

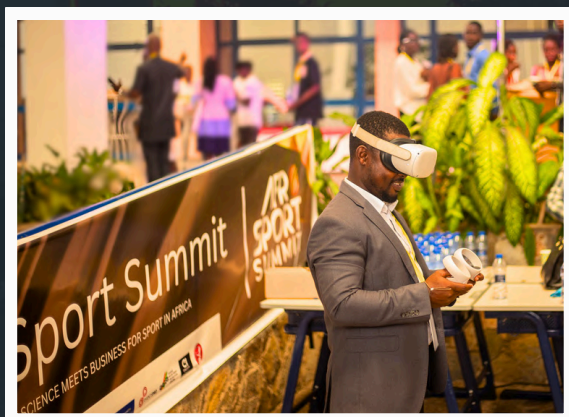
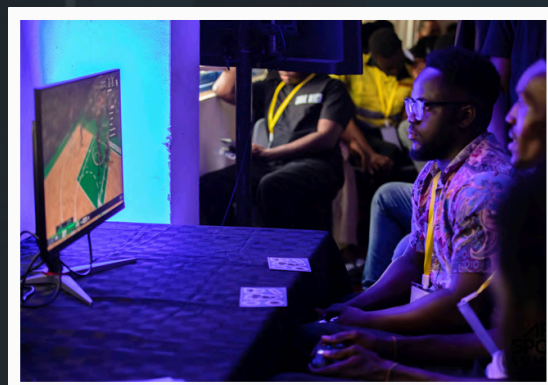
AFROSPORT SUMMIT

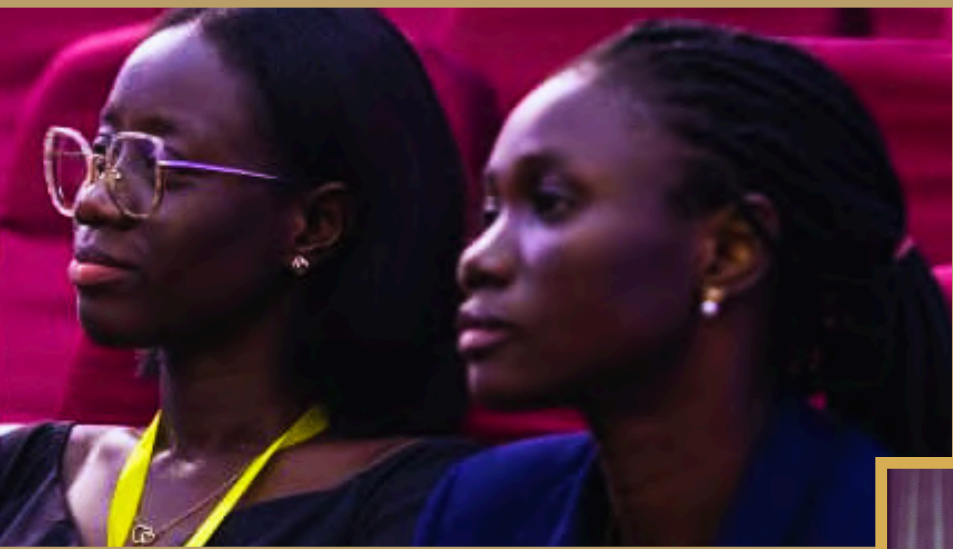
WHERE SCIENCE MEETS BUSINESS
FOR SPORT IN AFRICA

REVIEW **2024**



July 17-18 2024

*Ghana College of Physicians and Surgeons
Accra - Ghana*





REVIEWS

Paul Azumah Salam-Ayagri • 2nd
 • Lifelong learner • Sport Management •
 3mo •  


On 17th and 18th July, I was privileged to attend the AfroSport Summit 2024 edition, which saw leaders in sport, business, and science come together to share ideas and solutions to relevant issues in the sport industry. Meeting and connecting with experts in their respective fields of sports was a highlight. All the sessions were informative and eye-opening.

We learned a lot from the sport for development sessions, business ideas from Esports, and intellectual property laws. We learned fan engagement and media strategies, and how to design programs and products that are relevant to the societies and contexts in which we want to effect change.

A highlight of the summit was when former Black Stars players talked about life after sports and how athletes can thrive after their athletic careers are over. Taking courses in leadership, governance, events, and other opportunities is essential to ensure they remain relevant after sports and use their experience to raise the new generation of athletes.

Special thanks to Mr [Prince Narkortu Teye](#), CEO of AfroSport Summit for organizing a splendid event that brought together great people with solid ideas that will be used to change the narrative of sports in Ghana and Africa in general.

[GoldDux Sports Corporation](#) [Prince Kofi Apoh](#) #AfroSportSummit #Sportmanagement








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Liked by [radjoa](#), [garfawomen](#) and others
[ridgcityfc](#) Happy to have our club invited to this years' #AfroSportSummit in Accra! 🇵🇸🇳🇮

Networking for women's football! ⚽ 

BevonherAgame
 @MaxxyB 


@AfroSportSummit Day 2
 Connecting with the sports ecosystem
 Knowledge sharing
 Moderating
 Relationship building
 Always at the centre
 Well done @PNTeye



 Yacine Abeka and 2 others


9:03 PM · Jul 18, 2024 · 535 Views

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Southern University Law Center
 July 17 · 

For the last two years, the Law Center has served as a sponsor for the AfroSport Summit in Accra, Ghana.

Marla Dickerson, vice chancellor for Innovation and Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives and Chris Turner, director of SULC's Mixed Reality Virtual Innovation Gaming and Esports Institution were joined by Kwesi Hayford, president of Ghana Esports Association and Danny Martin, chief executive officer of Esposure to discuss the parallels of the legal industry and the gaming world. They explored branding, contracts, internet access, and more. #SULC #Esports #Gaming




 10 3 shares

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WHAT IS AFROSPORT SUMMIT?

The socio-economic potential of sport is incredibly limitless. From being a primary amusement activity, sport now transforms economies in a multi-billion-dollar industry of its own, while occupying a special place as a powerful force for social change and development.

At the heart of this revolution is heavy capital investment, radical innovations, and tremendous scientific drive.

While many around the world benefit from sport's true power, Africa, unfortunately, lags in exploiting the boundless opportunities on offer.

This has resulted in a painfully slow growth of the sport industry on the continent, a lamentable near-sideline of an opportunity to boost socio-economic growth, and struggle to compete internationally on the field and beyond.

The AfroSport Summit is a two-day event bringing together stakeholders of the African sport value chain for knowledge gathering, progressive conversations, and networking in a unique environment of an intersection of science, business and tourism.

A gathering of sport clubs, leagues, federations, athletes, coaches, distinguished personalities, businesses, academia, media and more, the two-day conference aims to fuel development, tackling the continent's peculiar challenges and charting a new course for socio-economic growth.

The event consists of a congress, industry talks, expo, gala cocktail, and more.



WHAT WILL I FIND AT AFROSPORT?



Main Auditorium



Industry Talk Halls



Networking Centre



Expo



Food Area



Corporate/
VIP Lounge

WHO ATTENDS AFROSPORT?



Federations &
Associations



Clubs



Academia



Media



Businesses



Distinguished
Personalities

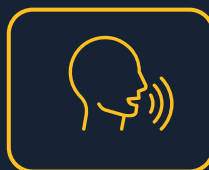


Coaches

HOW CAN I PARTICIPATE?



Delegate



Speak



Industry Talk



Exhibit



Partner/Sponsor



Press



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

Dear Member of the Sport Value Chain,

It is always a pleasure welcoming the sport value chain to the AfroSport Summit to connect, network, take stock of our sport and its value, learn, share ideas and, among others, look brightly into the future.

Profound appreciation goes to all involved in making this gathering possible – the Government of Ghana, its Ministry for Youth and Sports, and the Ghana Tourism Authority - and our associate partners of Stats Perform Opta and the Southern University Law Center.

Appreciation also goes to the Johan Cruyff Institute, Events Pro, RwandAir, the Ghana Investment Promotion Centre (GIPC), the Ghana League Clubs Association (Ghalca) and the Professional Footballers Association of Ghana (PFAG) for supporting us in diverse ways.

At the AfroSport Summit, we stand resolute in our dreams of bringing together members of the sport value chain, including clubs, leagues, federations, athletes, coaches, distinguished personalities, businesses, academia, media and more, with the utmost aim of fuelling development, tackling the continent's peculiar challenges and charting a new course for socio-economic growth.

