

CASTLE PARK CLUB

Event and Community Physical Activity
Engagement Research



LEEDS
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England
Rugby



**SPORT
ENGLAND**



Doncaster
Council

Executive Summary

Doncaster Council is committed to understanding and improving the value of iconic sporting events for local communities. Previous research from the Tour de Yorkshire 2018 and 2019 and the Union Cyclist International Championship Event 2019 shows that these events leveraged community social structures to engage locals in physical activity. This new research extends from those linear iconic sporting events, to address similarly iconic, but stadium-based, sporting events.

Doncaster is due to host the stadium-based events of Rugby League World Cup 2021 (RLWC). To optimise the platform of the RLWC in engaging communities in physical activity, the Women's Rose's match hosted at Castle Park was used to test-bed stadium-based perspectives centred on physical activity and social engagement. Additionally, we sought local perceptions of Castle Park Club - an established Rugby Union Club - to help them deliver better engagement of communities across Doncaster.

The Rose's match (vs Ireland) was hosted at Castle Park Club (CPC), Doncaster, on the 23rd of February 2020. Using at-the-ground match day spectator surveys (n=192), collected from 10 am to 12:30 pm, we identified spectator perspectives on the match. Respondents were 56% women and 44% men; every age group had a high percentage of 'inactive' individuals; 95% of respondents self-identified as 'White British'. Only one in three (33%) had a Doncaster postcode, indicating the wide 'draw' of this International match.

Of the Doncaster-based respondents, most were already actively engaged with CPC, watching matches either 'every week' or 'sometimes'. Despite the local engagement status, 88% of respondents reported they would be interested in attending new CPC activities. Principle challenges to engagement were dominated by transportation, scheduling and clarity of advertising. Given that 48% of respondents attended with their family, it was not surprising most interest in CPC-based activity was for 'Family Fun Days'. Pre-match activities were the second most favoured CPC activity suggestion; providing family fun days before matches may be an effective way to initially engage with groups.

Social themes were powerful drivers for physical activity participation. The stadium event had no direct impact on respondent's physical activity levels, yet comments proposed an opportunity to capitalise on the social appeal of the club and of positive perceptions of Women's Rugby. This may represent an opportunity to leverage the social inclusion of women. The social buzz around this game was perceived effective, yet - as with previous research - this momentum has been left untapped, post-event. The reaction of both locals and visitors was overwhelmingly enthusiastic, passionate and positive towards Doncaster - and 'the North' more generally - for hosting such high-profile sporting events.

This research has generated important insights to help CPC to engage locals in impending physical activity initiatives. It has also provided Doncaster Council with a better understanding of stadium events. The survey identified both positive mechanisms and missed opportunities for leveraging both social and physical activity engagement that may relate to the upcoming RLWC. Next stages should address how to deliver stadium events that meet aspirations for sociable physical activity, to make it an inclusive experience. Recommendations of habit stacking, framing marketing material and co-creating activities have been suggested to promote engagement for both CPC and Doncaster Council's initiative of 'Get Doncaster Moving'.

Findings

Demographics

On the day of the event, opportunistic sampling was used to gain spectators perceptions and views. A survey secured 192 respondents; 56% female and 44% male – see Figure 1. The match generated greatest interest in females. Observationally, there were many girl’s rugby teams - attending as a team - to watch the match.

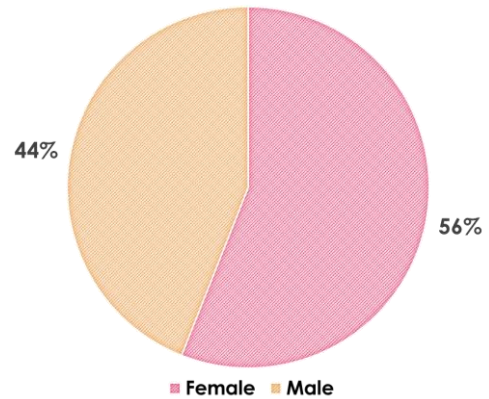


Figure 1: Percentage Split of Male and Females Respondents

AGE GROUP	PERCENTAGE
<18 Years	11
18-64	81
65+	8

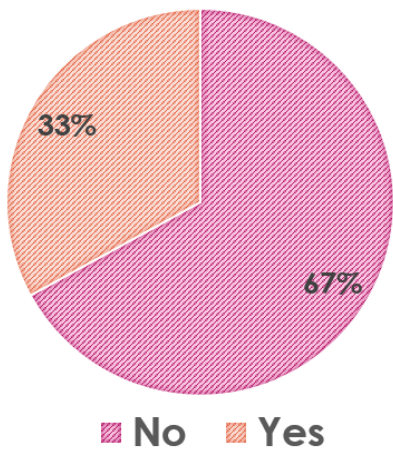
Table 1 reports the percentage of respondents allocated to age groups of either <18-years, 16-64 years, or 65+ years old.

