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SPORT AND THE 2021 SCOTTISH ELECTION

Grant Jarvie, Paul Widdop, Yujun Xu***

We will:

“Appoint a Minister for Sport”- Scottish Green Party

“Develop a New Scotland Active Plan”- Scottish Labour Party

“Double Sportscotland’s Budget”- Scottish National Party and Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party

“Appoint an Outdoor Recreation Champion”- Scottish Liberal Democrats

Key Fact check

- Double the Scottish Government’s investment in sport and active living to £100 million a year by the end of the Parliament (SNP).
- 10% of the transport capital budget on walking, cycling and wheeling (SNP).
- £1 million to support more schools to open their facilities to the public during evenings and weekends (Conservatives).
- Double sport scotland’s budget over the course of the next Parliament (Conservative).
- Develop a new Active Scotland Plan, enabling councils to reintegrate local services (Labour).
- Appoint a Minister for Sport (Greens).
- Back the UK’s bid to host the 2030 World Cup and bid to hold the final in Scotland (Conservatives).
- Extend opportunities for Gaelic sports (Liberal Democrats).
- Appoint an Outdoor Recreation Champion (Liberal Democrats).
- Establish an island travel scheme for teams and individuals to compete in national events (Liberal Democrats).
- Every £1 spent on sport generates £1.91 in health and social benefits.
- None of the manifestos according have been adequately costed. (Institute of Fiscal Studies).
- Create a ‘Fan Bank’ to empower communities and groups and strengthen local decision-making by supporting communities to acquire a share or control of their local sports club (SNP).
- Participate in the UK-wide preparatory work for a 2030 Men’s World Cup bid being funded by the UK Government (Liberal Democrats).
- The importance of sport in the national economies usually varies between 1 percent and 2.3 percent in terms of gross value added and employment.
- The education sector is the biggest sector overall in European countries; it is invariably one of the most important sport subsectors globally. The virtual closure of the education sector during the lockdown had a strong effect on the sport.
- Sport is a major untapped Scottish resource in terms of international engagement.
- Sport in Scotland should be supported far more to helping Scotland achieve its environmental ambitions.
- Sport in Scotland should be rewarded much more for its contribution to the SDG’s and sport in Scotland should make much more aware of the world mandate it has been given.
- Scotland should use sport and sport should use current human rights legislation to enshrine a right to sport and safe places.

*** Grant Jarvie is Professor and Director of the Academy of Sport at the University of Edinburgh; Dr Paul Widdop is an associate of the Academy of Sport and Senior Lecturer at Leeds Metropolitan University and Dr Yujun Xu is a Teaching and Research Associate with the University of Edinburgh and the University of East Anglia. [The Academy of Sport](#) is Scotland’s leading international think tank, dedicated to sport. A summary of this report can be found [here](#).

Introduction

1. On 6 May, people across Scotland will vote to elect 129 Members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs). The party that wins the most seats will form the government. Given the multiple ways in which sport matters, nationally and internationally is sport in Scotland become an important political force field, control over which brings authority, visibility, and power also delivers tangible outcomes for Scotland?

2. Let's get past the absurd politics question first, sport is inherently political. On any given day, sport is used as a tool to serve political functions and ends. Indeed, recent events illustrate this, from the rise and fall of The European Super League; to support for Black Lives Matter; to drawing attention to the need for free school meals to the most deprived sections of our populations. Furthermore, to the many NGO's working in civil society to deliver conflict resolution through sport and much more the past year has illustrated that it is factually wrong, a myth, bad faith to suggest that athletes or grassroots sportspeople cannot be successful social and political activists.

3. There are times when sport can, does and should lead by example. Yet, will Scotland learn from other countries who place sport central in their thinking around diplomacy and national brand image. That is, take a sensible and rational approach in realising, beyond just rhetoric and media soundbites, that Scotland is a sporting nation. One that can harness sport and see it as a key driver in helping to deliver a wide range of outcomes.

4. Research has demonstrated that for every £1 spent on sport, it generates £1.91 in health and social benefits.

5. The Academy of Sport has previously covered sport in the 2020 US Presidential Campaign; the 2014 independence referendum [1]; the 2015 and 2019 UK General Election and the 2016 Scottish Election [2].

