

Impact case study (REF3)

Institution: Sheffield Hallam University		
Unit of Assessment: UOA24 - Sport and Exercise Sciences, Leisure and Tourism		
Title of case study: Increasing Investment in Sport by Evidencing the Impact of Major Events		
Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: January 2000 - July 2020		
Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:		
Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Dr Girish Ramchandani	Associate Professor	2004 - Present
Richard Coleman	Principal Research Fellow	1999 - Present
Professor Simon Shibli	Head of Research Group	1999 - Present
Dr Larissa Davies	Reader	1999 - Present
Elizabeth Christy	Researcher	2012 - Present
Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013 - December 2020		
Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? No		

1. Summary of the impact

Sheffield Hallam University's Sport Industry Research Group, known externally as the Sport Industry Research Centre (SIRC), led the development of a research-informed event evaluation toolkit (*eventIMPACTS*) for the sport industry in 2010 and its subsequent refresh in 2016. Major events in receipt of public funding in the UK are now routinely evaluated using the methods advocated in the toolkit. *eventIMPACTS* is widely acknowledged as being the gold standard for measuring a range of benefits associated with major sports events. Use of the toolkit has provided robust evidence which has: prompted a **change in legislation** to allow competitive motorsport on public roads in Britain; contributed to an **increased appetite to host major sports events**; enabled **infrastructure developments**; secured **greater funding for hosting major events** and leveraging their outcomes; informed event planning and delivery; and contributed to a strategic alliance between UK Sport and Sport England to **lever the sport participation benefits of major sports events**.

2. Underpinning research

Following the establishment of UK Sport in 1997, and the UK's hosting of the Olympic and Paralympic Games in 2012, there has been a heightened emphasis on understanding, measuring and leveraging the impacts of major sports events. Whilst initially a requirement for events in receipt of National Lottery funding, a whole range of organisations and their funders now use research of this type to demonstrate the impacts of their events and aid decision making. For two decades SIRC has been at the forefront of conducting major events research for UK Sport, and a broad range of public and private sector organisations - conducting extensive research into the economic and social impacts that major events can generate.

Our initial research featured events such as the London Marathon (2000), World Snooker Championship (2002), Wimbledon (2006) and the Tour de France Grand Départ (2007), amongst others. Based on surveying tens of thousands of event attendees across multiple events, analysis of event documentation and complex modelling, this research demonstrated that major events produce economic impacts for host communities which can be quantified using recognised, but suitably adapted, principles from mainstream economics (**R1**); and that different types of economic impact assessment techniques are needed for different event typologies (**R2**). The volume of economic impact data that we collated from major events enabled us to devise a forecasting model that can be used to estimate the likely economic impacts of future events (**R3**).

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To bring consistency to the way in which the impacts of major events were measured and reported, SIRC was appointed by UK Sport and its partners to lead a consortium (also involving the University of Cardiff, the University of Stirling and the social enterprise consultancy Substance) to develop a robust, theoretically grounded event evaluation toolkit. This toolkit, known as *eventIMPACTS*, was underpinned by our previous research on major events (R1-R3), coupled with SIRC-led primary data collection across six major events held in the UK in 2008. The toolkit was published as a website (www.eventimpacts.com) in 2010.

Since then we have embarked on a programme of applied research using *eventIMPACTS*, covering 100+ major events. We have developed our research agenda over time to test hypotheses about the efficacy of events, to contribute towards public policy objectives and to deliver social impacts, such as increased participation in sport and physical activity. We piloted primary data collection exercises, based on behaviour change theories, at three London 2012 'test' events (hockey, triathlon and rugby), which revealed their potential to inspire audiences to be more physically active (R4). Between 2011 and 2018, we conducted more in-depth 'inspiration' research with a larger sample of 40+ major sports events and found that they were typically more likely to contribute to positive changes in people's attitudes towards sport and physical activity, than influence their actual participation behaviour (R5-R6).