We believe that only through joint efforts like this can the continent rise above our challenges, while promoting an Africa of profound sporting opportunities and beyond. I would like to make a special appeal to African national governments and their various agencies to embrace and support private sector initiatives in the strive for African sporting and general socio-economic excellence.

Again, it is my hope that the private sector open themselves to collaborations for a better and stronger ecosystem and value-chain for all.

Yours in sports,

Prince Narkotu Teye
Chief Executive
AfroSport Summit

AFROSPORT SUMMIT 2024 SNAPSHOT

ATTENDEES



SPEAKERS



SESSIONS



NATIONALITIES REPRESENTED

13



-  Ghana
-  Rwanda
-  Gabon
-  Australia
-  Kenya
-  Gambia
-  Nigeria
-  France
-  Ivory coast
-  Liberia
-  UK
-  USA
-  Zambia

PARTNERS:

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KEYNOTES



Hon. Mustapha Ussif

Ghana Minister for Youth and Sports

The government of Ghana is deeply committed to harnessing the utmost value of sports, so opportunities like this are treated with all the seriousness and attention it requires.

This has been reflected with Ghana's recent hosting of the 13th African Games, Accra 2023, in March this year, where we welcomed the rest of the continent for two weeks of continental and international engagement and sportsmanship.

The government's significant investment in sports infrastructure aims to develop and promote sports, as well as use sports for development in Ghana. This commitment was highlighted in March when Accra was named the African City for Sports by the African Union, following Ghana's successful hosting and organization of the African Games.

As a government, we recognize the immense socioeconomic power of sports. From creating job opportunities for many to promoting the brand of Ghana globally, the potential is limitless.





Akwasi Agyeman

CEO, Ghana Tourism Authority

Over the last few years, as a destination, we've been trying to position Ghana as a MICE (meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions/events) destination. The intersection between sports and tourism is one of dynamism.

We know that destinations have been clamoring to have sports events hosted in their cities. That is why you find countries bidding to host the World Cup, the Africa Cup of Nations and other events because it shows a spotlight on the country.

For us in tourism it helps us to promote the destination, the food, the culture and all the various attractions that we have, and so we see sports and tourism as a shared passion, something with a common trait that helps to ignite. Sports and tourism are also economic powerhouses.

As people visit destinations, if you look at the value chain of tourism, hotels, transportation, airlines, restaurants, the entire nine years, the entire value chain seeks to benefit. And so we are excited that the AfroSport Summit is happening here, and we believe that as the event grows, it becomes a powerhouse of a summit that we can utilise to promote our destination.





Prof. Joshua Alabi

Former Greater Accra Regional Minister, Ghana

Sports is a unifying force, bridging ethnicity, religion, and social class. It is a catalyst for health, fostering physical fitness, and mental well-being. It is an economic engine, creating jobs, stimulating local business, and attracting investment. And most importantly, sports inspire hope and ambition among our youth, providing them with a platform to showcase their talents and achieve greatness.

The economic benefits of investing in sports are manifold. By developing robust sports infrastructure, we can create numerous jobs from construction and maintenance to coaching and administration. Sports events attract tourism, boosting local economies through hospitality and related industries and stimulating urban development.

Africa's greatest asset is its youth. We have a unique opportunity to harness their energies and potential through sports. By investing in youth sports programs, we can provide avenues for skills development, leadership training, and personal growth.

As we promote sport development, it is imperative that we ensure gender equality, breaking down barriers and challenging the way we see women when it comes to sports. By supporting female athletes and investing in women's sports, we can empower half of our population, driving further in socio-economic development and progress.

Sports development is not just a policy. It is a pathway to a better future in Africa. Let us embrace this vision with passion and dedication, knowing that our collective efforts will lead to a stronger, healthier, and more prosperous Africa.





SPORT FOR DEVELOPMENT SPOTLIGHT: HIGHLIGHTING SOME COMMENDABLE INITIATIVES IN AFRICA

Panelists:



Badara Jeng

Coach and Basketball Development Coordinator, The Hope Project Gambia



Prince Osiadan

CEO, SUCCA Africa, Ghana



Shogo Shodunnke

CEO, PhreeStyle Sports, Nigeria

Sport for development leverages the power of sport to drive social change, promote health and education and foster community development. In Africa, various organisations and initiatives have been at the forefront of using sport to address pressing societal issues such as youth unemployment, gender inequality and health disparities. This discussion aimed at spotlighting the work of such organisations, share best practices and explore a broader impact of sport for development in African communities.

Shogo Shodunnke's **ARMAPRO** initiative targets athletes at the grassroots level, developing them into professional footballers while preparing them for life after their careers. Since launching ARMAPRO in 2016, the initiative has produced about 165 footballers. There is a strong focus on the education of athletes, with six players in the Nigerian professional league being graduates.

This highlights the importance of academic achievement alongside athletic success. As he puts it, "Life is beyond 90 minutes and also is beyond the court". Consequently, his "Play Safe Play Plan" initiative also builds athletes' capacity in personal financial management and education, through facilitating their enrolment in vocational training and diploma courses during the off-season.

He is exploring a collaboration with the University of Ghana where athletes from Nigeria can enrol in sport management courses during their off-season, a collaboration which was sparked by attending the 2023 edition of the summit. A key part of the project's philosophy is using football terminology to emphasise planning for the future.



SUCCA Africa is a management consulting firm that provides consulting services on Environmental and Social Governance (ESG) across various sectors including banking and mining. Realising a gap in the local sports industry regarding these critical areas, the Green Football project aims to fill this void by integrating environmental and social change in football.

The project is a collaboration between SUCCA Africa, the Ghana League Clubs Association and the Sports20 Network, with the objectives of promoting environmental sustainability amongst football clubs whilst reducing operational costs by employing sustainability initiatives. Prince Osiadan said, "There's a gold mine the clubs are living with that they don't even see, which is waste. If in a typical match they look at the waste generated, we want to be able to let them monetize the waste that is generated in the stadium".

The project also seeks to leverage the popularity and influence of professional athletes as ambassadors to promote pro-environmental behaviour among the public. This initiative would be showcased at the 29th Conference of Parties (COP29) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, highlighting its significance on a global stage and its potential impact on sustainable sports development in Africa.

The Hope Project Gambia focuses on grassroot basketball where basketball is used as a tool to campaign against drugs and illegal migration in Gambia's rural areas.

Gambia's proximity to the Mediterranean promotes illegal migration across the sea, leading many individuals attempting dangerous crossings. This prompted the project to use basketball as a platform for awareness and prevention.

The initiative targets grassroots levels, particularly in rural areas, to identify and nurture talent. The project runs an annual camp where young people are trained to develop their skills in basketball and supported in education as well as trained in life skills, preparing participants for future success beyond basketball. Badara Jeng remarked, "We're really using it [basketball] in a good way because we just don't focus on the skills development. We focus on educational aspects as well". The project has successfully helped several young athletes secure scholarships to play basketball in the United States, including the first Gambian scholarship recipient at Florida State University and another at Ohio State.

These successes illustrate the potential of the programme to change lives and provide opportunities for the rural youth. The Hope Project also ensures equal opportunities for both boys and girls, fostering an environment of equality in sports and education. While basketball in Gambia faces challenges, there is optimism about its growth and the positive impact of the Hope Project on the sport's development in the region.

DRIVING LEGAL EXCELLENCE IN GAMING, ESPORTS, MUSIC AND ENTERTAINMENT: A SOUTHERN UNIVERSITY LAW CENTER PANEL

Panelists:



Marla Dickerson

Vice Chancellor of Innovation and Strategic Partnerships and Initiatives, Southern University Law Center, USA



Christopher Turner

Director, Mixed Reality, Virtual Innovation, Gaming and Esports Institute, Southern University Law Center, USA



Danny Martin

Co-founder and CEO, Esposure, USA



Kwesi Hayford

President, Esports Association, Ghana

The session, presented by the Southern University Law Center, provided an in-depth look at the rapidly growing esports industry, highlighting its potential as a major sub-sector in the global sports ecosystem. Panelists explored a range of topics, from company building and workforce development to the critical legal considerations surrounding intellectual property (IP) and contract negotiations. The session also shed light on the evolving opportunities for content creators within esports and navigating the legal complexities that come with rapid digital growth. These discussions underscored the need for strategic planning and legal counsel to capitalise on esports' untapped potential in Africa and beyond.

