenues in 2018/19. However, this picture is heavily skewed by Premier League parachute payments, which amounted to around a third of the league's total revenues. Removing their influence, match day contributions rise to an average of 30%, with some clubs relying on match day even more heavily. Championship clubs are likely currently foregoing in excess of £200k match day ticket cash inflow on average per home game played without fans, with some clubs far exceeding this mark.

Championship broadcast revenue contributes c.35% of revenues when excluding parachute payments – this is predominantly made up of EFL broadcast distributions and Premier League solidarity payments. It's been reported that the EFL has agreed a collective broadcast rebate of £7m with Sky in respect of the 2019/20 season, but like the Premier League, this has been deferred, with no reductions in club receipts until at least 2021/22.

The much larger issue at hand in the Championship is the levels of expenditure. The league has historically operated on a

> ARTICLE CONTINUES

“THE FUTURE OF ENGLISH FOOTBALL IS NOW FIRMLY ON THE TABLE IN A WAY IT NEVER WOULD HAVE BEEN PRE-PANDEMIC.”

very high wages to revenue ratio in the pursuit of promotion to the Premier League, recording an overall wages to revenue ratio in excess of 100% for the third time in the last four seasons in 2018/19, and recording cumulative losses before tax in excess of £240m. These are pre-pandemic levels of spending and losses, which puts into context the issues many clubs are likely to be currently facing when match day revenue is removed from that equation. And whilst the levels of spending are not quite as severe in Leagues One and Two, the steadily increasing reliance on match day revenue means that cash flow shortages could be even more acute in the face of club operating costs.

HOW CLUBS IN THE EFL AND NATIONAL LEAGUE HAVE BEEN HELPED THROUGH THE CRISIS

Earlier in the year, the EFL (£50m) and the Premier League (£125m) advanced EFL clubs’ funds in an effort to stem the cash flow shortages experienced due to the initial suspension of play. However, these were predominantly made up of advance broadcast payments (parachutes, solidarity, and EFL), i.e. not replacing lost income, but simply bringing future income forward which may have already been spent in advance. Furthermore, given the huge disparity between the values of parachute payments and solidarity/EFL distributions, a very large proportion of these funds will likely be received by only a handful of clubs.

In the autumn, it was announced that The National League would be receiving a £10m rescue package from the government, allowing

the 2020/21 season to kick off behind closed doors. With some clubs relying almost entirely on match day revenue alongside owner contributions at that level, the funding was intended to stop some clubs going out of business. A secondary package of £11m for The National League, largely composed of loans, was announced as part of the government’s wider £300m Sports Winter Survival Package in November.

More recently, after months of reportedly drawn out negotiations, the EFL accepted a further £50m bailout package (c.£20m grants and c.£30m loans) from the Premier League for teams in Leagues One and Two, having initially rejected the terms. In the Championship, precise agreements are yet to be finalised.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO PROTECT THE ENGLISH GAME?

Many have seen the current circumstances as an opportunity for a reset of the economics of English football, and the associated unsustainable business models across much of the EFL.

For instance, there has been a growing clamour for the Premier League broadcast revenue distribution mechanism to be reconsidered. In 2018/19 all Premier League clubs recorded revenues of at least £120m, largely due to the broadcast deal which paid out a total c.£2.4bn to those clubs alone. Whilst parachute recipients tend to receive between £43m and £17m at current rates, other Championship clubs received

just c.£5m each from the Premier League in broadcast solidarity payments in 2018/19, falling to c.£700k per League One club and c.£500k per League Two club.

Cost management also needs to be considered. The existing Championship Profitability and Sustainability regulations, regulating clubs at the adjusted loss before tax level, have not worked. Several clubs have recently employed creative accounting techniques such as sale and leaseback of stadia transactions with owners in order to meet the rules over the measured three-year period. It has been suggested that any bailout from the Premier League to Championship clubs should incorporate enhanced financial regulation as a covenant, to provide a much needed reset to the levels of unsustainable wage expenditure in the division.

Clubs in Leagues One and Two have already voted in a hard salary cap, replacing the previous soft cap regulation in both divisions, in advance of the 2020/21 season. The levels of wage expenditure in both leagues had steadily increased over recent years, with Deloitte reporting an 80% wages to revenue ratio in League One and 78% in League Two in 2018/19.

| MANCHESTER UNITED WOMEN ARRIVE ON A MATCH DAY WEARING FACE COVERINGS - A NOW COMMON SIGHT IN THE GAME |



What is clear is that the pandemic has had a profound impact on all of our football clubs, shining the clearest light yet on existing models of finance, governance and regulation throughout the game. The future of English football is now firmly on the table in a way it would never have been pre-pandemic. If given appropriate consideration and due diligence, one of the worst years for the game in living memory could yet prove to be its long term salvation both on and off the pitch.

| EVEN GOALPOSTS ARE DISINFECTED AS A PRECAUTION |



COACHING | BUSINESS

THE POWER OF STATISTICS IN SPORT

Statistics are an increasingly valuable aspect of sport, including the concept of spread betting to identify young football talent. For the likes of Championship side Brentford, the method famously employed by owner Matthew Benham, is a closely guarded secret. Future Sport decided to step into the unknown and find out why it could be the model of the future....