Table 1: Age Group Percentages

Table 2 outlines the proportions of respondents by age categories and physical activity levels. Younger respondents were most likely to report meeting the Department of Health guideline of at least 150-minutes of moderate physical activity each week. Only 48% of respondents aged 18-64 years achieved the guidelines. While 50% of older adults (ages 65+) achieved the guidelines, reported doing less than 30-minutes of activity each week. These data suggest the ‘audience’ the Rugby match engaged with is almost equally distributed of active and inactive.

Minutes of Physical Activity (proportion of sample population)	<18 age (%)	18-64 age (%)	≥65 age (%)
< 30 (14%)	0	14	33
30-149 (37%)	37.5	38	17
≥150 (49%)	62.5	48	50

Table 2: Proportion of Respondents Achieving the Physical Activity Guidelines in Each Age Group



To distinguish between Doncaster locals and non-locals, respondents were asked if they had a Doncaster postcode. Figure 2 shows 67% were not Doncaster locals (as predicted by the Castle Park Club team). Home locations included Barnsley, Cumbria and Cambridge, indicating the distances people were willing to travel for the sport. From the 67% of respondents with non-Doncaster postcodes, only 15% of people stayed overnight in Doncaster. The match was supported by individuals already engaged at the Club; 51% watched Doncaster Knights “sometimes” and 33% “every week” - only 16% had “never” watched Doncaster Knights.

Figure 2: Doncaster Locals (YES) vs. Non-Doncaster Locals (NO)

Rugby Union was seen as a white middle- and upper-class sport until more recently when it began recruiting players with more diverse backgrounds. While the survey for this research did not address socio-economic status, it confirmed low engagement of ethnic minority groups; 95% of respondents were ‘White British’.

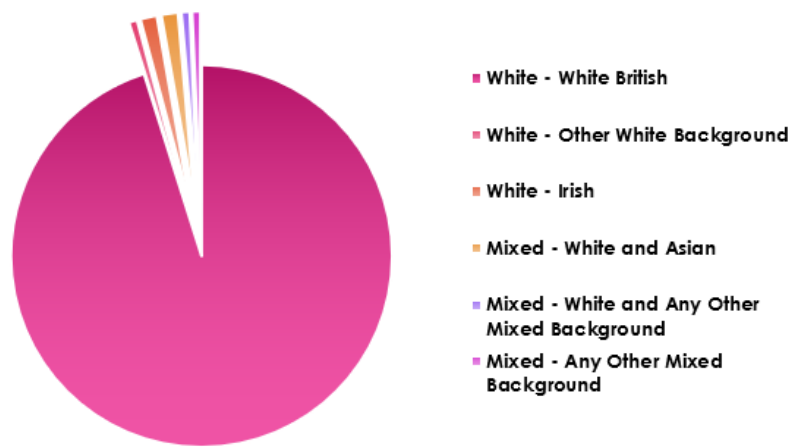
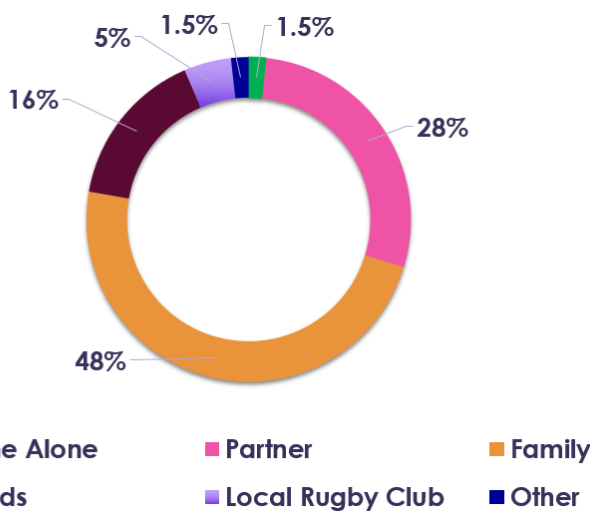


Figure 3: Ethnicity of Survey Respondents



The ‘context’ of attending the match was mixed – see Figure 4. The greatest proportion of respondents reported attending with their family (48%). Partner (28%) and friends (16%) were also frequent answers. Few people attended with their local rugby club (5%), alone (1.5%) or other (1.5%).

Spectators are interested in Castle Park Club community activities.

