

Performance analysis in women's Australian football: A review of current literature, challenges, and its potential for future research

Van der Vegt, Braedan; Farley, Jessica B.; Gepp, Adrian; Keogh, Justin W L

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**BOND
UNIVERSITY**

INTERDISCIPLINARY
COLLOQUIUM ON SPORT

GETTING BACK ON THE FIELD:
SPORT IN A POST-COVID WORLD

18 February, 2022



ABOUT THE COLLOQUIUM

The Bond University Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Sport was first held in 2010 as a ‘round table’ event. Originally an initiative of the Emeritus Professor Jim Corkery from the Faculty of Law (and founder of the Centre for Commercial Law), the Colloquium is now in its 12th year.

The Colloquium is an interdisciplinary forum for the presentation and discussion of contemporary sport-related research with the objective to exchange ideas and create collaborative opportunities across jurisdictions, disciplines and institutions.

Selected papers are invited for peer review and submission to the Bond Sports Law and Governance Journal. Research presented at previous colloquia has been published in journals including the Bond Sports Law and Governance Journal and Sport Management Review.

The Bond University Colloquium is truly interdisciplinary and supported by:

- Faculty of Law
- Bond Business School
- Health Sciences & Medicine
- Faculty of Society and Design
- The Centre of Commercial Law
- Centre for Professional Legal Education
- Office of Research Services
- Office of Learning and Teaching
- Microcredential Unit



Friday, 18 February 2022

- 8.30am – 8.45am** **Registration**
Lounge & Hallway, Level 3, Faculty of Law (Building 4), Bond University
- 8.45am – 9.00am** **Opening Address & Welcome to Country**
Case Study 2, Level 3, Faculty of Law (Building 4), Bond University
- Uncle John Graham**
Traditional Custodian of the Kombumerri Land
Chair of Yugambah Regional Aboriginal Corporation Alliance (YRACA)
Bond University Elder
- Hon. Dr Annabelle Bennett, AC, SC, FAA (Online)**
Chancellor, Bond University
- 9.00am – 10.00am** **Keynote Speaker**
Dr Peter Harcourt OAM (Online)
Managing COVID in Elite and Professional Sport: International and Australian Perspectives
- 10.00am – 10.30am** **Morning Tea**
Level 2, Faculty of Law (Building 4)
- 10.30am – 12.00pm** **Dr Catherine Ordway (University of Canberra) and Professor Jack Anderson (University of Melbourne)**
Covid impacts: Sports Law
- Dr Eric Windholz (Monash University)**
Getting Back on the Field in a Covid World: Australian Cricket – A Case Study
- 12.00pm – 1.30pm** **Lunch**
Level 2, Faculty of Law (Building 4)
- 1.30pm – 3.00pm** **Stephen O’Grady (Bond University; Queensland Academy of Sport)**
Rekindling old relationships or sparking new connections? Insights for sport organisations drawn from experiences of women from refugee backgrounds
- Braedan van der Vegt, Dr Jessica Farley, Dr Adrian Gepp, Dr Justin Keogh - Bond University**
Performance analysis in women’s Australian football: A review of current literature, challenges, and its potential for future research
- 3.00pm – 3.30pm** **Afternoon Tea**
Level 2, Faculty of Law (Building 4)
- 3.30pm – 4.30pm** **Associate Professor James Duffy and Mr John O’Brien – QUT Law School**
Inadvertent Doping: Shayna Jack is Back on the Black Line
- Michael Connelly (CPR Group)**
What CAN clubs do?: Using the lessons of COVID to help sports clubs adapt to their ever-changing reality
- 4.30pm – 5.00pm** **Interdisciplinary Discussion and Closing Remarks**
- 5.00pm – 6.30pm** **Closing Reception**
Level 2, Faculty of Law (Building 4)

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

DR PETER HARCOURT OAM

Dr Peter Harcourt OAM is a Sport and Exercise Physician based in Melbourne who has been involved in the management of elite and professional athletes since the 1980s. Internationally he is the current Chair of the FIBA (basketball), ICC (cricket) and CGF (Commonwealth Games) Medical Committees and through those organisations has had a leadership role in navigating the pandemic for those sports. At the national level he recently stepped down from the AFL CMO role, a position he held for 25 years. He continues in medical roles that overlap into COVID-19 management as the CMO for Basketball Australia and a Medical Consultant to Cricket Australia.