6. Why do manifestos matter? They are an important guide to our politics and priorities in public life. For a governing party it sets priorities, once elected it becomes a programme of work for ministers and a means of holding administrations to account once elected. If required a manifesto can be an important element in reaching a coalition deal, although such a deal has not been needed at Holyrood for 18 years.

7. While this brief will cover what the manifestos say about sport, what is more revealing is what they don't say, and what they could say about sport. What is surprising is the degree of convergence or common ground for the next five years, with the exception of the issues relating to independence. For those parties supporting independence none of them comment upon how this would impact upon sport, or indeed the role of sport in a independent Scotland.

8. More generally none of the party's comment upon the impact of Brexit on sport and yet arguably the issues of independence, Brexit and building back better from Covid-19 remain realities for Scottish sport, as they do for society.

9. One final introductory point is that manifestos, whether they be disseminated from Holyrood or Westminster do not exist in some global vacuum, devoid of the influences of global networks. Indeed, there are many levers and issues that governments, including Scotland's, do not have control over, such as global economic forces, consumer sentiment, the arrival of pandemics, social change, and the fast-moving impact of technology whether these be disruptive or not. This is certainly true of the global networks and sporting trends.

10. Manifestos should be about harnessing these trends and building a better Scotland.

[1] See **Jarvie, G. (2016)** 'Sport, the 2014 Commonwealth Games and the Scottish referendum <https://www.research.ed.ac.uk/en/publications/sport-the-2014-commonwealth-games-and-the-scottish-referendum> [retrieved 28 April 2021].

[2] See 'Why sport matters in the US election campaign? The Scotsman 30 October 2020- <https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/why-sport-matters-us-election-grant-jarvie-3019710> [retrieved 28 April 2021].

The Scottish 2021 Manifesto's, Sport and the World

11. The Scottish sporting landscape is complex [1]. It operates within a world and country that is changing and sport needs to change too. Many countries promote the need to be more physically active, highlight the dangers of being physically inactive, and tend to assess activity against a generic set of criteria. Many countries see sport as being key to delivering sustainable development goal outcomes.

12. Scottish sport also sits in an international landscape. A fact that all the Scottish political manifesto's fail to realise. The rise and fall of the proposed European Super League should have acted as a wake-up call to the realities of the dangers of excessive capitalism, market forces, poor judgment, and the real importance of sport in communities and social networks. This condemnation of fans across Europe of the ESL proposals demonstrates growing unrest and tension between populations on one side and corporations and governments pursuing neoliberalism policies. This needs to be monitored closely.

13. A fair, safe, more equal, more diverse, and strong sport sector free from corruption is crucial to the integrity of global sport. Is it too aspirational to ask for Scottish sport to want to lead the world or at least lead domestically on such areas of concern?

14. It is paramount that sport is delivered in a safe environment and captures the real value to be gained by harnessing greater diversity.

15. The world of sport, both internationally and locally, is currently facing both external and internal threats. Some parts of the Scottish sporting landscape are thriving, embracing change and innovation, while other parts are struggling to cope with change both in terms of capacity and/or capability.

16. The Scottish sporting landscape is supported at local, regional, and national level by different entities [4]. A wide range of organisations are involved in sports planning and delivery. No up-to-date detailed organisational diagram of Scottish sport exists. For all these reasons and more it is disappointing that the manifestos do not grasp that forces shaping sport in different parts of the world are not just narrow local forces but also ones in where sport in some parts of the world is reaching out to those in need not just at home but internationally.

17. When a sports campaign by an observatory of sport played out in one of the national papers talks of sports participation being structured by patterns of poverty and inequality in Scotland, this is not new or some radical observation. Sportswales published their Child Poverty Strategy in 2010. The same thing was said before the last Scottish general election, but something needs to be done about it.

18. The Irish Department of Foreign Affairs is currently looking at using sport to draw attention to hunger and homelessness in Ireland. The chair of sportscotland is a recognised world leader in social entrepreneurship and homelessness but such thinking has to penetrate discussion of sport in the manifestos, if not mainstream sports in Scotland.

[3] Scottish Government (2019) Review of the Scottish Sporting Landscape. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

[4] Scottish Government (2019) Review of the Scottish Sporting Landscape. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

What is in?