The team at Castle Park Club are interested in providing a ‘Club Foundation’ service for the local area. Currently, the Club has limited insight regarding the interests of Doncaster locals, and/or the types of activities that would be popular locally. Among respondents reporting a Doncaster postcode in the survey, 88% stated being interested in engaging with activities at Castle Park Club.

For people who showed interest, Figure 5 presents their most favoured activities (from a list of suggested activities). Health and activity sessions during the week were favoured among almost 22% of respondents along with 23% also showing interest in pre-match activities. Only 15% showed interest in ‘Activities for Parents/Guardians’; this may reflect the profile of survey respondents. This same explanation may explain the most favoured option, Family Fun Days. In a community characterised by current financial instability, and an accompanying need for ‘community feeling’, this activity may be effective if ‘rolled out’ by the Club. Presented as an alternative – and cheaper - option to other family activities or day trips may be an effective approach.

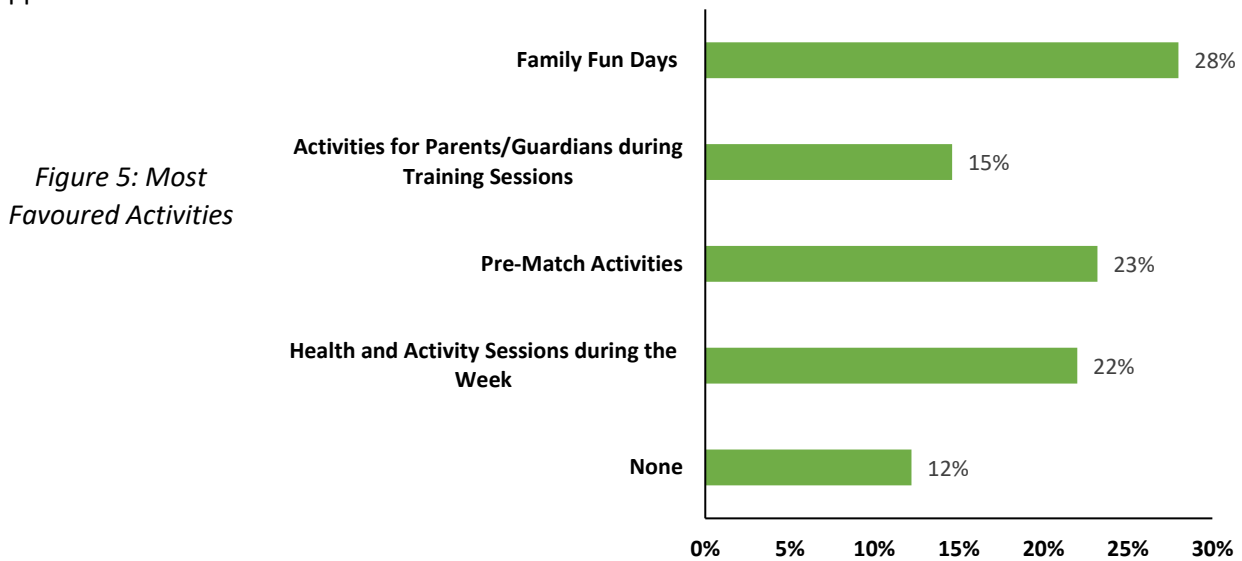


Figure 6 shows the challenges to engaging with Club activities. Lack of marketing was a recurring theme. For younger groups transport/access appeared problematic; comments surrounded “not being able to get a lift”. Scheduling and timing of activities were most linked to job commitments, childcare and busy weekday schedules. Despite these challenges, 23 of 63 respondents said they would not face any challenges because they were already **involved in the Club**.

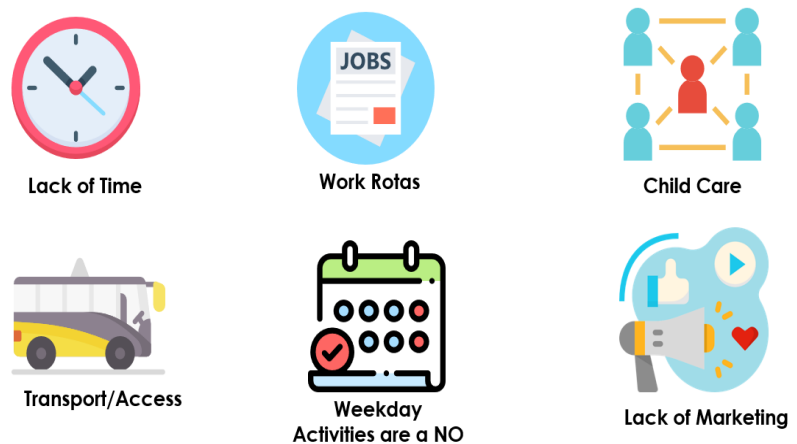


Figure 6: Challenges for Participation

Club reach appears limited.

