

Call for Papers to

Play the Game 2011

- Bringing change to the heart of sport

German Sport University Cologne, 3-6 October 2011

Few sectors in society can claim as resounding a global success as sport. Over the past three decades, sport has expanded its outreach, its economy and its societal influence in ways few would have dreamed of seeing. But success has a downside. Doping, corruption, match fixing, political abuse, and failure to mobilise ordinary people are among the factors that threaten the core values of sport.

Change is needed for sport to maintain a positive role in society. But what kind of change should that be, and where should it lead us?

For the seventh time Play the Game invites you to engage in open, fact-based and constructive debates on a number of themes that are essential to the future of sport. The German Sport University Cologne will host Play the Game 2011 from 3-6 October and we welcome you to join this unique forum for independent thinking and dialogue on sport.

As an academic, journalist or sports practitioner your participation is vital:

Academics can play a key role by bringing comprehensive data, scientific methods and analytical skills into the process.

Journalists have a special responsibility, partly because the media are an integral part of the sporting environment, and partly because the media have a strong influence on which issues are raised in public and which that are not.

Sports practitioners must balance a series of demands: Not only are they expected to provide economic growth, and increase membership and audiences, they must also guarantee ethical governance, strict anti-doping measures and social responsibility.

We invite you to share your expertise and experience with leading stakeholders by submitting an abstract/storyline with relevance to one of these main themes:

- The Middle East on the Move: Sport in Arab countries
- Outside Threats, Inside Traps: Countering Corruption in Sport
- Chasing the White Elephants: Mega-events for the Public Good
- Fair Play, Fair Pay? Creating Growth in Grass-root Sport
- Crime and Credibility: Advancing Anti-Doping Strategies
- Little Difference, Huge Impact: The Gender Challenge to Sport
- The Power of the Chip: How Technology Changes the Landscape of Sport

Theme descriptions:

Outside Threats, Inside Traps: Countering Corruption in Sport

Match fixing and illegal gambling driven by organised crime are immense threats to sport as a global entertainment and educational culture. But sport is also threatened from the inside when top leaders are caught filling their own bank accounts rather than serving their sport. A growing number of sports leaders call for worldwide action against all forms of corruption in sport.

At Play the Game 2011 we will take the debate several steps further on how an international anti-corruption agency can improve the shattered state of sport. Will governments take a leading role, and are sports organisations ready to give up parts of their autonomy?

World class journalists and whistleblowers will tell how corruption can be uncovered, academics analyze the extension of the problem, and we invite top sports leaders, athletes and politicians to give their view about how sport can achieve fair play in the corridors of power.

Chasing the White Elephants: Mega-events for the Public Good

The fight between nations to conquer glamorous sports events has brought a new species to life: The White Elephant. At Play the Game we will search the world for the most magnificent creatures and put them into a White Elephant Index – listing the stadia that were built at huge public costs and for very little use.

Legacy is the keyword for event organisers, and there is more to it than arena projects. Campaigns for getting the biggest events are loaded with geopolitical and commercial interests, and events are said to push the development of national image, infrastructure, social skills – and even sport itself.

For a number of emerging nations, hosting a sports event is seen as a step into global recognition. With inspiration from South Africa, Colombia, Brazil, India, China, Russia and of course the upcoming London 2012 Olympics we invite experts, campaigners, politicians and sports leaders to answer some of the key questions:

Is it possible to stage mega-events that serve the public good and live up to the promises made to get them? Or should we accept with joy that a mega-event is a wonderful global party built around a sports competition? And does the White Elephant have a future on earth?

Fair Play, Fair Pay? Creating Growth in Grass-root Sport

Has sport become too good for people to practice?

Governments invest growing amounts in elite sport to strengthen the nation's global image, while the nation itself is increasingly turning its back to sport. In most countries, citizens become more physically active, but they spend the extra hours at the fitness centre, in the forest, on the road or on the commercial pitch.

Politicians worldwide have noted the scientific evidence that even little exercise has dramatic

impact on our health, and they hope that sport can help them reduce health budgets in the years to come. They seem however to ignore that there is no evidence behind the claim that support for elite sport and major events improves the population's health and sports participation.

Is it really of long-term benefit to sports organisations to maintain the myth that elite and grass-root sport have common interests, or should they shift strategies and get people back in the associations? Which measures can governments take to activate the millions of people that are ready to move, but short of time and facilities?