KEYNOTE TITLE: Managing COVID in Elite and Professional Sport: International and Australian Perspectives

PRESENTERS

DR CATHERINE ORDWAY AND PROFESSOR JACK ANDERSON

Title: COVID impacts : Sports Law

Abstract: This presentation will outline how the responses to the COVID-19 pandemic have impacted on the sport industry from a legal perspective, and what we can expect going forward. The main areas for examination include: hosting impacts (especially major events such as the Olympic and Paralympic Games), broadcasting rights agreements, employment of sports' professional participants and impact on clubs; rescheduling implications on competitions; establishing and bursting biosecurity protocols and bubbles; the rise of sport online and gaming and the related impacts on match-fixing.

The three key sports law-related points to be taken from the first two years or so of COVID-19 are:

1. Investment opportunities: For the various professional codes in Australia, the pandemic brought out a key commercial vulnerability – an over-reliance on television money as a source of revenue. Many sports have begun to accelerate the process of seeking revenue from outside the traditional areas of broadcasting, ticketing and sponsorship. In 2021, private equity funds and investors took a strong interest in Australian sport. This will come with positives (eg: opportunities to expand) and negatives in terms of what genuine due diligence on those seeking to invest in a sport might reveal as to their true motivations (e.g., allegations of sports-washing and A-League investment).

2. Vaccination requirements: Can professional sports, as has been seen on other workplaces, mandate that their athlete-employees must be vaccinated and if an athlete chooses otherwise, will any consequent restrictions on the employee be deemed discriminatory in nature? and

3. Inclusion: The principal duty of care of any sports body is to ensure that as many people as possible, in as inclusive manner as is practicable, participate in sport. Initial data on the impact of COVID-19 is revealing that community clubs across Australia are struggling and some recent gains in gender equality have been reversed.

The responses to the COVID-19 pandemic are going to continue to challenge the sports industry and without careful planning and foresight the legal implications may be felt long into the future.

DR ERIC WINDHOLZ

Title: Getting Back on the Field in a Covid World: Australian Cricket – A Case Study

Abstract: COVID-19 played havoc with professional sports. Events were postponed or cancelled; organisations were placed under enormous economic strain; and financial, commercial and governance tensions were exposed. The same organisations then faced the daunting task of having to resume their sports in a Covid world. The latter challenge raised complex regulatory and legal issues. Using Cricket Australia as its case study, this paper examines one (and arguably the

most important) of these regulatory issues – obtaining the approval of State public health authorities for cricket to be played in the jurisdictions, and for players and staff to be able to cross in to their jurisdiction to do so. Obtaining these approvals required Cricket Australia to reformulate competitions and events to be COVID-safe. This, in turn, required Cricket Australia to assume and operate at a greater level of responsibility than it had previously assumed, redefining its relationship with not only its players and staff, but also with the families of players and staff, the staff of its partner organisations, spectators and the public.

Cricket's complexity of men's and women's international and domestic competitions, across different formats, and in every Australian State, provides an interesting and instructive case study from which valuable insights and lessons can be distilled to inform other professional sports faced with solving like problems in the future.

STEPHEN O'GRADY

Title: Rekindling old relationships or sparking new connections? Insights for sport organisations drawn from experiences of women from refugee backgrounds

Abstract: The Covid-19 pandemic has disrupted participation patterns in community sport in Australia (Hughes et al., 2020; Sport Australia, 2021). Sport organisations have been beset with uncertainty around demand for facilities, availability of volunteers and fluctuating memberships (Staley et al., 2021). In a 'living-with-Covid' future, club committees will be charged with renewing club/member relationships undone by the vicissitudes of the pandemic (Elliott et al., 2021).