The key insights from the discussion are as follows:

Legal Aspects and Contractual Protection for Players

- Players should always seek legal advice

- before signing any playing contracts to ensure their rights are protected. Joining player organizations or associations can help protect players' interests and provide support in contract negotiations
- Contracts should comply with labour laws, ensuring fair working conditions, such as reasonable hours and breaks. Contracts should be balanced and fair for both parties. Players must ensure the terms are reasonable and can be upheld without risking a contract breach.
- Players should not be overworked or forced into unrealistic training requirements, avoid non-compete clauses and ensure their contracts include proper compensation and benefits, such as health insurance and the ability to access medical care.
- Players must safeguard their IP (e.g., their face, name, and likeness) and avoid contracts that give organisations excessive control over their IP.

"I've been in the space long enough to know you have to get legal advice. That's the first thing you need to do. As a player, you have IP, that is, your face, your likeness. You don't want to sign it away. I've seen that happen multiple times, especially early on in the esports space where players just signed everything away and the organisation got a piece of everything."

Christopher Turner

Intellectual Property and Content Creation

- Gamers often overlook the detailed terms and conditions of games, which outline the limitations on what creators can do with games. Publishers of games may have restrictions on how games can be broadcast, particularly on traditional media and for tournaments with certain prize pools. Violating these IP rules can result in bans or penalties from digital content platforms, causing frustration for content creators who are unaware of the regulations.
- The esports industry is as an untapped frontier, like space exploration. Legal frameworks are still being developed, and creators should take advantage of the current landscape to establish and protect their IP while seeking guidance from legal professionals.
- Creators should be aware of the potential for their work to gain recognition and should prepare themselves legally to benefit financially from such success.

"Unfortunately, most of us gamers don't read them [the rules]. We are quick to play the game. Yes, you bought a game, but the game is not solely for you. As content creators and as gamers, we need to read between the lines to see where these rules and regulations apply." – Kwesi Hayford

Company Building and Workforce Development

- Start-ups and growing companies in the esports industry can leverage students (in high school and university) to complement their human resource through contracting arrangements such as paid internships. This also gives students opportunity to build their portfolios and gather relevant work experience prior to entering the work force as adults.

"At Esposure, we have about 17 students that are in high school and middle schools that are working in our organisation from a contracting perspective. This gives them a great opportunity to develop their portfolios, so when they get into college or going straight into the workforce, they have the skills that are super important". –

Danny Martin



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FAN ENGAGEMENT AND MEDIA STRATEGIES

Panelists:



Daniel Price

Senior Manager, Media and Pro Partnerships Africa, Stats Perform Opta



Neil Armstrong-Mortagbe

Head of Public Relations and Strategy, Ghana Football Association



Ameenu Shardow

General Manager, Dreams FC; Team Manager, Ghana Black Stars

This session focused on innovative ways through which sport properties such as leagues and clubs can connect with modern sports audiences, both digitally and in-person. Panelists discussed the challenges of reaching fans across diverse platforms, the importance of creating meaningful content, and the role of data and statistics in driving fan interaction. They also highlighted the need for affordable media solutions, community-based approaches, and the creative use of influencers to build stronger fan bases. The session provided valuable insights into how leagues, teams, and brands can enhance fan loyalty and generate new revenue streams in an increasingly digital sports landscape.

The key insights from the discussion are as follows:

Broadcasting and Match Visibility

- There is a paucity of match broadcasting across Africa, limiting visibility for sports teams and fans. Broadcasting does not have to be expensive. Relying on cost-effective solutions like mobile phone cameras can make it easier to broadcast games. Ensuring that matches reach audiences is fundamental.
- Once fans can consistently watch games, other aspects of engaging fans and

driving revenue can easily be capitalised on.

“You need every match broadcast because every team is important. Without that fundamental visibility, and it doesn't have to be expensive these days, it doesn't have to be OB vans everywhere, you can have very cost-effective mobile cameras put in the stadium, but you've got to get the content out there. What is the content? It's the match. Once you've got the match into people's eyeballs, then things can flow.” – Daniel Price

Community-Centric Fan Engagement Strategies:

- Leveraging community-centric strategies is important. For example, when teams are associated with specific communities, they can galvanise local support and build a strong fan base. Again, reinvigorating stadiums by making them community centres, not just sports venues, can bridge any gaps between sports teams and the communities in which they are located. This opens new avenues for driving fan engagement. Brighton and Hove Albion in the English Premier League, for example show how their new stadium revitalised interest by hosting diverse events, such as weddings and skills development classes, making it a community asset.

- Fans in rural areas often have strong attachments to local teams, such as juvenile (colts) football or lower division teams. Local rivalries and community pride drive high attendance at local matches. These factors can be tapped into by developing sports products that cater to local interests and emotions

“Stats drive conversations. What is the currency? The currency of football is goals. We all know that. But the currency of social media, the currency of marketing, sponsorship, is conversation. And I think we can all agree, the more stats you have, the deeper stats go, the more conversations you can have which equals more sponsorship opportunities” – Daniel Price

Data-driven Engagement, Commercialisation and Sponsorship Opportunities

- Fans today are highly engaged with live scores and statistics, driven by an insatiable appetite for data. However, in Ghana for example, there is a lack of deep stats for the Ghana Premier League, unlike global leagues like the EPL or La Liga, where stats fuel fan discussions.

- Stats drive social media conversations, which, in turn, drive marketing and sponsorship opportunities. Continuous fan engagement through daily or weekly updates on stats can keep fans connected throughout the week, not just on match days.
- Instead of focusing solely on stadium attendance, clubs and leagues should leverage social media engagement and digital impressions to measure and demonstrate fan engagement to sponsors.



- A significant portion of sports venues globally struggle with attendance, with only about 30% being consistently full. To counter this, it's crucial to analyze trends and adjust accordingly.
- Detailed stats provide an avenue for sponsorships and commercial opportunities, linking fan engagement with revenue generation. With more detailed stats, clubs and leagues can create multiple new revenue streams, including branded content, predictor games or weekly stats shows.
- Fantasy leagues add another dimension to fan participation and opens new sponsorship channels.
- African sport properties must view marketing and influencer engagement as investments, not costs. Many organisations claim they lack funds, but using influencers can generate returns, making it a worthwhile investment. Investments in media, marketing, and image-building should be viewed as strategic investments, not as mere costs. This mindset shift is crucial for attracting resources and growing sports organisations.

Digital Media and Influencer Engagement

- Physical access to rural communities can be difficult, with some places only accessible by boat. This logistical challenge makes it hard to engage fans in such areas in person. To overcome physical access challenges, fan engagement can be facilitated through digital means. Additionally, creating football products and experiences tailored to the local culture and rivalries can harness the passion for both local and international games.
- Identifying influencers is simple as they are already active on platforms like TikTok. Teams and leagues should look for popular influencers on social media and collaborate with them to promote their content.

- Simple, engaging content, such as short clips of fans or highlights, can go viral and engage large audiences. It does not require professional studios, just creativity and someone skilled with a smartphone.

Building on Tradition

- A unique way of engaging fans is through tapping into a team's history, culture, and mystique.
- Fan engagement is reinforced by creating rituals, such as fans eagerly awaiting the team's arrival at the stadium or rallying before games. These practices build anticipation and excitement, drawing people into the club's activities.
- Supporters are actively involved in the team, from attending rallies to visiting training grounds. This involvement strengthens their connection with the club and reinforces the club's traditions.

“I wasn't born into Hearts of Oak because my dad wasn't a supporter of the club. But I was living in a place called Osu and you had these old men who on a Sunday would be looking in the sky. And I wonder ‘What are these old men looking for?’ They were looking for a rainbow, one of the symbols of Accra Hearts of Oak. And they would say to me, a six-year-old, ‘Small boy, when you see the rainbow, and it drizzles a little bit, Hearts of Oak is going to win’.” – Neil Armstrong-Mortagbe

Infrastructure and Venue Experience

- Successful venues offer more than just sports. Communities are closely tied to venues that provide unique experiences, such as specialty foods, lounges, or even swimming pools, drawing fans for reasons beyond the game itself.
- Modern fans are becoming more discerning, wanting enhanced experiences like LED screens, interactive elements, quality food, drinks, and social opportunities. These features play a significant role in attracting fans to live events.
- The key strategy is to continually assess and cater to the growing, diverse needs of fans, creating venues and experiences that align with their expectations.
- Rather than building large, expensive stadiums, smaller, functional stadiums that meet basic certification requirements could have a significant positive impact on communities.