Castle Park Club would like to understand why locals do not engage with the Doncaster Knights rugby matches. A total of 51% of respondents (with a Doncaster postcode) reported watching Doncaster Knights “sometimes”, while 33% watched Doncaster Knights “every week”. Albeit this match was a sell-out, these findings suggest a limited reach of new ‘events’ for engaging genuinely ‘new’ local audiences.

There were few comments regarding non-engagers (16%) and their reasoning for not engaging with the Doncaster Knights Club. However, from the comments identified below, it would appear Castle Park Club could continue to engage with these spectators. Rugby was liked by all survey respondents on the day, meaning they may be highly responsive to offers of new activities made through more focused advertising.



Individual and Social Domains are Most Cited for Engaging in Activity.

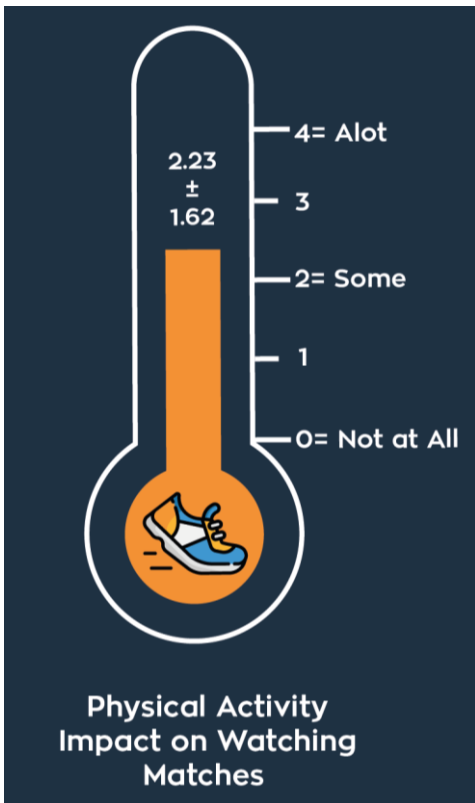
Respondents were all asked what would help them to engage in activities. Few already-active respondents offered options here, however, comments were reported across all three Six Influencer domains (Figure 7).

Previous research from the UCI Championships suggests structural domains are important for older adults. With only 8% of the sample being older adults, and they were attending the match, this may explain being well served by their structural capacities and having no suggestions to offer. Individual domain comments centred on having the motivation to get started. While many aspired to become healthier and fitter they also reported low individual competency for making that a reality. This suggests a need to piggy-back activities they already do (aka ‘habit stacking’). Improved social motivation was linked to more advertising of events, making the benefits of PA clear and framing PA as ‘fun’. Younger age groups mentioned that having a role model or a ‘playing figure’ would excite them to engage with activities. Social competence was seen as being enhanced by emphasising friendship building and feeling a part of a group.

Domain	Motivation	Competency
Individual	“The motivation to keep fit” “Motivation to get going” “Motivation to be healthy” “Weight Management” “Health improvements” “For mental health benefits”	“Two new knees” “A new leg” “General fitness”
Social	“More information about what’s on and what it involves”	“The social benefits”

	<p>“It needs to be fun with other people”</p> <p>“A role model for inspiration”</p> <p>“It’s fun to keep active”</p>	<p>“The opportunity to make new friends”</p> <p>“Meeting new people and being a part of a team”</p>
Structural	<p>“Some perks by attending”</p> <p>“Make me feel good”</p> <p>“Work life balance”</p>	Non-Stated

Physical activity is not directly influenced by watching rugby.



Using iconic sports events to ‘convert’ spectators to become more physically active is an on-going challenge. Respondent perspectives of the impact of the Roses event on their physical activity behaviour was inconsistent. From a 5-point response option, the overall score was 2.23±1.62 identifying large variation between individual scores.

We found no direct links between watching rugby and respondents’ PA levels, although aligning to the social side of the game was linked to following the matches around the country. Few individuals reported their PA levels were impacted “a lot” due to playing the sport or engaging in adapted rugby activities.

Previous findings from the recent UCI and TDY sports events showed the potential of piggy-backing these events with micro-PA events/opportunities for engaging a mix of age groups. The question of how to transfer this learning to a stadium-based event remains unanswered. One initial option is to reframe the spectator experience. Instead of thinking of ‘spectators’ (in a consumer sense), it may be more helpful to regard them as engagers. Further, just as match-day experiences have been revolutionised by technological advances (screens, ticketing etc), the match day can be made analogous to a ‘customer journey’. This may begin with

pre-match (welcome, try-out opportunities, engagement events), progressing to the match event (separated into halves and half-time) and the post-match (featuring the transition to club house, refuelling and exit from the ground). Opportunities to promote PA arise by considering these elements of the whole event experience.