For some organisations this capacity (re)building will be seen as an exercise in structural renewal post pandemic; for others it will be perceived as an opportunity for planned change in response to a changed social environment (Hanlon et al., 2019). In the case of the latter group, the relationship radar may be extended to new and diverse communities and embarking on rewarding relationships with specific sociocultural groups not targeted previously by sport clubs (Cunningham, 2008).

Across a dynamic sporting landscape where competition for new members and emerging talent is

robust, and where life commitments and a reluctance to resume sport are adjoining factors (Sport Australia, 2021), this challenge of relationship development post-pandemic represents an onerous task for clubs that take it seriously. It can be further subverted where predominant club committees resist organisational change and cling to the power and privilege granted to them by extant structures (Spaaij et al., 2018; Taylor, 2004).

For sport organisations determined to enrich membership in a post-Covid era, there are lessons to be taken from an examination of the role of sport in the integration process for women from refugee backgrounds (WRB). The findings of this qualitative research study show relationship development to be a key benefit experienced by WRB through their involvement in organised sport in Queensland, while also spotlighting factors behind relationship breakdown which are perceived by WRB to sit with sport organisations, their structures and membership values.

In considering the forms of capital WRB accessed, accumulated, and converted through sport involvement, the concepts of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986), bonding and bridging social capital (Putnam, 2000), and linking social capital (Woolcock, 2001) were useful in shedding light on the nature of relationships as experienced by WRB. Five dimensions of relationship development were identified: (i) confined; (ii) initiated; (iii) built; (iv) extended; (v) evolved. Using these dimensions, it was possible to critically explore how integration was supported by relationships developed by WRB through sport involvement. For example, relationships initiated, built and extended within sport were experienced as meaningful, two-way interactions with members of the host and other cultures (Ager & Strang, 2008; Wille, 2011). An impasse was identified at the point of entry to sport clubs for numerous WRB, while those that gained entry often cited constraints to continued involvement and sporting progress. In addition, opportunities to build, extend and evolve valuable relationships from within the field of sport were undermined at times by structures of exclusion.

Informed by these research findings, this presentation will offer sport club committees and sport planners insights into how relationship management can be ambitiously approached in a 'living-with-Covid' future.

BREADAN VAN DER VEGT, DR JESSICA FARLEY, DR ADRIAN GEPP, DR JUSTIN KEOGH

Title: Performance analysis in women's Australian football: A review of current literature, challenges, and its potential for future research

Abstract: Female Australian football (AF) became professional through the creation of the Australian Football League Women's (AFLW) in 2017. This competition has allowed performance analysis capabilities within female AF to increase due to greater availability of data measuring game statistics, greater match coverage, access to facilities and sports science equipment, and player information. This newfound capability for data collection enables the exploration of a wide array of performance areas of the women's game. This includes the opportunity to use big data analytics, which is becoming more prevalent in performance analysis in sport.

To date, no review of existing research in AFLW has been done to synthesise current knowledge and uncover current research gaps. This presents challenges to female AF practitioners regarding what

evidence base they should use to guide industry best practices. Meanwhile, researchers are also challenged as to what additional research needs to be prioritised. This is particularly relevant given that results produced by examination of male match-play performance have previously been assumed to translate to female performance without further investigation. Such an assumption fails to account for the differences in human physiology and athletic profile, and also access to further sport science facilities and development pathways that are more readily available in many male sports. Thus, a review study with the specific objective of understanding performance in the AFLW competition can be valuable to help alleviate this issue.

The AFLW competition has not been beyond criticism and challenges in its formative years with scrutiny over low-scoring and high injury rates, while there has been the ever-present uncertainty surrounding COVID restrictions that have plagued the previous three seasons. Adding further difficulty to research within the sport, the fast-evolving nature of match-play as the competition has begun to develop means that much of the research already produced can quickly lose representativeness of the current state of the

competition and sport. With the increasing prominence of female AF, as evident by the increase in participation of women and girls of all levels in AF and the expansion of the AFLW competition, a review of female AF performance analysis literature is warranted. As a result, the review that we have conducted can guide further investigation of performance analysis within female AF by establishing clear foundations for future research to build upon with consideration given to the difficulties that have arisen through the changing face of the game due to internal development and the challenging external environment surrounding professional sport currently.