The David versus Goliath story is one of the oldest in sport. After all, everybody loves an underdog. But what if you no longer want to be David, yet don't have the means to become Goliath?

For those in football who don't have deep pockets, the alternative routes to success are few, and the success stories themselves even fewer. However, Matthew Benham's purchase of Brentford FC in 2012 may change that. The club's success over the last decade is well written – promotion to the Championship, a new stadium, new training ground, a seemingly endless supply chain of young talent and a play-off final appearance – but perhaps their biggest success will be if their unique recruitment model catches on.

Owner of SmartOdds, a company that uses a stats-based model to provide advice to bettors and customers alike, Benham and his team have been employing a similar tactic to player recruitment at the West London club since taking over. In essence, it's lots and lots of data crunching to unearth undervalued talent.

The club crunch the numbers to find under-performing talent with a high ceiling, develop them and then sell them on for a high mark-



| BRENTFORD PLUCKED SAID BENRAHMA FROM NICE BEFORE HE JOINED WEST HAM |

up. Sounds simple, but the club's numbers go deeper. They look at different teams and different leagues to identify markets they believe to have a higher level than others. Nothing is off the table.

"It's not that data tells you who to pick, data can tell you where to look," the club's director of football Rasmus Ankersen has previously said.



| LEE DYKES, BRENTFORD'S HEAD OF RECRUITMENT AND GIS DELEGATE |

For a club like Brentford, who have one of the smallest playing budgets in the Championship, this model enables them to be highly competitive. Over the last five years the club have sold players for a combined value of £150m, including Ollie Watkins and Said Benrahma in the recent summer transfer window for a combined estimated £50m. The huge profit made on players has helped the club recently open the brand new Brentford Community Stadium, but also reinvest into the team to remain competitive.

Lee Dykes, the club's head of recruitment, told Future Sport: "Matthew will tell you himself that we never want to be in a position where we have to outspend our competitors – we out think them. That's why it's such an innovative club and everything recruitment wise is geared towards that philosophy."

Fed up with losing their best academy talent to bigger clubs in London, and in response to the Premier League's elite player performance plan (EPPP), the club controversially scrapped their academy in 2016. Instead, they introduced a 'B' team model which hoovered up released academy players from around London and further afield. Like all player recruitment there are varying levels of success, but for a club like Brentford the financial rewards are worth it if a player makes that step up to the first team.

Dykes, a GIS delegate on the VSI MSc Sports Directorship, added: "The football club wins because the asset value of the player goes up. But as you saw on the pitch last season, we added key experience on the pitch [to the first team] as well and we're focussed heavily on what a successful team looks like. There's been some good investment to achieve a very strong football team that I believe we were unlucky not to be promoted."

Benham's model proving a success at Brentford won't be a surprise to anyone who has followed his career over the years. In 2014 he acquired Danish Superliga side FC Midtjylland – one year later they won the championship for the very first time. The model has been closely followed by a number of people in the game, none more so than Will Daniels at Spreadex.

A senior sports trader and former colleague of Brentford's other director of football, Phil Giles, Daniels has been implementing his own methods over the last couple of seasons at League One side AFC Wimbledon as a consultant analyst.

A lifelong Dons fans, Daniels explained to Future Sport in more detail how that crossover between spread betting and football analysis worked.

He told us: "In the gambling world every decision has to be justifiable and you have to use a rounded selection of knowledge. It's not just good fortune that guys like Matthew Benham and Tony Bloom [Brighton & Hove Albion chairman] win a lot of money on gambling – that comes from a lot of hard work and a huge number of analytics from a huge number of people. So those skills transfer really nicely into football because you can combine as many different information sources as possible to try and achieve the right answer."

> ARTICLE CONTINUES

“IN THE GAMBLING WORLD EVERY DECISION HAS TO BE JUSTIFIABLE.”



Daniels, himself a GIS delegate, added: “I feel that the knowledge you get from both analysing football, and the number of contacts and experts you get in studying the game, has given both Brighton and Brentford a huge boost over the years. I don’t think they’d mind me saying that they’re not being geniuses in what they’re doing, they’re just making really informed and justifiable decisions with the hard work behind them.”

That’s what Will is now trying to achieve at AFC Wimbledon, he says. The club recently moved back to their original home at Plough Lane, nearly 30 years after their last game there. For the club now it’s about climbing the leagues in an informed way.

Daniels said that the club must now think in an innovative way. “The trading platform is the most viable option for Wimbledon if we’re going to get above League One level,”

he says. “It’s about trying to use a lot of creativity in the way that we look at players and the way we buy and sell.”

For Dykes and Brentford, they’re convinced they’re on the road to the Premier League and looking at recent evidence it’s hard to argue. The club were just 90 minutes away from the top flight in last season’s delayed campaign, and despite selling two of the feared ‘BMW’ strike force in the summer, they’ll be expecting to challenge once again for promotion.