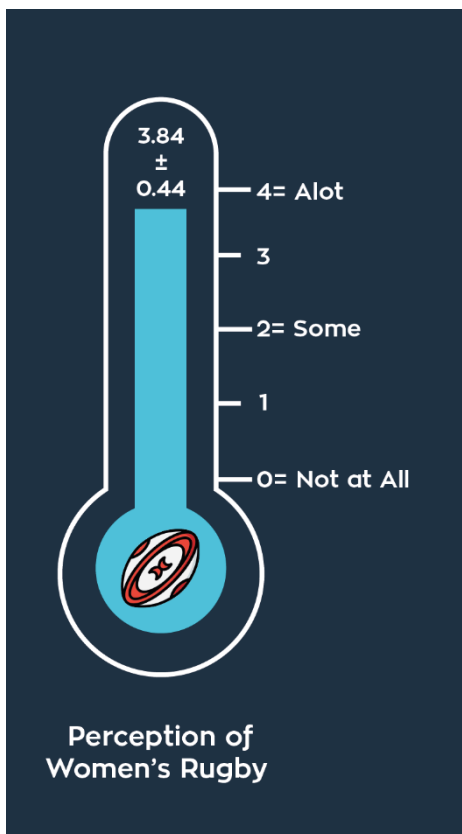
Regarding physically active spectators of stadium-based events, it may be advantageous to deploy ‘habit stacking’ to leverage the pre-event to encourage sustained engagement throughout the event. ‘Habit stacking’ involves supplementing an inevitable behaviour (i.e., attending a match) with a desired, but harder-to-do behaviour (e.g., attending a yoga class, or walking four laps of the pitch before the game). Castle Park Club has previously undertaken a form of habit stacking by offering ‘meet and greets’ with RFU players for U13 girls in the pre-match period of a Doncaster Knights game. Given the familiarity of club staff with the

concept of habit stacking, it makes sense to develop this approach to engage ‘new faces’; compelling PA events are needed to bring these groups to the club.

Clearly, sports fans are engaged with the sport, the event and the social atmosphere encompassing it. On-the-day spectators are active in their engagement by paying and turning up. However, as discovered in the Rose’s match survey, a large proportion of survey respondents are in need of more PA, meaning there is an opportunity to create PA leverage that adds value to their spectator experience. Research suggests greater event satisfaction increases subsequent purchase intentions (1).



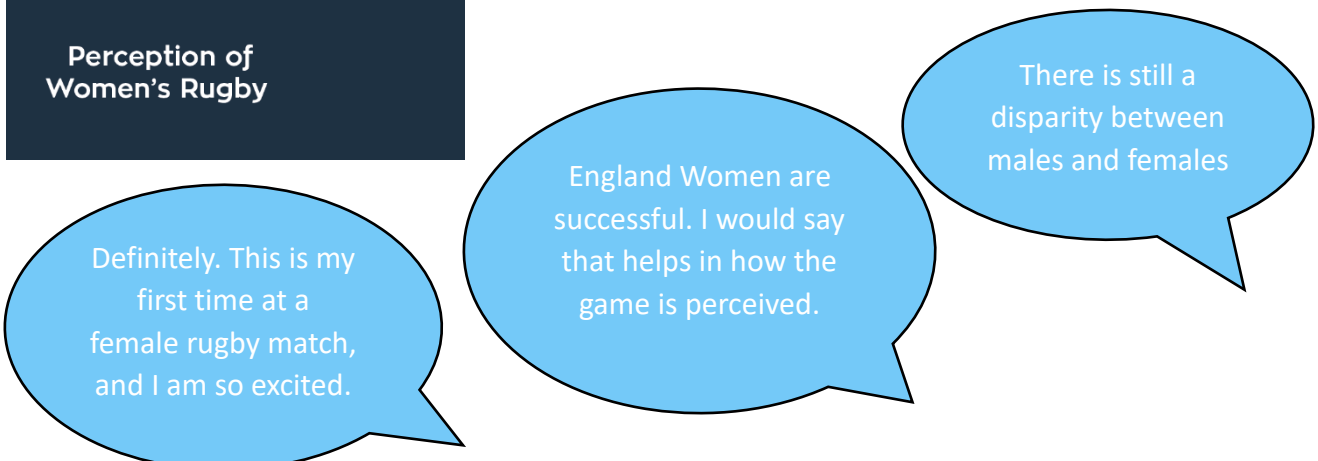
Positive perceptions of Women’s rugby



On observation, the event attracted many young females; some were experiencing their first live rugby match. Women’s rugby is one of the fastest-growing sports with a 28% increase in registered players since 2017 (2). The success of the England Women’s team appears to have generated a greater interest in the sport.