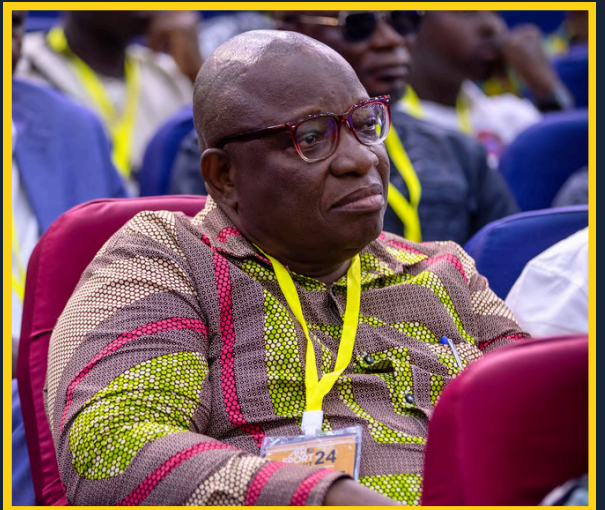
Creativity and Resourcefulness

- The shift from physical venues to digital platforms, accelerated by COVID-19, shows the need for creativity in maintaining fan engagement, for example, including virtual fans and sound effects to simulate stadium atmospheres during lockdowns.
- Sports entities can draw sponsorship from local and 'smaller' brands with whom they can build deep connections with, rather than always targeting large corporations.

"The main strategy, in my opinion, is to study the trends, look at the needs, the growing needs of the sophisticated fan and try as much as possible to adjust to meet those needs. Once you're able to do that, you will see that kind of effective relationship will be there." –

Ameenu Shardow





RESEARCH PRESENTATIONS

Panelists:



Dr. Patrick Kwaku Ofori

Adjunct Lecturer , University of Ghana Business School



Frank Appiah Kusi

PhD Candidate, Department of Sports and Exercise Medical Sciences, University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ghana

Research plays a pivotal role in advancing the development of sports by providing data-driven insights, shaping policy decisions, and identifying opportunities for growth. At the AfroSport Summit, two researchers presented groundbreaking studies that underscore the importance of research in transforming the sports landscape. Their work sheds light on key issues relating to physical activity in schools and corporate governance.

The research presentation session was included in the summit for the first time, to provide early-career and seasoned researchers in the sport industry to present their research, following a call for abstracts.

Below are the abstracts that were presented:

Football in Crisis: Corporate Governance in Ghana Football

Corporate governance is crucial for the effective functioning of sports organizations. However, many sport organizations in developing countries face challenges in implementing effective governance structures. This study focuses on the governance structure of a developing country's football federation to identify deficiencies that may have contributed to perceived issues of corruption and bad governance practices. The study also examines how and why non-government organizations might be susceptible to government institutional pressures.

The study sought to propose a robust governance model for the administration of football associations in developing countries with a considerable attention to bridging the gender inequality gap in football management, compliance and regulations.

Using a qualitative case study approach, we conducted semi-structured interviews with 10 football administrators purposively recruited for their expertise. We employed interpretative phenomenological analysis, guided by the principles of multiple and instrumental case studies. The analysis revealed eight (8) main categories, each with various sub-categories, highlighting key aspects of corporate governance in the football industry. These categories included compliance, human capital, tenets of corporate governance, structural deficiencies, coercive isomorphism, stakeholder representation, and diversity and equality.



The findings suggest that addressing these issues is essential for the sustainable growth of sports institutions. The study recommends that football industry stakeholders, should prioritize effective corporate governance structures to ensure the smooth operation of sports organizations.

Author: Dr. Patrick Kwaku Ofori, Adjunct Lecturer , University of Ghana Business School, Accra, Ghana

Genetics and Epigenetics from Physical Activity: Ghana Active Schools' Programme and Ambidextrous Organisational Practices

Aim: In this paper, we examine how ambidextrous organisational practices can be used to advance the management of public basic schools in accepting behaviours that can improve physical activities of children.

Methodology: Drawing on extant literature and desk review of policy documents including school reports, we examine physical activities in public basic schools in Ghana and then explore three key developmental systems – managerial responsiveness, healthcare variation and educational development and highlight four areas from these systems; organisational processes, infrastructure development, human resource improvements, and stakeholder collaboration where policy makers can focus their efforts to improving physical activity in school children in Ghana.

Findings: The findings demonstrate a seeming absence of structures for physical activity in public basic schools in Ghana - presenting severe consequences, especially for the healthy growth of children, proper integration of children into society, learning processes, and developing talents for future sporting activities in general. Again, the analysis shows that the Ghana Education Service's implementation guidelines for physical activity in public basic schools are not yielding the needed results -

thus provoking policy dialogues in managerial practices for effective implementation of those guidelines. Next, we propose the promotion of physical activity in public basic schools in Ghana through sustainable and pragmatic approaches drawing from ambidextrous managerial practices to strengthen organisational capacity in the schools for improvements in movement behaviours, lifestyle changes, active learning, and physical activity levels of school children.

Conclusion: Practical approaches are needed to enhance the physical activity for children and this requires the initiation of active schools' programme in public basic schools – and clearly learning from best practices in the last decades, examples from other countries provide a really useful approach in the years ahead.

Authors:

- Dr. James Antwi, West End University College, Centre for Health and Social Policy Research, Accra, Ghana
- Frank Appiah Kusi, Department of Sports and Exercise Medical Sciences, University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ghana and Philippine Christian University, Manila, Philippine
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BASKETBALL: A TOOL FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Panelists:



Kwasi Minta Gyeke-Dako

Social Entrepreneur, Sports and Community Development



Feranmi Olunloyo

Director and Head Coach, DC Dynamics



Isaac Kwapong

Founder and Director, Sports Leadership Academy



Dr. Eric Opoku-Antwi

Lecturer, Sport and Exercise Science, University of Cape Coast, Ghana; Co-founder, Spintex Knights Sporting Club

This session highlighted basketball's potential as a powerful tool for driving socio-economic change in Africa, particularly how the sport can go beyond the court to impact communities by creating jobs, fostering youth development, and promoting education. By focusing on grassroots initiatives, infrastructure development, and partnerships, the session underscored how basketball can be a catalyst for positive change across the continent, using Ghana as a case study.

The key insights from the discussion are as follows:

Value, Structure and Synergy

- There is an apparent lack of value, structure and synergy in the Ghanaian basketball system. Creating a future where basketball, and sports in general, has inherent value is key to driving socioeconomic development.

- Many parents question the professional value of sports for their children as there is no clear pathway to success or long-term benefit. Without the possibility of earning an income through sports, there is little incentive for young people to participate seriously, beyond mere recreation

Create a future where sports has value. Not necessarily monetarily, but a future where a kid can at least get maybe a certificate, an education, earn some income, and get some kind of valuable character development.” – Feranmi Olunloyo

- A well-structured basketball or sports ecosystem provides avenues for growth. In many developed countries, youth sports systems offer a clear pathway for athletes. These systems include high school and university leagues, scholarships, and part-time jobs as referees or coaches. These opportunities give young athletes a reason to pursue sports as they can see a future and derive value from it. The erstwhile Spriteball tournament for high school students, is an example of a successful structure that created opportunities for young athletes. Many players who participated in Spriteball have transitioned to other leagues, received scholarships, and are still active in the ecosystem today.

“There's a lack of synergy in our system. We do have a sort of ecosystem but there's no synergy because everybody's doing something [independent of each other]. When there's synergy, you are able to sustain, replicate and scale up the value. We just have to start connecting the dots and let the system start running for itself.”
 – **Isaac Kwapong**

- While there are various basketball activities and leagues happening across different regions (e.g., Tamale, Kumasi, Sunyani, and Accra), there is a lack of coordination and collaboration among actors in the different pockets.

- While there are various basketball activities and leagues happening across different regions (e.g., Tamale, Kumasi, Sunyani, and Accra), there is a lack of coordination and collaboration among actors in the different pockets. This isolation hinders the ability to sustain, replicate, and scale the value that basketball can offer. When different efforts within the basketball ecosystem are connected, it becomes easier to create a structured system that can thrive. By working together, stakeholders can collectively achieve better outcomes.
- Collaboration between researchers and individuals engaged in basketball activities can strengthen the system. Using research to back on-the-ground initiatives will provide data that supports progress and can serve as a blueprint for future efforts. While individual efforts can achieve short-term goals, collective efforts are essential for long-term success. Working together will ensure basketball development reaches its full potential, benefiting all involved.

