

THE ECONOMIC IMPACT OF SPORT IN ENGLAND'S EAST MIDLANDS

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Context

In March 2004, the East Midlands Development Agency (*emda*) commissioned Knight, Kavanagh & Page and York Consulting to undertake an assessment of the economic impact of sport in the East Midlands (see full report and appendices¹). The work involved:

- Compiling a database of sports businesses and sector mapping for the region
- Assessing the key characteristics of the sector
- Reviewing areas contributing to, and with the greatest potential for economic growth, and
- Generating an action plan and recommendations about the way forward.

The report examined policy implications for sport, the regional Development Agency, Sport England, the Countryside Agency and the region's association with the successful 2012 Olympic bid. Although it makes reference to, and explores various aspects of, sports related tourism, *emda* also commissioned a separate and complementary project on sports tourism.

Methodology

The KKP/York study combined quantitative and qualitative techniques to produce a factual backdrop and national context alongside opinion and debate (as shown below). This made it possible to explore opportunities and outline a way forward for the region's sports related economy.

Quantitative – assessing the composition, economic impact and distribution of sport provision and sports related businesses, including company size and Gross Value Added (GVA), representation and performance of professional clubs in the region to be produced (see Table below).

Qualitative - more than fifty individual and group interviews, and seven themed workshops to ascertain the opinions of key players and agencies across the region.

<i>Greater Nottingham Sub-regional Strategic Partnership</i>	
Population	621,635 representing 14.9% of the East Midlands' population
Employment	8,468 jobs within Greater Nottingham SSP are in the sports sector <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ This represents 18.6% of the sports-related jobs within the region▪ 1,696 more jobs (25.0%) than might have been expected had there been an equal distribution of sports employment and population▪ Above-average numbers of people employed in facility-based (indoor; 115% above and outdoor: 41.1% above) sports clubs and associations, 'unstructured' outdoor sports (148.8% above), retail and manufacturing▪ Below-average numbers employed in countryside and motorsport
Company size	75.5% contain 10 or fewer employees, 2.5% contain over 100
Income	£165.7m in income per annum
GVA	£257.1m is generated through sport in Greater Nottingham SSP
Growth areas	Sports clubs; 16.8%, Activity centres; 26.7%, Sale, retail, hire & repair; 13.7%, Other sports; 19.1%

¹ Report - <http://www.emda.org.uk/uploaddocuments/EISSFinalreportH4Emda.doc>

Appendices - <http://www.emda.org.uk/uploaddocuments/EISSFinalreportH4Appendices.doc>

Key findings

The selection of key findings set out below is accompanied by an example of how GIS and gap analyses can be combined to direct practical improvements in a local rural economy.

Sport and sports-related businesses (not including professional clubs) play a significant role in the region's economy, albeit one which falls below the national average, and account for:

- 46,775 jobs (about 2.4% of the overall number) in the East Midlands (cf. England 2.6%)
- 2.28% of the East Midlands regional economy, contributing around £1,421m to total gross value added (GVA) compared with sport's contribution of 2.42% nationally.

Professional sport (clubs and venues) account for 2,238 jobs in the region, generating approximately £85.95m in wages and salaries for those employed and £133.43m in GVA.

The region's key advantages include:

- The academic and research profile of the region in sport is higher than others in England primarily because of Loughborough University, the Queens Medical Centre in Nottingham and the significant contribution made by other universities
- Innovation in sports, with notable successes such as the Reebok Deck
- Universities' reputation, in particular Loughborough's, for business incubation, and
- Business relationships with companies such as Adidas, Dunlop and Callaway.

The greatest economic growth opportunities for the East Midlands were identified as:

- Loughborough - performance sport, research and innovation
- Professional sports clubs and venues
- Provision and integration of business support services for the sports industry, and
- The contribution of sport to the marketing, branding and tourism offer of the region.