19. The main areas covered by the 2021 manifestos involving sport and physical activity are relatively limited [5]. They include: health and well-being; communities; equity; facilities; participation and outdoor recreation. In terms of the actual space allocated to sport the Liberal Democrats say the most and the Greens say the least. Only the Conservatives, Liberal Democrats and Labour state that they will support a 2030 FIFA World Cup Bid. Only the Greens state that they will support a dedicated Minister for Sport. Only the SNP state that by the end of the parliament - 10% of the transport capital budget will be spent on walking, cycling and wheeling [6]. None of the parties refers to the impact of constitutional change on sport and recreation.

20. Only the Liberal Democrats talk of establishing an island travel scheme for teams and individuals to compete in national events [7]. Only Labour talk of re-integrating sport and leisure trusts back into local authority control and support for Sabhal Mor Ostaig, the National Centre for the Gaelic Language and Culture and the implied support for Celtic sports given their centrality to Celtic cultures [8].

Health and Wellbeing

21. On the question of health, the five parties are more similar than different. The Scottish National Party (SNP) have: promised to double sportscotland's current funding of £33.7m and Active Health Lives funding of

£15.4m within an overall doubling of the Scottish Government's spending on sport and active living to £100 million by the end of the next parliament [9]. The Liberal Democrats have: set out proposals to expand GPs' powers to prescribe free access to sport and exercise; support wellbeing by making it easier for people to use active travel, reserving more space for safe cycling and walking; invest in sport and promote healthy lifestyles as part of a package of measures for preventative care; examine what support can be given to ex-football and rugby players suffering from dementia and develop research into the potential link between brain injuries, dementia and ball sports [10].

22. The Conservatives have: also promised to double sportscotland's budget over the course of the next Parliament; place an emphasis on funding grass roots and elite sport; stress the importance of physical activity as part of a Covid recovery plan; encourage physical activity by making it more accessible; and evoke the language of rights to ensure that every child has the right to play a sport at school [11].

23. The Green Party have: asserted that keeping active and participating in sport can make a positive contribution to physical and mental health and will continue to support investment in grassroots sport and address the barriers to participation [12].

24. The Labour Party approach is framed in terms of Covid recovery, outdoor recreation, and equity of access with the impact on health and wellbeing being implied rather than stated [13]. They have stated that

[5] **The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (2021)**. Rebuild Scotland. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#); **The Scottish Green Party (2021)**. Our Common Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#); **The Scottish Labour Party (2021)**. Scottish Labour National Recovery Plan. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#); **The Scottish Liberal Democrat Party (2021)**. Put Recovery First. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#); **The Scottish National Party (2021)**. Scotland's Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[6] **The Scottish National Party (2021)**. Scotland's Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[7] **The Scottish Liberal Democrat Party (2021)**. Put Recovery First. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[8] **The Scottish Labour Party (2021)**. Scottish Labour National Recovery Plan. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[9] **The Scottish National Party (2021)**. Scotland's Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[10] **The Scottish Liberal Democrat Party (2021)**. Put Recovery First. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[11] **The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (2021)**. Rebuild Scotland. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[12] **The Scottish Green Party (2021)**. Our Common Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[13] **The Scottish Labour Party (2021)**. Scottish Labour National Recovery Plan. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

they will: develop a new Active Scotland Plan; designate new national parks; ensure that every community will access at least one open and freely available local space for sport and recreation, which is safe and secure. They would also restrict the sponsorship of sporting events and clubs by industries that promote health-harming commodities.

Equality

25. On the question of equity, the parties are more similar than different. None of the parties adopt the SDG's approach of 'Leaving No One Behind' or talk of Sport for All or use the language of human rights to advance equity in and through sport. The Greens talk of removing barriers to participation and providing free access to school and community hubs for children and young people [14]. The SNP promise to work with public broadcasters to increase the amount of women's sport shown on Scottish screens and develop interventions such as Fan Banks to enable increase participation in sport for women, girls and boys [15].

26. The Liberal Democrats will support anti-racism and anti-homophobia campaigns and work to make sport inclusive and intolerant of discrimination at all levels [16]. The Labour Party state that they: will commit to seeing more women and girls participating in sport, agree that single-sex sports opportunities can help build confidence in sports participation and that it is essential to ensure that women from various religions and diverse minority communities can participate [17].