“I believe from value, the most important thing you put together is structure. With stats and data, it makes it very easy to put down a structure for whatever you are trying to engage yourself in.” – **Dr. Eric Opoku-Antwi**



Branding and Identity

- A strong brand is built on identity, which is reflected in how a team or organization presents itself. Organisations like the Spintex Knights and Sports Leadership Academy have created clear identities through consistent messaging, image, and performance.
- Branding is more than logos or uniforms, it's about the experience and feeling that fans and participants associate with teams or organisations.
- Branding starts with having a clear mission and objective. While an organization can define its mission, its brand is ultimately shaped by the market and consumers.
- Messaging is key to influence the market's perception of a brand. It is essential to create a narrative that resonates with consumers to help define the brand.
- There is an absence of a distinct identity for Ghanaian basketball, akin to Brazil's well-known football style. A conversation is needed around defining "Ghana basketball" and its characteristics. Understanding and promoting what basketball represents in Ghana is vital to shaping its brand.
- Basketball is already transforming lives, with many individuals attributing their personal and professional success to their involvement in the sport during their school years. It is crucial to document these transformational stories and communicate them widely as part of the basketball brand in Ghana. Focusing on how basketball makes a difference will attract investment and support.

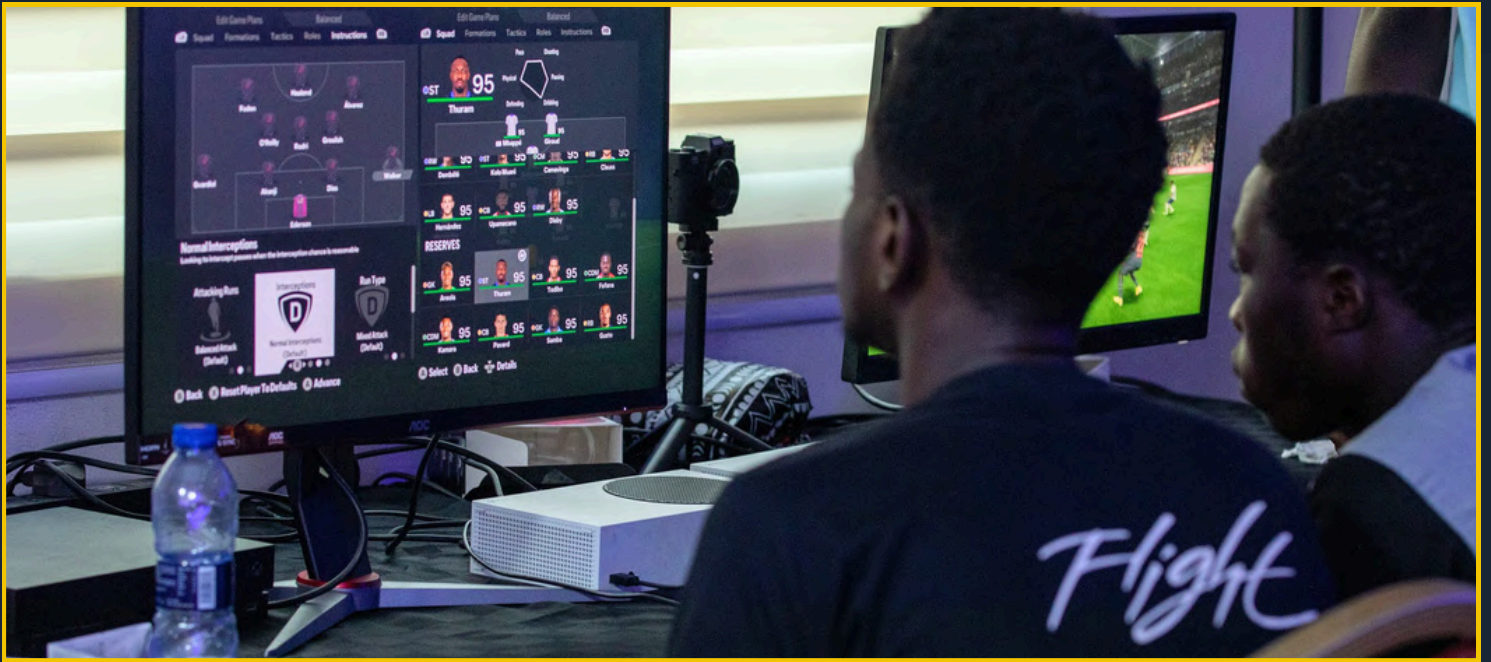
"We [Spintex Knights] were very intentional about our social media presence because we understand the day and age we are in. A single tweet could blow up the whole world. We were very conscious about what we were putting out as a brand and what is being said about us as a brand." – Dr. Eric Opoku-Antwi

Creating opportunities for young people

- Many kids in Ghana start organised sports at a later age, often around 14 or 15 years, which limits their development. By providing earlier access to sports, communities can better support their athletic growth.
- Initiatives like open runs (free-play events) and leagues to give children more chances to play regularly. This approach brings the community, including coaches, referees, and families, together. When children have opportunities to play, they spread the word, leading to more participation and the growth of sports programs.

Most kids get involved in organised sports at maybe 14, 15 years old, and that's if they're in a good school. We asked ourselves, 'how can we involve the community? How can we build this?' What we did was we started to create opportunities for kids to play. The interesting thing is that when you create opportunities to play, people will play." – Feranmi Olunloyo

SULC Crossover II Esports Competition



PLAYERS' CORNER: PREPARING FOR LIFE AFTER SPORTS

Panelists:



Anthony Baffoe

Founder and General Secretary, Professional Footballers Association of Ghana



Asamoah Gyan

Former Ghana Black Stars Striker; All-Regional Games



Derek Boateng

Former Ghana Black Stars Midfielder; Scout, Right to Dream Academy



Jerry Akaminko

Former Ghana Black Stars Defender

This session brought together seasoned former professional footballers to discuss one of the most critical aspects of an athlete's career: life beyond the pitch. The panelists, drawing on their own journeys and post-sports transitions, explored the emotional, financial, and professional challenges athletes face after retiring from sports. They emphasised the importance of early preparation, financial management, continuous learning, and the role of strong support systems in ensuring a smooth and fulfilling transition. The discussion provided valuable insights for current athletes on how to navigate life after sports and build sustainable careers.

The key insights from the discussion are as follows:

Education, Continuous Learning and Dual Careers

- Education is critical for life after sports, and athletes are encouraged to explore different career paths beyond football.
- There was emphasis on taking courses in business, sports management, event management and leadership, for example, to prepare for future careers. Athletes are also encouraged to take advantage of online learning platforms in this regard.
- Athletes can pursue parallel careers in other industries, to ensure that they have alternative career options after retirement.
- Athletes can also explore other career pathways in sports besides coaching before they retire.



“Education is the key. The young players of today are very lucky. COVID has made us know that you can be here and work and meet your person at the other side of the continent. If you have the time to be on Instagram for two hours, you can dedicate one or two hours per week also to do online studies. That's what I'm encouraging the footballers of today to do. You have that time. Don't wait until your playing career is over. Do it during your career.” – Anthony Baffoe

Financial Investments and Discipline

- Investment diversification is key to ensuring a successful investment portfolio and recurrent income flow. Athletes are encouraged to invest as early as they can.
- It is important to learn from poor investing decisions to be able to make better decisions in the future.
- Athletes are encouraged to respect small but steady income streams, rather than focusing only on large investments. These smaller investments can eventually grow and support them during their retirement.
- Athletes on big pay checks tend to spend frivolously on luxury items and experiences, often driven by some level of competition among colleagues. Financial discipline during athletes' playing careers is important.
- It is possible to maintain a good lifestyle with smaller earnings if properly managed. Athletes should adapt to living with what they have and focus on sustainable growth rather than expecting to always earn large amounts.
- Seeking financial advice and guidance from experts is important to be able to make good financial decisions.

Support System and Mentorship

- A strong support system, particularly from family and friends, is essential for athletes during and after their careers.