In December 2015 the UK Government announced its new strategy for sport, *Sporting Future*. We were engaged by UK Sport and its partners in 2016 to refresh the content of the *eventIMPACTS* website, by incorporating the learning from our social impact research strand (R4-R6), to align the toolkit more closely with the five outcome areas that defined why the Government invests in sport, outlined in *Sporting Future*.

3. References to the research

- R1. Coleman, R and Ramchandani, G (2010). The Hidden Benefits of Non-Elite Mass Participation Sports Events: An Economic Perspective. *International Journal of Sports Marketing and Sponsorship*. 12 (1), 24-36. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSMS-12-01-2010-B004>
- R2. Davies, L. Coleman, R. and Ramchandani, G (2013). Evaluating Event Economic Impact: Rigour versus Reality? *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*. 4 (1), 31-42. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17582951311307494>
- R3. Ramchandani, G and Coleman, R (2012). Testing the Accuracy of Event Economic Impact Forecasts. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*. 3 (2), 188-200. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17582951211229726>
- R4. Ramchandani, G and Coleman, R (2012). The Inspirational Effects of Three Major Sport Events. *International Journal of Event and Festival Management*. 3 (3), 257-71. <https://doi.org/10.1108/17582951211262693>
- R5. Davies, L. Coleman, R. Shibli, S. and Bingham, J (2015). Limited or Lasting Legacy?: The Effect of Non-Mega Sport Event Attendance on Participation. *European Sport Management Quarterly*. 15 (1), 93-110. <https://doi.org/10.1080/16184742.2014.996583>
- R6. Ramchandani, G. Coleman, R. and Christy, E (2019). The Sport Participation Legacy of Major Events in the UK. *Health Promotion International*. 34 (1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dax061>

All articles underwent rigorous peer-review and are published in leading journals in the field.

4. Details of the impact

The impact of our research has manifested in two main ways:

Use of the *eventIMPACTS* Toolkit

eventIMPACTS has become accepted as the gold standard for conducting major events research in the UK, which is reflected in the widespread use of the framework to measure the economic

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and other impacts of sporting events. From 2014 onwards, and particularly since the online toolkit was updated in 2016 with our social impact research (R4-R6), it has been a requirement for organisations seeking public funding for their events from the likes of UK Sport, Tourism Northern Ireland, EventScotland and Welsh Government, to commit to measuring the impacts of their events using the methods recommended in the toolkit. UK Sport confirmed that: *"If we are to prioritise our resources in a fair and robust way, it clearly follows that impact assessment should be undertaken in a consistent way and in accordance with broadly accepted methodology. We signpost organisations to the relevant sections of eventIMPACTS to determine how they might undertake their own research and a broader evaluation of their event's impacts."* (E1). While EventScotland state that: *"Major international sports events in Scotland are evaluated in line with eventIMPACTS. Glasgow Life has a regular programme of research at events in the city, some of which are supported by EventScotland, and compliance with eventIMPACTS is a requirement of that commissioned research."* (E2)

Between August 2013 and December 2020, over **60 major sports events** held in the UK (plus one in France) were subjected to research using eventIMPACTS, including the **Rugby League World Cup** (2013), **Open Championship** (six times from 2014-19), **Ryder Cup** (2014 in Scotland and 2018 in Paris), **London Marathon** (2015), **Wimbledon** (2016), Henley Royal Regatta (2017), Special Olympics (2017), IAAF World Championships (2017), Netball World Cup (2019), Solheim Cup (2019) and UCI Road World Cycling Championships (2019). The toolkit has also been applied to measure the impacts of cultural events, including the Edinburgh Festivals in 2015. For most of these events, our impact has been quantifying their economic impact on host communities.