Many spectators on the day felt despite progress in minimising the gap between male and female rugby, the women’s game needed more prominence. This notwithstanding, excitement and energy scores were high; from a possible maximum 4, the score was almost universally maximised – 3.84±0.44.

The ‘buzz’ created by the emergence of the women’s game suggests that iconic sporting events represent a powerful opportunity for creating PA opportunities. PA might be promoted (i) based on opportunities provided by the venue, (ii) by offering sport-specific options, as in the #TryAndStopUs campaign, and (iii) based on adapted versions of the game.

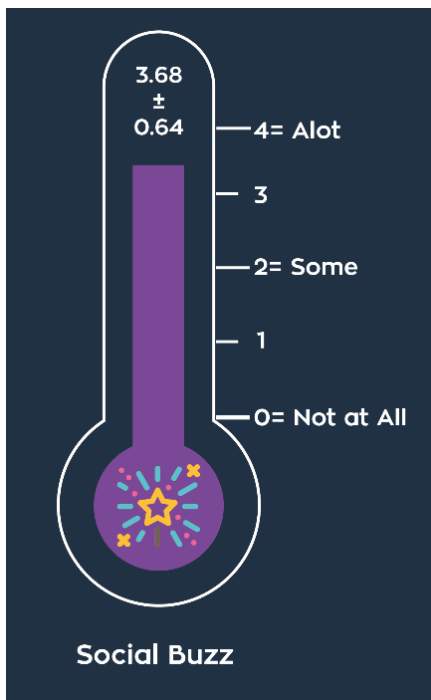


The women should be on a bigger stage. It is sold out today...that tells you the demand is increasing.

Keep bringing International Women's games to life like this. Many more girls and women are beginning to follow the sport.

Excellent event and need more events like this to occur in the future to continue the progress.

A powerful 'social buzz' surrounded the match



Social buzz is a summative term for the combined sense of emotion, energy, excitement, and anticipation surrounding an event. On a 0-4 scale (see left), the social buzz score of the Rose's match was 3.68 ± 0.64 ; most respondents scored either 3 or 4 on this item.

Comments to explain social buzz scores revolved around the music, friendly staff, sell-out of the stadium, the quality of the local facilities and food, and the overall atmosphere. Despite the social buzz not being influenced by PA, as we learned from previous research in Doncaster, a positive social buzz (encouraged by energetic music, upbeat announcements about on-going or new opportunities and reminders about crowd attendance) can be the right context for encouraging individuals to undertake try-out activities in a fun, family-friendly way. Events that fail to create a positive social buzz are unlikely to engage many low-active individuals into an activity.

Consistent with most other research, few respondents offered comments on how to improve the social buzz. One suggestion was to offer a 'photo frame' to make the day more memorable. A 'photo

opportunity' may not only add to the immediate buzz experienced by individuals, but also to the online buzz around the event and for subsequent events. A further suggestion was to encourage the involvement of more schools to capitalise on the exuberance of groups of young people.

The social buzz was perceived as effective however alike to previous research there is no mechanism to continue the inertia post-event. Planned levers need to be in place to have the desired effect. For example, Castle Park Club could have provided a taster session or advertised an upcoming activity or event to engage with if spectators enjoyed the day.

It would be cool to have a photo frame for online buzz.

Good atmosphere today and nice to spend it with the family.

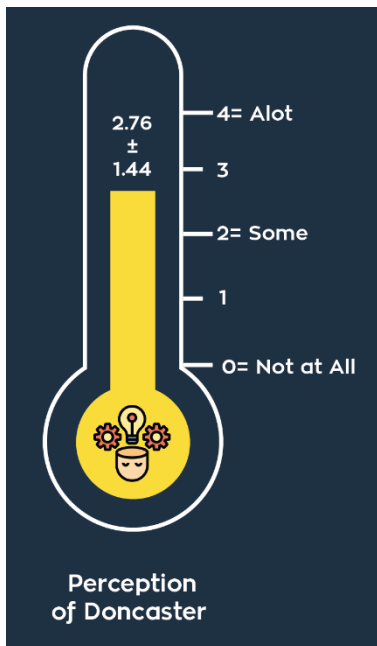
Lovely stadium, friendly staff and parking was easy.

Get more schools involved.