- Having honest, trusted individuals to lean on for advice is critical for making clear, informed decisions during and after one's career.

“As football players, we don't think about tomorrow. We don't think about our future because we feel like we are earning a lot of money every month. When I got to England, my brother called me and he said, ‘Listen. It's time to invest, let's try and build something’.” –Asamoah Gyan

Well-being and Mental Health

- Physical and mental health should be prioritised to ensure a smooth transition from professional careers and to prevent negative psychological effects associated with the transition
- Athletes can face emotional challenges, such as missing the 'locker room atmosphere' and dealing with the uncertainty of life after sports. Staying connected to the sport through serving in roles such as team coordinator/manager, scouting or mentoring young athletes can be helpful in navigating these challenges.

“Life after football is really difficult, but I always say thanks to Right to Dream for helping me to find my purpose. Since I become a scout, it's different. I am happy. I have a lot of peace. The kids look up to me and I have to be a role model for them.” – Derek Boateng

Apprenticeship/Internship Opportunities for Athletes

- A recommendation was made for domestic clubs to explore collaborations with companies in various industries to offer apprenticeship or internship opportunities for athletes to learn new skills and explore alternative career paths.
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OPTA DATA: ELEVATING TEAM PERFORMANCE, FAN ENGAGEMENT AND COMMERCIAL GROWTH

A PRESENTATION BY STATS PERFORM OPTA

A Presentation by Stats Perform Opta

Opta, part of Stats Perform, is the official data provider for major football leagues, including the English Premier League, La Liga, Serie A, and CAF competitions like AFCON. The company's data services are used to track player and match statistics, helping improve team performance, fan engagement, and commercial growth.

Data-driven Performance Enhancement:

Teams can elevate their performance through data analysis. Opta provides systems that analyse opponents, streamline video analysis, and reduce the manual work done by team analysts. Better data analysis leads to improved team performance, and consequently better results, which increase a team's revenue and league position.

Commercial Growth through Fan Engagement:

Data creates content, which drives conversations and fan engagement. More engagement leads to increased sponsorship opportunities, as brands seek digital exposure. Therefore, data not only enhances team performance but also offers financial benefits by increasing fan interaction and sponsor visibility.

Changing Digital Consumption:

Fans are increasingly consuming sports content across digital platforms like TikTok, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. To capitalize on this, clubs need to develop strong digital strategies to engage with fans and attract sponsorships, as traditional TV is no longer the only channel for brand exposure.

Employment Opportunities in Data Analytics:

Sports data analysis opens up job opportunities for individuals who may not succeed as athletes. Young people, especially those who didn't make it professionally, can still contribute to the sports ecosystem through roles in data analytics and performance analysis.

Scalability of Data Services:

Opta offers flexible data solutions to clubs of all sizes, from major leagues to local academies. Their services are customizable, depending on whether clubs need tools for performance tracking, scouting, or commercial growth, allowing them to choose solutions that meet their specific needs.

Opportunities in African Sports:

The potential for sports data to transform the African sports ecosystem is immense. By incorporating data into media strategies and team performance, African sports can experience commercial growth. Opta aims to support this transformation by offering tailored data solutions to clubs, leagues, and federations, helping them unlock new revenue streams and elevate their sports infrastructure.

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YACINE ABEKA
Football Partnerships



GJIS BEENKER
Client Services Manager

THERE IS **MAGIC** IN THE DETAIL OF SPORT



FUNDAMENTAL PILLARS OF THE RETAIL AND LICENSING BUSINESS

Panelists:



Cynthia Mumbo

Founder and CEO, Sports Connect Africa



Sarah Bohner

Immediate-Past Head of Licensing and Retail, Fifa



Jon Boafo

Sports Marketing Consultant

This session brought to light the critical role licensing and merchandising play in the commercialisation of sports brands. While often overshadowed by traditional revenue streams like sponsorships and broadcast rights, there is an untapped potential of sports merchandising, especially in Africa. The panel discussed the complexities of building successful licensing strategies, the importance of intellectual property (IP) protection, and the need for tailored approaches to reach diverse consumer bases. With examples from both global markets and local successes, the session underscored the growing opportunities for African sports brands to drive fan engagement and generate significant revenue through creative merchandising and strategic collaborations.

The key insights from the discussion are as follows:

Licensing and Merchandising

- The six pillars of building a licensing business include:
- IP and brand: the core of the business from which everything else flows
- Asset development and style guides: creating consumer-facing brands
- Product: the actual items for sale
- Retail partnerships: where the products are sold
- Marketing and communications: how consumers become aware of the products
- Licensing combine fashion, creativity, product differentiation and marketing, with success depending on making products that resonate with consumers. The more appealing the products, the more revenue is generated for both the licensee (e.g., Puma) and the rights holder (e.g., Ghana Football Association).



- Licensing is not a one-size-fits-all approach. It depends on market conditions, brand specifics, and consumer preferences. Each product needs to be developed based on where the consumer is and how they engage with the brand.
- The following are key motivators for fans in purchasing merchandise:
 - Passion: fans buy merchandise out of loyalty and enthusiasm for their teams.
 - Memorabilia: merchandise serves as a keepsake, reminding fans of significant moments, events or experiences.
 - Quality assurance: licensed products guarantee quality and authenticity
 - Cultural influence: sometimes products are purchased purely for their aesthetic or social appeal, not directly related to sports.
- While core fans are important, real business growth lies in expanding beyond this base. Creating a brand and culture that appeals to fans outside the local region is important.
- Marquee signings can play a significant role in enhancing a club's local and global brand which can translate into increased merchandise sales. For example, the signing of Argentine superstar and eight-time Ballon d'Or winner, Lionel Messi, brought a significant increase in global retail sales for Nike, with substantial royalties for French Ligue 1 club, Paris Saint-Germain FC (PSG). Messi's presence maintained PSG's retail momentum in sports stores worldwide, solidifying their status as a global brand.

"Licensing and retail is about consumer products, it's brand marketing, it's merchandising. People look at licensing and merchandise and sometimes think it's just the t-shirts and caps that you might buy at a stadium, but it's a lot more than that. It's an investment. It's a really important part of the commercial conversation and also the fan growth and fan experience conversation." – **Sarah Bohner**

Consumer Engagement and Fan Experience

- Branded merchandise (such as team jerseys) creates recognition, connection and conversation among fans, enhancing engagement which further drives revenue opportunities.
- Special edition merchandise and memorabilia also strengthens emotional ties between fans and clubs. For example, Cote d'Ivoire's victory at the 2023 Africa Cup of Nations (Afcon) led to a demand for their team jersey with three stars (signifying their three titles) which sold out quickly.

Intellectual Property in Retail and Licensing

- Licensing value comes from three key parts of IP namely, rights holders (e.g., Fifa), tournaments, and players.
- IP needs to be properly registered and trademarked to protect its commercial value. Historic marks, taglines, and logos are central to what brands pay for when entering licensing agreements.
- IP also includes various elements like mascots, trophies, taglines (e.g., Nike's "Just Do It"), and other creative assets. These are what companies pay to use in co-branding and merchandising partnerships.

Local Industry and Manufacturing

- The success of Tanzanian clubs like Yanga FC and Simba FC was emphasized, particularly in terms of local manufacturing of jerseys. Yanga's locally produced, affordable jerseys showcases the potential of tapping into local industries to meet fan demand.

Strategic Collaborations

- Collaborations with global leagues and clubs (e.g., La Liga's partnership with Yanga FC) can help African clubs elevate their business operations. However, African clubs do not always need external help, as local expertise and understanding of the African market can be just as effective in driving growth.
 - Collaborations with non-sports brands can also be effective. For example, in recent times, PSG's collaborations with non-sports brands, led to their growth as a cultural icon, influencing other clubs to pursue similar collaborations, which blend sports and lifestyle brands.
 - Collaboration between sports organizations and brands such as Puma, Nike, and Adidas helps ensure that merchandise is available to fans globally. These brands often act as licensees, producing and selling official merchandise in collaboration with sports teams or leagues.
 - Caf's collaboration with Puma for merchandising during the 2023 Afcon in Cote d'Ivoire resulted in the creation of an e-commerce store with country-specific merchandise, including jerseys featuring players like Ghana's Mohammed Kudus. Puma also launched the "Pokou ball," named after the Ivorian football legend, Laurent Pokou.
- With general retail, brands like Puma, Nike, or Adidas, as well as other retail outlets such as Decathlon, have licensing agreements allowing them to produce and sell sports merchandise. General retail partnerships are important to distribute products to a wider audience globally.
 - Tailored distribution networks helps bring merchandise closer to the consumers. For example, Gor Mahia FC (Kenya) repurposes old shipping containers into retail shops in informal settlements. This strategy brings products closer to the community, particularly in areas where large fan bases reside, allowing for more convenient access to merchandise.