Areas explored in greater detail include

- Using sport to market and raise the profile of the region, development of the sporting brand to positively showcase the region's sporting excellence and achievement
- A 'centre for research excellence' networking expertise, creating new opportunities and providing a conduit for sports related research from technology to medicine
- A proposal for an East Midlands-Loughborough Company focusing on performance sport, research and innovation in partnership with *emda* and other key organisations
- More sophisticated use of ICT to increase the effectiveness, efficiency, reach and audience base for sport, sports business and sports tourism
- Promoting inter-club/agency collaboration on development of the Region's national and international conference trade profile and extension of the wider tourist offer
- A strong focus on social enterprises in sport linked to a dedicated business service resource, in conjunction with Social Enterprise East Midlands
- The use of GIS to review services and inform spatial planning, capital investment, economic development and business support at macro and micro-levels
- The region's potential links to the 2012 Olympics in respect of the:
 - High proportion of the UK's elite athletes and associated coaching, sports science and sports medicine structures based in the area; 42 Olympians and 22 Paralympians in the Great Britain teams at the Athens Olympics 2004 were from, or are based in, the East Midlands, &
 - Potential to host acclimatisation and pre-training camps for visiting nations through the concentration of high quality sports training and conference facilities.

Strategic micro-level planning

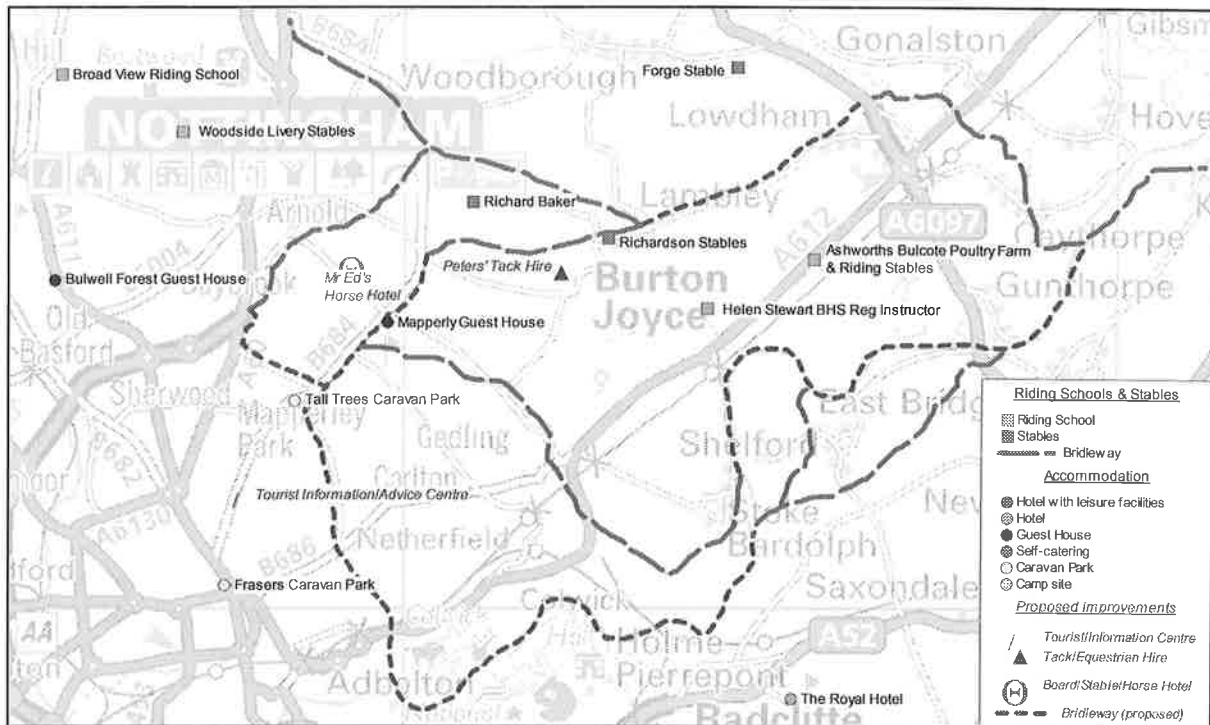
The study also recommended the use of geographic information systems alongside gap-analysis to investigate whether and how key 'micro' level investments could be locally significant and impact on the economic and social robustness of rural communities, enhancing not only the visitor offer but also

the quality of life and economic regeneration of rural communities. At a local level, for example, mapping and developing a combined database of:

- ❑ Establishments providing accommodation, services and transport, for example, drawing together guest houses, horse hotels and riding schools.
- ❑ Footpaths, bridleways and towpaths.