The turnout is fantastic.

Good facilities, tasty food and music playing – no complaints.

Positive perceptions of Doncaster hosting sporting events.



Typically, there is a perception of inequality of the North and South regarding opportunities. Major sporting events are frequently hosted in the South, and London especially. For example, Twickenham hosted the Men's Six Nations match against Ireland. However, Doncaster has now hosted the Tour de Yorkshire, UCI Championships for cycling, the Rose's match and due to host the RLWC 2021. 'Opportunity' is important in creating behaviour change. People need opportunities to 'try out' their interest in new experiences.

Respondents - both Doncaster locals and visitors - reported that the event had changed their perception as Doncaster as a place to live, work or visit. Scores (where the maximum was 4) were 2.76 ± 1.44 . The variation of scores (i.e., ± 1.44) suggests a wide range of perceptions.

Recurring comments about Doncaster, in particular and the North more generally, about hosting sporting events, instead of venues 'down in the South'. Locals, in particular, were impressed with the initiative taken by Doncaster Council to assist in raising the profile of the area and investing in the locality; they saw the Roses match as part of a wider movement involving

other iconic sporting events, including Tour de Yorkshire cycling. Visitors from outside of Doncaster were also receptive to Doncaster's offering. This outcome suggests framing of Doncaster may be experiencing a shift.

It's brilliant what Doncaster are doing for the area.

Hosting the games in the North is a huge positive.

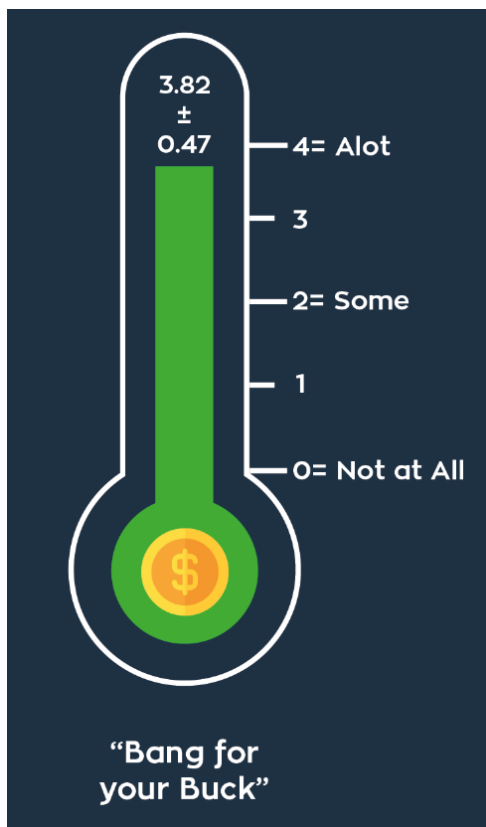
We would visit Doncaster again for the rugby.

Try to invest locally. People enjoy the big events and it is really important for Doncaster.

The event will raise the profile for Doncaster.

Really good to have things like this today in the Doncaster locality.

An impressive sense of “bang for their buck”.



A commonly cited barrier to physical activity engagement is cost (3). Linking to previous work around the UCI Championship, the benefits of the activity must outweigh its ‘cost’. Importantly, cost can be monetary, time, cognition or effort. In this research the ‘cost’ related to monetary value.

The scores from the survey identified the cost was worth the benefits. Out of a total of 4, the score almost optimally scored – 3.82±0.47. Little variation (i.e., ±0.47) was found among the 192 respondents.

Comments were frequently made regarding the cost differences of men’s match prices versus women’s. Lower comparative pricing – perhaps even using higher match prices to ‘frame’ lower costs - may be an attractive way to engage new individuals to the sport and retain existing engagers for longer.

The low cost ‘benefit’ was apparent for families attending the event. A family of four (2 adults, 2 U16’s) could purchase an early bird ticket for £40. Many families commented this as good value for money for Doncaster. Without prompting they used the cognitive bias of ‘price anchoring’ (using the available information of prices to form a judgment of value) but restricted

it to ‘within Doncaster’. In effect, the event price was perceived as better value when compared to other family day trips in the locality. This mechanism coincides with Castle Park’s interest of community engagement activities. The most favoured activity to be ‘rolled out’ by Castle Park Club was Family Fun Days. By offering an activity at a no/low cost is likely to generate considerable momentum.

Good value for money.

It’s been a good price for the family. I think it’s been money well spent.

Excellent price for the quality of Rugby.

It makes a cheaper day out to most places in Doncaster these days.

Men’s games are very expensive in comparison to Women’s games.

Recommendations

‘Habit Stack’: Use sporting events to promote the Club’s community PA initiatives.