Marketing and Branding

- Storytelling is crucial for retail and brand success. For example, Caf used social media and videos to share the backstory of the Pokou ball, reinforcing its value to fans. Storytelling played a key role in the campaign, as the ball was presented with content honouring Pokou's legacy, creating an emotional connection with fans.
- Logos are an important element linked to merchandising. Logos are a fusion of science and art, requiring both research and creativity to craft a design that tells a story. A well-crafted logo holds symbolic meaning and creates a strong visual identity. For example, new, cleaner PSG logo, with "Paris" more prominent and fewer colours, improved brand recognition and made it easier to reproduce the logo for merchandise.

Retail Distribution

- Retail distribution, including direct-to-consumer and general retail, plays a critical role in sports merchandising.
- Direct-to-consumer includes branded stores at events, stadiums, or dedicated outlets (e.g., the NBA store in South Africa). Such stores drive sales directly through fan interaction at events or online.

"During the 2023 Afcon in Cote d'Ivoire, Caf did some really cool stuff with Puma with the Pokou ball and the storytelling that went behind it. Storytelling is important in marketing and goes into the way that you present your products. Pokou was one of the legendary Ivorian players. They [Caf] were able to tell the whole story around Pokou as a player with engaging content. In this day and age of social media, the content drives stories." – **Jon Boafo**

Consumer Understanding and Tailored Approaches

- The core of any successful licensing or merchandising strategy is understanding what fans want. Product development should cater to the fan's emotions and desires, which ultimately drive consumer loyalty and business success.
- Tailoring products to local markets is critical, with examples like Gor Mahia's tiered product offerings. Gor Mahia sells premium kits in official stores and more affordable merchandise in informal settlements. This allows the club to cater to different income groups while maintaining accessibility and inclusivity in their merchandising approach.
- Understanding African consumers' purchasing behaviour can help in developing effective strategies. Not all consumers visit physical stores, partly due to the perception that store prices are high. This insight highlights the need for tailored strategies to reach a broader customer base.

"One of the things that really comes to mind for me in this space is understanding the African consumer, understanding our distribution networks, and how people buy, because not everyone goes to the store as there's a perception that the store products are sometimes expensive. In Kenya we have a football team, Gor Mahia FC, and one of the things that they've done is they've simplified the store, recycling old shipping containers into shops and taking them to the informal settlements. They also have two sets of kits; the premium kit which you can buy in the main store, and the second-tier kits and t-shirts that you can buy in the informal settlements. They've taken the product to the people and they've been able to differentiate in terms of the levels of the product." – **Cynthia Mumbo**

Revenue Streams and Business Growth

- A comprehensive commercial strategy, integrating marketing, licensing, and merchandising, is essential for sustainable growth. A well-structured plan is essential for sustainable growth in football clubs and sports businesses in Africa.
- Beyond apparel, there is potential in other product categories such as headwear, keychains, sleep pillows, and even surfboards. This shows how clubs can create everyday products that appeal to fans' sense of pride and allegiance, broadening their product offerings and increasing fan engagement.
- Licensing opportunities extend into areas like gaming, digital products, and collectibles, for example trading cards produced by companies like Tops and Panini.

Panelists:



Dr. Prince Pambo

Caf Medical Committee Member; Fifa Doping Control Officer



Peterking Quaye

International Sports Marketing Consultant; Management Member and SA President, FC Fassell, Liberia

This session focused on the socio-economic impact and lasting legacies of tournament hosting in Africa. Panelists explored the extensive, multifaceted outcomes that major sports events bring to host nations, ranging from economic boosts and job creation to infrastructure upgrades and social unity, as well as strategies to ensure tournament facilities are fully utilised and properly managed post-event, ensuring these investments continue benefiting communities long after the final whistle.

The key insights are as follows:

Economic Impact and Job Creation

- Hosting tournaments boosts the economy through tourism as large numbers of visitors boost spending. For example, the 2023 Afcon in Cote d'Ivoire injected significant revenue into the local economy, highlighting the financial boost from tournament-related activities.
- Events create employment opportunities, significantly benefiting local economies and improving livelihoods.
- Tournament hosting increases land value in surrounding areas where event infrastructure such as stadiums are located, making locations more attractive
- Tournaments can inspire professional growth among local experts in fields like sports medicine, setting a foundation for future specialists.

For example, the CAN 2008 (Afcon 2008) tournament which was hosted in Ghana inspired local medical professionals to venture into sports medicine.

*“If CAN 2008 (Afcon 2008) did not leave Ghana with anything, it left Ghana with a doctor called Prince Pambo who went on to specialise in sports medicine and a sub-specialty in sports cardiology. Just to tell you that my interest in sports medicine started after CAN 2008, in fact during and after, then I decided to pursue it as a specialty.” – **Dr. Prince Pambo***

Health and Safety Legacies

- Tournaments can inspire a lasting culture of fitness and sports engagement within local communities. For example, after CAN 2008, Ghana saw an increased public interest in physical activities and gym usage, contributing to a healthier community.

Infrastructure Development

- Tournament hosting brings about the development of sports infrastructure. Well-planned tournament infrastructure investments continue to benefit local sports leagues, creating sustainable facilities that serve future generations.
- Tournament venues become part of the community's identity and legacy, which is vital to maintain for future generations.

“Sustainability culture in Africa is very poor. When planning to host a competition, there should be a sustainability plan, particularly for any built infrastructure, that local communities can fully utilise well after the event is over.” – **Peterking Quaye**

Recommendations for Legacy Preservation

- Facilities could be gifted to local communities as legacy assets, encouraging youth programs and fostering talent development in sports. This approach would ensure that the taxpayer investment in these facilities has a lasting, positive impact on the community, rather than serving only short-term tournament needs.

By embedding stadiums within communities, these facilities are more likely to stay active, offering continuous economic and social benefits to locals.

- Sole reliance on government funds for tournament infrastructure upkeep has proven inadequate. Private sector investment can supplement government resources, through public-private partnerships, to ensure proper facility maintenance.
- Establishing a structured, long-term plan for facility upkeep post-tournament is essential. This could help prevent these venues from becoming unused "ghost" sites and ensure they continue benefiting local communities.
- Facilities built for major events should be developed to have multipurpose functionality, not only for sports but also for a variety of community events to ensure they are fully utilised.





GOVERNANCE: MATCH FIXING AND MANIPULATION IN SPORTS

Panelists:



Beverley Agbakoba Onyejianya

Partner, Olisa Agbakoba Legal, Nigeria



Prosper Harrison Addo

General Secretary, Ghana Football Association



Frisco Mulosa

Head of Business Development, Zambian Premier League



Yacine Abeka

Football Partnerships, EMEA, Stats Perform Opta

This session delved into one of the most pressing governance and integrity challenges facing the industry today. Panelists examined the factors that enable game manipulation, the complexities in identifying possible manipulation, the tools available to mitigate these threats, and the role of education, data, and regulation in safeguarding sports against corruption while exploring the ethical and practical responsibilities of stakeholders. They provided a nuanced view of the collaborative efforts required to protect the integrity of sports in a rapidly evolving landscape.

The key insights are as follows:

What is Match-fixing and Manipulation?

- Match-fixing is defined as any act beyond the rules of fair play intended to influence a game's outcome. This includes both direct actions and indirect actions that impact the score or result.
- Regulations on match-fixing and manipulation (whether at international level or local level) can cover all individuals involved in games, from players to officials to ball boys, in the case of Fifa, for example.

- This comprehensive scope ensures that anyone contributing to manipulation, directly or indirectly, can be held accountable.
- Rules cover not only deliberate acts but also cases of omission, where a person fails to act on observed manipulation. For instance, if a Match Commissioner witnesses suspicious exchanges and remains silent, they are still complicit.

Motivations for Match-fixing and Manipulation

- The motivations for match fixing primarily include influencing sporting results to achieve outcomes like promotion or avoiding relegation, and exploiting betting opportunities by manipulating specific actions rather than entire match outcomes.
- Play-by-play betting (e.g., betting on the next yellow card or throw-in) makes manipulation easier because fewer people need to be influenced compared to entire match outcomes. This trend has increased opportunities for match-fixing across sports.