The adoption of eventIMPACTS by high-profile commercially successful events that are not particularly reliant on funding from the public sector, is further recognition of its status and value. According to UK Sport: *"The resources available on eventIMPACTS have been adopted as best practice across the UK and are a great starting point for any event organiser looking to evaluate their event in a consistent and realistic way"* (E1). The Open's organiser, Royal & Ancient, acknowledge: *"Our goal was to demonstrate the economic value of The Open using methods that would stand up to the highest level of external scrutiny and could be used to add value to our business... eventIMPACTS...is widely regarded as the gold standard within the industry for robust research of this type."* (E3)

Impacts Resulting from the Use of the eventIMPACTS Toolkit

The use of eventIMPACTS has subsequently shaped legislation and policy, support for major events, infrastructural developments and organisational working practices.

Changing Legislation

In April 2017 changes were made to the Road Traffic Act that allowed local authorities in Britain to organise motorsport events on closed public roads without requiring an Act of Parliament. This new legislation was informed by the application of our economic impact forecasting model (R3), projecting that local communities across Britain could benefit from up to GBP40,000,000 of additional revenue by closing public roads to host a limited number of motorsport events.

This was seen as potentially one of the **biggest developments in the history of UK motorsport**. The Chief Executive of Motor Sports Association, Rob Jones acknowledged: *"This is a seismic shift for UK motorsport. We can now take motorsport to the people, and in turn those local hosting communities have the opportunity to benefit from the economic boost that these events may provide"*. Transport Minister, Andrew Jones MP, said: *"New road races will boost local economies through increased tourism and hospitality, and offer community opportunities such as volunteering"*. While Nigel Mansell CBE, 1992 F1 world champion, stated: *"I have seen first-hand the very significant impact of motor sport on the economy of the Isle of Man and Jersey, so this is a great move forward for the sport and will bring visitors and pride to parts of the country that wish to stage such events. I am delighted that this... will... improve the sport's ability to help provide opportunities and focus for young people."* (E4)

The first closed-road motorsport event under this new legislation was organised in Clacton-on-Sea in 2018. Following this, in recognition of the potential positive externalities of major events, the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government authorised the temporary

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suspension of the 1985 Stray Act, to allow the UCI Road World Cycling Championships to be staged in Harrogate in September 2019 (E10).

Increased Appetite to Host Major Events

For many events, our research has quantified their economic impact on host communities. Our research at the last 10 editions of The Open Championship on behalf of the Royal & Ancient has confirmed that the event brings significant economic benefits to the areas in which it is held. Royal & Ancient explained: *"The impact of SIRC's eventIMPACTS compliant research has been considerable, enabling us to **demonstrate to our public sector partners** the benefits of bringing The Open to their economies... When we took The Open to Royal Portrush in 2019, for the first time in 51 years, we were able to enter a three-event hosting contract with the Northern Ireland Assembly"* (E3). Similarly, the PGA have stated: *"The work conducted by SIRC at two separate Ryder Cups (2014 and 2018) has proven extremely valuable in ensuring we have been able to deliver our economic objectives for both events, which has undoubtedly paved the way for the event to grow as it has and to ensure we have an **ever-growing list of host venues** keen to welcome us"* (E5).

Enabling Infrastructure Developments

eventIMPACTS estimated the economic benefit of bringing The Open golf tournament to Kent in 2021 would be in excess of GBP77,000,000. To ensure they secured the tournament therefore, Kent County Council, the South East Local Enterprise Partnership and Network Rail undertook to make significant enhancements to Sandwich Station, to improve spectators' access to the Royal St George's Golf Course. Kent Council felt this GBP1,000,000 infrastructure investment, driven by eventIMPACTS forecasts, meant *"the direct economic impact on East Kent and the County as a whole can continue to grow"*, well beyond the tournament. (E9). These improvements commenced in 2019. Royal & Ancient confirmed: *We have been able to lever important public sector **investment in infrastructure upgrades**, such as the improvements to the railway station at Sandwich"* (E3).