At Play the Game we will seek out the best practices for governments and sport organisations wanting to create growth among the grass-roots. We will look at sport as a vehicle for development in poor countries and examine how European sport will be influenced by Lisbon Treaty which for the first time allows the EU to shape its own sports policy.

Crime and Credibility: Advancing Anti-Doping Strategies

The ever intensifying battle between those who invent new doping practices and those who try to stop them affects the values declared by sport and by society respectively. Like at previous conferences, top executives from WADA will debate their policies with some of their most lucid critics among scientists, researchers, journalists and sports practitioners.

This time, the overall question is whether it is possible at all to shape an alternative, efficient, coherent, ethical, truly global and bullet-proof anti-doping strategy. If yes: What does it take? If no: How can we live with an imperfect and vulnerable system?

The legal rights of athletes, the lack of compliance by various sports and countries, the value of the biological passport, the future of testing, the financing of anti-doping in the future... the topics are numerous, and the debates will set off the process of revising the World Anti-Doping Code due to unfold in the course of 2012.

But why fight doping if it can be prevented? Germany is a leader in doping prevention and local researchers will share their insight into prevention practices in youth, fitness and elite sport cultures.

Educators and testers face a common enemy: The huge illegal market for sports drugs. We will examine the links between doping and organised crime and ask if criminalization can be regarded as the solution or a problem in itself?

Little Difference, Huge Impact: The Gender Challenge to Sport

The distinction between man and woman is seemingly simple, and it should be a solid cornerstone in the construction of modern sport. But on a number of fronts, the little difference is more complex than it seems. By birth or by choice, a notable percentage of the human race does not fit into a traditional view of male and female.

Gays and lesbians have been striving for equal rights for many years, and more recently transgendered persons have been able to highlight their claim to a place on the sports arena. Sports organisations struggle to find a foothold in a new gender reality, facing the dilemma of

protecting the traditional “level playing field” while still being able to offer “sport for all”.

Other athletes increase their revenues by being feminine or masculine in a very palpable way, offering an image as sex symbols in addition to their sporting talent. The sexualisation of sport in the media is a growing trend in the industry.

For yet another group of athletes the challenge is almost the opposite: Women in Muslim countries are often deprived of the right to sport and play simply because of their gender.

The Power of the Chip: How Technology Changes the Landscape of Sport

The explosive growth of the gaming industry is one of the few global culture factors that can really rival the clout of sport. The image of a sedentary youth linked to their couch and their controller is often described as antagonist number one to modern sport.

But the fast technological progress also offers new opportunities for sport: Community building through the Internet, GPS-tracking as a catalyst for new movement disciplines, and games that use the moving body as the controller and lead role. Last but not least technology can help the disabled to move or even to take part in sports.

Within the well-known sports disciplines the role of the referee can be assisted – or, as some fear, taken over – by communication technology. Is that a threat or a gift to sport, or both?

Play the Game 2011 will offer workshops, debates and gaming activities in order to explore what we can realistically expect from our electronic devices in the years to come.

The Middle East on the Move: Sport in Arab countries

What may have appeared a fata morgana has become tangible reality: The Middle East has entered the international sports arena as a player you have to count in. With Qatar as the most visible example, Arab governments have invested huge amounts in getting control over big sports events, mega-brands, clubs and international federations. Their money seems abundant, but their image is under dispute: What is the Arab elite aiming at, what are their visions for world sport?

Sport also plays a vibrant role in others spheres of the Arab societies. The stadium is not only a sports field, but also a platform with a potential for politics, and football crowds seem to have played a role in the recent political uprisings.

A particular challenge is the role of women in countries where Islam is the predominant religion: Are women covered by the term “Sport for all”?

Abstracts/storylines will be peer reviewed by leading academics, journalists and practitioners in the Programme Committee in cooperation with the secretariat.

Selected speakers will be given a minimum 15 minute timeslot to present their papers orally in parallel sessions and some may be chosen to present in plenary sessions.

Submission deadline

The deadline for submission of abstracts/storylines is May, 31st 2011.

Notification of approval of abstracts will be sent by email in the second half of June.

Please note that the registration price for abstract submitters will be calculated as of the day of the abstract submission.

Submit your abstract [here](#)

We thank you in advance for any help in distributing this message to friends, colleagues and others who share the goals of Play the Game: To promote democracy, transparency and freedom of expression in world sport.

Play the Game 2011 is hosted by German Sport University Cologne. We all look forward to hearing from you and seeing you in Cologne!