27. What is evident over the last year is that a new generation of sporting activists are on the march. There are times when sport can, does and should lead. New waves of sporting activists and philanthropists need to be supported long after the protests fade. Sport has always been political. Athletes have always

had social and political consciences. Yet, the public can't always depend on sports stars to tackle social inequality alone, nor should they but the world needs them and others to strive to make a difference.

28. Universal access to sport remains a work in progress and while social characteristics are protected under the provision of The Equalities Act, social class, poverty and geography remain significant barriers to sport in Scotland.

Community

29. On communities some of the manifestos say more than others. Labour states that sport is an essential aspect of our culture and public life but is rarely viewed as a policy priority. They assert that it should be the priority of community planning, working with national agencies like sportscotland, for every community to have access to at least one open and freely available local space for sport and recreation, which is safe and secure. Neighbourhoods should be designed around these safe and secure facilities together with other community amenities.

30. The Greens want to see adequate provision of indoor sports facilities across Scotland in partnership with clubs, communities and governing bodies, including 200 metres indoor track [18]. Children and the young are to have free access to school and community hubs.

31. The Liberal Democrats will extend the discounts offered to young people with a Young Scot card to access more sports centres, cultural and arts venues. They seek to capitalise on Judy, Andy, and Jamie Murray success by supporting the development of accessible tennis facilities, with covered courts,

[14] **The Scottish Green Party (2021)**. Our Common Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[15] **The Scottish National Party (2021)**. Scotland's Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[16] **The Scottish Liberal Democrat Party (2021)**. Put Recovery First. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[17] **The Scottish Labour Party (2021)**. Scottish Labour National Recovery Plan. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[18] **The Scottish Green Party (2021)**. Our Common Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

including rural areas, to get more people playing tennis with more pathways for their potential successors [19].

32. The Conservatives state that they will improve access to community leisure facilities as an essential part of increasing rates of physical activity, while ensuring that leisure facilities are embedded in COVID recovery and local regeneration plans [20]. They seek to deliver fair funding for councils to support facilities and develop a national strategy to protect assets. The SNP will create a 'Fan Bank' to empower communities and groups and strengthen local decision-making by supporting communities to acquire a share of their local sports club [21].

Education

33. Education is one of Scotland's major government expenditures. Research shows a direct correlation between participation in sport and greater achievement in higher education and employment. The Scottish Greens will pledge to expand outdoor learning, including a guarantee of at least one one-week residential outdoor experience for every primary and secondary pupil [22].

34. The SNP talk of support for the Active Schools Scheme, first introduced by Labour, but making it entirely free everywhere to bring sport and physical activity into the playground and ensure every child can stay active no matter the financial barriers their family may be facing [23].

35. The Liberal Democrats see grassroots sport benefitting from funding from a Bounce Back Education plan [24]. The Labour Party pledged that pupils have at least one week away at an outdoor centre. A Summer Comeback Pass would strengthen children's mental and physical health by providing free access to sport, transport, outdoor activities and culture [25]. The Conservatives state that they will review the physical education training which teachers receive and introduce specialist PE teachers in primary schools by the end of the next Parliament [26]. They also state that they would invest £1 million to support more schools to open their facilities to the public during evenings and weekend.

36. Reports on the economic importance of sport in Canada relate the core element of sport. Sport industries contribute \$49 million (or 0.2 per cent) to total GDP, led by sport-related education and training (\$19 million) and governance, funding and professional support (\$11 million) (Statistics Canada, 2014). Similarly, the core of the sport industry contributes 0.4 percent of total jobs in Canada [27]. Most of these jobs are in education and training and in organised sport. It is worth pointing out that, according to the EU SSA, the education sector is the biggest sector overall in European countries. It is one of the most important sport subsectors globally [28]. The virtual closure of the education sector during the lockdown had a strong effect on the sport.