Securing Increased Funding for Staging Events and Investment in Sport Development

Research-informed knowledge of the economic benefits of staging events has also been used to secure additional funding for the events themselves, to the benefit of the organisers, the wider sports where those funds are re-invested, and the host regions. UK Sport explain that: *"The use of eventIMPACTS research to **lever additional funding for events** is probably best seen where support is being sought for a comparable or higher-level event in the same sport. Examples include: the 2014 Tour de France Grand Depart and the 2019 Road World Cycling Championships; and the 2013 and 2021 Rugby League World Cups"* (E1). Our research at The Open was also instrumental in the event returning to Royal Portrush (Northern Ireland) in 2019, for the first time since 1951. The anticipated economic impact has seen infrastructural and course redevelopments totalling GBP25,000,000 with the event receiving the backing of NI Assembly, local councils and Tourism NI. Royal & Ancient confirm: *"Our partnership with the NI Assembly realised millions of pounds for the development of golf, whilst producing a £100m+ **economic windfall** for Northern Ireland. Understanding the economics of The Open was an important contributory factor in achieving the benefits for both parties"* (E3).

Public Investment to Leverage the Inspirational Effects of Major Sports Events

Guided by our social impact research strand (R4-R6), there has been **new public investment** to engage less physically active individuals through community projects linked to major events. In February 2014 Sport England launched the GBP2,000,000 *Major Events Engagement Fund* to invest in initiatives linked to major sports events, designed to increase the number of people participating in sport (E7). The Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport also committed GBP15,000,000 via the *Places to Ride* scheme, connected with hosting the 2019 UCI Road World Cycling Championships. This included a dedicated event legacy programme to fund the development of cycling facilities in England, including the new Doncaster Cycle Track, with the objective of converting inspiration into participation (E8).

Informing Operational Aspects of Event Planning and Delivery

Detailed breakdown and analysis of the components of event planning and delivery mean eventIMPACTS has been used as the basis of operational developments. Henley Royal Regatta confirm how: *"The research by SIRC provided valuable insight around the economic benefits of*

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*Henley Royal Regatta to the town and local area which, when coupled with their analysis on extensive data from spectators and local businesses, **shaped our thinking and plans** to extend the [duration of the] Regatta [from five to six days] in 2021" (E6).* Another contribution of our research has been the installation of permanent fibre optic networks at four Open venues in Scotland, serving 30,000 users. Royal & Ancient state: *"In partnership with Scottish Enterprise we have installed permanent fibre optic cabling at the venues in Scotland that host The Open. This **investment has been justified** by the economic arguments we can present from the SIRC research" (E3).*

A Partnership Approach to Major Events Research

Our extensive research on the inspirational effects of major sporting events (R4-R6) has led to a strategic alliance between UK Sport and Sport England, to lever the sport participation benefits of major sports events and engage less physically active individuals through community projects linked to major events. UK Sport, Sport England, plus British Cycling, **collaborated for the first time** to commission joint research on the social impacts of the 2019 UCI Road World Cycling Championships which *"would not have been possible without eventIMPACTS providing a foundation for the research programme that was developed" (E1).*

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

- E1. Testimony from Research Manager, UK Sport
- E2. Testimony from Senior Events Manager, EventScotland
- E3. Testimony from Chief Executive, Royal & Ancient
- E4. Press Release from the Motor Sports Association <https://www.motorsportuk.org/MSA-achieves-closed-road-motorsport-for-mainland-Britain>
- E5. Testimony from Head of Marketing, PGA European Tour
- E6. Testimony from Secretary, Henley Royal Regatta
- E7. Sport England - Major Events Engagement Fund Information Pack 2013/17
<https://sportengland-production-files.s3.eu-west-2.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/major-events-engagement-fund-information-pack.pdf>
- E8. British Cycling News Item
<https://www.britishcycling.org.uk/article/20191001-World-championships-set-to-boost-cycling-participation-as-first-major-legacy-investment-increases-access-to-facilities-0>
- E9. Kent County Council Report on The Open
<https://democracy.kent.gov.uk/documents/s82006/GEDCC%20-%20Open%20Report%2022%2003%2017%20final.pdf>
- E10. House of Commons Harrogate Stray Report
<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201719/cmselect/cmdelreg/2116/2116.pdf>