Many sport and physical activity groups depend upon such networks (see illustration below for example of micro-level strategy to achieve rationalisation). This approach ensured that it was possible to identify elements absent from a strategy aimed at the development of targeted tourism packages or the establishment of bridleway networks.

Example: Theoretical review of equestrian and short-stay tourist facilities at a micro-level.



A heightened awareness of the relevance of such provision, the ‘cross-cutting’ benefits for tourism, business collaboration and sustainability, and the critical importance of small improvements to complete ‘loops’, service provision networks or holiday packages is required. The wider significance of such proposals could be further supplemented by placing them in the broader context of promoting healthy lifestyles.

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REFEREES: RUGBY'S FRONTLINE MANAGERS

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Context

Over the past decade Rugby Union Football has made great advances in positioning the code as a global sport. This occurred through strategic international developments, like successful World Cup competitions. The number of nations playing the sport and entering the World Cup or the World 7s Competition places the sport second in global participation. The advent of the Super 12 (soon to be the Super 14) in the Southern Hemisphere and the Heineken Cup and other national competitions in the Northern Hemisphere, puts more attention and focus on the sport.

This expansion resulted in the code becoming a professional sport at elite level and in greater media attention, fan support, and public scrutiny. Whilst players and coaches were poised to enter the professional era, other facets of the sport were not. In particular the professionalisation of game officials is uneven. Game officials now form "teams" in their own right, of 10-15 personnel. Little research or insight in this key factor of rugby exists.

New levels of professionalism are happening to the officials' teams - developing standardised protocols, professional development interventions and educating game management personnel. This paper starts by examining developments after the 1996 watershed, to identify the issues, pressures, and responses to the demand for more professional management. Next we report a structural analysis of the official teams, including discussion of education and coaching developments. Finally, the paper discusses quality management, from Deming's (2000) perspective, and the future developments required. It originated through work undertaken with International Rugby Board (IRB) panel referees and their immediate supervisors in Australia and is based on the Australian Rugby Union's (ARU) developments to increase the quality and professional development of its game officials.

Methods

The referees studied officiate at Super 12, Tri-Nations, and IRB competitions. Their supervisors include selectors, a match assessor, and their nationally appointed coach. The nexus of national, supra-national, and international officials' panels is evident here – i.e. several closely coupled organizations are involved in developing, selecting, and assessing officials. Initially, our method was to observe individual referees and feedback to them after a match. We were able to listen to the referee through his microphone, observe his actions, and then discuss them with the match assessor and the referee's coach.

Whilst the initial contact focussed on improvements in the individual referees' communication skills, the study moved beyond this to centre on the overall quality management of the officials teams. Rather than simply generating lists of competencies and skills to reduce variation of judgments and decisions during matches, toward standardisation and consistency, we took a holistic approach. We sought ways to improve the quality of the game, understanding it as an integrated whole, and to develop management models that address the quality issues for improving the learning and skills of referees.

Then, we carried out intensive interviews to ascertain the organisational structure and understand how individuals are integrated. In-depth interviews (n=15) were completed with ARU game officials, referees' coaches, selectors, and game official managers. Using a semi-structured schedule, the period from 1996 to the present was mapped to identify how officials, and teams had evolved. Parallel to this, content analyses of policy, education programme, and minutes of ARU and IRB officials' meetings and workshops were completed. Finally, we employed a mapping exercise to locate the goals of the officials' panel in terms of structures and systems in place to develop them.

Results

The development of RU game officials was found to be moving rapidly at ARU level, but developments were contingent at the IRB level. Uneven developments were identified within and