[19] **The Scottish Liberal Democrat Party (2021)**. Put Recovery First. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[20] **The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (2021)**. Rebuild Scotland. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[21] **The Scottish National Party (2021)**. Scotland's Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[22] **The Scottish Green Party (2021)**. Our Common Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[23] **The Scottish National Party (2021)**. Scotland's Future. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[24] **The Scottish Liberal Democrat Party (2021)**. Put Recovery First. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[25] **The Scottish Labour Party (2021)**. Scottish Labour National Recovery Plan. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[26] **The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (2021)**. Rebuild Scotland. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[27] **Commonwealth Secretariat (2020)** Commonwealth Moves: Resourcing the Sustainability and Recovery of the Sport Sector during the Coronavirus Pandemic. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

[28] **European Commission (2018)** 'Study on the Economic Impact of Sport through Sport Satellite Accounts'. Brussels: Directorate-General Education and Culture.

Governance

37. It is perhaps a given that it is essential to support good governance policies, practices and systems to help build safe, fair and accessible sport. The SNP state that to be eligible to apply for support from the Fan Bank, groups will require to show clear community focus and support and demonstrate how involvement in the running of their club would be used to support women and girl's participation in sport. The Liberal Democrats assert that they will promote more fan ownership and involvement in professional football clubs and leagues to secure better governance, inclusive decision-making, transparency and accountability, and a better fan experience [29].

38. The Conservatives point to a review of football governance in Scotland to ensure it is inclusive and fully representative of all levels of the game [30]. Labour also talks of governance reform in relation to football stating that it supports fan ownership of football clubs in Scotland, recognising that clubs are more than just businesses and that believe there is an urgent need to reform the governance of the game in Scotland for football to be more inclusive. They support calls by the Scottish Football Supporters Association and others for a full and inclusive review of the game.

Other

39. All the manifestos single out football more than other sport which acknowledges the importance of the sport to Scotland but none of the political parties remind the electorate that the SFA were ahead of the game in Scotland by asking politicians of all parties to fully recognise football's influence and help extend its

already considerable reach. Scotland is a small nation with a large football footprint. It has a set of football assets that can extend influence and energise our economy. The global marketplace for sports coaching platforms is expected to grow by £12.7 billion by 2023 [31]. The reconstruction of Camp Nou will allow FC Barcelona Infrastructure to incorporate a more attractive performance and educational offering through its Barça Innovation Hub. Scotland can be a key player too, rather than a spectator.

40. Football, for all its flaws, has been an anchor of support in Scotland's areas of multiple deprivation. Poverty and inequality are at the heart of Scotland's health and well-being challenges. The low level of sports participation has been widely documented, but the important thing is to do something about it and football is playing its part.

41. The SFA has asked an incoming government to support an initiative that promotes football for all and for free – by removing the cost barrier and allowing children to enjoy the sport's many benefits by creating a free football voucher scheme [32]. Football, for all its flaws, has been an anchor of support in Scotland's areas of multiple deprivations. Its clubs are essential community assets. Perhaps a more collaborative approach could be taken by local councils and the community programmes of Scottish Clubs.

42. One of the lessons of Covid-19 is that clubs, organisations, and stadium owners have all had to rethink the world of fan engagement. This includes embracing new technologies and understanding of the changing needs and wants of different segments of society.

[29] **The Scottish Liberal Democrat Party (2021)**. Put Recovery First. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[30] **The Scottish Conservative and Unionist Party (2021)**. Rebuild Scotland. 2021 Scottish Election Manifesto: See [here](#).

[31] 'Football can help Scotland become healthier, wealthier and win friends around the world'. The Scotsman 10 April 2021- <https://www.scotsman.com/news/opinion/columnists/football-can-help-scotland-become-healthier-wealthier-and-win-friends-around-the-world-professor-grant-jarvie-3194420> [retrieved 28 April 2021].

[32] **Scottish Football Association (2021)**. Scottish FA: Vision for the Future. Glasgow: Scottish Football Association. Glasgow: Scottish Football Association. See [here](#).

What could be in?

43. While the areas mentioned above talk of sport being able to deliver it is equally important to consider what is not said and what could be said. Given Scotland's stated positive intentions on climate change, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and human rights it is surprising that the political parties do not see sport as enabling outcomes in these areas. These are missed opportunities. What is perhaps even more surprising is that a nation that does not have control over foreign affairs and claims to be disadvantaged by Brexit does not maximise the benefits to be gained from grasping the potential of sport as a key component of culture to drive international relations, diplomacy and soft power for Scotland.