“Years ago, we could just bet on who's going to win the next match. At that extent it was difficult to manipulate the whole match because there are twenty-two players, coaches, substitutes, referees. To manipulate a match you needed to act on a lot of people. Now, with play-by-play betting, you can bet on who's going to get the next yellow card, throw-in or free kick. With that wide range, even if at the end of the match you don't influence the final result, you can still win a bet by manipulating who's going to get the next key action.” – Yacine Abeka

Betting Increases Likelihood of Match Manipulation

- The rapid growth of sports betting in Africa, heightens the risk of match-fixing and manipulation as more money circulates within the system. As betting expands, so too does the need for vigilance in protecting the integrity of sports.
- The majority of match-fixing issues stems from illegal betting activities, emphasising the need for stringent oversight of betting markets.

Leveraging Technology to Combat Manipulation

- Advanced data systems in betting markets track every bet and detect unusual betting patterns on specific actions (e.g., unusual spikes in bets on yellow cards). Any odd activity triggers alerts, similar to how stock market traders detect irregularities.
- Betting companies monitor betting patterns and report anomalies to sports federations. They provide leagues and associations with "green, orange, or red" alerts to help them investigate potential manipulation cases.

Preventing Match-fixing and Manipulation

- Strengthening governance structures within sport governing bodies can reduce or eliminate individuals influencing certain decisions with regards to match organisation (e.g., match official assignments) in order to manipulate them.
- Federations, associations and clubs can organise integrity workshops for stakeholders including players, referees, match commissioners, etc., to help reinforce anti-match-fixing rules to all stakeholders, including clubs, referees, and match commissioners, particularly before competitions.
- State law enforcement institutions can play a critical role in curbing match-fixing and manipulation. In Zambia, for example, the Anti-Corruption Commission and Drug Enforcement Commission are involved in addressing match-fixing, creating a safer sports environment.

“Most match-fixing is actually attributable to illegal betting. In Zambia, the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Drug Enforcement Commission got involved early on when there were allegations of match-fixing. Law enforcement agencies have taken interest in trying to nip the vice in the bud.” –

Frisco Mulosa

- Like the Professional Golfers' Association (USA) Tour requiring players to sign a document acknowledging match-fixing regulations, mandatory reminders for all participants in leagues and federations can also reinforce awareness and deter potential violations.

- Athletes should carefully read and understand the rules governing the sport they play, including contract stipulations. Rules around match-fixing may be complex and often misunderstood, emphasising the need for athletes to educate themselves to avoid unintentional violations.
- Athletes are strongly advised against betting on games. Likewise, close family members of athletes should refrain from betting on games the athlete is involved in since there is a risk of being implicated in match-fixing as authorities could see this as insider manipulation.
- Players have an obligation to not only avoid match manipulation but also to report any attempts or knowledge of it. Reporting to their clubs or associations is crucial for exoneration in investigations. Failing to report can result in shared punishment, regardless of the level of involvement.
- Athletes should be aware of and avoid dealing with match-fixing syndicates. Such syndicates are pervasive and may target players at all levels, even those with significant wealth, by offering large financial incentives.
- Curbing match-fixing and manipulation, within a league for example, reassures sponsors of the integrity of the league, potentially leading to an increase in sponsorship and investments.

“Players must make it a point to read the rules around match-fixing and manipulation and to understand them. We are talking about big money and where there is big money there will be [betting] syndicates. There are syndicates all over the world trying to influence players, team officials and others to influence them.” –

Prosper Harrison Addo



PERFORMANCE FORUM: PROFILING AND BENCHMARKING IN SPORTS

Panelists:



Abdul Faisal Chibsah
High-Performance Specialist, Fifa



Owuraku Ampofo
Country Manager (Ghana), Flashscore

This session offered an insightful look into the crucial aspects of profiling and benchmarking that guide talent identification and performance assessment in the sporting world. Panelists discussed the complexities of setting performance standards, the importance of data and the challenges inherent in profiling talent and teams accurately.

The key insights are as follows:

What are Profiling and Benchmarking?

- Profiling is a process of assessing strengths and weaknesses to determine fit for specific roles or tasks.
- Benchmarking is a process of setting performance standards or goals by comparing current performance against desired targets. It is about identifying where one currently stands relative to where they aim to be, based on norms accepted globally or within an industry.
- Both profiling and benchmarking are positioned as tools for improvement, helping athletes and teams evaluate their strengths, weaknesses and performance, set goals, and measure progress effectively. However, these tools must be applied carefully to ensure relevance and accuracy in decision-making.

Challenges with Profiling and Benchmarking

- Benchmarking can be problematic if

the standards of “good” are subjective or inconsistent. Without a broad, representative sample to define performance norms, benchmarking may lead to inaccurate standards, affecting assessments.

“We are all just as good as the environment we live in. We live in a global world, and play a global sport. If the only thing we can measure is our environment, sometimes it can be very tricky. It's always important that when we are establishing those performance norms, we are able to sample a large sum to understand the average.” – Abdul Faisal Chibsah

Key Considerations in Profiling Talent

- Physical profiling is considered the most straightforward form of profiling, focusing on observable attributes like height, build, and technical skill. Such physical characteristics allow scouts to quickly categorise and distinguish players based on their physical presence and abilities on the field.
- While essential, mental profiling is more challenging to measure. This involves assessing a player’s mindset, resilience, and adaptability, qualities that are crucial for performance but not easily quantified. Mental attributes often require specialised tools and data analysis for accurate assessment.

- Data and advanced metrics, such as those provided by performance analytics companies like Opta, are imperative when quantifying both physical and, to some extent, mental attributes.
- Predicting the future success of young players is inherently difficult. Despite the challenges, data is crucial. Objectively tracking a player's progress over time and documenting each stage can help refine profiling standards and establish benchmarks, even if success is not guaranteed.
- Talent profiling will never be perfect, as human development varies widely, influenced by individual and environmental factors. Accepting that mistakes are part of the process allows recruiters to make informed decisions with realistic expectations.

Profiling and Benchmarking in Sports Reporting

- Profiling athletes/teams/coaches provides a framework for more objective, data-backed reporting.
- Despite the subjectivity that comes with opinions, sports journalism requires objectivity. Profiling, benchmarking, and data collection enable journalists to make well-informed projections about an athlete's or coach's future performance.

“The thing about being a journalist is that as much as you would want to be subjective and give your opinion, there has to be some form of objectivity. That's where you look at the profiling and perhaps benchmarking as well. One aspect of my job is projections. And in order to do something like that, you need data.” – Owuraku Ampofo

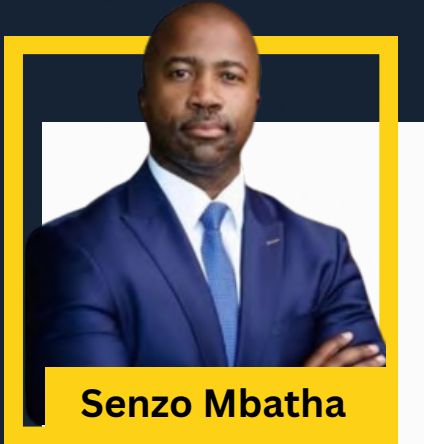
Key Considerations in Establishing Performance Norms

- Contextual Benchmarking: In setting performance standards different factors such as age, gender, and physical differences must be considered to avoid unfair comparisons and provide meaningful insights.
- Comparative Modelling: By comparing athletes with similar profiles, one can create a targeted improvement framework.
- Continuous Education and Adaptability: Ongoing education and adapting frameworks as sports evolve is important. Innovations, such as wearable tech that tracks attributes like speed and stamina, are increasingly shaping training insights. As technology advances, performance standards will need continual updating.
- Sample Size and Global Standards: A large and diverse sample is essential to create reliable performance norms. Assessing only local performance can lead to skewed benchmarks, which may not represent true competitiveness on an international level. For instance, Fifa uses the World Cup as a benchmark for understanding global standards in football, helping teams assess and address performance gaps relative to the global average.
- Adaptability to Evolution: What's considered “good” constantly shifts as sports evolve, especially in a dynamic field like football. Standards and benchmarks must be regularly reassessed to remain relevant and accurate as the game advances.





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