Many of the Doncaster locals attending the sporting event identified as ‘inactive’. Considering they identified existing barriers as transport, work commitments and lack of advertisements about opportunities, the Club could minimise these impacts by timing PA opportunities with time spent at the club on match days. This approach aligns well with the recommendations of the E.A.S.T. framework (making behaviour easy, attractive, social and timely). Once interest has grown (aka ‘social buzz’), the Club may look to further expand involvement in Club activities on other days, times. Once engaged in this way, there may be further opportunities to vary their activity types.

One suggested ‘habit stack’ is to tie the event to a pre-match Family Fun Zone. Families accounted for 48% of spectators to the Roses game. Further, when asked for preferences, most interest was expressed in both family fun days and pre-match activities. This approach has been regarded as effective when adopted by many of soccer’s Premier League Football Clubs, including Manchester City – see Appendix A for their activity itinerary. Ultimately, increasing the salience of the offer for spectators has shown to improve engagement and Club loyalty. This can positively impact purchase consumer decision.

‘Frame’ advertisements around BOTH the sport and social atmosphere of the event.

Castle Park Club aspires to improve match day attendances and increase community engagement by pioneering their Community Foundation. To improve the reach of the Club within Doncaster, message framing is important. Strategically, this must satisfy (i) Rugby enthusiasts and (ii) Social enthusiasts, to increase total footfall at the club. Rugby enthusiasts are likely to be responsive to marketing that emphasises themes such as match hype, league table outcomes and player performance. Social enthusiasts are likely to prefer themes such as social buzz and offering fun, perhaps play-based, options and ‘popular’ contemporary styles of physical activity. Given that the rugby playing offer is well supported and close to being ‘full’, priority needs to be placed on social approaches to attract ‘new faces’ to the Club and to attend matches.

“If you do what you’ve always done, you’ll get what you’ve always gotten”.

Co-create interventions with members who want to be a part of the Community Foundation.

Ideally, for more targeted interventions a bottom-up approach is more valuable. This reduces the risks of inefficiencies emerging from over-committing to programmes with low social appeal. Including representatives of the intervention target group not only generates design insights but also allows participants to take ownership of the offer and to support it once it goes ‘live’. It is unlikely that the conventional ‘frames’ for recruitment into rugby clubs – perhaps emphasising playing opportunities, level of competition and facilities and featuring muscular, bearded young men (see example, *Figure 7*; this example does include two desirable features for social enthusiasts; fun and food!) – will be compelling to this new audience.



Figure 7: Conventional Player Recruitment for Rugby

A simple, but progressive, interactive ‘four-step’ Gamification approach can be used to refine the planning, implementing, adoption and evaluation of an intervention (*Figure 8*). The framework can support loyalty, participation and engagement of the target group co-creating an intervention with.



The initial engagement and perception of an activity, formulating an attitude towards it.	A critical phase; the first experience of the activity.	The progression of the activity.	The 'future' of the activity and/or transfer from it.
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Figure 8: Gamification Framework

References

1. Silveira, M., Cardoso, M. and Quevedo-Silva, F., 2019. Factors influencing attendance at stadiums and arenas. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 37(1), pp.50-65.
2. World.rugby. 2020. *World Rugby Launches Global Campaign To Revolutionise Women's Rugby* | *Www.World.Rugby*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.world.rugby/news/422288?lang=en>> [Accessed 9 April 2020].
3. Didymus, D., Fletcher, D., Staff, D. and Potts, D., 2020. *Elements Of Engagement Evidence Review Final Report*. [online] Sportwales.org.uk. Available at: <http://sportwales.org.uk/media/1924952/elements_of_engagement_-_evidence_review.pdf> [Accessed 9 April 2020].

Appendices

Appendix A – Manchester City Family Fun Zone Initiative

The screenshot shows the Manchester City website header with navigation links: NEWS, VIDEO, PLAYERS, CITYZENS AT HOME, SHOP, MORE. There are also language and login options. The main content area features a large promotional banner for 'ENJOY TWO HOURS OF FREE PRE-MATCH FUN AT THE CITY FOOTBALL ACADEMY.' The text describes a 2-hour free pre-match fun event at the City Football Academy, starting 3 hours before every fixture. It lists activities like playing on the indoor training pitch, getting photos with trophies, and meeting club mascots. A 'MAN CITY KIDS ONLINE' section promotes visiting the Man City Kids website or app for competitions, games, and videos, with a 'PLAY ONLINE' button.

Source: <https://www.mancity.com/ticketing-and-hospitality/man-city-kids-fanzone>

Appendix B

Barometer Indicators Presenting Survey Scores