Sport and the Sustainable Development Goals

44. In July 2015 Scotland became one of the first countries in the world to sign up to the sustainable development goals. A UN sport specific remit around sport for development and the 2030 SDG's provide sport with an international mandate that should be grasped by Scotland. The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development recognises sport as an enabler of sustainable development and peace [33].

45. One of the most recent areas of research on sport relates to the issue of happiness, life satisfaction or subjective well-being. Several econometric techniques have been developed to notionally monetise such an impact. In an Australian study, the monetised value of sport-related happiness ranged from AU\$4,000 to AU\$9,000 per participant per year, dependent on frequency of participation and the definition of happiness (Australian Sports Commission, 2017). A study by the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2014) supports such outcomes [34].

Sport and Human rights

46. If sport is to be further enabled to address power, inequalities and social justice within the contemporary context then the development of further interventions is an urgent necessity.

47. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) proclaimed in 1948 that recognition of the inherent dignity and of equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace (United Nations 1948).

48. Seventy years later the Centre for Sport and Human Rights, chaired by the former President of Ireland and former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson, was set up with the aim of supporting: (i) the prevention of human rights harms from occurring through sport; (ii) access to effective remedy where harms have occurred and (iii) promoting a positive human rights legacy from sport and sporting events [35]. As the world enters the third decade of the 21st century the call for knowledge exchange around human rights through sport is needed as much as ever and one very practical step forward would be for sports bodies to work more closely with national human rights units or agencies.

49. Impunity, denial, and neglect remain central characteristics within the struggle to realise human rights in more places, more contexts, more often. A gulf exists between human rights ideals and human rights in practice. Sport is an important space through which human rights activists can be advocated for, investigated through, protected, publicised and prevented. Whilst the state was the original focus of human rights protection, the advance of human rights norms is also used to hold non-state actors to account.

[33] Commonwealth Secretariat (2015) Sport for Development and Peace and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

[34] DCMS (Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport) (2014) 'Culture, Sport and Wellbeing: An Analysis of the Taking Part Survey'. See [here](#).

[35] See Centre for Sport & Human Rights- <https://www.sporhumanrights.org/> [retrieved 28 April 2021].

50. Thus, the focus of any contemporary consideration of human rights through sport covers a broad range of places, agencies, individuals, communities including those invoked by the state and non-state actors.

51. The First Minister set up a Scottish Human Rights task force in 2015. The task force reported in 2021 and made some 30 recommendations. Any proposed legislation would be for the next incoming government. All the manifestos talk to a new human rights agenda going forward for Scotland. The Scottish Government has stated its ambition to embed human rights across all areas of policy in a way that makes a difference in the lives of people in Scotland and demonstrates global leadership in setting standards.

52. Sport and human rights is an area where Scotland could aspire to be a world leader [36]. None of the manifesto sport and physical activity commentaries talk to the human rights through sports agenda.

Sport, Culture and External Affairs

53. Scotland has a lot to offer, and the sports industry could further advance Scotland's international interests by grasping sport's ability to engage with other Governments and Cities and open the door not just for business but for cultural exchanges and messaging. Sport can help to advance Scotland's international connectivity, soft power and paradiplomatic networks. For this to happen Culture and External Affairs portfolios must enable sport to have a parity of esteem with other aspects of culture.

54. Sport matters, global sport impact reports regularly remind us that this form of culture connects with 1 in 5 people in the world in some way, shape or form. On any given day sport matters to millions of people around the world.

55. According to the European Commission (2018), in a study that developed a Sport Satellite Account (SSA) for the EU, in 2012 sport-related GDP was 2.12 per cent of total GDP within the EU. In addition, sport sustained 5.67 million employees, equivalent to a 2.72 per cent share in total employment [37].

56. Australia with its 2030 sports diplomacy strategy funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the USA with its Sports United programmes funded by the Bureau of External and Cultural Affairs [38], France with its the hugely ambitious Sport En Commun intervention that brings together a coalition of 13 public development banks and partners with the sole purpose of using sport as a key driver of economic and social development in Africa, and China with its sports stadium diplomacy are all examples of nations grasping the modern power sports to win friends and influence internationally, nationally and locally [39].