Therefore, the primary aim of this conference presentation and review is to describe and critically analyse methods of performance analysis that have been employed in female AF taking a physical, technical, or tactical perspective with suggestions of areas of future research that can be produced to consider and potentially help alleviate the challenges that currently face the sport. The insights produced can provide practical information for researchers, sports science practitioners, and data analysts working with female AF players. This includes better describing the current demands of the competition while highlighting areas covered within the men's game that have not been researched, critical analysis of the methods and the representativeness of the current literature, as well as helping to inform better data collection and other best practices to provide guidance to produce more meaningful results in future research.

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR JAMES DUFFY AND MR JOHN O'BRIEN

Title: Inadvertent Doping: Shayna Jack is Back on the Black Line

Abstract: In 2022, Australian swimmer Shayna Jack is back on the black line. Jack was ineligible to compete at the 2021 Tokyo Olympic Games, as her two-year suspension for an anti-doping rule violation (ligandrol) expired just before the start of the Games. Jack's tale highlights the difficulties faced by elite athletes, in circumstances where they allege that their doping violation occurred inadvertently. This presentation will chart Jack's legal battle through a Court of Arbitration for Sport hearing, followed by an appeal by the World

Anti-Doping Agency against the leniency of her initial sanction. What has become clear is that Jack was simultaneously very unlucky, and then very lucky, during her anti-doping ordeal

MICHAEL CONNELLY

Title: What CAN clubs do?: Using the lessons of COVID to help sports clubs adapt to their ever changing reality

Abstract: COVID hit grassroots sports clubs hard. From having to adapt to new regulations to dealing with complete shutdowns, there was a lot to learn for the hard-working volunteers who run local clubs.

Clubs that emerged the strongest following each shutdown were those that focused not on the restrictions themselves, nor on how they were 'victims' of circumstance. Rather, they focused on what they COULD do. By spending their forced downtime on strategic activities rather than whinging, clever clubs found ways to stay connected with their members and to keep their members engaged (and ultimately coming back to the club as soon as they could), and invested time away from the field on things that often fall between the cracks when the day-to-day business of running a sports club keeps volunteers so busy.

COVID taught us that, like it or not, our world is going to change. Some changes happen very quickly, like when sport simply stopped due to government-mandated shutdowns. But other changes result from incremental trends over years, if not generations, and by the time a committee becomes aware of their impact, they can be left playing catch-up.

Some of these slower-burning changes include a decline in volunteering, increasing demand from members for better Levels of Service, the professionalisation of sports governance and increased legislative compliance obligations for clubs.

As Australia prepares to get back on the field for full sporting seasons in 2022, it's time for more clubs to use the lessons that COVID taught us about change, and apply them across their operations. For example, if members want their club to still exist in a decade, what do they need to change about their operations now, to deal with the fact that the downward trend in volunteering is unlikely to reverse itself in that time?

How can they use what they've learned in their COVID recovery to improve the viability of their business? (Yes, they may be 'not-for-profit' entities, but it's business nonetheless!)

For more than two decades, CPR Group has been creating great clubs by improving the lives of the volunteers who run them. Michael Connelly is CPR Group's Managing Director and is an inspirational community development specialist. Through his work with community, sport and recreation organisations at all levels in Australia, as well as local Councils, universities and government, Michael is driving the innovation of not-for-profit governance to ensure long-term sustainability and viability in a transforming community sector.

Michael's presentation at the Interdisciplinary Colloquium on Sport will engage delegates through stories of clubs on both ends of the bell curve of COVID recovery strategies, and will challenge the traditional approaches that clubs often take towards things like volunteer recruitment, fee setting and effective monetisation of their core business