He added: “Everybody that works for Brentford is very excited at the moment because they’re such a bold club. If you look at the structure of how a football club should look, Matthew, Phil and Rasmus have the club, in my mind, how a lot of clubs should be run.”



| AFC WIMBLEDON ARE THE LATEST CLUB TO LOOK AT STATISTICS DIFFERENTLY |

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COACHING

IN CONVERSATION WITH...

ROBBIE FOWLER

Often referred to as 'God' by the Liverpool faithful, Robbie Fowler is without doubt one of the most devastating goal scorers in Premier League history. For over a decade he scored goals for fun in the top flight for the Reds, Leeds United and Manchester City. Speaking to Future Sport just before he took the reins at Indian Super League side SC East Bengal in October 2020, Fowler talked about the importance of partnerships, working as a collective and the reasons behind his successful career...

Did scoring as many goals as you did during your first few seasons at Liverpool create extra pressure for you as a young footballer?

I suppose it did it but I never looked at it that way. I enjoyed my football anyway so it was a case for me of just going out and keep on doing what I needed to do to be the player I wanted to be. I suppose that's football in a nutshell - the more games you play the more pressure you put on yourself. If you hit the ground running and score goals, then that pressure more or less falls on your shoulders as opposed to from elsewhere.



| FOWLER IS SEVENTH IN THE ALL-TIME PREMIER LEAGUE TOP SCORERS LIST |

You and Stan Collymore were prolific at Anfield alongside Steve McManaman. How did you all click so well?

I like to think good players can play with anyone else. With Stevie we had a great understanding on and off the pitch, but regardless of whether you're mates off the pitch or not, as long as there is that good understanding on the pitch I think that is what primarily we need as football players. I never socialised with Stan like Stevie, but when we were on the pitch he knew what I was going to do and I more or less knew what he was going to do. Ian Rush will tell you that the best player he ever played with was Kenny Dalglish because of the goals he scored; my best striker was Stan simply for the fact that I scored more goals with him. It's a selfish attitude but the relationship we had on the pitch was frightening. We both weighed in with goals and helped each other out.

Then there was the famous cup treble in 2000/01. What happened behind the scenes to make it such a success?

I think whenever you are building a team it's important that you get the right team morale and players within a squad so you can galvanise everyone. I'm not sure we had one player dislike anyone within that team; we all got on and mixed in the right way which can be important for teams because it just gives you a little bit of a release. I think we were not just the 11 because there was a time when obviously we did have a few injuries, myself included - players came in and did unbelievable jobs as well. So I think it ticked every box of what you need to be a successful team when the players believe in each other.

You left Liverpool in 2001 before returning five years later. Did you feel you had unfinished business?

I get what you're saying but I'm not sure whether that is the correct phrase. My life was so much easier when playing for Liverpool; my family and I were all still living in the area and it was something that I really wanted

to do. Maybe in my first spell towards the end I became a little bit too complacent or a little bit stale. To say unfinished business is strong but obviously I wanted to come in and still score goals, but I think I was far more appreciative of the club.

You're currently seventh in the all-time Premier League top scorers list with 163 goals. What do you think made you such a devastating goal scorer?

I think it helps when you have a little bit of talent! I recently did my pro license and one of my theses was nature or nurture. I was always described as one of the most naturally gifted goal scorers. I probably made it look natural, without sounding big headed, because of the monotony of doing the same things over and over again. On the training pitch I used to love scoring goals, so it was just a case of doing the same again and again. I suppose when you do that, and when you practice as much as I did, then it becomes or it looks more natural when you're playing a game.

> ARTICLE CONTINUES

"I LIKE TO THINK THAT GOOD PLAYERS CAN PLAY WITH ANYONE."

| FOWLER IS ADORED BY THE KOP AT ANFIELD |





| FOWLER, LEFT, AND JAMIE CARRAGHER WITH THE FA CUP |

“I LOOK BACK ON MY ENGLAND CAREER AS BITTER-SWEET.”

You scored goals for England, earnt over 20 caps and were in three tournament squads but you were competing for a place with the likes of Alan Shearer and Michael Owen. How do you look back on your England career?

I was unlucky because there were that many good players about. I look back on my England career as bitter-sweet, if you like. I would have preferred a lot more caps. I think I'd scored almost 100 goals before I got my first cap. If I was playing now and had played ten games as an English forward I'd be guaranteed more or less to be in that squad. If I'd scored 98 goals I'd be captain - I think I'd probably be managing the team! It's not something that I look back on fondly and think I had this great England career because in all fairness, I didn't. I got 26 caps, but I think I only started

12 games. I'm happy with my goals per game ratio but am I happy with my caps? Probably not. I should have had a lot more.

If you could give one piece of advice for those at the very start of their sports career what would that be?

You've got to go out and enjoy what you're doing. I think when you enjoy it you give it a little bit more; you go out there with the correct attitude wanting to be better all the time. When you actually enjoy it your belief grows as well. I think if you have belief in yourself and go out there and show the right attitude then nothing can stand in your way. You need to be a little bit lucky at times but with the correct attitude you'll enjoy it more.



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