Sport, Environment and Climate Change

57. Undoubtedly, we are facing a climate crisis, which will shape Scotland both economically and politically. Addressing the Virtual Leaders Summit on Climate, United States of America President Biden, proclaimed that the world beyond 1.5 degrees means more frequent and intense fires, floods, droughts, heat waves, and hurricanes tearing through communities, ripping away lives and livelihoods, dire impacts to our public health. Sport is not sheltered from this, nor should it not contribute to a greener Scotland.

58. Dr Madeleine Orr founder of The Sport Ecology Group states that both indoor and outdoor sports are vulnerable to the effects of climate change, from heat waves and diminishing amounts of snow to disruptions in supply chains [40]. She notes that sport needs to prepare for and adapt to the effects of climate change, engage board members and staff in intentional discussions about the climate hazards.

[36] See recommendations in **Scottish Government (2019)** Review of the Scottish Sporting Landscape. Edinburgh: Scottish Government.

[37] See **European Commission (2018)** 'Study on the Economic Impact of Sport through Sport Satellite Accounts'. Brussels: Directorate-General Education and Culture.

[38] See <https://eca.state.gov/programs-initiatives/initiatives/sports-diplomacy> [retrieved 28 April 2021].

[39] See **Murray, S and Price, G (2020)** Towards a Welsh Sports Diplomacy Strategy. British Council Wales. See [here](https://www.britishcouncil.org/wales/sports-diplomacy).

[40] See <https://www.sportecology.org/> [retrieved 28 April 2021].

59. Furthermore, to increase adaptive capacity, start with the soft infrastructure items (e.g. writing new policies, building awareness about climate risks among staff) and work your way up to the costlier 'hard' infrastructure development (e.g., infrastructural upgrades). Finally, she notes that sports organizations need to orient their thinking around mitigating climate change through climate action and advocacy.

60. President Biden also highlights that there are opportunities for economic growth in addressing climate change, stating that 'I see an opportunity to create millions of good-paying, middle-class, union jobs.'

61. Sport in Scotland should see this next stage of development as an opportunity to lead the way in a carbon-neutral sports environment, harnessing the natural environment to support sport and the economy.

Conclusion

62. If the value of sport to Scotland were measured by manifesto space it would be hard not to conclude that sport is not important to Scottish political parties, but it should be.

63. Those working in or with sport recognise the value of sport but those working in other sectors or with other portfolios have still to be convinced. This is not a challenge unique to Scotland but sport both in and beyond Scotland needs to be much better at making the case for sport in a way that is understood by different Ministries or sectors of government.

64. Sport is effective in generating employment because it is community-based and depends on human interaction. As such, one policy implication is that investing in sport can be used as an economic tool to help a country reduce unemployment during a recession, which could be a valuable insight for the post COVID-19 period [41].

65. The internal characteristics of the sport economy imply that investing in sport can boost economic recovery and increase employment. However, the same characteristics also imply that sport is much more vulnerable during the pandemic/lockdown period compared with an average economic sector.

66. Other sporting nations have made the case for sport in a way that has enabled sport to gain traction, long term funding and profile across Government Ministries. Scottish sport must be better at making the case for sport outside of the sports world and beyond just the health portfolio in a way that releases funding for agreed outcomes across a much broader range of government budgets.

67. Chief Medical Officers have long since argued that it is social capital that is key to addressing poverty and health inequality and sport delivers this in spades.

68. An incoming Government could enable Scotland to be a greater sporting nation by being aspirational and including a sports line in each of these budgets where sport delivers on much more than just health.

[41] **Commonwealth Secretariat (2020)** Commonwealth Moves: The Implications of COVID -19 for Community Sport and Sport for Development. London: Commonwealth Secretariat; **Commonwealth Secretariat (2020)** Commonwealth Moves: Resourcing the Sustainability and Recovery of the Sport Sector during the Coronavirus Pandemic. London: Commonwealth Secretariat.

Sports Observation Editors

Professor Grant Jarvie and Dr. Yujun Xu

Grant Jarvie (Director, Academy of Sport) Grant.Jarvie@ed.ac.uk

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Academy of Sport
University of Edinburgh
Moray House School of Education and Sport
Holyrood Campus
St Leonard's Land
Edinburgh, Scotland UK
EH8 8AQ